



HF HANDONG
UNIT WIN
FELLOWSHIP

Second Language Acquisition

Lecture 2: Second Language Acquisition Theory

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INTRODUCTION

AIM OF THE COURSE

- understand the underlying concepts of SLA
- explain the theory of SLA
- identify the roles of first, second, and third languages to one's language learning and development
- explain the various approaches to language teaching by considering diverse type of students
- analyze the differences method for SLA research
- formulate the roles of input, process, and output related to SLA
- distinguish the different influence of various factors to someone's language acquisition and or learning journey

WEEK 2 – LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Five Hypotheses about SLA
 - a. The Acquisition-Learning Distinction
 - b. The Natural Order Hypothesis
 - c. The Monitor Hypothesis
 - d. The Input Hypothesis
 - e. The Affective Filter Hypothesis
2. The Causative Variable in SLA
 - a. The Causative Variables
 - b. Language Teaching
 - c. Exposure Variables
 - d. Age
 - e. Acculturation



01

Five Hypotheses about SLA

The Acquisition-Learning Distinction; The Natural Order Hypothesis; The Monitor Hypothesis; The Input Hypothesis; The Affective Filter Hypothesis

1a. The Acquisition – Learning Distinction

- The acquisition-learning distinction is the most fundamental of all the hypotheses presented here.
- Adults have 2 distinct and independent ways of developing competence in an L2.
- They are *language acquisition* and *language learning*.

1a. The Acquisition – Learning Distinction



LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- A process similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their L1.
- It is a subconscious process.
- Language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact they are acquiring language.
- They are only aware of the fact they are using the language for communication.

- The result → acquired competence → also subconscious.
- Subconscious means
 - we are not aware of the rules of the languages we have acquired.
 - We have a “feel” for correctness.
 - Grammatical sentences “sound” right, or “feel” right.
 - Errors feel wrong.
 - But we do not consciously know what rule was violated.

1a. The Acquisition – Learning Distinction



LANGUAGE LEARNING

- Term learning → refer to conscious knowledge of a second language.
- Learning → knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them, knowing the “rules” or “grammar”.
- Learning = formal knowledge of a language = explicit learning.

- Some L2 theorists have assumed that children acquire, while adults can only learn.
- The acquisition-learning hypothesis claims → adults also require & learning ability to “pick-up” languages does not disappear at puberty.
- ≠ adults will always achieve native like
- = adults can access the same natural “language acquisition device” that children use.

1a. The Acquisition – Learning Distinction

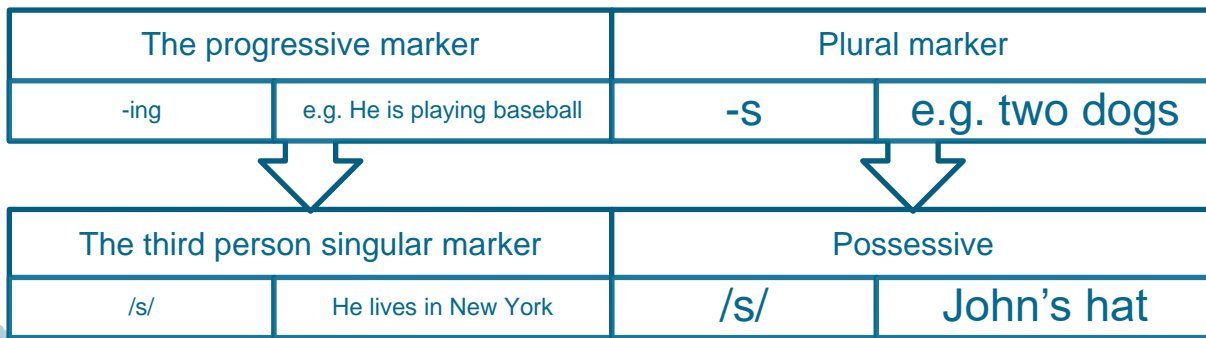
- Error correction → has little or no effect on subconscious acquisition.
- Error correction supposedly helps the learner to induce or “figure out” the right form of a rule.
- Example:
 - A student of ESL class says “I goes to school every day”
 - The teacher corrects him or her by repeating the utterance correctly.
 - The learner realizes that the /s/ ending goes with the 3rd person and not the 1st person.
 - It alters his/her conscious mental representation of the rule.

1b. The Natural Order Hypothesis

- The acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order.
- Acquirers of a given language tend to acquire certain grammatical structures early, and others later.
- The agreement among individual acquirers is not always 100%, but there are clear, statistically significant, similarities.
- The examples given will be about English, the most studied language as far as the natural order hypothesis is concerned.

1b. The Natural Order Hypothesis

- Brown (1973) reported that children acquiring English as a first language tended to acquire certain grammatical morphemes, or functions words, earlier than others.



The first morphemes acquired

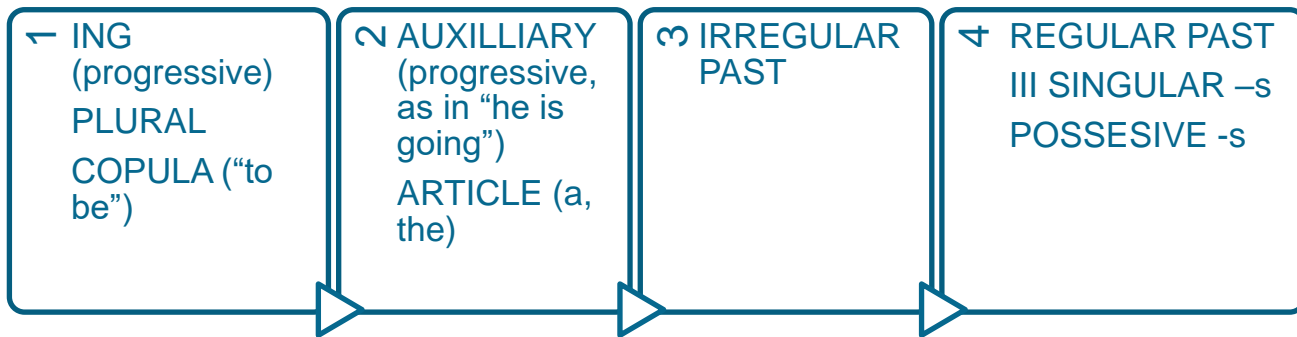
The morphemes acquired later, coming anywhere from 6 months to 1 year later.

1b. The Natural Order Hypothesis

- de Villiers and de Villiers (1973) confirmed Brown's longitudinal results cross-sectionally, showing that items that Brown found to be acquired earliest in time were also the ones that children tended to get right more often.
- In other words, for those morphemes studied, the difficulty order was similar to the acquisition order.
- Dulay and Burt (1974, 1975) reported that children acquiring English as a second language also show a "natural order" for grammatical morphemes, regardless of their first language.
- The child second language order of acquisition was different from the first language order, but different groups of second language acquirers showed striking similarities.

1b. The Natural Order Hypothesis

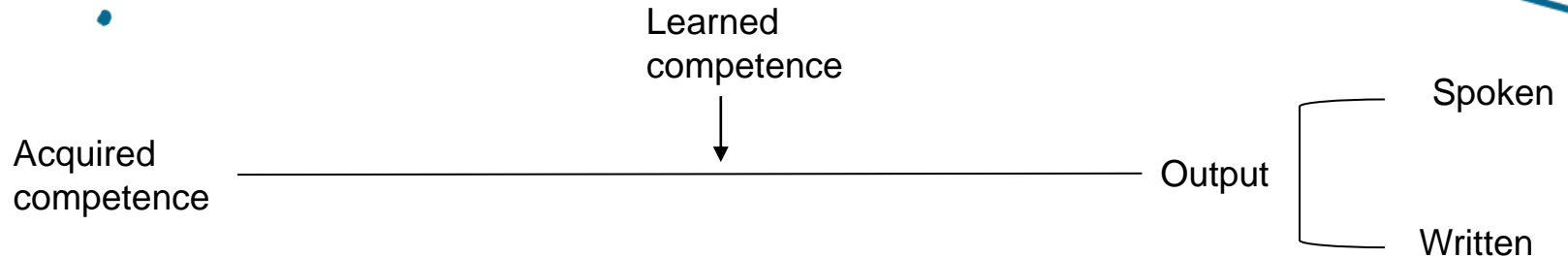
- The order of acquisition for second language is not the same as the order of acquisition for first language, but there are some similarities. Krashen (1977) presents an average of it:



1C. The Monitor Hypothesis

- While the acquisition-learning distinction claims that two separate processes coexist in the adult, it does not state how they are used in second language performance.
- The Monitor hypothesis posits that acquisition and learning are used in very specific ways.
- Normally, acquisition "initiates" our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency. Learning has only one function, and that is as a Monitor, or editor.
- Learning comes into play only to make changes in the form of our utterance, after it has been "produced" by the acquired system. This can happen before we speak or write, or after (self-correction).

1C. The Monitor Hypothesis



- Conscious learning is available only as a “Monitor”, which can alter the output of the acquired system before or after the utterance is actually spoken/written.
- It is the acquired system which initiates normal, fluent speech utterances.

1C. The Monitor Hypothesis



- Second language performers can use conscious rules only when three conditions are met, in which a performer may not fully utilize his conscious grammar even when all three conditions are met.

1. TIME

In order to think about and use conscious rules effectively, a second language performer needs to have sufficient time.

For most people, normal conversation does not allow enough time to think about and use rules.

2. FOCUS ON FORM

To use the Monitor effectively, time is not enough. The performer must also be focused on form, or thinking about correctness

3. KNOW THE RULE

The structure of language is extremely complex, and the linguists have only described a fragment of the best-known languages.

Our students are exposed only to a small part of the total grammar of the language.

We know that even the best students do not learn every rule they are exposed to.

1D. The Input Hypothesis



Let us first restate the question of how we acquire: given the correctness of the natural order hypothesis,

How do we move from one stage to another?

If an acquirer is at "stage 4", how can he progress to "stage 5"?

How do we move from stage i , where i represents current competence, to $i + 1$, the next level?

The input hypothesis makes the following claim:

a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage i to stage $i + 1$ is that the acquirer understand input that contains $i + 1$,

*where "understand" means that the acquirer is focused on the **meaning** and **not** the form of the **message**.*

1D. The Input Hypothesis



We acquire only when we understand language that contains structure that is "a little beyond" where we are now.

How is this possible?

How can we understand language that contains structures that we have not yet acquired?

Because:

- we use more than our linguistic competence to help us understand
- we also use context, our knowledge of the world, our extra-linguistic information to help us understand language directed at us.

Hatch (1978a) has pointed out, our assumption has been that:

- we first learn structures, then practice using them in communication, and this is how fluency develops.
- The input hypothesis says the opposite. It says we acquire by "going for meaning" first, and as a result, we acquire structure!

1E. The Affective Filter Hypothesis



- The Affective Filter hypothesis states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process.
- A variety of affective variables relate to success in second language acquisition (reviewed in Krashen, 1981).
- Most of those studied can be placed into one of these three categories:

1. Motivation

Performers with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition (usually, but not always, "integrative")

2. Self-Confidence

Performers with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition.

3. Anxiety

Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety.

1E. The Affective Filter Hypothesis



- The filter hypothesis explains why it is possible for an acquirer to obtain a great deal of comprehensible input, and yet stop short (and sometimes well short) of the native speaker level (or "fossilize").
 - The Affective Filter hypothesis implies that our pedagogical goals should not only include supplying comprehensible input, but also creating a situation that encourages a low filter.
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- The input hypothesis and the concept of the Affective Filter define the language teacher in a new way.
 - The effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation.



02

The Causative Variable in SLA

*The Causative Variables; Language Teaching; Exposure
Variables; Age; Acculturation*

2A. The Causative Variables



Our review of SLA theory thus far can be summarized as follows:

- Acquisition is more important than learning.
- In order to acquire, two conditions are necessary. The first is **comprehensible** (or even better, comprehended) input containing $i + 1$, structures a bit beyond the acquirer's current level, and second, a **low or weak affective filter** to allow the input "in".

- This is equivalent to saying that comprehensible input and the strength of the filter are the true causes of SLA.
- Other variables may relate to second language success, that is, we may see positive correlations between other variables and measures of achievement in second language, but in all cases in which language acquisition is attained, analysis will reveal that the relationship can better be explained in terms of comprehensible input plus filter level.

2A. The Causative Variables



- In this section, we will perform such an analysis, looking at several factors that have been shown to relate to success in second language acquisition.
- We will see that not only can they be re-analyzed, but that the comprehensible input + filter explanation helps to solve some apparent problems and contradictions in the research literature.
- We will begin with the effect of language teaching on SLA, then examine variables relating to exposure (length of residence in the country where the language is used and reported use of the second language), and then turn to age.

2B. Language Teaching: Does It Help?



- The classroom should be especially valuable for beginners, those who cannot easily utilize the informal environment for input.
- It will be of less value to those who can, who have other sources of comprehensible input, and who are linguistically advanced enough to take advantage of it.

- The question then becomes
Does language teaching help?
↓
When does language teaching help?

- The answer is:

Language teaching helps when it is the main source of low filter comprehensible input,

...that is for beginners and for foreign language students who do not have a chance to get input outside the class.

It will be less of help when rich sources on input are available.

2B. Language Teaching: Does It Help?



a. When language teaching helps

Briere (1978)

- investigated factors predicting successful acquisition of Spanish as an L2 among 920 native Mexican children.
- reported the best predictors of Spanish proficiency was attendance in class in the school.
- The school classroom was the major source of comprehensible input in Spanish, as opportunities to use Spanish outside the classroom were not plentiful.

Krashen, Zelinski, Jones, and Usprich (1978)

- Tested students in an extension program in English as a second language at Queens College in New York.
- Reported robust correlations between reported years of formal study and performance on a variety of ESL tests.

2B. Language Teaching: Does It Help?



a. When language teaching helps

Chihara and Oller (1978)

- reported substantial correlations between length of formal study and second language proficiency in a class of English as a foreign language in Japan.
- A clear foreign language situation in which the classroom was the main, if not only, source of comprehensible input.

2B. Language Teaching: Does It Help?



b. When language teaching *doesn't* helps

- Not all the research literature concludes that language teaching is good for second language acquisition.
- In all cases, students had a rich source of comprehensible input outside the classroom, and were competent enough in the second language to be able to take advantage of it, i.e. understand.

Fathman (1975)

- Found no significant differences in English proficiency between children who had ESL instruction and children who did not.
- All children in her study were enrolled in English-medium public schools in Washington, D.C. and all had been in the US from 1-3 years.
- Hypothesis: they were getting comprehensible input from the school and playground, and the extra input from the ESL class did not make a difference (nor did grammar and drill!).

2C. Exposure Variables



Walberg, Hase, and Rasher (1978)

- Studied Japanese-speaking children who had been in the US a range of 0 – 12 years.
- Reported a LOR of 3 – 4 years showed a significant relationship between LOR and proficiency in English as an L2.

Ekstrand (1976)

- Studied immigrant children in Sweden.
- Found no relationship between LOR and child L2 proficiency.
- The median LOR in his study was only 10.5 months.
- That may be the case that LOR effects are not seen unless the minimum length of time is achieved (say one year?).

2C. Exposure Variables



- Some studies show a clear relationship between the amount of exposure and proficiency and some do not.
- Several studies have examined length of residence (LOR) in the second language environment.
- For those studies of child SLA, it can be plausibly argued that LOR may reflect simply the amount of comprehensible input the child obtains.

Fathman (1975)

- Reported that LOR did predict proficiency for her sample of children (ages 6-14, enrolled in public school in Washington D.C)
- Those who had been in the United States for three years did better on the SLOPE test than those who had been in the United States for two years, and this group, in turn, outperformed those who had been in the United States for only one year.



2D. Age

- Age is a predictor of L2 proficiency, that younger acquirers are better at second language acquisition than older acquirers.
- It can be argued, however, that age is **not in itself** a predictor of second language rate or attainment, and that here too everything reduces down to the quantity of comprehensible input and the level of the affective filter.

Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1979)

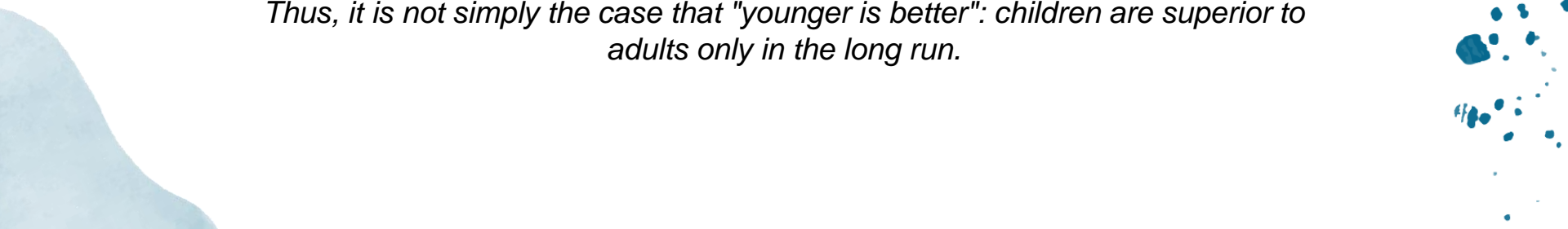
- reviewed the available empirical research on the effect of age and second language acquisition
- concluded that all published studies were consistent with these three generalization:



2D. Age

- Adults proceed through the early stages of second language development faster than children do (where time and exposure are held constant).
- Older children acquire faster than younger children, time and exposure held constant.
- Acquirers who begin natural exposure to second languages during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults.

Thus, it is not simply the case that "younger is better": children are superior to adults only in the long run.






2D. Age



Younger acquirers

- Input and the level or strength of the affective filter needs observing further.
- Younger acquirers actually received “simpler” input in a block building task.
- That seems to predict greater speed for younger, and not older acquirers.

Older acquirers

- Older acquirers (adolescents) were better able to regulate both the quantity and quality of their input.
 - They could, for example, ask for help, change the topic, and direct the conversation better.
 - They had more “conversational competence”.
 - Despite the simpler input directed at the younger children, older acquirers actually get more comprehended input, and this may be a key factor in their faster initial progress.
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2E. Acculturation



Schuman (1978b)


- Hypothesized that acculturation is the major casual variable in SLA.
- Maintained that SLA is just one aspect of acculturation, and the degree to which the learners acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the TL.
- Acculturation can be viewed as a means of gaining comprehensible input and lowering filter.

Schuman (1978b) defines 2 types of acculturation:

Type one:

- The learner is socially integrated with the TL group.
- The learner develops sufficient contact with TL speakers, enabling him to acquire the TL.
- The learner is psychologically open to the TL, the input → intake.

Type two:

- The acculturation has all characteristics of type 1
 - The learner regards TL speakers as a reference group whose lifestyle and values he consciously/unconsciously desires to adopt.
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2E. Acculturation



- Both types of acculturation are sufficient to cause acquisition of the TL.
 - But the distinction is made to stress that social and psychological contact with the TL group is the essential component in acculturation (as it relates to SLA)
 - Maintained that SLA is just one aspect of acculturation, and the degree to which the learners acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the TL.
- The adoption of the lifestyle and values of the TL group (characteristics traditionally associated with the notion of acculturation) is not necessary for successful acquisition of the TL).

Comprehension Check!

1. What is underlying difference between acquisition and learning?
2. What does it mean by subconscious in language acquisition?
3. What does Natural Order Hypothesis say about how someone acquires a language?
4. What are the three conditions in which second language performers can use their “monitor” function?
5. What does The Input Hypothesis say about necessary type of input one needs in language acquisition?
6. What are affective factors that influence second language acquirers in acquiring their languages?
7. When is language teaching considered helpful in one’s language acquisition journey?
8. Please mention some differences in the language acquisition journey experienced by younger acquirers vs older acquirers, by referring to their age factor.
9. What does it mean by acculturation?

Comprehension Check!

1. What is underlying difference between acquisition and learning?
 2. What does it mean by subconscious in language acquisition?
 3. What does Natural Order Hypothesis say about how someone acquires a language?
 4. What are the three conditions in which second language performers can use their “monitor” function?
 5. What does The Input Hypothesis say about necessary type of input one needs in language acquisition?
1. Acquisition is done unconsciously, while learning is done consciously.
 2. It means we are not aware of the rules of the languages we have acquired. We only “feel” whether something is correct or not.
 3. The hypothesis says that acquirers tend to acquire certain grammatical morphemes or function words earlier than others.
 4. They are time, focus on form, and know the rule.
 5. It should be comprehensible, meaning that it should be in $i + 1$, with i as the current level of the language acquirer.

Comprehension Check!

6. What are affective factors that influence second language acquirers in acquiring their languages?
 7. When is language teaching considered helpful in one's language acquisition journey?
 8. Please mention some differences in the language acquisition journey experienced by younger acquirers vs older acquirers, by referring to their age factor.
 9. What does it mean by acculturation?
6. They are motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.
 7. It becomes helpful when the language teaching becomes the main source of low filter comprehensible input, that is for beginners and for foreign language students who do not have a chance to get input outside the class.
 8. Younger acquirer tend to have simpler input, but older ones do not. However, older acquirers have more conversational competence that can be the key factor in their faster progress.
 9. The process of changing so that you become more like people from a TL group.

Reference

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The image features a white background with several decorative blue elements. In the top left, there are several curved, parallel brushstrokes in a medium blue color. In the bottom left, there is a cluster of small, dark blue dots and splatters of varying sizes. On the right side, there are two overlapping, soft-edged blue shapes that resemble watercolor washes or ink blots, one positioned above the other.

Thank You