



**HUF** HANDONG  
UNIT WIN  
FELLOWSHIP

# Second Language Acquisition

**Lecture 12: Applied Linguistics Research**

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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 12 – LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Review of the Previous Material
2. Introduction
3. Review of Method Comparison Studies
  - a. American Studies of AL, GT, and CC
  - b. The GUME Project
4. Some Preliminary Conclusions to Method Comparison Studies
5. Some Recent Method Comparison Studies
  - a. The TPR Series
  - b. Other Input Methods Compared
  - c. Suggestopedia Research



**01**

# **Review of The Previous Material**

# Review of the Previous Material

Answer the following questions about present-day teaching method discussed in Lecture 9.

1. A teaching method that is designed for foreign language instruction and whose classes are taught in the students' first language
2. A teaching method that highlights the use of four basic drill types (simple repetition, substitution, transformation, and translation) which is followed up with some description of what was practiced, not a prescription of what to say is named... teaching method. It has a goal of having the student over-learn a variety of patterns to be used directly in performance.
3. All discussion and all classroom language are in the target language. The focus is on inductive teaching of grammar and the goal of the instruction is for the students to guess, or work out, the rules of the language. The said characteristics belong to teaching methods named....

1. **Grammar translation method**

2. **Audio lingualism**

3. **The Direct method**

## Review of the Previous Material

4. This teaching method is similar to grammar translation method. As is the case with grammar translation, the assumption of this method is that conscious learning can be accomplished by everyone, that all rules are learnable, and that conscious knowledge should be available at all times. What is this teaching method?
5. Class time is devoted primarily to providing input for acquisition. Teachers only speak target language and students are given freedom to use either L1 or L2. If the students make errors in L2, error correction won't take place. They are given time to produce in the L2 until they feel ready. What is this method?

4. Cognitive code

5. Natural approach

## Review of the Previous Material

6. This method consists basically of obeying commands given by the instructor that involve an overt physical response. What method is it?
7. In this teaching method, content precedes form. Accurate pronunciation and grammar are to come in due course. While there is error correction and grammar explanation in part one of each lesson, grammar use in this method apparently does not interfere with communication. What method is it?

6. **Total Physical Response**

7. **Suggestopedia**

The background features several light blue watercolor washes and numerous small, dark blue splatters scattered across the white space. A prominent brushstroke with multiple parallel lines is visible in the upper right quadrant.

# 02 Introduction

# Applied Linguistics Research

- Applied linguistics research → research aimed at solving a practical problem, with or without reference to an underlying theory.
- A portion of applied linguistics research has consisted of empirical comparisons of language teaching methods.
- The purpose of this section is to review the major findings of these studies in order to make the following points:

# Applied Linguistics Research

## 01

When older methods such as grammar-translation, cognitive-code, and audio-lingual are compared with each other, we see small differences, or no differences in terms of efficacy.

Cognitive-code, in some studies, shows a very slight superiority for adult students when compared to audio-lingual, and no difference are seen when adolescents are compared.

## 02

Data are not as plentiful as we would like them to be for newer methods, but the results we do have are quite consistent with our theoretical analysis of the previous section.

Newer approaches such as Total Physical Response, produce significantly better results than older approaches.



# **03** Review of Method Comparison Studies

# Review of Method Comparison Studies

- Before proceeding directly to the studies, it should be pointed out that classroom research, while it often produces valuable and interesting data, does not produce "definitive" data.
- This is because of the many "confounding variables" that prevent us, in nearly all cases, from concluding that it must have been a particular treatment or method that was responsible for the results obtained.
- It may be useful to list some of these potential confounds here.

# Review of Method Comparison Studies

- If students in approach A **did better** in achievement tests than students in approach B, assuming they were **equal to start with**, it may be **the teacher** rather than the actual method that was **responsible for the difference**.
- Even if the **same teacher taught both classes**, the teacher may have **preferred one approach to the other**, or may have even **liked the students in one class better!**



**A**

Class A might have been taught early in the morning, and class B right after lunch. Thus, students in class A might have been more alert.



**B**

Class B might have been located near the athletic field, causing more distractions.

# Review of Method Comparison Studies



## Texts

Texts may have made differences.



## Students Selection

There might also have been a selection bias on the part of the students; some may have deliberately enrolled in class A because they knew it was "special". The teacher can certainly add other potential confounds.

- Many of the methodological problems can be reduced.

*If approach A consistently does better in many studies, involving different classrooms with many students in different schools, that is, if A is reliably superior in a variety of conditions using a variety of measures, the results of classroom experiments are at least worth considering, especially if they are consistent with conclusions derived from other sources, e.g. second language acquisition theory.*

# Review of Method Comparison Studies

## – *(a) American Studies of AL, GT, and CC*

- There were some comparison studies of teaching methods, all of which lasted one or two years.
- These studies were all concerned with foreign language teaching in the US, comparing audio-lingual system with either grammar-translation (GT) or cognitive-code (CC).

1

### **Scherer and Wertheimer (1964)**

- Found some differences between AL and GT after 1 year.
- The differences appeared to reflect the modality each method emphasized.
- The differences were attenuated after the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, and combine scores for sub-tests showed no significant differences between the 2 methods.
- Conclusion → students tended to do well in those areas emphasized in the teaching method.

# Review of Method Comparison Studies

## – *(a) American Studies of AL, GT, and CC*

### **Chastain and Woerdehoff (1968) and Chastain (1970)**

- Found similar results after comparing AL and CC teaching.
- Found some differences after year 1.
- The differences could plausibly be traced to those skills emphasized in the method used.
- No differences after year two.
- Males tended to do better with AL, females did better with CC.

2

### **Mueller (1997)**

- Compared AL and CC in 1 year of teaching
- For those skills tested, CC was superior.
- AL classes scored at national (MLA) norms.

3

# Review of Method Comparison Studies

## – *(a) American Studies of AL, GT, and CC*

- The results of previous studies force us to ask whether this advantage would have been maintained in the second year.
- The studies gave us some idea as to the degree of superiority shown by one method over another.
- What is obvious is that both methods result in some progress; students do better at the end of the course than at the beginning.
- While differences are occasionally significant, they are certainly not huge.

# Review of Method Comparison Studies

## – *(b) The GUME Project*

- The first group of studies looked at language teaching efficacy over one or two years, using proficiency tests.
  - Another group of studies focused rather on specific structures over a shorter time span.
  - These studies are the result of the GUME project, which dealt with English as a foreign language in Sweden.
- 
- The GUME project aimed to compare AL type teaching with "cognitive" methods, the latter being quite similar to the cognitive-code system.

# Review of Method Comparison Studies

## – *(b) The GUME Project*

- The GUME project found no overall differences between what they termed "implicit" methods (similar to AL) and "explicit" methods (similar to CC for adolescent subjects).
- For adult subjects, explicit methods were found to be somewhat better.
- The difference for adults was statistically significant, but not very large.

1

2

- The degree of superiority the explicit methods showed with adult subjects in the GUME studies was shown.
- As is the case with American studies described in the previous section, the differences are not large.
- Clearly, both groups make progress.



# 04

## Some Preliminary Conclusions to Method Comparison Studies

# Some Preliminary Conclusions

- Taken as a whole, American and Swedish studies show only small differences, if at all, between the methods they investigated.
- Students make at least some progress no matter what method is used, a result that had two different kinds of reactions in the field of language teaching.
- The results of method comparison studies using audio-lingual, grammar-translation, and cognitive code are quite consistent with the theoretical analysis of these methods presented in the previous section:

*according to this analysis, none of these methods does a particularly effective job in encouraging subconscious language acquisition, although each will provide at least some, and the cognitive*

- This predicts the close similarity in effectiveness, and the slight superiority cognitive systems show for older subjects and the more "verbal" adolescents.
- It also predicts that other methods should do much, much better.
- Unfortunately, we do not have detailed method comparison data on all the newer methods, but some is available, and the results are quite consistent with this prediction.



**05**

# **More Recent Method Comparison Studies**

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *The TPR Series*

- Asher has done a thorough job in putting his method to the empirical test.
- He has compared TPR to other methods using foreign language classes and second language classes, using children and using adults. Here is a brief survey.

### Asher (1972)

- He conducted the TPR series with adults.
- He compared students in a TPR German course with controls in a “standard” college course.
- He reported that after only 32 hours of TPR instruction, TPR students **outperformed controls**, who had had 15-hours of class time, in a test of listening comprehension, and equaled controls in tests of reading and writing.
- Asher's students progressed nearly five times faster!
- This is in contrast to the very small differences seen in older comparative method experiments comparing AL, CC, and GT.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *The TPR Series*

### Asher, Kusudo, and de la Torre (1974)

- They compared TPR students studying Spanish at the 1<sup>st</sup> year of university levels with AL controls.
- After 45 hours of TPR instruction, **students outperformed controls** who had had 150 hours in listening comprehension, and equaled control's performance on a reading test.
- After 45 additional hours of instruction. TPR students **performed beyond the 50<sup>th</sup> percent**ile on a Spanish proficiency test designed for students with 150 hours on all skill.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *The TPR Series*

- TPR studies have also been done using children as subjects.

### Asher (1977b)

- He conducted 3 experiments in one, all involving Spanish as a foreign language in grades 5 - 9.

#### *Experiment I*

- TPR classes in grade 6. A class consisted of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were compared to grade 9 controls.
- The controls covered similar material, but their instruction focused on repetition, and formal instruction in reading and writing, emphasizing Spanish grammar.
- All groups had a total of 40 hours of class time.
- All TPR classes (seven different classes in all) **exceeded** the controls **on a test of written production** (subjects were asked to write a short story based on a cartoon, and were graded on the number of meaningful expressions produced).

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *The TPR Series*

### *Experiment II*

- It was conducted in 9 elementary school TPR classes, grade 5 - 8 and an adult education TPR class.
- All of them were compared with 2 control classes from grade 7 - 9.
- TPR classes had 20 hours of instruction. Controls had 200 hours of instruction similar to that described in Experiment 1.
- The test used was the “Spanish Picture Test for Listening”, asking students to judge whether a given sentence was true or false in relation of a picture.
- **All TPR classes**, with the exception of grade 5, **outperformed** controls **after 100 hours**, and the **adult class**, after only 20 hours, **outperformed controls after 200 hours**. Similar results were obtained using a reading test.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *The TPR Series*

### *Experiment III*

- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade TPR and control classes were compared on tests that measured fluency (e.g. "Write as many Spanish orders or sentences as you can recall...").
- Both groups had equal class time.
- **TPR** students **did significantly better** than controls on both fluency tasks.

- *The TPR results are clear and consistent, and the magnitude of superiority of TPR is quite striking.*
- *Even the one sub-group that did not turn out to be superior (grade five in Experiment II above) can be explained:*
- *the TPR advantage was outweighed by the fact that the controls were older, and, as mentioned in previous lectures, older children are known to be faster acquirers (Krashen, Long and Scarcella, 1979).*

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## – *Other Input Methods Compared*

- A variety of studies have been done examining the efficacy of methods that, like TPR, focus on providing comprehensible input and do not force early production.
- None of these methods has been analyzed in the previous section, since they are not "standard" or widely used,
- but they strengthen both the case for TPR and the hypothesis that methods allowing a silent period will do better than methods that do not, even when "speaking skills" are tested directly.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *Other Input Methods Compared*

### Gary (1975)

- Examined children studying Spanish as a foreign language over a period of 5 months.
- Her experimental group did not speak at all for the first 14 weeks but, instead, had to produce "active responses" that demonstrated comprehension.
- Also, they were not forced to speak for much of the next seven weeks.
- The **experimental group** was shown to be **superior to the control group** in listening comprehension and equal in speaking, despite the fact that the controls had more "practice" in speaking.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *Other Input Methods Compared*

### Postovsky (1974)

- Used students at the Defence Language Institute, studying Russian in an intensive 12 week course, six hours per day, in a fairly standard audio-lingual course.
- The "experimental" group did not speak for the first 4 weeks, but wrote their responses.
- The two groups were combined after four weeks.
- At mid-terms, the experimental group **excelled in reading, writing, and speaking tests** (especially with respect to "control of grammar" and "reading aloud"), and after 12 weeks, they were significantly **better in listening comprehension**.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *Other Input Methods Compared*

### **Swaffer and Woodruff (1978)**

- Examined the effects of a first year college German course taught at the University of Texas.
- Their approach: not like the standard ones, but it fits the requirement for providing optimal input for acquisition and for putting learning in its place very well.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> 4 weeks: TPR based, emphasizing switching to reading "for global meaning"
- Students were not required to speak at all in German for the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 weeks of the class, and to do so on a voluntary basis.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *Other Input Methods Compared*

- Low filter strength was further encouraged by the use of relaxation exercises and yoga breathing.
- No drill was used, and the only grammar taught was those features "considered essential for listening and reading comprehension.
- The method thus appears to supply comprehensible input in quantity.
- It uses techniques that encourage a lower affective filter, and does not encourage the over-use of the Monitor.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *Other Input Methods Compared*

### Swaffer and Woodruff (1978)

- The Swaffer and Woodruff program was evaluated in several ways, and all indicated clearly that **the method was a huge improvement over other approaches.**
- **78%** of the students finishing the first year "**expressed confidence** that they could read German and grasp main ideas at least most of the time.
- **48%** said they could **understand spoken German** at least most of the time.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *Suggestopedia Research*

### **Bushman and Madsen (1976)**

- Put Suggestopedia to the experimental test in a small-scale study done at Brigham Young University.
- (Lozanov has carried out extensive experimentation which reportedly demonstrate the superiority of Suggestopedia over AL-type methods.
- 6 different classes at BYU, teaching Finnish as a foreign language, with an average of 7 students in each class were used.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *Suggestopedia Research*

- Two control classes were taught using the "full" Suggestopedia treatment and two with a modified treatment.
- The modified Suggestopedia classes followed all aspects of Suggestopedia but lacked music, the easy chairs, and the "living room environment".
- They were held instead in ordinary classrooms.
- Each class received 10 hours of instruction and covered similar linguistic material.
- To control for teacher effect, two instructors taught all three treatments.

# More Recent Method Comparison Studies

## - *Suggestopedia Research*

### Bushman and Madsen (1976)

- **Suggestopedia students in both full and modified classes** clearly **outperformed** controls in a vocabulary test and were "vastly superior" in a test of "communication".
- (In this test, students were rated on their success in conveying a message to a native speaker.)
- There were **no significant differences** between Suggestopedia classes and controls on a grammar test or in a pronunciation test;
- This result **supports the hypothesis that Suggestopedia was superior to the control group**, since control classes had far more work on pronunciation and grammar in the form of pattern drills and repetition exercises.

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# Thanks

Does anyone have any questions?  
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