The logical problem of

Second Language Acquisition
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...We shall consider whether a parallel case can be made for L2 acquisition, whether the proposal that language acquirers are equipped with the innate structure in the form of UG...
What constitutes knowledge of language?

For the native speaker is represented in the form of mental grammar, an abstract system of principles and rules.

Competence will be represented in the form of an internalized grammar.

The interlanguage grammar represents knowledge of the grammar.
2.2.2 L2 knowledge and L2 use of language

- Competence and performance: distinction
- Language used by L2 learner
  - Internalized competence
  - Performance variables
    - Gonna
- L2 acquisition
  - Use of knowledge
    - Interlanguage competence
  - Devising appropriate methods to tap the L2 learner’s competence, while abstracting away performance phenomena, is not an easy task, but it is crucial to be able to do this in order to investigate the role of UG in second language acquisition
2.3 Logical Problem of L2

- L2 --------- L2 Grammar
- L2 --------- UG --------- L2 Grammar
2.3.1 Underdetermination

- Successful L2 acquirers will be considered, who have had naturalistic L2 acquisition outside the classroom.
- If the input in L1 is the same as in L2 it will underdetermine the L1 and L2 grammar.
- It goes beyond the input.
- Coppieters found adults who acquired the second language being assessed by native speakers appeared to have internalized knowledge not available in the input.
- Not every L2 learners are considered as close to native speakers.
2.3.2 Degeneracy

- **Input to L1 learners**
  - Grammatical and ungrammatical sentences → principles
  - Obscure any generalizations

- **Non degenerate input**
  - Teacher-talk
  - Foreigner talk

- **Simplified input**
  - Issue of acquiring complex structure
2.3.3 Negative Evidence

- L1 acquisition lacks negative evidence or error correction, knowledge of ungrammatically is not acquired by means of negative evidence, and incorrect hypothesis do not have to be eliminated by means of correction.
2.4 Some Differences Between L1 and L2 acquisition

- There are considerable differences showing that L1 and L2 acquisition differ from UG.
- They do not lead us to abandon the role of UG in L2 acquisition.
2.4.1 Degree of success

- Difference between L1 and L2 is the degree of success attained by learners.
  - L1 = success
  - L2 = fail to acquire the language fully
- Differences in output: L2 learners and native speakers
Failure: non-operation of UG
Success:
- phonology – accent
- Inflectional morphology
- Articulatory difficulties experienced by older learners

Failure requires explanation ≠ UG
Schachter (1988)

- L2 learners often fail to use structures derived by movement: clefts, topicalization, or raising.
- Central role of UG in L2 acquisition
2.4.2 MOTHER TONGUE

- Another difference between L1 and L2 learners is that L2 learners know another language.
- L2 learners whose L1 is related to their L2 have an advantage over learners whose L1 is unrelated.
2.4.3 Fossilization

- L2 often get ‘stuck’ and they produce non target form which are ineradicable.
- It involves the use of forms attributable to the mother tongue of the learner.
- Since L1 learners already know a language UG does play an major role in L1 acquisition.
2.4.4 Input

- L1 = Naturalistic input
- L2 = vary depending on the learning environment and teaching method
- L2 learners = negative evidence than L1 learners
  - Errors violating UG principles
2.4.5 AGE

- Critical Period

L2 acquisition assumes a role for UG in child L2 acquisition, but do not accept that it is involved in adult learning.

There is a critical period and at the end of the critical period, UG has decayed or become inaccessible.
2.4.5 AGE

- UG is only a LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DEVICE helping a child to acquire language, but not in adult knowledge of language.
2.4.5 AGE

- UG appears to mediate adult knowledge of the mother tongue because UG consists of negative constraints that prevent ungrammatical sentences and allow some interpretations of sentences over others which is part of our adult competence as well.
2.5 The L2 Projection Problem: Alternative Solutions

- There is something like UG guiding L2 acquisition when grammar complexity is attained by L2 learners.
- L2 learners do attain some abstract principles.
- To admit that the L2 input share the deficiencies of the L1 input. If abstract principles are not accessed, problem solving takes place.
2.5.1 The mother tongue grammar as a solution to the projection problem

- L2 input → L1 Grammar → ILG
2.5.2 L2 acquisition as problem solving

- Hypothesis testing: Trial and Error
- Hypothesis testing have been rejected for L1 acquisition for the following reasons:
  - 1. It can not guarantee that learners will hit on the right result.
  - 2. It requires feedback in the form of negative evidence.
  - 3. It predicts the different patterns and sequences of acquisition from one person to another.
2.6 UG and L2 Acquisition: The alternatives

i. UG is available and works exactly as it does in L1 acquisition.

ii. UG is totally unavailable in L2 acquisition.

iii. Access to is mediated via the L1 (2 hypothesis)
   a. UG is unaccessible but any aspects but it available in the L1 can be used in the L2
   b. L2 learners initially assume the L1 value of UG parameters, but are still able to tap UG. Hence, they can reset to L2 parameter settings.

iv. UG is available but does not work in identical fashion to L1 acquisition.
2.6.1 The pure UG hypothesis

- L1 and L2 identical = operation of UG
  - L2 acquisition \rightarrow interaction UG and L2
  - Previous knowledge is considered irrelevant
  - No effects from the mother tongue
2.6.2 Universal Grammar is dead

- UG grammar is not available to L2 learners, at least to adults.

- Adult L2 acquisition mechanism is different from L1 acquisition mechanism.
2.6.3 Role of the L1

There two different positions:

- Version of UG-is-dead position: Any mismatch between the L2 input and the L2 learner’s grammar is mediated not by UG but by knowledge.

- An assumption of a more active role of UG: it attributes considerable importance to the L1 grammar.
2.6.4 UG is partially available

- UG does not operate → differences between L1 and L2 acquisition
- UG is dead position → null hypothesis L2 is not the same as L1
- L1 and L2 are identical
  - Both theories are misleading = similarities and differences
- UG is might be available: impigne by various factors
 UG is only a component
  ● Module: interact with various others
    ○ Non-operation of UG

 UG available
  ● Without one’s having to accept total identity of L1 and L2 acquisition
2.7 Testing the issues: some general problems

- UG cannot be rejected out of hand.
- UG make different predictions from UG-is-dead hypothesis.
2.7.1 UG Effects

- Child grammar show effects which could only have come from UG.
- L2 learners should attain knowledge of ungrammaticality and ambiguity.
- It should be demonstrated that L2 learners posses the kind of knowledge only obtained from UG.
2.7.2 No “wild” grammars

- Related to the issue of UG effects is the question of violations of principles of UG.
  - Interim competence = constrained

- Goodluck: “no wild grammars” mandate
  - Child: no grammar that violates UG
Violations of UG
- Constrained by UG
- Absent in Child language

L2 acquisition should be similar
- Impossible errors
What does Mary believe the story that John saw?

She watched television before Mary had dinner.

John run fast.

Is raining.
2.7.3 Tapping aspects of UG not exemplified in the L1

- The mother tongue grammar mediates L2 acquisition is consistent. Where the L1 and the L2 both have the same principles or parameters, it possible to distinguish between UG or the L1 grammar as the source of any complex UG-like knowledge.
Conclusions

- Logical problems of L2 acquisition, and that a reasonable case can be made for a role for UG.
- UG hypothesis is a testable one.