

An analysis of Interlanguage Development with definition and examples

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Write a note on interlanguage development in a language learner.

'Interlanguage' is a linguistic system that a second language learner uses to learn his target language. An American Applied Linguistics professor, Larry Selinker (1937-present), developed this theory in 1972 in his article 'Interlanguage.' Interlanguage development is how a language learner shifts from their native language to acquiring proficiency in a new language.

Primary Level: At the outset of the process, learners depend heavily on their native language. They translate their mother tongue and want to learn the foreign or target language. This process does not allow the learners to learn the target language appropriately. It refers to the picture of a man making his new house with the materials from the old one.

Fossilization: Generally, fossilization is a process of preserving the dead bodies of animals and plants whose bodies are buried in sediments under ancient seas. In Linguistics, fossilization means the obstruction a target language learner faces on his way to learning the language. In fossilization, learners may get stuck at a certain level and cannot progress further. It is like a fossil trapped in amber. This linguistic habit is challenging to overcome. Here, the learners may learn some new vocabulary but fail to master the language's grammar, syntax, and frequent use.

Errors Self-Correction: Learning without mistakes is quietly impossible. In 'Interlanguage' theory, errors are influenced by the learner's native language. For example, a Spanish learner might say, "I have 20 years" instead of "I am 20 years old" because in Spanish, it is "Tengo 20 años." These errors disappear with time. Besides, when the learners become proficient, they rectify these errors themselves.

Overgeneralization: This means using a regular grammar system in an irregular situation. Learners probe to misuse their grammar rules. For example, a learner might say "I goed to the store" instead of "I went to the store" by applying the past tense rule "add -ed" from English irregular verbs.

Lexical and Pragmatic Development: Learners learn new words and phrases by expanding their vocabulary. Though they primarily rely on direct translation methods, gradually, they upgrade their condition by habituating to the target language environment. Learners eventually learn appropriate ways to express themselves in different situations.

Interlanguage is like a bridge between two worlds. It helps a learner to learn another language beyond his mother tongue. This also gets hindered by the feeling of fear and embarrassment. Students can overcome this situation through motivation and confidence.

LxNotes