

## **NORMAL PROCESSES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

### **Second Language (L2) Age of Onset:**

1. Simultaneous (AKA -Bilingual language acquisition – Acquire both languages Before the age of 3 or at the onset of speech

2. Sequential language acquisition – Exposure to the second language after the age of 3, or after the initial establishment of the first language. (August & Hakuta, 1997; Wei, 2000)

*Some researchers differentiate between ‘early sequentials’ (acquiring L2 before age 3) and sequentials (acquiring L2 after the age of 3)*

*\*No evidence that 3 is a “magic” number... some say 5.*

1. *Children can and do acquire more than one language during early childhood.*
2. The acquisition of two languages need not hamper the acquisition of either language
3. *The acquisition of two languages can be parallel but need not be. One language may lag behind, surge ahead, or develop simultaneously with the other language.*
4. Interference – An error in the child’s second language (L2) that is directly produced by the influence of a structure in the primary language (L1)
  - Phonological interference – accent
  - Syntactic interference – *German*: I have played ball yesterday; *Spanish*: I live in a house red)
  - Lexical interference – embarrassed/embarazada; record/recorder, library/librería, constipation/constipación, exit/éxito
5. Fossilization – Those L2 errors that remain firmly entrenched despite good L2 proficiency
  - Critical Period Hypothesis – inevitable in those who learn a language beyond puberty
  - Those within the CPH are not invulnerable
  - Happens in more intuitive aspects of a language (cadence, pronunciation, idiom use)
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6. Interlanguage – Intermediate status between L1 and L2. *Transitory*. The interlanguage contains properties of L1 transfer, overgeneralization of L2 rules and semantic features. (Selinker, 1972)
  1. What he is doing? (a Chinese language)
  2. Why this guy say, stop? (Spanish)
  3. Why the bus driver can’t stop for him? (French) - (Tarone & Swierzbis, 2009)
7. Silent Period – Period of listening (heightened receptivity) and little or no production. In children this may last 3-6 months.
  1. This has been linked to learners who are introverts.
  2. Some L2 learners may not exhibit a silent period.

*NEWER RESEARCH CASTS DOUBT on Silent Period (Roberts, 2014) - Evidence of a silent, non-verbal, pre-production, or receptive language stage was limited.*

8. Codeswitching and Codemixing - Changing of language over phrases or sentences. Generally a normal phenomena.
9. Language Loss (or language attrition) – “Use it or lose it”. Occurs when L1 skills and proficiency diminish with lack of use or exposure. L2 becomes more predominant.

### Typical Dual Language Phenomena

- Forward Transfer: L1 to L2 (individual uses what is known in L1 into L2)
  - Backward Transfer: L2 to L1 (as children get to school, this may occur; applying rules in English to first language, L1)
  - Amalgamation: One set of properties for both languages (transition, such as the use of vowels that are not in either language)
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### Similarities to First Language Acquisition

*Process is not random*

- First acquire a “Non-productive” grammatical form (i.e., “It’s mine”). Also known as *prefabricated utterances, or formulaic speech*.
- Production does not imply competence.
- Comprehension does not imply production.

### Differences from First Language Acquisition

- *Amount, type and variation of input may differ between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> language acquisition.*
- Increased age, cognitive maturity, and more extensive language experiences are variables which serve to enhance the process.
- *L2 learners may capitalize on cognitive strategies unavailable to first language learners (mnemonics for new vocabulary, may have literacy skill in L1, use of cognates, etc.).*
  - **Cognates** – Words from two languages that are the same or similar (Spanish: curious/curioso, hospital, correct/correcto; German: compatible/kompatibel, drink/trinken; Russian: milk/moloko). Watch for FALSE cognates)

### Is bilingualism good?

- A “Cognitive Flexibility” has been found in bilinguals, not found in monolinguals (Baker, 1993; Lambert, 1962).
- Heightened ability in the area of concept formation and higher levels of abstract thought have been found (Diaz, 1985; Zelasko & Antunez, 2000).
- 2 - 3 years ahead in semantic development (Baker, 1993; Bialystok, 1991)

(The following articles also address the benefits of bilingualism: Bialystok & Craik, 2010; Diamond, 2010; Friesen et al, 2014, Kesler & Quinn, 1980)

