

Lecture 5

Second Language Acquisition - 1

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION – KEY CONCEPTS

- What is a second language (L2)?
- In Indian school contexts – first language, second language, third language
- In research contexts – first language and second language

- L2 – any language learnt after L1
- Typically for education, employment, and other such specific purposes

- A foreign language - not widely used in the learners' immediate social context; future travel or other crosscultural communication situations

e.g. FLP at IITK

- A library language – functions as a tool for further learning through reading, especially when books or journals in a desired field of study are not commonly published in the learners' native tongue

e.g. English (9,000), French (3,500), German (2,700), Spanish (2,300) and Chinese (1400)

(Source:
<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/03/13/domination-english-language-journal-publishing-hurting-scholarship-many-countries>)

- An auxiliary language - learners need to know for some official/ interpersonal purposes
- E.g. Tribal languages, local dialects

Our focus: learning English as a second language
in school contexts

Learning other Indian languages in
informal/naturalistic contexts

Sometimes a distinction is made between:

Acquisition – naturalistic contexts

Learning – in formal school/ college contexts

- SLA - process of learning another language after the native language has been learned.
- Learning of a nonnative language after the learning of the native language.
- L2 can refer to any language learned after learning the L1, regardless of whether it is the second, third, fourth, or fifth language.

Key Questions

- (1) What exactly does the L2 learner come to know?
- (2) How does the learner acquire this knowledge?
- (3) Why are some learners more successful than others?

(Troike 2006)

- English as a second language

	L1 speakers (in millions)	L2 speakers (in millions)
Chinese	1,200	15
English	427	950
Spanish	266	350
Hindi	182	350

(Troike, 2006: p.9)

Why learn a second language

- Invasion or conquest of one's country by speakers of another language;
- A need or desire to contact speakers of other languages in economic or other specific domains;
- Immigration to a country where use of a language other than one's L1 is required;
- Adoption of religious beliefs and practices which involve use of another language;

- A need or desire to pursue educational experiences where access requires proficiency in another language;
- A desire for occupational or social advancement which is furthered by knowledge of another language;
- An interest in knowing more about peoples of other cultures and having access to their technologies or literatures.

(Crystal 1997b)

English as a second language in India

- Historical reasons
- Language of higher education/ jobs
- Social mobility
- English – medium of instruction in private schools
- Many states English introduced from Class 1 in government schools