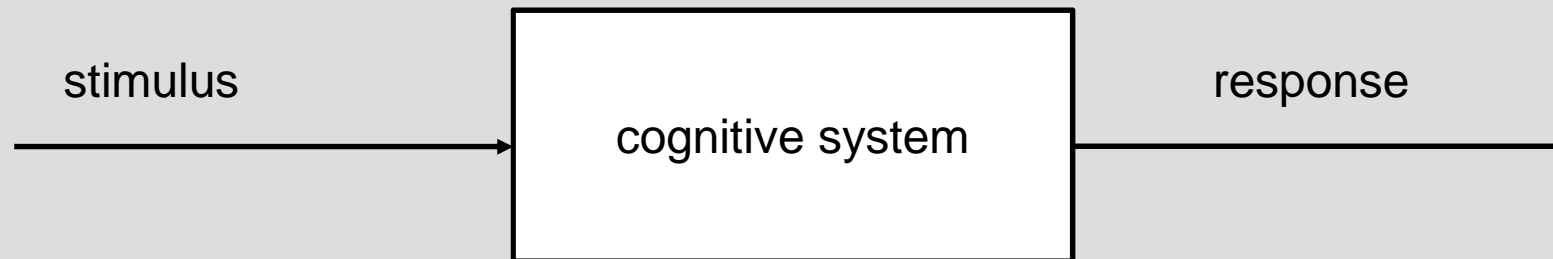# The role of the native language

Holger Diessel

Contrastive analysis

Contrastive analysis

Contrastive analysis can be seen as a behaviorist approach to L2 acquisition.

stimulus   cognitive system   response

Learning is a process of *habit formation*.

Learning involves:
1. imitation
2. practice
3. reinforcement

Contrastive analysis

Like contrastive analysis, the usage-based approach emphasizes the importance of imitation, practice, and reinforcement for language acquisition.

Is the usage-based theory of language acquisition a new version of linguistic behaviorism?

Contrastive analysis

Learning is a cumulative process. The more knowledge and skills an individual acquires, the more likely it becomes that his new learning will be shaped by his past experiences and activities. An adult rarely, if ever, learns anything completely new; however unfamiliar the task that confronts him, the information and habits he has built up in the past will be his point of departure. Thus transfer of training from old to new situations is part and parcel of most, if not all, learning. In this sense the study of transfer is coextensive with the investigation of learning.

[Postman 1971]

Contrastive analysis

If L2 acquisition is disturbed by the habits of the learner's native language, it is reasonable to focus on the differences between native and target language.

In the US, contrastive analysis had a pedagogical goal: Making L2 learners aware of the differences between their native language and the target language, so that they are able to overcome the linguistic habits of your native language that interfere with the habits of the target language.

Contrastive analysis

Since even languages as closely related as German and English differ significantly in the form, meaning and distribution of their grammatical structures, and since the learner tends to transfer the habits of his native language structure to the foreign language, we have here the major source of difficulty or ease in learning the structure of a foreign language. Those structures that are similar will be easy to learn because they will be transferred and may function satisfactorily in the foreign language. Those structures that are different will be difficult because when transferred they will not function satisfactorily in the foreign language and will therefore have to be changed.

[Lado 1957]

Contrastive analysis

Two types of transfer:

1. **Positive transfer**: When the structure of the native language is similar or equivalent to the structure of the target language, it facilitates the acquisition process.

2. **Negative transfer**: When the structure of the native language is different from the structure of the target language, it disturbs the acquisition process.

Error analysis

Contrastive analysis

Critique of contrastive analysis (Croder 1967):

- The process of L2 acquisition is not sufficiently described by the analysis of errors.
- The structural difference between two languages is not sufficient to predict the occurrence of errors in L2 acquisition.

Types of errors

Corder (1967):

- **Interlingual errors** (also called errors of transfer) are due to native language influence.
- **Intralingual errors** (also called developmental errors) are due to general learning mechanisms.

Like children, L2 learners produce overgeneralization errors and the development often involves the same stage (e.g. negation).

Negation in L1

Klima and Bellugi (1966): Development of negation in L1 acquisition:

1. No milk.
2. No more apple.
3. No singing song.
4. No the sun shining.

1. He not little, he big.
2. He no bite you.
3. I don't want it.
4. We cant talk

1. No, it isn't
2. That was not me.
3. Paul didn't laugh.
4. Why don't you leave.

Negation in L2

John Schuman (1979): Development of negation in L2 acquisition:

1. No me.
2. No mine.
3. No open it.
4. No lookit.
5. No break?
6. Susie no wan get off.

1. I no want.
2. No tree.
3. You dont put down mine.
4. We no going outside.
5. I dont gonna be your friend.
6. Dont tell me.

1. She no talk English.
2. No, I dont remember.
3. He dont like him.
4. I can't see yet.
5. I am not listening.
6. Chris is not playing.

Types of errors

Corder (1967):

- **Interlingual errors** (also called errors of transfer) are due to native language influence.
- **Intralingual errors** (also called developmental errors) are due to general learning mechanisms.

Corder (1967) :

- **Errors**: they are caused by the application of inadequate rules (competence).
- **Mistakes:** they are caused by accessing and processing linguistic knowledge (performance).

Error analysis

Pit Corder (1967) ‚The significance of learner's errors'.

- L2 acquisition should not be looked at from a purely pedagogical perspective.
- Errors in L2 are interesting because they reflect underlying linguistic rules.
- The study of L2 can be seen as a subfield of general linguistics or cognitive science.

Error analysis

Contrastive analysis	Error analysis
Pedagogical orientation	Scientific orientation

Error analysis

Contrastive analysis	Error analysis
Pedagogical orientation	Scientific orientation
Focus on input, practice, inductive learning	Focus on linguistic and cognitive processes

Error analysis

Contrastive analysis	Error analysis
Pedagogical orientation	Scientific orientation
Focus on input, practice, inductive learning	Focus on linguistic and cognitive processes
Errors of transfer	Multiple types of errors

Interlanguage

Larry Selinker (1972): A second language is not an imperfect copy of the target language but a rule-governed linguist system in its own right.

Interlanguage

Rod Ellis (1990):

- A learner's interlanguage is a linguistic system.
- A learner's interlanguage consists primarily of implicit linguistic knowledge.
- A learner's interlanguage is variable.
- A learner's interlanguage is the product of multiple interacting forces: transfer, general learning mechanisms, input.
- A learner's interlanguage may fossilize.

Types of errors

Errors of transfer are not symmetrical:

(1)	a.	I saw Pascal and Jean.	SVO
	b.	Je vois Pascal et Jean.	SVO
(2)	a.	I saw them.	SVO
	b.	Je les vois.	SOV
(3)	a.	*Je vois elle.	Engl. learner
		I see them.	
	b.	Le chien a mangé les.	
		The dog has eaten them.	
(4)	a.	I them saw.	Fr. learner
	b.	The dog them has eaten.	

Phonological errors

Holger Diessel

Different speech sounds

The   -> [z]e
Thank you   -> [t]ank you

Window   -> [v]indow

Job   -> [y]ob

Bach   -> Ba[k]

Müsli   -> M[yu]li

Non-overlapping speech sounds

bitte   bitter
leide   leider
Wunde   Wunder

(-e)(-a)(-er)
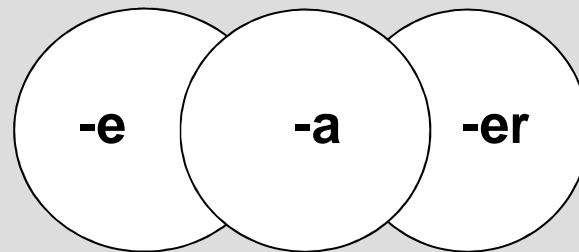
Wunden   wundern
enden   ändern
Sieges   Siegers

Phonetic features

Round   ->   [r]ound
Run   ->   [r]un

Feel   ->   fee[l]   (=viel)
Build   ->   bui[l]d   (=Bild)

Phonotactics

[ts]	Zeit
	Zunge
	zu
[s-z]	Salz
	Süden
	singen
[ʃt]	Stock
[ʃl]	schlimm
[ʃm]	Schmalz

Auslautverhärtung

has	[hæs]
glass	[glas]
wife	[walf]
bag	[bæk]
gave	[gæf]
in	[ɪn]
is	[ɪs]
are	[ar]
live	[lɪf]

Spanish L2 learners of English

[bɔp]	Bob	[tæg]	tag
[rɛt]	red	[faðər]	father
[ðə]	the	[bɔbi]	Bobi
[fʌsi]	fuzzy	[bik]	big
[son]	zone	[rɛðər]	redder
[fris]	freeze	[sik]	sick
[prawdəst]	proudest	[brevər]	braver
[bref]	brave	[bɛd]	bed
[bigər/biæər]	bigger	[pɪg]	pig
[wɛðər]	wetter	[wɛt]	wet
[sikəst]	sickest	[prawt]	proud

Spanish L2 learners of English

[bɔp]	Bob	[tæg]	tag
[rɛt]	red	[faðər]	father
[ðə]	the	[bɔbi]	Bobi
[fʌsi]	fuzzy	[bik]	big
[son]	zone	[rɛðər]	redder
[fris]	freeze	[sik]	sick
[prawdəst]	proudest	[brevər]	braver
[bref]	brave	[bɛd]	bed
[bigər/biæər]	bigger	[pɪg]	pig
[wɛðər]	wetter	[wɛt]	wet
[sikəst]	sickest	[prawt]	proud

Spanish L2 learners of English

[bɔp]	Bob	[tæg]	tag
[rɛt]	red	[faðər]	father
[ðə]	the	[bɔbi]	Bobi
[fʌsi]	fuzzy	[bik]	big
[son]	zone	[rɛ**ð**ər]	redder
[fris]	freeze	[sik]	sick
[prawdəst]	proudest	[brevər]	braver
[bref]	brave	[bɛd]	bed
[bigər/biæər]	bigger	[pɪg]	pig
[wɛðər]	wetter	[wɛt]	wet
[sikəst]	sickest	[prawt]	proud

Spirantization

[drama]	drama	[komiða]	food
[dolor]	pain	[anda]	beat it
[dime]	tell me	[sueldo]	compensation
[kaða]	each	[durar]	to last
[laðo]	side	[toldo]	curtain
[oðio]	hatred	[falda]	skirt

Stress

Unterricht	unterrichten
Überfall	überfallen
Urteil	erteilen
Undercut	to undercut
Foresight	to foresee
Insult	to insult

Stress

democrat — Demokrat

democratic — demokratisch

democracy — Demokratie

philosophic — philosophisch

atom — Atom

energy — Energie

dialogue — Dialog

president — Präsident

opposition — Opposition

academy — Akademie

electricity — Elektrizität

architecture — Architektur