

Special Issue on:
The acquisition of French as a second language

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first Special Issue of the *Journal of French Language Studies*, which will from now on have one thematic number per year. This issue is devoted to the acquisition of French as a second language.

Our aim is to offer a broad introduction to the field of French Second Language Acquisition (SLA), by providing both overview articles introducing the field (Myles) and assessing its achievements (Towell), and by providing in depth articles adopting specific theoretical approaches in order to study French SLA. We are not aiming to be comprehensive in our choice of theoretical approaches. Rather, we have chosen to include those which have been most significant in furthering our understanding of **French** SLA. Some influential approaches, such as e.g. Connectionism, Processability Theory, or Input Processing, have not been applied to the study of French to any great extent and are therefore not represented in this volume. Similarly, the field has tended to concentrate primarily on the acquisition of syntax and morphology, and this imbalance is reflected here too.

The approaches we have decided to include are Universal Grammar (Hawkins), sociolinguistics (Dewaele), functionalism (Véronique), developmental sequences (Bartning and Schlyter), and pedagogical (Lyster). We have also included a short review of technological advances facilitating the analysis of electronic French L2 corpora (Rule).

We believe that, although far from exhaustive, this selection provides a representative overview of the field of French SLA. It will become obvious to the reader how far this field has progressed since *JFLS* published a review article on this topic back in 1992 (Hawkins and Towell, 1992). Many challenges still remain, however, which are analysed in the concluding article (Towell).

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REFERENCE

Hawkins, R., and Towell, R. (1992). Second language acquisition research and the second language acquisition of French. *Journal of French Language Studies*, 2.1: 97–123.