Announcement(s)

Second Language Acquisition

Do you think first language and second language acquisition are the same? If not, how are they the same and how are they different? Make a list of similarities and differences on the board.

First let's get some terms down.

- Universal Grammar - the fundamental grammar that all humans share and upon which one's native language is built. [Note: This builds on the innateness idea and defines the constraints of language learning.]

- interlanguage - the state of the learner's second language knowledge when less than native-like

- (L1) transfer - the idea that features of one's first language influence acquisition of a second language

Illustrate these ideas graphically: UG forms a foundation from which our L1s are derived. Then when we learn an L2, it is derived either from UG again, or from L1, or from both (latter two possibilities are transfer). The intermediate steps can be called an interlanguage.

One major similarity between first and second language acquisition is that acquisition is constrained to certain sequences. For example, the acquisition of negation passes through four stages.

1. External negation: "No speak English"

2. Internal negation: "I no(t) play piano"

3. Modal verb attachment: "I can't understand"

4. Auxiliary verb attachment: "I didn't hear you"

This is one piece of the puzzle that lends credibility to the idea of a Universal Grammar which constrains our acquisition of a new language. However, assuming that this so, then there are other questions to consider such as whether our first language affects second language acquisition, that is, transfer.

What do you think? Give me some examples.

- Saying "gomennasai" at a funeral in Japan

- Saying "I'm sorry" when receiving a gift

-

Now, let's take a look at acquisition of phonology.

Ebzo-Ebuzo

Do the Ebzo-Ebuzo experiment: Have students take a sheet of paper and explain to them the ABX experiment design. Use the following examples.

- boat vote boat (A)

- walk work work (B)

Do the experiment and then collect results item by item separated into the A items and the B items. Add up the results and see how people did. Theoretically, the Japanese students should show an error rate of 50% and those errors should be in the cases where the correct answer has no epenthentic vowel: That is, they should be likely to hear a vowel (even though it's not there) and mark the answer corresponding to the item with a vowel.

So it seems that even advanced learners may not actually be able to perceive some aspects of English phonology. Is this evidence of transfer? Is there something about Japanese language that prevents adult native speakers from perceiving English sounds? Possibly. Another explanation is that the ability to hear sound distinctions is lost early in life. Thereafter we must use other mental strategies to learn sounds.

Error production

The Upside-down "U" of language development.

- Learners begin by making few errors because they mostly memorize chunks of un-analyzed language.

- Learners make many more errors because they are beginning to use language creatively.

- Learners make few errors because they are reaching mastery of the target language.

Theories of SLA

Krashen's monitor theory

- acquired competence vs. learned competence

- monitor hypothesis

- natural order hypothesis

- input hypothesis

- affective filter hypothesis

1. egdo egudo egudo (B)
2. obuni obni obni (B)
3. iguna igna iguna (A)
4. ibdo ibudo ibdo (A)
5. akmo akumo akumo (B)
6. abuge abge abge (B)
7. oguza ogza oguza (A)
8. abno abuno abuno (B)
9. agmi agumi agmi (A)
10. ebuza ebza ebza (B)
11. egdo egudo egdo (A)
12. abuge abge abuge (A)
13. agmi agumi agumi (B)
14. iguna igna igna (B)
15. ebuza ebza ebuza (A)
16. ogza oguza ogza (A)
17. akumo akmo akmo (B)
18. abno abuno abno (A)
19. obni obuni obuni (B)
20. ibudo ibdo ibudo (A)