

Routledge Studies in Applied Linguistics

ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN AN INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM

Alan Juffs



Aspects of Language Development in an Intensive English Program

While there is much in the literature on ESL development, this book is the first of its kind to track the development of specific language abilities in an intensive English program (IEP) longitudinally, and it highlights the implications of this particular study's findings for future IEP implementation and practice and ESL and SLA research. The volume draws on many years' worth of data from learners at an IEP at the University of Pittsburgh to explore selected aspects of language development, including lexical, grammatical, speaking, and writing abilities, in addition to placement assessment practices and student learning outcomes. A concluding chapter points to the ways in which these findings can be applied to decision-making around IEP curriculum development and the future role of IEPs in higher education more broadly. With its focus on students in IEP settings and the concentration on data from students evaluated over multiple semesters, this volume offers a unique opportunity in which to examine longitudinal developmental patterns of different L1 groups on a variety of measures from the same learners and will be key reading for students and researchers in second language acquisition, English for academic purposes, language education, and applied linguistics.

Alan Juffs is Professor of Linguistics and Director of the English Language Institute at the University of Pittsburgh. He has also taught English in Asia, Europe, and North America. His research focuses on formal linguistic approaches to second language acquisition, the lexicon (*Learnability and the Lexicon: Theories and Second Language Acquisition Research*, 1996), and sentence processing (*Second Language Sentence Processing*, 2014).

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Alan Juffs

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	xi
<i>List of Tables</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiv
<i>Preface</i>	xv
1 Intensive English Programs and Second Language Teaching Research	1
1.1 <i>Intensive English Language Programs: Early Beginnings and Professionalization</i>	1
1.2 <i>The Spread of English as a World Lingua Franca and Economic Impact</i>	2
1.3 <i>The Economic and Political Context of the Intensive English Program</i>	4
1.4 <i>Wider Context in Research and Second Language Teaching</i>	7
1.4.1 <i>Second Language Acquisition as Theoretical Research</i>	8
1.4.2 <i>Second Language Acquisition and Language Teaching Research</i>	10
1.4.3 <i>The Role of Instruction in Language Development</i>	10
1.5 <i>Goals and Role of Intensive English Programs in the Wider Context of English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes</i>	11
1.6 <i>The Research in This Book: Mixed Methods and in the Spirit of ‘Design-Based’ Research</i>	12
1.7 <i>Summary</i>	13
1.8 <i>Topics for Administrators and Teachers to Reflect On</i>	13
1.8.1 <i>Questions and Issues Mainly for Program Administrators and Curriculum Supervisors</i>	13

1.8.2	<i>Questions and Issues for Classroom Teachers</i>	14
	<i>References</i>	15
2	The Intensive English Program at the University of Pittsburgh: Methods and Curriculum	19
2.1	<i>Methodology – The Communicative Approach (CLT)</i>	20
2.2	<i>The Faculty and the Design and Implementation of the Curriculum</i>	22
2.3	<i>The Students: National Origins, Proficiency, and Goals</i>	26
2.4	<i>The Curriculum</i>	28
2.4.1	<i>The Speaking Curriculum – Goals, Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes</i>	30
2.4.2	<i>The Writing Curriculum – Goals, Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes</i>	31
2.4.3	<i>The Grammar Curriculum – Goals, Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes</i>	32
2.5	<i>Summary</i>	33
	<i>References</i>	33
	<i>Appendix I English Language Institute General Best Practices</i>	36
	<i>Appendix II Level 3 Horizontal Articulation</i>	38
	<i>Appendix III Level 4 Horizontal Articulation</i>	45
	<i>Appendix IV Level 5 Horizontal Articulation</i>	52
3	Placement Assessment and Developmental Measures in an Intensive English Program	58
3.1	<i>Introduction</i>	58
3.2	<i>Background to Assessment</i>	60
3.3	<i>Placement Assessment</i>	63
3.3.1	<i>Description of the Placement Tools in the Intensive English Program</i>	63
3.3.2	<i>Determining and Justifying Cut Scores</i>	66
3.4	<i>Data Visualization and Analysis</i>	69
3.4.1	<i>Central Tendency and Dispersion</i>	69
3.4.2	<i>Cluster Analysis</i>	70
3.5	<i>A Case Study From the Pitt Intensive English Program</i>	71
3.5.1	<i>Participants</i>	72
3.5.2	<i>Data Visualization</i>	74
3.5.3	<i>K-Cluster Analysis</i>	75

3.6	<i>Rubrics for Assessing Development</i>	84
3.7	<i>Final Exams</i>	85
3.7.1	<i>Reading</i>	85
3.7.2	<i>Writing</i>	86
3.7.3	<i>Listening</i>	86
3.7.4	<i>Speaking</i>	86
3.7.5	<i>Grammar</i>	87
3.8	<i>Summary</i>	87
3.9	<i>Topics for Administrators and Teachers to Reflect On</i>	87
3.9.1	<i>Questions and Issues Mainly for Program Administrators and Curriculum Supervisors</i>	87
3.9.2	<i>Questions and Issues for Classroom Teachers</i>	88
	<i>References</i>	89
	<i>Appendix I Writing Sample Rubric</i>	93
4	<i>Lexical Development in an Intensive English Program</i>	94
4.1	<i>Introduction</i>	94
4.2	<i>Some Terminology for the Lexicon</i>	95
4.3	<i>Which Words Should and Do the Students Know at Each Proficiency Level?</i>	97
4.4	<i>How Does Lexical Knowledge Develop? Diversity, Sophistication, and Depth</i>	98
4.4.1	<i>Comparing vocD and Advanced Guiraud for Advanced Writing</i>	102
4.4.2	<i>Naismith et al. (2018): Which List Is Better for Calculating Advanced Guiraud: The Role of L1 and L2 Experience</i>	103
4.4.3	<i>Differences Among Regions With the Same First Language</i>	105
4.5	<i>Instructional Approaches to Vocabulary Teaching</i>	106
4.5.1	<i>Teaching Vocabulary: Decisions for the Approach, Method, and Technique</i>	106
4.5.2	<i>Using Technology to Teach Vocabulary: The Role of Learners' Motivation, Culture, and Teachers' Perceptions</i>	108
4.7	<i>Collocations and Formulaic Sequences</i>	113
4.6	<i>Conclusion</i>	114
4.8	<i>Topics for Administrators and Teachers to Reflect On</i>	115

4.8.1 *Questions and Issues Mainly for
Program Administrators and Curriculum
Supervisors* 115

4.8.2 *Questions and Issues for Classroom
Teachers* 115

References 117

*Appendix I English Language Institute
Vocabulary List* 122

5 Grammatical Development in an Intensive English Program 127

5.1 *Introduction: Theories of Grammar and
Learning* 127

5.2 *Background: Grammatical ‘Func-tors’ in English,
Developmental Orders, and First Language
Influence* 129

5.3 *Acquisition Orders in Func-tors and L1 Influence
Revisited* 130

5.4 *Development of Clause Structure in Recorded
Speaking Activities* 135

5.5 *Word Frequency Ranking Changes Reflect Morpho-
Syntactic Development in English as a Second
Language Writing* 137

5.5 *Specific Structures and L1 Development: Two Case
Studies* 157

5.5.1 *Articles* 157

5.5.2 *Development of Passive in the Intensive
English Program* 159

5.6 *Summary* 160

5.7 *Topics for Administrators and Teachers to
Reflect On* 161

5.7.1 *Questions and Issues Mainly for
Program Administrators and Curriculum
Supervisors* 161

5.7.2 *Questions and Issues for Classroom
Teachers* 162

References 163

6 Spoken Language: Pronunciation and the Development of Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency in an Intensive English Program 170

6.1 *A Brief Review of Topics in Pronunciation:
Phonetics and Phonology* 171

- 6.2 *Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency in L2 Speaking* 174
 - 6.2.1 *Recorded Speaking Activities in the Pitt Intensive English Program* 176
 - 6.2.2 *Do Self-Correction Notes Make a Difference?* 180
 - 6.2.3 *The Development of Fluency in the Intensive English Program – An Example Intervention Study* 181
 - 6.2.4 *A Comment on Task-Based Language Instruction and Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency Research* 184
- 6.3 *The Influence of L1 Phonology and Orthography on L2 Reading and Writing* 186
- 6.4 *Summary* 187
- 6.5 *Topics for Administrators and Teachers to Reflect On* 188
 - 6.5.1 *Questions and Issues Mainly for Program Administrators and Curriculum Supervisors* 188
 - 6.5.2 *Questions and Issues Mainly for Classroom Teachers* 189
- References* 190

- 7 Some Features of the Development of Writing in an Intensive English Program** 194
 - 7.1 *Introduction* 194
 - 7.2 *Research on L2 Writing Development – Selected Key Highlights* 195
 - 7.2.1 *Writing: Taking Account of the Potential Reader* 195
 - 7.2.2 *The Learner-Centered Curriculum* 196
 - 7.2.3 *Awareness of Genre* 197
 - 7.2.4 *Contrastive Rhetoric: L1 Influence in L2 Writing* 198
 - 7.2.5 *Corrective Feedback: Second Language Acquisition Research* 199
 - 7.2.6 *Corpus-Based Studies of Writing: Quantitative Measurements* 199
 - 7.2.7 *The Big Picture* 203
 - 7.3 *Case Studies From the Intensive English Program – Tracking Development of Eight Students Over Three Semesters* 204

x Contents

7.3.1 *Review of Curriculum Goals and Background of Selected Students* 204

7.3.2 *Quantitative Overview of the Learners' Texts* 208

7.3.3 *Qualitative Analysis* 212

7.3.3.1 *Content Evaluation* 212

7.3.3.2 *Do Quantitative Ratings and Qualitative Teacher Evaluations Align?* 216

7.4 *Summary and Conclusion* 219

7.5 *Topics for Administrators and Teachers to Reflect On* 220

7.5.1 *Questions and Issues Mainly for Program Administrators and Curriculum Supervisors* 220

7.5.2 *Questions and Issues Mainly for Teachers* 220

References 221

Appendix I. AF3 Arabic L1. Writing Texts 225

Appendix II. BN7 Arabic L1. Writing Texts 230

Appendix III. AQ1 Chinese L1. Writing Texts 237

Appendix IV. BL7. Chinese L1. Writing Texts 242

Appendix V. AY3 Japanese L1. Writing Texts 248

Appendix VI. FW1 Japanese L1. Writing Texts 254

Appendix VII. CC4 Korean L1. Writing Texts 260

Appendix VIII. EQ8 Korean L1. Writing Texts 267

8 **Epilogue**

273

8.1 *The Wider Context of the Intensive English Program* 273

8.2 *Tracking Development: Providing Quantitative Support for Qualitative Judgments* 274

8.3 *Aspects Not Covered* 275

8.4 *Prospects for Intensive English Programs* 275

8.4.1 *In the United States* 275

8.4.2 *Around the World* 276

References 276

Index

277

Figures

2.1	Numbers and Levels of Students in the Pittsburgh English Language Corpus (PELIC)	27
3.1	The Normal Curve (c.f. Brown, 1988)	69
3.2	Normal and Non-Normal Distributions in a Boxplot	70
3.3	Boxplot of EPT Total Scores	74
3.4	K-Cluster Means Centroids and Actual Level Placement Using EPT Listening and Structure	77
3.5	K-Cluster Means and Actual Level Placement Using EPT Structure and IEP Listening Test	79
3.6	Quality of Model and Size of Clusters for IEP Placement	81
3.7	Z-Score Distribution and Importance of Predictors in IEP Placement	82
3.8	Comparison of Mean Scores of Initial IEP Placement and Clusters	83
4.1	Gains in Advanced Guiraud Scores by First Language and Level Using Pitt IEP Frequency List	104
4.2	Gains in Advanced Guiraud Scores by First Language and Level Using NGSL Frequency List	105
5.1	Putative Universal Development Order of English Functors	130
5.2	L1 Development of Nominal Functors by Chinese and Arabic Learners by Level	132
5.3	Accuracy on Verbal Functors, Chinese and Arabic Learners by Level	133
5.4	Emergence of Clause Types by Proficiency Level	136
5.5	Frequency Rank of Selected Functional Categories by Level	147
5.6	Estimated Frequency per Million of ‘whether’ by L1 and Level	148
5.7	Level 3: NP vs. CP Verb Frequency per Million by L1	151
5.8	Level 4: NP vs. CP Verb Frequency per Million by L1	152
5.9	Level 5: NP vs. CP Verb Frequency per Million by L1	153
7.1	Complex NPs per Clause for Each Learner’s Sample of Two Texts	211
7.2	Mean Length of Clause for Each Learners’ Two Texts From Levels 3–5	211

Tables

2.1	ELI Administrative Structure: Responsibilities of Administrative Faculty	23
2.2	Other Essential Faculty Administrators	25
3.1	Pitt IEP Placement Test Scores – Historical Viewpoint	64
3.2	Pitt IEP Cut Scores (Note Level 6 Added After 2015)	66
3.3	Test Scores by Initial Placement Level	75
3.4	Placement Test Results by L1 Typological Group	75
3.5	K-Means Cluster and Level Means With Michigan EPT vs. Actual Placement (Only EPT)	76
3.6	Correlations Among Scores Used in Placement Assessment	78
3.7	K-Means Cluster and Level Means With EPT Structure and IEP Listening vs. Actual Placement	78
4.1	Coverage of the Most Frequent Words in Various Genres	97
4.2	Lexical Diversity and Lexical Sophistication Scores of IEP Level 4 and 5 Students: Arabic, Chinese, and Korean	103
4.3	Results of Paired <i>t</i> -Tests on % Scores of Receptive and Productive Skills	110
5.1	English Inflectional Morphemes	129
5.2	Verbs and Approximate Complement Preferences (NP vs. CP) Based on Kennison (1999) or Google N-Gram if Absent (in Alphabetical Order)	143
5.3	Descriptive Data by L1 and by Level	144
5.4	Frequency Rank of Functional Category Words (FCW) in Top 2000 Most Frequent Words by Language and Level. (COCA Rank in Header). Rank/Frequency per Million. (Lower Rank and Higher Frequency per Million Indicate Increased Use)	144
5.5	Frequency Rank of Verbs Permitting CP (V-CP), but Preferring NP or CP (Kennison, 1999) by Language and Level. Rank/Estimated Frequency per Million. (Lower Rank and Higher Frequency per Million Indicate Increased Use)	145

6.1	Results of the Number of Preserved and Deleted Consonant Codas	172
6.2	Results of the Number of Errors From Preserved Consonant Codas	172
6.3	Basic Statistics: Initial Measure and Subsequent Growth Rates	178
6.4	Reliable Differences Among CAF Measures on Picture Prompt	183
7.1	Lu and Ai (2015) Selected Syntactic Complexity Indices (Averaged Across Proficiency Levels)	202
7.2	Curriculum Objectives and Features, Levels 3–5	205
7.3	Summary of Students in the IEP Contributing Writing With Number of Texts Over 50 Words Long	206
7.4	Quantitative Scores of Learners' Lexical Richness: AG and vocD Scores of All Texts of 50 Words or More	208
7.5	Mean Lexical Richness Scores by L1 for All Writing Texts in PELIC	209
7.6	Level 3 Syntactic Complexity Measures	210
7.7	Level 4 Syntactic Complexity Measures	210
7.8	Level 5 Syntactic Complexity Measures	210
7.9	Topics Chosen by Students	213
7.10	Correlations Among Average Essay Rating and Measures of Syntactic Complexity ($N = 48$ in All Cases)	217
7.11	Impersonal and Personal Texts by Level in the Sample	219

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Preface

This book is the product of collaboration, conversations, observations, and analysis with the help of many colleagues and students over the years I have spent as Director of the English Language Institute and Professor of Linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh.

The work here is presented as ‘aspects’ of language development in an intensive English program (IEP). This title is meant to indicate that it is absolutely not a complete picture of one program, let alone how other programs should be. Rather, I present a series of ‘snapshots’ or illustrations of various facets of the administration of the program and the language development of the students.

The book provides the context of the IEP in education for international students in general and specifically at the University of Pittsburgh. Each chapter seeks to provide IEP administrators and teachers with a refresher in the research underpinning language education in IEPs in order to contextualize the data analysis that is provided. Subsequently, selected data of an aspect of the learners’ language are analyzed followed by some discussion. A section at the end of each chapter raises issues for administrators and teachers to reflect on in light of the theory and data presented in the chapter.

Chapter 1 provides some national and global context of IEPs, while Chapter 2 offers insights into the organization and curriculum of the IEP at Pitt. The topic of Chapter 3 concerns assessment in the IEP, focusing particularly on the Pitt IEP’s experience with the challenge of placement testing. Subsequent chapters illustrate the language development of the students in the areas of lexis (Chapter 4), grammar (Chapter 5), spoken language (Chapter 6), and writing (Chapter 7). In Chapter 8, I reflect briefly on what we have learned and point out other areas that we need to invest time and energy in tracking in the future. To a great extent, the discussion in Chapters 3 through 7 is dependent on the data that we have been able to collect and analyze to date and should by no means be seen as making definitive claims about development in the Pitt IEP.

The book can be seen as a series of case studies of issues that have come up in one IEP. The selected aspects of language development are those evidenced

by the learner data collected during the typical two to three semesters that learners spend in our IEP before they either return to their home countries or go on to academic studies. The analysis concentrates primarily on Arabic-speaking, Chinese-speaking, Korean-speaking, and Japanese-speaking learners. In Pittsburgh, Spanish-speaking learners are rather scarce in the IEP, and there are not enough speakers of other languages to even attempt to look at the first language influence among those students.

The work in this volume attempts to address two audiences at the same time. This goal is a risky undertaking, as it could ‘fall between two stools’, satisfying neither constituency. On the one hand, the goal is to describe language development in enough detail so that students and researchers in second language acquisition might find it of some value in generating future research questions and topics of inquiry. On the other hand, the style and level of detail should be such that teachers in IEPs will find most sections in each chapter accessible and thought provoking enough to stimulate action research projects. Although most teachers in IEPs have at least a master’s degree, many Master’s degrees in the Teaching of Speakers to Other Languages (MA TESOL) programs do not focus a great deal on quantitative research and experimental design (Gass, Juffs, Starfield, & Hyland, 2018), and so very sophisticated quantitative analysis will not always be immediately accessible. Where the chapter gets too detailed in terms of statistics and analysis, the reader is invited to skip to the main points that the chapter is trying to make.

The data and analysis that are presented may be unique in several respects. One advantage of the data is that it was collected ‘in the wild’. This means that much of the data are not the result of an experimental intervention (although some are) but rather an account of what the students were doing in the IEP as part of their routine studies; data have been collected over many years (2003–2016), in part as a component of a project funded by the United States National Science Foundation. The second advantage is that the data are in many cases longitudinal. Such documentation of longitudinal language development is rare (Ortega, 2011) and constitutes a major gap in the literature both from a second language acquisition and a pedagogical perspective.

Of course, the background scholarship on L2 development is of high quality and very extensive. What is different in this book is the focus on the setting of an IEP (rather than students matriculated in an academic degree program) and the concentration on data from the students who are tracked over multiple semesters. Thus, the volume does not include a review of the work that the English Language Institute does for students who are already in degree programs at the University of Pittsburgh.

Most analysis is based on production data collected from students’ assignments in the day-to-day course of their studies and are therefore less controlled than rigorous quasi-experimental interventions. However, some chapters do draw on published experimental data (e.g., de Jong & Perfetti, 2011), corpus data (Vercellotti, 2017), and unpublished thesis

data (e.g., Schepps, 2014), but all of these data were collected from students in the Pitt IEP.

Therefore, the focus is on a group of learners who are perhaps less well studied than non-native English-speaking students enrolled in degree programs. (Although see the work of Bardovi-Harlig (2000) and many of her other articles for examples of data from learners in an IEP.) However, in my literature searches, I have found very few studies – even in journals – that *explicitly* address longitudinal development by adult students in *intensive English programs*. For very good reasons of experimental design, second language acquisition studies tend to focus intensely on one or two structures and are less able to cover larger numbers of the same students' production data from a variety of sources over time (written exam data being an exception, e.g., Murakami & Alexopoulou, 2016). In these data, we are able to cover a wide variety of structures and discourse abilities in speaking and writing over periods of 8–12 months.

It is hoped that second language acquisition researchers might be interested in the more detailed analyses of the data, but they are not the principal target audience. Instead, members of organizations such as International TESOL and its local affiliates, UCIEP (www.uciep.org), and EnglishUSA (www.EnglishUSA.org) might find the reports of learner development to be of some value. In addition, the book could be relevant to teachers and administrators in intensive English programs across the world, for example, in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia.

The detailed overview of an IEP would be relevant to a variety of graduate and undergraduate TESOL programs, including teacher preparation courses in higher education such as M.Ed. TESOL, and program administration, as well as teaching and learning courses.

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1 Intensive English Programs and Second Language Teaching Research

1.1 Intensive English Language Programs: Early Beginnings and Professionalization

Intensive English programs have officially existed for over 70 years in the United States to serve the needs of learners who wish to study various subjects through the medium of English at universities and colleges. It is generally accepted that the first program was established in 1941 at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (<https://lsa.umich.edu/eli/about-us.html>).¹ Its founder, the linguist Charles Carpenter Fries (1887–1967) (Anthony, 1968), sought to combine teaching English as a second language (ESL), materials writing, and research on ESL learning as part of his broader work as a linguist (Anthony, 1968). According to some accounts, Fries can also be considered one of the originators of modern construction grammar, but his ideas were eclipsed by the paradigm shift in linguistics triggered by Chomsky's generative approach to grammar (Zwicky, 2006, languagelog/archives/003743.html). This background history is important because it underpins one of the goals of this book, which is to show that knowledge of theories of language and descriptive linguistics is a vital component of understanding instructed language development. Such understanding is the basis for creating materials to make development more efficient in instructed contexts (Juffs, 2017).

After the founding of the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Michigan, other institutes quickly followed in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1964, one of Fries' students, Edward Mason Anthony, Jr., was recruited from Michigan to the University of Pittsburgh. He founded the ELI as part of a program of internationalization at the university (www.utimes.pitt.edu/?p=36498). The Department of Linguistics was founded concurrently, in part as a way to train teachers for the institute. Hence, Fries' influence extended from English language teaching to teacher training and linguistics itself.

From these early beginnings, IEPs have increased in importance and in their professional standing as the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) has evolved into a mature profession. In

2 *IEPs and Second Language Teaching Research*

1967, at a conference for international student advisors, administrators and teachers (NAFSA), a group of individuals from 13 intensive English programs, including the one at the University of Pittsburgh, realized that they had many issues in common, and so the association College Intensive English Program (CIEP) was founded, later to become University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP) (www.uciep.org/). Subsequently, other organizations were created that included private language schools. The most well known of these organizations is now called EnglishUSA (www.englishusa.org) but was founded as the American Association of Intensive English Programs. Many IEPs belong to both organizations. In 2019, there are well over 400 intensive English programs in the United States.

The field of English as a second language is now an established profession, with international professional organizations for teaching practice and research (www.tesol.org; www.aaal.org). One of the most recent developments in the professionalization of the field was the establishment of program standards for accreditation and an organization to monitor the adherence to these standards. The Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) (www.cea-accredit.org) is one organization that is recognized by the US Department of Education as an approved accrediting body for US IEPs, as well as IEPs overseas, including in Greece, Peru, Qatar, Turkey, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. As immigration policy and border control in the United States have increased in importance, accreditation has become required for all intensive programs in the United States (www.ice.gov/sevis/accreditation-act). The enactment of this legislation was in part the result of advocacy by UCIEP, EnglishUSA, and TESOL.

1.2 **The Spread of English as a World Lingua Franca and Economic Impact**

As the second half of the twentieth century unfolded, and as the United States succeeded the United Kingdom as the English-speaking military and economic global power, the teaching and learning of English as a second language developed into a true industry itself. One key reason for this development is that technological and economic success continued to be linked to knowledge of English. Proficiency in English remained the gateway to acquiring expertise in science and technology in higher education and consequently to both personal and national economic advancement.

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States was the leader in science, technology, and industrial capacity. As other countries rebuilt from the devastation of the war, globalization began with the economic dominance of the United States and its leading research universities and industries, in addition to higher education in English-speaking

democracies that include the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Access to education and professional training provides economic benefits to students, but these benefits could only be accessed through English-medium education. Thus, the range and influence of English as a lingua franca has continued to expand (Graddol, 1997; Melitz, 2016). For example, it was estimated in 1997 that over 750 million people world-wide are learning English as a foreign language, which was nearly twice the number of 'native' speakers of English (Graddol, 1997, p. 10).² For this reason, as a gateway to the benefits of higher education, learning English is a core component to the programs of many universities that seek to recruit students.

However, it is not only international students who benefit from university education overseas; the institutions where they study also benefit. For institutions in English-speaking countries, the motivation to recruit international students is both economic and cultural. One primary reason is that universities around the world increasingly need the funds that international students bring in the form of tuition dollars and services paid for; in addition, international students provide cultural diversity on campus that enriches the educational experience of the locally resident students. Because of these long-term benefits, universities provide English language training both before and during degree programs to help students succeed as well as to attract highly qualified students whose English might otherwise not be quite proficient enough for university coursework.

An added benefit is that the economic life of the towns and cities around campus benefit greatly from this educational activity. For example, the money spent on housing, food, and services had a total impact on the US economy estimated to be worth over \$42 billion in 2017 (www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/Economic-Impact-of-International-Students). After graduation, international students add to the talent pool in the workforce. These factors make local and national governments view international students favorably.

This context, then, is the one in which the research in this book is situated: economic goals of international students lead them to learn English to access higher education; higher education institutions need their dollars to support their academic and cultural diversity goals in an increasingly globalized economy. All of this activity is occurring in a wider context of globalization – a trend that brings both benefits and challenges.

The role of an intensive English program is to provide a bridge for students to cross from their educational system into the world of English-medium education. Acting as a bridge – a *means* rather than an *end goal* – can be a challenge for teachers and administrators in IEPs (dePetro Orlando, 2016; Hoekje & Stevens, 2017). For some students, the IEP and standardized tests, such as the Internet-Based Test of English as a Foreign

4 *IEPs and Second Language Teaching Research*

Language (TOEFL) (iBT) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), constitute barriers instead of a pathway to success in coursework. The IEP can be perceived as a block to students' access to their ultimate goals of enrollment in a degree program and successful completion of that program. From the point of view of the university, the IEP can be seen as a unit that is not part of their central mission of delivering degree programs and research output funded by government and industry (Algren, 2016). Often, English language learning and teaching are seen as simply a 'support' enterprise, such as a computer support or some other 'ancillary' unit. As a result, the domain expertise that applied linguists bring to the IEP can sometimes be ignored or discounted by academic units that are ignorant about the knowledge base ESL professionals have of linguistics, language development patterns, and instructional methodology.

The hope is that this book can serve as a source of reference and documentation of how learners can improve their English in IEPs. Examples of student output are intended to allow administrators and teachers to compare what is happening in their programs with the data in this book and online at <https://github.com/ELI-Data-Mining-Group/Pitt-ELI-Corpus>. The more data administrators of programs can present to sponsors and learners regarding the effectiveness of their programs, the better equipped they will be to convince students and higher administrators of the importance of the education that IEPs provide and of the scientific basis of our discipline.

1.3 The Economic and Political Context of the Intensive English Program

Pennington and Hoekje (2010)'s Chapter 1 provides an excellent overview of the economic and political landscape in which IEPs operate. Although their book was written nine years ago, most of their observations remain relevant today. The international political economy of the world changes constantly, and these changes have direct impacts on IEPs. The election of Donald Trump as US president in 2016 and the tide against globalization as represented by the UK voting to leave the European Union (BREXIT) makes predicting future developments even more challenging than during usual economic cycles around the world. Because their overview of the context of intensive English programs is an important background, it is worth summarizing their main points here.

First, international students make up a significant proportion of all students in higher education in the US and other English-speaking countries. Thus, an important fact is that many English-speaking universities depend on international students for a substantial part of their tuition revenue. Some numbers that were relevant in 2010 have not changed a great deal. In Australia, from 20% in 2006, now 23% of students in

higher education are international students (<https://docs.education.gov.au/node/39321>). The United Kingdom reported 436,585 international students in 2014–2015 (<http://institutions.ukcisa.org.uk/>). In the United States, data from Open Doors (www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Enrollment) in late 2017 showed that the number of international students increased by 1.5% to 1,094,793 students, making up 5.5% of all students in the United States. This is an increase of 2% of total students since 2008, the top five countries being China (33.2%), India (17.9%), Saudi Arabia (4.1%), South Korea (5.0%), and Canada (2.4%). While most countries have increased the numbers that they send to the United States, economic and political turmoil in countries sending students abroad can create large fluctuations. For example, the number of students from Brazil decreased 18.2% from 23,675 in 2015 to 19,370 in 2016, and students from Saudi Arabia decreased by 15.5% from 52,611 in 2016/2017 to 44,432 in 2017/2018. Changes in Saudi scholarship policy have had a particularly severe effect on US IEP enrollments.

As Pennington and Hoekje (2010) pointed out, the web of international exchanges is increasingly complex and connected. It is no longer a one-way street to English-speaking countries. Students learning Chinese as a second language, for example, are increasing as China promotes its language and culture through the Confucius Institutes (<http://english.hanban.org/>). In addition, of the almost half-million students in the United Kingdom, over 16,000 were from the United States and presumably speakers of some variety of English. Moreover, a recent development is that many UK and US universities now have established ‘international’ campuses, especially in China, because of population and demand. For example, Duke University (<https://dukekunshan.edu.cn>), New York University (<https://shanghai.nyu.edu>), and the University of Pittsburgh (<http://scupi.scu.edu.cn/en/>) all have campuses and/or programs in China with different levels of collaboration. The United Kingdom has also established international presence in China; for example, the University of Nottingham (www.nottingham.edu.cn/en/index.aspx) is in Ningbo and the University of Liverpool in Xi’An in cooperation with Xi’An Jiaotong University (www.liverpool.ac.uk/xjtl/).

This growth in English-medium education in countries where English is a *foreign* language is not limited to degree courses. Although the British Council has long been involved in English language teaching around the world, IEPs are increasingly being set up by institutions to support English-medium education in their own countries. An early example in Japan in the 1980s was at the International University of Japan (www.iuj.ac.jp/), where students from many countries continue to study international relations and business through the medium of English. The increase in CEA-accredited IEPs outside the United States indicates that countries in the Middle East are now trying to raise the level of ESL

6 IEPs and Second Language Teaching Research

in their students before they depart overseas for specialized degree programs. It is also noteworthy that Malaysia, a former British colony that reduced the importance of English, has now reemphasized the importance of English (e.g., Gill, 2006), demonstrating the *economic* power of knowing English. These developments mean that English as a medium of instruction is important not only in the English-speaking countries but also internationally.

In addition to the global historical background and economic developments noted by Graddol (1997) and others, Pennington and Hoekje (2010) draw attention to increased *electronic* connectivity that has arisen: the world wide web and the advent of smartphones enable students to connect with each other and with institutions very rapidly and from almost any location in the world. Technology developers have used these developments to create language learning programs (Duolingo.com) that are available wherever the learners may be on their smartphones. Some of these online, web-based companies are trying to break into the ESL market for testing (<https://englishtest.duolingo.com/>) and online education through partnerships with media companies (e.g., <https://onlineenglish.pearson.com>).

As we have seen, the teaching and learning of English as a second and foreign language is a multi-billion-dollar industry in the United States alone. The Open Doors website's figure of \$39.4 billion applies only to the United States, so of course globally, the impact must be even higher. While the sale of textbooks by major publishers and private language schools has always been part of international language teaching commerce, learners are increasingly seen as 'customers' to be vied for as education moves to more and more of a business footing. The internet-based companies just mentioned are one aspect of this trend.

Another recent development is the outsourcing of English as a second language instruction by US and British universities to companies whose core business may not be education. Such decisions by higher level university administrators reflect their lack of understanding of the academic basis of language instruction; that is, they wrongly treat language teaching as a *service* rather than an academic endeavor with a scientific basis that belongs under the umbrella of the university rather than a private company. One example is a provider called INTO (www.intostudy.com/en-gb/) that bundles the search for degree programs via agents and their own website with immigration, accommodation, and 'pathway' programs in the United States, the United Kingdom, and China. Such outsourcing proved very attractive to some institutions in the United States after the crash of 2008, when funding for public universities from US state governments collapsed due to declines in tax revenue. This opportunity for outside vendors arose in part because state governments, required to cut budgets, viewed a large influx of international students as a solution to funding shortfalls. International students pay higher tuition

than domestic students and come from wealthy families who neither need nor qualify for financial aid. In some cases, these students prefer studying overseas to attending institutions in their home countries. While such 'for-profit' outsourcing is of concern to some educators (www.tesol.org/docs/pdf/13029.pdf?sfvrsn=2), they seem to have established a firm foothold in the United States, as INTO now has eight US universities in its system.

This context of the monetary value of students means that IEP educators need to be even more aware of the quality of education that we provide and be able to demonstrate to students the benefit that they receive for the investment that they and their families make to their education. Second language teaching is often called a caring profession because teachers are mediators of language and culture (Watson-Gegeo, 1988), and part of that caring is that we know how best to provide instruction that will help students meet their life goals and not put the bottom line of a for-profit company as a priority. To achieve this goal of helping our students, we need to have an increasingly clear idea of exactly what and how our students learn during their time in the intensive English program.

1.4 Wider Context in Research and Second Language Teaching

Human beings, and with them their languages and cultures, have been coming into contact with each other for as long as recorded history, and so, presumably, have issues of language learning. Languages of wider communication – lingua francas – have been documented at least since the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BCE), where Imperial Aramaic (a Semitic language) was used in an empire dominated by the Persian-speaking ruling class (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire#Languages). English is thus merely the most recent in the history of changing languages of wider communication. The difference is that how to teach modern languages to speakers of other languages is now the focus of significant academic study in its own right.

The modern discipline of second language studies itself now consists of many subfields. Some of these subfields are more theoretically related to representation and cognitive science; some are more applied in terms of how instruction can be delivered in real time either in classrooms or increasingly via computer-assisted instruction. Other research looks into the social underpinnings of language teaching in a wider social context. The body of research of relevance to second language acquisition (SLA) spans time and space from uninstructed language learning via language contact (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988) to attrition in heritage speakers (e.g., Montrul, 2008; Nagy, 2018) to the cultural, political, and economic forces that drive language maintenance and shift and language policy

8 IEPs and Second Language Teaching Research

(Paulston, 1994, 1997; Paulston et al., 2007). Instruction and learning in IEPs fits into this wider context of research on second language acquisition and teaching that is by now well documented but can be considered divided into two main areas, which are theory and application.

1.4.1 Second Language Acquisition as Theoretical Research

Instruction in IEPs relies on a solid foundation of research in second language learning and teaching, which is itself founded on linguistic theory. Indeed, the relationship between language learning and linguistic theory has a long history (Lightbown & White, 1987). At times, this relationship has been very close, as during the early period of audiolingualism (Bloomfield, 1942; Castagnaro, 2006). At other times, the study of second language acquisition and classroom instruction have drifted apart because abstract theoretical concerns were seen as less relevant to classroom practice and the development of knowledge of academic literacy that students need to succeed in their programs.

Thus, some researchers hold the view that SLA can be *purely theoretical*, without any classroom applications as a goal of the research in mind (Juffs, 2017; White, 1990). Indeed, it is important to understand what the cognitive (mental) state of knowing another language is and how that state comes into being like any other natural phenomenon. It is clear that theoretical second language acquisition has now emerged as an independent discipline outside the practical concerns of foreign and second language classroom teaching. In fact, since the late 1960s (Corder, 1967), the study of second language development has become an important part of linguistics and psychology and not necessarily *directly* related to classroom language instruction at all. The precise extent to which SLA can be considered an independent discipline remains a complex issue in the field (Long, 2007), but many researchers would argue that second language acquisition must in fact be studied as discipline that is independent of education, albeit part of the wider field of cognitive science. This position does not mean that the results of pure SLA research are not useful or in fact vital in improving educational practice. Indeed, this book will consider the implications of SLA research in classroom contexts, but a direct application of research findings is not always obvious or desirable even if the research is classroom based. This caution is especially needed if results are based only on a single study (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). In this book, the focus will be on the specific context of language development in intensive English programs as evidenced by corpus data and experimental data in one specific IEP and how observed developmental patterns *could be* informed by a wide range of theoretical approaches, which I discuss briefly in the following paragraph. The point is that research in applied linguistics

can and should be relevant to language centers and IEPs (Gass, Juffs, Starfield & Hyland, 2018).

It is important to emphasize that this book concerns *aspects* of language development, and in no sense is it intended to be comprehensive. The focus will be mainly on lexical development, the development of morpho-syntactic accuracy, writing for academic purposes, and to some extent fluency. We will not address in detail reading comprehension of extended texts, even though this is a very important skill for students to master.

The current approaches to second language acquisition that this book will draw on reflect the developments in the fields of linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and education. These perspectives vary quite widely, as the summary articles in different handbooks of SLA demonstrate (e.g., Hinkel, 2005; Doughty & Long, 2003; Ritchie & Bhatia, 2009). The first approach to research is that carried out in the tradition of formal linguistics. This approach seeks to understand how abstract knowledge constrains the hypothesis space in acquisition and processing (White, 2003), but it also provides a detailed theory to describe learner development. In contrast, approaches that are grounded in connectionist psychology put much more emphasis on input and frequency than abstract structures (e.g., Robinson & Ellis, 2008). Sociocultural theory focuses on understanding how learners interact and co-construct knowledge and may be more directly relevant to how learners actually behave in classrooms and with technology that we introduce (e.g., Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Juffs & Friedline, 2014).

The IEP that is the subject of this volume provides focused instruction, not only on linguistic forms but also literacy in the broadest sense in terms of reading skills (bottom-up and top-down) and written output that would be appropriate in an academic context in US higher education. SLA research has not always considered ‘literacy’ part of its core focus because the subfield of English for academic purposes (EAP) has occupied that niche to some extent. It is worth re-emphasizing Larsen-Freeman & Long’s (1991, pp. 169–170) call for more nuanced approaches to SLA. Researchers and teachers need to bear in mind the concerns of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive and academic language skills (CALP) proposed by Cummins (1979, 2003). Such differences must be taken seriously when preparing students for academic work and following their progress toward those goals. In other words, some (but certainly not all) differences of opinion in SLA stem from researchers trying to account for language acquisition at the level of basic sentence structure and pronunciation versus high-level skills in academic settings. However, as recent discussion in the literature has shown (c.f., De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2007; Ionin, 2007), scholars are engaging more with each other and clearly delineating areas where each can excel (see also Shirai & Juffs, 2017).

1.4.2 *Second Language Acquisition and Language Teaching Research*

Naturally, the divisions of labor that have been created between ‘theoretical’ SLA, with its different theoretical paradigms, and classroom-based research sometimes result in a view of language, proficiency, and identity that is ‘reified’ (e.g., Brumfit, 1997). ‘Reification’ means that definitions are created and *artificial boundaries* set up between users of language, formal descriptions of language systems, language researchers, and educators. Consequently, competition among approaches is promoted that is not helpful in establishing evidence for learning that directly assists teachers as they help learners to achieve their goals. Thus, in this book, I draw on multiple perspectives, reflecting what has become one guiding principle in the University of Pittsburgh’s ELI, which is ‘principled eclecticism’ (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). This means that we take the best insights from theories of grammar, pedagogical grammar, corpus research, classroom-based research, sociocultural theory, curriculum design, and methodology and apply them to what we perceive our learners’ needs to be in the best way we are able.

1.4.3 *The Role of Instruction in Language Development*

It seems odd to address this issue in a volume that is about IEPs, where teaching is paramount, but the influence of some researchers who claim that explicit instruction is of reduced value persists. In brief, some confusion remains regarding such topics as the ‘natural approach’ propounded by Krashen (1987), who has denied a direct link between instruction and what he called ‘acquisition’ in contrast to ‘learning’. I assume here that by ‘acquisition’ Krashen meant the acquisition of the abstract structures of language that formal linguists assume is the basis of knowledge of language and vocabulary learning. This issue remains one of debate among applied linguists. However, the approach taken in the Pitt IEP is that instruction is vital in speeding learners through developmental stages and avoiding ‘fossilization’ or reaching a plateau in learning (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, pp. 321–322). However, aspects of language use other than abstract knowledge, such as the appropriate way to construct an academic research paper, must be taught through explicit example and instruction. Thus, this knowledge is clearly amenable to manipulation through instruction, as indicated in the following paragraphs.

The logical next question is what kind of instruction is most appropriate. As communicative language teaching evolved and was added to the drills of audiolingualism (Paulston, 1974, pp. 352–353), the influence of Krashen’s monitor model (Krashen, 1987), and subsequent research on interaction (e.g., Mackey [2008]), it is clear that syllabi devoted to instruction on a progression through a list of forms alone is untenable in *basic*

language instruction (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 322). We will address communicative language teaching and its relation to form-based instruction in more detail in Chapter 2. However, recent meta-analyses seem to suggest that no matter the form and regardless of the difficulty level of the structure, explicit instruction that is form-focused in communicative settings is superior to implicit instruction (Spada & Tomita, 2010). This finding relates pronunciation, morphology, and syntax.

In contrast to debates regarding grammar instruction, especially for beginning to intermediate language learners, instruction regarding cultural norms and conventions in academic writing has never been questioned (to my knowledge). Such skills will of necessity be explicitly instructed and practiced in classrooms. There is no reason to assume that structured progression of this type of content should not be organized and formal, building on skills one at a time. Thus, an approach to second language instruction and learning must be nuanced as regards language and content in ways that ‘basic language’ instruction might not be. This feature of the Pitt IEP program and how learners make progress will be taken up specifically in the chapter on writing, and we will consider how instruction affects the development of these skills.

1.5 Goals and Role of Intensive English Programs in the Wider Context of English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes

One important practical contribution of applied linguists over the past 50 years has been the establishment of the subdisciplines of English for academic purposes and English for specific purposes (ESP). EAP refers to the general preparation of students for participation in university or advanced programs of study. It would be impossible to discuss all of these authors’ contributions here, but linguists such as Widdowson have for a long time written both scholarly articles on academic English and edited EAP textbook series (e.g., Widdowson’s [1979] series *Reading and Thinking in English*, published by OUP). These textbooks applied research in written academic discourse to ESL textbooks in order to help learners participate in the academic culture(s) that they aspired to join. More recently, several researchers have contributed to the specific lexical items required in EAP (e.g., Coxhead, 2000; Gardner & Davies, 2014) and other academic and vocational contexts; handbooks of research in the area have also appeared (Stoller, 2016).

For more specific contexts, Swales (e.g., Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 1994) has been a major contributor in the area of ESP, which focuses on language required in special fields such as engineering, science, and technology – the so-called ‘STEM’ fields. Corpus linguists such as Biber (Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004; Pan, Reppen, & Biber, 2016) and Hyland (e.g., Hyland, 2008, 2012) have concentrated on the language used in

specific scientific contexts, developing not only lists of lexical items but also set phrases that are useful for learners entering different fields of study.

Both of these fields now have academic journals devoted to improving our understanding of the needs and development trajectories of learners in these domains: in EAP (www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-english-for-academic-purposes) and in ESP (www.journals.elsevier.com/english-for-specific-purposes/). These professional resources form the basis for the goals of IEPs in addition to those provided by more general professional associations such as Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (www.tesol.org/).

All of this very important research forms the background to the kinds of English genres that students in an IEP need to be made familiar with. Thus, the task of many IEPs is to bring students from a low intermediate level of English to a very high level of literacy in a relatively short time. Some students are constrained by their own finances or restricted by their government's support of their language learning prior to beginning degree courses.

However, not all students desire to study in an English-medium degree course. Many students want to spend time in an English-speaking environment, study some English for personal or professional purposes, and then return to their home countries, enriched by their study abroad, in order to continue their lives. These students are often in the same classes as students who desire to enroll in degree programs, and IEPs also have to be sensitive to their needs.

1.6 The Research in This Book: Mixed Methods and in the Spirit of 'Design-Based' Research

As Gass et al. (2018) point out, research related to language development can take many forms: psycholinguistic experiments in the laboratory, corpus analysis, teacher-initiated action. The studies in this book includes all three of these approaches. In addition, it is in the spirit of 'design-based' research, which is discussed by Cumming (2015). Citing Anderson and Shattuck (2012), Cumming notes the following six characteristics of design-based research, which are worth listing in full:

1. Real educational contexts
2. Design and testing of significant intervention
3. Mixed research methods (quantitative and qualitative)
4. Multiple iterations
5. Collaborative partnerships
6. Practical impact on practice

The IEP is a real educational context in which design and intervention take place. In some cases, as with the fluency training discussed in