Week 7: Cross-Linguistic Influence and Learner Language

- Cross-Linguistic Influence and Learner Language

- Two major hypotheses have been developed to explain cross-language transfer: the interdependence hypothesis and threshold hypothesis.

1) The Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins, 1981; 1984)

- It explains that in the process of developing proficiency in one language, children develop underlying cognitive skills and metalinguistic awareness, an awareness about the content and meaning of language that extends beyond external structure and sound.

- The result is a universal understanding of language from the acquisition of one language that facilitates learning and developing proficiency in a second or additional languages.

2) The Threshold Hypothesis (Short-Circuit Hypothesis) (Cummins & Swain, 1986)

- It explains that bilinguals must achieve minimum levels or thresholds of proficiency in both languages before the benefits of bilingualism can be observed. A higher level of proficiency in the first language is more likely to contribute to the acquisition of a second language.

- Language Transfer

• Positive and negative transfer

- When the relevant unit or structure of both languages is the same, linguistic interference can result in correct language production called positive transfer — "correct" meaning in line with most native speakers' notions of acceptability.
An example is the use of cognates. Note, however, that language interference is most often discussed as a source of errors known as negative transfer. Negative transfer occurs when speakers and writers transfer items and structures that are not the same in both languages.

Within the theory of contrastive analysis (the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities), the greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative transfer can be expected.

The results of positive transfer go largely unnoticed, and thus are less often discussed. Nonetheless, such results can have a large effect.

Generally speaking, the more similar the two languages are, and the more the learner is aware of the relation between them, the more positive transfer will occur.

• Conscious and unconscious transfer

Transfer may be conscious or unconscious. Consciously, learners or unskilled translators may sometimes guess when producing speech or text in a second language because they have not learned or have forgotten its proper usage.

Unconsciously, they may not realize that the structures and internal rules of the languages in question are different. Such users could also be aware of both the structures and internal rules, yet be insufficiently skilled to put them into practice, and consequently often fall back on their first language.

<Examples>
Language transfer produces distinctive forms of learner English, depending on the speaker’s first language. Some examples, labeled with a blend of the names of the two languages in question, are:
Such interfered-language names are often also used informally to denote instances of code-switching, code-mixing, or borrowing (using loan words).

**Code-switching vs. borrowing**

- The phenomenon is to be differentiated from borrowing. In general, the easiest way to find out whether a word or phrase is a borrowing in a given language is to determine whether the word is used by monolinguals of that language or not: Code-switches are only used by bilingual speakers.

- Borrowings, by contrast, are regularly used by monolinguals of a given language and that they have, to an extent at least, been adapted to the phonological system of the recipient language.

- However, as some linguists assume that the process of integration happens gradually, some forms of borrowings cannot be easily distinguished from code-switches. A more or less reliable test mentioned in the relevant literature relies on frequency (borrowings occur much more frequently than code switches).

**Code-switching and code-mixing**
The terms code-switching and 'code mixing' are often times used synonymously, though 'code-mixing' is often used for intrasentential codes-switching only.

**Broader effects of language transfer**

With sustained or intense contact between native and non-native speakers, the results of language transfer in the non-native speakers can extend to and affect the speech production of the native-speaking community. For example, in North America, speakers of English whose first language is Spanish or French may have a certain influence on native English speakers' use of language when the native speakers are in the minority. Locations where this phenomenon occurs frequently include Québec, Canada, and predominantly Spanish-speaking regions in the U.S.

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**Communicative Competence**

**Theories of Communicative Language Ability**

- Competing hypotheses about communicative language ability based on various assumptions as to the structure of language proficiency:

  i.e., the divisible competence (multi-dimensional) model (Lado, 1961) &
  the non-unitary (modular) models (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Cummins, 1983; Bachman, 1990)
  vs.
  unitary-competence (uni-dimensional) model (Oller, 1976).

- Two of the extreme possibilities – the stronger version of unitary competence hypothesis (UCH) and complete divisibility hypothesis were ruled out, but the partial divisibility hypothesis was supported (Bachman & Palmer,

- Since both the weaker version of UCH and modular theory assume a componentially complex general factor, the competing hypotheses are no longer mutually exclusive, but rather complementary.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

**A. Oller's framework**

a) Language proficiency cannot meaningfully be broken down into a variety of separate components. (Strong version of UCH)

b) weaker version – that underlying performance on many language processing tasks must be a general factor, which is componentially complex (1983).

**B. Canale's Framework**

a) As opposed to UCH, Canale & Swain (1980) propose four different components of communicative competence in their model., which are essential for a theoretical understanding of communication. (i.e., grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic)

b) • **grammatical competence**: concerned with sentence grammar and semantics.

   • **sociolinguistic competence**: includes socio-cultural rules for determining the appropriateness of meanings and forms.

   • **discourse competence**: associated with the knowledge to achieve unified text concerned with cohesion and coherence.

   • **strategic competence**: composed of verbal and nonverbal strategies used to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance factors or to insufficient other competences.

c) Building on the range of four competences, Canale (1983) postulates three
dimensions of language proficiency: basic, communicative, autonomous.

d) • **basic language proficiency**: concerned with the biological universals required for any language development and use.

• **communicative language proficiency**: focused on social, interpersonal uses of language through spoken and written channels.

• **autonomous language proficiency**: concerned with less directly social, more intrapersonal uses of language (e.g., problem-solving)

C. Cummins' Framework

a) With reduced importance of the dichotomy of **CALP** (Cognitive Academic Language Performance) and **BICS** (basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) in his previous theoretical framework (1980) for language proficiencies in relation to school achievement, Cummins (1983) postulates two orthogonal continua (i.e., context and cognitive efforts) along which language proficiency may vary. On the one hand, there is variation with respect to the degree of contextual support for a given communicative exchange or bit of discourse, on the other, there is the degree of cognitive effort required for comprehension and expression.

b) These dimensions are believed to vary somewhat *independently*, though there are *complex interactions* between them, explicitly recognizing that even face-to-face activities can be cognitively demanding.

D. Bachman's Framework

- Postulates a general model for describing the different factors that affect performance on language tests. This framework includes three factors: 1) communicative language ability, 2) test method facets, 3) random factors

1) **Communicative language ability** includes
(1) language competence, composed of
   organizational competence (grammatical, textual) &
   pragmatic competence (illocutionary, and sociolinguistic),

(2) strategic competence (determining the most effective means of achieving a
   communicative goal), and

(3) psychophysiological mechanisms:
   the channel (auditory, visual) and mode (receptive, productive).

2) Test method facets consist of
   (1) environment,
   (2) rubric,
   (3) input,
   (4) expected response, and
   (5) relationship between input and response.

3) Random factors include
   (1) personal characteristics,
   (2) interactions among language abilities and test method facets,
   (3) random measurement error.

※ Speech Acts
1. Locutionary speech acts
2. Illocutionary speech acts
3. Perlocutionary speech acts

**Strategy Learning/Using**

1) Learning strategies
   - Learning strategies relate to input — to processing, storage, and retrieval, that is,
     to taking in messages from others.
<3 main categories>

(1) Metacognitive strategies
- involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one’s production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed.

a. Advance Organizers:
- information presented prior to learning and can be used by the learner to organize & interpret new incoming information
- making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle

b. Directed Attention: Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors.

c. Selective Attention: Deciding in advance to specific aspects of language input that will cue to the retention of language input

d. Self-Management: understand the conditions that help one learn

e. Functional Planning: planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task

f. Self-Monitoring: correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary or for appropriateness

g. Delayed Production: consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially thru listening comprehension

h. Self-Evaluation: checking the outcomes of one's own learning against an internal measure of completeness
(2) Cognitive strategies

- more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of
  the learning material itself

a. Repetition: imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent
   rehearsal

b. Resourcing: using target language reference materials

c. Translation: using first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the
   2nd language

d. Grouping: reordering or reclassifying the material to be learned based on common
   attributes

e. Note Taking

f. Deduction: consciously applying rules to produce or understand the 2nd language

g. Recombination: constructing a meaningful sequence or longer language sequence
   by combining knowing elements in a new way.

  e.g. skirts, long or short, are bound to go. → *Skirts are either long or short.

h. Imagery: relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar,
   easily retrieval visualizations, phrases, or locations

i. Auditory Representation: retention of the sound or similar sound for a word,
   phrase, or longer language sequence

j. Keyword: Developed by Atkinson (1975)
   mnemonic(기억을 돕는) technique based on imagery
   remembering a new word in 2nd language by
(1) identifying a familiar word in the 1st language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word
e.g. 왜: why

(2) generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new word and the familiar word
   e.g. A: you should buy the PURSE.
   B: You can PERSUADE me to buy the PURSE.

k. Contextualization: placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence

l. Elaboration: relating new information to other concepts in memory
   e.g. housekeeper: house + keeper

m. Transfer: using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task

n. Inferencing: using available information to guess meaning

(3) Socioaffective strategies
   - have to do with social–mediating activity and transacting with others.

(* We can notice that the latter category, along with some of the other strategies are actually *communication* strategies.)

   a. Cooperation
   b. Question for Clarification

2) Communication strategies

   - Communication strategies pertain to output, how we productively express meaning, how we deliver messages to others.

(1) Avoidance Strategies:
   a. Message abandonment
- syntactic or lexical avoidance
- phonological avoidance
b. Topic avoidance

(2) Compensatory Strategies

c. Circumlocution: describes the characteristics or elements when one does not know the vocabulary e.g. construction worker – people who work to build something
e.g. dishwasher – the person who cleans the dishes
d. Approximation: replace the original one with a similar but not exactly the same word
e.g. stream, brook -> river, waterpipe -> pipe,
   mountain ridge -> mountain line
e. Use of all-purpose words: stuff, thing, etc.
f. Word coinage: *vegetarianist for vegetarian, *naiveness for naivety
g. Prefabricated patterns: 고정된 표현 (*travel survival" is full of these.)
e.g. Which way is to xxx? How can I get to xxx?
h. Nonlinguistic signals: gesture, facial expression
i. Literal translation: *small father, (길가는 할머니에 대한 호칭 )*grandmother
j. Foreignizing: “It's 다리미.” (영어적인 강세와 발음을 사용하여 한국어를 발음)
k. Code-switching: 2가지 경우가 있음:
   1. 언어 능력이 있으나 단 이유로 언어를 바꾸는 경우
   2. 언어능력이 모자라서 편한 언어로 바꾸는 경우
l. Appeal for help: e.g. "Sorry, I don't understand."
m. Stalling or time-gaining strategies:
   e.g. Let me think. . .
   e.g. That's a good question. .
   e.g. Uh, as a matter of fact. .


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Appendix: Role of Rote Learning

Rote learning of vocabulary
(by I. S. P. Nation)

. . . . The third finding I want to focus on is sometimes set up as in opposition to something like extensive reading. This is the idea of using bilingual word cards for deliberate decontextualized rote learning of vocabulary.

− Learners have known the value of this for a very long time, but teachers tend to see it as the very opposite of what they are supposed to do in a communicative approach to language teaching.

− There has been a long history of research into the deliberate learning of vocabulary. Much of this research has been done in psychology as a part of research on memory and forgetting. The findings are very clear. A large amount of vocabulary can be very quickly learnt and retained for a long period of time by using spaced retrieval and, where necessary, mnemonic techniques such as the keyword technique.

− Vocabulary which is quickly learnt in this way is not quickly forgotten. The use of the L1 and pictures to provide the meaning for words is generally more effective than the use of L2 definitions. There is now research which shows that such learning not only results in explicit knowledge but also results in implicit knowledge, which is the kind of knowledge needed for normal language use.
This recent finding is not yet well known and suggests that the learning of vocabulary is different from the learning of grammar, as research on grammar indicates that deliberate learning does not directly result in implicit knowledge.

(Source: http://journals.cambridge.org)

Appendix: Implicit vs Explicit Knowledge of Language


(p. 248)

• Positions on the relationship between implicit and explicit language knowledge

1. Noninterface position
   - According to noninterface position, Implicit and explicit L2 knowledge are acquired differently (Hulstijn, 2002: Krashen, 1981), are thought to be located in or accessed by different areas of the brain (Paradis, 1994), and are accessed by different processes (N.C. Ellis, 1993).

   - The hallmark of the noninterface position is that the two knowledge types are completely separate to such an extent that explicit knowledge can never become implicit. This is the position espoused by Krashen (1981) and his learning–acquisition hypothesis.

   - According to the noninterface position, explicit language knowledge will always remain explicit, despite years of exposure, practice, and proficiency in the language

2. The Strong interface position

   - The strong interface position is in polar opposition to the noninterface
position: This position holds that explicit knowledge can be derived from implicit knowledge and, even more importantly, that explicit knowledge can become implicit knowledge with enough practice.

- According to the strong interface position, learners can first learn a rule as declarative (explicit) knowledge and then, through repeated use and practice, can convert it into an implicit representation. The interface position was first formally advanced by Sharwood Smith (1981) and has subsequently been promoted by DeKeyser (1998).

3. The weak interface position

- The weak interface position similarly posits that explicit knowledge can become implicit; however, it is not as categorical as the strong interface position in its formulation.

- His position stipulates some constraints on the circumstances under which explicit knowledge can become implicit.

1) One version of the weak interface position, espoused by R. Ellis (1993), proposes that the conversion of explicit to implicit knowledge can occur through practice, but only if and when the learner is developmentally ready to acquire the linguistic form in question.

2) A second version, expoused by N. C. Ellis (1994), maintains that explicit knowledge contributes indirectly to the creation of implicit knowledge because “declarative rules can have ‘top–down’ influences on perception” (p. 16).

3) The third and final version of the weak interface position, espoused by Schmidt and Frota (1986) and Sharwood Smith (1981), proposes that learners use their explicit linguistic knowledge to produce (presumably planned) output, which, in turn, becomes input for their implicit system.

These positions have been debated in the SLA literature for decades. However, to date, there is no conclusive evidence that favors one position over another.
Appendix: Short–Circuit Hypothesis


(p. 459)

- . . two competing hypotheses have been proposed to describe differences between L1 and L2 reading. Broadly framed within the schema–theoretic model, the two views attempt to account for the performance of novice L2 readers who are already skilled in L1 reading.

The first, Clarke’s short circuit hypothesis, states that low proficiency in the L2 results in a "short-circuit" of effective strategies when good L1 readers are confronted with an L2 text: the top down processing of their L1 reading changes to bottom up processing in their L2. A logical extension of this explanation would be that as L2 readers improve their overall skills in the nonnative language, they increase their use of global processing strategies.

The second, opposing hypothesis, proposed by Lee (1991), is that even readers who are novices in the L2 simultaneously combine both bottom up and top down knowledge, and that such factors as text topic exert a power influence on L2 reading comprehension. In this view, "[b]eginning language learners who are sophisticated L1 readers are oriented neither from the bottom–up nor from the top down; they are bi–oriented" (p. 200). According to the bi–orientation hypothesis, then, little difference exists in psychological processing between L1 and L2 reading.