Outline

- L1
- First Language Acquisition
- L2
- Scope of SLA research (for L2 learning and teaching)
- What is SLA 1 & 2?
- Frameworks for SLA
- Early approaches to SLA
- Krashen’s Monitor Model
- L1 versus L2 language development
- Initial state
- Intermediate states
- Processes
- Necessary conditions
- Final state
- Social Contexts of SLA
- Micro social contexts
- Macro social contexts
- Integrating perspectives (for L2 learning and teaching)
What is a first language?

- **First language/native language/primary language/mother tongue:** roughly synonymous and generalised as L1
- Distinctions are not always clear-cut
- The important features that all shades of L1s share are that they are assumed to be languages which are acquired during early childhood—normally beginning before the age of about three years—and that they are learned as part of growing up among people who speak them. (Saville-Troike, 2006:4)
First Language Acquisition

Acquisition process a combination of:

- Innate cognitive strategies
- Interaction with parents, siblings, etc.

Developmental stages (acquisition schedule):

- Cooing and babbling: ee, oo; ba, ga; ba-ba
- One-word stage: doggy, poon (spoon), [ʌ 'sæʃ]
- Two-word stage: mummy eat, cat bad
- Telegraphic speech: cat drink milk
What is a second language?

- Second Language/ Target Language/ Foreign Language/ Library Language/ Auxilliary Language

- **Second Language Acquisition** (SLA) refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language. The additional language is called a **second language (L2)**, even though it may actually be the third, fourth, or tenth to be acquired.  

  (Saville-Troike, 2006)
Scope of SLA

- Informal L2 Learning (naturalistic contexts)
- Formal L2 learning (classrooms)
- L2 learning that involves a mixture of these settings and circumstances
What is SLA 1?

- **Process of SLA**

  - *What* exactly does the learner come to know?
  - *How* does the learner acquire this knowledge?
  - *Why* are some learners more successful than others?

- SLA has emerged as a field of study primarily from within linguistics and psychology (and their subfields of applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and social psychology), as a result to answer the what, how, and why questions posed above. (Saville-Troike, 2006)
What is SLA 2?

- **Linguists** emphasise the characteristics of the differences and similarities in the languages that are learned, and the **linguistic competence** and **linguistic performance** of learners at various stages.
- **Psychologists** and **psycholinguists** emphasise the mental/cognitive processes involved in acquisition.
- **Sociolinguists** emphasise variability in learner linguistic performance. (communicative competence & pragmatic competence)
- **Social psychologists** emphasise group-related phenomena, such as identity and social motivation.

(Saville-Troike, 2006)
Frameworks for SLA (Saville-Troike, 2006)

**Linguistic**
- Structuralism
- Transformational-Generative Grammar
- Functionalism
- Principles and Parameters Model
- Minimalist Program

**Psychological**
- Behaviorism
- Neurolinguistics
- Information Processing
- Humanistic models
- Connectionism
- Processability

**Social**
- Sociocultural Theory
- Ethnography of Communication
- Variation Theory
- Acculturation Theory
- Accommodation Theory
- Social Psychology
Linguistic

- Two central focuses since 1960: internal and external.
- Internal focus has been used by Chomsky.
- Transformational Generative Grammar
- Innate capacity
- Principles and Parameters Model and the minimalist program
- Linguistic competence
- External focus emphasises language use.
- Functionalism (Prague School of Eastern Europe)
Psychological

1. Languages and the brain (Neurolinguistics)
   - Critical period
2. Learning process
   - Information Processing (IP)
   - L2 is a highly complex skill
   - L2 is not unlike learning other highly complex skills.
   - Processability
   - Connectionism
3. Learner differences (why)
   - Humanistic framework
Social

1. Microsocial
   - Variation Theory
   - Accommodation Theory
   - Systematic differences in learner production

2. Macrosocial
   Ethnography of communication
   This extends the notion of what is being required in SLA beyond linguistic and cultural factors to include social and cultural knowledge that is required for appropriate use.

Acculturation Theory & Social Psychology
Early approaches to SLA 1

- **Contrastive Analysis**
  - Influence of L1 on L2
  - Influence by theories which were dominant in 1940s and 1950s in psychology and linguistics (Structuralism and Behaviorism)

- **Error Analysis**
  - Internal focus on learners’ creative ability to construct language
  - A shift to Mentalism in the early 1970s, with the emphasis on the innate capacity of the language learner rather than on external influences.
  - Chomsky’s Transformational-Generative (TG) Grammar
  - Language came to be known as having rule-governed behavior
Early approaches to SLA 2

- **Interlanguage**
  - Selinker (1972) under the similar influences as EA (Error analysis) introduced interlanguage (IL)
  - Intermediate states (or interim grammar)

- **Morpheme Order Studies**
  - The question of natural order
  - (universal sequence)
Monitor Model 1

- Krashen’s **language acquisition device (LAD)**
- Chomsky’s metaphor used for children’s **innate** knowledge of language.
- Five hypotheses:
  1. Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis
     - Distinction between **acquisition** and **learning**
     - **Acquisition** is sub-conscious and involves **LAD**
     - **Learning** is conscious (e.g. Classroom contexts)
Monitor Model 2

2. Monitor hypothesis
What is ”learned” is available only as a monitor, for purposes of editing or making changes in what has already been produced.

3. Natural Order hypothesis
We acquire the rules of language in a predictable order.

4. Input hypothesis
Language acquisition takes place because there is comprehensible input.

5. Affective Filter
Input may not be processed if the affective-filter is ”up”
Krashen’s Monitor Model

Learning situation:

Type of learning:

Result:

(Viberg 1987)
L 1 versus L 2 learning (Saville-Troike, 2006)

**L1**
- Innate capacity
- Child grammar
- Maturation
- Input
- Reciprocal interaction
- Native competence

**L2**
- Innate capacity?
- L1 knowledge
- World knowledge
- Interaction skills
- Learner language
- Transfer
- Input
- Feedback
- Aptitude
- Motivation
- Instruction
- Multilingual competence
In children’s minds (for L1) there is an innate capacity to learn language but it is not at all certain whether or not such natural ability is part of the initial state in older learners for L2 acquisition (?)

Some linguists and psychologists believe that the genetic disposition with children remains throughout life.

Others believe that some aspects of the innate capacity which children have for L1 remain in force for acquisition of subsequent languages, but that some aspects of this natural ability are lost with advancing age.

Still others believe that no innate capacity for language acquisition remains beyond childhood, and that subsequent languages are learned by means which are more like how older learners acquire other domains of knowledge like history etc.
But what is innate capacity?

- Humans are born with a natural ability ([or innate capacity](#)) to learn language.
- Children begin to learn their **L1 at the same age**, and **in the same way**, whether it is English, Bengali, Swedish, Chinese, Persian, or any other languages in the world.
- Children master **the basic phonological and grammatical operations** in their L1 by the age of five or six.
- It is thus possible to talk about **child grammar** or it is possible to systematically describe the kinds of utterances a child can produce or understand at a given maturational level.
- Children can understand and **create novel utterances**. They are **not limited to repeating** what they have heard. The utterances are systematically different from those of the adults around them.
Initial state 2

There is complete agreement among researchers on:
- Since L₂ acquisition follows L₁ acquisition, a major component of the initial state for L₂ learning must be prior knowledge of L₁.
- how language (in general) works
- Language specific features

This prior knowledge of L₁ is responsible for the transfer from L₁ to L₂ during second language development (second phase of L₁ versus L₂ learning)
L2 learners also already possess **real-world knowledge** in their initial state for language acquisition which young children lack at the point they begin learning their L1.

Initial state of L2 learning (also includes knowledge of means for accomplishing such interactional functions as requesting, commanding, promising etc.) which have developed in conjunction with L1 acquisition but are not present in the L1 initial state.
Initial state 4

- There is a cut-off age for L1 acquisition
- Acquisition of L1 is not simply a facet of general intelligence.
- For example,
- *Cookies me give*

- Children with English as L1 will recognise early on that the above mentioned sentence is ungrammatical, although they may have never been told so
Initial state 5

- Initial state of L₁
  - Innate capacity for language acquisition (which may or may not continue to be available for L₂, or may be available in some limited ways.)
  - The initial state for L₂ learning on the other hand has resources of L₁ competence, world knowledge, and established skills for interaction, which can be both an asset and an impediment.
Intermediate states

- Both L1 and L2 learners go through intermediate states (as they progress from their initial to their final state).
- Similarity (in the development of both L1 and L2):
  - Systematic (including predictable sequencing of many phenomena within each and some similarity of sequencing across languages, and in the fact that L1 and L2 learners both play a creative role in their own language development and do not merely mimic what they have heard or been taught.)
Processes

- Development is a spontaneous and largely unconscious process in L1 child grammar, where it is correlated with cognitive maturation.
- In L2 learners, learner language (interlanguage) occurs at an age when cognitive maturity cannot be considered a significant factor (processes other than age must be involved).
Processes

- There is general agreement that:
- Cross-linguistic influence (or transfer of prior knowledge from L1 to L2, is one of the processes that is involved in interlanguage development.
- Two major types of transfer:
  - **Positive transfer** (When an L1 structure/ rule is used in an L2 utterance and that use is appropriate or "correct" in the L2)
  - **Negative transfer** (When an L1 structure/ rule is used in an L2 utterance and that use is inappropriate and considered an "error")
Cross-linguistic influence occurs in all levels of IL: vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and all other aspects of language structure and use.

Positive transfer facilitates L2 learning because an L1 structure/rule that also works for L2 means that a new one doesn’t have to be learned.

Negative transfer of L1 features can often be inferred from forms in the second language which are unlike any that are likely to be produced by a native speaker of the L2, or are an integration of elements which would not occur in monolingual speech.

Inappropriate transfer of L1 pronunciation to L2 is detectable as a foreign accent in a non-native speaker’s production.
Necessary Conditions

- Language input to the learner is absolutely necessary for either L1 or L2 learning to take place.
- Children require interaction with other people for L1 learning to occur, but it is not a necessary condition for SLA (although it might facilitate L2 learning)
Final state

- The final state is the outcome of L1 or L2 learning. The final state of L1 development is native linguistic competence (by definition).
- Vocabulary learning and cultivation of registers may continue.
- The final state of L2 development can never be totally native linguistic competence, and the level of proficiency which learners reach is highly variable.
Social Contexts of SLA

- What must L2 learners know and be able to do in order to communicate effectively?

- Two levels of context that affect language learning: the microsocial and the macrosocial: The microsocial focus deals with the potential effects of different immediately surrounding circumstances, while the macrosocial focus relates SLA to broader cultural, political, and educational environments.
Microsocial factors

- **L2 variation**
  How contextual dimensions relate to variation in learner language and consider why differing varieties of an L2 may be chosen as targets of SLA even within groups who are supposedly learning the same language.

- **Input and interaction**
  Native speakers often modify their language in order to communicate with L2 learners.
Macrosocial factors

- Global and national status of L₁ and L₂
- Boundaries and identities
- Institutional forces and constraints
- Social categories
- Circumstances of learning
- Linguistic competence
- **Communicative competence** (from a social perspective): what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a particular language community.

The term language community refers to a group of people who share knowledge of a common language to at least some extent.
Integrating perspectives

• How? When? Why?

• Consider the goals that individuals and groups have for learning an additional language

• Set priorities that are compatible with those goals

• Approach learning/teaching tasks with an appreciation of the multiple dimensions that are involved: linguistic, psychological and social
Bibliography