

**Ionin, Tania, and Silvina Montrul (2023),
*Second language acquisition: introducing
intervention research*, Cambridge, Cambridge
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Second Language Acquisition (SLA) emerged as a field of study decades ago. However, in the 21st century both the scientific study of languages and the acquisition of their structural features are receiving increased attention. Intervention studies (conducted in labs or classrooms) are research tools that can bridge the gap between theoretical linguistic research and teaching practices. Ionin and Montrul, in collaboration with Cambridge University Press, present an authoritative textbook that provides a solid theoretical foundation to contemporary applied linguistics. In addition, they provide an in-depth analysis of several intervention studies on the acquisition of different grammatical aspects of English, French, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish. The book provides the reader with 10 well-rounded chapters. As an early career researcher in applied linguistics, I appreciate the extensive dedication necessary to create a firm yet accessible theoretical foundation that facilitates further analysis of a range of intervention studies. As a language educator, I also found useful the book's discussion questions, glossary of terms, and online resources.

In their preface Ionin and Montrul discuss the aim of the book and its intended audience. Chapters 1 and 2 explain their choice of the topics of discussion and clear guidelines on how to use the book to teach a course. The aim of both chapters is to set a theoretical framework that will help the reader to understand the book's subsequent discussion of intervention studies. In addition, another goal of these two chapters is to equip the reader with the necessary tools to conduct actual intervention studies in SLA.

Chapter 1 begins by presenting a definition of the Chomskyan concepts of "universal grammar" and "linguistic universal principles and parameters". Second language acquisition in heritage speakers receive extensive attention before moving to the role of input and a significant

discussion about implicit and explicit knowledge and learning in SLA research and teaching. Chapter 2 introduces intervention research and grammar teaching. Here the authors set a starting point, explaining the differences between laboratory and classroom research. Then they discuss the relevance of the learning environment and different components of intervention research. They continue with a review of research intervention methods. Finally, they explain the various approaches to grammar teaching which the reader will find in the different intervention studies analyzed later.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss intervention studies of the acquisition of articles and verb placement in question formation. Regarding articles, chapter 3 introduces the theoretical concepts of specificity and genericity. Discussion then focuses on different teaching approaches and different intervention studies of the acquisition of articles. These intervention studies are presented in two categories: (1) those focused on instructional techniques and (2) those with a focus on theoretical approaches to articles. The most salient implication from chapter 3 is the need for a link between theoretical and instructional studies. The authors also discuss further research directions (psycholinguistics).

In Chapter 4 the discussion turns to syntax, particularly the position of verbs and adverbs within sentences. After presenting terminology to help readers understand the intervention studies on this topic, the authors turn to differences between English and French in verb movement, adverb location, and question formation. Next, they discuss intervention studies of verb movement and adverb position in English as a second language (ESL), French, and Spanish. Finally, the authors discuss intervention studies of question formation and conclude with emphasis on the importance of feedback for the acquisition of these linguistic features.

Intervention studies on the acquisition of inflectional morphology and its implications are the focus of chapter 5. The authors introduce key terminology (i.e., “morphemes”, “derivational” and “inflectional morphology”, etc.). Afterwards, they discuss why morphology is a challenge for second language (L2) learners, psycholinguistics, and intervention studies. The authors analyze studies that explore the effects of different feedback and instructional methods on verbal morphology, tense marking, and grammatical gender. The conclusions are that explicit instruction and processing input are more effective methods than implicit and output-based approaches to teaching inflectional morphology.

Chapter 6 examines the acquisition of the subjunctive mood in L2 learners and heritage speakers. Before discussing class-intervention research, chapter 6 introduces the reader to specific terminology and

theoretical aspects of the subjunctive mood in both usage and acquisition (L1 and L2). Ionin and Montrul present and analyze linguistic and classroom-oriented research studies conducted with intermediate and advanced L2 learners and heritage speakers of romance languages. Conclusions from these linguistically oriented studies are that, despite its complexity, learners can indeed acquire the target forms of the subjunctive mood. Conclusions from the analysis of class-intervention research studies are that while L2 and heritage learners have significant differences, explicit instruction facilitates language acquisition for both.

In chapter 7 the authors analyze argument structure. The theoretical introduction for this chapter discusses transitive and ditransitive verbs, the syntax of the passive voice, and finally object constructions. The authors examine research studies on how English speakers learning Spanish and then Japanese and Korean speakers learning English acquire these linguistic features. One conclusion is that most of the mistakes learners make in the acquisition process come from their L1. Therefore, a proper focus on meaning and form instruction can help them eliminate incorrect generalizations from their own grammar.

Chapter 8 provides the reader with insight and class-intervention research studies about direct- and indirect-object construction in English and the expression of objects in Spanish. About the double-object construction in English, the role of feedback and syntactic or structural priming are the most salient topics. Regarding the construction of Spanish objects, the authors analyze results of syntactic priming. Then they turn the focus to the effect of processing instruction and intervention with differential-object marking in both L2 and heritage Spanish learners. According to the intervention studies analyzed in chapter 8, syntactic priming is an effective teaching method to foster implicit acquisition of object pronouns in both English and Spanish. Additionally, explicit instruction with negative feedback and processing instruction leads to the acquisition of word order and object clitics in Spanish.

Chapter 9 explores word order and other syntactic constructions. Discussion focuses on adjective order, sentence-level word order, and word order in relative clauses and quantifier scope sentences. After a theoretical explanation of the acquisition of the syntactic phenomena mentioned above, the authors analyze nine classroom-intervention studies conducted with ESL learners. These studies analyze the effectiveness of different teaching and intervention methods. These include (1) processing input instruction that is explicitly focused form instruction, (2) rule-oriented and meaning-oriented instruction, and (3) the role of written and aural input and output. From a theoretical perspective, the

authors find contradictory evidence regarding the acquisition of these syntactic phenomena. Nevertheless, from a pedagogical perspective, explicit instruction is effective, and output practice and structured input instruction stand out over output enhancement.

Finally, chapter 10 discusses the efficacy of instructional approaches (including feedback types) which result in the development of language learners' interlanguage grammar. Final conclusions are that input-processing and output-based instruction are the most effective methods. Metalinguistic and implicit feedback, including recasts and prompts, are the techniques that lead to the most improvement. This final chapter also discusses the relationship between linguistic theory and intervention research. The authors conclude that there is still a significant need for further intervention research to understand if and how learners' linguistic systems evolve, and they suggest lines of inquiry for further intervention research.

Overall, *Second-language acquisition: introducing intervention research* fulfills its purpose of equipping the reader with the necessary knowledge to conduct intervention studies in SLA. The authors provide the reader with significant theoretical understanding of the grammatical and linguistic features of different languages, and they discuss in depth several models of intervention studies. The book thus bridges the gap between theoretical linguistics and second-language pedagogy. It is also important to note that the grammatical features that the authors analyze and explain are ideal for intervention studies. This is because they all pose significant challenges for both L2 and heritage language learners, i.e., they are the ones most often addressed by textbooks and teaching materials. I recommend this book for master's and doctoral students seeking to advance their knowledge of the fields of theoretical linguistics and SLA. Language educators and professors looking to teach courses at the graduate level will also find useful materials presented in an engaging and inspiring manner.