

Example of second language acquisition essay

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



In the world of second language instruction, it must be considered that there are many differences between acquiring a language and learning one.

Acquiring a language happens naturally with a subconscious manner, and can happen through normal conversation, while learning a language will happen actively – the learner has to make effort to study and fix mistakes in their true knowledge of the language. Second language acquisition (SLA) is usually said to be the best way to get an education, since the difficulty of learning and mistake fixing are not found as much (Ramat, 1999). It is said that second-language learning as an adult can be very slow and difficult, especially when compared to their first, native language (McLaughlin, Osterhout and Kim, 2004). There are many different things, theories and problems to think about when dealing with the idea of second language acquisition, all of which have their own ways to best master the learning of a foreign language.

Stephen Krashen's Monitor Theory (2003) gives a good definition of SLA, where a learner uses a current system to look at and investigate the speech being used in this second language. In the process of using a second language that has been learned, the learner will read it by themselves in order to fix mistakes before speaking. According to Krashen, "learning has only one function: As a "Monitor" or editor." (p. 2). If a mistake is made after the sentence has been said, it is later fixed using the monitor. Active language learning is thought by Krashen to only be possible by using this strategy (2003).

The interaction hypothesis says that, when a learner talks with a native speaker of the second language they hope to learn, they try to figure out

meanings of words. This lets the learner learn themselves just how a word or phrase is meant to be used through practice. There are two important topics of schooled learning: " grammar instruction and learning to write in one's native language, and the difference between learning one's native language and learning a foreign language in the classroom setting" (Lantolf and Thorne 2006, p. 292). As interaction with others is the best way this second language is used, the strategy makes the work more comfortable for the learner than a classroom setting (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

Sociocultural theory permits both people in the conversation to make a meaning together; as a result, the learner is changing the use of the language just as much as he or she is learning it. It also allows the inside mental voice to be trained and used, keeping it in practice and placing it in the real usage of communication with others. The world around the learner becomes their classroom, and the source for language development, focusing on communication. With this in mind, a normal classroom, with its strict ways of learning languages, is often way too restrictive and unfair to be good for learning (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006).

Depth of processing theory keeps the learning and SLA inside, but allows the learner to pay more attention to the language and how it works. When talking between people or using the language to communicate in any way, they are forced to look at the information more in depth and in greater detail in their mind. This allows a better mental understanding of the language itself; with that, knowledge is kept much more easily and stays longer than in what is called shallow processing (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Language learning practices using what is called 'discourse' can also help to educate

students on how a culture or nation-state is made - looking at its language shows the connection between the way language is practiced, how this language is heard by others, and what it says about their society. In this way, a learner can find out more about the way a society works by looking at the language with a culture in mind (Albert, 2001).

There a 'logical' problem involved with second language acquisition that talks about the concept of universal grammar. Second language learners face a problem when needing to figure every single aspect of adult grammar in their second language they are trying to learn. However, White (1985) says that there are certain concepts that adjust the learner to the point where they may do well at SLA. Once these concepts are learned, as part of universal grammar, research says that they pick up complex knowledge of the second language that is more than the input they have gotten. Teaching developments for this platform requires putting in more than just positive feedback to an student in order to pick up on universal grammar; the difficulty of the specific grammar must be found before finding ways to link it with the grammar (White, 1985).

There is a strong link between oral skill and academic achievement in SLA (Custer, 2011). There is a huge achievement gap to be found between those learners with bad oral skills and those who are native speakers or have high oral skills, showing the need to be skilled in a language to communicate and do well with regards to grades. Also, the skills that are learned through SLA may create habits that help academic grades; either way, Custer's research discovered a good link between oral language skills and academic grades (2011).

For those learning English who mostly speak a foreign language, it is said that 5000 base words need to be learned at least in order to fully and completely understand the concepts of non-standardized English language (Derakhshan & Kalvanpanah, 2011). It is recommended that non-native speakers learn new language through what is called cumulative learning - as a lot of information would mix them up, it is recommended that English is taught and exposed to them a bit at a time. There are a lot of programs that are using text messaging as a real academic tool for teaching ESL students in this way - with the anytime, relaxed and shortened nature of text messages, ESL learners can skip the worry and having too much information that often comes with traditional English as a Second Language learning. There are several ways in which a learner can get SLA; it can be said that a module or device is found in the brain that holds detailed knowledge of language, and as a result must just be unlocked in order to reveal the information of the second language. There are others, however, who think that language is processed through one of many intelligence-based brain functions that bring about learning in a student (Krashen, 2003). Given these different theories on the origins and best methods of SLA, it is interesting that many suggest the advantages of social and interaction-based learning over a normal classroom setting.

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