



HUF HANDONG
UNIT WIN
FELLOWSHIP

Second Language Acquisition

Lecture 4: The Role of the Native Language:
An Historical Overview

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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 4 – LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction
2. Behaviorism
 - a. Linguistics Background
 - b. Psychological Background
3. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
4. Error Analysis
5. Comprehension Check

The background is a light blue watercolor wash with various splatters and brushstrokes in a darker blue. There are several large, irregular blue shapes scattered across the page. A prominent feature is a series of parallel, slightly curved lines in a darker blue, resembling a brushstroke or a stylized object, located in the upper right quadrant. The overall aesthetic is artistic and minimalist.

01

Introduction

1. Introduction

- It has always been assumed that, in a second language learning situation, learners rely extensively on their native language.

- Lado, in his early and influential book *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), stated this clearly:

*individuals **tend to transfer the forms and meanings,**
the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the
foreign language and culture:*

- **productively** *when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture,
and*
- **receptively** *when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the
culture as practiced by natives.*

1. Introduction

- Lado's work and much of the work of that time was based on the need to produce pedagogically relevant materials.



- To produce these native language-based materials, it was necessary to do a contrastive analysis of the native language and the target language.



- This entailed making detailed comparisons between the two languages in order to determine similarities and differences.



1. Introduction

The original term used in the classical literature on transfer did not imply a separation into two processes, **negative** versus **positive** transfer.



Two underlying learning process:

Positive transfer

Negative transfer

There has been some confusion in the use of the terms in the second language literature.

1. Introduction

The actual determination of whether or not a learner has positively or negatively transferred is **based on the output**,

as analyzed by the researcher, teacher, native speaker/hearer, when compared and contrasted with target language output.



These terms refer to the product, although their use implies a process.

There is a process of transfer; there is *not* a process of negative or positive transfer.

Thus, one must be careful when using terminology of this sort because the terminology suggests a confusion between product and process.

The background is a white canvas decorated with various shades of blue watercolor. There are several large, soft-edged brushstrokes in light blue. Scattered throughout are numerous small, dark blue dots and splatters of varying sizes. A prominent feature is a series of parallel, dark blue lines that appear to be drawn with a brush, extending from the top right towards the center. The overall aesthetic is artistic and modern.

02

Behaviorism

2.1. Linguistic Background

Bloomfield (1933)

- Provide description of the behaviorist position with regard to language.
- Typical behaviorist position: language is speech rather than writing.
- Speech is a precondition for writing.

The justification for this position:

- children without cognitive impairment learn to speak before they learn to write.
- many societies have no written language, although all societies have oral language;
- there are no societies with only written but no spoken language systems

2.1. Linguistic Background

Behaviorist framework:

- Speaking consists of mimicking and analogizing.
- We say or hear something and analogize from it.



- Basic to this view is the concept of habits.
- We establish a set of habits as children and continue our linguistic growth by analogizing from what we already know or by mimicking the speech of others.
- But, what makes us talk and carry on conversation?



2.1. Linguistic Background

To understand the answer to the question within the behaviorist framework, consider the following information:



Jack and Jill are walking down a lane.



Jill is hungry.



She sees an apple in a tree.



She makes a sound with her larynx, tongue, and lips.



Jack vaults the fence, climbs the tree, takes the apple, brings it to Jill, and place it in her hand.



Jill eats the apple.

2.1. Linguistic Background

Bloomfield divides a situation like this into 3 parts:

Thus, in this view, speech is the practical reaction (response) to some stimulus.



1

Practical events before the act of speech (e.g. hungry feeling, sight of apple)



2

Speech event (making sound with larynx, tongue, and lips)



3

Hearer's responses (Jack's leaping over the fence, fetching the apple, placing it in Jill's hand).

2.2. Psychological Background

- The terminology used in a language-learning setting and the associated concepts (e.g., interference/facilitation) come from the literature on the psychology of learning.
 - The leading psychological school of thought of the time was behaviorism.
 - One of the key concepts in behaviorist theory was the notion of transfer.
-
- The main claim with regard to transfer is that the learning of task A will affect the subsequent learning of task B.
 - What is of interest is how fast and how well you learn something after having learned something else.

2.2. Psychological Background

From a physical perspective:



If someone knows how to play tennis

Then picks up a table tennis racket for the first time,



She / he will use the knowledge / skills that have been gained from playing tennis in this new, but related, situation.

Thus, old knowledge/skills are transferred to a new situation.

2.2. Psychological Background

From an example from the area of language learning,
According to the initial view of language transfer:

If speakers of a particular language (in this case, Italian) form questions by saying:



Mangia bene il bambino?
eats well the baby
“Does the baby eat well?”

then those same (Italian) speakers learning English would be expected to say

Eats well the baby?



when asking a question in English.

2.2. Psychological Background

- A behaviorist notion underlying this expectation is that of habits and cumulative learning.

According to behaviorist learning theory:

*Learning is a cumulative process.
The more knowledge and skills an individual acquires, the more likely it becomes that his new learning will be shaped by his past experiences and activities.*

2.2. Psychological Background

An adult rarely, if ever, learns anything completely new; however unfamiliar the task that confronts him, the information and habits he has built up in the past will be his point of departure.

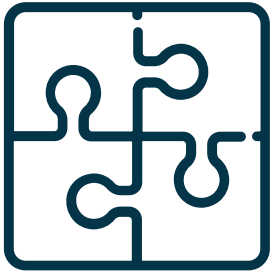
Thus, transfer of training from old to new situations is part and parcel of most, if not all, learning.

In this sense the study of transfer is coextensive with the investigation of learning.

2.2. Psychological Background

A distinction noted above that is commonly made in the literature is

POSITIVE TRANSFER / FACILITATION



NEGATIVE TRANSFER / INTERFERENCE

With regard to interference, there are two types noted in the literature:

(a) **Retroactive inhibition**—where learning acts back on previously learned material, causing someone to forget (language loss)

(b) **Proactive inhibition**—where a series of responses already learned tends to appear in situations where a new set is required.

This is more akin to the phenomenon of second language learning because the first language in this framework influences/inhibits/modifies the learning of the L2.

2.2. Psychological Background

Underlying much work in the 1950s and 1960s was the notion of language as habit.

Second language learning was seen as the development of a new set of habits.

The role of the native language, then, took on great significance, because, in this view of language learning, it was the major cause for lack of success in learning the L2.

The habits established in childhood interfered with the establishment of a different set of habits.

2.2. Psychological Background

From this framework emerged contrastive analysis, because if one is to talk about replacing a set of habits

(let's say, the **habits of English**)

with

another set of habits (let's say, **those of Italian**),

valid descriptions are
needed **comparing the “rules” of the two languages.**



03

**Contrastive Analysis
Hypothesis**

The background features abstract blue watercolor washes and line art. On the left, there are several curved, parallel lines in a darker blue. The rest of the background is filled with light blue watercolor splatters and dots of varying sizes, creating a textured, artistic effect.

What is it?

Contrastive analysis is a way of comparing languages in order to determine potential errors for the ultimate purpose of isolating what needs to be learned and what does not need to be learned in a second language-learning situation.

The pedagogical materials that resulted from contrastive analyses were based on a number of assumptions:

1



Contrastive analysis is based on a theory of language that claims that language is habit and that language learning involves the establishment of a new set of habits.

2

The major source of error in the production and/or reception of a second language is the native language.



3



One can account for errors by considering differences between the L1 and the L2.

4

A corollary to item 3 is that the greater the differences, the more errors will occur.



The pedagogical materials that resulted from contrastive analyses were based on a number of assumptions:

5



What one has to do in learning a second language is learn the differences.

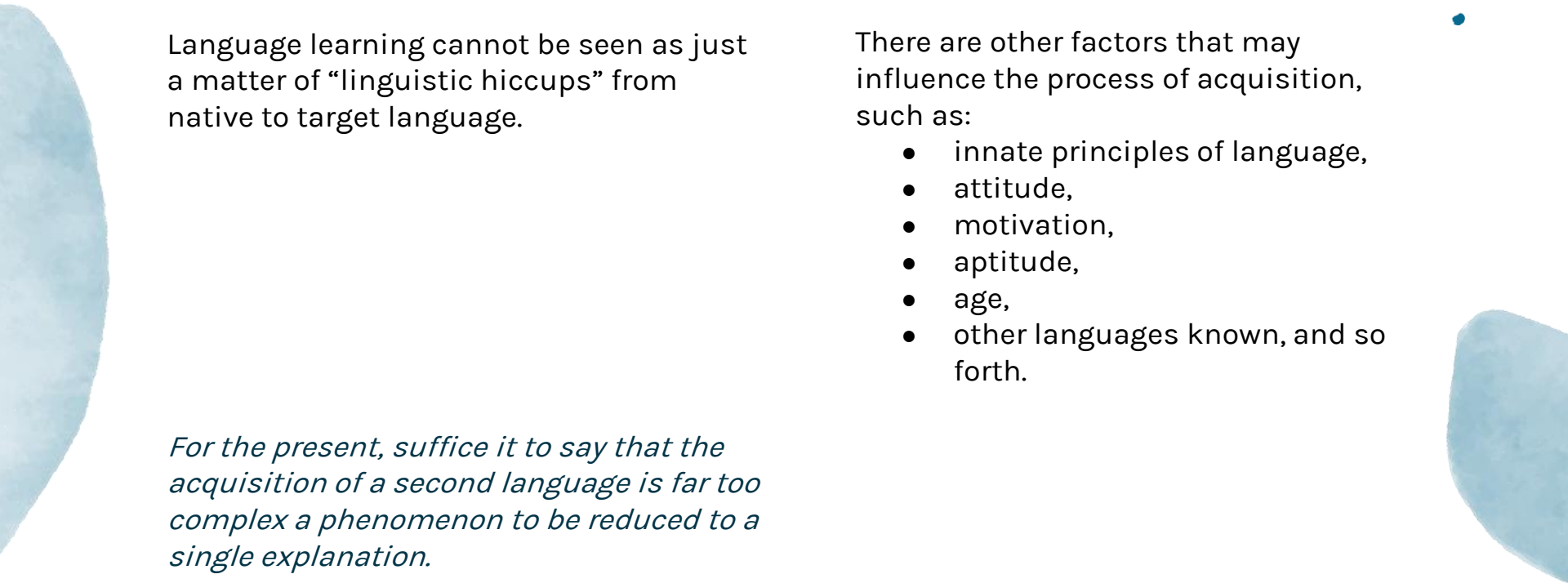
Similarities can be safely ignored as no new learning is involved.

In other words, what is dissimilar between two languages is what must be learned.

6

Difficulty and ease in learning is determined respectively by differences and similarities between the two languages in contrast.





Language learning cannot be seen as just a matter of “linguistic hiccups” from native to target language.

For the present, suffice it to say that the acquisition of a second language is far too complex a phenomenon to be reduced to a single explanation.

There are other factors that may influence the process of acquisition, such as:

- innate principles of language,
- attitude,
- motivation,
- aptitude,
- age,
- other languages known, and so forth.

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04



Error Analysis




What is it?

As the name suggests, it is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make.

The comparison made is between the errors a learner makes in producing the TL and the TL form itself.






They provide
windows onto a
system


Can be taken as
red flags




Error



Evidence of the state
of a learner's
knowledge of the L2.



They are not something
for teachers to throw
their hands up in the air
about.



Not to be viewed as a
product of imperfect
learning

L2 errors **are not**
a reflection of
faulty imitation

Rather, they are to be
viewed as indications of
a learner's attempt to
figure out some system,



Error

in child language acquisition

They are evidence of
an underlying rule-
governed system.

It is to impose
regularity on the
language the learner
is exposed to.



Mistake

Mistakes are akin to slips of the tongue.

They are generally one-time-only events.

The speaker who makes a mistake is able to recognize it as a mistake and correct it if necessary




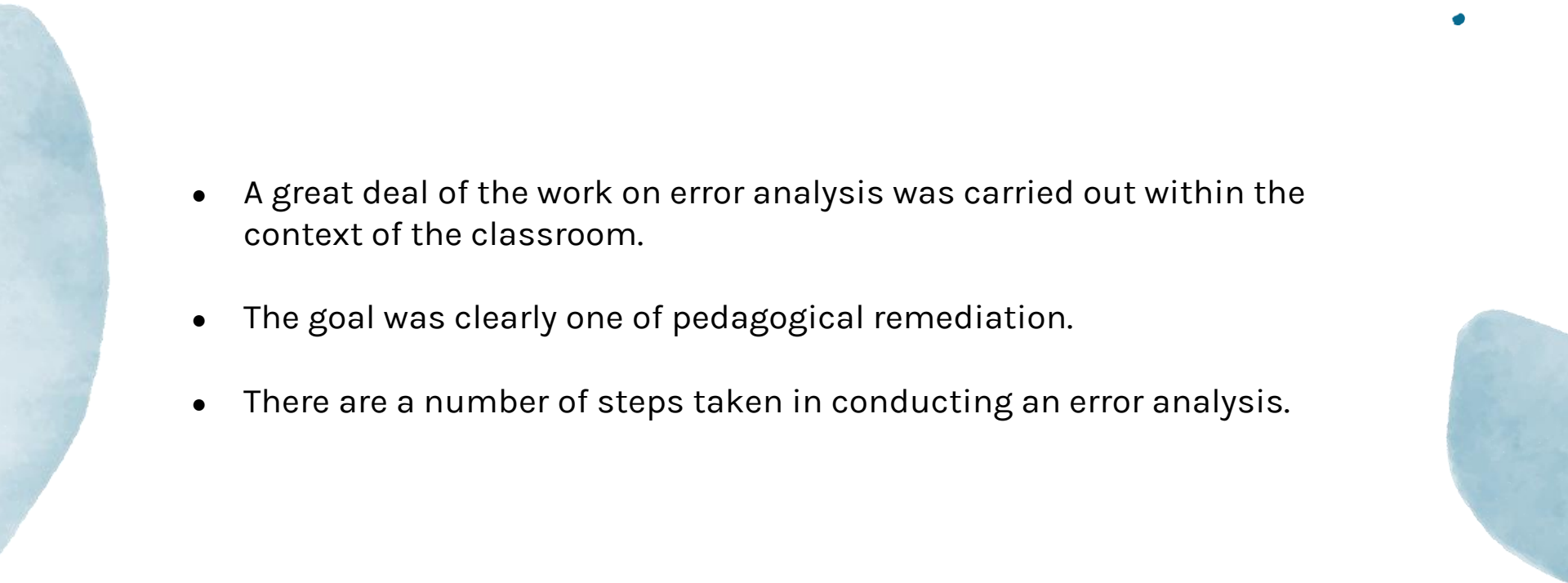
Error

An error is systematic.

It is likely to occur repeatedly.

It is not recognized by the learner as an error.

The learner in this case has incorporated a particular erroneous form (from the perspective of the TL) into his or her system.

- 
- A great deal of the work on error analysis was carried out within the context of the classroom.
 - The goal was clearly one of pedagogical remediation.
 - There are a number of steps taken in conducting an error analysis.
- 



1 – Collect Data

Although this is typically done with written data, oral data can also serve as a base.



2 – Identify Errors

What is the error (e.g., incorrect sequence of tenses, wrong verb form, singular verb form with plural subject)?



3 – Classify Errors

Is it an error of agreement?
Is it an error in irregular verbs?



4 – Quantify Errors

How many errors of agreement occur? How many irregular verb form errors occur?



5 – Analyze Source

Discussed later



6 - Remediate

Based on the kind and frequency of an error type, pedagogical intervention is carried out.

- Error analysis provides a broader range of possible explanations than contrastive analysis for researchers /teachers to use to account for errors, as the latter only attributed errors to the NL.
- In comparison, there are two main error types within an error analysis framework: **interlingual** and **intralingual**.



Interlingual Errors

those which can be attributed to the NL (i.e., they involve cross-linguistic comparisons)



Intralingual Errors

those that are due to the language being learned, independent of the NL

Example of Interlingual and Intralingual Errors

Type	Source	NL	TL	Example
Interlingual	NL-based	French	English	We just enjoyed to move and to play.
Intralingual	Regularization	All	English	He comed yesterday.

In interlingual example, verb complements are in the infinitival form.
There is no *ing* equivalent in French.



05

Comprehension Check

Please state whether the statements given are TRUE or FALSE.

Comprehension Check!

1. The term “transfer” is separated into two process. They are interlingual and intralingual transfer.
2. The term “transfer” refer to the product, although their use implies a process.
3. Behaviorist position argues that language is speech rather than writing and speech a precondition for writing.
4. When a series of responses already learned tends to appear in situations where a new set is required is a type of negative transfer/interference called proactive inhibition.
5. Contrastive analysis is used to compare languages in order to determine the weakness of each of the languages being compared.
6. To focus on the errors learners make, we can conduct error analysis.
7. Error in language learning means someone fails to learn the language.
8. In child language acquisition, error is seen as indication of a learner’s attempt to figure out some system.
9. Mistake is different from errors, where mistakes are made repeatedly.
10. Type of error which involve cross-linguistic comparisons is called intralingual errors.

Comprehension Check!

1. The term “transfer” is separated into two process. They are interlingual and intralingual transfer.
 2. The term “transfer” refer to the product, although their use implies a process.
 3. Behaviorist position argues that language is speech rather than writing and speech a precondition for writing.
 4. When a series of responses already learned tends to appear in situations where a new set is required is a type of negative transfer/interference called proactive inhibition.
 5. Contrastive analysis is used to compare languages in order to determine the weakness of each of the languages being compared.
1. FALSE → positive and negative transfer
 2. TRUE
 3. TRUE
 4. TRUE
 5. FALSE → determining potential errors

Comprehension Check!

6. To focus on the errors learners make, we can conduct error analysis.
 7. Error in language learning means someone fails to learn the language.
 8. In child language acquisition, error is seen as indication of a learner's attempt to figure out some system.
 9. Mistake is different from errors, where mistakes are made repeatedly.
 10. Type of error which involve cross-linguistic comparisons is called intralingual errors.
6. TRUE
 7. FALSE → errors can serve a function of someone's attempt in learning.
 8. TRUE
 9. FALSE → Mistake is done one time because of slip of tongue
 10. FALSE → interlingual errors

Reference

Bloomfield, L. (1933). *Language*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Gass, S. M., Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course*. Routledge.

Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures*. University of Michigan Press.



Thanks

Does anyone have any questions?
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