

Appendix D

Second Language Acquisition Stages and Related Linguistic Patterns

Individuals learning a second language use the same innate processes that are used to acquire their first language from the first days of exposure to the new language in spite of their age. They reach similar developmental stages to those in first language acquisition, making some of the same types of errors in grammatical markers that young children make, picking up chunks of language without knowing precisely what each word means, and relying on sources of input—humans who speak that language—to provide modified speech that they can at least partially comprehend (Collier, 1998). The rate at which learners reach each stage varies with each individual student since exposure and opportunity to use the language varies from individual to individual. Similarly, the sequence of acquisition of specific structures of English varies from student to student.

The process is not linear: It is more like a zigzag process (i.e. regular past tense, the morpheme “ed” in its written form, pronounced three different ways). Mastery occurs gradually over time until the student gets the morpheme right in more and more contexts until finally the subtleties of the use of the particular structure (e.g. exceptions, spelling variations, pronunciation contexts) has become a subconscious part of the learner’s language system. Additional example (acquisition of the third person singular present tense, adding “s” to the verbs). This morpheme becomes part of the subconscious acquired system after several years of exposure to standard English. Formal teaching does not speed up the developmental process. However, a high CALP level in the native language facilitates the learning of a second language. Acquisition occurs through exposure to correct use of the structure over time in many different linguistic contexts that are meaningful to the student.

The Second Language Acquisition Stages and Recommended Interventions

Roseberry-McKibbin (2002) lists common language characteristics observed in second language learners and provides suggested interventions matched to language acquisition stages (see table 15.1 on the following page). Definitions and discussion of terms used in the following table are provided below:

Interference

Interference is the process in which a communicative behavior for the first language influences the second language. Students tend to demonstrate interference when using English in formal settings, i.e., in a testing situation, rather than playing on the playground.

Practitioners are recommended to consider the possibility that second language learners’ errors in English may result from language interference or from limited English experience. An illustration of interference would be when children literally translate phrases from their native language to English i.e., the Spanish form for “Have a seat” is “Toma asiento”, when translated literally, second language learners may say, “Take a seat”. In such situations, the second language learner’s language use difference is due to language interference.

Table 15.1
MATCHING INTERVENTION TO SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) ACQUISITION STAGES

Stage I Preproduction (First 3 months of L2 Exposure)	Stage II Early Production (3-6 months)	Stage III Speech Emergence (6 months–2 years)	Stage IV Intermediate Fluency (2-3 years)
STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent period • Focusing on comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focusing on comprehension • Using 1-3 word phrases • May be using routines/formulas (e.g. “gimme five”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased comprehension • Using simple sentences • Expanding vocabulary • Continued grammatical errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved comprehension • Adequate face-to-face conversational proficiency • More extensive vocabulary • Few grammatical errors
GOALS:			
ORAL RESPONSES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes-no responses in English • One-word answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3 word responses • Naming/labeling items • Choral responses • Answering questions: either/or, who/what/where, sentence completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recalling • Telling/retelling • Describing/explaining • Comparing • Sequencing • Carrying on dialogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predicting • Narrating • Describing/explaining • Summarizing • Giving opinions • Debating/defending
GOALS:			
VISUAL/WRITTEN RESPONSES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing/painting • Graphic designs • Copying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing/painting, graphic designs • Copying • Grouping and labeling • Simple Reus responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Responses • Drawing, painting, graphics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative writing (e.g., stories) • Essays, summaries • Drawing, painting, graphics • Comprehensible written tests
GOALS:			
PHYSICAL RESPONSES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pointing • Circling, underlining • Choosing among items • Matching objects/pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pointing • Selecting • Matching • Construction • Mime/acting out responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating • Creating/constructing • Role-playing/acting • Cooperative group tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating • Creating/constructing • Role-playing • Cooperative group work • Videotaped presentations

Source: Hearne, D. (2000). Teaching Second Language Learners with Learning disabilities. Oceanside, CA: Academic Communication Associates. Adapted from Table 10-4 with permission. Adapted from Roseberry-McKibbin, C. (2002) Multicultural Students with Special Language Needs: Practical Strategies for Assessment and Intervention. Oceanside, CA: Academic Communication Associates, Inc.

Interlanguage

Second language learners are usually observed developing a new language system that incorporates elements from the native language and elements from English they recently learned. Interlanguage actually helps second language learners test hypotheses about how language works and develop their own set of rules for using language. As students master the English language, their unique set of rules will resemble more the second language.

Silent Period

It is observed at the beginning of exposure to the new language. It may last from a couple of days to several months). Fact: ESL beginners who listen but rarely speak in the new language make just as much, and frequently more, progress in second language development as their more talkative classmates, by the end of the first year of exposure to English.

Implications for instruction and assessment: Use sensitivity when developing systems for nonverbal feedback in this early stage. Beginning adolescent and adult students may be more influenced by cultural socialization norms or their own emotional feelings than by a predictable silent period. An initial focus of intensive listening comprehension in the very beginning of ESL instruction is beneficial for everyone.

Language shift

Language shift is a pattern of language use in which the relative prominence or use of the two languages changes across time and generations. Language shift is usually reported across generations and is characterized by a pattern whereby members of the immigrant populations are fluent in their native language with limited skill in the host country's language.

Language Loss

Language loss occurs when a child's competence in the first language diminishes, while skills in the second language are not at the same level of native speakers (Kayser, 1998). Language loss occurs primarily in a context in which minimal support is given for the use and maintenance of the L2. Thus, the sociolinguistic environment plays a critical role in the emergence of L1 loss and language shift (Goldstein, 2004).

Language Loss vs. Language Shift

Language shift results in changes in native language use with an eventual erosion of abilities in the language. L1 loss however, refers to a more rapid shift from first language prominence to second language prominence (Goldstein, 2004). When it occurs in children, L1 loss can be described as a language shift phenomenon that occurs within – rather than across generations. In this context, L1 loss are patterns of L1 use in which there is a change toward earlier linguistic forms. In other words, the child evidences reduction in linguistic skill relative to his/her skill at a previous time. (Goldstein, 2004).

Attrition

L1 attrition describes patterns of language use in which an individual does not lose ability in the L1 but does not advance in its use either. L1 attrition co-occurs with L1 loss when demonstrated skill with certain aspects of the language is reduced across time. Simultaneously, certain patterns are also present in which characteristics of the language do not continue to develop as noted in monolingual speakers of the target language (Goldstein, 2004).

Language Loss and Assessment

As clinicians working with children who are either bilingual or learning English as a second (or other) language, the phenomena of language shift and L1 loss/attrition is of great relevance. This is especially salient when working with Latino populations in the United States. Studies focusing on the Spanish language skills of children in various Latino groups have reported a pattern of reduction of expressive skills in Spanish over time.

When assessing children who may be in a language shift process and when assessing children who are experiencing L1 loss, the main concern is differentiating between language difference and language disability.

“Because some patterns that are observed in language shift/language loss situations may mimic what has been noted in children with true learning disabilities, correctly diagnosing language impairment in this population is not a trivial matter”(Goldstein, 2004, p. 203).

Bilingual Code Mixing

The use of phonological, lexical, morphosyntactic or pragmatic patterns from two languages in the same utterance or stretch of conversation (Genesse, Paradis & Crago, 2004). Bilingual code mixing plays several, important sociopragmatic functions, and it is a component of bilingual people’s communicative competence. Genesse et al., 2004 present six bilingual Code Mixing types and examples mainly observed in children:

1. Intrautterance mixing
“Alguien se murió en ese cuarto that he sleeps in.” (Someone died in that room)
2. Interutterance mixing
“Pa, ¿me vas a comprar un jugo? It cos’ 25 cents.” (Are you going to buy me juice?)
3. Words
“Estamos como marido y woman” (we are like man and ...)
4. Phrase
“I’m going with her a la esquina” (...to the corner)
5. Clauses
“You know how to swim buy no te tapa.” (...it won’t be over your head)

6. Pragmatic

“Donne moi le cheval; le cheval; the horse!” (Give me the horse, the horse; ...)

Two bilingual Code Mixing types mainly observed in adults:

7. Grammar

“Yo have been able to enseñar Maria leer” (I ... teach Maria to read.)

8. Flagging

“Hier, je suis allé au hardware store-how do you say hardware store in French?” (Yesterday, I went to the ...)

Use of First Language at Home:

When parents and children speak the language that they know best, they are working at their level of cognitive maturity. Practicing English at home can actually slow down student’s cognitive development. Parents can help their children grow cognitively by asking questions, solving problems together, discovering new things, building or fixing something, going somewhere together, cooking food, talking about a TV program, playing music; experiencing life! (Collier, 1998).

CALP Levels and Relationship to Demands of Instruction

Adapted from the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey-Revised (2005)

	CALP Level	Student will find the English/ Spanish language demands of instruction
6	Very Advanced/Muy Avanzado	Extremely Easy
5	Advanced/Avanzado	Very Easy
4-5 (4.5)	Fluent to Advanced/Fluido a avanzado	Easy
4	Fluent/Fluido	Manageable
3-4 (3.5)	Limited to Fluent/Limitado a fluido	Difficult
3	Limited/Limitado	Very Difficult
2	Very Limited/Muy limitado	Extremely Difficult
1	Negligible/Ímperceptible	Impossible

Level 6-Very Advanced/Muy avanzado CALP

When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 6 demonstrates very advanced cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject’s chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a student at level 6 will find the language demands of the learning task extremely easy.

Level 5-Advanced/Avanzado CALP

When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 5 demonstrates advanced cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject’s

chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a student at level 5 will find the language demands of the learning task very easy.

Level 4-Fluent/Fluido CALP

When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 4 demonstrates fluent cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a student at level 4 will find the language demands of the learning task manageable.

Level 3-Limited/Limitado CALP

When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 3 demonstrates limited cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a student at level 3 will find the language demands of the learning task very difficult.

Level 2-Very Limited/Muy limitado CALP

When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 2 demonstrates very limited cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a student at level 2 will find the language demands of the learning task extremely difficult.

Level 1-Negligible/Imperceptible CALP

When compared with others of the same age or grade, an individual at level 1 demonstrates very negligible cognitive-academic language proficiency. If provided with instruction at the subject's chronological age or corresponding grade level, it is expected that a student at level 1 will find the language demands of the learning task impossible to manage.