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Language Acquisition and Language Learning

The inclusion of language acquisition and learning in the second edition of this volume is a noteworthy event, for many readers probably do not engage in second-language research but pursue literary or linguistic studies and teach language classes. For those readers, I would like to place the field of research I describe here in its proper relation to the teaching they do.

Foreign language pedagogy has long been guided, directly or indirectly, by theories of language and learning. These theories have given rise to various methods or approaches, which have found their way into textbooks and syllabi and, in bits and pieces, into teachers' practices. H. H. Sten gives an exhaustive account of the history of language teaching and its relation to the theoretical thought of various disciplines. Until recently, however, language teachers have not based their teaching consistently on theoretical research. Most of them learned their craft on the job, teaching the way they were taught and the way their teachers were taught. Both literature scholars and linguists were convinced that learning a language was only a matter of memory, repetition, and hard work and that the skill that students would learn to use by going to the country where the language was spoken. Language teachers knew nothing of how people learn languages or of why some learners fail and others succeed.

My own career is a case in point. Trained in German literature and philology and called on to teach German language classes, I remember my despair at not understanding the most elementary principles of language use. I had to teach conversation classes but did not understand the systematic of conversation; I had to teach texts but had not been told what a text is; I had to correct errors but did not know why errors had been made. I remember my amazement one day in the early 1970s when I happened on studies in conversation and discourse analysis, and I immersed myself in the new field of second-language-acquisition research. Everything I taught started making sense. Everything I researched fell into place.

I began to see that literature and language scholars and teachers have much to learn from each other. Literature scholars can broaden their critical tools by applying to literary texts the same methods of discourse analysis that language-acquisition scholars use for analyzing the production of public discourses, including the discourse of the language classroom itself. At the same time, language-acquisition scholars can broaden their reflection on language learning to include not just the functional uses of language but also the figurative uses as presentation
and representation of reality (Widdowson, Stylistics). Moreover, literature scholars can bring to language teaching their unique training in the critical analysis of texts.

I would tell the novice language teacher, Go beyond the textbook you teach and learn about the way language is spoken and used. The literature you study and the language you teach are grounded in language as social practice, and "language has its rules of use without which rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes 278). Read work in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics as well as in linguistic approaches to literature. Understand the foreign culture you teach not only through its literature but also through its social sciences and ethnography. Deepen your knowledge of your students' own culture by reading similar studies about the United States or Canada, both in English and in the foreign language. The better you understand language and language use, the better you will be able to transmit to your students the critical knowledge you have gained by being a participant observer and researcher of that unique educational setting, the foreign language classroom. In the field of language acquisition, theory and practice enrich each other (see Ferguson).

It is important to distinguish between a teaching perspective and a learning perspective on language acquisition. Whereas teachers are mainly concerned with relating student performance to teacher input in a principled way, a learning perspective describes the process of attempting to acquire a second language. Before teachers can devise effective activities and techniques for the classroom, they must first understand how people learn languages. Thus language-acquisition research adopts primarily a learning perspective, and only in this light does it consider implications for language teaching.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING

The capacity to learn one's native tongue and then another language or several more is a unique property of the human species that has not ceased to amaze parents, linguists, and language teachers. How do children manage to produce an infinite number of sentences with the finite means of available grammars? What is the relation between their cognitive and their linguistic development? What makes learning a second language as an adult different? And then, as Michael H. Long has asked, Does second language instruction make a difference? If the answer from second-language-acquisition research is yes, then we must determine exactly what we can and should teach at what level for what purpose.

These questions have not only inspired scholars in linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education to pursue research in language acquisition, they have fueled political passions as well. In various countries, scholars' research results are used (or misused) as a basis for such policy decisions as the maintenance or abolition of bilingual and immersion programs, the restoration of high school and college foreign language requirements, and the governance structure of language and literature departments. Beyond academia, language-acquisition research helps us understand the links between language, literacy, and sociocultural identity, as well as the interrelations of foreign language teaching, national interests, and international peace and understanding (Kramsch).

The term language acquisition and second-language learning have come to designate first- and second-language acquisition, respectively. According to a distinction popularized by Stephen Krashen, whose work I discuss later, the term acquisition refers to the conscious applications of rules in the study of a second language in instructional settings. However, this dichotomy is not so clear-cut. After all, adults can also "acquire" a second language in naturalistic settings, and a certain amount of "acquisition" also takes place in classrooms.

Another distinction is made between a second language and a foreign language. A second language is one learned by outsiders within a community of native speakers, such as English as a second language (ESL) taught in the United States. A foreign language is a subject learned in an instructional setting removed from the relevant speech community, such as French in United States high schools. Second-language-acquisition research is uncertain about the nature and the degree of difference between second-language learning and foreign language learning.

Since the 1970s scholars have considered a variety of questions under the generic category of second-language-acquisition (SLA) research. For instance, are the processes of first- and second-language acquisition—or of second- and foreign language acquisition—similar? If so, for which learners, under which conditions, at which stage of acquisition? How much consciousness and which cognitive operations are involved? To what extent, if at all, is learning a language like learning, say, how to ride a bike?

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

First- and second-language acquisition are relatively recent domains of inquiry. At a time when language study was closely linked to philology and phonetics, European scholars such as Henry Sweet, Harold Palmer, Otto Jespersen, and Wilhelm Voicat attempted to apply the findings of the linguistic sciences to language teaching. Despite developments in linguistic thought in the 1920s and 1930s, however, no theoretical foundation was established for language-teaching approaches until the 1960s and 1970s, when questions about what it means to acquire, learn, and know a language were addressed. Until the 1960s, theories of language acquisition were subsumed under general theories of learning, and the prevalent theory was behaviorism. Children were thought to learn their native language by imitation and reinforcement. It was believed that learning a language, whether one's native tongue (L1) or a
The significance of learners’ errors

Ok, I know it's a difficult topic, but I'll try my best to explain it.

The 1960s saw a boom of empirical studies that explored the nature of second-language learners. An influential article published by S. Paul Copper in 1967, entitled "The Significance of Learners' Errors," proposed that both L1 and L2 learners make errors to test certain hypotheses about the language they are learning. In the following dialogue, for example, a child tests a series of hypotheses regarding the formation of past tenses.

Mother: Did Billy have his egg cut up for his at breakfast?
Child: Yes I almost had it.
Mother: What?
Child: Almost I showed him.
Mother: Did you show him?
Child: Yes I did show him.
Mother: Why do you send him?
Child: He saw me.

According to Copper, errors should be viewed not as regrettable mistakes but as necessary steps in the learning process. This approach led to a revolution in the study of language learning in general.

L1 and L2 learners make errors to test certain hypotheses about the language they are learning. In a study by Ellis and Temperley in 1989, it was shown that only 3% of the errors made by Spanish learners of English could be attributed to interference from their native language, whereas 67% were due to developmental errors inherent in the learners' acquisition of the language.

This study, by suggesting that errors are not just random mistakes, but a natural part of the learning process, has had a profound impact on the field of language learning.

Together with Chomsky's work, Larry Schimmer's "Interlanguage" is considered to mark the beginning of SLA research. Schimmer showed that learners create their own "interlanguage" through their errors, which, in turn, shape their eventual proficiency in the target language. His work has had a significant impact on the field of SLA, influencing the way we understand language acquisition and learning.

The significance of learners’ errors lies in understanding how learners construct their knowledge of a language, not just by correcting errors but by exploring and testing their hypotheses. This approach has transformed our understanding of language learning and has led to the development of new teaching methods and strategies.

In conclusion, the study of learners’ errors is crucial for understanding language acquisition and the process of learning a new language. It highlights the importance of errors as a natural and necessary part of the learning process, and it encourages a more inclusive and supportive approach to language teaching.

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Language acquisition and language learning are complex processes that involve the interaction of various factors, including the learner's environment, cognitive abilities, and motivation. Understanding these processes is essential for developing effective teaching strategies and creating supportive learning environments for language learners.
studies of learners' natural development led him to formulate a series of hypotheses that became influential in the next decade. I return to these studies later.

By the late 1970s, it became clear that both interlanguage and natural development processes are at work in the acquisition of L2 in naturalistic settings. Indeed, scholars found that learners acquire a language according to what Chomsky had termed "a built-in syllabary," with quite specific learning and communicative repertoires. But transfer did seem to occur on various levels. The 1980s saw, in addition to continued natural-development studies, a resurgence of interest in transfer studies. The first volume to deal comprehensively with transfer phenomena in language acquisition was Language Transfer in Language Learning, edited by Susan M. Gass and Larry Selinker. All SLA research since the 1970s has been characterized by a major shift in focus to the learner and the affective and cognitive processes involved in language learning. Instead of concentrating almost exclusively on the nonexistence of certain grammatical forms in learners' language, psycholinguists have turned their attention to the strategies learners use to learn the forms and to communicate intended meanings. The interest of scholars like James Cummins and Lily Wong Fillmore in the way learners match forms and meanings led researchers to investigate those factors that account for variability in acquisition among learners. Some of these factors are internal to the learner, such as general cognitive and intellectual abilities and affective states; others involve the interaction of the learners with their environment (input from teacher, peers, native speakers).

In the early years of SLA research, the language under study was mostly English, acquired in naturalistic settings. The overwhelming demand of English as an international language generated a great deal of empirical research on learners of English as a second language in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. This research was followed by studies of the acquisition of other languages in naturalistic settings, such as in the French language provinces in France and the Deutsch als Fremdsprache in Germany, two societies that had to meet the communicative needs of immigrant workers.

However, learning a language in the country where that language is spoken and learning a language in a general educational setting in one's native country are two different contexts that respond to different learners' needs. Princes, interest in examining the educational and, specifically, the classroom conditions of language learning in schools has grown. Many scholars are well-known for their work on ESL classrooms: Richard Alatis and Michael P. Beem in Great Britain; Willie J. Edmonds in Germany; Herbert W. Seliger and Michael H. Tong, Teresa Pica and Cathy Dougherty, Craig Chrousos, and Leo von der in the United States. Murrill Swain and Sharon Lappin have examined French immersion classes in Canada. Other scholars have started observing foreign language classrooms. J. P. B. Allen, Marta Prablich, and Nina Spada in Canada developed a communicative-orientation scheme; Gabrielle Kaiser recorded teacher-induced errors in German classes in Denmark; and recent doc-

oral dissertations in the United States have observed the influence of instruction patterns and task variation on student interaction in Spanish and French classes, respectively.

WHAT IS SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH?

Definition of the Field

According to Badell, the scope of SLA research refers to studies designed to investigate "the subconscious or conscious process by which a language other than the mother tongue is learned in a natural or a social setting." It covers both second-language acquisition and foreign language learning. SLA research is an interdisciplinary field. Its research methods are taken primarily from psychology, that is, the study of the relation between linguistic behavior and the psychological processes (memory, perception, attention, intention) that underlie it. The work of Thomas G. Bever on speech perception and speech processing, George A. Miller on language and communication, Kenneth Goodman on reading, and Roy O. Freedle and John B. Carroll on language comprehension and the acquisition of knowledge have greatly influenced the way SLA studies have been conducted. SLA research now increasingly draws also on other fields, such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis, that study the way language reflects and shapes the social context in which it is used. For example, the work of M. A. K. Halliday on language as social semiotic, William Labov on the social context of language, John J. Gumperz on discourse strategies, and Teun van Dijk on discourse processes have had a strong effect on pragmatic strands of SLA research.

Two other terms are used with respect to SLA research: applied linguistics and educational linguistics. Some controversy has arisen about the scope of these two fields, but they generally refer to what Charles A. Ferguson calls "the application of the methods and results of linguistics science to the solution of practical language problems." (82) Language learning is one such problem. In contrast to theoretical linguistics, which seeks to understand the nature of language, applied linguistics contributes to a theory of first- and second-language learning as a psychological and social activity and as a subset of human behavior.

SLA research, which arose out of the realization that language learning involves much more than just linguistic phenomena, can thus be viewed as a subdiscipline under the larger umbrella of applied linguistics. It is emerging in the United States as the designation for all research about L2 learning.

Theoretical Frameworks

The common focus of all second language research is the language learner, that is, the processes by which a learner acquires, stores, organizes, and uses knowledge of the language for successful communication. Within the shift history of
the field, researchers have investigated these processes and drawn theoretical hypotheses from a more systems perspective that is consistent with the linguistic perspective, which is consistent with the particular linguistic theory in question, focuses on the differences among languages or universals characteristic of language. Comparative analysis was intended to account for and predict learner difficulties that build themselves a representation of what to one or the other, and then revise and reconstruct this representation to match the way native speakers use these sentences in speaking and writing. Claire Pechy and Gabrielle Kepser, among others, have received increased interest, contrastive analysis, and psychological studies of language learning have revealed insights into the strategies and procedures used by learners. The work of Ellen Bialystok, Maria Fricklich, and John Howard of the National Institute of Education and the research of J. Michael Oller and Ana U. Camaan on learning strategies are important factors in S.L.A. research done within a sociolinguistic framework. The study by N. Oller, Maria Fricklich, M. H. Stern, and A. Todesco on the "good language learner" has been expanded by Anita Wodtke and JoAnne Reppen, and Lily Wong Fillmore's study of the social and cognitive strategies used by Spanish children learning English has had a far-reaching effect on cognitive approaches to S.L.A.

Investigation of the way learners use language for communication has also been carried out within a sociolinguistic framework. The third perspective. It studies the relation between language acquisition and its social context—such as the classroom, the community, and so forth. It can also be used to study the relation between language and culture, as can be seen in the research of language and culture by the late Stanley Elkin, who pointed to the importance of linguistic and sociolinguistic factors in the acquisition of a second language. For example, the "women whose child is dead" in the sentence, the result suggesting the existence of two distinct processes, and the first process of an aspect of the second-process sentence. These sentence structures differ in depth, with different levels of differentiators and different levels of differentiators that are needed to make a meaningful comparison. For example, Sian C. Chia examined the particular difficulties experienced by English learners because of deep syntactic differences between the two languages.

A second perspective in second-language research is that of cognitive psychology. Barry McLaughlin, a major researcher in cognitive processes in language learning, made the crucial distinction between automatic and controlled processes to explain the differences between proficient and less proficient learners. According to cognitive theory, "learning a language is acquiring a complex cognitive skill" that involves "the gradual accommodation of misperceptions and a consistent reorganization of interrelated representations as the learner achieves growing degrees of mastery." (Chomsky 1995). This process, according to the researchers' analysis, was intended to account for and predict learner difficulties and build for themselves a representation of what to one or the other, and then revise and reconstruct this representation to match the way native speakers use these sentences in speaking and writing. Claire Pechy and Gabrielle Kepser, among others, have received increased interest, contrastive analysis, and psychological studies of language learning have revealed insights into the strategies and procedures used by learners. The work of Ellen Bialystok, Maria Fricklich, and John Howard of the National Institute of Education and the research of J. Michael Oller and Ana U. Camaan on learning strategies are important factors in S.L.A. research done within a sociolinguistic framework. The study by N. Oller, Maria Fricklich, M. H. Stern, and A. Todesco on the "good language learner" has been expanded by Anita Wodtke and JoAnne Reppen, and Lily Wong Fillmore's study of the social and cognitive strategies used by Spanish children learning English has had a far-reaching effect on cognitive approaches to S.L.A.

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by Hatch, studies the speech adaptations native speakers make when they enter into verbal contact with nonnative speakers or learners. By observing this "foreigner effect" and also by watching phenomena of form taking and conversational correction, researchers of language classrooms hope to achieve a better understanding of the interactional components on language acquisition, especially in classrooms. Along with the qualitative research methods, more typical of sociolinguistics, classroom research has started to adopt ethnographic methods of inquiry that include case studies, diaries, studies, introspective and participant accounts, recall protocols, and long-term association of the researchers with his or her subjects. Possible cognitive and discourse processes, SLA is interested in the affective factors that shape a learner's acquisition of a second language. A fourth perspective comes from social psychology, which focuses on the influence of situational factors and individual differences on language learning. Howard C. Gardner and Wallace E. Lambert's innovative work on attitude and motivation in language learning and Howard Giles and J. Byrne's intergroup approach to second-language acquisition have had a widespread effect on the field. H. Douglas Brown is well known for his work on affective variables. Additional studies such as those of David R. Krashen, Benjamin Bloom, and Bertram S. Minna on the affective domain, Leslie M. Beebe on risk taking, and Kathleen Bailey on competitiveness and anxiety in language learning are examples of the large body of research devoted to personality factors in language acquisition. The four theoretical perspectives sketched above testify to the disciplinary diversity of SLA. Guided by hypotheses based on linguistic, cognitive, sociolinguistic, and social psychological theory, it looks at data from actual learner performance and attempts to build models of language learning that can both explain and predict successful performance. I turn now to a few empirical studies and some of the models proposed.

Empirical Studies

Taking as their point of departure raw data collected or elicited from learners in natural or instructional settings, SLA studies examine the performance of several learners at a single point in time (cross-sectional studies) or of one learner over a period of time (longitudinal studies). These observations are then screened for consistencies and variations and interpreted. Selinker's interlanguage study, which is based on evidence collected by other researchers from learners in natural and instructional settings, postulates that language learners proceed to a series of transitional stages, as learners acquire more knowledge of the L2. At each stage, they are in control of a language system that is equivalent to neither the L1 nor the L2—an interlanguage. Selinker suggests that five principal processes operate in interlanguage: (1) language transfer, such as German time-place order after the verb in the English interlanguage of German speakers; (2) overgeneralization of target-language rules, such as in the sentence "What did he intended to say?"; (3) transfer of training, such as the confusion of or and in the because of the overuse of he in textbooks and drills; (4) strategies of L2 learning, such as the simplification in "Don't worry. I'm learning him"; (5) strategies of L2 communication, such as the avoidance of grammatical form to fulfill the more pressing needs of communicative "I was in Frankfurt when I did application." Selinker's study has triggered many debates about this interlanguage in L2. Identifying the effects made in the learner's interlanguage is difficult, for example, in "did application" an error of pronunciation, intonation, and awareness of the past tense, or syntax (lack of awareness of concordance of subjects) or a learning or a grammaticalization strategy? Furthermore, languages disagree about what constitutes the initial state of a learner's interlanguage. From a cognitive perspective, second-language learners do not start with a clean slate: they already have, from their first language, a range of cognitive and communicative abilities that enable them to understand structures they have never encountered. As sociolinguists point out, the concept of the L2 native speaker is an ideal or standard construct that has no social reality. Even native speakers are not equally efficient on topics they don't know, in social settings they are unfamiliar with, and in speech genres they have not been educated in. The question is then, Is interlanguage a solitary construct, or do learners have various competencies at various times for various task in various situations? Further questions under discussion are, Can interlanguage be described at some intermediary stage? and does it remain unchangeable, and under what conditions does change occur?

To answer some of these questions, SLA research has conducted descriptive studies around three general questions: What does it mean to know a language? What processes involved in learning a language? What learning conditions favor or impede language acquisition? These studies are all predicated on the view that learning a language means not only learning forms and structures but learning how to use the forms accurately and appropriately in various social settings.

What does it mean to know a language? Michael P. Peters and Christopher N. Candie have argued that knowledge of a foreign language means having the ability to express, interpret, and negotiate intended meaning. A definition goes far beyond using the right grammatical rule or the right vocabulary. Others have attempted to define the various components of communicative competence. For example, studies by Michael Anzawa and by Carole and Shaw have identified four distinct aspects that do not automatically overlap: grammatical competence, the ability to understand and produce grammatically correct sentences; discourse competence, the ability to construct sentences in stretches of discourse; and to a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances; sociolinguistic competence, or the ability to conform to socially and culturally appropriate norms of verbal behavior; and strategic competence, which enables
the learner to function in a way that compensates for deficiencies in the other three components.

What are the processes involved in learning a language? We have seen that in order to learn a second language, a person must first develop and produce spoken language (as stated by Fawcus and Kasper, Fillmore, Krupetler, and Wang). An equally large body of research focuses on reading in a second language. Building on the work of psychologists and cognitive scientists like Walter Kintsch, and Richard C. Anderson and David A. Aschel, SLA researchers have shown how second-language readers use information-processing strategies to create meaning out of the words on the page. They develop and activate cognitive schemas, or mental representations, that allow them to anticipate incoming information and link it to other representations they might already have. Forming these schemas is more complex than deciphering the surface form of the words in the text. Once they have acquired an automatic recognition of the forms, second-language readers need to construct their schemas to fit the newly emerging meanings. Patricia L. Currell and Margaret Steffensen's studies of English as a second language, Elizabeth Bernhardt and Janet Sato's studies of learners of German, and James Lee's study of learners of Spanish in the United States have shown how misconceptions can occur if learners do not reorganize their initial schemata or if they cannot develop the culturally relevant schemata. For instance, American college students made a German test out of a large forest of trees, while American college students made a German test out of the "death of forest" (Waldorden) as a test of the "end of the world" (Waldorden), and North American readers adequately decoded but culturally misconstrued an English account of an Indian wedding.

What learning conditions favor or impede language acquisition? Many students examine the learners themselves and the influence of age, intelligence, aptitude, motivation, and personality. With respect to age, Henri L. Lenneberg's 1967 study introduced the idea that during a certain critical period language acquisition takes place naturally and effortlessly. With the onset of puberty, it was claimed, the plasticity of the brain begins to disappear and lateralization of the language function in the left hemisphere of the brain is completed. Then adults, having fewer languages, have greater difficulty acquiring new linguistic knowledge and rapidly grow older. Adolescents, who have greater cognitive abilities, outperform children in grammatical and lexical accuracy. Adults, too, have greater cognitive abilities that help them recognize primarily levels of language proficiency more rapidly than children do. Retrospects like Seiger have therefore suggested multiple critical periods ("replication"). For example, there may be one critical period for the acquisition of morphological grammar and another for the acquisition of grammar. One may suggest that second-language learning was carried out by Gooden and Lambert, who, over a period of twelve years studied foreign language learners in Canada, the United States, and the Philipines in an attempt to determine how attitudinal and motivational factors affect language-learning success. They distinguished two kinds of motivation: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation is to attain instrumental goals, such as large bodies of work is devoted to the strategies learners employ to comprehend going to the larger country; integrative motivation is to integrate oneself within the culture of the second-language group and to be part of that society.

Besides exploring language-dependent conditions of acquisition, SLA scholars have also investigated the effects of the learning environment itself, interaction between children and caretakers seems to play in language learning. For example, for the discourse "scaffolding" provided by adults in their conversations with children (Child: "Hiding." Adult: "Hide! What's hiding?" Child: "Behold hiding.") might help these children acquire the syntactic structures of full grammatical sentences in their first language. In a similar manner, as Schlegel ("Practice") and Long ("Native Speaker") have argued, interaction with other speakers of the language seems to play a crucial role in the acquisition of aspects and lexical structures by L2 learners, by providing them with what Gooden calls "comprehensible input" and the necessity to negotiate the meaning of that input (Second Language).

In the past, language researchers have tried to study ways in which classroom instruction and other learning environments can be optimized for more efficient language acquisition. Until the 1970s, attempts were made to establish the relative merit of one pedagogical "method" over another (e.g., grammar-translation vs. audiovisual vs. communicative, etc.). However, in recent years, studies under the rubric "classroom research," look at small pieces of the SLA picture, for example, classifying the types of corrections or repairs made in language classrooms; she also investigates the types of tasks given to the learners and the appropriateness of those tasks for fostering communicative competence into the target group (including native-like pronunciation). Vorderman examines gender differences in the way classroom discourse is managed. Long looks at modifications in teachers' talk ("Questioning").

Model Building

Several of the studies mentioned above have generated models or hypotheses that are the object of heated debates. One of the best-known studies of motivation model, which is based on data from a variety of sources, is related to second-language acquisition. Proposed for the first time in 1977 and developed subsequently in 1981.
1972, the model offers a prime example of the lively controversies that dominate the field at the present time (see Krashen's "Monitor Model"; Principles, Second Language). From his and others' studies of the mediations that parents and caretakers make when talking to young children, Krashen made three observations: (1) Caretakers talk as a simplified manner to make themselves understood. (2) Their input is only roughly matched to the children's linguistic knowledge, containing many structures the children already know but also some as yet unlearned. (3) Their speech notes to the here and now of the immediate environment.

With these observations in mind, a new model, the Monitor Model, was developed. The model's fundamental assumption is that the acquisition of a language is best understood in terms of two distinct, non-overlapping processes of language learning: speaking and listening. Speaking is the process by which a speaker constructs and produces a language message. Listening is the process by which a listener perceives and understands a language message. The two processes are distinct, but they are interrelated. The Monitor Model proposes that the learning process is not sequential but rather simultaneous. The monitor is a mental device that operates in the background, continually assessing the learner's linguistic performance and providing feedback to the learner. The monitor is selective, focusing on specific aspects of the learner's performance. The monitor is also adaptive, adjusting its function based on the learner's needs and progress.

Other scholars have attempted to build models of language acquisition from empirical data. These models are often based on the idea that language acquisition is a gradual process, not a sudden event. They propose that language acquisition is a complex process that involves multiple factors, such as genetic inheritance, social environment, and cognitive development. These models often use statistical methods to analyze the data and to make predictions about language acquisition. Some models suggest that language acquisition is a lifelong process, while others propose that it is a more rapid and spontaneous process. Despite the differences in these models, they all agree that language acquisition is a complex and ongoing process that involves multiple factors.
experimentation with the language according to the communicative demands of the moment. This idea doesn’t mean that errors should never be corrected. Teachers who choose not to rephrase a student’s utterance in a research reveal a great diversity of approaches and research tools that, in turn, reflects the variety of issues under study. In

conception and experience and all the variational factors of context and social interaction. To date, no comprehensive theory captures all the various contexts of occurrence, products, and processes involved in second-language acquisition. Indeed, it is not even advisable to strive for such a theory at the present time, since it could potentially lead to a more paradigms view.

For the moment, the various models and hypotheses are useful as research heuristics, and the cross-disciplinary debates they engender are healthy and intellectually fruitful. The impact of SLA research on language instruction has to be sought not somuch for the direct clues it gives teachers about what and how to teach but, rather, for the understanding it gives about the enormous complexity of second-language acquisition process. As Patsy M. Lightbown remarks, “Language is a new culture but not the intentional, orderly, scientific, decontextualized study often offered to students, but it can give teachers appropriate expectations for themselves and their students.” (183). In conclusion, I briefly discuss some of these expectations.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

SLA research has considerably changed our thinking about the way people learn to listen, speak, read, and write in a second language. Three major goals for language teachers have emerged from SLA research: focus on the learner, empathy learning processes and communication strategies, and provide interaction with the social context.

When the communicative revolution in language teaching started in Europe in the early 1970s, it was based on an analysis of learners’ needs and purposes. The term “communicative” has been used to describe teaching approaches that emphasize the role of the learner in the learning process. The communicative approach to language teaching posits that students learn best when they are engaged in meaningful communication activities that are relevant to their lives. According to the communicative approach, the teacher’s role is to create a supportive and stimulating learning environment that encourages students to use the language naturally and creatively.

Recent research on communicative strategies has direct applications for the teaching of speaking and writing. Teachers can no longer expect to understand and be understood by others in conversation on the basis of their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary alone. Conversation has its social rules without which rules of grammar would be useless, and these rules are often different in the one’s own language; they have to be observed and learned. In the same manner,
learners should not be disappointed if they understand all the words on the page yet still don't know what the text is about. Meaning is a matter not of decoding signs but of establishing connections, making inferences, drawing conclusions, and constructing the appropriate schemata.

The work by Carole and Swain on communicative competence should make teachers aware of the importance of strategic competence in both speaking and reading. Communication strategies can and should be taught explicitly during classroom activities: how to interrupt another speaker, how to switch topics during group work, how to begin a conversation when acting out the dialogue, how to end the conversation. These and other tacit behaviors of face-to-face encounters that speakers need to conduct conversations and develop fluency in the language.

Recognizing the importance of the social context of communication means that learners are encouraged to view language learning not only as the acquisition of a body of factual knowledge that can be displayed on a test but as an interactive process in which learning the forms and using them in communication are inseparable. SLA research shows that this interaction is central to the learning process: interaction of learners with peers, teachers, native speakers, and written texts. Fillmore's work on differences among learners can inspire teachers to pass on to their students some of the social and cognitive strategies successful learners use: "Join a group and act as if you understand what's going on, even if you don't get some expressions you understand, and start talking; make the most of what you've got; work on big things first, save the details for later" (2009). Teaching language as social interaction calls for a diversification of classroom formats, such as group and pair work, to maximize opportunities for interactions of various kinds. It also calls for an increased use of "authentic" materials, whose social meaning lies beyond the imitation of grammatical rules.

Finally, as the pragmatics strand of SLA research has shown, culture is inscribed in the very discourse that learners acquire. Teachers and learners need to recognize that no language is innocent and that, along with the language, they teach and are taught, a style of interaction and of knowledge presentation that characterizes the culture of a given speech community or educational institution. A critical view of language in discourse should help learners understand the links not only between the language and the culture they are learning but also between their own language and culture.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

For detailed studies of some of the key issues under investigation in SLA, the most useful edited volumes are those by Susan M. Gass and Carolyn M. Madden, Input in Second Language Acquisition, Gass and Larry Selinker, Language Transfer in Language Learning, and Gass, Madden, Dennis Preston, and Selinker, Variation in Second Language Acquisition. Two excellent reviews of the work done in SLA research can be found in Rod Ellis, Understanding Second Language Acquisition, and Leslie M. Beebe, Issues in Second Language Acquisition, as well as in influential articles by Michael H. Long, Patsy M. Lightbown, and Charles A. Ferguson and Thomas Hambler. Kenji Hakuta, Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism, offers a well-balanced and dispassionate state-of-the-art review of research on this hotly debated topic. Classics in the general field of applied linguistics include two books by Britta lingus, S. Pitt Corder and J. P. B. Allen, The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics, and Henry O. Widdowson, Explorations in Applied Linguistics.

To get a broader outlook on the issues of language learning and teaching, prospective scholars will find it extremely useful to read Jerome Bruner, Actual Minds, Possible Worlds; James Wertsch, Culture, Language and Cognition; John J. Gumperz, Discourse Strategies; Shirley Brice Heath, Ways with Words; and Dell Hymes. "On Communicative Competence," as well as any of the numerous volumes in the series Advances in Discourse Processes (ed. Roy O. Freedle) that offer an interdisciplinary perspective on all aspects of language learning and use.

H. H. Stern's Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching is the standard reference work for all foreign language teachers, along with Wini M. Rivers, Teaching Foreign Language Skills; Sandra Savignon, Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice; and H. Douglas Brown, Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. The United States proficiency orientation in language teaching is best illustrated in Alice Omaggio, Teaching Language in Context. There are five major journals: TESOL Quarterly and Modern Language Journal contain an easily readable mix of empirical research and pedagogic articles; Applied Linguistics, Studies in Second Language Acquisition, and Language Learning contain more difficult theoretical and empirical studies.

Of professional interest are the Proficiency Guidelines, published by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL); Helen Kernbbaum's Directory of Professional Preparation Programs in TESOL in the United States, and the publications of the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C.

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Rhetoric and Composition

The story of rhetoric and composition told in these pages grows, as it must, out of my own personal and professional experience: as a PhD candidate—and now a professor—in a discipline that has only recently recognized a formal specialization in rhetoric and composition. In the twenty years or so since I began the PhD program, rhetoric and composition, as areas of inquiry and research, have come to a place in English studies, though that place is by no means uncontested.

How did I come to embark on studies that would lead me to the heart of this context? By the late 1960s, I had earned a BA and MA in English (meaning at that time "literature"), written a thesis on Faulkner, and taken a job at a new community college. My first major assignment: designing a writing program.

I worked very hard at this task, for I wanted badly to teach the students crowding into my classrooms, students who would later be called "nontraditional" or "mature," students who represented rich diversity—in age, class, ethnicity—students, I quickly began to learn, I was vastly underprepared to teach. I thought often of Sisyphus and rolled the rock of my classes uphill, lecturing on the "readings" and doing grammar drills, but with less and less confidence. Like most of my friends, I had been trained in close reading of literary texts, and this training was a valuable asset as I concentrated on reading and interpreting student texts. But how to talk about the relation between the texts we were reading and those we were trying to write? And how to teach students how to

write such texts? These topics had never come up in my training. But now I was doing it (more or less), and it was remarkably hard. Then one day I opened the mail to find what was for me a new book: the 1971 edition of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, by Edward F. J. Corbett. Here was a world I knew nothing of, a world that offered answers to some of my many questions, most of all a world that took the teaching of writing as its intellectual goal.

On that day I became a student of rhetoric and composition, though I knew only vaguely and intuitively that this field offered the conceptual, theoretical, and political ground for teaching that I was looking for—one that was radically democratic; that valued what was "other"; that blurred the boundaries between disciplines, between the genres of reading, writing, and speaking, between theory and practice, between research and teaching; and that tended carefully to its effects in the world beyond as well as in the academy. These characteristics, I argue, are largely responsible for the remarkable growth of composition and rhetoric during the last quarter century as well as for the vitality, the sense of excitement and plentiful purpose that animates the field today.

At the time, I knew only that I had a lot of reading to do. As I explored