Second Language Acquisition

Session 3: Linguistic Perspectives on SLA

Sommersemester 2021

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Mondays 16.00 – 18.00

Outline of the session

- Contrastive analysis
- Positive & negative transfer
- Morpheme order studies
- Interlanguage
- Monitor model
- UG

Contrastive analysis

- descriptive approach, system-based
- key researcher: Robert Lado – *Linguistics across cultures* (1957)
- comparison of L1 and L2 on all language levels
- comparison to predict errors and learning difficulties
- positive and negative transfer from L1 to L2

Contrastive analysis

In groups discuss one of the following questions (10 minutes)

- Groups 1,2,3,4: Check the phonetic alphabets of German and English. Which consonants exist in only one language? What does that mean according to CA?
- Groups 5,6,7,8: Why could <v> and <w> be especially problematic for German Learners of English?

Positive and negative transfer

- Two types of transfer are often differentiated:
  - Positive transfer: L1 features match L2 features and can therefore be used correctly in L2 (e.g. "Haus" and "house", "Ich kenne sie" and "I know her").
  - Negative transfer: L1 features do not match L2 features and can therefore not be used in the L2 (e.g. "Akademiker" versus "academic", "Kann ich Ihnen helfen?" versus "Can I help you?", Tier (s) and Tiere (p) versus animal (s) and animals (p))
- Other terms:
  - cross-linguistic influence: synonym, still in use
  - interference: older term, no longer in general use, as it has the"unwanted implication that knowledge of the first language hinders L2 development" (Ortega 2009: 31)

Positive and negative transfer

- What other types of positive or negative transfer (for German learners of English/other L1's) can you think of?

Morpheme order studies

Morpheme	Example	English L1	English L2
Progressive - *ing*	He is talk*ing*.	1	3
Plural -*s*	There are two cat*s*.	2	4
Past irregular	We *ate*.	3	7
Possessive -*s*	The child*'s* toy	4	8
Articles *a/the*	*A* sunny day/*The* cat	5	1
Past regular -*ed*	They talk*ed*.	6	6
Third person -*s*	He sing*s*.	7	9
Copula *be*	He*'s* tall.	8	2
Auxillary *be*	She*'s* singing.	9	5

(Brown (1973) in Saville-Troike 2017: 46, emphasis added)

Morpheme order studies

- Using the morpheme chart, make up sentences
  a) Using the first two acquired morphemes in a L2.
  b) Using the first four acquired morphemes in a L2.
  c) Using the first six acquired morphemes in a L2.
  d) Using the first nine acquired morphemes in a L2.
- What can you see if compared to teaching material/memories from school?

Interlanguage

- introduced by Selinker (1972)
- a step between L1 and L2
- start and end point not defined
- systematic, dynamic and variable
- a reduced system
- fossilisation of IL features before reaching L2

Monitor Model

1. Acquisition vs. Learning Hypothesis
Acquisition occurs subconsciously and is superior due to it leading to fluent, natural language use. Learning happens consciously via explicit attention to language.

2. Monitor Hypothesis
The monitor works like an editor, checking what you have said or written. However, only works when there is a lot of time for checking. It can only be used with explicitly learned language.

3. Natural Order Hypothesis:
SLA unfolds in pre-determined, predictable stages.

4. Comprehensible Input Hypothesis
Comprehensible input is vital for SLA (considered a necessary condition for language learning).

Affective Filter Hypothesis
Motivation and emotions of learners can support or hinder language learning.

Universal Grammar

- LA means acquiring linguistic competence
- this cannot be achieved by imitating input (poverty of the stimulus)
- Watch the video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbKO-9n5qmc&ab_channel=KimberlyMurza)

a) Note down arguments Chomsky makes in favour of UG. What arguments speak against it in your opinion?
b) Explain principles and parameters view.

Reading for next week (3rd May)

- Hall & Cook (2012) on moodle

References

Gass, S. M. (2013). *Second Language Acquisition: An introductory course* (4th edition). London
      & New York: Routledge.

Saville-Troike, M., & Barto, K. (2017). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* (3rd
      edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.