

First and second language acquisition

Differences between L1 and L2 acquisition

Ellis 1994 (based on Bley-Vroman 1988)

Feature	L1 acquisition	L2 (foreign language) acquisition
1. Overall success	children normally achieve perfect L1 mastery	adult L2 learners are unlikely to achieve perfect L2 mastery
2. General failure	success guaranteed	complete success rare
3. Variation	little variation in degree of success or route	L2 learners vary in overall success and route
4. Goals	target language competence	L2 learners may be content with less than target language competence or more concerned with fluency than accuracy
5. Fossilisation	unknown	common, plus backsliding (i.e.

		return to earlier stages of development
6. Intuitions	children develop clear intuitions about correctness	L2 learners are often unable to form clear grammaticality judgments
7. Instruction	not needed	helpful or necessary
8. Negative evidence	correction not found and not necessary	correction generally helpful or necessary
9. Affective factors	not involved	play a major role determining proficiency