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Second Language Learning Theories Syllabus - Spring 2018

Week 1; March 7 - Introductions

Introductions to the course, to the materials, assignments, and everything else.

In this the first week of the class we introduce the theme of second language learning. We will discuss the brief history of SLA as a separate field of study and the approaches taken in SLA. As a means of showing how SLA often works, we will go over 'Milestones in Motor and Language Development' From *Language Files* 8, pp. 278-280 and see how we can interpret the data presented there.

Talk about initial reactions to the winter reading book (Brown & Larson-Hall, 2012).

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.
Finish the Winter Reading Project.

Week 2; March 14 – Native and Non-Native Speakers

Winter reading project due

We start our exploration of SLA themes by addressing the issue of the native speaker. The concept of the idealized native speaker has had a profound effect on SLA research and indeed thought and feelings about language development and use. Despite this there is no functioning working definition of a native speaker. It, therefore, seems that this is a central issue that will color our exploration of other areas of concern as we move through this course.

Readings:

Cook, V. (1999). Going beyond the native speaker in language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(2): 185-209.

Timmis, I. (2002). Native-speaker norms and international English: A classroom view. *ELT Journal*, 56(3): 240-249.

Davies, A. (2004). The native speaker in applied linguistics. In A. Davies and C. Elder. (eds.). *The handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 431-450.

Seidlhofer, B. (2005). English as a lingua franca. *ELT Journal*

Additional readings (optional):

Piller, I. (2002). Passing for a native speaker: Identity and success in second language learning. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 6(2): 176-206.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 3; March 21 – L1 versus L2 learning: Innateness

This week we explore the idea of innateness as being one of the chief differences between L1 and L2 learning. The idea of innateness is closely tied into the concept of Universal Grammar (UG). In our discussion we will, therefore, look first at the different proposals regarding possible access to UG in subsequent language learning. We will also look briefly at modern proposals regarding UG and its possible role in L2 learning. This centers around a discussion of Chomsky's proposed differences between i-language and e-language. Finally, we question the idea of innateness for language in general.

Readings:

Chomsky, N. (1986). *Knowledge of language*. Westport, CN.: Praeger, pp. 19-24.

Cook, V. and M. Newson. (1996). Chomsky's universal grammar (2nd Edition). Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 291-297.

- Hawkins, R. (2001). The theoretical significance of Universal Grammar in second language acquisition. *Second Language Research* 17(4): 345-367.
- Gopnik, A. (2003). The theory theory as an alternative to the innateness hypothesis. In L. Antony and N. Hornstein (eds.). *Chomsky and his critics*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 238-254.
- O'Grady, W. (2008). Innateness, universal grammar, and emergentism. *Lingua*, 118: 620-631.
- Bybee, J. (2010). *Language, usage and cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-13.

Additional readings (optional):

Evers, A. and J. van Kampen. (n.d.). E-language, I-language and the order of parameter setting. Retrieved July 5, 2013 from: <http://www.hum.uu.nl/medewerkers/j.vankampen/downloadables/Syntax.pdf>.

Hawkins, R. and C. Chan. (1997). The partial availability of Universal Grammar in second language acquisition: The 'failed feature hypothesis'. *Second Language Research* 13(3): 187-226.

Kanno, K. (1998). Consistency and variation in second language acquisition. *Second Language Research* 14(4): 376-388.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 4; March 28 – L1 versus L2 learning: Age effects

This week we go over the issue of age related issues in second language learning. Age issues are often thought to be limited to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), but, as recent research has shown, the CPH is largely disproven in its strong form. Age effects are an undeniable variable, but they are both positive and negative and like almost everything else we find in our exploration of the phenomenon of language learning highly variable. The variable of age is being included in this course not just because it is an important issue worldwide but because there is a large amount of misunderstanding about age effects in large part because people have taken the CPH at face value and not read more up to date treatments of the issue.

Readings:

Singleton, D. (1995). Introduction: A critical look at the critical period hypothesis in second language acquisition research. In D. Singleton and Z. Lengyel (eds.) *The age factor in second language acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, pp. 1-29.

Bialystok, E. (1997). The structure of age: In search of barriers to second language acquisition. *Second Language Research* 13(2): 116-137.

Birdsong, D. and Molis, M. (2001). On the evidence for maturational constraints in second-language acquisition. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 44: 235-249.

Hyltenstam, K. and N. Abrahamsson. (2003). Maturational constraints in SLA. In A. Davies and C. Elder. (eds.). *The handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 539-588.

Chiswick, B. and P. Miller. (2008). A test for the critical period hypothesis for language learning. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 29(19): 16-29.

Additional readings (optional):

Tomiyama, M. (2000) Child second language attrition: A longitudinal case study. *Applied Linguistics* 21/3: 304-332.

Piske, T. I. MacKay and J. Flege. (2001). Factors affecting degree of foreign accent in an L2: A review. *Journal of Phonetics* 29: 191-215.

Qureshi, M. A. (2016). A meta-analysis: Age and second language grammar acquisition. *System* 60, 147-160.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 5; April 4 – L1 versus L2 learning: Transfer

We start our exploration of issues in second language learning by exploring the controversies surrounding the differences and similarities between first and second, what I like to term subsequent, language learning. This week we look specifically at the idea of transfer. We will examine the early studies focusing on negative transfer, but will focus out attention on the more recent studies of positive transfer. The basic idea is that subsequent language learning is fundamentally different from first language learning in that there is a wealth of knowledge already in place that can and should be transferred. This means, in theory, that learning and additional language should be easier than the first one. It also means that we cannot and should not teach a second language without consideration of the other language(s) a learner has.

Readings:

Wardhaugh, R. (1970). The contrastive analysis hypothesis. *TESOL Quarterly* 4(2): 123-130.

Gomez, C. and R. Reason. (2002). Cross-linguistic transfer of phonological skills: A Malaysian perspective. *Dyslexia* 8: 2-33.

Odlin, T. (2002). Language transfer and cross-linguistic studies: Relativism, universalism, and the native language. In R. Kaplan. (ed.). *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford: OUP, pp. 253-261.

Pavlenko, A. and S. Jarvis. (2002). Bidirectional transfer. *Applied Linguistics* 23(2): 190-214.

Additional readings (optional):

Paradis, J and M. Crago. (2003). What can SLI tell us about transfer in SLA? *Proceedings of the 6th Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition Conference (GASLA 2002)*. Retrieved on July 5, 2013 from: <http://www.lingref.com/cpp/gasla/6/paper1047.pdf>.

Crompton, P. (2011). Article errors in the English writing of advanced L1 Arabic learners: The role of transfer. *Asian EFL Journal. Professional Teaching Articles* 50: 4-34.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 6; April 11 – Memory systems (types)

This week we go over the different types of memory system and their effects on the second language learning process. The basic idea is that the different types of memory function differently, even though they affect each other as shall be addressed in the following week. Each one has its own functions (purposes) and ways of working. It, therefore, behooves language teachers to develop a basic understanding of these different systems and how they work in general and in relation to language so we can help our students learn better.

Readings:

Masoura, E. and S. Gathercole. (1998). Phonological short-term memory and foreign language learning. *International Journal of Phonology* 34(5/6): 383-388.

Terry, W. (2000). *Learning and memory* (3rd Edition). Boston: Pearson, pp. 193-219.

Kail, R. and L. Hall. (2001). Distinguishing short-term from working memory. *Memory and Cognition* 29(1): 1-9.

Baddeley, A. (2003). Working memory and language: An overview. *Journal of Communication Disorders* 36: 189-208.

Gruber, O. and Groschke, T. (2004). Executive control emerging from dynamic interactions between brain systems mediating language, working memory and attentional processes. *Acta Psychologica* 115: 105-121.

Blumenfeld, R. and C. Ranganath. (2007). Prefrontal cortex and long-term memory encoding: An integrative review of findings from neuropsychology and neuroimaging. *The Neuroscientist* 13(3): 280-291.

Additional readings (optional):

Kormos, J. and A. Sáfár. (2008). Phonological short-term memory, working memory and foreign language performance in intensive language learning. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 11(2): 261-271.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 7; April 18 – Memory systems (processes)

This week we continue with the issue of memory in second language learning. We week we focus on the processes of memory and how they are involved in the second language learning process. Encoding memories is not just something that happens in the way the teacher would like. There are many different stages and aspects related to the encoding of memories and each of them plays an important role in the entire process. It is, therefore, important for language teachers to develop ideas about these processes. After all, for something to be learned it needs to be stored in memory in one way or another. How something is stored can make all the difference.

Readings:

Hulstijn, J. and B. Laufer. (2001). Some empirical evidence for the involvement load hypothesis in vocabulary acquisition. *Language Learning* 51(3): 539-558.

Hulstijn, J. (2002). Towards a unified account of the representation, processing and acquisition of second language knowledge. *Second Language Research* 18, 3: 193-223.

Schneider, V., A. Healey, and L. Bourne. (2002). What is learned under difficult conditions is hard to forget: Contextual interference effects in foreign language vocabulary acquisition, retention and transfer. *Journal of Memory and Language* 46: 419-440.

Robinson, P. (2003). Attention and memory during SLA. In A. Davies and C. Elder. (eds.). *The handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 631-678.

Additional readings (optional):

Hulstijn, J and R. Schmidt. (eds). (1994). Consciousness in second language learning. *AILA Review* 11. Retrieved on July 2, 2013 from <http://www.aila.info/download/publications/review/AILA11.pdf#page=27>.

Egi, T. (2004). Verbal reports, noticing, and SLA research. *Language Awareness* 13(4): 243-264.

Horton, W. (2005). Conversational common ground and memory processes in language production. *Discourse Processes*, 40(1): 1-35.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 8; April 25 – Complexity

This week, as we close our discussion on SLA and language in general, we look at one of the newer issues, namely that of complexity. Also called a dynamic systems approach, the idea of complexity is as the name would imply. In the complexity view language development is not a linear process that under the right conditions moves steadfastly forward. Rather language learning is a highly complex process that is affected by any number of different variables both internal and external.

Readings:

De Bot, K, Lowie, W, and Verspoor, M. (2007). A dynamic systems theory approach to second language acquisition. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 10(1): 7-21.

Van Geert, P. (2008). The dynamic systems approach in the study of L1 and L2 acquisition: An introduction. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(2): 179-199.

Dörnyei, Y. (2014). Researching complex dynamic systems: 'Retrodictive qualitative modeling' in the language classroom. *Lang. Teach.*, 47(1): 80-91.

Homework: Prepare for the midterm.

Week 9; May 2

Reading Week

This is your chance to catch up on missed work and to prepare for the mid-term project. Use this time well.

Week 10; May 9 – Personality

Midterm project due

This week we look at the issue of personality in language learning. Personality is a complex construct composed of many different aspects and with many different variables. In second language learning personality factors have been linked to success or failure. Such aspects as anxiety, degree of introversion and learning styles can have a large effect on how our students perform in the class.

Readings:

MacIntyre, P and C. Charos. (1996). Personality, attitudes, and affect as predictors of second language communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 15(3): 3-26.

Robinson, P. (2001). Individual differences, cognitive abilities, aptitude complexes and learning conditions in second language acquisition. *Second Language Research* 17(4): 368-392.

Norton, B. and K. Toohey. (2002). Identity and language learning. In R. Kaplan. (ed.). *The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford: OUP, pp. 115-123.

Dörnyei, Z. and P. Skehan. (2003). Individual differences in second language learning. In C. Doughty and M. Long. (eds.). *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 589-630.

Additional readings (optional):

Dewaele, J. and A. Furnham. (2000). Personality and speech production: A pilot study of second language learners. *Personality and Individual Differences* 28: 355-365.

Ehrman, M., B. Leaver, and R. Oxford. (2003). A brief overview of individual differences in second language learning. *System* 31: 313-330.

Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and speaking English as a second language. *RELC Journal* 37(3): 308-328.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 11; May 16 - Motivation

Continuing our discussion from the previous week, we review some of the basic theories and practices related to motivation. Many people consider motivation the key factor in getting learners to succeed in the language, but research has shown that motivation is a rather difficult concept to pin down.

Readings:

Dörnyei, Z. (2003). Attitudes, orientations and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. *Language Learning* 53(Issue S1): 3-32.

Masgoret, A. and R. Gardner. (2003). Attitudes, motivation and second language learning: A meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and associates. *Language learning* 53(1): 123-163.

Farver, S. (2011). Motivation in second language learning. *The Journal of Multiculturalism in Education* 7: 1-8.

Additional readings (optional):

Csizér, K and Z. Dörnyei. (2005). The internal structure of language learning motivation and its relationship with language choice and learning effect. *The Modern Language Journal* 89: 19-36.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 12; May 23 – Metacognition/Strategies

This week we take a look at the idea of Metacognition in second language learning. We use the term metacognition here as a blanket term to encompass a wide range of reported phenomenon from awareness to strategies use. Many theorists believe that there is a strong link between awareness and success in SLA and particularly in more formal foreign language learning situations. We discuss awareness as both from the receptive and productive sides.

Readings:

- Oxford, R. (1989). Use of language learning strategies: A synthesis of studies with implications for strategy training. *System* 17(2): 235-247.
- Goh, C. (1997). Metacognitive awareness and second language listeners. *ELT Journal* 51(4): 361-369.
- Jessner, U. (1999). Metalinguistic awareness in multilinguals: Cognitive aspects of third language acquisition. *Language Awareness* 8(3/4): 201-209.
- Rosa, E. and R. Leow. (2004). Awareness, different learning conditions, and second language development. *Applied Psycholinguistics* 25(2): 269-292.

Additional readings (optional):

- Bardovi-Harlig, K. and Z. Dörnyei. (1998). Do language learners recognize pragmatic violations? Pragmatic versus grammatical awareness in instructed L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly* 32(2): 233-259.
- Goh, C. (2008). Metacognitive instruction for second language listening development: Theory, practice and research implications. *RELC Journal* 39(2): 188-213.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 13: May 30 - Input

This week we go over the idea of input and question whether comprehensible input is enough. Certainly input is a necessary aspect of learning anything and especially language, but the question is whether input (even good input) is enough. This leads to the further question of what type and how much input is necessary.

Readings:

- Neuman, S. and P. Koskinen. (1992). Captioned television as comprehensible input: Effects of incidental word learning from context for language minority students. *Reading Research Quarterly* 27(1): 94-106.
- Krashen, S. (1998). Comprehensible output? *System* 26: 175-182.
- Oh, S. (2001). Two types of input modification and EFL reading comprehension: Simplification versus elaboration. *TESOL Quarterly* 35(1): 69-96.
- Harrington, M and Dennis, S. (2002). Input-driven language learning. *SSLA*, 24: 261-268.

Additional readings (optional):

- Matsumura, S. (2003). Modeling the relationships among interlanguage pragmatic development, L2 proficiency, and exposure to L2. *Applied Linguistics* 24(4): 465-491.
- Rodrigo, V., So. Krashen, and B. Gribbons. (2004). The effectiveness of two comprehensible-input approaches to foreign language instruction at the intermediate level. *System* 32: 53-60.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 14: June 6 (Holiday-class to be rescheduled) – Output/Interaction

This week we take a rather quick look at the issue of output in general and interaction. Within the field of SLA this has been one of the biggest issues of the last few years and is having a large impact on teaching approaches to second and especially foreign languages.

Readings:

- Izumi, S. (2003) Comprehension and production processes in second language learning: in search of the psycholinguistic rationale of the output hypothesis. *Applied Linguistics* 24/2: 168-196.
- Watson-Gegeo, K and S. Nielsen. (2003). Language socialization in SLA. In C. Doughty and M. Long. (eds.). *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 155-177.
- Barkhuizen, G. (2004). Social influences on language learning. In A. Davies and C. Elder. (eds.). *The handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 552-575.

Giles, H. and A. Billings. (2004). Assessing language attitudes: Speaker evaluation studies. In A. Davies and C. Elder. (eds.). *The handbook of applied linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 187-209.

Additional readings (optional):

Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing 12*: 267-296.

Cheng, W. and M. Warren. (2003). Indirectness, inexplicitness and vagueness made clearer. *Pragmatics 13*(3): 381-400.

Homework: Read the required articles and answer the focus questions.

Week 15; June 13 (Holiday-class to be rescheduled) - **Variability**

This week we return to the issue of differences between L1 and L2 learning and address the issue of variability. In this case we are looking in variability in the forms that people produce rather than the processes of learning. This is an important issue in SLA because it ties in with the issue of ultimate achievement/development in SLA. The idea is that all speakers of a language (even native speakers) vary their language but the issue for non-native speakers in the SLA tradition is whether this variation is planned or not. Further, the issue of systematicity in variation is of concern in SLA.

Readings:

Adamson, H.D. and O. Elliot Jr. (1997). Sources of variation in interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching 35*(2): 87-98.

Ellis, R. (1999). Item versus system learning: Explaining free variation. *Applied Linguistics 20*(4): 460-480.

Verspoor, M., W. Lowie and M. van Dijk. (2008). Variability in second language development from a dynamic systems perspective. *The Modern Language Journal 92*: 214-231.

Additional readings (optional):

Rahimpour, M. (n.d.). Task complexity and variation in L2 learner's oral discourse.

✓ **Final Project**: The final project will be a continuation of the midterm project. Please do not forget to do it and hand it in at the symposium on June 16.