



**HUF** HANDONG  
UNIT WIN  
FELLOWSHIP

# Second Language Acquisition

**Lecture 7:** The Role of Grammar,  
or Putting Grammar in Its Place

**Lecturer:** Maria Dewi Rosari, M.Pd.  
Jakarta International University

# 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 7 – LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition
2. The Place of Grammar
  - a. Grammar for Monitor Use: When the monitor is used
  - b. What Can Be Monitored
3. The Effects of Learning: Accuracy of Self-Correction
  - a. Factors Influencing Self-Correction Accuracy
  - b. When Should Errors Be Corrected?
  - c. Which Errors Should Be Corrected?
  - d. How Errors Should Be Corrected?

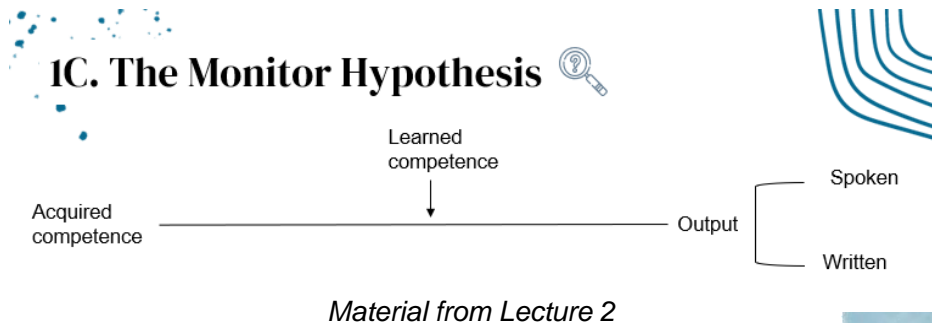


**01**

**Learning Does Not  
Become Acquisition**

# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition

- Lecture 2 highlights what learning does and what it does not do in the theoretical model of second language performance.
- **The Monitor model:**  
*Conscious learning acts as an editor, as a Monitor, "correcting" the errors, or rather what the performance perceives to be errors, in the output of the acquired system.*
- This can happen before the sentence is spoken or written, or after. Conscious knowledge of rules is therefore not responsible for our fluency, it does not initiate utterances.



# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition

- A very important point that also needs to be stated is that:

***Learning DOES NOT turn into acquisition.***

- The idea is like this:

WE FIRST **LEARN** A NEW RULE



THROUGH PRACTICE, WE **ACQUIRE**



THEN IT IS **WIDESPREAD** AND TO SOME  
PEOPLE IT BECOMES **INTUITIVELY  
OBVIOUS**

Carol (1966):

***Once the student has a proper degree of cognitive control over the structure of a language, facility will develop automatically with the use of the language in meaningful situations.***

This process of converting learned rules into acquired rules was called "**internalization**".

# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition

Some theory does not directly predict that learning needs to precede acquisition. There are very good reasons for maintaining this position that emerge from observing second language performers.

**1** We often see acquisition in cases where learning never occurred.

- There are many performers who can use complex structures in a second language who do not know the rule consciously and never did.

Example:

Evelyn Hatch's students, Cindy Stafford and Ginger Covit, interviewed one such second language performer, "V", an ESL student at UCLA, who exhibited considerable competence in English, but who admitted that he had conscious control of very few, if any, rules.



# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition

The following exchanges come from an interview with “V”, which takes place while one of the authors is reviewing his compositions errors):



(When you write a composition)... do you think of grammar rules? Do you think "Should I have used the present tense here or would the present continuous be better..."



I don't refer to the books and all that, you know. I just refer it to this, uh, my judgment and... sensing if I'm writing it right or wrong. Because I really don't know... what where exactly how... the grammatical rules work out.

# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition

Later in the interview, one investigator asks:



Do you think grammar rules are useful?



Useful? Yeah. When you want to write they are very very useful.



But you don't use them when you write.



Yeah, I know. I don't use them... I don't know how to use them.

# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition

Some theory does not directly predict that learning needs to precede acquisition. There are very good reasons for maintaining this position that emerge from observing second language performers.

## 2 We also see learning that never seems to become acquisition

- Many fine ESL performers, while they have acquired a great deal of English, also know many conscious rules.
- They nevertheless make what they consider to be "careless" errors on rules that are linguistically quite straightforward.
- This occurs when the performer has learned a rule but has *not* acquired it.

# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition

- They nevertheless make what they consider to be "**careless**" errors on rules that are linguistically quite straightforward.
  - This occurs when the performer has **learned a rule but has not acquired it.**
  - This happens typically with late-acquired items, such as the third person singular ending on regular verbs in English ("*He goes to work every day.*").
- 
- What is particularly interesting is that **these performers may have known the rule and have practiced it for many years.**
  - Even after thousands of correct repetitions, and with a thorough understanding of the rule, such performers still **make "careless" mistakes** on certain items.
  - What has prevented learning from "becoming" acquisition in these cases is the fact that the learned rule is still **beyond the acquirer's  $i + 1$ .**

# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition

Some theory does not directly predict that learning needs to precede acquisition. There are very good reasons for maintaining this position that emerge from observing second language performers.

## 3 Even the best learners master only a small subset of the rules of a language

- even professional linguists admit that their conscious knowledge of even the best studied languages is imperfect, and
  - discoveries of new rules are reported with every issue of technical journals in linguistic theory.
- While learning may often precede acquisition, it need not, and in fact **may not even help directly.**
  - Rather, we acquire along a fairly predictable natural order, and this occurs when **we receive comprehensible input.**
  - Occasionally, we learn certain rules before we acquire them, and this gives us the illusion that the learning actually caused the acquisition.

# 1. Learning Does Not Become Acquisition



Learning sometimes precedes acquisition in real time: A rule that is eventually acquired may have been, at one time, learned only.



Just because event A preceded event B does not demonstrate that A caused B.



We see many cases of acquisition without learning, learning (even very good learning that is well practiced) that does not become acquisition, and acquired knowledge of rules preceding learning.

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 curve downwards from the top right towards the center, resembling a stylized brushstroke or a graphic element.

# **02** The Place of Grammar

## 2. The Place of Grammar

Krashen uses the term “Grammar” as a synonym for conscious learning.

It has two possible roles in the second language teaching program.

**#1**

### **Monitor**

It can be used with some profit as a Monitor.

**#2**

### **Subject-Matter**

A second use for grammar is as subject-matter, or for “language appreciation”.

Neither role is essential, neither is the central part of the pedagogical program, but both have their functions.

## 2. The Place of Grammar

When can rules be used?

Which rules should or can be learned?

Several issues will be discussed in relation to teaching grammar for Monitor use

What are the effects of Monitor use?

What can we expect in terms of Monitor efficiency?

## 2a. The Place of Grammar –

### *Grammar for Monitor Use: When the Monitor is Used*

- One of our goals in pedagogy is to encourage optimal Monitor use.
- We would like our students to utilize conscious rules to raise their grammatical accuracy when it does not interfere with communication.
- Stated differently, the optimal Monitor user knows when to use conscious rules.
- One necessary condition for successful Monitor use is time.
- It takes real processing time to remember and apply conscious rules.



## 2a. The Place of Grammar –

### *Grammar for Monitor Use: When the Monitor is Used*



- We should not expect most students to successfully apply conscious rules to their output during oral conversation-- there is, obviously, little time.



People who do attempt to think about and utilize conscious rules during conversation run two risks.

- They tend to take too much time when it is their turn to speak.
- They have a hesitant style that is often difficult to listen to.
- They plan their next utterance while their conversational partner is talking.
- Their output may be accurate, but they all too often do not pay enough attention to what the other person is saying!

## 2a. The Place of Grammar –

### *Grammar for Monitor Use: When the Monitor is Used*



- Some people are better than others at Monitor use.
- Some may actually be able to successfully use a fair number of conscious rules “on line”.



- Most people run the risk of seriously endangering the success of the conversation when they try to Monitor during casual talking.

## 2a. The Place of Grammar –

### *Grammar for Monitor Use: When the Monitor is Used*

- Success in Monitor use in free conversation also depends on other factors--one is **the difficulty or complexity of the rule.**
- A second is **the topic**: it is much easier to pay attention to the form of what to say in something we are very familiar with and have discussed before.

- The place for Monitor use is when the performer has time, as in writing and in prepared speech.
- As stated earlier, simply giving performers time **does not insure** that they will use the conscious Monitor; hence condition no 2:
- The performer must be thinking about **correctness or focused on form.**
- When given **time**, and when **focused on form**, some people can use conscious grammar to great advantage.

## 2a. The Place of Grammar –

### *Grammar for Monitor Use: When the Monitor is Used*

- In the case of the second language performer who has acquired nearly all of the grammar of the second language, but who still has some gaps, **the use of the conscious grammar can fill in many of the non-acquired items.**
- This can, in writing at least, occasionally result in native-like accuracy.

- We often see beginners, students who can barely converse in the target language, struggling to make correct subject-verb agreement in what are termed "communicative" exercises, fearful of the teacher's shattering corrections.

## 2. The Place of Grammar –

### *Grammar for Monitor Use: When the Monitor is Used*

- The cause of this torture is:

1. First, it is **a confusion between linguistic simplicity and order of acquisition.**

It is not at all the case that the more linguistically simple an item is, the earlier it is acquired.

Some very “simple” rules may be among the last to be acquired.

2. Second, the cause is also a **failure to distinguish between acquisition and learning.**

A failure to realize that conscious knowledge of an item **bears no relationship** to a performer’s ability to use it in unmonitored speech.

This ability comes from acquisition, and **acquisition come from comprehensible input**, not from error correction.

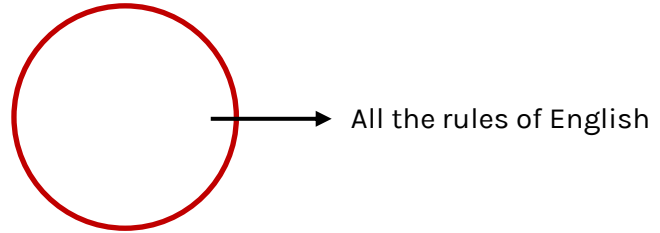
The result of such treatment is, at best, **overuse of the monitor.**

## 2b. The Place of Grammar –

### *What Can Be Monitored*

**Hypothesis 3 for Monitor use is this:**

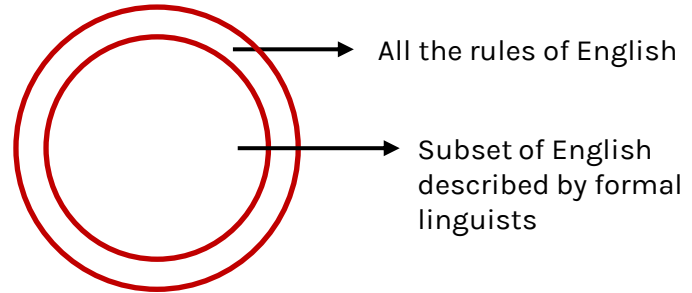
- In order for performers to Monitor successfully, they must know the rule they are applying.
- The illustration below shows how drastically this requirement limits Monitor use.
- The circle in the illustration represents all the rules of a well-described language, such as English.



## 2b. The Place of Grammar –

### *What Can Be Monitored*

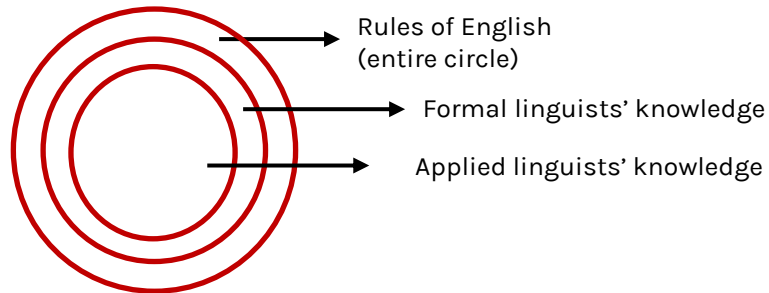
- Let us now consider all the rules of English that the best linguists "know", or have succeeded in describing.
- How many rules did **Jespersen (ever) know**, how much of English have scholars such as **Noam Chomsky described**?
- While Chomsky often says that he and his colleagues **have only described "fragments" of English**, we will give the formal linguists the benefit of the doubt, and represent their accomplishments as a proper subset of the first circle.



## 2b. The Place of Grammar –

### *What Can Be Monitored*

- Now let us consider the rules that "**applied linguists**" know, where applied linguists here refers to the scholar whose task is to study the work of the formal, theoretical linguist, and present it to the language teacher, and perhaps also to the language student.

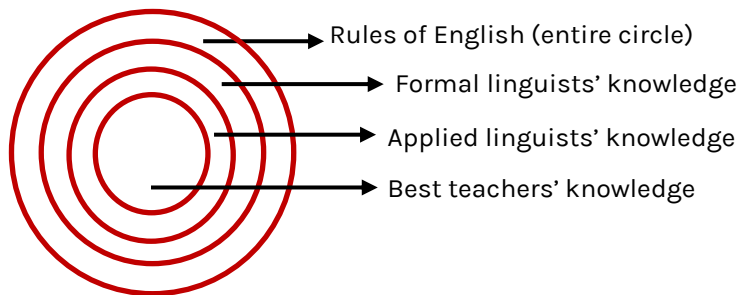


- The additional smaller circle in the figure represent what the applied linguist knows.
- This will have to be a proper subset of what the formal linguist knows, since the full-time job of the theoretician is to seek out new rules, while the applied linguist spends a great deal of time explaining this work.

## 2b. The Place of Grammar –

### *What Can Be Monitored*

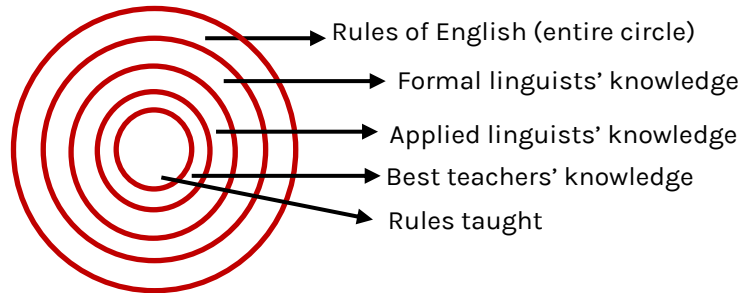
- The next circle represents all the rules that the most knowledgeable language teachers know.
- This will be a proper subset of the circle introduced in the last figure. Teachers, after all, have a great deal to do besides study the work of applied linguistics:



## 2b. The Place of Grammar –

### *What Can Be Monitored*

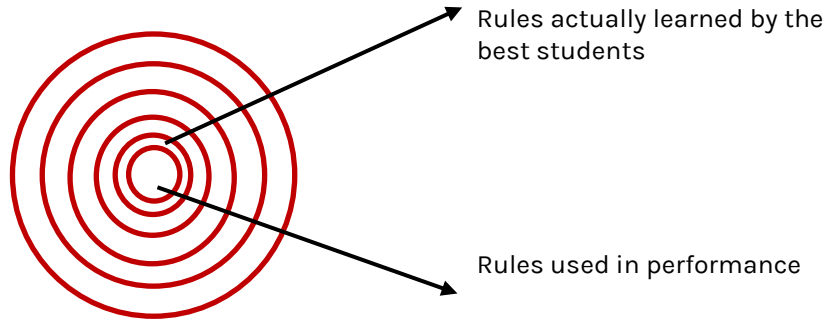
- Still another circle represents the number of grammar rules that the best teachers actually teach.
- This is, in turn, a proper subset of the set of circles they know, since teachers will undoubtedly present to their students only a part of their knowledge.



## 2b. The Place of Grammar –

### *What Can Be Monitored*

- We draw next still another circle, which represents all the rules that the best students actually succeed in learning.
- We should even put in one last circle, all the rules that students can carry around in their heads as mental baggage and actually use in performance



- By now, we are down to a very small circle, even giving every group discussed the benefit of the doubt.
- Even our best students will be able to learn and utilize a small part of the grammar of a language as a conscious Monitor.

## 2b. The Place of Grammar –

### *What Can Be Monitored*

- We can draw an even smaller circle for some people.
  - Some performers are either less willing or less able to utilize conscious rules.
  - At the opposite extreme from the professional linguist or language teacher, we have the **Monitor under-user**, the performer who does all self-correction by "feel" and has no control of conscious grammar.
- 
- Perhaps even more extreme is the **incompetent Monitor user**, the performer who thinks (s)he knows the rules but has them (or at least many of them) wrong.
  - We should be aware that confusions may exist even for rules that appear to us to be very simple, and for rules that the performer may have already acquired and can utilize in an unmonitored situation.
  - Such cases illustrate vividly the contrast between acquisition and learning.

## 2c. The Place of Grammar – *Consequences of Teaching “Hard” Rules*



• Felix (1980) shows us what happens when students are asked to learn rules that are too difficult for them, rules that are not only difficult to learn but that are also not yet acquired.



Not only were such students asked to learn difficult rules, they were also asked to use them in unmonitored situations.

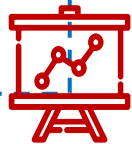
- Felix observed an EFL class for 10 and 11 years old students in Germany.
- Teachers taught and demanded **correct use of elliptic sentences** (as in exchanges of the type: *It is a dog? Yes, it is*).
- This type of question-answer dialogues was **drilled every day**.
- Felix reports that correct elliptic sentences were only **randomly supplied for a period of almost 3 months**.

## 2c. The Place of Grammar – *Consequences of Teaching “Hard” Rules*



### The results:

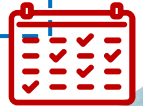
- The result is predictable.
- The rule was simply **too hard** to learn.
- The rule was **not yet acquired**.
- Literature says: *elliptic sentences do not appear until relatively late*.
- Even with input containing sentences of this sort (assuming the input was comprehensible, interesting, etc, such structures were **far beyond  $i + 1$  of these students**).



## 2c. The Place of Grammar – *Consequences of Teaching “Hard” Rules*



- These point to the reality and strength of subconscious acquisition, but they also confirm that conscious learning is quite limited, and that, except for certain conditions, acquisition is responsible for most second language performance.





**03**

**The Effects of Learning:  
Accuracy of Self-  
correction**

# 3a. The Place of Grammar –

## *Factors Affecting Self-Correction Accuracy*

- 1. There is individual variation with respect to self-correction efficiency.**
  - To the extent that self-correction involves the conscious Monitor, if there is individual variation in degree of and ability for Monitor use, this will be reflected in self-correction efficiency.
  - We might expect much better performance from a professional linguist who is an optimal Monitor user than from other performers, all other conditions (see below) held constant.
  
- 2. We might expect variation depending on which aspects of output the performer attempts to correct.**
  - The Monitor appears to work best for simple morphology,
  - It may be less efficient for complex syntax, and
  - It may have even more trouble with other parts of the grammar

# 3a. The Place of Grammar –

## *Factors Affecting Self-Correction Accuracy*

3. Self-correction efficiency will also vary according to the conditions under which it is done. See the following conditions:

- **First**, there is “free speech”, or natural conversation.
- In “free speech”, self-correction is up to the performer, and there is no special focus on form. Rather, the focus, in most cases is on communication.
- We would expect natural difficulty orders when looking at errors in grammatical structures in this condition.

- **Second**, moving in the direction of more focus on form, can be termed “careful” speaking or writing.
- It occurs when speakers or writers are attempting to speak or write “correctly”.

# 3a. The Place of Grammar –

## *Factors Affecting Self-Correction Accuracy*

- **Conditions (1) and (2)** cover most situations in real world informal communication.
- We can, however, specify other conditions typically used in language instruction that focus the performer still more on form.

- In **condition (3)**, the student is informed that an error exists, but does not know where the error is or what rule has been broken.
- This is roughly equivalent to composition correction in which students are simply told that there are some errors in their paper and that they should be corrected.

## 3a. The Place of Grammar –

### *Factors Affecting Self-Correction Accuracy*

- A condition still more in the direction of focusing on form indicates to students where the error is, in addition to informing them that an error exists.

- This condition, **condition (4)**, corresponds to composition correction in which the teacher underlines the errors
- Still more focused, is **condition (5)** in which existence, location, and description of the violated rule are provided, as in feedback of this sort:

I saw two boy.<sup>pc</sup>

## 3a. The Place of Grammar –

### *Factors Affecting Self-Correction Accuracy*

- The more we move toward condition (5), the more effect of the conscious Monitor is predicted, and the greater the likelihood of "unnatural" order for errors.
- We see natural orders for conditions (1) (free speech, BSM, free composition) and (2) (edited writing),
- But we might see some effect of the Monitor in condition (2) (i.e. rise in accuracy in third person singular.
- The unnatural order was produced under conditions similar to condition (4)

## 3b. The Place of Grammar –

### *When Should Errors be Corrected?*

- In general error correction be limited to "manipulative grammar practice"--more errors may be ***tolerated during "communicative practice"***.
- The implications of second language acquisition theory are similar.

- If error correction aims at learning, ***it is logical to suppose that the conditions for error correction should be identical to the conditions for utilizing learning--we should focus our students on form, and correct their errors***
- This implies no error correction in free conversation but allows for error correction on written work and grammar exercises.

## 3c. The Place of Grammar –

### *Which Errors Should be Corrected?*

(1) We should correct "global" errors, errors that interfere with communication or impede the intelligibility of a message. Such errors deserve top priority in correction.

(2) Errors that are the most stigmatized, that cause the most unfavorable reactions, are the most important to correct.

(3) Errors that occur most frequently should be given top priority.

## 3c. The Place of Grammar –

### *How Errors Should be Corrected?*

(1) providing the correct form ("direct" correction).

(2) the discovery (inductive) approach.

Second language acquisition theory, however, predicts that error correction will show positive results only if the following conditions are met:

(1) Errors corrected are limited to learnable and portable rules.

(3) The efficacy of error correction are administered under Monitor use conditions to allow the learner time to refer to his or her conscious knowledge.

(2) Errors are corrected under conditions that allow Monitor use. This will give the learner time to reconsider the rule that was violated.

(4) Subjects are "Monitor-users" (i.e. they are not under-users of the Monitor).

# Reference

- Carroll, J. (1966). *The contributions of psychological theory and educational research to teaching of foreign languages*. In A. Valdman (Ed.) *Trends in language teaching*. McGraw-Hill. pp. 93-106.
- Felix, S. (1980). *The effect of formal instruction on second language learning*. Paper presented at Los Angeles Second Language Research Forum, UCLA, February, 1980.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press Inc.



# Thanks

Does anyone have any questions?  
[mdrosari@jiu.ac](mailto:mdrosari@jiu.ac)

**CREDITS:** This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon** and infographics & images by **Freepik**