

# **GRAMMAR LEARNING IN SLA**

Foreign Language Acquisition &  
Communication II

Class I

## LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

- What linguistic knowledge do L2 learners have?
- Comparing a target construction in the L2 with an equivalent construction in the learners' L1
- Universal Grammar, LAD: theoretical and scientific explanation for the nature of grammar knowledge L2 learners have.
- L2 learner errors are systematic and dynamic
- They seem not to deviate from any human languages.

## PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE/ COGNITIVE APPROACH

- How do L2 learners process language input?
- Relation between learners and input: learners are likely to notice patterns in input and create generalizations based on these regularities.
- To what part/feature do learners pay attention in input for form-meaning-function mapping?
- Frequency, regularities, saliency → Contextual cues

## **SECOND LANGUAGE RESEARCH FROM THE COGNITIVE APPROACH**

- SLA = a process of knowledge integration
- A central goal in SLA studies = to understand the nature of integrated knowledge (linguistic perspective) and the process involved in knowledge integration (psychological perspective or cognitive approach)

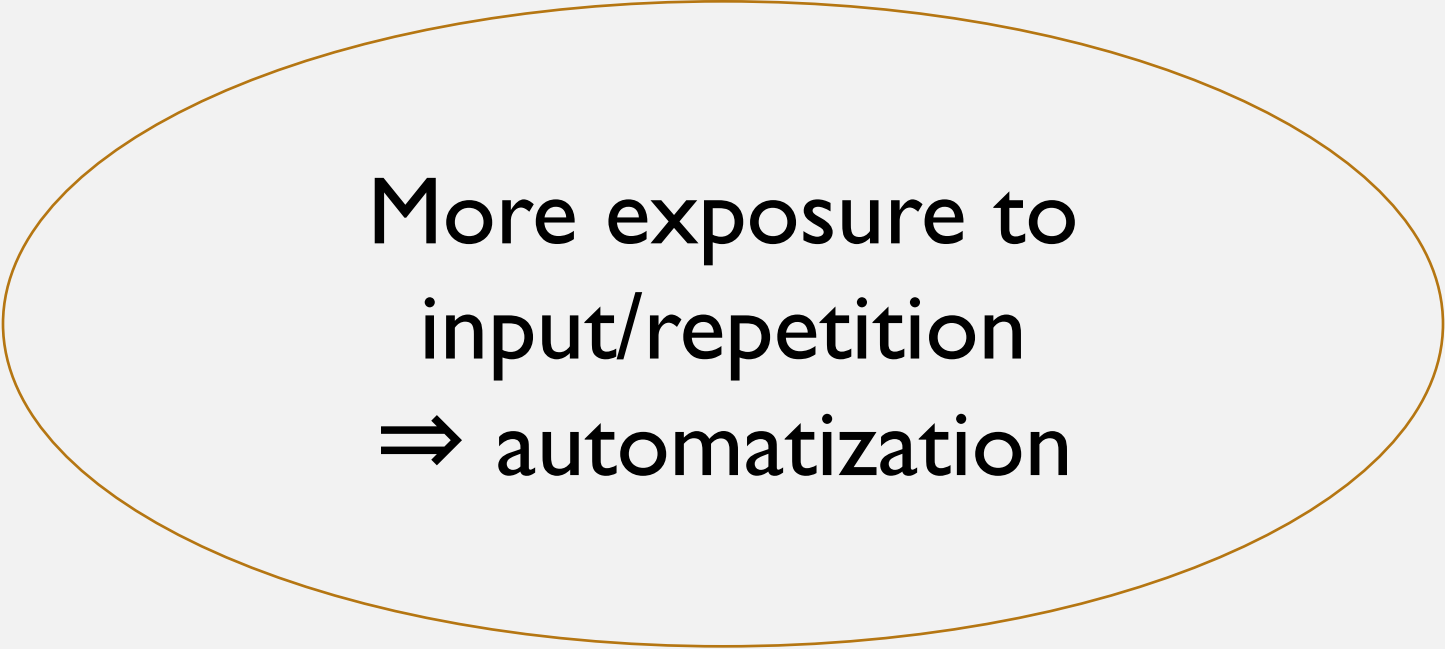
Noticing a particular form  
in input

Mapping form, meaning, and function  
Making a hypothesis

Receiving negative feedback  $\Rightarrow$   
Reconstructing interlanguage

Receiving positive feedback  
⇒ Internalization of form into  
interlanguage (tentative)





More exposure to  
input/repetition  
⇒ automatization

Integration of form  
⇒ integrated knowledge

# INTERACTION HYPOTHESIS (LONG, 1996)

- [L2 learner] Incomprehensible input → trigger meaning negotiation/ receiving feedback
- [Interlocutor] Incomprehensible (L2 learner's) output → trigger meaning negotiation/ providing feedback
- Meaning negotiation through
  - Clarification requests: What? What did you say?
  - Comprehension checks: Did you understand?
  - Confirmation checks: Is this what you mean?
- Effect of meaning negotiation: Bringing learners' attention to particular linguistic form(s)
- With realizing that
  - their production does not conform to the standards of the target language → **Pushed/modified output (reformulating their utterances to make their message comprehensible)**
  - Their current grammar system is not adequate → **Reconstructing interlanguage (L2 development)**

# GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE: TERMS IN SLA

- Prescriptive grammar
- Descriptive grammar
- School grammar
- Universal grammar
- Implicit grammatical knowledge
- Explicit grammatical knowledge
- Declarative knowledge
- Procedural knowledge

## IMPLICIT VS. EXPLICIT L2 KNOWLEDGE

<i>Implicit knowledge</i>	<i>Explicit knowledge</i>
easy/difficult to acquire	easy/difficult to learn
unconscious	conscious
automatic processing → time pressure	controlled processing → more time
systematic	Imprecise, inaccurate, inconsistent → Restructuring interlanguage
not learnable	learnable at any age
Non-verbalizable	Verbalizable

## DEFINITION OF “DIFFICULTY”

- Objective difficulty: the inherent difficulty of different grammatical features
  - Universal phenomenon → The same grammatical features are easy or difficult for all learners.
- Subjective difficulty: it may depend on individual learners, yet “the same features are easy or difficult for *all* learners” (p. 432).
  - Individual difference: Among learners

## **DIFFICULT TO LEARN OR ACQUIRE?**

- Grammar that is easy/difficult to “acquire”
- Grammar that is easy/difficult to “learn”
- Grammar that is easy/difficult to learn but difficult/easy to acquire
- Grammar that is easy/difficult to acquire but difficult/easy to learn

## DIFFICULTY OF LEARNING/ACQUIRING GRAMMAR

- Individual difference: Among learners
- Universal phenomenon: The same grammatical features are easy or difficult for all learners.
- Gap between the actual order and pedagogical instruction: Ex. Third-person singular –s: late acquired but introduced at the early stage of learning English.  $\Leftrightarrow$  Irregular past tense: early acquired but introduced late in the curriculum



## WE NEED TO BE AWARE THAT

- L2 learners do not learn and acquire everything they are taught.  
⇒ Get it right from the beginning???
- Development of Interlanguage: try and fix the hypothesis
- Not all grammar develops in the same way/at the same speed.
  - Some of them are acquired early. ⇒ integrated relatively easily
  - Others are acquired later. ⇒ It takes time to be integrated into L2 interlanguage.