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LING 478.01: Second Language Development

Tully J. Thibeau

University of Montana - Missoula, tully.thibeau@umontana.edu

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Linguistics 478
Second Language Development
Fall 2013
MW, 3:10 to 4:30, Education 114

Dr. Tully J. Thibeau
Office: Social Sciences 207 (Ext. 2156)
Office Hours: M 1:10-2:30, T 11:10-12:30
E-mail: tully.thibeau@umontana.edu

COURSE MATERIALS

textbooks

Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (2004). Second Language Learning Theories, 2nd Edition. New York: Hodder Arnold .

Towell, R., & Hawkins, R. (1994). Approaches to Second Language Acquisition. Bristol, PA: Multilingual Matters.

supplemental readings

details announced on blackboard may be mentioned in class; e-mail accompanies announcements

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the first half of the term, this course examines second language acquisition studies in breadth, its origins in bilingual studies, its subsequent recognition by language-classroom methodologists, and its coming of age (still in progress) as a discipline in the cognitive sciences (true to its roots). After midterm, course content probes a specific theoretical framework for language development, an account based in generative grammar. Generative grammar is a theory attempting to explain language knowledge (as evidenced through our intuitions of well-/ill-formed phrases and clauses), not language use. At midterm, we may examine at least one use-based account for how learners develop a second language. The distinction between knowledge and use has pervaded linguistics since its inception as a modern science, and second language acquisition studies have inherited it.

For linguists, language knowledge, or "competence" (coined in 1965 by Chomsky, likely the 20th century's most influential linguist) is either distinctively central or highly controversial. Like de Saussure (the founder of modern linguistics) 50 years before, Chomsky distinguished language as a system of knowledge from language as a system of communication. Competence (like de Saussure's *langue*) concerns mental symbols that are necessarily separable from spoken (and written) symbols that we use to communicate. When communicating, we avail ourselves of "performance" skills that are, Chomsky claims, distinct from our capability to know a language, or our native competence. But developing knowledge of a language other than a native tongue cannot be easily explained in terms of competence; thus, directing focus at language performance (de Saussure's *parole*) leads us to consider linguistic knowledge as "communicative competence" (Hymes, 1972), a capability for using language appropriately according to a situational context (settings, participants, relationships, topics, etc., normally understood without very much regard for well-formedness in the language being learned, a more-or-less communication-based theory).

As students in the course, you will survey to the extent possible leading yet diverse perspectives on second language development, focusing your attention on how the empirical data (i.e., experimental and, to a lesser degree, naturally occurring) reveal processes that are presumed to be involved in developing a nonnative language. At midterm, groups will report to the class about some of these perspectives before considering thoroughly the view that virtually equates second language acquisition with first language acquisition (i.e., access to Universal Grammar).

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

To pass this course, you must complete all examinations (first-quarter, mid-term, and final); plus, you must complete various problem sets available on blackboard (see Course Outline for dates).

Assignment Breakdown

Exams

First-Quarter	15%	(available Wed. 26 Jan., due Wed. 23 Feb.)
Mid-term	25%	(data set, article summary, and position paper)
Final	35%	(in-class data sets; plus, take-home article summary, position paper, short definitions)

Problem sets

One	5%	(Problem 5.2, Oral Interview, with Four and)
Two/Three	6%	(Problem 4.1, Vowel Epenthesis/Problem 2.1, Polysemous Words)
Four	4%	(Problem 3.2, Negation, supplement for One)
Five	3%	(Problem 3.8, Reflexives)
Six	3%	(Problem 3.1, Question Formation)
Seven	4%	(Problem 3.3, Adverb Placement, supplement for One)

COURSE DUE DATES

Assignments are due on the day listed in Course Outline (or announced in class/on blackboard). Late assignments might not get assessed or returned, but those that do will receive partial credit. Any assignment that is not turned in for a grade will receive a zero. Absences are not considered an excuse for turning in a late assignment or for failing to turn in an assignment, unless of course the absence is related to a major illness or major emergency.

A major illness or emergency is the only valid excuse, so I always require documentation for these excuses (like a certification from a physician).

COURSE GRADES

I evaluate your final grade based on an assessment of all the examinations and the problem sets. The final grade breakdown for the assignments equals 35% for the final, 25% for the midterm and 15% for the first-quarter exams; an additional 25% is awarded for problem-set assignments.

I assess final grades based on points awarded to assignments and exams described above, including planned and impromptu in-class activities contributing to either. I gauge points earned in several ways, according to a percentage (points earned divided by total points), a percentile (points earned measured on a curve) and also a quartile (points earned distributed in quarters, e.g., top 25%, etc.). The measures help assessment using traditional letter grades with +/-.

COURSE OUTLINE

The class schedule is subject to change according time constraints. You are responsible for any schedule changes, even if you are absent for announcements.

Week One

M 24 Jan. Intro – What is Second Language Development (SLD)? Approach it empirically: *elicit* data, see what you find in them, and then go from there; but where to go?
**informal supplemental reading assignment in class today*
{ Part One of Problem Set One introduced today }

W 26 Jan. Return again to the data: which phenomena can we directly observe and describe?

supplemental reading

Ellis 1997, pp. 3-14, Chapter 1

Sharwood Smith, 1994, pp. 13-16, Chapter 1, Subsections 1.2.7-1.2.10

textbook

Mitchell & Myles 2004, pp. 15-20, Chapter 1, Sections 1.4.4-1.4.7

{In-class informal assignment as prep for Part One of Problem Set One}

F 28 Jan. Describe data; then explain them: what is the difference and why is that significant?

supplemental reading

Sharwood Smith, 1994, pp. 15-16/7-11, Chapter 1, Subsection 1.2.9, 1.2.2-1.2.4

textbook

Mitchell & Myles 2004, pp. 20-23/10-13, Chapter 1, Subsections 1.4.8, 1.3.2-1.4.1

Towell & Hawkins 1994, pp. 7-16, Chapter 1

{In-class informal assignment as prep for Part One of Problem Set One}

Week Two

M 31 Jan. Explain data: whence do the observable phenomena already described originate?

supplemental reading

Ellis 1997, pp. 31-35, Chapter 3

Sharwood Smith, 1994, pp. 17-19, Chapter 1, Subsection, 1.2.11-1.2.12

textbook

Mitchell & Myles 2004, pp. 20-23/10-13 Chapter 1, Subsections 1.4.2-1.4.3

Towell & Hawkins 1994, pp. 1-6, Introduction

{In-class informal assignment as prep for Part One of Problem Set One}

W 2 Feb. Evaluate data: what results from comparing learner language and target language?

supplemental reading

Ellis 1997, pp. 51-54, Chapter 6

Ellis 1994, pp. 299-306, Chapter 8

textbook

Mitchell & Myles 2004, pp. 29-33 Chapter 2, Sections 2.1-2.2

Towell & Hawkins 1994, pp. 17-23, Chapter 2

F 4 Feb. Errors: how do they relate to studies of SLD and what purpose should they serve?

supplemental reading

Lehiste 1988, pp. 2-8, Chapter 1

Cook 2001, pp. 46-50, Chapter 3

Ellis 1994, pp. 306-309, Chapter 8

textbook

Mitchell & Myles 2004, pp. 9-10 Chapter 1, Subsections 1.3.1

{Part One of Problem Set One due today}

Week Three

M 7 Feb. Evaluating **error** in data: to what degree is it learned, acquired and/or developed?
supplemental reading
Odlin 1989, pp. 112-117, 120-124, Chapter 7, Section 7.1 to 7.3, and pp. 77-80, Chapter 5, Section 5.2
Ellis 1994, pp. 315-317, Chapter 8
textbook
Towell & Hawkins 1994, pp. 18-23 Chapter 2
{Problem Set Two and Three introduced today}

W 9 Feb. Error analysis: how are errors explained if they originate in neither the NL nor TL?
supplemental reading
McLaughlin 1987, pp. 59-66, Chapter 3
Ellis 1997, pp. 15-20, Chapter 2
Ellis 1994, pp. 299-306, Chapter 8
textbook reading
Mitchell & Myles, pp. 37-39, Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2
Towell & Hawkins, pp. 23-25, Chapter 2

F 11 Feb. Children's errors: what is to be made of them when they appear the IL of adults?
supplemental reading
McLaughlin 1987, pp. 66-67, Chapter 3
Ellis 1994, pp. 90-96, Chapter 3
Cook 2001, pp. 25-29, Chapter 2, Section 2.2, pp. 190-192, Chapter 8, Section 8.3
textbook reading
Mitchell & Myles, pp. 39-44, Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3
Towell & Hawkins, pp. 25-28, Chapter 2

Week Four

M 14 Feb. Returning once more to data: what do grammatical morphemes reveal about SLD?
supplemental reading
McLaughlin 1987, pp. 19-20, 30-35, Chapter 2
Ellis 1997, pp. 20-25, Chapter 2
textbook reading
Mitchell & Myles, pp. 44-49, Chapter 2, Section 2.3.4
{Part Two of Problem Set One introduced today}

W 16 Feb. The minimalist claim: is adult and child language development identical or similar?
supplemental reading
McLaughlin 1987, pp. 20-24, Chapter 2
Ellis 1994, pp. 309-315, Chapter 8
textbook reading
Towell & Hawkins, pp. 28-32, Chapter 2

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F 18 Feb. Evaluating a claim: if we hypothesize all swans are white, then how do we know?

supplemental reading

McLaughlin 1987, pp. 24-30, Chapter 2

Cook 1993, pp. 63-65, Chapter 3, Section 3.3

{Problem Set Two and Three due in class today}

Week Five

M 21 Feb. PRESIDENTS' DAY HOLIDAY: NO CLASS MEETING

W 23 Feb. Exposure to experience: how does input work and how does it differ from intake?

supplemental reading

Cook 1993, pp. 55-63, Chapter 3, Section 3.2

Ellis 1997, pp. 43-50, Chapter 5

textbook reading

Mitchell & Myles, pp. 164-166, Chapter 6, Section 6.3

{Problem Set Four introduced today}

F 25 Feb. Degenerate input: to what degree is L2 speech limited by scarce exposure to TL?

supplemental reading

Cook 1993, pp. 69-75, Chapter 4, Section 4.1

McLaughlin 1987, pp. 109-114, Chapter 5

textbook reading

Mitchell & Myles, p. 49, Chapter 2, Subsection 2.3.5; pp. 224-227, Chapter 8,
Subsections 8.2.1 to 8.2.2

Towell & Hawkins, pp. 33, 37-39, Chapter 2

{Part Two of Problem Set One due & Part Three introduced in class today}

Week Six

M 28 Feb. Variable output: to what degree is L2 speech distinguished by inconsistent forms?

supplemental reading

Cook 1993, pp. 83, 86-89, Chapter 4, Section 4.3

textbook reading

Mitchell & Myles, pp. pp. 227-229, Chapter 8, Subsection 8.2.3

Towell & Hawkins, pp. 34-37, Chapter 2

W 2 Mar. Free variation: what regulates choice of form if two of them serve one function?

supplemental reading

Cook 1993, pp. 82-86, Chapter 4, Section 4.3

textbook reading

Mitchell & Myles, pp. pp. 229-233, Chapter 8, Subsection 8.2.4

F 4 Mar. Interlanguage: what does L2 learners' speech reveal about their L2 development?

supplemental reading

Ellis 1994, pp. 134-151, Chapter 4

textbook reading

Towell & Hawkins, pp. 39-43, Chapter 2

Week Seven

- M 7 Mar. Read T&H, Chapter 10, (pp. 154-159, Variability is a Pervasive Phenomenon): On explaining an interlanguage (IL) system that permits variable speech while also managing demonstrably consistent sets of developmental patterns
{Problem Set Four & Part Three of Problem Set One due in class today}
- W 9 Mar. Read Ellis Chapter 4 (pp. 130-133, on reserve in electronic and traditional formats); read M&M, Chapter 4, subsection 4.2.2.1; and read T&H Chapter 10 (pp. 162-171, Psychological Mechanisms): On the variability of learner language as determined by on-line cognitive processes operating in real-time
{Part Four of Problem Set One introduced today}
- F 11 Mar. Read M&M, Chapter 4, Section 4.1 and subsection 4.2.2. (not 4.2.2.3 to 4.2.2.5); read T&H, Chapter 4 (pp. 45-50, Cognitive Approaches, Pienemann's and Wolfe Quintero's account): On implementing on-line cognitive processes used to account for variability to explain systematic development (and thus minimize modularity)
{In-class informal assignment as prep for Part Three of Problem Set One and Midterm}

Week Eight

- M 14 Mar. Read M&M, Chapter 4, section 4.4; read T&H, Chapter 4 (pp. 50-54, Evaluation of Cognitive Approaches to SLA): On the issue of language comprehension as information processing and its (lack of) reliance of grammatical knowledge
- W 16 Mar. Read T&H, Chapter 10 (pp. 159-162, Three explanations for variability) and Chapter 12 (pp. 201-209, Development of Language Processing and "Act star"); also read M&M, Chapter 4, subsection 4.2.1.2: On general psychological constructs that manage L2 development without making reference to a linguistic system
- F 18 Mar. Read T&H, Chapter 5 (pp. 57-60, UG Approach to SLA, Goals & Assumptions); read M&M, Chapter 3, sections 3.1 and 3.2: On accounting for observed phenomena by adopting a model of L1 acquisition known as Principles and Parameters (P&P)

Midterm Due in class Friday, 18 MarchWeek Nine

- M 21 Mar. Read T&H, Chapter 5 (pp. 61-68, P&P, Phrase Structure and L1 acquisition); read M&M, Chapter 3, sections 3.3 and 3.4: On understanding modularity and the role that language input plays in the development of the child's linguistic system(s)
{Part Four of Problem Set One due in class today}
- W 23 Mar. Read T&H, Chapter 5 (pp. 68-72, Phrase Structure and L2 acquisition); read M&M, Chapter 3, subsections 3.5.1 and 3.5.3.1: On P&P's (im)probable role in SLA
{Problem Set Five introduced today}
- F 25 Mar. Read T&H, Chapter 6 (pp. 74-87, Parameter Setting, Transferring an L1 Setting): On language knowledge and variation in languages (esp. between two languages) as explained by a UG framework (also an account for negative transfer)

Week Ten

- M 28 Mar. Read T&H, Chapter 6 (pp. 87-102, Two Kinds of Parameter Settings in an L1); On the impact of exclusive and inclusive parameter settings in a native language on the development of a nonnative IL system, two learnability theories referred to as markedness and the subset principle
- W 30 Mar. Read T&H, Chapter 6 (pp. 103-108, Transferring/Resetting L1 Parameters); read M&M, Chapter 3, subsections 3.5.3.2 and 3.5.3.3: On assessing learning principles (i.e., the impact of the input on the developing system) within a UG framework
- F 1 Apr. Read Ellis, Chapter 9 (pp. 350-355, on blackboard under supplementary reading); read M&M, Chapter 3, subsections 3.5.4 and 3.5.4.1; and read T&H, Chapter 7 (pp. 110-113, Parameters and Fossilized ILs): On interpreting "incompleteness" as learners' incapability of (i) accessing UG or (ii) resetting L1 parameters to L2
{Problem Set Five due in class today}

Week Eleven

SPRING BREAK HOLIDAY

Week Twelve

- M 11 Apr. Read M&M, Chapter 3, subsection 3.5.4.3; read T&H (pp. 114-120, Pro-Drop); interpreting incompleteness as a seeming parameter resetting that is in actuality the learner fitting L2 input to L1 parameter settings
{Problem Set Six introduced today}
- W 13 Apr. Read M&M, Chapter 3, subsection 3.5.4.2; read T&H (pp. 120-128, V⁰ Movement in French and English): On reinterpreting incompleteness as a gradual resetting of parameters based on the naturalistic input accessed by a learner's linguistic module, and preparation for problem-set Seven (due in two weeks)
- F 15 Apr. Read T&H, Chapter 8, (pp. 129-132, Logical and Developmental Problems); read M&M, Chapter 4, subsections 4.2.2.3 to 4.2.2.5: On a parameter resetting model that accounts for systematic developmental stages in L2 development

Week Thirteen

- M 18 Apr. Read T&H, Chapter 8, (pp. 132-141, Logical & Developmental Problems in SLA): On sorting through issues pertaining to cognitive models of stagiated development and their linguistic counterparts
{Problem Set Seven introduced today}
- W 20 Apr. Read M&M, Chapter 3, section 3.6; read T&H, Chapter 9: On periods of transition between systematic stages of IL development and the need for a cognitive model to account for such stagiation (i.e., how does the IL system pass from stage to stage)
{Problem Set Six due in class today}
- F 22 Apr. Reread M&M, Chapter 4, subsection 4.2.1.2; read T&H, Chapter 12, (pp. 209-213, Production Memory and Tuning): On the ACT* model of language processing and its function in L2 speech production/comprehension to explain development
{Part Five of Problem Set One introduced today}

Week Fourteen

- M 25 Apr. Read M&M, Chapter 4, subsection 4.2.1.4; read T&H, Chapter 12 (pp. 213-218, Processing Different Kinds of Knowledge and Evaluation): Arriving at a model that resolves competence (mental representation) and performance (mental process)
- W 27 Apr. Read M&M, Chapter 4, subsection 4.2.1.3; read T&H (pp. 218-225, Application and Summary): On specifying one of the original Interlanguage concepts, Selinker's strategies
- F 29 Apr. Read T&H, Chapter 11 (pp. 174-183, Hypothesis Creation and Explicit Instruction): On using classroom instruction in order to facilitate L2 speech and development

Week Fifteen

- M 2 May Read Ellis, Chapter 14 (pp. 617-627, 636-647, 657-660, on reserve in electronic and traditional formats): On whether traditional methods of grammar instruction lack durability, alternatives espousing cognitively-based grammar teaching, and the 'necessity for instruction' (examined in White 1991)
- W 4 May Reread Ellis, Chapter 14 (pp. 617-627, 636-647, 657-660, on reserve in electronic and traditional formats): On White & Trahey 1993, the reading for the take-home final exam (due at the beginning of the in-class final exam period, Dec. 16th)
- F 6 May

{Problem Set Seven & Part Five of Problem Set One due in class today}

Week Sixteen

- X Final Exam Period, from 0:00 to 0:00, xday morning
- take-home portion of the due at the very beginning of today's meeting
 - first hour, both undergraduates and graduates working on a problem set
 - second hour, only graduate students working on a different problem set