

Schumann's Acculturation Model

Variability Summary C

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Some learners make rapid progress in learning a second language, while others with the same initial ability and language instruction make little progress in the same amount of time. Schumann hypothesized that this difference could be accounted for by characteristics of the social and psychological distance learners placed between themselves and the language they were learning. Schumann identified eight characteristics of social distance and four characteristics of psychological distance.

Characteristics of Social Distance:

Characteristics	Explanations of Characteristics
Social Dominance Patterns	The native language learners' reference group can be superior, inferior, or equal in terms of politics, culture, technology, or economics. If they view their group as superior, they may not learn the second language.
Integration Strategies	Assimilative learners give up native language values and lifestyles. Preservative learners keep native language values and lifestyles. Adaptive learners become bicultural and switch depending on the group.
Enclosure	When groups share social facilities, enclosure is low. This supports language learning.
Intended Length of Residency	Length of time a learner plans to stay in the country and the permanency of residency in the country impact motivation to learn a new language.
Cohesiveness	Strong intragroup contact in the native language community with few contacts outside the community impacts second language learning.
Size	The size of the native language community may impact L2 learning.
Cultural Congruence	The similarity and harmony between the cultures impact second language learning.
Attitudes	The feelings of the reference groups toward each other impact learning.

Characteristics of Psychological Distance:

Characteristics	Explanations of Characteristics
Language Shock	Feeling silly about trying to learn the language equates to less likely to learn.
Culture Shock	Being anxious or disoriented in the culture equates to less likely to learn.

Motivation

Level of motivation affects learning.

Ego-permeability

The extent to which second language learners view their first language as fixed and rigid will impact their learning of the second language.

Adapted with permission from:

Teemant, A. & Pinnegar, S. (2007). *Understanding Language Acquisition Instructional Guide*. Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership.



**Principles of
Language
Acquisition**

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