

Description of the Field of Second Language Acquisition

Researchers in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) seek to understand and explain processes and mechanisms involved in the acquisition of non-native languages. Since 1967, the year in which Pit Corder published a pivotal article about the systematic nature of second language (L2) learners' errors, the field of SLA has grown tremendously. SLA research is an essentially interdisciplinary endeavor. Questions addressed by SLA researchers overlap with those addressed in a variety of different fields, such as linguistics and psychology. The scope of SLA research includes acquisition of different areas of linguistic competence, such as the development of L2 phonology, vocabulary, syntax, and pragmatics. SLA research also addresses development in different skill areas, such as oral comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. SLA theory and research may be used to inform L2 instruction, but as a field of inquiry SLA pursues research goals independently of questions related to language instruction.