

The SLA Hall of Fame

Scott Thornbury

The BIG questions:

- In what ways is SLA like FLA (First Language Acquisition)?
- Which of the following are necessary and/or sufficient?

input/exposure

attention

interaction

correction

motivation

formal instruction

all/none of the above

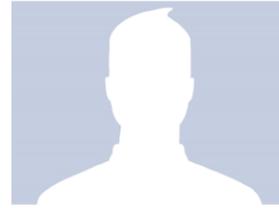
- Why do learners make errors?
- Why do some do better than others?



Alberto



Julie



Wes



Takahiro



Nora



R.



Almon



Mario

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The reason why Alberto's language pidginized was very simply because the members of the dominant anglophone community had ambivalent attitudes towards Alberto, offering him limited opportunities to practice English, rather than the reverse situation.

Norton, B. (2000) *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*, Harlow: Pearson, p. 116.

It seems that [Wes's] confidence, his willingness to communicate, and especially his *persistence* in communicating what he has in mind and understanding what his interlocutors have in their minds go a long way towards compensating for his grammatical inaccuracies.

Schmidt, R. (1983) 'Interaction, acculturation and the acquisition of communicative competence,' in Wolfson, N., and Judd, E. (eds) *Sociolinguistics and Second Language Acquisition*, Rowley, MA.: Newbury House, p. 161.

One learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed.

Hatch, E. (1978) Discourse analysis and second language acquisition. In Hatch, E. (Ed.) *Second language acquisition: A book of readings*. Rowley, Mass.:Newbury House.

Social strategies	Cognitive strategies
S-1 Join a group and act as if you understand what's going on, even if you don't.	C-1 Assume what people are saying is relevant to the situation at hand. Meta-strategy—guess.
S-2 Give the impression, with a few well-chosen words, that you speak the language.	C-2 Get some expressions you understand, and start talking.
S-3 Count on your friends for help.	C-3 Look for recurring parts in the formulas you know.
	C-4 Make the most of what you've got.
	C-5 Work on the big things first: save the details for later.

Table 1.1 Social and cognitive strategies used by five child L2 learners

from Ellis, R. (2008) *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (2nd edn) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This week we were introduced to and drilled on the imperfect... Wednesday night A came over to play cards ... I noticed that his speech was full of the imperfect, which I never heard (or understood) before, and during the evening I managed to produce quite a few myself, without hesitating much. Very satisfying!

(Schmidt and Frota, 1986: 279)

'I've changed a lot in the last two months actually. I have kind of changed my determination. I'm not as fearful, or afraid of the future [...] Yeah, maybe the Internet has changed me'.

(Lam 2000, p. 468)

Voice:

The act of meaning making itself, the choice of which role we will play, which identity we will put forth in our interaction with others...

(Kramsch, C., quoted in Lam 2000)

I had six resources that helped me in important ways:

1. Buying a pocket dictionary and a standard encyclopedia for my hotel room.
2. Talking with Anglos who didn't speak Spanish.
3. Watching and listening to English-language television and radio every day.
4. Reading newspapers and magazines and trying to translate everything that was going on.
5. Keeping a dictionary with the words that I learned every day. I took notes in a small pocket notebook during the day, then copied everything at night into a regular notebook that I alphabetized.
6. Translating everything that I saw: signs in shop windows, neon signs, ads in the subway, everything...

Conclusions?

1. Some language learners reach impressive levels of proficiency without instruction; others don't.
2. Those who do are often motivated to develop learning strategies of their own.
3. These learning strategies typically involve some kind of social interaction.
4. Classroom instruction might have a 'priming' function.
5. Communicative competence may be less dependent on formal accuracy than on memorized formulaic language.

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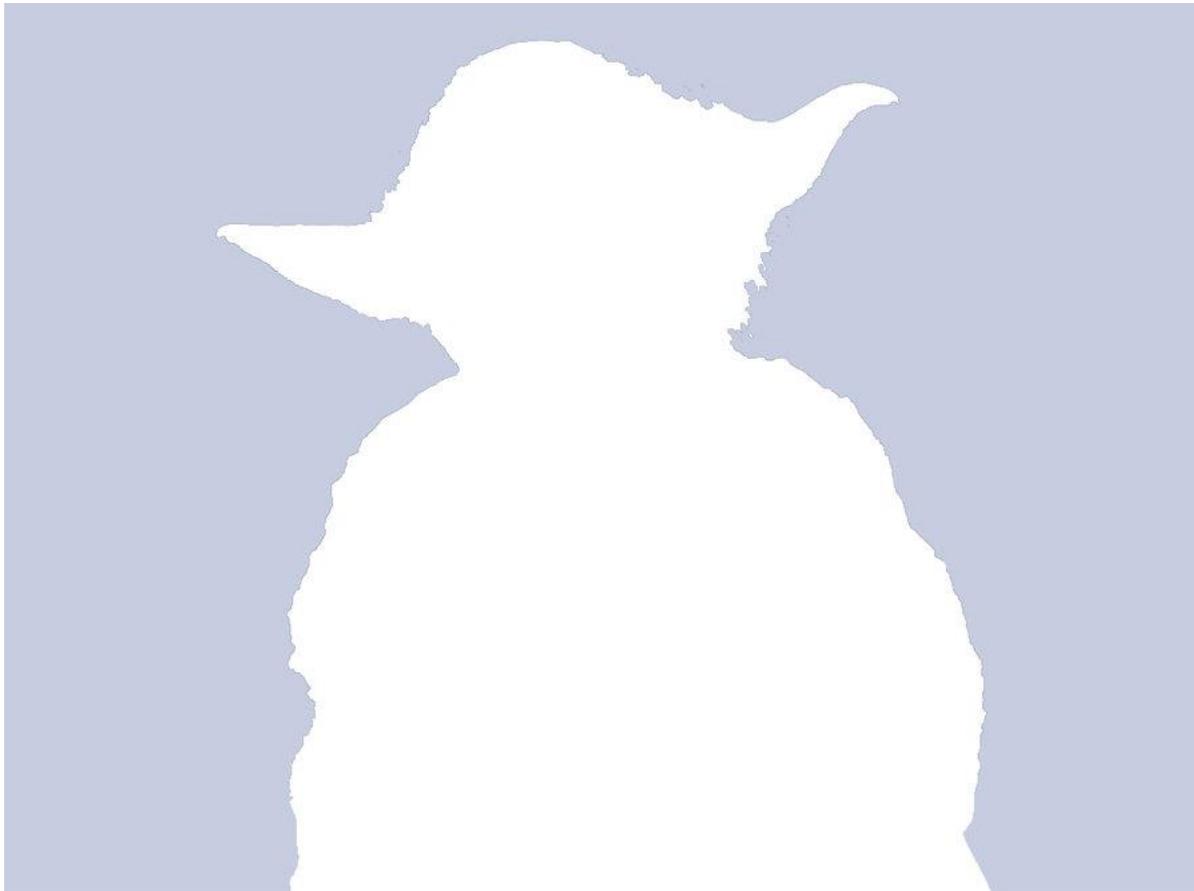
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