Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition 5B

1. Bilingualism – speaking two languages fluently
   1. Fluency is a slightly vague term
      1. Productive bilinguals can speak and understand both languages
      2. Receptive bilinguals can understand both languages but have limited production abilities
   2. Languages
      1. L1 is the language that is learned first
      2. L2 is the language that is learned second
   3. Definition:
      1. Simultaneous – l1 and l2 are learned together at the same time
      2. Early sequential – l1 learned first, l2 learned relatively early in childhood
      3. Late sequential – l1 learned first, l2 learned later in adolescence and onwards
   4. Which language?
      1. Depends on culture, who you are talking to, what the national language is, etc.
   5. Questions with bilingualism:
      1. It’s practically important in our society to know two languages
      2. Best way to teach a second language
      3. How do we store two different languages in the lexicon?
      4. How do we translate between the two languages?
   6. Early studies/definitions:
      1. Diary studies of people who’ve moved as children – picked up and switched to new language
      2. Language mixing – when words combine (i.e. putting wrong suffixes on)
      3. Code switching – switching languages mid sentences
      4. Early studies show that both languages are learned well, but slower vocabulary development in each individual language (because you are learning two of them!)
         1. Overall it’s a great advantage – more metalinguistic awareness, cognitive flexibility, verbal fluency
2. Bilingual Language Processing
   1. Lexicons
      1. Separate store model – suggests that there are separate lexicons for each language that connect at the semantic level
         1. Supported by repetition priming in the same language – if you hear a word (doctor) in English, then when you hear doctor again in English you are much faster than if it where in a different language. If they were the same lexicon the help would be same
      2. Common store models – just one lexicon and one semantic memory system, words are connected together.
         1. Semantic priming does produce help in both languages (i.e. doctor to nurse)
         2. Especially true if you make people use automatic processes (masked priming, fast priming) because the controlled language processes get in the way
      3. Research favors the common store model, but this research interacts with age of learning for the language – people who learn late get much less priming advantage
      4. Mixed models – a mixture of separate and common stores
         1. Cognates – words in different languages that have developed from the same root (i.e. same latin root) or are the same word oblige in English and French – these words tend to act like they are stored the same
         2. Abstract and very different words tend to act like they are in separate stores
      5. Discrimination between languages appears to be at a very low level. When people are asked to mark words in one language and ignore the others, they do not seem to process the words at a very high level (using brain studies).
   2. Syntax processing
      1. Not a lot of research, but some research supports that when syntax is roughly similar (English – Spanish) then you store it as one syntax
   3. Moving between languages
      1. Forward translation (l1 to l2) – conceptual mediation – must access the meaning of a word in order to translate it
      2. Backward translation (l2 to l1) – word association – use direct links between items in the lexicon
         1. Semantic factors (such as meaning order) changes your performance for forward but doesn’t help your backward translation
         2. However, congruent pictures help backwards, suggesting some semantic involvement
      3. Speaking in target language – only the target language words are considered.
         1. When shown pictures with the other language on the top and asked to name the items in the picture, that other language didn’t interfere (think stroop task)
   4. Brains
      1. The dominant language tends to be activated in the left hemisphere, while the 2nd language tends to activate the right hemisphere or have problems with aphasia in the right hemisphere
      2. If you are learning as a child, the dominant language lateralizes before the non-dominant language
3. Second Language Acquisition
   1. Why is it so difficult?
      1. Learning syntax or some other language parts is difficult outside the critical period
      2. Less time and motivation
      3. Differences between l1 and l2
         1. Contrastive Hypothesis – you will experience difficulty learning l2 when l1 and l2 differ
   2. Learning follows a u shaped curve – lots of learning at first, then slows off, then lots of learning due to restructuring
   3. Teaching
      1. Traditional method – translation from one language to another, lectures in the primary language (l1)
      2. Direct methods – all teaching is in l2, emphasizing conversational skills
      3. Audiolingual method – emphasizes speaking and listening before reading and writing
      4. Immersion method – teaches learners exclusively l2
      5. Submersion method – usually surrounded by l2 speakers (sink or swim) (page 159)
4. Monitor Model of 2nd language learning
   1. Language learning versus Language acquisition
      1. Learning emphasizes explicit grammar rules
      2. Acquisition unconscious grammar rule use
      3. Better programs focus on acquisition
   2. Hypotheses
      1. Acquisition and learning distinction – children acquire their first language unconsciously, automatically, they do not *learn* it.
         1. Adults needs to acquire a second language
      2. Natural order in acquisition – syntax errors, generalization rules, are in the same order in both languages (page 160)
      3. Monitor hypothesis – acquisition processes create sentences in l2 but learning enables us to have mechanisms that check the sentences
      4. Comprehensible input – emphasizes the role of comprehension, were we understand the meaning and form of the input
      5. Active filter hypothesis – attitude and emotional factors are important
   3. Other ways we vary on our ability to learn a second language:
      1. Phonetic coding ability – the ability to identify new sounds and form associations with them
      2. Grammatical sensitivity – ability to recognize grammatical functions of words and syntactic structures
      3. Rote – learning ability
      4. Inductive learning ability – inferring rules from data
      5. Working memory
      6. Motivation
5. How do we make the l2 easier?
   1. Immersion seems to work quite well
   2. But also immersion where less is more – so starting with smaller units and building up to larger more complex syntactics
   3. Four Cs (Sharpe)
      1. Communication – must emphasize that people use l2 to communicate
      2. Culture – de-emphasizing direct translation, more about the culture of the language
      3. Context – providing comprehensible input
      4. Confidence