

Lecture 6

Second Language Acquisition Theories - I

Role of L1

- Does L1 help in learning L2 or is it a hindrance?
- Influence of L1 more prominent on pronunciation
- Use of vocabulary and structures from L1

Contrastive Analysis

- Earliest approach to SLA by Lado
- “Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture—both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives.”

- Lado

Contrastive Analysis

- Language learning – habit formation by making stimulus response connection
- So learning L2 is learning new habits
- Already existing L1 interferes
- L1 – the major cause for lack of success in learning the L2.
- The habits established in childhood interfere with the establishment of a different set of habits.

- Contrastive analysis - compares L1 and L2 to identify potential errors
- A comparison of the sound, morphological, syntactic, and the cultural systems of two languages
- The ultimate goal is to predict what areas will be easy or difficult for learners.

- Transfer - transfer of elements acquired (or habituated) in L1 to the target L2
- Positive: the same structure is appropriate in both languages
- E.g. Plurals formed by adding '-s' in both Spanish and English
- Negative: the L1 structure is different from that of L2 but learners use L1 structure
- e.g. *Moderns Languages, greens beans*

- Many learner errors could not be predicted
- Positive transfer did not occur as predicted
- Language came to be seen in terms of structured rules instead of habits.
- Learning was seen not as imitation but as active rule formation

Differences between English and French

- Je les vois.
- I them see
- I see them

- French learners of English produce - *I see them*
But never **I them see*
- But English learners of French produce -
 - a. Je vois elle 'I see her'
 - b. Le chien a mangé les 'The dog has eaten them'
 - c. Il veut les encore 'He wants them still'