

The Interplay of Linguistic Background, Linguistic Environment and Language Distance in Second Language Learning

(Andrea Pérez, UPV/EHU)

The number of languages an individual speaks (i.e. linguistic background) influences their ability to learn a new language. While a number of studies indicate that being proficient in more than one language facilitates learning a new language, other studies find conflicting results. Recent research argues that the linguistic environment, that is, the number of languages to which an individual is exposed in their surroundings, also impacts language learning, as being immersed in a linguistically rich environment appears to enhance foreign language learning in monolinguals. In her Ph.D. thesis, Andrea will systematically and comprehensively examine the impact and interplay of linguistic background and linguistic environment on language learning, and explore how these factors interact with language distance—that is, the typological similarity or difference between the learner's known languages and the target language.