

Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics

# First and Second Language Acquisition

Jürgen M. Meisel

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Infants and very young children develop almost miraculously the ability of speech, without apparent effort, without even being taught – as opposed to the teenager or the adult struggling without, it seems, ever being able to reach the same level of proficiency as five-year-olds in their first language. This useful textbook serves as a guide to different types of language acquisition: monolingual and bilingual first language development and child and adult second language acquisition. Unlike other books, it systematically compares first and second language acquisition, drawing on data from several languages. Research questions and findings from various subfields are helpfully summarized to show students how they are related and how they often complement each other. Specific facts about language, such as where the verb is placed, are used as examples to explain 'big questions' like the nature of the human Language Making Capacity. The essential guide to studying first and second language acquisition, it will be used on courses in linguistics, modern languages and developmental psychology.

- Each chapter includes suggested reading and topics for further discussion
- Summarizes research questions and findings from various subfields to demonstrate how they are related and how they often complement each other
- A useful glossary at the end of the book provides a guide to the technical terms

JÜRGEN M. MEISEL is Professor Emeritus of Linguistics in the Department of Romance Languages and a member and former (1999–2006) Chair of the Research Center on Multilingualism at the University of Hamburg. He is also an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Distinguished Fellow in the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Calgary. He is one of the founding editors and current co-editor of the journal *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, published by Cambridge University Press.

"... an excellent textbook on similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition, but also an insightful and provocative synthesis of research on this topic."

Fred Genesee, Psychology Department, McGill University



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