

<<第二语言学习与教学>>

图书基本信息

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内容概要

Of the first edition: '...marvellous...covers the major developments in language teaching theory since the 1950s with wit, authority and a breathtaking breadth of perspective; it is readable, concise and instructive...recommend it to your students.' Ann Ryan, BAAL Newsletter “ This much-needed book will be an excellent text for courses in Language Acquisition within second language teacher education programs. There is a wealth of new knowledge, new vocabulary, and new perspectives which not only contribute to specialized aspects of teacher training but will enrich students' general education as well.' Patsy Lightbown, Professor of applied Linguistics, concordia University.

How do people learn languages? Vivian Cook's highly successful second Language Learning and Language Teaching has proved immensely valuable to teachers as an introduction to aspects of second language acquisition research where it relates to practical language teaching and the classroom. This new, enlarged edition has been thoroughly updated in the light of recent developments in the field and the author has laid greater emphasis on the implications of SLA studies for the classroom. There are exercises and expanded sections at the end of chapters offering practical help and tips for teachers approaching second language acquisition for the first time.

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书籍目录

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章节摘录

5 Principles and parameters grammar KEYWORDS Universal Grammar : the language faculty built into the human mind consisting of principles and parameters principles of language : aspects of human language present in all human minds , e.g. the principle of structure dependency - why you cannot say 'Is John is the man who happy ?

' parameters : aspects that vary from one language to another within tightly set limits , e.g. the pro-drop parameter has two settings that distinguish pro-drop languages which do not need subjects expressed (Spanish , Chinese) and non pro-drop languages in which they must be expressed (English , German) So far grammar has been seen in terms of morphemes , patterns or structures , and universals spread across many languages. All of these capture some aspect of L2 learning and contribute to our knowledge of the complete process. A radically different way of looking at grammar that has become popular in recent years , however , tries to see what human languages have in common because of the nature of the human mind. This is the Universal Grammar theory associated with Noam Chomsky , for example , Chomsky (1988) . Universal Grammar (UG) sees the knowledge of grammar in the mind as having two components : 'principles' that all languages have in common and 'parameters' on which they vary. All human minds are believed to possess the same language principles. They differ over the settings for the parameters for particular languages. PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE A fairly simple example of a principle is structure-dependency. How might you explain to someone how to make questions in English such as 'Is Sam the cat that is black ?

' One possible instruction is : 'Start from the sentence : "Sam is the cat that is black" and move the second word "is" to the beginning.' But while this works in this instance , it obviously will not work for 'The old man is the one who's late' as it would produce 'Old the man is the one who's late ?

'To remedy this you might suggest : 'Move the copula "is" to the beginning of the sentence.' But this also does not work as it will not prevent someone mistakenly saying 'Is Sam is the cat that black ?

' It is important which 'is' is moved. The only instruction that works properly is to say : 'Move the copula "is" in the main clause to the beginning of the sentence.' This instruction depends on the listeners knowing enough of the structure of the sentence to be able to distinguish the main clause from the relative clause. In other words it presupposes that they know the structure of the sentence. This is what is meant by 'structure-dependent' , Anybody producing a question in English takes the structure of the sentence into account. Inversion questions in English , and indeed in all other languages , involve a knowledge of structure , not just of the order of the words. There is no particular reason why this should be so; computer languages , for instance , do not behave like this , nor do mathematical equations. It is just a feature of human languages that they depend on structure. In short structure-dependency is one of the language principles that is built into the human mind. This type of grammar affects the nature of inter language - the knowledge of the second language in the learner's mind. As described earlier , there appeared to be few limits on how the learners' inter language grammars developed. Their source might be partly the learners' first languages , partly their learning strategies , partly other sources. However , the human mind always uses its built-in language principles , so inter languages too conform to these principles. It would be literally inconceivable for the L2 learner , say , to produce questions that were not structure-dependent. And indeed no one has yet found sentences aid by L2 learners that breach the known language principles such as structure-dependency. Inter languages do not vary without limit but conform to the overall mould of human language since they are stored in the same human minds. Like any scientific theory , this may be proved wrong. Tomorrow someone may find a learner who has no idea of structure-dependency. But so far no one has found clear-cut examples of learners breaking universal principles. PARAMETERS OF VARIATION How do parameters capture the differences between languages ?

One variation is whether the grammatical subject of a declarative sentence has to be actually present in the sentence. In German it is possible to say 'Er spricht' (he speaks) but impossible to say 'Spricht' (speaks) ; declarative sentences must have subjects. The same is true for French , for English , and for a great many

languages. But in Italian it is possible not only to say 'Lui parla' (he talks) but also 'Parla' (talks) without an expressed subject; declarative sentences are not required to have subjects. In Arabic and Chinese and many other languages the same is true. This variation is captured by the pro-drop parameter - so-called for technical reasons we will not go into here. In 'pro-drop' languages such as Italian , Chinese or Arabic the subject does not need to be actually present; in 'non-pro-drop' languages such as English or German it must always be present in declarative sentences. The pro-drop parameter variation has effects on the grammars of all languages; each of them is either pro-drop or non-pro-drop. Children learning their first language at first start with sentences without subjects (Hyams , 1986) . Then those who are learning a non-pro-drop language such as English go on to learn that subjects are compulsory. The obvious question for second language learning is whether it makes a difference if the L1 does not have subjects and the L2 does , and vice versa. Lydia White (1986) compared how English was learnt by speakers of French (a non-pro-drop language with compulsory subjects) and by speakers of Spanish (a pro-drop language with optional subjects) . If the L1 setting for the pro-drop parameter has an effect , the Spanish-speaking learners should make different mistakes from the French-speaking learners. Spanish- speaking learners were much more tolerant of sentences like 'In winter snows a lot in Canada' than were the French. Oddly enough this effect does not necessarily go in the reverse direction : English learners of Spanish do not have as much difficulty with leaving the subject out as Spanish learners of English have in putting it in.

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