Instructional Media

for

203 511
Second Language Acquisition
M.A. (English Language Studies)

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Week 1
Key issues in second language acquisition (SLA)

- What is SLA?
- Competence & Performance (Chomsky, 1965)
- Acquisition & Learning
- The role of L1
- The natural route of development
- Variability in language-learner language
- Individual learner differences
- The role of the input

What is SLA?

- SLA & F(First)LA & F(Foreign)LA
- studies how learners learn an additional language after they have acquired their L1
- includes both naturalistic and tutored acquisition
- refers to all aspects of language that L2 learners acquire (syntax, morphology, phonology, pragmatic knowledge)

Competence & Performance (Chomsky, 1965)

- Competence = a language learner's underlying knowledge of language
- Performance = the actual use of language in either comprehension or production
- SLA research is about performance. (To what extent competence can be inferred from performance?)

Acquisition & Learning

- Acquisition = picking up a second language through exposure, natural language use, learners focus on meaning rather than form, subconscious
- Learning = the conscious study of a second language

Second language acquisition = the subconscious and conscious processes by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or a tutored setting. It covers the development of phonology, lexis, grammar, and pragmatic knowledge.
The role of the first language

- L1 similar to L2 aid L2 learning?
- L1 different from L2 interfere with L2 learning?
- Language transfer (negative, positive)
- Contrastive analysis hypothesis

The 'natural' route of development

- Do L2 learners follow a universal route in acquiring a L2?
- Learners with different L1s would learn a L2 in different ways?
- L1 acquisition follows a highly predictable route
- L2 = L1 hypothesis → Error analysis → Longitudinal studies

Contextual variation in language-learner language

- Learner errors are not systematic.
- 2 types of contextual variation
  - Situational context
  - Linguistic context

Individual learner differences

- Do 2 learners learn a L2 in exactly the same way?
- Factors that can influence the course of development are infinite. (age, aptitude, cognitive style, motivation, personality)

Age

- Do adults learn L2 in the same way as children?
- Is there a 'natural' route for adults and a different one for children?
- The rate at which adults and children learn?

Aptitude & Intelligence

- Aptitude (the special ability involved in language learning)
- Intelligence (the general ability that governs how well we master a whole range of skills, linguistic or non-linguistic)
Motivation
- Instrumental motivation
- Integrative motivation
- Socioaffective filter
- Fossilization

Personality & Cognitive Style
- What kind of personality is most successful in learning a L2?
- Extroverts VS Introverts

The role of the input
- Learner access to L2 Input → SLA take place
- Habit formation through practice and reinforcement → importance of input
- Language acquisition device (Chomsky)
- Comprehensible input (Krashen)

Learner strategies (Tarone, 1980)
- Learning strategies
- Production strategies
- Communication strategies
- Can we observe learner strategies?

The role of formal instruction
- Effects on the route of learning
- Effects on the rate of learning
Week 2
First Language Acquisition

- Analogies between FLA and SLA
- Theories of FLA
- Issues in first language acquisition

Theories of First Language Acquisition

- Behavioristic approaches
  - Theory of verbal behavior
  - Mediation theory
  - Jenkins & Palermo's theory
- The Nativist approach
- Functional approaches

Theory of verbal behavior (B.F. Skinner)

- Effective language behavior = the production of correct responses to stimuli
- Operant conditioning = conditioning in which a human being emits a response
- Operant = a sentence or utterance
- Operant is maintained by reinforcement (a positive verbal or nonverbal from another person).

The Nativist Approach

- Language acquisition is innately determined, that we are born with a genetic capacity that predisposes us to a systematic perception of language around us, resulting in the construction of an internalized system of language.

Language acquisition device (LAD)

- The ability to distinguish speech sounds from other sounds in the environment
- The ability to organize linguistic events into various classes which can later be refined
- The knowledge that only a certain kind of linguistic system is possible and that other kinds are not
- The ability to engage in constant evaluation of the developing linguistic system so as to construct the simplest possible system out of the available linguistic input
Universal grammar
- All human beings are genetically equipped with abilities that enable them to acquire language.
- UG research attempts to discover what it is that all children, regardless of their environmental stimuli bring to the language acquisition process.

Functional Approaches
- The generative rules proposed by the nativists dealt with the forms of language and not with the deeper functional levels of meaning constructed from social interaction.
- "Mommy socks"

Competence & Performance
- Competence = one's underlying knowledge of the system of a language - its rules of grammar, vocabulary, all the pieces of a language and how those pieces fit together.
- Production = actual production (speaking, writing) or the comprehension (listening, reading) of linguistic events.

Competence
- An "idealized" speaker-hearer who does not display such performance variables as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, errors, and hesitation phenomena such as repeats, false starts, pauses, omissions, and additions.

Comprehension & Production
- Comprehension (listening, reading)
- Production (speaking, writing)
- Research shows the superiority of comprehension over production.
- Adults understand more vocabulary than they ever use in speech and also perceive more syntactic variation than they actually produce.

Nature or Nurture?
- What are those behaviors that "nature" provides innately, in some sort of predetermined biological timetable?
- What are those behaviors that are, by environmental exposure -by "nurture," by teaching -learned and internalized?
Universals

- Language is universally acquired in the same manner, and moreover, the deep structure of language at its deepest level may be common to all languages.

Systematicity and Variability

- Systematicity of the process of acquisition
- Variability in the process of learning

Language and Thought

- Language affects thought??
  - Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity (each language imposes on its speaker a particular "world-view."
- Thought affects language??

Imitation

- Surface-structure imitation
- Deep-structure imitation

Practice

- A behavioristic model of FLA: Practice (repetition and association) is the key to the formation of habits by operant conditioning.
- The frequency of occurrence of a linguistic item in the speech of mothers was an overwhelmingly strong predictor of the order of emergence of those items in their children's speech. (meaningful occurrence)
Week 6
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Communicative Competence

Communicative language teaching
- teach second languages for the ultimate goal of communication with other speakers of the second languages
- focus on speaking and listening skills, on writing for specific communicative purposes, and on 'authentic' reading texts.

Communicative competence
- competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts
- knowledge that enables a person to communicate functionally and interactively

Linguistic competence
- knowledge about language forms

Cummins (1979)
- Cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP)
- Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS)
**CALP**
- the dimension of proficiency in which the learner manipulates or reflects upon the surface features of language outside of the immediate interpersonal context → context-reduced communication (classroom, school-oriented language)

**BICS**
- the communicative capacity that all children acquire in order to be able to function in daily interpersonal exchanges → context-embedded communication (face-to-face communication)

**Communicative competence**
- Grammatical competence
- Discourse competence
- Sociolinguistic competence
- Strategic competence

**Grammatical competence**
- knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology

**Discourse competence**
- ability to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful series of utterances

**Sociolinguistic competence**
- the knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and of discourse → the appropriateness of a particular utterance
Strategic competence
- the competence underlying our ability to make repairs, to cope with imperfect knowledge, and to sustain communication through paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, hesitation, avoidance, and guessing, shifts in register and style
- the way we manipulate language to meet communicative goals

Pragmatic competence
- Influences language production and interpretation - makes SLA difficult task because of cross-cultural contrasts
- Samoan: Please take it.
- the way we manipulate language to meet communicative goals

Functions of language (Halliday)
- Instrumental function
- Regulatory function
- Representational function
- Interactional function
- Personal function
- Heuristic function
- Imaginative function

Discourse analysis
- The analysis of the functions of language
- A single sentence can hardly be analyzed without considering its context.
- Without the intersentential relationships of discourse, it would be difficult to communicate unambiguously with one another.

Rules of conversation
- attention getting
- topic nomination

Conversational maxims (Grice) or Rules of communicative competence
- quantity
- quality
- relevance
- manner
Speech styles (Joos)

- Criterion of formality
  - oratorical
  - deliberative or formal
  - consultative
  - casual
  - intimate

Characteristics of Communicative language teaching

- Goals
- Language techniques
- Fluency and accuracy
- Classroom use language productively, receptively in unrehearsed contexts
Week 8
Individual learners differences and SLA

- Personal factors
  - Group dynamics
  - Attitudes to the teacher and course materials
  - Individual learning techniques
- General factors
  - Age
  - Intelligence and aptitude
  - Cognitive style
  - Attitudes and motivation
  - Personality

The influence of individual learner factors on SLA

- Differences in age, learning style, aptitude, motivation, and personality result in differences in the route along which learners pass in SLA.
- Factors influence only the rate and ultimate success of SLA.

Group dynamics

- Anxiety and competitiveness impair or enhance SLA?

Individual learning techniques

- Involved in studying L2
  - Preparing and memorizing vocabulary lists
  - Learning words in context
  - Practicing vocabulary
- Involved in obtaining L2 input
  - concerns the ways in which the learner gets into contact with the L2

Age

- Route of SLA
  - Age does not alter the route of acquisition.
  - Child, adolescents, and adult learners go through the same stages: learners appear to process linguistic data in the same way, irrespective of how old they are.
Rate or success of SLA

- Where rate is concerned, there is evidence to suggest that older learners are better.
- The learners who progress most rapidly may be adolescents (12-15 years).
- Age was a factor only when it came to morphology and syntax.
- The longer the exposure to the L2, the more native-like L2 proficiency becomes.

Rate (continued)

- The influence of the age of the learner seems to outweigh the length of the learning period, at least on listening and reading tests.
- Although number of years of exposure to the L2 leads to greater success, this may be restricted to overall communicative ability, rather than to grammatical or phonological accuracy.
- The age of arrival <-> pronunciation

Explaining the effects of age

- The critical period hypothesis
- Cognitive explanations
- Affective explanations

The critical period hypothesis

- The optimum age for language acquisition falls within the first ten years of life.
- During this period the brain retains plasticity, but with the onset of puberty this plasticity begins to disappear.
- Supported by Lenneberg (1967).

Cognitive explanations

- Adults = learn linguistic rules -> apply these rules when they use the language
- Young child = responds not so much to what language is as to what it does
- Why is there no advantage in pronunciation in adolescent learner?
- Why do adolescents outperform adults?

Affective explanations

- Brown (1980): stages of acculturation
  - Initial excitement, culture shock, culture stress, assimilation or adaptation to the new culture
- Neufeld (1978)
  - Primary = a reasonably large functional vocabulary, basic mastery of pronunciation and grammatical rules
  - Secondary = the ability to handle complex grammatical structures and different language styles
Intelligence
- A hypothesized 'general factor' which underlies our ability to master and use a whole range of academic skills

2 kinds of language ability
- Cognitive/academic language ability (CALP) = dimension of language proficiency which is strongly related to overall cognitive and academic skills = intelligence
- Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) = skills required for oral fluency and also include sociolinguistic aspects of competence = aptitude

Aptitude
- Phonetic coding ability (ability to perceive and memorize new sounds)
- Grammatical sensitivity (the individual's ability to demonstrate awareness of the syntactical patterning of sentences of a language)
- Inductive ability (ability to notice and identify similarities and differences in both grammatical form and meaning)

Cognitive style
- The manner in which people perceive, conceptualize, organize, and recall information
  - Field independence/dependence
  - Analytic/Holistic
  - Data gatherers/rule formers

Attitudes and motivation
- Attitudes
  - Attitudes toward the community and people who speak the L2
  - Attitudes towards learning the language concerned
  - Attitudes towards languages and language learning in general

Motivation
- Motivation (Brown, 1981)
  - Global motivation
  - Situational motivation
  - Task motivation
- Gardner & Lambert
  - Integrative motivation
  - Instrumental motivation
Personality

- extroversion/introversion
- social skills
- inhibition
Week 9
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Styles and strategies
Focus: cognitive variations in learning a second language: variations in learning styles that differ across individuals, and in strategies employed by individuals to attack particular problems in particular contexts

Process
- characteristics of every human being e.g. transfer in the process of learning and retention

Style
- general characteristics that differentiate you from someone else e.g. more visually oriented, more tolerant of ambiguity

Strategy
- methods of approaching a problem or task

Learning styles
- cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment
Field independence
- Your ability to perceive a particular, relevant item or factor in a 'field' of distracting items: democratic, industrialized, competitive, self-confident \(\rightarrow\) independent, competitive, self-confident \(\rightarrow\) in SLL (related to classroom learning, attention to details, mastering of exercises, drills)

Field dependence
- The tendency to be 'dependent' on the total field so that the parts embedded within the field are not easily perceived though that total field is perceived more clearly as a unified whole methods of approaching a problem or task

Left-and Right-brain functioning
- Left hemisphere: logical, analytical thought, with mathematical and linear processing of information
- Right hemisphere: perceives and remembers visual, tactile, and auditory images

Ambiguity tolerance
- The degree you are cognitively willing to tolerate ideas and propositions that run counter to your own belief system or structure of knowledge

Reflectivity and impulsivity
- Reflective children: make fewer errors in reading: slower but more accurate, weak performance on a proofreading task
- Impulsive children: faster readers, benefit more from inductive learning situations

Visual and Auditory styles
- Strategies
- Learning Strategies
Models of learner strategy training

- as part of a standard communicative methodology
- Teachers can embed actual strategy practice into their techniques and materials.
- Certain compensatory techniques are practiced to help students overcome certain weaknesses.
- Textbooks can include strategy training as part of a content-centered approach.