Revised Perspectives on the Role of Previously Known Languages

The Role of Previously Known Languages
- The Morpheme Order Studies
- Avoidance
- Different Learning Rates
- Different Paths
- Overproduction
- Predictability/Selectivity

A Natural Order for the Acquisition Morphemes in English as a SL?

PROGRESSIVE – ing
PLURAL – s
COPULA is/are

AUXILIARY is/are/have

3rd PERSON SINGULAR – s
POSSESSIVE – s

A Natural Order. But why?
- The frequency of morphemes in classroom input to ESL learners
- Naturalness statements that regulate the acquisition of English morphology

A Natural Order. But why?
- The frequency of morphemes in classroom input to learners
### Natural Order and Acquisition of Morphology

1. Bound morphemes are more difficult than free morphemes.
2. Phonologically stable affixes are easier to acquire than those that have several forms.
3. Affixes with a clear semantic function are easier than those with no clear function.
4. High frequency affixes are easier to learn than low frequency affixes.

### A Natural Order. But why?

- **Naturalness statements that regulate the acquisition of English morphology**


### Avoidance

- Comparison of relative clause errors produced in free compositions in English (L2) by 50 (25 intermediate, 25 advanced) NSs each of Persian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese.
Avoidance

- Schachter (1974) showed that knowledge of the difference between L1 and L2 did make a difference to learners’ L2 production.
- But greater differences did not imply greater errors.
- Instead, learners chose to avoid using the more difficult structure.

The Role of Previously Known Languages

- The Morpheme Order Studies ✓
- Avoidance ✓
- Different Learning Rates
- Different Paths
- Overproduction
- Predictability/Selectivity

Different Learning Rates

- Compare the development over time of negation in English as a second language by:

The Role of Previously Known Languages

- The Morpheme Order Studies ✓
- Avoidance ✓
- Different Learning Rates ✓
- Different Paths
- Overproduction
- Predictability/Selectivity

Different Learning Paths

- Chinese L1
  - this is acquired before the in English L2.
  - Chinese has an equivalent demonstrative but no definite article.
- Spanish L1
  - this and the are acquired simultaneously.
  - Spanish has both demonstratives and definite articles.

The Role of Previously Known Languages

- The Morpheme Order Studies ✓
- Avoidance ✓
- Different Learning Rates ✓
- Different Paths ✓
- Overproduction
- Predictability/Selectivity
Overproduction

- Han claims that Chinese learners of English first transfer discourse word order into English, which in many cases corresponds to English SVO word order. But when an object is fronted, transfer of discourse word order results in pseudo-passives such as His car keeps inside.

Identify the passives and pseudo-passives

- Though I have not learnt much about it, Bates’ suggestions (May 1995) about enhancement on this issue impressed me deeply. His viewpoints are absolutely right and should be stressed again (I do not know whether these problems have solved in the newest release).
- Generally the reference line or surface of elements is set at the central line or surface. But sometimes the structural geometrical shape poses some problems of element compatibility if the reference keeps at the central surface.
- I think mathematics is not a big problem, but Chinese is, as one can not learn Chinese in a few days. I will make her mathematics but Chinese should keep continuously.

The Role of Previously Known Languages

- The Morpheme Order Studies √
- Avoidance √
- Different Learning Rates √
- Different Paths √
- Overproduction √
- Predictability/Selectivity

Selectivity

- Dušková showed that second language learners select what they transfer into the L2
Selectivity in Transfer of Plurals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2 English</th>
<th>NS Czech and English Gloss</th>
<th>L2 Russian</th>
<th>NS Russian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*teacher-ele</td>
<td>učitelé = 'teachers'</td>
<td>učiteľ</td>
<td>učitelja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*workwoman -ice</td>
<td>dělnice = 'workwomen'</td>
<td>robotnice</td>
<td>robotnicy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selectivity in Transfer of Past Tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2 English</th>
<th>NS Czech and English Gloss</th>
<th>L2 Russian</th>
<th>NS Russian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*arise-nul</td>
<td>vznikl, vzniknul = 'arose'</td>
<td>voznul</td>
<td>voznik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*he die-el</td>
<td>umřel = 'he died'</td>
<td>on umrel</td>
<td>on umer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictability

- Eric Kellerman showed that L2 learners believe they can predict what is transferable from the L1 to the L2.

Eye – a polysemous word
Eye – a polysemous word

The human eye
The eye of a potato
An electronic eye
The eyes on a peacock's tail
The eye of a needle
The eyes (spots/dots/pips) on dice

What learners believe about the translatability of “oog”

Kellerman (1986) presented 35 Dutch first-year students of English with pairs of sentences containing *oog* and asked them which sense in each pair was more likely to be rendered by *eye* in English.

The results of these judgments are shown in the table, where for instance it will be seen that 6 people found *het oog van een aardappel* more likely to be translated into English by *eye* than *oog op een pauwstaart* would be (potato row and peacock column). Twenty-nine people thought otherwise (peacock row and potato column).
Preference Scores for Translatability Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Potato</th>
<th>Peacock</th>
<th>Electronic</th>
<th>Human</th>
<th>Dice</th>
<th>Needle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potato</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacock</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dice</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needle</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you predict about the translatability of “break”? (37)

- Which country has broken the cease-fire?
- She broke the world record.
- She broke his heart.
- The waves broke on the rock.
- He broke his word.
- He broke his leg.
- The underground resistance was broken.
- The cup broke.

What do you predict about the translatability of “break”? (38)

- Thanks to a few jokes, the ice was finally broken.
- A game would break up the afternoon a bit.
- His fall was broken by a tree.
- Some workers have broken the strike.
- After the accident, he was a broken man.
- His voice broke when he was 13.
- The man broke his oath.

The Role of Previously Known Languages (39)

- The Morpheme Order Studies ✓
- Avoidance ✓
- Different Learning Rates ✓
- Different Paths ✓
- Overproduction ✓
- Predictability/Selectivity ✓