

BIG IDEAS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING PSYCHOLOGY

ABSTRACT

In complex fields such as the psychology of language learning (PLL), the people who stand to gain most from findings are those for whom the field can be least accessible. Users of PLL research can be faced with a fragmented and often confusing picture of the field. Dense terminology and the fine-grained distinctions that tend to preoccupy researchers can make the field difficult to navigate and can prevent teachers, early career researchers, and other stakeholders from seeing the bigger picture. One way of improving accessibility is through the use of big ideas. A big idea is a core idea that connects subfields and that links disciplinary understandings into coherent wholes. Parsimoniously formulated and intuitively understandable, a big idea can provide newcomers and non-specialists with a heuristic framework within which particular theories can be located. Focusing on comparison processes and the central role that self-appraisal plays in many of the constructs investigated in PLL, in this talk I will show how a big idea can support accessibility.



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BIO

Alastair Henry is Professor of Language Education at Lund University and University West, Sweden. His research has involved the psychology of language learning and teaching, with L2 motivation and willingness to communicate being of particular interest. He has published widely on these topics with articles appearing in journals such as *The Modern Language Journal*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Language Teaching*, *Language Learning*, *TESOL Quarterly* and *System*. He is a past editor of *The Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning* (with Kata Csizér and Wen Zhisheng) and the co-editor of *The Palgrave Handbook of Motivation for Language Learning* (with Kata Csizér, Martin Lamb and Stephen Ryan).

Thursday, December 10, 2026
18:00-19:30 (JST) via Zoom

○ Free of charge ○ Advance registration required

Sign up by Thursday, December 3

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