



Second Language Acquisition Terminology

This document includes basic definitions for the terms and phrases that we will use throughout this module and the remainder of the course. If you have any questions, or if there are additional terms you would like to see on this list or explore in more detail, let us know on the Canvas Course Q&A page!

1. Aptitude: A set of cognitive abilities that predicts L2 learning rate (how quickly or easily an individual increases their proficiency in the target language).
2. Authentic Resources: Texts created for non-pedagogic purposes; also referred to as “genuine” resources.
3. Automaticity: The ability to process and produce language in a fast, unconscious, and effortless manner with a lower error rate.
4. Clarification requests: A corrective feedback strategy; a question or request is used to ask for more information or clarity; the interlocutor indicates they do not understand the utterance and/or a mistake was made that needs correction.
5. Communicative approach: An approach to language teaching that focuses on learners using the language to achieve communicative goals and tasks; also known as *communicative language teaching (CLT)*
6. Comprehensibility: Speech that is or can be understood by others.
7. Comprehensible Input (CI): Developed by Stephen Krashen; language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to language that is just beyond their current level of understanding.
8. Comprehensible Output: Developed by Merrill Swain; language acquisition relies on comprehensible input and output, where learners are producing language that is understood by other people.
9. Confirmation checks: A strategy to negotiate meaning; learners are asked questions about their utterance to confirm understanding



10. Elicitation: A corrective feedback strategy; the interlocutor sets up the student to say exactly what needs to be said or corrected by asking questions or allowing the student to complete the interlocutor's utterance.
11. Explicit correction: A corrective feedback strategy; clear indication that the learner's utterance was incorrect is given and the correct form is given explicitly.
12. Explicit instruction: Instruction that directly and primarily focuses on language forms and rules.
13. Explicit learning: Learning that is conscious and intentional in identifying rules and patterns present in input.
14. Explicit knowledge: Knowledge about the language that learners consciously know and can retrieve from memory.
15. Extrinsic motivation: Motivation driven by external rewards (grades, approval, praise, awards, etc.).
16. Feedback: The responses learners receive from other speakers during communicative interactions; can be positive or negative.
17. First language(s) (L1): The language(s) an individual interacts with from birth.
18. Form-focused instruction: Instruction that focuses learners' attention on the language's forms and rules (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, etc.); *also known as focus-on-form*.
19. Heritage language: A language an individual speaks because of a familial or cultural connection and is not the dominant language in the individual's surrounding environment.
20. Heritage language learner (HLL): A learner of a heritage language.
21. Ideal self: The possible future self that a learner wants to be, including the desired language-specific abilities and target language community connections.
22. Identity: A learner's sense of self, especially in comparison to the language and culture of the target language; often informed by identity markers like race, gender, sexuality, nationality, etc.



23. Implicit instruction: Instruction that focuses on creating, conveying, and understanding meaning; no explicit directions or explanation of grammatical rules or translation is included.
24. Implicit learning: Linguistic development that occurs without learners' awareness.
25. Implicit knowledge: Knowledge about the language that learners unconsciously know and often are unable to verbalize or explain.
26. Individual differences (IDs): A variety of factors (e.g., age, aptitude, motivation, personality, willingness to communicate) that may affect a learner's language learning process and experiences.
27. Input: The language that learners hear, read, or see in the target language(s).
28. Input Hypothesis: Proposed by Stephen Krashen; emphasizes the primary and central role of comprehensible input in language acquisition.
29. Interaction: Instances where individuals engage with each other.
30. Interaction Hypothesis: Proposed by Michael Long; states that learners need opportunities to interact with each other so they can work together to negotiate meaning when conversation breaks down.
31. Interlocutor: A conversation partner; may be written or spoken.
32. Intonation: The rise and fall of pitch during speech.
33. Intrinsic motivation: Motivation that is driven by internal rewards (enjoyment, pride, fulfillment, etc.).
34. Language Learning Anxiety: Feelings of tension, apprehension, and nervousness associated when learning or using a language.
35. Lexicon: The vocabulary students have acquired.
36. Metalinguistic cues: A corrective feedback strategy where the interlocutor uses questions or comments to indicate an error in the sentence; sometimes the correct form may be provided with an accompanied explanation.



- 37. Modified output: Speech that has been self-corrected or reformulated by the student to improve comprehensibility.
- 38. Native language(s): The language(s) that children are exposed to from infancy.
- 39. Natural approach: An approach to language teaching that occurs without any focus on grammar instruction and primarily focuses on engaging with L2 input.
- 40. Negotiation for meaning: Instances where individuals address and resolve comprehension or other language issues that arise during a communicative interaction.
- 41. Noticing Hypothesis: Proposed by Richard Schmidt; states that learners cannot develop language abilities or internalize language features unless they consciously notice the linguistic features and how they carry meaning in input.
- 42. Ought-to self: The possible future self that a learner feels they should be, including the desired language-specific abilities and target language community connections they think they should have.
- 43. Output: The language that learners produce, either in spoken or written form.
- 44. Output Hypothesis: Proposed by Merrill Swain; states the language learning occurs when learners encounter a 'gap' in their knowledge through what they are able to accomplish when speaking or writing and must then modify their output to be understood.
- 45. Pedagogic Task: An approximation of a target task that can be accomplished in a classroom.
- 46. Pragmatics: The way context and circumstances contribute to meaning during conversations.
- 47. Present, Practice, Produce (PPP): An approach to language teaching where language is presented to learners, practiced in a controlled environment, and then produced in a more open environment.
- 48. Productive knowledge: Knowledge about a language that informs how a learner communicates in real-world interactions.



49. Proficiency: The degree to which the learner is able to use and understand the target language; informed by topics, context, and outcomes.
50. Pushed output: What learners write and say when an interlocutor encourages them to modify their speech in conversation.
51. Recast: A corrective feedback strategy where the interlocutor implicitly reformulates the utterance without the mistake, indirectly indicating the utterance was incorrect.
52. Receptive knowledge: Language that a learner is able to recognize and comprehend (primarily through reading and listening) and may not be able to produce.
53. Repetition: A corrective feedback strategy where the interlocutor repeats the error, adjusting intonation during the incorrect section to draw attention to it.
54. Second language(s) (L2): The additional language(s) that learners begin to learn, typically after early childhood.
55. Second language acquisition (SLA) research: A subfield of Linguistics that explores how people add additional languages to their linguistic repertoires.
56. Simultaneous Bilingual: An individual who grew up interacting with two languages at the same time and is able to use both those languages to communicate.
57. Syntax: The order and arrangement of words in clauses, phrases, and sentences.
58. Target language: The language that is being taught or learned.
59. Target task: A real-world action or experience that an individual would encounter in their day-to-day routines (e.g., buying a cup of coffee, finding a gas station, writing an email to a supervisor).
60. Task-based language teaching (TBLT): A teaching approach based in communicative language theory that emphasizes the use of tasks; emphasizes that language learning is most effective when learners can practice language that allows for communication in real-world situations.



- Follows a task cycle sequence (*pre-task, task, post-task*)

61. Task-supported language teaching: A teaching approach that primarily follows a *Present-Practice-Produce (PPP)* model and then adds a task as an activity to practice linguistic items during language production.
62. Willingness to communicate (WTC): A learner's readiness, level of comfort, and interest in producing the target language and engaging with the target language community.