Seven things beginning with A
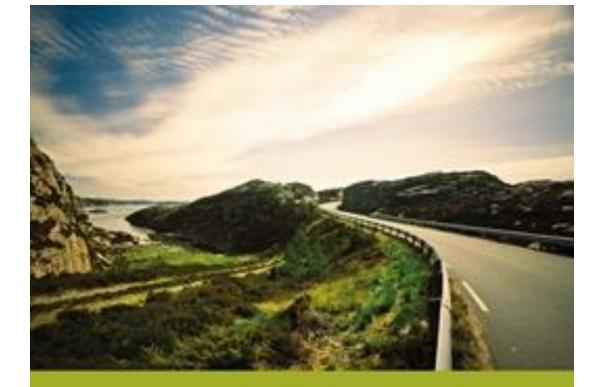
Scott Thornbury

The New A–Z of ELT

A Dictionary of Terms and Concepts
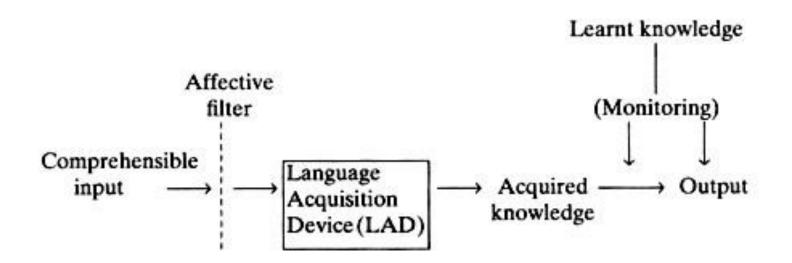
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A is for….

- acquisition
- activity
- assisted performance
- appropriation
- affordances
- agency
- alignment

Acquisition

'Most SLA researchers view the object of enquiry as in large part an internal mental process: *the acquisition of new (linguistic) knowledge…*'

Long (1997), quoted in Larsen-Freeman, D. (2002) 'Language acquisition and language use form a chaos/complexity perspective'. In Kramsch, C. (ed.) *Language acquisition and language socialization.* London: Continuum. P. 34.

The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 learning and production (adapted from Krashen, 1982, pp. 16 and 32; and Gregg, 1984)

"Just as surely as language is social, so is its acquisition."

Atkinson, D. 2002, Towards a sociocognitive approach to second language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal, 86/4*. p. 527.

The acquisition metaphor: 'i.e. that human learning is conceived of as an acquisition of something, that something being an *a priori* category such as rules or sequences of language…'

The participation metaphor: 'rather than talking about acquiring entities, attention is paid to activities. "In the image of learning that emerges from this linguistic turn, the permanence of *having* gives way to the flux of *doing*."'

Larsen-Freeman, D. *op.cit,* p. 36.

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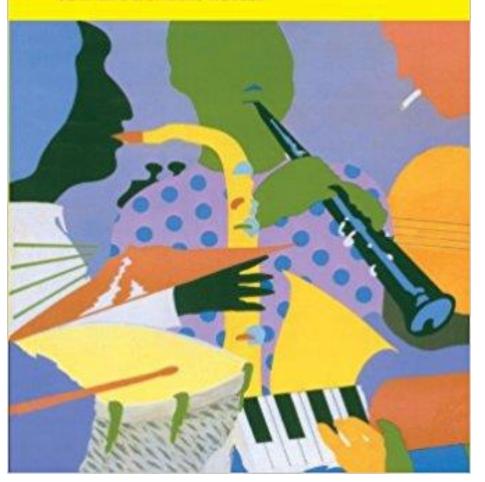
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Larsen-Freeman, D. *op.cit,* p. 36.

Activity

Situated learning

Legitimate peripheral participation

JEAN LAVE & ETIENNE WENGER

'In contrast with learning as internalisation, learning as increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world.'

Lave, J. & Wenger, E 1991. *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 49.

"The rules of the game become learnable, in an interaction between bottom-up discovery, and top-down instruction, within the social context of playing the game".

van Lier, L. (2004) *The Ecology and Semiotics of Language Learning: A Sociocultural Perspective,* Boston: Kluwer Academic.

"Language learning emerges from participation in linguistic practices, such practices always being steeped in historical, cultural and institutional meaning systems."

van Lier, L. (2004) *The Ecology and Semiotics of Language Learning: A Sociocultural Perspective,* Boston: Kluwer Academic. P. 88.

https://www.ted.com/talks/deb_roy_the_birth_of_a_word

'When we design our lessons using *activity* as the focal unit, language becomes a constituent alongside movement, gesture, experiment, manipulation, focusing, planning, judging, and so on.'

Van Lier, L. (2002) 'An ecological-semiotic perspective on language and linguistics,' in Kramsch, C. (ed.) *Language acquisition and language socialization: Ecological perspectives.* London: Continuum, p.159 (emphasis added).

Assisted performance

'Teaching consists in assisting performance through the ZPD [Zone of Proximal Development]. Teaching can be said to occur when assistance is offered at points in the ZPD at which performance requires assistance.'

Tharp, R.G. & Gallimore, R.(1988) *Rousing Minds to Life: teaching, learning, and schooling in social context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.31.

other-regulation

↓

self-regulation

Teaching 'at the point of need'

WHAT VIDEO GAMES HAVE TO TEACH US ABOUT LEARNING AND LITERACY

REVISED AND UPDATED EDITION

"A transformative work. Gee is the Johnny Appleseed of the serious games movement, planting seeds that are springing new growth everywhere we look."
—HENRY JENKINS, author of *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*

JAMES PAUL GEE

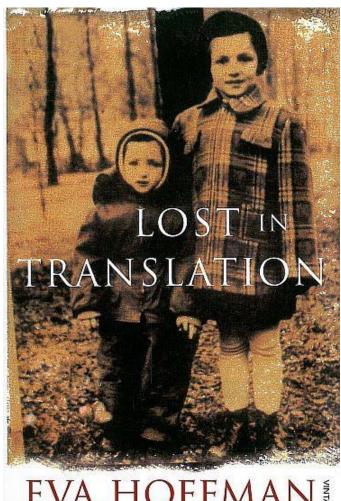# Explicit Information On-Demand and Just-in-Time Principal

The learner is given explicit information both on demand and just in time, when the learner needs it or just at the point where the information can best be understood and used in practice.

Gee, J.P. (2007) *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy.* Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan. p.226.

Appropriation

'"Becoming competent" is not a matter of learning to speak. It is, instead, a matter of developing a range of voices, of learning to ventriloquate, i.e. to (re)construct utterances for our own purposes from the resources available to us.'

Hall, J.K. (1995) '(Re)creating our worlds with words: a sociohistorical perspective of face-to-face interaction.' *Applied Linguistics*, 16, p. 218.

LOST in TRANSLATION

EVA HOFFMAN

'A DEEP AND LOVELY BOOK' JOSEF SKVORECKY

'Since I lack a voice of my own, the voices of others invade me […] By assuming them, I gradually make them mine. I am being remade, fragment by fragment, like a patchwork quilt.'

Hoffman, E. (1989) *Lost in Translation,* London: Vintage Books, p. 220.

First attempt	Third attempt
J: They went to the park by car and he go with his dog and he take lunch box and I have sandwich and hamburgers. T: champagne … J: champagne, sandwich and very peaceful but later many people will come, will came, … many people came here and one people played football and the dog is barking there … N: *They were fed up* … a man listening to music …	T: It was a nice sunny day so Tom and Victoria decided to go to picnic in the countryside. They went to picnic by car with their dogs, his name is Jim. They had lunchbox and champagne, sandwiches and hamburgers. N: They found a nice place near the lake …. very peaceful. J: Felt relaxed, but later one family come and the man was playing football, the girl singing, the dog was barking and the man listen loud music. T: *They were fed up*. They decided to go home.

Affordances

'Learners build their grammars out of new language offered by interlocutors, which then each learner uses and recycles in different ways. This socially and locally grounded recycling mechanism gets captured in the term *affordances*,… defined as language "provided by the environment, ... something the L2 speaker picks up from the environment and users for a locally contextualised purpose."'

Ortega, L. (2015) 'Usage-based SLA : A research habitus whose time has come,' in Cadierno, T. & Eskildsen, S.W. (eds) *Usage-based perspectives on second language learning*. Berlin: De Gruyter, p. 359.

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http://languagelearninginthewild.com/

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However, experiential language learning will not give up the classroom as a learning space. It will develop methods to bring a second language user out into the 'wild' where the target language is spoken, it will also develop methods to harvest the experiences from the 'wild' and to bring them back into the classroom.

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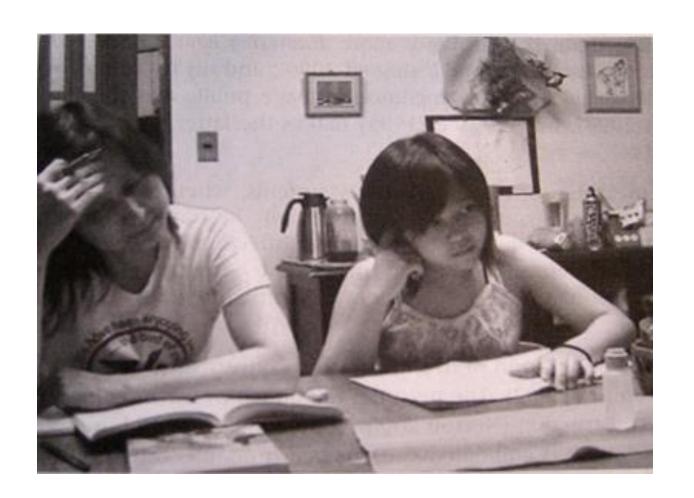
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Agency

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.

Alignment

"Learning is more discovering how to align with the world than extracting knowledge from it."

Atkinson D. (2010) 'Extended, embodied cognition and second language acquisition', *Applied Linguistics*, **31**, 599-622.
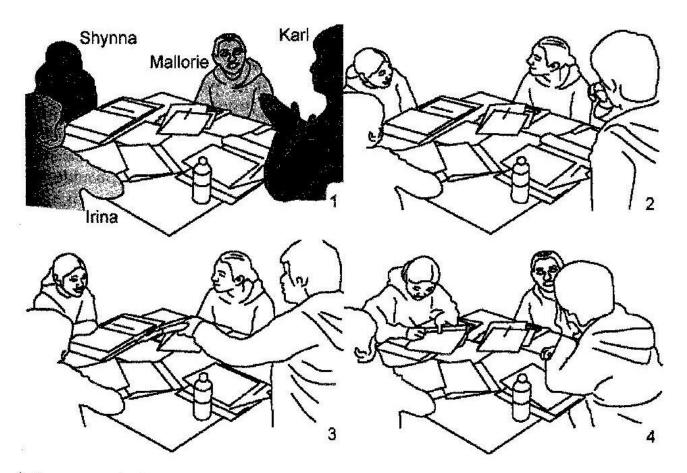(p. 610)

Figure 2: Shift in engagements between different participants. 1. Shynna directing her question 'Have you seen the mo:vie Jackass¿' at Karl; 2. Mallorie asking of Shynna her verification question; 3. Karl handing a notebook to Shynna and asking her to spell a word; 4. Mallorie 'taking over' Shynna's report

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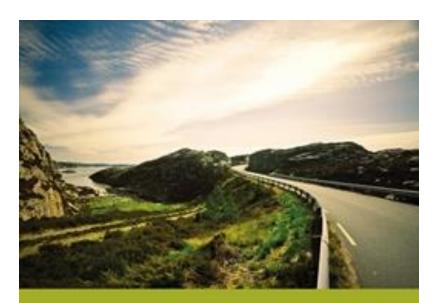- affordances
- agency
- alignment

old (cognitivist) paradigm	new (sociocultural, ecological, complex systems) paradigm
input	affordances
output	'languaging'
interaction	co-adaptation
fossilization	partial competence
learner	(multilingual) user
error	non-standard form
acquisition	emergence
learning	appropriation

"Acquisition cannot and will not occur without use."

Firth, A. and Wagner, J. 2007. Second/foreign language learning as a social accomplishment: elaborations on a reconceptualized SLA. *Modern Language Journal, 91: Focus issue*, p. 806.

'What matters in learning is the freedom to initiate, steer, and manage talk and interaction; the creativity to craft communication with the available resources present in the interactional situation; and the opportunity to learn together, in interaction with others.'

Käänta, L., et al. (2013) 'Learning English through social interaction: the case of *Big Brother* 2006, Finland.' *Modern Language Journal* 97/2, p.356.

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Macmillan Books for Teachers

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