

Encyclopedic  
Dictionary of

# APPLIED LINGUISTICS

 edited by

Keith Johnson  
and  
Helen Johnson



# Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics

A Handbook for Language Teaching

*Edited by  
Keith Johnson and Helen Johnson*



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# Preface

The *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* is, as its subtitle states, *A Handbook for Language Teaching*. It is intended for all those with an interest in the field of applied linguistics as it relates to second and foreign language education. The book will prove an invaluable source of reference for students following any course in the area of language teaching, as well as those professionally engaged in language education.

When the *Dictionary* was in preparation, entries were initially grouped under the three categories of language, language learning and language teaching. The team of contributors was assembled to provide expertise in these three general areas, and they have been allowed a degree of freedom in what they say. The aim has been to provide basic information, but occasional comments which reveal personal positions in regard to the topics considered have not been discouraged.

The entries vary in length, usually in proportion to their importance, but sometimes an important area has a short entry. One example is COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING. The entry on this large topic is short because a series of larger entries (like COMMUNICATIVE METHODOLOGY and COMMUNICATIVE SYLLABUS) together cover the field. The short entry on COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING refers readers to these longer entries.

Cross-referencing is achieved in two ways. Within the text, words which have their own alphabetical entries are printed in small capital letters, as in the paragraph above. There is also a comprehensive index to help readers track down topics which do not have entries dedicated to them.

Wherever we have felt it would save the reader a laborious search, we have permitted information to be repeated in more than one entry. Nearly all entries are accompanied by a bibliography. Sometimes items in these are marked with an asterisk, indicating the most important recommendations for further reading.

We wish to thank the contributors for their participation and co-operation in this large venture. Thanks also to Philip Carpenter of Blackwell Publishers for (among other things) the part he played in initiating the project, and to Steve Smith and Alison Dunnett for their support – and patience!

HJ  
KJ  
*Lancaster*  
*May 1997*

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# A

**accent** is the component of **DIALECT** which refers to pronunciation. Regional accents locate speakers geographically, e.g. British, American, Welsh, Scottish (with the exception of the non-localized **RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION (RP)** in the United Kingdom). Regional accents intersect with social ones which depend on the speaker's class, education, ethnicity and other characteristics.

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AJ

**acculturation hypothesis** Some researchers have stressed the similarities between Second Language Acquisition and contact situations involving speakers of different languages, such as those in which **PIDGINS AND CREOLES** are found. The best-known is the acculturation model initially proposed by John Schumann (1978).

The starting-point is the resemblance of pidgin languages to L2 learners' languages, particularly in terms of the overall simplicity of **SYNTAX**. Schumann and two colleagues (Cancino, Rosansky and Schumann, 1974) originally studied six Spanish learners of different ages learning English in the USA over a period of ten months. Schumann's acculturation work focused on a single 33-year-old speaker of Spanish called Alberto, who showed noticeably less improvement than the others. Alberto's speech exhibited

several characteristics of pidgin languages such as the lack of inflectional **MORPHOLOGY**. While certain morphemes such as plural **-s** (85%) and irregular past **-ed** (65%) were supplied by Alberto fairly consistently, others, such as regular past **-ed** and inversion, were supplied only 7% and 5% of the time respectively. The other five learners in the study proceeded through a sequence of acquisition for the auxiliary that went through *is, am, can, do, does, was, did* and *are*; Alberto only got as far as *is, am, can* and *are*. He used only four auxiliaries by the end of the observation period, having 'acquired' only *is* satisfactorily; the others had acquired from 4 to 18 auxiliaries.

The similarities between Alberto's speech and pidgins are, according to Schumann:

- both use a single negative marker *no* and have a rule that negation can be expressed through a formula of 'no + Verb' as in *I no see*
- both lack inversion of subject and verb, as in *Where the paper is?*; auxiliaries, as in *she crying*; possessive **-s**, as in *The king food*; present and past tense inflections, as in *Yesterday I talk with one friend*; and subject pronouns as in *no have holidays*
- both tend to use unmarked forms of the verb bereft of inflectional morphology

Alberto therefore appears to speak a pidginized English.

Why should the speech of an individual learner resemble the conventional communication language evolved by speakers of two languages? Schumann sees the cause as residing in the functions of language. Pidgin languages are used only for communicating

ideas, never for bringing people together through language or for expressing the speaker's deepest emotional wants, since the speaker will always resort to the first language for these. A pidgin is a restricted language that serves only the communicative function (perhaps this is news to advocates of communicative language teaching who see communication as the highest function of language!); speakers of pidgins do not identify themselves primarily with the group who speak the pidgin but go back to their own group apart from purposes of contact. Alberto was of normal intelligence etc. What separated him from other learners was that he did not use English for social purposes, for instance, he did not go to classes or watch television and he listened to Spanish music. The pidginized nature of early L2 language is then due to the social isolation inherent in L2 learning, something which most learners overcome. But not, however, Alberto.

In the original research the concept of acculturation accounted for failure and success in L2 learning, 'acculturation' meaning social and psychological integration with the target group. Social factors are covered by the notion of social distance: if one group dominates the other, if one group isolates itself from the other, if one group is very small, and so on, social distance is high and success is consequently low. Psychological factors come down to psychological distance: if the person feels language shock at not being able to express themselves, or culture shock, or is poorly motivated then distance will be too great for success. Hence the theory largely applies to the relationships between groups in an immigrant situation, not to short-term visits or to foreign language situations. There was indeed a second concept of 'enculturation' that was invoked to describe people who learn an L2 in order to function in their own society; in England or in Russia in the past a 'gentleman' knew French, i.e. some foreign languages acquire status within a society

unrelated to their usefulness outside this group.

Intriguing as the idea was, little research support for it has materialized; an L2 theory cannot be based on the malfunctioning of a single L2 learner, the now notorious Alberto. A theme would appear to be that lack of successful interaction with native speakers is a key factor in failure to learn the L2 (*pace* a learner called Wes who led a fully integrated life in Hawaii but did *not* progress as expected). Roger Andersen (1990) has described a cognitive-interactionist model developing its themes within a broader cognitive perspective. The original links to creole studies have also been taken further in the BioProgram model of Derek Bickerton (1981), and the work of Andersen with nativization and denativization, for example, Andersen (1981).

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**accuracy/fluency** Different pedagogic practices have aimed either at accuracy or fluency as the prime targets of students' attainment in L2 proficiency (Brumfit, 1984). For example, other things being equal, explicit **GRAMMAR TEACHING** and more intense **ERROR CORRECTION** are accuracy-orientated procedures, whereas **COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING** and the relative infrequency of error correction are fluency-oriented (see also **CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING**, **FORM-FOCUS**, **MESSAGE-FOCUS**, **PROCESS VS PRODUCT**).

The distinction between accuracy and fluency is parallel to that of code and communication in SLA respectively. The emphasis on the former (accuracy/code) deals with the production of structurally correct instances of L2. The latter (fluency/communication) focuses on functional appropriateness and the smooth 'flow' of L2. Oral fluency is associated with the lack of undue pausing and hesitation, and both oral and written fluency has been defined in terms of the natural use of vocabulary, idioms and automatization of grammatical structures (Leeson, 1975).

Practising accuracy relies largely on the type of oral and written exercise which was developed by **AUDIOLINGUALISM**: the drill. Drills which give students opportunities to produce correct instances of language take a variety of forms. They can be choral or individual, rote or meaningful, based on repetition or substitution, and so on. On the other hand, fluency is fostered by classroom activities which give students opportunities to produce L2 utterances which are more spontaneous and less constrained by strict formalism, e.g. **ROLE PLAY AND SIMULATION**, real life/personal discussion, guessing activities, games and puzzles, problem-solving activities, open-ended listening, open-ended reading (for a discussion of these techniques see Mitchell, 1988). (See also **CONTROLLED PRACTICE TECHNIQUES**, '**PRESENTATION - PRACTICE - PRODUCTION**' **TEACHING SEQUENCE**.)

The accuracy/fluency polarity underlies much controversy over the role of formal

instruction in SLA. For example, Krashen's **MONITOR MODEL** rejects extensive grammar instruction in favour of teaching communication. On the other hand, Sharwood Smith sees the teaching of grammar (see **CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING**) as a 'short cut' to attaining communicative fluency. The inevitable middle-of-the-road position, represented for example by Bialystok (1982), suggests that the decision over formal instruction in the classroom should be based on the analysis of students' goals. Ellis (1985: 244-5) states that

[i]f the goal is to participate in natural conversation, the learner will need to develop his vernacular style by acquiring L2 knowledge that is automatic but unanalysed. This can be achieved directly by means of instruction that emphasizes communication in the classroom [fluency]. It may also be achieved indirectly by teaching that focuses on the code [accuracy], if there are also sufficient practice opportunities to trigger the passage of knowledge from the careful to the vernacular style. If the learner's goal is to participate in discourse that requires careful, conscious planning, he will need to develop a careful style by acquiring L2 knowledge that is automatic and analysed. This can best be accomplished by formal instruction that focuses on the L2 code [accuracy].

Hammerly (1991) takes a programmatically reconciliatory position towards communicative fluency and linguistic accuracy. Being somewhat critical of **COMMUNICATIVE METHODOLOGY**, he reviews the results of **IMMERSION PROGRAMMES** in Canada and the United States, and observes that although these programmes were successful in the students' attaining a high level of communicative proficiency (fluency), they failed in the area of linguistic accuracy. Hammerly (1991: 5) cites studies which indicate that 'an error-laden classroom pidgin becomes established as early as Grade 2 or 3 because students are under pressure to communicate and are encouraged to do so regardless of grammar' (see **FOSSILIZATION**). Therefore, he advocates a 'balanced' approach to language teaching and learning in which the

#### 4 achievement strategies

question of accuracy/fluency is perceived not as one of kind but degree. The author is also in favour of greater emphasis on the teaching of accuracy in the beginning and intermediate stages of L2 learning, and fluency at the more advanced levels.

Certainly, the success of L2 learners in attaining near-native proficiency is not only regulated by their exposure to accuracy- or fluency-oriented teaching. There are many individual learner characteristics which to some degree determine the success of L2 mastery by a student. One of the crucial factors is age. It is possible for most people to learn a second language at any time in their lives and achieve a considerable degree of fluency in effective communication. However, it is rare for learners over the age of puberty to be as successful in acquiring all the grammatical properties of L2 as those who start learning L2 below that age (see CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS).

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AJ

**achievement strategies** (See also AVOIDANCE STRATEGIES, COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES, TEACHING SPEAKING.) Faced with difficulty in meeting an intended communicative goal in the L2, a learner may improvise or expand existing resources by borrowing from L1,

using L2 paraphrase, word coinage or generalizing, appealing for help, using mime/gesture, or retrieval strategies.

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KSM

**achievement tests** measure success in achieving objectives and are directly related to language courses followed. Final achievement tests at the end of a course may be based on the course syllabus and materials or on the objectives of the course. Progress achievement tests measure students' progress towards course objectives. (See also LANGUAGE TESTING.)

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KSM

**acquisition/learning** The distinction is associated with the work of Krashen (1982) and his MONITOR MODEL. He characterizes acquisition as a 'natural' process, where there is no 'conscious focusing on linguistic forms'. First and second language acquisition are comparable, and both may be described in terms of CREATIVE CONSTRUCTION THEORY. The minimum condition for acquisition to occur is 'participation in natural communication situations'. Learning is a conscious process, marked for Krashen by two characteristics: the presence of feedback (error correction), and rule isolation – the procedure of dealing with language points one at a time. The distinction is criticized by some, who find the processes insufficiently distinguished.

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KJ

**action research (AR)** derives from the work during the 1940s of Kurt Lewin, who used it as a method of research into social issues. In education, it has become closely associated with the broader area of **TEACHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**. Its underlying rationale is to encourage teachers in the reflective and critical investigation of their own practice. AR is characteristically context-specific and collaborative and, most important, oriented to pedagogic change brought about by the participants in a setting. Most models of AR are conceived in terms of a cycle or 'spiral' which offers a sequential set of research steps. See also **TEACHER EDUCATION**.

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JMCD

**adjacency pairs** In conversation, certain utterances make a particular response very likely. For example, a greeting is likely to be followed by another greeting. In conversation analysis, the two turns together are called an adjacency pair. Often there are alternative responses; for example, blame may elicit denial or admission. (See also **DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**, **TURN-TAKING**.)

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GC

**affective filter** A term coined by Dulay and Burt and developed by Krashen to refer to a putative mental process whereby a learner's brain would filter available input, letting in to the central acquisition processes only those items that were affectively (i.e. emotionally, attitudinally) acceptable to the learner. (See also **INPUT HYPOTHESIS**.)

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RLA

**affective variables** 'Affective' means 'related to feelings'. One of the three areas considered to make up the **INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES** between learners which influence their degree of success in foreign language learning is the affective area, and **MOTIVATION** and **ATTITUDE** are generally regarded as the two major affective variables. Both are considered to be of considerable importance to learning success, particularly in certain contexts (many affective variable studies have been undertaken in the bilingual context of Canada). Some commentators use the term more widely than this, to include variables like **EXTROVERSION/INTROVERSION**, although these are more generally considered under **PERSONALITY VARIABLES**.

## 6 age learning differences

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KJ

**age learning differences** Cumulative empirical research of the past fifteen years seems to point to the following generalizations about the relationship between age and SLA (see Long, 1990, 1993 for reviews):

- adolescent and young adult L2 learners (as a group) are faster in the initial stages of L2 learning than young children (as a group) on all linguistic measures (SYNTAX MORPHOLOGY, pronunciation, LEXIS);
- with continued exposure, young children (as a group) become more native-like than adolescent and adult learners (as a group) on all linguistic measures;
- individual learners may depart from these generalizations (e.g. some older learners may be slower than young children in the early stages, some older learners may ultimately become as successful as child learners, and so on);
- the process of L2 development appears to be highly similar across child and adult learners;
- deterioration in sensitivity to linguistic material begins as early as age 6 in some individuals (Long, 1993);
- loss of sensitivity to linguistic material is not sudden, but progressively declines with age.

### ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS ARE FASTER LEARNERS IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF SLA

Here are three sets of findings representative of studies which show that older L2 learners have an initial advantage over younger learners. Snow and Hoefnagel-

Höhle (1978) studied 42 English-speaking initial learners of Dutch in Holland over a 13-month period. They ranged in age from 3 years to adulthood. The measures on which subjects were tested were pronunciation, auditory discrimination, morphology, vocabulary, sentence repetition and translation, and tests were administered at 4½-month intervals. Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle found that at the first testing the adolescent and adult subjects outperformed the child learners on all measures except auditory discrimination. However, by the time of the final testing there was no significant difference between the subjects. To summarize, over a period of 13 months child L2 learners of Dutch did not outperform adolescent/adult learners, and adolescent/adult learners were actually faster during the initial period of acquisition.

Ervin-Tripp (1974) studied a group of 31 4–9-year-old English-speaking children acquiring French in Switzerland after 9 months of exposure. She tested their development on syntax, morphology and pronunciation, and found that the 7–9-year-olds significantly outperformed the 4–6-year-olds on all three measures.

Swain (1981) has compared L1 English-speaking adolescents in late French IMMERSION PROGRAMMES in Canada with younger children in early immersion programmes, and found that the adolescents performed as well on reading comprehension and a CLOZE test after about 1,400 hours of immersion as the children did after 4,000 hours of immersion (although the early immersion students were better on listening comprehension).

### CHILD LEARNERS ARE ULTIMATELY MORE SUCCESSFUL L2 LEARNERS THAN ADOLESCENTS/ADULTS

Here are three representative sets of findings which suggest that child L2 learners are ultimately more successful than older L2

learners. Patkowski (1980) and Johnson and Newport (1989, 1991) have both investigated the effect of the age of first consistent naturalistic exposure to an L2 in subjects who have had considerable lengths of exposure. Patkowski selected 67 L2 English speakers from mixed L1 backgrounds, of various ages, who had all been resident in the USA for at least five years. He recorded their performance in an interview, together with the performance of 15 native speaker controls, transcribed the data to eliminate an accent factor, and asked trained native-speaking raters to rate each sample for nativeness. In analysing the results, Patkowski made an arbitrary division between those who had first arrived in the USA before the age of 15, and those who had arrived after the age of 15. He found that those who had arrived before the age of 15 were strikingly more likely to be rated as native speakers or near-native speakers than those who had arrived after the age of 15. Length of exposure and type of exposure (whether the subjects had formal instruction as well as naturalistic exposure) had no effect on the ratings.

Johnson and Newport (1989, 1991), in a similar kind of study with Chinese- and Korean-speaking learners of English who had also been resident in the USA for at least 5 years, focused on grammatical intuitions rather than production data. They found that subjects who had arrived in the USA prior to the age of 7 performed as well on a grammar test as native-speaking control subjects. Those subjects who had arrived after the age of 7 performed progressively less well – the older the subject, the less native-like was the performance on the grammar test. Decline was gradual rather than sudden.

#### L2 DEVELOPMENT APPEARS SIMILAR ACROSS CHILD AND ADULT LEARNERS

Studies which compare child and adult L2 development generally find that children and

adults go through the same stages. For example, Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1974) found a similar accuracy order in adult L2 English morphology to that found by Dulay and Burt (1973) with children. Studies of the acquisition of German word order have found that learners go through the same stages whether they are children or adults (Meisel, Clahsen and Pienemann, 1981), and so on.

#### EXPLANATIONS FOR AGE DIFFERENCES

Four main types of explanation have been offered for age differences: (a) the language faculty is just as capable of learning L2s in older learners as in child learners, but 'affective' factors like threatened self-esteem, low EGO PERMEABILITY and perceived social distance act as a barrier between L2 data and the language faculty (Krashen, 1982); (b) input to adult learners is less well-tuned than to children, so that older learners do not get the data they require to be fully successful; (c) COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT (development of advanced thinking processes) somehow inhibits language learning ability (Krashen, 1982); (d) changes in the nature of the brain with age cause a decline in language learning ability (see CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS). For a review of these explanations, see Long (1990).

#### FUTURE TRENDS

In the past, attempts to formulate generalizations about age-related differences in language learning have been bedevilled by apparently incompatible results: the fact that older learners can appear to achieve native-like pronunciation in reading lists of words after only a few hours' practice conflicts with the generalization that, with exposure, young children (as a group) become more native-like on all linguistic measures than their older counterparts, as does the fact that young

children may not appear to be as successful as older learners over the first few months of L2 learning. These apparent conflicts are resolved once mere 'parroting' is teased apart from real acquisition, and development is distinguished from potential ultimate knowledge. Long (1993) suggests a number of ways in which the design of future studies of age differences could be tightened to eliminate such factors. He also hypothesizes that if future studies are more tightly controlled, it will become clear that the 'sensitive period' for language acquisition is up to the age of 6, and beyond that there is progressive deterioration of all linguistic abilities.

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**analytic/synthetic teaching strategies**

Wilkins (1976) distinguishes two strategies for syllabus organization. In a synthetic approach teaching items are presented one by one to the learner, who builds up or 'synthesizes' knowledge incrementally. In analytic teaching the learner does the 'analysis' (i.e. 'works out' the system) from data presented in 'natural chunks' (the phrase is Newmark's, whose views influence Wilkins's arguments). Wilkins associates synthetic teaching with the STRUCTURAL SYLLABUS and analytic with NOTIONAL/FUNCTIONAL SYLLABUSES because in these structures are not presented one by one, in a carefully graded way. Brumfit (1979) and Johnson (1979) argue against Wilkins's association.

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