

Cognitive accounts of second language acquisition We have just noted that learners may use their L1 as both a means of learning an L2 (when we speak of transfer) and as a means of communicating. The latter consist of conscious or potentially conscious attempts on the part of the learner to employ their available linguistic resources, for example by developing their ability to use the L2 fluently or by compensating for inadequate knowledge when communicating a particular message. (1987) observes, interlanguage theory has undergone almost constant development, but one common theme is the notion of hypothesis testing, i.e. the idea that learners form hypotheses about what the rules of the target language are and then set about testing them, confirming them if they find supportive evidence in the input and rejecting them if they receive negative evidence. The former consist of the mechanisms that learners use to (1) notice features in the input, (2) compare these features with those that are currently part of their mental grammars or interlanguages, and (3) integrate the new features into their interlanguages. As McLaughlin