EUROPEAN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: A SURVEY OF MAJOR TRENDS

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摘　　要

　　本論文主要在介紹歐洲地區第二語言習得方面，自七十年代以後的主要研究趨勢和結果。歐洲心理語言學之學理，和美國境內的，一向不太一樣。一般而言，歐洲學派比較偏向語用功能，比較不注重形式理論。這種情形不但在語言學如此，在一般心理語言學亦如此，在語言習得方面的研究也是如此。

　　因此，本論文試就以下數個具有代表性的歐洲學術研究群，所做的第二語言習得方面的研究，來助讀者明白歐洲的「功能」取向，希望能因此給國內讀者，在語言習得的研究方面，提供更寬廣的角度與空間。

　　本文除前言之外，分成五段。第一段介紹歐洲第二語言習得的整體概況。第二段至第五段則較詳細地介紹五個德國研究群、三個法國研究群、一個荷蘭研究群，以及歐洲基金會所發起的跨語言、跨國度的大型計劃。這些研究，早的在七十年代中即已開始，晚的則在最近一兩年才完成報告，很能代表這個時期的歐洲派作風。然而在這共同的作風之下，若干各研究群各有其獨特之處。這些都是歐洲的第二語言習得研究，頗令吾人借鏡的地方。

0. Introduction

Language acquisition, be it that of one's first language or second language, has long been an enticing topic since the beginning of human civilization. However, scientific investigation of this exciting topic started in the twentieth century when linguistics and psychology progressed in such a way as never being preceded before. While research in first lnaguage acquisition (hereafter FLA) is mostly concerned with the issue of how the young child manages to master his/her mother tongue with ease in a relatively short period of time, second language acquisition (hereafter SLA) researchers have a wider range of interests, e.g., the similarity or difference between FLA and SLA, the interference of FL on SLA, SLA by children and adults, SLA in the classroom and in the street, etc.

By the 1960's, theories of language acquisition followed the major ideology of Behaviorism – that children learn their first language by imitation, repetition and reinforcement. This is also true of SLA where contrastive analysis played the major role in analyzing data as well as in designing teaching materials. But as Chomsky's transformation grammar began to take floor, language acquisition research changed its direction too. Brown's morpheme studies became the major model for both FLA and SLA. The idea of acquisition order of grammatical morphemes was widely accepted. Shortly afterwards, it was felt that SLA was very much like FLA (Ervin-Tripp 1974). Not only was it found that second language learners' errors were mostly developmental in nature (not solely due to first language interference), the claim that SLA was too a constructive process was also made (Dulay and Burt 1974). As errors were found to be systematic and significant (corder 1967), error analysis became a popular fad. At more or less the same time, interlanguage hypothesis came into existence too (Selinker 1972). At this point, the issues of interference and transfer, just like their kin – contrastive analysis, sank onto the backstage of the research arena.

As SLA moved from error analysis to interlanguage, the focus of study changed from product to process. The psychological processes, or more specifically, the learner's learning strategies, have been a favorite topic. Processes such as overgeneralization and hypothesis-testing were recognized as operant in learning a second language. These processes were often viewed as belonging to general cognitive abilities (Ausubel 1965) rather than to a specific LAD (Language Acquisition Device) proposed by Chomsky (1965) and popular among FLA research.

It was also found that some psychological processes were hard to detect. An example is the avoidance strategy (Schachter 1974; Kleinmann 1977). Learners might choose to avoid certain linguistic forms or items in spontaneous talk. Thus, these strategies can only be investigated through carefully designed elicitation.

As process studies began to gain momentum, SLA had shifted from a linguistic approach to a psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic approach. Not only were psychological factors such as personality, cognitive styles, motivation and attitude examined, but social factors such as social distance, ego permeability were also considered as relevant to SLA. Some SLA studies beginning in the late 1970's began to be devoted to the topics of communicative competence, learner variation and stylistic change due to social factors such as task, setting, topics, etc. (Beebe 1988).

Thus far, we have discussed the development of American SLA–how it changed from one theoretical framework to another, resulting in one hypothesis after another. Let us now comment beiefly on its methodology. Early SLA was mostly done on

longitudinal data where limited numbers of subjects were studied. However, in the early 1970's, cross-sectional experimental methods were developed and made a unique contribution to SLA (Beebe 1988). By the cross-sectional method, the researcher can collect data from a vast range of subjects and observe the differences between different age groups. Two outsanding examples are de Villiers & de Villers (1973) on FLA and Dulay & Burt (1974) on SLA.

So much about SLA in the North America scenario. Now, let's turn to the European continent.

Although European SLA runs somehow parallel to American SLA under the influence of the same psychological and linguistic theories, it nevertheless has its own special traits. In general, European SLA is more functional, functional in the sense of putting the matter of language use in the center of research. For example, while American SLA of the 1960's and early 1970's was concerned with the mere counting of either certain grammatical morphemes in obligatory contexts or the number of errors, or with the description of the development of some syntactic structures in the learners' interlanguage, European researchers were often more concerned with the semantics and pragmatics of linguistic forms and in the interaction of various psychological and social factors with the language learning mechanism.

European functionalism is a result of at least two factors: (1)a mentalistic tradition in psychology and a functional orientation in linguistics (Yang 1994), (2) a multilingual setting that is ideal for a large-scale longitudinal and observational study of SLA in naturalist settings.

For this reason, the present parper aims to describe European SLA since the 1970's. First an overview will be given to describe the general characteristics of European SLA as distinct from American SLA. Then attention will be directed to some major research in German, France, the Netherlands where studies on SLA abound. Finally, the biggest SLA project in Europe, the European Science Foundation's project, will be discussed.

1. An Overview

As we have just said, European SLA in the 1960's and the early 1970's was pretty much under the same climate as American SLA, i.e., first in the framework of contrastive analysis and later error analysis. We also pointed out that in general European SLA distinguishes itself by being more functional than its American counterpart. In this section, we shall look into this matter a little bit further by taking

into consideration of the many studies taken up in Germany, France, and the Netherlands, the three most advanced countries in Western Europe where second language acquisition has been a major issue.[1]

Why is SLA a major issue in these countries? The single most important factor is the increasing numbers of immigrant workers and their families, often from Africa, Southern Europe and the Middle East. Since the 1950's, the post-war reconstruction in Europe started and these European countries were desperate in procuring workers from abroad. As these workers' stay was not limited to a one-year or two-year term, and as their families were later admitted to join them, the existence of these foreign workers and their families in the host countries became a problem, not only socially and culturally, but also linguistically. This is how SLA has become a major issue in these countries.

The immigrant workers and their children were initially not given any instruction in the native language of the host country. So they had to learn it in their own way, that is, by having contact with native speakers of the language at work/school or in the street. Therefore, the acquisition of a second language by these people is in essence naturalistic, and in reality very slow and gradual. Such a situation enables European scholars to carry out studies that extend over a long period of time and on a large scale. This is something that never happens before.[2]

We have said that beginning in the late 1970's, an orientation toward psycholinguistics or even sociolinguistics has been found in American SLA. This is especially true of European SLA. Basically, three major questions have been addressed in European SLA:

1. The role of sociopsychological factors in SLA;

2. The interrelation between the acquisition of linguistic competence and communicative competence;

3. The particular influence of the first language (von Stutterheim 1991, p. 136).

The sociopsychological factors studied include age, attitude, length of stay, exposure to target language, sex, and so on. Many of these factors were found to be significantly related to success of SLA (refer to Section 2–5).

While American SLA takes up the topic of the development of communicative competence in the framework of speech act theory, European SLA deals with it in a

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[1] The present writer must apologize for not being able to include British SLA which deserves a paper of its own. Also the choice of certain research projects rather than others is mostly idiosyncratic in that the present writer makes her choice on two principles: the principle of uniqueness and the principle of representativeness.

[2] While European longitudinal studies on SLA are unique as such, they are not the only studies done. In fact, there are also cross-sectional or strictly experimental studies. But most of the studies this paper refer to will be of the first type.

slightly different way. Basically, three steps are followed. First, observable surface forms are identified and semantic and pragmatic functions are ascribed. Secondly, instances of reference to semantic and pragmatic notions are spotted and their corresponding linguistic forms are examined. Thirdly, communicative intentions are investigated on the basis of not only linguistic forms but also non-linguistic cues. In other words, researchers are more interested in understanding how second language learners in naturalistic settings manage to get things done with limited linguistic resources and how these resources develop as a result of communication demands. McLaughlin called this approach the social psychological approach (1989).

Because of this orientation toward communicative competence and sociopsychological factors, the interlanguage issue has too assumed a different characteristics on the European scene. Here the term "learner variety" is preferred. This variety is often investigated in its own light, that is, less from a linguistic point of view and more from a sociolinguistic point of view. Clearly, the Labovian peradigm is widely accepted. Thus, learner variety is defined as a "necessary synchronic manifestation of the diachronic evolution of grammatical competence" (Huebner 1991, p. 157). As a result, several attempts have been made to account for this inter-language system – "variety grammar" (Klein and Dittmar (1979), "multi-dimensional model" (Meisel et al. 1981), and topological universals (Hyltenstam 1977, 1978).

This kind of analysis is essentially "deep-level" analysis (Valdman 1991) in which not only syntactic but also semantic and pragmatic factors are used to interpret the learner's production. In such an approach, the learner's learning process is also uncovered. It was found that L2 process is essentially a restructuring process, drawing from all available sources of knowledge, including L1. In this way, the influence of L1 on L2 is not explained in the same terms as found before. Rather, it was discovered that very often it was the L1 subsystems that operated on L2 surface structures. As an example, Dutch college students of French performed relatively well in inserting the determinate pronoun ce in subject or direct object position, but poorly in prepositional object position. The reason, as it was found, is that the French ce dont does not depend on the syntactic notion of the antecedent as the Dutch wie does, but on the animacy feature of the antecedent (Valdman 1991, p. 177).

Here the issue of transfer is approached from a different perspective. This influence of the first language on SLA is not merely a direct mapping, either positive or negative. Transfer is redefined as the interaction of the first language with the second language on cognitive grounds (refer to Kassel project in Section 2).

Cognition, or the conceptual basis for language acquisition is an issue where European SLA differs from American SLA. As we just said, it is semantics and

pragmatics that researchers turn to to interpret their data. The development of concepts such as gender, deixis, temporality, and space was closely studied in relation to their linguistic realizations. For example, the acquisition of the French passé composé was found to be an intriguing phenomenon in that in interactive discourse it functions as a completive, but in narration as punctual (Bentolila 1983). Topics such as reference to space and time are common among European SLA (refer to the following sections).

To sum up, European SLA in general illustrates the following common traits: an emphasis on the sociopsychological factors, a preference for longitudinal observational studies of natural spontaneous interactions, an inclination toward semantic/conceptual and pragmatic interpretations, and a new perspective to view interlanguage and transfer. However, individual researcher has his/her own special focus. For example, the aforementioned "variety grammar" was developed more in linguistic terms, but the "enunciation theory" more in pragmatic terms (refer to Section 2,3). In the following section, we shall look upon many of these issues in more detail.

2. German SLA

A survery done in 1983 (Nicholas & Meisel) revealed that there were already nine recognizable research projects on natural SLA completed by then in West Germany. This is not surprising at all if we consider the economic boom of this country in the 1950's and 60's. These studies differ greatly in terms of their choice of subjects, linguistic areas investigated, and methods used. Instead of presenting all of them, we shall describe five major projects: the Kiel project, the HPD project, the ZISA porject, the TIKA project, and the Kassel project, as representative of the diverse orientations they have.

2.1. The Kiel Project

In the early 70's, H. Wode and his colleagues of the University of Kiel took up longitudinal studies on the acquisition of both English and German as both first and second languages by children of varying ages. In studying the acquisition of phonology, grammatical morphemes, and some sentence structures by these children, Wode was most interested in describing the developmental sequences so as to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition. The conclusion drawn was that both first and second language acquisition follow very similar processes in that the learners create their language on the basis of the same

cognitive strategies.

Wode was primarily interested in testing the universal hypothesis of language development. Although Wode's theory was not completely accepted, he did exert great influence on German SLA studies on examining more closely the similarities between first and second language acquisition (Nicholas & Meisel 1983). Wode's studies are very similar to American SLA of the same time in methodology and in theorizing. However, Wode differed from his American friends by drawing cross-linguistic data (both German and English) for comparison.

2.2. The Heidelberg Project

The Heidelberg Projekt Pidgindeutsch (HPD) was initiated by W. Klein in 1973 and from 1974 to 1979 was funded by Deutsch Forschungsgemeinschaft. The subjects were adult Italian and Spanish immigrant workers learning German as a second language. The study was cross-sectional, with forty-eight subjects of varying linguistic abilities. Two kinds of data were collected. The first type was collected in the subject's home by means of informal conversations in which a set of questions concerning the subject's life, work, leisure time activities, future plans, etc. was asked. The second kind was collected at the subjects' working site by means of observation and field notes. Both were carefully analyzed.

On the basis of the assumption that natural languages are variable, open, ambiguous, vague, and context dependent, Klein focused on the variation between the speakers and the relationship between the different varieties of the learners and the language norm of native speakers (Klein & Dittmar 1979). In order to account for such variations, Klein & Dittmar used a technique called "probabilistic weightings" to describe the developing grammar of their subjects. This grammar is called "variety grammar."

> A variety grammar associates a probabilistic grammar with each element of a previously defined space of varieties. These varieties are conceived of as stabilizations of grammatical regularities under certain conditions, such as period, place, social class, or type of situation. (1979, p. 64)

Variety grammar is in essence formal, but in function descriptive. The main purpose is to understand how these immigrant workers develop their grammar, especially in constructing verbal, nominal and adverbial complexes.

HPD also explored the relationships between linguistic development and some

sociopsychological factors: contact with Germans at work and leisure time, duration of stay, and age and sex, etc. One important finding was that some learners developed a fossilized pidgin: subjects who stayed longer than two years were found not to do better along with the lengthening of stay. This result sheds light on the fossilization process and gives rise to the issue of subject selection (Nicholas & Meisel 1983).

Recently, Dietrich is investigating the acquisition of German by Cantonese adult speakers in naturalistic setting, following more or less the same format of HPD. Dietrich & Zheng are interested in the issue of word order in second language production (1993).

2.3. The ZISA Project

The ZISA project (Zweitspracherwerb italienischer [portugiesischer] und spanischer Arbeiter) was initiated by Meisel at the University of Wuppertal (later Hamburg) and Clahsen and Pienemann (Meisel 1980; Meisel, Clahsen & Pienemann 1981). It is like the HPD project in that it studied immigrant workers. The first part of the project was done in 1977-8 supported by the Ministerium für Wissenschaft and Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, and the second part continued another three years with a grant from Stiftung Volkswagenwerk. The former was crosssectional while the latter longitudinal. The purpose of the study was to explore the acquisition of German by forty-five Italian, Portugual, and Spanish speaking immigrant workers in terms of language use and socio-psychological factors (Meisel, Clahsen, & Pienemann 1981).

The project seems to bridge the gap between the Kiel and HPD projects in both methodology and theory. While the HPD used spontaneous and elicited conversations on a longitudinal basis, the ZISA used both longitudinal and cross-sectional methods. In the matter of theory, Meisel et al. believed that there was no single path to second language acquisition. They aimed to describe both the developmental and variation dimensions of SLA. As a result, a bi-dimensional model was developed: on the one hand, there was the dimension of the developmental stage, and on the other, the dimension of social-psychological orientation. Thus,

the acquisition of word order rules required for standard German can be located along the developmental dimension, whereas phenomena such as deletions, optional permutations and the degree of expansion of a sentence are to be located along the variation dimension where their use is determined

by socio-psychological factors which reflect/constitute the learner's attitudes toward the learning task, the target language and the target society. (Nicholas & Meisel 1983, p. 80)

The social-psychological dimension is a continuum ranging from a segregative to an integrative orientation. Therefore, a learner with a segregative orientation may attain the same stage of development as one with an integrative orientation, but he is likely to become fossilized because of such an orientation. Meisel et al. also investigated the learning strategies of the learners and found that restrictive simplification was likely to end in pidginization, but elaborative simplification would move the learner to the target language. The model does seem to be able to capture the problems of developmental hypothesis and variation.

Elsewhere, Meisel (1987) proposed a similar model, called the "integrativist" model in which there is an autonomous linguistic component and a set of nonlinguistic cognitive principles (general problem solver) to account for developmental sequences as well as for individual variations.

2.4. The KITA Project

The KITA project, taken up by Pfaff and her collegues at Free University of Berlin, is unlike the HPD and the ZISA in that it studied immigrant workers' children in a bilingual setting. It is a five-year longitudinal investigation of the development of both Turkish and German grammars of young children in a bilingual day-care center in Berlin-Keruzberg. It is more like the Kiel project in that it studied the morphosyntac development, including nominal and verbal inflections and marking, but it also studied language mixing, and discourse strategies. Many of the research results have been published. Here we shall briefly summarize the results on morphosyntac development.

1. Grammatical markers in German developed out of lexical items for both L1 and L2 learners. *Der, die, das* first appeared as pronominals then as definite articles, and *sein* and *haben* appeared as main verbs first, and then as auxiliaries.

2. As to the process of grammaticalization, there was no evidence that nouns were marked for θ role before syntactic case, and verbs for transitivity before person-number agreement.

3. In the matter of case marking, both subjects and objects were frequently unmarked, perhaps a trace of influence from Turkish.

4. The learners' L1 grammatical categories did not seem to affect the dvelopment

of L2.

So, Pfaff concluded that there was

no evidence for the position that grammaticalization processes in early child language development operate initially to convert markers of universal pragmatic categories into markers of language-particular syntactic categories. Instead, it appears they apply to language-particular representations from the outset. For plurifunctional forms, the functions of the independent lexical items precede the more grammatical functions. (1992, p. 293)

2.5. The Kassel Project

The Kassel project differs from the others just described in many was. First, it is not limited to the study of child learners only. Secondly, it does not study immigrant workers or their children. Thirdly, as a result, it has very divergent orientations and focuses. Finally, it often publishes its research results in English, making them assessible to the English speaking world.[3]

A special feature of the Kassel group is their preoccupation with the "essentially psycholinguistic processes" of the second language learners. They care little for the issues of developmental universals and systematic variations, nor the linguistic descriptions of developing grammars or the external social factors (Dechert, Möhle, Raupach 1984; Dechert & Raupach 1989a, 1989b). Instead, they look closely at the psychological processes of language production in the individual.

For this reason, the Kassel group often collects data on individual basis, rarely on a large-scaled cross-sectional basis. By focusing on one or two persons' second language production at different points of time, and by measuring real-time production phenomena, e.g., pauses, hestitations, etc., the Kassel group is able to examine closely the subtle nuisances of the psychological processes involved in producing the second language.

Besides the many papers published elsewhere, the 1984 collection presents in one breath their project which has been started since 1977. Their project has the following characteristics:

(1) it uses quasi-naturalistic language data of advanced adult speakers of closely

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[3] Von Stutterheim did not include the Kassel project in her review (1991) although the Kassel group started their project in 1977 (Dechert et al. eds. 1984). The reason is that the Kassel group has a very different orientation; they do not study immigrant workers, nor do they do structural analysis. They are more psychological (Yang 1994).

related European languages;

 (2) it focuses on temporal variables and error phenomena;

 (3) it is essentially psycholinguistic;

 (4) it is oriented to processing;

 (5) it is concept- and data-driven;

 (6) it sometimes uses introspection as research technique (1984, p. 9).

Their theoretical framework is at once based on Anderson's information processing theory (1980) and Baars' Competing Plans Hypothesis (1980).[4] The two theories together enable the Kassel group to look at SLA production from a completely new perspective.

To put is simply, Anderson makes a distinction between declarative and procedureal knowledge, both of which form our knowledge base. The declarative knowledge is the "know-what," and the procedural is the "know-how." It is the procedural knowledge used subconsciously that enable people to function properly in real situations.

As to Baar's Completing Plans Hypothesis, in their own words:

[The Competing Plans] Hypothesis basically assumes that the planning and execution of language in order to be adaptive to ad hoc peripheral task demands must be flexible. Flexibility is achieved by a top down diminishing of control in the face of a limited processing capacity. The resulting lack of control enables occasional development of competing plans under the condition of increasing processing load. The temporal variables such as hesitations and error phenomena such as false starts, self-correction and blends found in the language output vice versa provide access to an assessment of the underlying planning and competition and collision of planning. (Dechert et al. 1984, p. 9)

These two hypotheses – the Completing Plans and the Procedural Knowledge, along with the other three hypotheses, are the crutch on which the Kassel group develop their research.[5] They enable the Kassel group to explain the multilingual interaction within the individual learner (Möhle 1984; Möhle & Raupach 1989).

Take the matter of transfer as an example. They discovered that in the process of

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[4] The Kassel group came to know Bernard Baars, a "young American psychologist," in 1978 at the secon Kassel psycholinguistic workshop where Baars presented a paper on CPH.

[5] The other five hypotheses are: the procedural knowledge hypothesis, the hypothesis-testing hypothesis, the island hypothesis, the task stress hypothesis, and the monitor hypothesis (Dechert 1984).

acquiring L2 transfer is observed to operate as the learner applies his L1 procedural knowledge in producing L2. They said,

> transfer in production can be regarded as L1 procedural knowledge in L2 production when the nature of the task environment favors the execution of a competing plan which can be applied automatically or more directly than the time-consuming retrieval of declarative memory. (Bartelt 1984, p. 159)

In other words, transfer is the "easy-way" out; it is the result of a mental process under task stress in which the learner turns to his stored knowledge (including his L1) for help. To Dechert and his colleagues, transfer occurs whenever one is using existing knowledge, be it that of the first language or else, to acquire new knowledge (Dechert 1989). They concluded that language transfer should be "understood as a metaphorical concept in the context of cognitive science" (Dechert & Raupach, eds. 1989a, p. xiii), i.e., it is an aspect of human cognition. The idea of interference is thus rejected.

It is necessary to point out that the Kassel group has taken great pains in analyzing the trivialities involved in second language production in order to understand the psychological processes of the individual learner. For instance, in studying the performance of the reproduction of a Congo folktale by an adult German learner of English both before and after his three-month visit to the United States, Dechert found very interesting results despite the fact that the learner had gained better competence. Dechert discovered that the subject paused longer, but with fewer silent and filled pauses in the second reproduction task, and he explained

> In his first production the subject used different time gaining and planning devices, silent pauses, filled pauses, and prolongations. After his exposure to English in a natural environment he has reduced these strategies to practically one, silent pausing. But his silent pauses at the same time have become longer. What he has learned is a higher tolerance of pausing, or to put it differently he has gained more safety to use fewer pauses more carefully for planning without taking refuge to linguistic cues (filled pauses and prolongations) to signal continuation of production under task stress. George has become a more experienced editor of his second language speech. (1985, p. 55)

Another important contribution of the Kassel group is the publications of various monographs as a result of their workshops on second language acquisition. Three

should be mentioned here: *Transfer in Language Production* (Dechert & Raupach, eds. 1989a), *Interlingual Processes* (Dechert and Raupach 1989b), *Trends in European Second Language Acquisition Research* (Dechert, 1990). The three collections cover not only most major works done in Europe but also some works done by researchers from elsewhere, especially USA, making the study of second language acquisition a really international concern.[6]

From the five groups of SLA study just described, it is but clear that German SLA is to a large extent very different from American SLA in the methodology used and the issues explored. While the Kiel and the KITA projects are more alike to each other in the choice of subjects (child bilinguals) and in the topics (development of grammar) taken (and in this way closer to American SLA), the other three look upon the acquisition of second language by adult learners from a wider scope of view. While the Kiel and the KITA are more concerned with linguistic development, the other three more with the socio-psychological aspects of SLA. The general impression of German SLA as being more functional and psychological are perhaps best captured by the HDP, the ZISA, and the Kassel projects.

3. French SLA

French ESL is a slightly different story. It has from the very beginning been oriented toward second language teaching, and primarily concerned with teaching English as a second/foreign language in France or teaching French as a second language in African settings. It has been clearly professed as part of applied linguistics (Valdman 1991). During the 1960's and early 1970's, although both contrastive analysis and error analysis were employed, more studies stressed EA and applied their results to actual teaching (Noyau & Véronique 1986).

But after the 1970's, research trends in France changed greatly; there has been growing interest in language learning as a learner-based activity, in communicative and metalinguitic activities, and in the functional approach of analysis.

Basically French SLA addresses the following questions:

1. interlanguage and learner variety,
2. the development of communicative competence,
3. metalinguistic activities of the learner,
4. the application of SLA findings to the classroom.

Here we can see that French SLA is similar to German SLA in some respects

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[6] Many of the reports are drawn from the ESF's project, e.g., Dietrich 1990, Noyau 1990.

(Questions 1 & 2), but different in still others.

In the following, we shall describe three major research groups as representative of French SLA in general.

3.1. The GRAL

GRAL is the acronym for Groupe de Recherches sur l'acquisition des Langues, a research group composed of scholars from the University of Paris VII (Mittner, Arditty, Porquier, Duobis, and Noyau), the University of Paris X (Trévise), and the University of Provence (Véronique) (Dubois et al. 1981; Noyau 1982; Trévise 1987; von Stutterheim 1991). This group was founded in 1976 and has changed its composition and topics over the years, but their central concerns remain unchanged.

The GRAL collected both adult longitudinal observational data (in France) and data of children learning French as a second language in the classroom setting (in Africa). It often sponsors workshops on SLA, exerting great impact on French SLA in general. Many important issues/topics (as just listed above) were studied by this group. The GRAL was later engaged in the project of European Science Foundation. Basically, the following questions were addressed:

1. Learner variety and interlanguage;
2. The acquisition of morphosyntactic properties of spoken French in naturalistic settings;
3. The acquisition of temporal and spatial expressions;
4. The acquisition of communicative competence;
5. The development of metalinguistic abilities (von Stutterheim 1991).

Some results of these four research questions will be reported in the following.

First is the topic of interlanguage. The GRAL and French SLA in general stresses the heterogeneity and variability of interlanguage. In this aspect, the Labovian paradigm is adopted. For example, in studying the relations between systematicity, variability, and degree of attention, besides coming up with a rather similar view as Tarone's (1979), Arditty & Perdue (1979) further discovered that interlanguage variation emerged as a continuum, determined not only by the degree of attention but also by social conditions of acquisition and production and by the learner's relation to his/her interlocutors. The same finding about the influence of sociolinguistic rules on interlanguage was also found by Dubois et al. (1981).

As to some existing models for the interlanguage system, such as Selinker's hypothesis or Schumann's pidginization, some GRAL members have expressed their opinions (Noyau 1980; Véronique 1980, Chaudenson 1974).

Secondly, in studying the development of some morphosyntactic properties, Véronique (1987) and Trévise (1987) have tried to look into the problem via a close examination of the emergence of temporal expressions in second language narratives by means of a functional approach, that is, by taking into consideration of the situational factors in the linguistic forms. They found that L2 speakers often had to rely on discursive principle (first happened, first mentioned), shared knowledge of the world, calendrical expressions and spatial reference, and indexical and anaphoric adverbials (Véronique 1987). The functional approach taken here can shed much light on the acquisitional processes, a step beyond the mere description of the stages of development.

The question of interaction or communication has been one of the important concerns of the GRAL. In this aspect, some attention has been paid to the study of interethnic communication or "exolingual communication" (Porquier 1984). Focusing on topics such as turn-taking, cooperation, and understanding and misunderstanding, research in this area made a close examination of the communicative situations, the interactional patterns, and the communicative needs of immigrant workers. It has shifted from the study of the learner himself and the linguistic system per se to the effective use of the learner's linguistic knowledge in real situations (Py & Alber 1986). Also the appropriateness of methods used to study immigrant workers has been questioned (Faita 1980; Vaita & Véronique 1981).

Such studies have gained importance in recent years in terms of the acquisition of a second language by immigrant adults and children where they have to learn to communicate by communicating (Noyau & Alber 1986). Many of the sociolinguistic issues taken up by the GRAL were also studied in ESF's SLA project (refer to the following section).

The GRAL also studied metalinguistic activities and classroom applications. But since in these two aspects, the other two groups are more volumious, we shall report on them later.

3.2. The CRAPEL

CRAPEL is the acronym for the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pedagogiques en Langues, a research group at the University of Nancy founded by Yves Chalon in 1964. The members of the group are "practicing language teachers who are interested in applied linguistics for its own sake" (Riley 1985, p. xix). However, the "applied linguistics," as conceived by this group is not "linguistics

applied", but a "conceptually eclectic investigation of all the factors – social, psychological, pedagogic and linguistic – which impinge on language learning and teaching" (Riley 1985, p. xx). So their research orientation is essentially practical and pedagogical, and they pay close attention to the learner, his needs and his situations.

The CRAPEL has taken up a vast array of research topics, e.g., communicative language teaching, discourse analysis and the study of interaction, speech act theory, the use of authentic materials, non-verbal communication, etc., but the most distinguished one is the self-directed instruction, or the autonomous learning schemes. Let us take a close look at some of the ideas it develops over the years.

The concept of autonomy has had a long history, but Chalon has managed to help it develop into a complete theory. The basic idea is that the learner should be responsible for his/her learning and once this responsibility has been assumed, active learning can then take place. The GRAPEL's model of autonomous learning gives specifications about three learning phases: self-directed learning, the acquisition of autonomy by the learner, and the relationship between autonomy and self-directed learning. While the learner has to acquire autonomy as his/her learning objective, self-directed learning is only used as an aid for such acquisition, not an end in itself or obligatory in relation to autonomy. Autonomy is made possible only through a cooperation among the learners, the teachers, and the institutions (Holec 1985). The theory of autonomy is to be regarded as an approach not as a specific method so that it can meet the needs of individual learners (Riley 1985).

The autonomy approach has been experimentally tested, and the results obtained were quite positive (Henner-Stanchina 1985). But the CRAPEL is still working for more evidence.

3.3. The Charlinelle

This research group is founded at the Department of Research in Language Learning at the University of Paris VII under the leadership of Culioli who worked especially to develop the enunciation theory on the basis of the linguistic theory of Benveniste – a French-Swiss linguist (Bailly 1990; Noyau & Véronique 1986). Along with the enunciation theory is the concern over metalinguistic and epilinguistic activities in the classroom as a learning strategy. Let us look at the enunciation theory first.

In the enunciative theory, the learner in producing the second language is regarded as an "enunciator." The theory holds that a certain syntactic structure, for example, the progressive in the sentence *When she said she took the money, she was lying,* will have a special meaning when it is filtered through the enunciator who takes

responsibility for its truth value (Valdman 1991). In other words, the speaker who says the sentence is making a claim that someone referred to as "she" "was lying." French enunciation theory, like Searle's speech act theory, aims to relate surface structures to pragmatic functions. The enunciation theory has been evidenced to be of great pedagogical value (Bailly 1990).

The idea that the learner is in the center of the learning situation is not a product solely of French SLA, but a focus on the learner's activity, especially his metalinguistic activity, is certainly so. Metalinguistic activities (that part of the learner's metalanguage-verbalizations about his/her own language ability) and epilinguistic activities (defined as indirect traces of metalinguistic activity beyond conscious control (Culioli 1979)) are considered as very important as clues to the process of developing a second language. It was discovered that these activities are always present in one form or another, in guided or unguided settings (i.e., classroom or naturalistic settings) (Bredart & Rondal 1982; Gautheir 1982; Taulelle 1984; Bonnet & Tamine 1984).

Within the guided setting, it was fond that the linguistic productions of a learner might be very different from his/her metalinguistic verbalizations. Therefore, it is necessary to compare the difference between "awareness" of a given linguistic behavior and the actual performance of this behavior (Berhoud 1982; Trévise 1982). It was speculated that the differences might be accounted for through an understanding of the learner's attitude toward learning.

Studies on metalinguistic activities in the unguided settings also discovered that sociolinguistic factors such as attitude and relations between interlocutors also affected metalinguistic activities (Véronique & Faita 1982; Mittner & Kahn 1982).

The issue of metalinguistic activity is such a great concern to French SLA that not only have they frequently given workshops on this subject matter (the second and the third GRAL Colloquia) for the purpose of classroom application, but also it is one of the topics taken up in ESF's SLA project.

In a word, although French SLA is more applied linguistics oriented, it is more functional in dealing with such issues as interlanguage. Besides, it distinguishes itself by developing the enunciation theory and the autonomy approach, by stressing the importance of metalinguistic activities and social interactional aspects of second language acquisition, and by orienting toward classroom applications.

4. Dutch SLA

Like West Germany, the Netherlands' economic development in the 1960's demanded a lot of immigrant workers from abroad, especially Turkey and Morocco,

resulting in very similar problems as found in West Germany. In the 1970's, the workers' families and children were permitted to join them. So by 1977, 38% of Dutch schools had immigrant children in their schools, creating many problems for these schools (Appel 1984).[7]

In 1979, the Dutch government published a "two track policy" to take care of the education problems of these immigrant children. The policy was never strictly executed however, and in the late 1970's the common model for the education of these children was either (1) put them in regular Dutch classes, with an additional Dutch lesson of 30-45 minutes every day or (2) put them together in one reception class and have a special teacher for them in the Dutch language for all school subjects, and a year later put them in regular classes.

The result of this system was that these children were not only linguistically deficient, but also socially and culturally deprived (Appel 1984).

In 1977 an experimental teaching program started in Leiden in order to find better solutions for immigrant children. The program lasted three years. In the first year, "national classes" were given where the children were taught in their native language, accompanied with regular (one hour a day) Dutch lessons. As soon as the children had some preliminary comprehension competence, they were put together with other Dutch children in courses such as gym, music, or arts. During the second year, the children were taught half of the time in their native language, and half in Dutch, again with regular Dutch lessons. In the third year, the children were all put in the regular schools.

The program was called "transitional bilingual model," aiming for (1) a smooth transition from their native language/culture to Dutch school life, (2) better adjustment socially and psychologically on the part of the children, (3) maintenance of the children's own language and culture.

Along with this experimentation was a research taken up by Appel (1984). By using half-controlled tasks (story telling, conversations, etc.) and other tests, the research collected data from about fifty children[8] enrolled in the program three times, each at the end of the academic year of 1978, 1979, and 1980. Many research questions were addressed and many variables, linguistic as well as non-linguistic ones, were investigated. The major findings are summarized as follows:

1. The amount of time spent on minority-language teaching did not affect the

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[7] Again, there are quite a few projects on SLA taken up recently in Holland. But here only Appel's study will be presented. Interested readers can refer to Perdue, ed. (1984) for a short review (pp. 52-62).

[8] Because there are a lot of variables measured, slightly different numbers of subjects were tested. There was also a control group for comparison.

second language (Dutch) acquisition by both Turkish and Moroccan children. As a matter of fact, the children taught by minority-language teaching did better than those taught by regular Dutch schools in many L2 performance skills.

2. In terms of the socio-psychological factors, it was found that there was no clear positive or negative relation between cultural orientation of the second language learners and second language proficiency. However, children who had higher Dutch orientation had a higher proficiency level, but not statistically significant.

3. In the matter of L1 interference, it was discovered that there was some interference in the beginning, and especially for Turkish children, but in the later years, relatively little transfer was detected. Furthermore, it was found that the success of learning was not influenced by the differences between L1 and L2.

Clearly, this study has very important bearings on the country's future educational policies in language teaching.

5. ESF's Project on SLA

In 1982, a large-scale project "Studies in Second Language Acquisition by Adult Immigrants" was funded by the European Science Foundation, involving sixty researchers affiliated to Earling College of Higher Education (England), the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics at Nijmegen, and the Universities of Brabant, Göteborg, Heidelberg, Lancaster, Pasis and Aix-en-Provence. In this project, data from five countries/target languages and six source languages were collected over a period of two and half years. Thus, the project was basically longitudinal and cross-linguistic. It studied the process of acquisition of one target language by two groups of four people of different source languages and vice versa. So there were ten different target/source language pairs, one of them having very similar language origin (for example, French vs. Spanish), but the other different (for example, French vs. Arabic). The target languages were English, German, Dutch, French, and Swedish, and the source languages were Punjabi, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Spanish and Finnish.

The general purpose of the project was to describe the process of spontaneous second language acquisition by forty adult immigrants in five different European countries and to isolate the various factors which determine the structural properties and speech of the acquisition process. Specifically, the project aimed to
   (1) describe how the informants achieve or fail to achieve success in the communicative tasks;
   (2) describe the structural properties of the acquisition process;

(3) explain the descriptions found in terms of (a) cognitive/perceptual capacities; (b) propensity factors such as communicative needs, wishes, attitudes, motivations; (c) exposure to the target language (Perdue 1984).

Hence, there were six research areas, with each having its own editor(s): (1) Ways of achieving understanding: communicating to learn in a second language, ed. by K. Bremer, P. Broeder, C. Roberts, M. Simonot, M-T. Vasseur, (2) Feedback in adult language acquisition, ed. by J. Allwood, (3) Processes in the developing lexicon, ed. by P. Broeder, G. Extra, R. van Hout, S. Stromqvist, K. Voionmaa, (4) Reference to space, ed. by A. Becker, M. Carroll, (5) Temporality, ed. by M. Bhardwaj, R. Dietrich, C. Noyau, (6) Utterance structure, ed. by W. Klein, C. Perdue.

It was a five-year poject, with the first three years devoted to data collection, transcription, computer entry, and some preliminary analysis, and the last two years on intensive and extensive data analysis and report writing.

In data collection, both natural observation and recording (either audio or video) were used. The former enabled the investigators to understand the informants' way of life, communicative behaviors and other personal propensities; while the latter, often done once every six weeks at the homes of the informants or in the recording studio, were mostly informal conversations aiming to obtain biographical information as well as to elicit different, natural types of speech activities. The latter was rather quasi-experimental and served as the data base for analysis, but the former played an important role in data analysis, the techniques of which varied a great deal on the basis of the topics dealt with. The collection of data was done in three cycles, each between a distance of 7-9 months (Dietrich 1990). Usually both qualitative and quantitative analyses were done.

What is so important about the project was not so much in the scale or topics taken up as in the orientation toward actual learning situations where not only the conceptual factors but also factors of propensity and language exposure were investigated. As Gumperz (1984) pointed out, the project was a "new departure" in that it started from communicative competence to linguistic competence, rather than the reverse as found in most traditional studies of SLA. Here the emphasis was not on the structure of the input or output only, but rather on the acquisition of second language in social context and as individual processes. That is why Gumperz regarded it as "*both* sociolinguistically *and* psycholinguistically-oriented" (p. 140).

Six volumes of final reports came out in 1988 and two books appeared later (Klein & Perdue 1992; Perdue 1993), as originally designed. Some papers dealing with more or less the same issues can also be found in some collections, e.g., Dechert 1990. Let us present some results of them.

In studying the problems of understanding and misunderstanding, it was discovered that the proecess of achieving understanding was more a matter of "attitude, emotions, values, and expectatons" than a matter of mere "linguistic knowledge and skills" (Bremer et al. 1993). Misunderstanding often occurred not only because of the learners' limited linguistic means but also because of their wrong conceptions about discourse interaction (Allwood & Abelar 1984). Furthermore, different background knowledge and different goals of the interlocutors often created a different schematic set of preconceived ideas by which the speaker endeavored to interpret the intention of the other (Becker & Perdue 1984). The immigrant workers under study were in a very disadvantageous position for they were confronted not only with all sorts of barriers – communicative, linguistic, conceptual, social and cultural, they were also constantly under the threat of being treated as "worthless people."

However, they were able to achieve certain amount of understanding by means of certain strategies, e.g., metalinguistic comments like "What do you mean" etc. so as to "create involvement and [yet] sufficient distance to analyze both TLS [target language speaker] turns and their own language" (Bremer et al. 1993, p. 190).

In studying the acquisition of lexicon, it was found that target language properties, activity type, time of data collection, and source language properties all played a part in the distribution of certain lexical categories, as well as of pronoun reference and word formation. Frequently, cogntive and sociocultural factors interfered (Broeder, et al. 1988). An important issue is about the acquisition of verbs, which was relatively late compared to the acquisition of nouns. This finding was supported by Dietrich's analysis (1990). While differences between the source language and the target language could account for the late acquisition of prepositions by Turkish learners of German and Dutch, similarities could explain the borrowings in the Spanish learner's French production (Broeder et al. 1988).

In analyzing the structure of utterances produced by learners of English, German, Dutch and French, it was found that despite great variability there was a basic system in the very beginning: NP – V – (NP). In this frame, the first NP serves as the controller, and the second the focus which often signals a break in the referential movement established by the first NP. Such kind of structure is a function of the communication demands of the learner (Klein & Perdue 1992). In general, the development of utterance structure can be summarized as follows:

1. Development goes from unconnected nominals to infinite verbs and finally to finite utterances.[9]

2. The development is slow and gradual.

3. The structure is constrained by phrasal, semantic and pragmatic factors (Klein & Perdue 1993).

The study of spatial reference dealt with both the acquisition of reference of spatial state and to spatial change in three target languages (English, German, French) by informants of all five source languages. After a cross-linguistic examination of the data, it was found that there was a common process of language learning irrespective of the target language and that a certain number of factors seemed to intervene in the process. The factors could be linguistic, extralinguistic, L1 interference, social or personality. Therefore, a rather complex picture of development was obtained. But generally speaking, all learners managed to learn some expressions to refer to motion, to the direction an entity was taking and to the place which an entity occupied with respect to another. However, the expressions developed were made on some principle of selectivity which was by and large governed by the knowledge system the learner had. Both the rate of development and the variability in mastering specific expressions for spatial reference differed from language to language and from learner to learner (Becker, Carroll, Kelly 1988).

The development of temporality in French by three Spanish speaking Latin Americans appeared to be marked with the following features: (1) heavy reliance on pragmatic inferences in the first stage, (2) use of discursive configurations for an implicit temporal structuring of events, (3) specialization for temporal indications of linguistic means from other areas such as spatial expressions and causal connectors. And in terms of linguistic forms, lexical expressions were used first, then a great number of deictic expressions developed, finally adverbials and subordination emerged. It was also noticed that morphological categories of temporal reference were acquired rather late. Several factors appeared to contribute to such a picture: the influence of source language, and the intrinsic difficulty of the target language (Noyau 1990).

In a later report (Klein et al. 1993), the development of temporality by twenty learners, from different L1 and learning different L2, was described. Adopting a more qualitative method of data analysis, some very insightful findings were obtained. First, there were distinct stages for the development of temporality, moving from the very basic form (mostly via nouns and adverbials) to the more advanced form (fully inflected tense marking). Secondly, the mechanism of expressing temporality relied foremost on pragmatic devices, then on lexical ones, and finally on, grammatical clues. Thirdly, while some learners were able to make progress step by step, others were clearly fossilized at certain stages.

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[9] Nominals include unconnected nouns, adverbs, particles. Non-finite utterances are those built on uninflected verbs, and finite ones are those with properly inflected verbs.

To sum up, ESF's second language acquisition project is very unique in terms of (1) the involvement of six target languages and five source languages which makes a very rich data base for cross-linguistic comparisons, (2) the longitudinal and observational data for a qualitative as well as a quantitative analysis into the real course of development in naturalistic settings, thereby with findings that can be utilized in solving practical problems, (3) a concept – and communication-oriented approach to the acquisitional process, which views the acquisition of structure from congnitive/ personal and socio-cultural perspectives.[10]

6. Conclusion

This paper describes research on second language acquisition in Europe, with special reference to the situations in Germany, France and the Netherlands since the 1970's. Second language acquisition research in many European countries share some similarities which are distinctively European, that is, functional. First of all, it is a result of social and educational necessity. Secondly, it studies immigrant adults or their children's second language acquisition in naturalist settings.

Consequently, the research purpose is often to explore how these learners acquire their communicative competence rather than grammatical knowledge. Fourthly, the research methodology is often observational and longitudinal, aided by quasi-experimental designs of elicitation. Furthermore, research interests have mostly been the acquisition of concepts rather than linguistic forms. Finally, the interaction between language acquisition and cognitive and social factors have often been investigated.

Reports are given on five German SLA projects (e.g., HPD, ZISA), three French SLA research groups, one Dutch SLA study, and European Science Foundation's project. Many important issues have been closely explored: the developing grammar, the developmental vs variation dilemma, the acquisition of spatial and temporal reference, communicative competence and metalinguistic activities, interlanguage and transfer, and the enunciation operation and the autonomy approach.

In sum, European SLA, with its unique methodology and concerns, creates new directions for SLA researchers to explore the intricate phenomenon of second language acquisition.

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