

Understanding Second Language Acquisition by Lourdes Ortega
Discussion Questions for Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Many terms used in SLA were introduced both in the text and in class. Whenever we use terms to categorize we run the risk of generalizing or creating bias. Ortega notes that with the use of terms like "L1" and "L2," we may be unconsciously constructing a monolingual bias (p. 5). What "dangers" do you think may be present in the use of other terms, such as "native speaker," "nonnative speaker," and "interlanguage"? (Feel free to explore other terms as well.)

2. This course focuses on the *acquisition* of language, rather than its *evolution* or *description*. What would be the value, if any of studying these other two areas in more depth?

3. Who is more likely to become successfully bilingual: a child born and raised in Canada by one Canadian and one Japanese parent; or a child with two Japanese parents who moves with them to London at the age of 5? What are the important variables in each case, and why are they important?

4. Ortega lists some potential impacts of SLA research on the world (pp. 7-8). What are the most important current or future policy issues in your country that SLA findings would be useful in helping to resolve? Be specific.