

Written assignment: L2 learner data analysis

Task

1. Interview a second language (L2) learner about their language learning experiences and individual factors that have affected their second language learning.
2. Using the data (the learner's spoken output) from the interview, analyse the strengths and weaknesses of their spoken output, the individual factors that have affected their second language acquisition, providing examples throughout.
3. Make specific and realistic recommendations for that learner and their language learning based on your error and individual analysis of factors affecting second language acquisition.
4. Refer to at least ten published academic references in total (note that you should read everything you cite). Include full referencing (in-text and post-text) for your assignment using the APA referencing guide.

Collecting data

The focus of this assignment is a learner learning a second language. You might choose a participant who is studying a language at university, at a language school, with a tutor, or by distance; or a learner who has not been attending formal classes for some time, but who is still striving to improve their second/additional language.

You will need to prepare an interview sheet with questions on second language learning and factors affecting second language learning. Run through the questionnaire with someone before you do your interview, so that you become fluent and familiar with your questions.

Use your readings and course notes to guide you in your question development. After the interview, write up your notes quickly and compare them with the interview you recorded.

Transcribe some sections of the interview to use as examples in your assignment (but not all the interview). Check the accuracy of your transcription. You need to discuss your findings in light of your reading in this subject area and in light of what your participant has said. Please provide sufficient examples (from your learner output) to support your argument.

In your analysis and discussion, you should draw on the readings you have done for the course. Additional suggested readings are listed below.

Please note that you can interview a learner in person, or via video call (e.g. Zoom or Skype). Make sure they sign and return their consent form, and that you are able to record the interview.

You can interview a learner of any second/additional language (i.e., it doesn't have to be English). But, note that the interview needs to be conducted in the second/additional language of the learner. So, you need to be a proficient user of this language, to be able to 1) conduct the interview, and 2) analyse the data in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

Ethical considerations

Because this assignment involves research with humans, you need to ensure that your participant is given information about the assignment, and signs a consent form. You will find copies of the information sheet and the consent form on Nuku.

- Include the signed consent form as an appendix with your assignment.

- Make sure that all the data you have collected (including notes and the recordings) are destroyed after the assignment has been marked and returned to you (and all your questions about the mark received have been answered).

- In the assignment, use a made up name for your participant. On the consent form, use their real name.

Remember you need to record the data. Check your equipment before the interview carefully.

Presenting your findings

This is an essay. Please make sure you have an introduction, main body, and conclusion. Include a properly formatted list of references (please use the APA style) and any appendices. Make sure you format in-text reference appropriately. You should not cite or refer to the lectures in your assignment; instead, cite relevant published academic literature you have read for the course.

It is a good idea to briefly introduce your learner at the beginning of the essay (e.g., their L1, age, gender, learning context, etc.).

Please read the information below carefully and address each of the points required.

***** Part 1: Strengths and weaknesses (circa 800 words)**

Read the chapters by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, available on Nuku) and Lightbown and Spada (2013/2021, Ch. 2) about analysing learner language and carrying out an error analysis. In the light of these readings, analyse the recorded interview.

1. What are some of the strengths of your interviewee's output? What category (a-g) do these strengths belong to in the list below? Give examples to support your discussion of the strengths.

2. Carry out an error analysis of your interviewee's L2 output. What are the two main weaknesses of your interviewee's output?

What category (a-g) do the two main weaknesses you identify belong to in the list below? Give examples to support your discussion of the weaknesses.

- a) **Phonology**: e.g., pronunciation of sounds, stress, intonation patterns, etc.
- b) **Morphology**: e.g., inflectional affixes, derivational affixes, irregular forms etc.
- c) **Syntax**: e.g., word order, grammatical categories/parts of speech, etc.
- d) **Vocabulary** / Semantics: use of words or semantic fields, collocations, etc.
- e) **Discourse**: cohesion, coherence, questions, responses, feedback, turn-taking etc.
- f) **Pragmatics**: utterance functions, implied meanings, world knowledge, cultural assumptions, etc.
- g) **Sociolinguistics**: forms of address, styles in different contexts, formal/informal usage, etc.

***** Part 2: Individual factors affecting second language acquisition (circa 800 words)**

In your interview, make sure you address directly factors that affect second language acquisition (see the lecture slides and the relevant readings to help you decide what to focus on).

Discuss three individual factors that have affected your interviewee's second language acquisition. Give reasons and examples from your interview and support your ideas with readings.

*** Part 3: Recommendations for language learning (circa 400 words)

Make at least two constructive and realistic recommendations for your interviewee on what they could do to enhance their language learning. Give clear explanations, examples, and concrete suggestions. Base your answer on your interview with the learner, error analysis and individual factor analysis, and your readings.

Please proofread your work carefully and do not go over the word limit (appendices and references are excluded from the word count).

Marking considerations

Your assignment will be marked on:

- Your identification and the depth of the discussion of the strengths and weaknesses; integration of readings and theory with examples from your data;
- Your discussion of the major factors affecting the learner's second language acquisition, and integration of readings and theory with examples from your data;
- Your recommendations for enhancing their language learning, and integration of readings and theory with examples from your data;
- Your academic writing skills, including in-text and post-text referencing.

Reading list

Here are some resources you could use for your assignment. Feel free to read more widely!

- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. 5th edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Chamot, A. (2001). The role of learning strategies in second language acquisition. In M. Breen (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research*, pp. 25-43. Harlow, Essex: Pearson.
- Cook, V. (2008). *Second language learning and language teaching*, pp. 135-154. London: Hodder Education.
- Dörnyei, Z. & Schmidt, R. (2001). *Motivation and second language acquisition*. University of Hawaii at Manoa. Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center: University of Hawaii Press.
- Ellis, R. (2006). Individual differences in second language learning. In A. Davies & C. Elder (eds). *The handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2015). *Understanding second language acquisition* (2nd edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gass, S. & Mackey, A. (2007). Input, output, and interaction in second language acquisition. In B. Van Patten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition*, pp. 175-199. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mackey, A. & Gass, S. (2012). *Research methods in second language acquisition. A practical guide*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell (**Note:** Here you can find some information on data collection and analysis).
- Mackey, A. & Gass, S. (2016). *Second language research. Methodology and design*. London, New York: Routledge (**Note:** You can consult this volume for some information on conducting interviews).
- Mackey, A. & Gass, S. (2014). *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition*.

- London, New York: Routledge.
- Lamb, T. (2011). Future selves, motivation and autonomy in long-term EFL learning trajectories. In G. Murray, X. Gao, and Lamb, T. (Eds.) *Identity, motivation and autonomy in language learning*, pp. 177-194. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Lightbown, P & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press (**Note**: This is the set text for LALS 201).
- Nation, P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language* (2nd edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. & Richards, J. (2015). *Language learning beyond the classroom*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Hodder Education.
- Saville-Troike, M. (2012). *Introducing second language acquisition* (2nd edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spada, N. & Lightbown, P. (2002). Second language acquisition. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics*, pp. 115-132. London: Arnold.

You will find these materials in the library (some of the books are available as e-books). Important: Make sure you refer to at least ten published academic references in your assignment.

The test will be marked according to the following criteria:

Criteria
1. Strengths and weaknesses. Have strengths and weaknesses been identified and categorised? Have sufficient examples been provided? Are possible origins of the weaknesses discussed? Is there support from academic sources?
2. Individual factors. Are individual factors discussed in sufficient detail? Are there examples? Does the discussion draw on relevant and reputable SLA literature?
3. Recommendations. Have two recommendations been provided? Are they realistic and relevant? Are they based on the learners' weaknesses? Is there support from academic sources?
4. Overall organisation and clarity of expression. Is the language used clear and free of typos? Is the language used academic and appropriate at the UG level? Do the arguments follow each other in a logical and coherent way?
5. Support from reading and referencing. Does the essay sufficiently draw on the relevant academic literature? Is the referencing style appropriate (ie APA)?

The Victoria University of Wellington grade scheme

Pass/fail	Grade	Normal range	Midpoint	Indicative characterisation
Pass	A+	90%–100%	95	Outstanding performance
	A	85%–89%	87	Excellent performance
	A	80%–84%	82	Excellent performance in most respects
	B+	75%–79%	77	Very good performance
	B	70%–74%	72	Good performance
	B	65%–69%	67	Good performance overall, but some
	C+	60%–64%	62	Satisfactory to good performance
	C	55%–59%	57	Satisfactory performance
	C	50%–54%	52	Adequate evidence of learning
Fail	D	40%–49%	45	Poor performance overall, some evidence of learning
	E	0–39%	20	Well below the standard required
	K	Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements, even though the student's numerical course mark reached the level specified for a pass, usually 50%. A student whose course mark is below 50 should be given a D (40– 49) or E (0–39), regardless of whether they met the mandatory course requirements.		
Pass	P	Overall pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail)		
Fail	F	Fail (for a Pass/Fail course)		