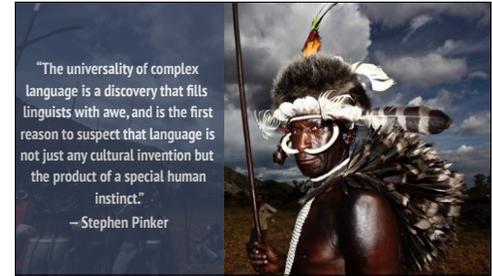


Learning Additional Languages (Part 1)

Lecture 4

My friends started a study abroad program in the jungle. Meet your teacher. Be sure to call him "sir."

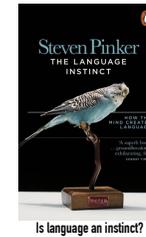


Today's Main Point

Scholars disagree about the language instinct – UG. But today we'll see 4 points that support UG. Also, if UG is real for L1 learners, what about the L2? To answer this, we must think about how L1 and L2 learners differ. After all, we may naturally and instinctively acquire advanced L2 ability without a lot of study – as long as we get big data.

Outline

- (1) Language Instinct (UG)
- (2) L2 Learner Characteristics
- (3) Behaviorism (Revisited)
- (4) Krashen (Revisited)



Is language an instinct?

Language Instinct (UG)

- Language is an organ.
- a bird's wing or a spider web.
- What is acquisition like?
- Like sight & digestion
- It's an organ.
- The innatist position.



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Language Instinct (UG)

- Children use innate knowledge to acquire language.
- They receive insufficient input to acquire the rules.
- "the poverty of the stimulus."
- 刺激の貧困



Language Instinct (UG)

- Input consists primarily of positive evidence.
- This evidence shows what is grammatically correct.
- Children often don't accept negative evidence.
- This evidence shows what is grammatically incorrect.
- Negative evidence may also be rare.

Language Instinct (UG)

- Child: Nobody don't like me.
- Mother: No, say, "nobody likes me."
- Child: Nobody don't like me.
- Negative evidence often does not work.
- It is rare, so the child doesn't get spaced repetition.
- Positive evidence is common. Negative evidence is rare.



Language Instinct (UG)

- But UG claims that "Input underdetermines acquisition."
- Not enough negative & positive evidence.
- But kids acquire language. Why?
- We naturally expect grammar rules.
- We have innate expectations for how grammar works.

Language Instinct (UG)

- Our minds are designed with the logic of word structure.
- Peter Gordon showed that children instinctively knew the difference between (a) roots stored in memory and (b) words created by rules.



The "rat-eater" experiment

Language Instinct (UG)

- For "men" we must memorize the root.
- For "teachers," we memorize the root and the rule, "add -s."
- We make compounds from irregular plurals, not regular plurals.
- We can say "men-bashing," not "teachers-bashing."
- The correct form is "teacher-bashing."
- Children seem to know this instinctively, without enough input.

Language Instinct (UG)

- Gordon asked children:
- "What do you call a monster that likes to eat mice?"
- Children answered: "A mice-eater."
- What do you call a monster that likes to eat rats?"
- Children answered: "A rat-eater."
- They did not say "rats-eater."

Language Instinct (UG)

- Children answered: "mice-eater" and "rat-eater."
- Claim: children learned this rule without evidence from input.
- They just knew the difference between (a) roots stored in the mental dictionary and (b) inflected words created by rules.

Just How Powerful is Your Grammar?

It creates time travel!

Back to the Future 2

Biff from the future meets Biff from the past. He gives himself a "Sports Almanac" so he can get rich.



Back to the Future:

"He had will have placed a bet"

"They never had had have brought the time machine."

Language Instinct (UG)

- The mice-eater results support the idea of poverty of stimulus.
- It supports UG. But so does "Linguistic Creativity:"
 - You can produce an unlimited number of combinations with a limited number of elements.
 - You have a grammar acquiring recipe in your brain.

Language Instinct (UG)

- After linguistic creativity, we have "language creation."
 - Natives acquire grammar without study.
 - Our brains create language.
 - What's a pidgin? What's a creole? What happens when children grow up speaking a pidgin?

Language Instinct (UG)

- Universality: There are no primitive languages.
- Creativity: We produce unlimited novelty, not set responses.
- Language Creation: Brains create language.
- Poverty of Stimulus: We acquire some rules without enough input.

L2 Learner Characteristics

- Do adults have access to UG?
 - How do L1 and L2 learners differ?
 - This is an important question.



L2 Learner Characteristics

- Here are some L2 learner characteristics.
 - Knowledge of another language.
 - Cognitive maturity.
 - Metalinguistic awareness
 - Knowledge about the world.
 - Anxiety about speaking.

L2 Learner Characteristics

- Our theory of SLA must account for:
 - learner characteristics and conditions.
 - Let's look at some behaviorism.
 - Does it take into account L2 Learner Characteristics?

Skinner:
Make the bird turn around with rewards.





Does behaviorism work for L2 SLA?

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Behaviorism (Revisited)

- What is behaviorism? We learn by***
 - imitation, practice,
 - reinforcement (positive and negative)
 - habit formation.

Behaviorism (Revisited)

- The audio-lingual approach is behaviorist.
 - Repeat after me! (repetition). Don't make mistakes.
 - Practice the dialog again! (practice & repetition)
 - Memorize this pattern! (memorization)
 - A: I'm Mary.
 - B: Hi Mary, I'm Jim. Nice to meet you.
 - I'm not Mary. You're not Jim. (meaningless)

Behaviorism (Revisited)

- We easily learn L2 patterns similar to L1 patterns.
 - This is the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis.
 - It's not that simple.
 - There are many errors we can't trace to the L1.
 - L1 influence on L2 learning is not just habit transfer.

Behaviorism (Revisited)

- Second language acquisition is complicated.
 - Behaviorism and contrastive analysis are inadequate.
 - We can't explain second language acquisition only with imitation, practice, reinforcement, habit formation, and transfer.
 - Even L2 learners "create" novelty with language.
 - Let's see how all this relates to Krashen.

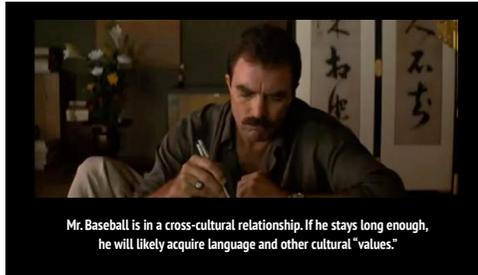
Krashen

"The only thing that counts is giving people messages they understand."



Krashen Revisited

- How can we get this super grammar power as a L2 learner?
 - For one, we can't do it without input. Input (lots of it) is key:
- This brings us back to Krashen's position, which is innatist.
 - We all acquire languages in the same way.
 - It's like digestion or the visual system.



Krashen Revisited

- The "romance hypothesis" is based on Krashen's theory:
 - We understand meaningful messages and thus acquire language.
 - Krashen influenced L2 teaching practice.
 - Despite the problems, he helped move us away from behaviorism.

Krashen Revisited

- You can see Krashen's influence with
 - Communicative language teaching (CLT).
 - Emphasize the communication of meaning.
 - Less grammar focus, or none.
 - Or grammar + meaning and in context.

Krashen Revisited

- You can see Krashen's influence in
 - Content-based Instruction & immersion programs.
 - Teachers organize lessons around subject matter, not language points.

Summary - So What?

- L1 and L2 learning are different.
 - Learners tend to be different; they are older; they know more about the world. They have less time and more stress.
 - The solution to the L2 problem is big data.