

1: Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition | Lydia White

Universal Grammar (UG) in second language acquisition (SLA). I will suggest that we must not lose sight of the fact that UG is a theory which provides constraints on linguistic.

Whereas other species do communicate with an innate ability to produce a limited number of meaningful vocalizations e. This ability is remarkable in itself. What makes it even more remarkable is that researchers are finding evidence for mastery of this complex skill in increasingly younger children. Infants as young as 12 months are reported to have sensitivity to the grammar needed to understand causative sentences who did what to whom; e. After more than 60 years of research into child language development, the mechanism that enables children to segment syllables and words out of the strings of sounds they hear, and to acquire grammar to understand and produce language is still quite an enigma. Early Theories One of the earliest scientific explanations of language acquisition was provided by Skinner As one of the pioneers of behaviorism , he accounted for language development by means of environmental influence. Skinner argued that children learn language based on behaviorist reinforcement principles by associating words with meanings. Correct utterances are positively reinforced when the child realizes the communicative value of words and phrases. Consequently, he proposed the theory of Universal Grammar: Universal Grammar is considered to contain all the grammatical information needed to combine these categories, e. For example, according to the Universal Grammar account, children instinctively know how to combine a noun e. This Chomskian approach to language acquisition has inspired hundreds of scholars to investigate the nature of these assumed grammatical categories and the research is still ongoing. Contemporary Research A decade or two later some psycholinguists began to question the existence of Universal Grammar. They argued that categories like noun and verb are biologically, evolutionarily and psychologically implausible and that the field called for an account that can explain for the acquisition process without innate categories. Researchers started to suggest that instead of having a language-specific mechanism for language processing, children might utilise general cognitive and learning principles. Whereas researchers approaching the language acquisition problem from the perspective of Universal Grammar argue for early full productivity, i. It is suggested that children are sensitive to patterns in language which enables the acquisition process. An example of this gradual pattern learning is morphology acquisition. Morphemes are the smallest grammatical markers, or units, in language that alter words. In English, regular plurals are marked with an "s" morpheme e. Children are considered to acquire their first instances of third singular forms as entire phrasal chunks Daddy kicks, a girl eats, a dog barks without the ability of teasing the finest grammatical components apart. When the child hears a sufficient number of instances of a linguistic construction i. In this case, the repeated pattern is the "s" marker in this particular verb form. Approaching language acquisition from the perspective of general cognitive processing is an economical account of how children can learn their first language without an excessive biolinguistic mechanism. Conclusion However, finding a solid answer to the problem of language acquisition is far from being over. Our current understanding of the developmental process is still immature. Investigators of Universal Grammar are still trying to convince that language is a task too demanding to acquire without specific innate equipment, whereas the constructivist researchers are fiercely arguing for the importance of linguistic input. The biggest questions, however, are yet unanswered. How much does the child need to be exposed to language to achieve the adult-like state? What account can explain variation between languages and the language acquisition process in children acquiring very different languages to English? The mystery of language acquisition is granted to keep psychologists and linguists alike astonished a decade after decade. Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. Journal of Child Language, 35 1: Evidence from the dative. Language Learning and Development, 7 1: Journal of Child Language, 32 2: The New Science of Language and Mind. How to reference this article:

2: Universal Grammar in Second-Language Acquisition: A History, 1st Edition (Paperback) - Routledge

1 Universal Grammar and language acquisition Introduction This book will be concerned with characterizing and explaining the linguistic systems that second language (L2) learners develop, considering in par-

History[edit] As second-language acquisition began as an interdisciplinary field, it is hard to pin down a precise starting date. Examples include research into error analysis , studies in transitional stages of second-language ability, and the " morpheme studies " investigating the order in which learners acquired linguistic features. The 70s were dominated by naturalistic studies of people learning English as a second language. In his theories, often collectively known as the Input Hypothesis , Krashen suggested that language acquisition is driven solely by comprehensible input , language input that learners can understand. Research in the s was characterized by the attempt to fill in these gaps. This period also saw the beginning of approaches based in other disciplines, such as the psychological approach of connectionism. The latter category also saw the new theories of processability and input processing in this time period. The s also saw the introduction of sociocultural theory , an approach to explain second-language acquisition in terms of the social environment of the learner. VanPatten and Benati do not see this state of affairs as changing in the near future, pointing to the support both areas of research have in the wider fields of linguistics and psychology , respectively. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. September Learn how and when to remove this template message For the second-language learner, the acquisition of meaning is arguably the most important task. Meaning it is the heart of a language, not the exotic sounds or elegant sentence structure. There are several types of meanings: All the different meanings contribute to the acquisition of meaning resulting in the integrated second language possession. Sociocultural theory[edit] Sociocultural theory was originally coined by Wertsch in and derived from the work of Lev Vygotsky and the Vygotsky Circle in Moscow from the s onwards. Sociocultural theory is the notion that human mental function is from participating cultural mediation integrated into social activities. The UG model of principles, basic properties which all languages share, and parameters, properties which can vary between languages, has been the basis for much second-language research. From a UG perspective, learning the grammar of a second language is simply a matter of setting the correct parameters. Take the pro-drop parameter, which dictates whether or not sentences must have a subject in order to be grammatically correct. This parameter can have two values: In German the sentence "Er spricht" he speaks is grammatical, but the sentence "Spricht" speaks is ungrammatical. In Italian , however, the sentence "Parla" speaks is perfectly normal and grammatically correct. Once he has set all the parameters in the language correctly, then from a UG perspective he can be said to have learned Italian, i. Universal Grammar also provides a succinct explanation for much of the phenomenon of language transfer. Spanish learners of English who make the mistake "Is raining" instead of "It is raining" have not yet set their pro-drop parameters correctly and are still using the same setting as in Spanish. The main shortcoming of Universal Grammar in describing second-language acquisition is that it does not deal at all with the psychological processes involved with learning a language. UG scholarship is only concerned with whether parameters are set or not, not with how they are set. Schachter [6] is a useful critique of research testing the role of Universal Grammar in second language acquisition. When they come into direct contact with the target language, this is referred to as "input. By the way, the amount of input learners take in is one of the most important factors affecting their learning. However, it must be at a level that is comprehensible to them. He does so by proposing a Language Acquisition Device that uses L2 input to define the parameters of the L2, within the constraints of UG, and to increase the L2 proficiency of the learner. According to this concept, a part of the mind filters out L2 input and prevents intake by the learner, if the learner feels that the process of SLA is threatening. Input enhancement might include bold-faced vocabulary words or marginal glosses in a reading text. Research here is closely linked to research on pedagogical effects , and comparably diverse. Monitor hypothesis Other concepts have also been influential in the speculation about the processes of building internal systems of second-language information. Some thinkers hold that language processing handles distinct types of knowledge. Language

learning, on the other hand, is studying, consciously and intentionally, the features of a language, as is common in traditional classrooms. Krashen sees these two processes as fundamentally different, with little or no interface between them. In common with connectionism, Krashen sees input as essential to language acquisition. Through this process, they acquire these rules and can use them to gain greater control over their own production. Monitoring is another important concept in some theoretical models of learner use of L2 knowledge. In addition, it claims that the effectiveness of comprehensible input is greatly increased when learners have to negotiate for meaning. In doing this, learners can receive feedback on their production and on grammar that they have not yet mastered. This can lead to better understanding and possibly the acquisition of new language forms. Comprehensible output In the s, Canadian SLA researcher Merrill Swain advanced the output hypothesis, that meaningful output is as necessary to language learning as meaningful input. However, most studies have shown little if any correlation between learning and quantity of output. Today, most scholars[citation needed] contend that small amounts of meaningful output are important to language learning, but primarily because the experience of producing language leads to more effective processing of input. Competition model Some of the major cognitive theories of how learners organize language knowledge are based on analyses of how speakers of various languages analyze sentences for meaning. MacWhinney, Bates, and Kliegl found that speakers of English, German, and Italian showed varying patterns in identifying the subjects of transitive sentences containing more than one noun. Connectionism and second-language acquisition[edit] See also: Connectionism These findings also relate to Connectionism. Connectionism attempts to model the cognitive language processing of the human brain, using computer architectures that make associations between elements of language, based on frequency of co-occurrence in the language input. From this input, learners extract the rules of the language through cognitive processes common to other areas of cognitive skill acquisition. Since connectionism denies both innate rules and the existence of any innate language-learning module, L2 input is of greater importance than it is in processing models based on innate approaches, since, in connectionism, input is the source of both the units and the rules of language. Noticing hypothesis Attention is another characteristic that some believe to have a role in determining the success or failure of language processing. Richard Schmidt states that although explicit metalinguistic knowledge of a language is not always essential for acquisition, the learner must be aware of L2 input in order to gain from it. Processability theory Some theorists and researchers have contributed to the cognitive approach to second-language acquisition by increasing understanding of the ways L2 learners restructure their interlanguage knowledge systems to be in greater conformity to L2 structures. Processability theory states that learners restructure their L2 knowledge systems in an order of which they are capable at their stage of development. They do so by a series of stages, consistent across learners. Clahsen proposed that certain processing principles determine this order of restructuring. Automaticity[edit] Thinkers have produced several theories concerning how learners use their internal L2 knowledge structures to comprehend L2 input and produce L2 output. One idea is that learners acquire proficiency in an L2 in the same way that people acquire other complex cognitive skills. Automaticity is the performance of a skill without conscious control. It results from the graded process of proceduralization. In the field of cognitive psychology, Anderson expounds a model of skill acquisition, according to which persons use procedures to apply their declarative knowledge about a subject in order to solve problems. Performance speed and accuracy improve as the learner implements these production rules. DeKeyser tested the application of this model to L2 language automaticity. This model is consistent with a distinction made in general cognitive science between the storage and retrieval of facts, on the one hand, and understanding of how to carry out operations, on the other. In contrast, knowledge about the rules of a language, such as grammatical word order is procedural knowledge and is stored in procedural memory. One area of research is the role of memory. Williams conducted a study in which he found some positive correlation between verbatim memory functioning and grammar learning success for his subjects. Dynamic systems theory[edit] Main article: Dynamic approach to second language development Second language acquisition has been usually investigated by applying traditional cross-sectional studies. In these designs usually a pre-test post-test method is used. However, in the s a novel angle emerged in the field of second language research. These studies mainly adopt Dynamic systems theory perspective to

analyse longitudinal time-series data. Scientists such as Larsen-Freeman , Verspoor , de Bot , Lowie , van Geert claim that second language acquisition can be best capture by applying longitudinal case study research design rather than cross-sectional designs. In these studies variability is seen a key indicator of development, self-organization from a Dynamic systems parlance. The interconnectedness of the systems is usually analysed by moving correlations.

3: Language Acquisition Theory | Simply Psychology

It argues for a role for Universal Grammar in second language acquisition. Theories as to the role of Universal Grammar and the extent of language transfer are presented and discussed, together with relevant empirical research.

Journal of Language and Social Psychology Exploring big educational learner corpora for SLA research: Perspectives on relative clauses. International Journal of Learner Corpus Research 1: The Modern Language Journal Asymmetries in the perception of non-native consonantal and vocalic length contrasts. Second Language Research Interfaces in the prosodic hierarchy: New structures and the phonological parser. International Journal of Bilingualism 8: Functional categories in L2 acquisition: Evidence of presence is not necessarily presence of evidence. Behavioral and Brain Sciences The subset principle in second language acquisition. The Grammar of Telegraphic Structures. Journal of English Linguistics Acquisition Theory and Experimental Design. Studies in Second Language Acquisition Theoretical and developmental issues in the syntax of subjects: Evidence from near-native Italian. Theory Construction in SLA. Annual Review of Anthropology Transfer in L2 grammars. Structural Minimality, CP and the initial state in second language acquisition. A dim monocular view of Universal-Grammar access. Full access to the evidence for falsification. What we have to explain in foreign language learning. International Journal of Bilingualism Access to Universal Grammar: The role of the L1 grammar in the L2 acquisition of segmental structure. Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism 1: Formal Instruction from a Processing Perspective: An Investigation into the Spanish Past Tense. Explicit and Implicit Negative Feedback. Parameter-setting in second language acquisition “explanans and explanandum. Induction in a modular learner. Comparing anaphora resolution in early and late Brazilian Portuguese-European Portuguese bidialectal bilinguals. How adult second language learning differs from child first language development. Reexamining the acquisition of null subject pronouns in a second language. Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism 7: Investigating the acquisition of the Split-IP parameter and the V2 parameter in second language Afrikaans. A preposition is something you can end a sentence with: Learning English stranded prepositions through structural priming. The poverty-of-the-stimulus argument and multicompetence. Interlanguage studies bulletin Utrecht 7: L2 Acquisition, Age, and Generativist Reasoning. Phonological transfer and levels of representation: On the role of experience and age-related effects: Evidence from the Spanish CP. The syntax-semantics of bare and definite plural subjects in the L2 Spanish of English natives. Computer Assisted Language Learning 8: UG and acquisition in pidginization and creolization. The Universal Parser and interlanguage: Mental design and second language epistemology: Domain Specificity and Second-Language Acquisition. Syntax and Discourse in Near-Native French: Assessing L2 knowledge of Spanish clitic placement: Spanish-English and Portuguese-English interlanguage phonology. On evaluating arguments for special nativism in second language acquisition theory. Theoretical and experimental issues in contemporary research. Universal Grammar and second language acquisition: Generative Research on Second Language Acquisition. Negation in early German-English Interlanguage: Universal Grammar in the classroom: Adult language acquisition and Universal Grammar. International Journal of Applied Linguistics Foreign Language Annals Linguistics and second language acquisition. ISBN 0 1. The access question, and how to beg it. Does second language grow?. Language acquisition in a multilingual context: Journal of Language Teaching and Research 6: Can UG and L1 be distinguished in L2 acquisition?. Competence and performance in language acquisition. Against underdetermined reflexive binding. Is Implicational Generalization Unidirectional and Maximal? Evidence from Relativization Instruction in a Second Language. Input processing of Chinese by ab initio learners. Canadian Modern Language Review L2 access to UG: Transactions of the Philological Society Second language acquisition research and the second language acquisition of French. Journal of French Language Studies 2: Computer Assisted Language Learning 7: Natural language processing techniques in computer-assisted language learning: Status and instructional issues. Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism 3: International Journal of Applied Linguistics 6: Learnability, negative evidence and the L2 acquisition of the English passive. An introduction to second language research. Interlanguage studies bulletin Utrecht 8: In

support of the early presence of functional categories in second language acquisition. The acquisition of null and overt pronominals in Japanese by English speakers. In Pedagogical Grammar, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002226890000444>: Dominant language influence in acquisition and attrition of binding: Interpretation of the Korean reflexive caki. Language and Cognition Journal of Psycholinguistic Research

4: Universal grammar - Wikipedia

A Study of Chomsky's Universal Grammar in Second Language Acquisition International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL) Page | 3 puberty in order for language to develop fully.

This paper tries to take stock of recent Chomskyan thinking in terms of second language L2 learning. The second section considers the implications for L2 learning, particularly important because they appear to contradict some of the cherished assumptions in the field; it should, however, be noted that Chomsky himself has not extended the theory to L2 learning, apart from occasional scattered allusions. While the first part attempts to present a consensus view of the LI theory, the second is much more an individual interpretation of the theory for L2 learning. But how could he have acquired this piece of knowledge about English? But these are the kinds of information that the child learning his first language precisely does not have available to him. If native speakers find the sentence ungrammatical, their judgement must be based on something other than their experience of the world; the remaining possibility is that it is derived from some property of the human mind that they all share. If the child has not learnt the distinction from the input, he must have done so from some property of his own mind. One of the parameters that is open in Universal Grammar is the pro-drop parameter which is concerned roughly speaking with the relationship of government between Subjects and Verbs Chomsky a. English chooses not to have pro-drop; a Subject is required for every sentence and it cannot be inverted with the verb in declarative sentences. Hence a particular grammar amounts to a specification of the ways in which it selects from the different possibilities inherent in Universal Grammar. A partial analogy might be made to the relationship of the European Convention on Human Rights to laws passed in the UK Houses of Parliament; the Convention does not force particular laws on the UK, but it establishes certain principles that the actual laws must conform to; it sets parameters within which the laws can vary. One way of visualizing Universal Grammar is to see it as part of the brain: A bulb becomes a flower; some cells become a lung. Language acquisition is the growth of the mental organ of language triggered by certain language experiences. Hence the theory of Universal Grammar is frequently referred to as part of biology. So, to acquire language, the child needs not only Universal Grammar but also evidence about a particular language; he needs to hear sentences of English to know how to fix the parameter for the order of Verb, Subject, and Object. The evidence he encounters can be positive or negative Chomsky a. Negative evidence falls into two categories, direct and indirect. Indirect negative evidence is provided by the non-occurrence of something in the language the child hears; the fact he never hears Subject-Object-Verb order is negative evidence that English is a Subject-Verb-Object language. First language acquisition relies chiefly on positive evidence; the child apparently receives little direct negative evidence in the form of correction of syntax Brown and Hanlon The few corrections that occur are largely about dialectal or socially stigmatized forms or socially prescribed politeness formulas, a small fraction of English. Language principles that apply to long or complex sentences are needed only when the child has the capacity actually to produce them; the parameters for SVO order, for example, cannot apply when the child says only one word at a time. Although language is a separate mental organ, its development is influenced by other organs. Sequence of development reveals more about other cognitive systems than about language acquisition: So far as acquisition is concerned, the interim developing grammars of the child are irrelevant. It is nevertheless an open question in terms of development whether the child starts with all the principles of Universal Grammar available, or whether they gradually unfold as part of maturation: If Universal Grammar is present in toto from the beginning, all human languages should conform to the language principles, whether the stable grammars of adults or the temporary grammars of learners: On this assumption, while many principles are missing from the interim grammar, the rules that are present do not break them. Let us now try to specify what the theory is actually dealing with. It contrasts grammatical competence with pragmatic competence rather than communicative competence, since there are many uses of languages other than communication: Secondly, for those familiar with earlier versions it is plain that rules play a much less central role. Chomsky shows elegantly how rules are in fact consequences of principles of Universal Grammar and of the way in which particular parameters are set. A grammar consists of a

specification of the values of parameters, which may be represented as rules, but these are of secondary importance. Let us now see what this means for learning. By using the same language principles, a French child constructs a grammar of French, an English child a grammar of English. But the children also have to learn aspects of language that are peripheral, that do not conform to Universal Grammar. By listening to the language around him, he can decide how to fix the parameter of sentence order as SVO or SOV, for instance. This may be interpreted through the concept of markedness: Hence we may expect to find a continuum of markedness from core to periphery. The distinction does not, however, entail that core unmarked grammar is necessarily learnt first. Sequence of development again is an unreliable guide to acquisition. Though not part of the theory itself, earlier versions were often associated with the notion of language acquisition as hypothesis testing. It is important, however, to define the sense in which hypothesis testing is acceptable. One interpretation has been that the child creates a hypothesis about the grammar more or less at random; he produces sentences according to his hypothesis, and the feedback he receives from the situation tells him whether or not it is correct. In this sense, hypothesis testing has never recovered from the blow administered to it by Martin Braine, who argued that it required negative as well as positive evidence to be successful Braine ; Baker ; the child cannot discover if his hypothesis is right or wrong if he is not told when he makes mistakes. But, as we have seen, it is widely accepted that correction is infrequent; the child does not meet enough negative evidence to reject incorrect hypotheses. The lack of negative evidence and of incorrect sentences shows the inadequacy of hypothesis testing through feedback from outside. Another interpretation of hypothesis testing is nevertheless acceptable: Universal Grammar allows different core grammars in different languages; the child has several initial hypotheses to choose from, several parameters to fix; his internal Universal Grammar severely restricts the range of hypotheses he can entertain, the final choice depending upon evidence from the environment. Hypothesis testing is a possible explanation for language acquisition, in the sense that the child chooses from the limited number of possibilities provided by Universal Grammar in accordance with the evidence he meets. Let us try to summarize the roles of the environment and of cognition within the theory, two threads that have run through the discussion. Even behaviourism attributes to the child an ability to form associations of stimulus and response. Theories differ in how they strike the balance between person and situation, Chomsky coming down heavily at the learner end, behaviourism at the situational end. Universal Grammar makes certain things obligatory in any grammar; others it leaves free to vary within pre-set limits; the environment provides evidence about the particular limits that apply in a given case. One of the implications of the theory, therefore, is a shift in the balance of what is learnt from grammar to lexis. Much grammatical knowledge simply needs fixing though evidence from the environment. What does need learning is how particular lexical items can enter into various structures. The role of cognition is complex. There are two senses in which cognition is involved; one is the development of overall levels of thinking, the stages of cognitive development familiar from Piaget or Bruner; the other is the systems of information processing involved in handling language, which can be called channel capacity. So far as acquisition is concerned, the mental faculty of language does not need to be related to other faculties of the mind, as for instance Piagetans would claim that language presupposes certain cognitive operations Sinclair-de-Zwart So far as development is concerned, language is bound up with other elements of cognitive maturation. Partly, however, as we have seen, language development interacts with cognition in that certain language principles cannot be deployed until the child has developed the channel capacity to handle them. So, for instance, short-term memory may be vitally important to development, because the length of sentence that can be uttered limits the principles that can be employed. Although language is an independent mental organ, in development it nevertheless needs to draw on other mental organs. Indeed, the same argument applies to physical organs: Neither of these physical changes affects acquisition itself, but may have profound effects on language development. Thus certain aspects of cognitive and physical development can influence the order in which a child develops language. As the purpose of this section has been to present the theory as a whole in order to bring out its implications for L2 learning, it is not the place to evaluate it or to discuss the acquisition research carried out within the theory reported in Tavakolian and Goodluck and Solan A criticism that is often voiced is its abstraction from the everyday world. Competence is separated from performance, grammatical

competence from pragmatic competence, acquisition from development, core from peripheral grammar, each removing something from actual language use: Some people would dispute whether such abstraction is valid; has the baby been thrown out with the bathwater? Its power depends instead on the argument from the poverty of the stimulus that speakers know things they could not have learnt. Can a single paradoxical argument bear the weight that is put upon it? The Chomskyan argument is in the same tradition, the presentation of an argument that is no more unrelated to what it is trying to explain than that advanced by Galileo. However, while the conclusion is the same as in first language acquisition, it may have a different explanation, in as much as the minds of L2 learners or the situations have different properties. The most obviously different property is that the L2 learner possesses a grammar of a first language incorporating the principles of Universal Grammar and specifying a particular set of values for its parameters. Two possibilities for L2 learning need to be considered: So far as the principles of Universal Grammar are concerned, the question amounts to asking whether L2 grammars are constrained in the same way as LI grammars. The notion of parameter-fixing can formulate the relationship between first and second language learning in a more precise way. To take a specific example, if Universal Grammar is directly accessible to the L2 learner, it should not affect a Spanish learner of English that the two languages have fixed the pro-drop parameter differently; he simply needs the proper triggers to fix it anew. However, if it is not directly accessible, he can approach English only through the value of the parameter for Spanish. There is, however, a third possibility: Presumably it would mean that after a particular age, the principles and parameters of Universal Grammar are no longer directly accessible to the learner; the older L2 learner has no option but to work through his L1 or through a non-language faculty. One reason for the lack of discussion of the CPH in the current theory may be that it is concerned with physical or cognitive maturation, that is to say, development; acquisition does not by definition take account of maturational factors. It has always been difficult to reconcile the CPH with successful L2 learning after the critical period. Chomsky himself has queried the importance of the LI as a mediator: In the current theory, mediation would be successful if the values of parameters were the same in the two languages; if the learner has been cut off from Universal Grammar, it is hard to see how he can retrieve the original parameters to fix their values differently in the second language. Evidence for the CPH in relation to L2 learning has been widely discussed by, inter alia, McLaughlin, and Paivio and Begg; the usual conclusion is that it is disconfirmed by evidence that adults and older children are better than younger children at L2 learning when the circumstances are the same, e. Asher and Price and Ekstrand, and that there are not the expected differences between children acquiring their first language and adults acquiring their second when situational and other accidental factors are discounted. Within the present theory, the evidence from Ritchie and Schmidt suggests that a strong form of the hypothesis is not tenable, as learners after the critical period demonstrate they have access to at least some of the principles of Universal Grammar. The answer to the conundrum may, however, be caused by differences in the environment; the L2 learner might know things he could not apparently have learnt because the situation supplies him with special types of evidence either not available to the native child or not usable by him. In the natural setting one may assume that L2 learners probably meet positive and negative evidence in more or less the same proportions as native children; they also meet language modified by native speakers to their communication needs. One suspects, however, that correction is less likely with foreign adults, since it is more rude to correct an adult than a child. In the classroom setting on the other hand, direct negative evidence sometimes looms larger, since some teachers provide frequent and systematic correction, at least on a surface syntactic level. Older classroom learners may also encounter what can be called explanatory evidence, that is to say, explanations of the grammatical rules of the language. The role of cognition is also different in L2 acquisition, since the learner is not necessarily subject to the same maturational constraints. Let us first consider this in terms of cognitive levels. To study L2 learning in adults is in a sense to study language acquisition divorced from maturation, as Gass and Ard have argued. While the formula that L2 learning equals acquisition is attractive, it rests upon the assumption that the channel capacity for language use depends upon maturation and does not need to be re-acquired in a second language.

5: Second Language Acquisition & Universal Grammar

Universal Grammar in Second Language Acquisition is a remarkable contribution to the history of linguistics and will be essential reading for students and scholars of linguistics, specialists in second language acquisition and language teacher-educators.

Differences between L1 and L2 acquisition 4. The seminar deals with both, first and second language acquisition. The main focus lies on German and English. However, the course is not supposed to deal with a contrastive view but rather a descriptive way of analyzing language acquisition in general and with a specific concentration on English. The following term paper, primarily, deals with second language acquisition and the Role of Universal Grammar UG in the course of the on-going acquisition process. The UG approach is an issue which is often discussed within the linguistic science and the opinions about it are highly diverged. Not only in Second Language Acquisition SLA, but also in First Language Acquisition the Universal Grammar approach is often seen as not verified, or on the other hand, as opposed to, it is viewed as the only solution to the mysterious question of language acquisition. The main question of the paper is: There are a bunch of opinions on this topic and all of them show evidence, more or less persuasive. It is not possible to explain all the different aspects of research and all the data and experiments concerning UG and SLA in this term paper. Nevertheless, this paper describes some of the essential views on how UG plays a role in SLA and additionally what kind of influence first language L1 can possibly have on the process of SLA. Bilingual aspects are not considered in this context. To describe and define the most important expressions, the paper starts with definitions, before the so-called Logical Problem of Language Acquisition and the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition are portrayed. To conclude, the main ideas are summarized and discussed, so that the reader will be able to pick the different opinions to formulate his own attitude towards the role of UG in general and, especially, in SLA. Definitions To understand the whole context of this term paper, it is necessary to define the most important phrases. The third and last aspect in this chapter is the difference between Competence and Performance in language acquisition. The term Universal Grammar UG is considered as one of the most discussed about and controversial issue. UG is often associated with Noam Chomsky, a famous American linguist and philosopher. The principle-and-parameter explanation means that the principles are the basis for all languages and parameters are triggered differently from language to language. Moreover, universal language principles are declared to be innate, which means they are supposed to be specific to human beings and built up in the human mind. Language Acquisition Device; LAD which is, in combination with language input, the basis for general language acquisition. As already stated, UG is highly diverged and controversial. Oppositional theories often point toward the fact that UG is not able to explain all phenomena of language acquisition, such as the different kind of success between L1 and L2 learners explained in Ch. Conversely, UG has never been meant to explain all aspects of language and its acquisition. It is supposed to give explanation about how principal features can be acquired even without specific teaching or learning mechanisms. These principal features are often described as core grammar and the supplementary characteristics as peripheral. The core grammar principles and parameters is distinguished as already present in the human brain and the parts of the periphery values of the parameters can be learned, acquired or triggered by the language input. Oxford University Press, p. Cambridge University Press, p. Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition.

6: Theories of second-language acquisition - Wikipedia

Lydia White argues that second language acquisition is constrained by principles and parameters of Universal Grammar. The book focuses on characterizing and explaining the underlying linguistic competence of second language learners in terms of these constraints.

Argument[edit] The theory of universal grammar proposes that if human beings are brought up under normal conditions not those of extreme sensory deprivation , then they will always develop language with certain properties e. The theory proposes that there is an innate, genetically determined language faculty that knows these rules, making it easier and faster for children to learn to speak than it otherwise would be. As Chomsky puts it, "Evidently, development of language in the individual must involve three factors: For example, if a predisposition to categorize events and objects as different classes of things is part of human cognition, and directly results in nouns and verbs showing up in all languages, then it could be assumed that rather than this aspect of universal grammar being specific to language, it is more generally a part of human cognition. UG is the term often used by Chomsky for those aspects of the human brain which cause language to be the way that it is i. In the same article, Chomsky casts the theme of a larger research program in terms of the following question: Chomsky has speculated that UG might be extremely simple and abstract, for example only a mechanism for combining symbols in a particular way, which he calls " merge ". Merge is part of universal grammar whether it is specific to language, or whether, as Chomsky suggests, it is also used for an example in mathematical thinking. Some students of universal grammar study a variety of grammars to extract generalizations called linguistic universals , often in the form of "If X holds true, then Y occurs. Later linguists who have influenced this theory include Chomsky and Richard Montague , developing their version of this theory as they considered issues of the argument from poverty of the stimulus to arise from the constructivist approach to linguistic theory. The application of the idea of universal grammar to the study of second language acquisition SLA is represented mainly in the work of McGill linguist Lydia White. The first hypothesis states that the faculty of language in the broad sense FLb is strictly homologous to animal communication. This means that homologous aspects of the faculty of language exist in non-human animals. The second hypothesis states that the FLb is a derived, uniquely human, adaptation for language. This hypothesis holds that individual traits were subject to natural selection and came to be specialized for humans. The third hypothesis states that only the faculty of language in the narrow sense FLn is unique to humans. It holds that while mechanisms of the FLb are present in both human and non-human animals, the computational mechanism of recursion is recently evolved solely in humans. The concept of a universal grammar or language was at the core of the 17th century projects for philosophical languages. There is a Scottish school of universal grammarians from the 18th century, as distinguished from the philosophical language project, which included authors such as James Beattie , Hugh Blair , James Burnett , James Harris , and Adam Smith. The idea rose to prominence and influence, in modern linguistics with theories from Chomsky and Montague in the s, as part of the " linguistics wars ". During the early 20th century, in contrast, language was usually understood from a behaviourist perspective, suggesting that language acquisition, like any other kind of learning, could be explained by a succession of trials, errors, and rewards for success. Language acquisition device , Generative grammar , X-bar theory , Government and binding , Principles and parameters , and Minimalist program Chomsky argued that the human brain contains a limited set of constraints for organizing language. This implies in turn that all languages have a common structural basis: Speakers proficient in a language know which expressions are acceptable in their language and which are unacceptable. The key puzzle is how speakers come to know these restrictions of their language, since expressions that violate those restrictions are not present in the input, indicated as such. The absence of negative evidence—evidence that an expression is part of a class of ungrammatical sentences in a given language—is the core of his argument. Speakers of the local language do not use them, or note them as unacceptable to language learners. Universal grammar offers an explanation for the presence of the poverty of the stimulus, by making certain restrictions into universal characteristics of human languages. Language learners are consequently never tempted to generalize in an

illicit fashion. Creoles are languages that develop and form when disparate societies come together and are forced to devise a new system of communication. The system used by the original speakers is typically an inconsistent mix of vocabulary items, known as a pidgin. Unlike pidgins, creoles have native speakers those with acquisition from early childhood and make use of a full, systematic grammar. According to Bickerton, the idea of universal grammar is supported by creole languages because certain features are shared by virtually all in the category. For example, their default point of reference in time expressed by bare verb stems is not the present moment, but the past. Using pre-verbal auxiliaries, they uniformly express tense, aspect, and mood. Negative concord occurs, but it affects the verbal subject as opposed to the object, as it does in languages like Spanish. Another similarity among creoles can be seen in the fact that questions are created simply by changing the intonation of a declarative sentence, not its word order or content. However, extensive work by Carla Hudson-Kam and Elissa Newport suggests that creole languages may not support a universal grammar at all. In a series of experiments, Hudson-Kam and Newport looked at how children and adults learn artificial grammars. They found that children tend to ignore minor variations in the input when those variations are infrequent, and reproduce only the most frequent forms. In doing so, they tend to standardize the language that they hear around them. Hudson-Kam and Newport hypothesize that in a pidgin-development situation and in the real-life situation of a deaf child whose parents are or were disfluent signers, children systematize the language they hear, based on the probability and frequency of forms, and not that which has been suggested on the basis of a universal grammar. Many researchers of universal grammar argue against a concept of relexification, which says that a language replaces its lexicon almost entirely with that of another. This goes against universalist ideas of a universal grammar, which has an innate grammar. Criticisms[edit] Geoffrey Sampson maintains that universal grammar theories are not falsifiable and are therefore pseudoscientific. He argues that the grammatical "rules" linguists posit are simply post-hoc observations about existing languages, rather than predictions about what is possible in a language. In keeping with these points, James Hurford argues that the postulate of a language acquisition device LAD essentially amounts to the trivial claim that languages are learnt by humans, and thus, that the LAD is less a theory than an explanandum looking for theories. Christiansen and Nick Chater have argued that the relatively fast-changing nature of language would prevent the slower-changing genetic structures from ever catching up, undermining the possibility of a genetically hard-wired universal grammar. Instead of an innate universal grammar, they claim, "apparently arbitrary aspects of linguistic structure may result from general learning and processing biases deriving from the structure of thought processes, perceptuo-motor factors, cognitive limitations, and pragmatics". Universal grammar has no coherent formulation and is indeed unnecessary. Universal grammar is in conflict with biology: There are no linguistic universals: This research has been led by Daniel Everett. Among other things, this language is alleged to lack all evidence for recursion, including embedded clauses, as well as quantifiers and colour terms. And what can we put in its place? A complex interplay of factors, of which culture, the values human beings share, plays a major role in structuring the way that we talk and the things that we talk about. And universals in the grammatical structure of different languages have come from more general processes and constraints of human cognition, communication, and vocal-auditory processing, operating during the conventionalization and transmission of the particular grammatical constructions of particular linguistic communities.

7: Project MUSE - Universal Grammar in Second Language Acquisition: A History (review)

The question of whether L2 learning recapitulates L1 learning can be narrowed down to considering whether L2 learners' grammars reflect the principles of Universal Grammar, and whether parameters are still free to be fixed in a second language from triggering evidence.

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8: Suzanne Flynn | Linguistics

Not only in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), but also in First Language Acquisition the Universal Grammar approach is often seen as not verified, or on the other hand, as opposed to, it is viewed as the only solution to the mysterious question of language acquisition.

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis This hypothesis claims that adults have two distinct ways of developing their L2 competence, i. This leads to say that acquisition is a subconscious process similar to the process of acquiring L1 in natural setting. The initiation of utterances in adult L2 performance occurs according to what the performer has picked up via natural language use Krashen, Acquisition is characterized by the lack of conscious awareness of linguistic rules which the native speaker has acquired. Native speakers are generally, when asked unable to state the rules or to explain the use of certain rules, yet they have the sense for correctness of grammatical utterances Krashen, ; ; Thus, acquisition is believed to be governed by universal language strategy available to all language learners Huda, Learning is a process focused on the internalization of linguistic rules, not linguistic content through teaching-learning and self-study activities. Learners have explicit knowledge of the rules of the language being learned. The Natural Order Hypothesis According to the Natural Order Hypothesis, L2 learners acquire the grammatical structure of the language in a predictable way. Certain structures might be acquired earlier while others are acquired later. In other words, it can be said that some structures might be less difficult than the others, but the order of difficulty does not necessarily correspond with what is deemed to be easy or difficult Higashi, However, it does not mean that every acquirer will acquire grammatical structure in exactly the same order Krashen and Terrell, The order of acquisition of structural items might be influenced by the quality and the types of input entailed by the learning environment to a certain extent. The Monitor Hypothesis Monitor Hypothesis claims that acquisition and learning have important roles in the production of sentences or utterances. This learnt system or formal knowledge functions as monitor concerning the output of the acquired system. Learners can use the monitor to make changes in their utterances only after the utterances have been generated by the acquired system. The Monitor can work either before or after the actual production of utterances Krashen, ; ; Krashen and Terrell, This implies that implicit knowledge plays only a limited role in L2 production. There are three conditions that must be met in order to utilize Monitor successfully, in the sense the learnt system can be reached Krashen, ; Krashen and Terrell, First, the learner must have sufficient time in order to think about and use conscious rules effectively. Taking time to think about rules may disrupt the communication. Second, the learner has to focus on forms-the correctness of forms. He may be more concerned with what he is saying not how he is saying it. The last the learner has to know the rules. Linguist readily confess that the structure of language is extremely complex, and that they have only been able to describe a subset, a fragment of the overall structures of a language, even well-studied language like English. They presume that even the most intelligent students fail to learn everything presented to them. It needs to note that learners vary in their use of the Monitor, some being over-users, some being under-users and some being optimal users. Monitor over-users are those who attempt to monitor all the time; they constantly check their output on their learnt knowledge in the target language. This may cause the learners to be hesitant, often self-correct in the middle of utterances, and are so concerned with grammaticality that they cannot speak with any real fluency. Over-users may derive from learning without acquisition. Monitor under-users are second language learners who do not utilize their monitor maximally. The optimal monitor users are the adult second language learners who utilize their monitor when it is appropriate. The pedagogical goal is to produce optimal users. In ordinary conversation, an optimal user will not be excessively concerned with applying conscious rules to performance. However, in writing and in planned speech, he will make any correction which raises the accuracy of his output. This suggests that adult language learners know how to utilize their knowledge appropriately and accurately. The Input Hypothesis Input Hypothesis claims that learners acquire second language in only one way, that is by understanding message or receiving comprehensible input that is a bit ahead of their current level of acquired competence. With the aid of context which includes extralinguistic information, knowledge of the world and previously

acquired linguistic competence, the learners can understand input containing unacquired structures. According to Krashen, Input Hypothesis has two corollaries. First, speaking as a productive skill is the result of acquisition and not its cause. Speaking emerges on its own after the acquirer has built up linguistic competence through comprehensible input. Second, if input is comprehensible and there is plenty of it, the required grammar is automatically supplied. Therefore, language teachers do not need to deliberately teach the text structure along the natural order because it will be automatically reviewed in case the learners get an adequate amount of comprehensible input. Krashen and Terrell write that a corollary of the input hypothesis is that input need not be finely tuned. For example in the language classroom, teachers simplify their speech which is natural, and in most cases they solely use structures which are being analyzed at the present moment. However, according to Higashi a roughly tuned input is also recommended. Some of the structures will be slightly beyond their current level. However, it does not signify that they cannot comprehend them. For instance, in daily communication learners normally make use of all kinds of grammatical structures in organizing and delivering their speech incompatible with their communicative needs. They may start with the simple present, then answer a question using a continuous tense, later produce their conversation with a narrative in the simple past and the like. Higashi emphasizes that roughly tuned input is more advantageous than finely tuned input. The language used will sound more natural, learners are exposed to a better kind of input, and the structures will be previewed, practised, and ultimately reviewed. Therefore, the input need not be grammatically sequenced. Learners should be exposed to situations involving natural communication in which the grammatical structures will be constantly provided and automatically reviewed. Input Hypothesis also accounts for the existence of silent period from input to production in second language acquisition. Krashen and Terrell appraise that the silent period may be the time during which learners build up competence by means of active listening through input. Children can talk and show off their competence when they are ready, that is, after they have acquired a rather intricate map of how the language works. Spolsky, Krashen asserts that this idea helps minimize the feeling of uneasiness many learners have when they are asked to speak in the target language right away before they have built up adequate competence through comprehensible input. When they are forced to talk early they tend to fall back on their first language. Krashen, This leads to say that speaking ability turns up after sufficient linguistic competence has been developed through listening and understanding. The acquirers need silent period to internalize the input properly. One of the problems is that the length of input varies from acquirer to acquirer. Higashi, Teachers are very often impatient to let their students remain silent their early weeks of learning. The Affective Filter Hypothesis Although comprehensible input is necessary for the language acquisition process, it is not enough to ensure the success of language acquisition. Learners must be open to the natural speech he encounters, otherwise the acquisition process will not operate. Quinn, It implies that not all input reaches language acquisition device LAD, it is filtered somewhere along the way, and only a part of it is acquired or changed into intake. In this case affective filter is a mental block that precludes acquirer from impartially using the comprehensible input they receive for the language acquisition. Krashen, In short, comprehensible input plus a low affective filter are necessary and sufficient conditions for SLA to take place. Acquirers who have low affective filter are more open to the input, and that the input strikes deeper. Krashen and Terrell, and vice versa. This is in line with the rationalist view to language learning which concludes that one cannot really teach language but can only present conditions for the learners to develop it in their mind. If this is related to second language acquisition research, there are still controversies on whether or not universal grammar UG is available to adult second language learners. The proponents of the view that UG is no longer available to adult L2 learners argue that learning mechanism underlying adult L2 acquisition and L1 acquisition are radically different. He claims that the availability of additional learning strategies to adults blocks the functioning of UG which yields differences between L1 and L2 acquisition. In contrast is the view that Universal Grammar is still available to adult L2 learners. Ritchie, ; Flynn, ; White, ; see White, for further discussion. The proponents of the availability of UG argue, if UG is no longer available to adults, and second language acquisition proceeds by means of general cognitive abilities, as the opponents of this view claim, L2 learners should not be able to work out abstract properties of the L2 from restricted input data. White suggests one

form of evidence for the hypothesis that UG operates in L2 acquisition. The evidence can be seen based on the fact that L2 learners attain the kind of complex and subtle knowledge which is attributable to UG. For instance, if UG is available, they should unconsciously know that subjacency applies as soon as they find that WH-Movement is present in English; they should reject subjacency violation. This evidence can be gained by providing test case. Second Language Learning It has been stated that learning a language cannot be done through memorizing rules Wexler et. In this case, learners are argued to have linguistic creativity. The creative construction that learners have refers to the subconscious process by which language learners gradually organize the language they are exposed to. They generate sentences by constructing rules. The form of the rules is determined by mental structure language acquisition device which is responsible for human language acquisition which is believed to be innate see Dulay et. The availability of mental structure language acquisition device is also claimed by cognitive-code learning theory which states that learning a language is learning the rules of the language Boey, This is done by testing a series of hypothesis against the language data until they are able to produce grammatical sentences. The notion of creativity entails the assumption that internal processors contribute to learning progress which is independent of the contribution made by the input Dulay and Burt, The best evidence for creative construction is the occurrence of systematic errors Ritchie, A number of studies show that some learning behaviors are common to children no matter what language they are learning. For example, Brown who conducted a study on three children acquiring English as their first language, found that children learn grammatical morphemes in relatively the same order. Slobin reported that children learning Hungarian and Serbo-Croatian first learn grammatical markers that come after nouns and verbs and then followed by those that come before nouns and verbs. The acquisition of plural inflection by children in a second language follows the same order as in the first language Natalico and Natalico, It can be inferred that the child approaches the task of language learning equipped with a set of principles for the analysis of linguistic data. Therefore, language acquisition is a process in which a series of hypothesis are tested against the data available Kiparsky, In relation to second language acquisition, the process related to creative construction is acquisition, opposed to learning Krashen, Krashen claimed that acquisition occurs subconsciously in constructing the system of a language, while learning is the result of conscious study Krashen, This view is countered by claiming that there is no clear distinction between conscious and subconscious process Bialystock, ; McLaughlin, Chomsky claimed that a child is born with language-forming capacity

9: Chomsky's Universal Grammar and Second Language Learning

Is Universal Grammar accessible in Second Language Acquisition? by Peter Lee and Jessie Yong.

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