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JCLL's mission, similar to that of the NAACLT, is to provide another forum in which teachers and applied linguists can contribute to the literature presently available on bilingual and second language acquisition, as well as increase communication among modern Celtic language teachers and researchers.

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All submissions should be double spaced. Articles should be 2500 to 3000 words long (with a 50 to 60 word abstract at the beginning), and short descriptions of a program or technique should be 200 to 500 words.

All research papers will be refereed blindly by two anonymous readers.

Comments from the referees will be forwarded to the authors together with the editors' decision regarding publishing by September 15 of the same year.

INDEXES

Some of the articles published in the Journal of Celtic Language Learning are abstracted or indexed in Language Teaching, LLBA (Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts), RIE (Resources in Education), the Modern Language Association International Bibliography, and Selected Articles from Language Journals from the Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann.

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Preface: The Acquisition of Celtic Languages

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Some problems of Celtic language acquisition

It has long been recognised in the field of second language teaching and learning that there is some kind of relationship between the process of first language acquisition and that of learning language as an older child or adult in a classroom or other structured environment. The precise nature of this relationship, however, is by no means clear. Differences between first and second language learning may be internal to the mind and brain, external in so far as the linguistic environments are usually different for each type of learning, or interactive to the degree that the individual brings different attitudes and motivations to the language learning process in different social settings. Then again, apparent differences between first and second (or plural) language learning may not really be that great: conventional wisdom and particular research traditions hold that children have a natural superiority in language learning, sometimes attributed to the biology of brain maturation, yet more recent work and counter-evidence urges us to be cautious and qualified in accepting such a view (see, for example, Scovel 1988, Singleton 1989, and Bialystok and Hakuta 1994). Either way, or perhaps just because the field is still full of unanswered questions, the relationship between first and second language acquisition poses a central problem for anyone who works with language learning.

The problem of language acquisition is particularly acute for the Celtic languages, since most children acquiring a Celtic language as a first language do so in a minority language environment in which bilingualism with the socially dominant language is an inevitability. The effect of this large-scale bilingualism is twofold. Obviously, it becomes difficult to find children whose linguistic environments are so monolingually Celtic that they represent the 'pure' unfolding of a Celtic language in the mind. It thus becomes difficult to know if a child's deviation from the adult language norm is attributable to developmental errors of the kind typical of children everywhere, or if cross-linguistic interference from another language is involved. Due to the diversity of language inputs and environments for children learning Celtic languages from birth, it also becomes difficult for applied specialists such as classroom teachers or speech and language therapists to establish linguistic norms in the acquisition process: 100 learners of a minority language in a bilingual context may well show more...