



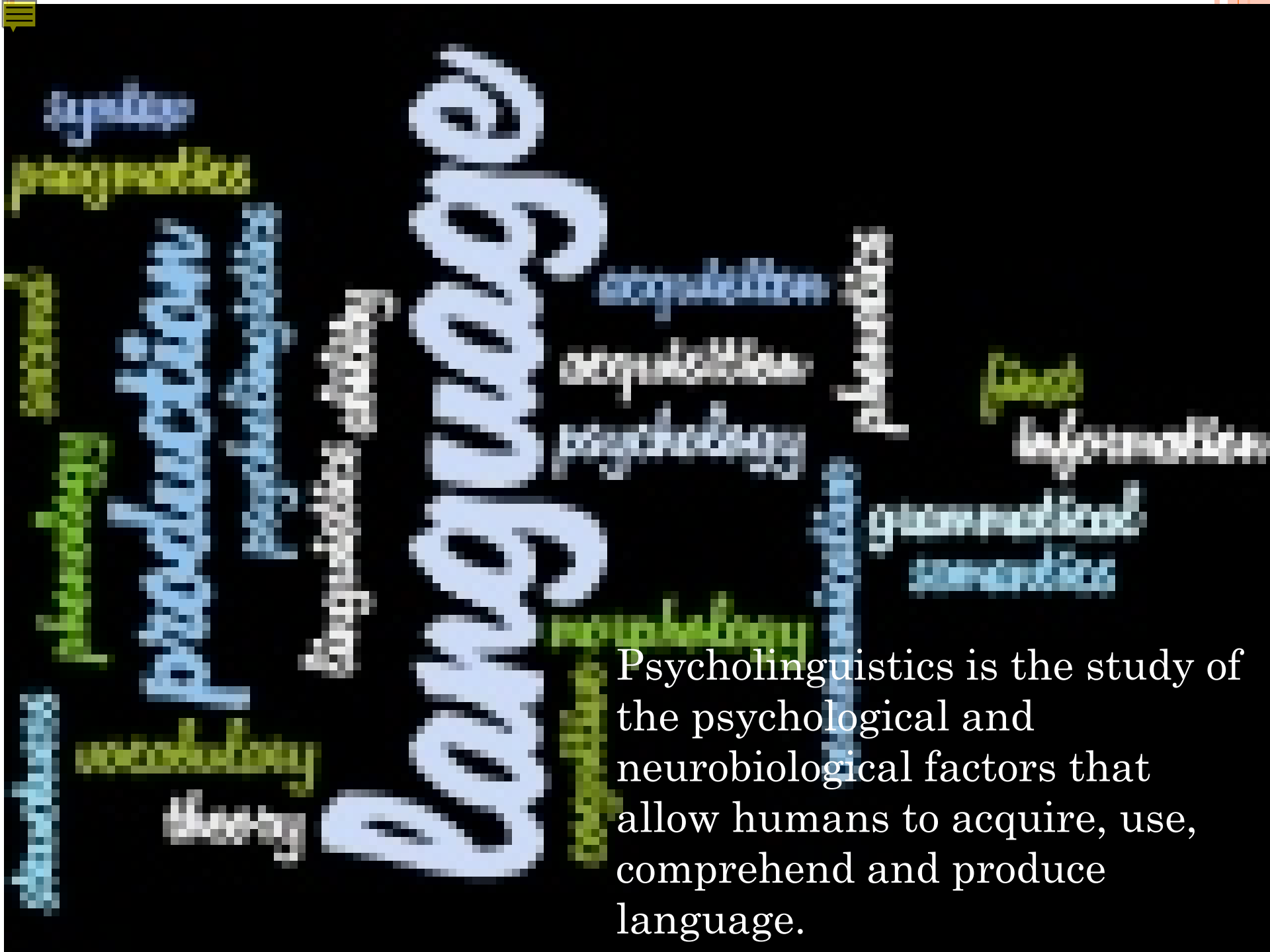
# TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

**Unit Six: The Empirical Basis of Second Language  
Teaching and Learning**



# IS LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE LIKE LEARNING A FIRST?

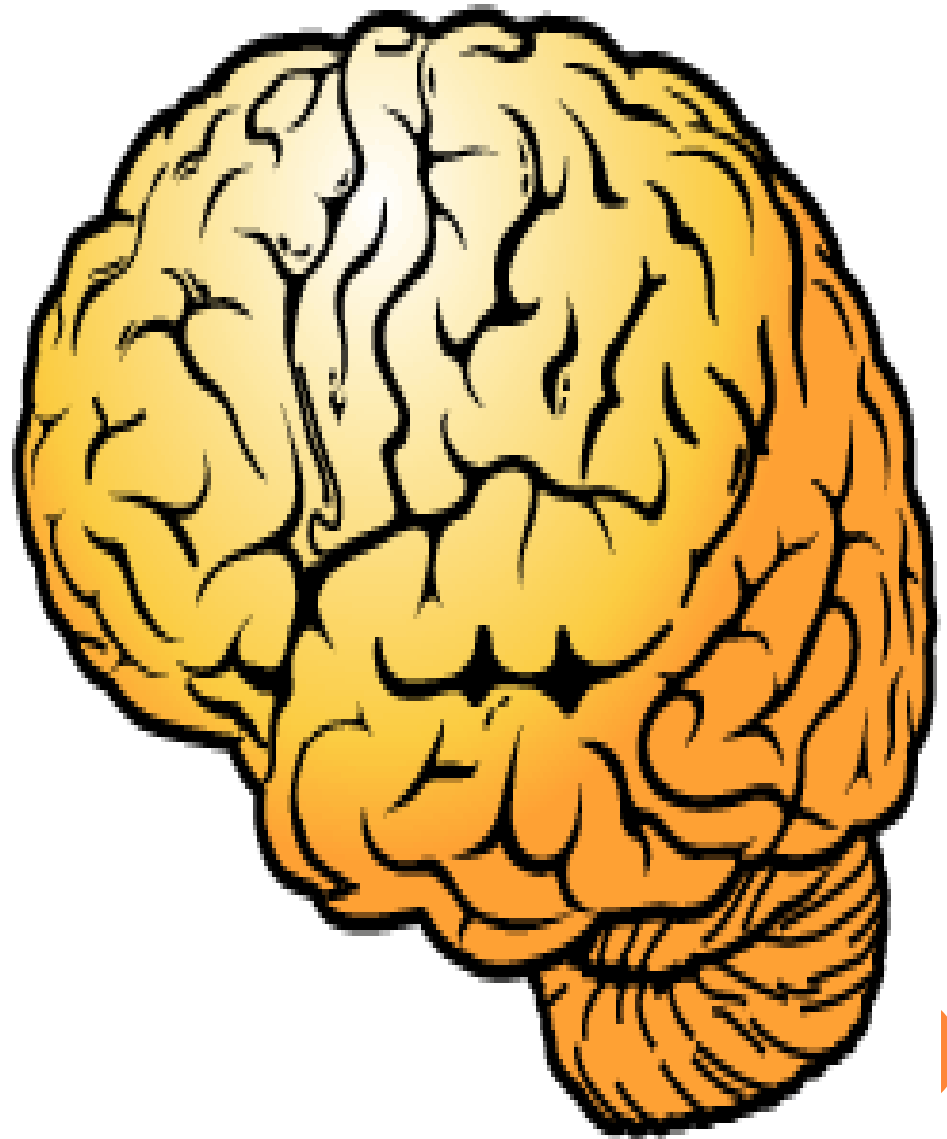
- Psycholinguistic mechanisms
- The acquisition of syntax
- Discourse Acquisition



Psycholinguistics is the study of the psychological and neurobiological factors that allow humans to acquire, use, comprehend and produce language.

# PSYCHOLINGUISTIC MECHANISMS

- Grammars
- Syntax
- Vocabularies
- Other factors that allow us to produce & understand language





# PSYCHOLINGUISTIC MECHANISMS IN THE L1 & L2

- People learn the L1 at a young age when the brain is still forming
- When a person learns the L1, it is the first language they've learned (no previous experience)
- An L2 is learned when a person is much older and the brain has developed more
- Have previous experience in learning a language (L1 influences L2)



# THE ACQUISITION OF SYNTAX

The 'Innate Hypothesis' suggests that the ability to acquire language is a facility unique to the human race.

We inherit this ability genetically in the same way as other species inherit such things as the ability to migrate to certain parts of the world to mate and breed.





## DISCOURSE ACQUISITION: UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR

-all languages have the same basic structural foundation (i.e. all have nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc)

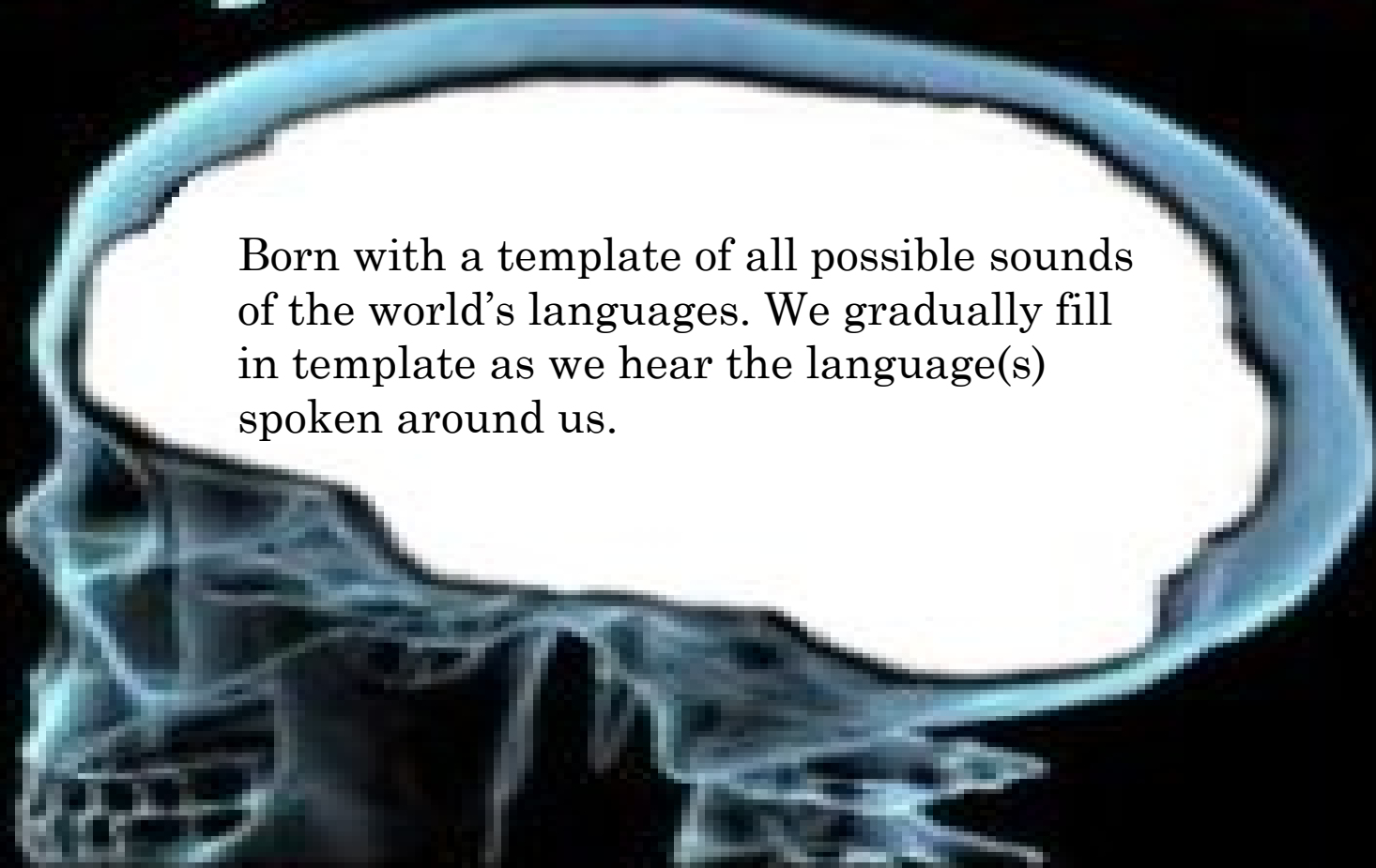
-Universal Grammar (UG) and its interaction with the rest of the brain is what allows children to become fluent in any language during the first few years of life




# UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR

## ON JIM'S BRAIN

Born with a template of all possible sounds of the world's languages. We gradually fill in template as we hear the language(s) spoken around us.





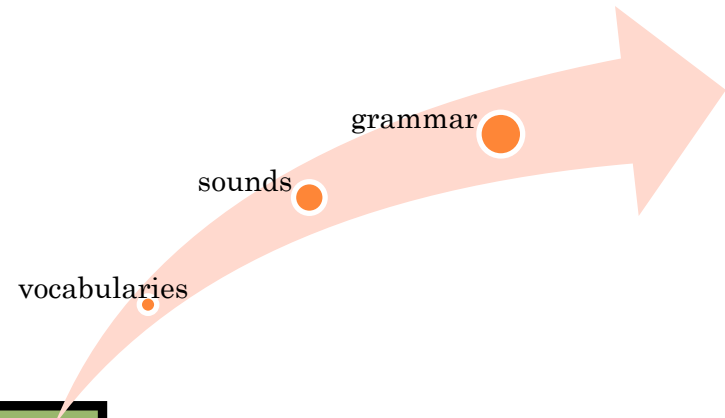
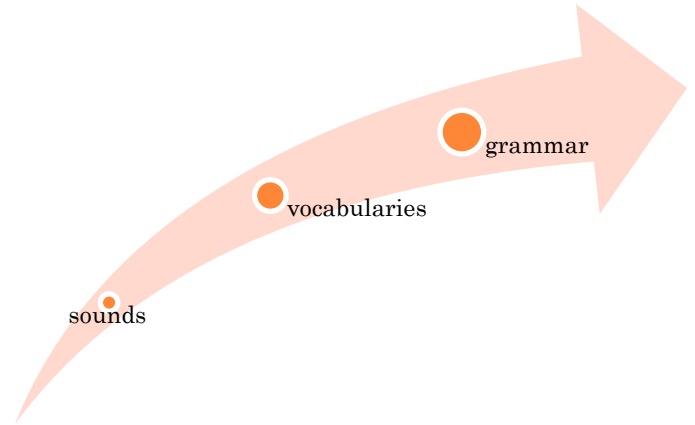


# THE ROLE OF CHRONOLOGICAL AGE ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- Age-related differences
- The critical period hypothesis

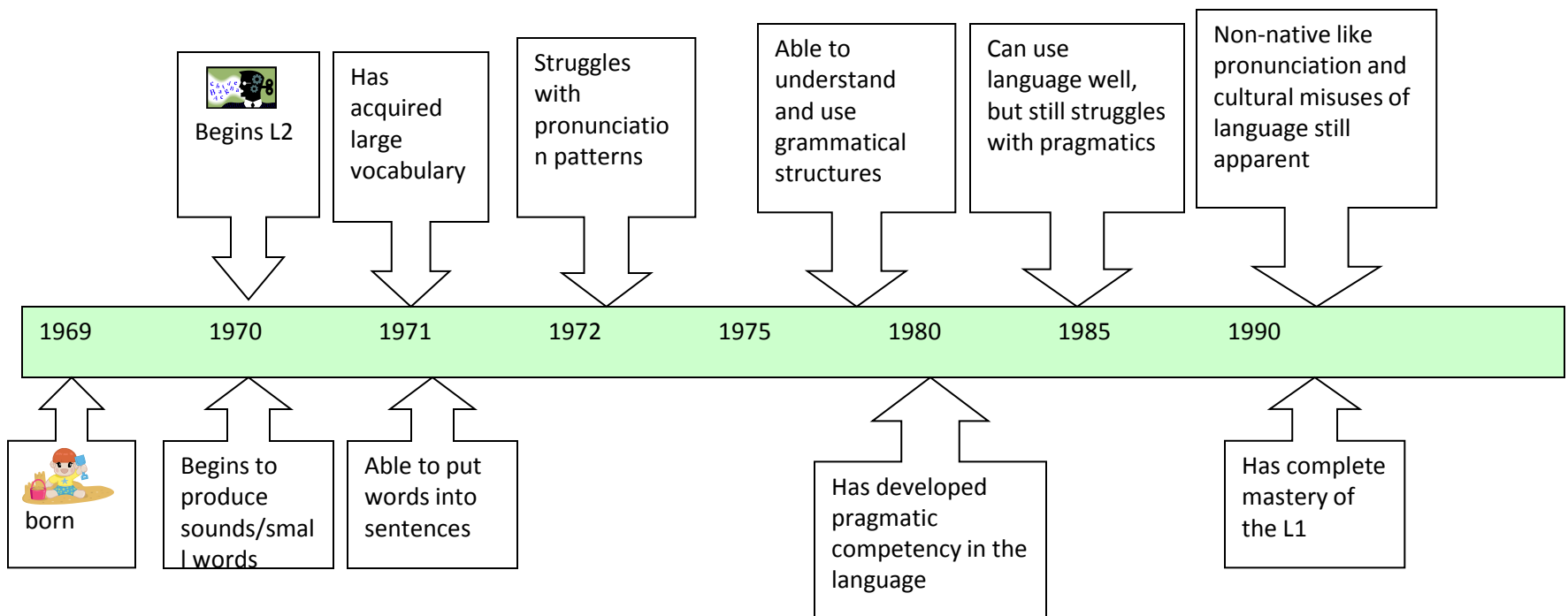
# AGE-RELATED DIFFERENCES

The age in which a learner begins learning a new language does not affect the route (i.e. how they get to being able to communicate in an L2), but the order in which they learn to function differs.



# AGE RELATED DIFFERENCES

- Starting age affects the rate of learning





# AGE RELATED DIFFERENCES

How long we learn a language and the age in which we begin learning the language have a direct affect upon how well we are able to use the language.


- Increase years of exposure=better fluency
- Younger starting age= higher level of accuracy





# THE CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS

Supporters of the critical period hypothesis suggest that there is a period in a person's life (sometime around puberty) when biological changes in the brain begin to function independently. When this occurs, acquiring native-like competency in a language becomes difficult, if not impossible.





“Ahhhhhh! I’ve been studying Spanish for seven years, and I still can’t speak it fluently!”

“Well, honey, it’s not your fault. You didn’t start young.”



# CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS TOO RIGID?

## Language learner in children

- Undeniable evidence: children learn languages faster

## Language learning in adults

Difficulty in learning L2 related to:

- Less accessible access (in the brain) to UG
- Complex sets of input
- Self-consciousness that comes with adulthood



# THE CRITICAL PERIOD AND ITS RELEVANCE TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

## Hypothesis states


- Post-pubescent learners are not going to be likely to acquire a native-like pronunciation and possibly not be able to fully acquire the syntax and morphology of the second language.

## Teaching Implications

- use the critical age hypothesis in order to restructure the way you teach pronunciation to post-pubescent learners
- Use structured pronunciation drills and compare phonemes from the L2 to the L1







# OTHER LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Intelligence

Aptitude

Personality

Motivation & Attitude

Learning Style

Learner Beliefs

# BEFORE LOOKING AT LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS.....

- Difficulties in research on learner characteristics and SLA:
  1. A learner's language proficiency can be defined and measured in many ways. There are many ways to define the 'success' of language learner.
  2. It is not possible to directly observe and measure qualities such as motivation, personality, aptitude, and intelligence. They are simply labels of behavior.
  3. These psychological variables are often not independent of one another. Researchers may use the same labels to describe different sets of behavioral traits.



# INTELLIGENCE

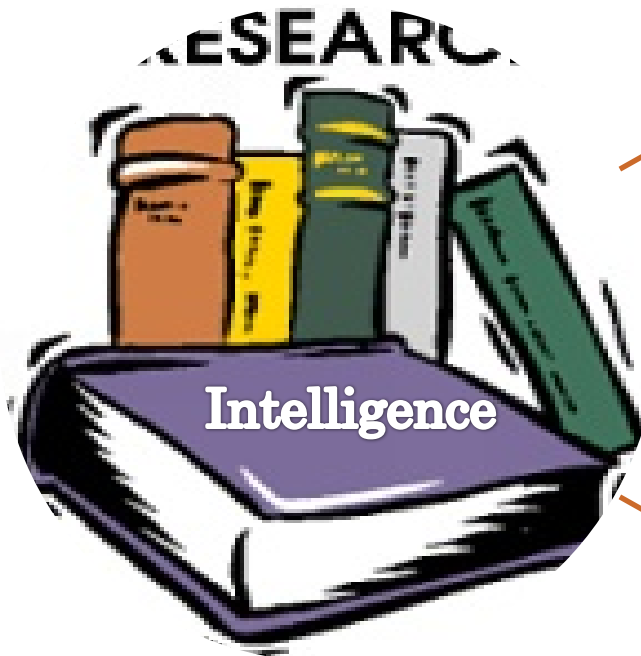
- Intelligence levels may be a good means of predicting how successful a learner will be at language learning
- Intelligence highly related to performance on reading, dictation and writing skills but not on listening comprehension or free oral production



# INTELLIGENCE

- **Linguistic intelligence:** speaking, using words, writing, giving presentations, solving word problems.
- **Logical-mathematical intelligence:** using numbers, logic, calculations, learning and understanding grammar rules
- **Spatial intelligence:** drawing, painting, using color, art, graphics, pictures, maps, and charts
- **Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence:** muscular coordination, athletic skill, body language, drama, and theater.
- **Musical intelligence:** using music, tones, hearing; producing the intonation and rhythm of a language
- **Interpersonal intelligence:** talking with other people, understanding them, using language to communicate
- **Intrapersonal intelligence:** self-knowledge, self-confidence using language to analyze oneself.



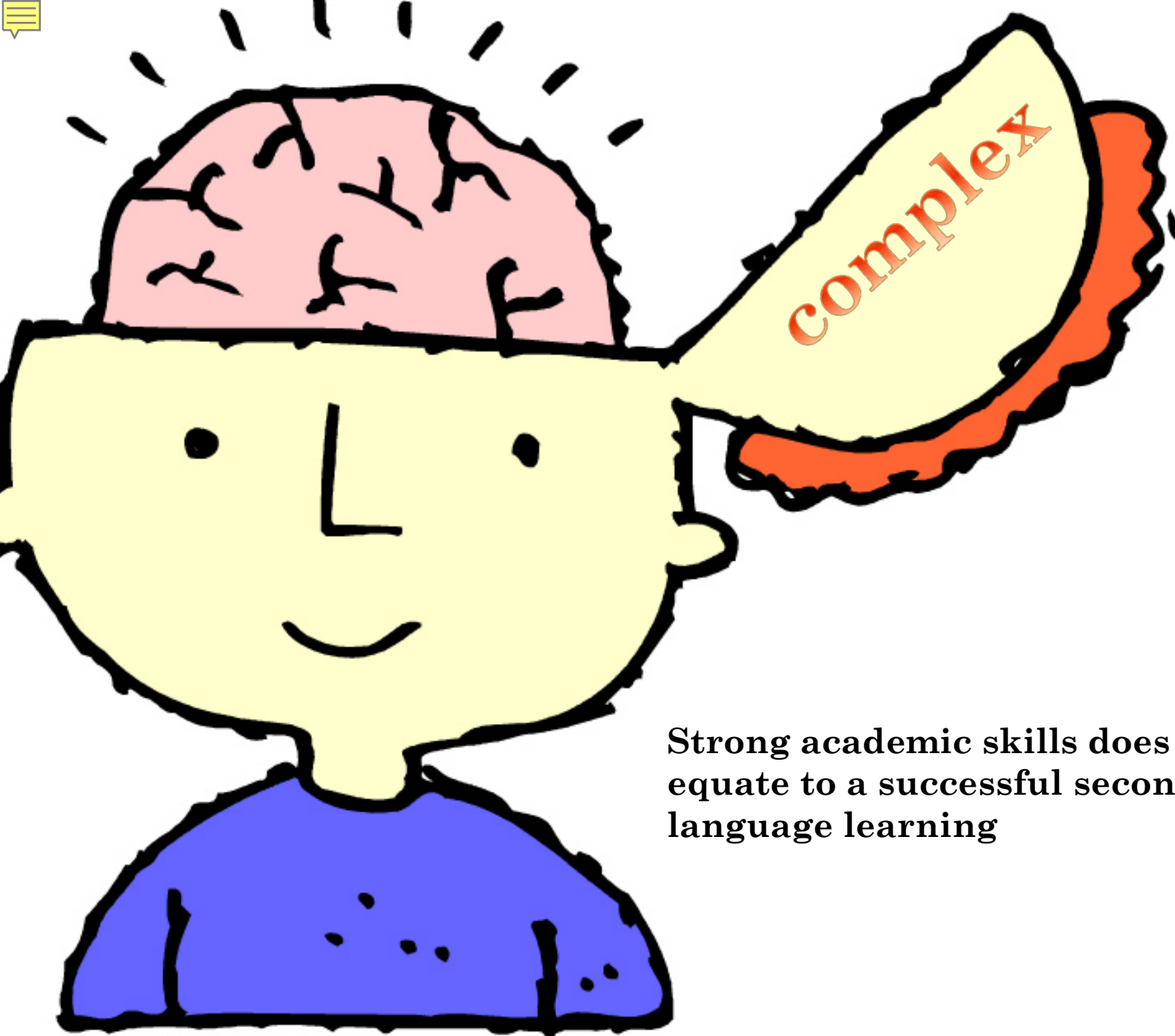


Measured  
by verbal IQ  
tests

- Strong factor in language learning involving language analysis and rule learning

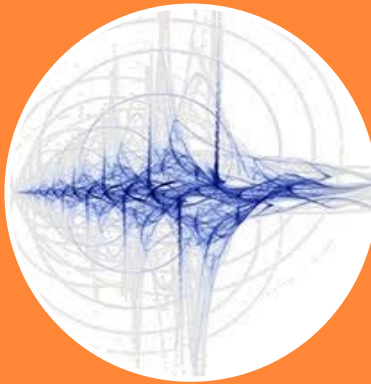
Less  
important

- When language learning is focused on communication and interaction.



Strong academic skills does NOT  
equate to a successful second  
language learning





Able to identify and memorize new sounds



Able to understand the function of words in sentence



Able to examine language samples to figure out grammatical rules



Memorize new Words

← aptitude →

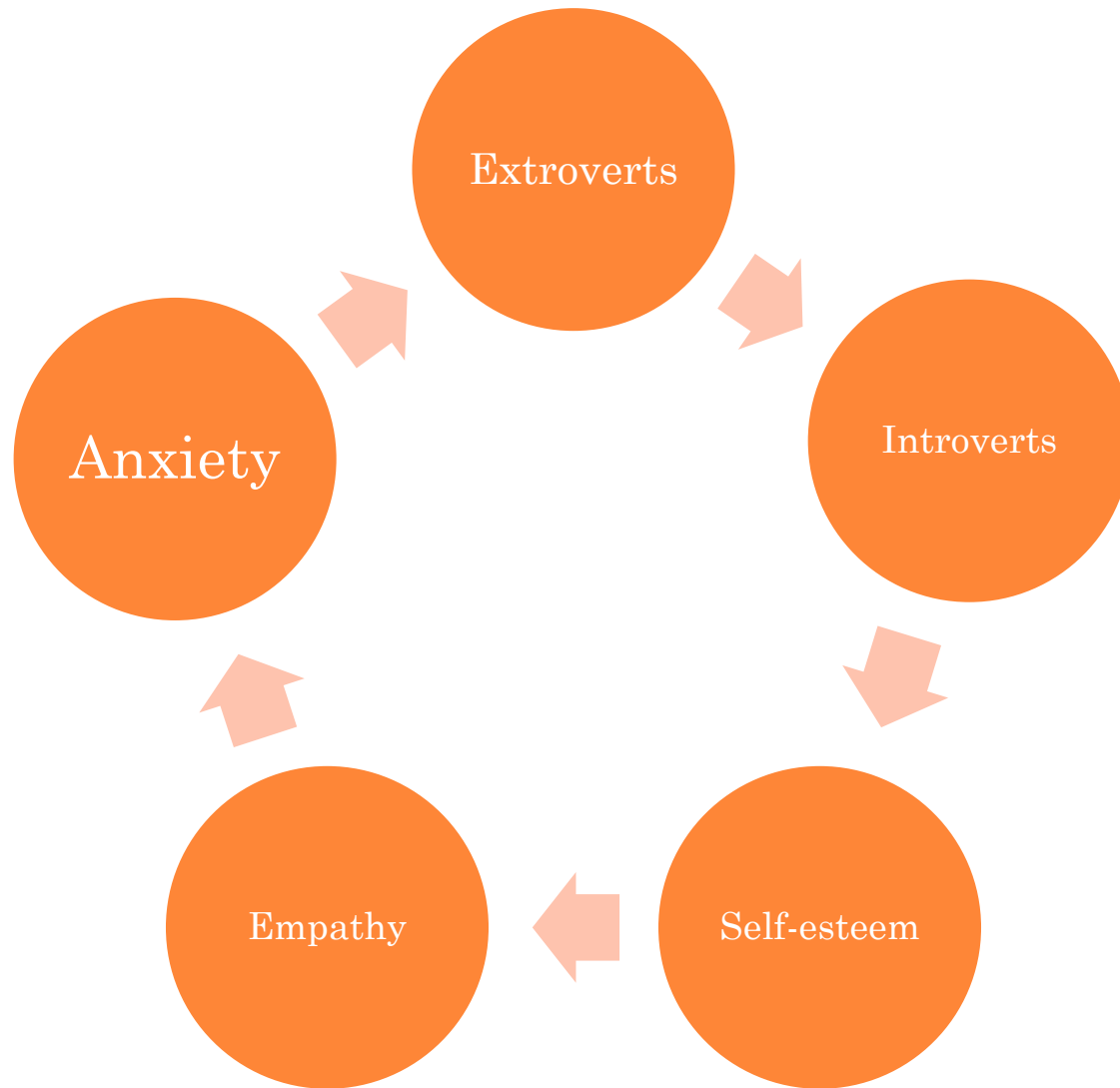
# APTITUDE

- There is some evidence that certain individuals have an aptitude for language learning. However, with the adoption of communicative language teaching, aptitude may not be relevant for learning an L2.
- Definitive results are inconclusive because it is difficult to measure and define 'aptitude' for research studies





# PERSONALITY



# MOTIVATION & ATTITUDE

## Communicative needs

- If learners need to speak the L2 in a wide range of social situations or to fulfill professional ambitions, they will be motivated to learn

## Attitude towards the L2 community

- If learners have favorable attitudes towards the speakers of the language, they will desire more contact with them.

If a learner's only reason for learning the L2 is external pressure (e.g. curriculum requirements) then internal motivation will be minimal and general attitude may be negative



# TYPES OF MOTIVATION

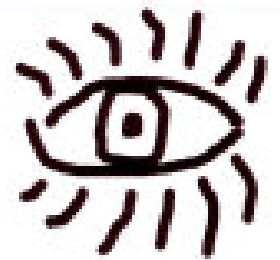
<b>Source</b> <b>Purpose</b>	<b>Intrinsic (internal</b>	<b>Extrinsic (Externa.</b>
Integrative	The learner wishes to learn the L2 for personal growth and cultural enrichment.	Someone else wishes the learner to know the L2 for an integrative reason.
Instrumental	The learner wishes to achieve practical goals for using the L2. (e.g. for a job)	External power wants the learner to learn the L2 for a practical reason (eg. A hotel in Japan asks its staff to get language training)



# LEARNING STYLE

Perceptual

## What's Your Learning Style?



### Visual

Visual learners usually retain more information when they can see something that graphically depicts what they are trying to learn. Visual learners should study using visual aids whenever possible. Flash cards, pictures, drawings—anything that will give you a visual memory.



### Auditory

Auditory learners will retain more information when they hear something. For auditory learners, the best way to learn is to listen...over and over. Use a tape recorder. Read out loud. Have a friend quiz you orally.



### Tactile

Tactile learners will retain more information when they use the "hands-on" approach—like labs and demonstrations.





# Cognitive Learning Styles

Field-  
independence  
vs. field-  
dependence

Reflectivity  
vs.  
impulsivity

Right-brain  
dominance  
vs. left-brain  
dominance

Tolerance of  
ambiguity



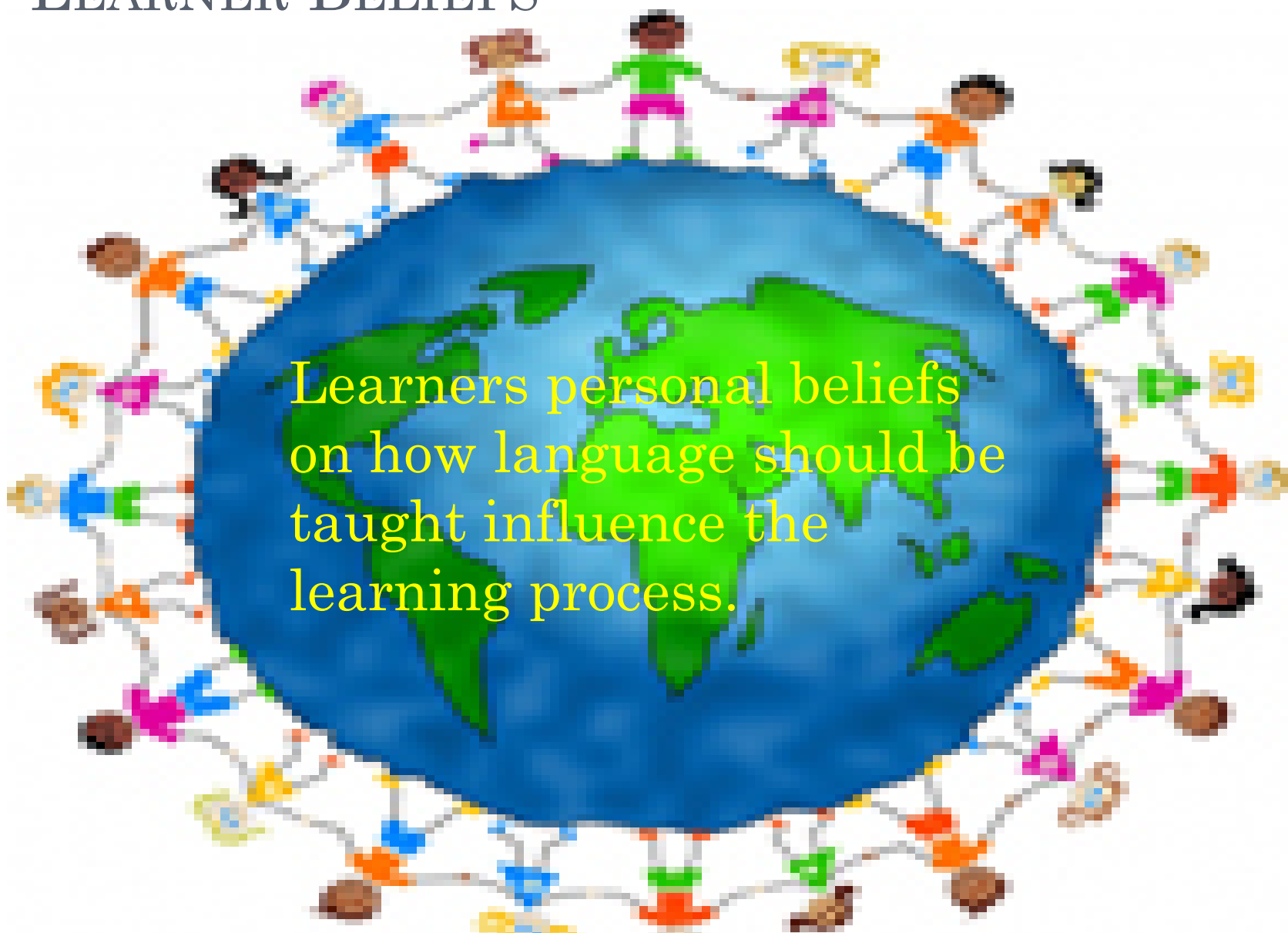


# UNDERSTANDING YOUR COGNITIVE LEARNING STYLE

[http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-  
learning-styles-quiz](http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-learning-styles-quiz)




# LEARNER BELIEFS

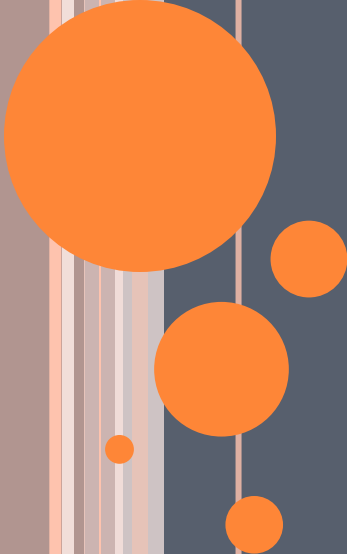
A central blue and green globe is surrounded by a circle of diverse children of various ethnicities and ages, all holding hands. The children are wearing colorful clothing. The globe is the central focus, with the text overlaid on it.

Learners personal beliefs  
on how language should be  
taught influence the  
learning process.



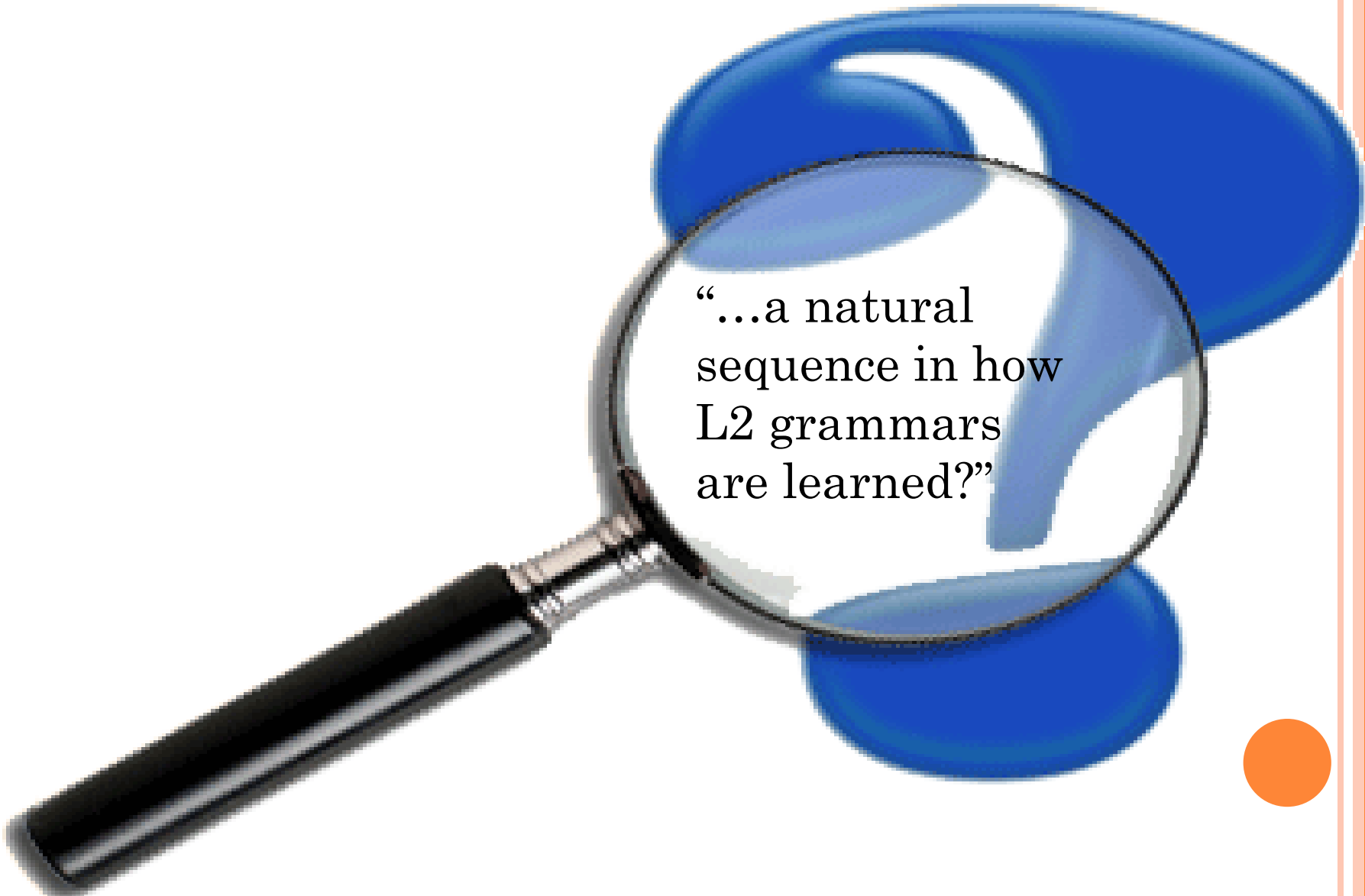


# THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTION ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- 
- **The morpheme order studies**
  - **Conscious learning versus subconscious acquisition**
  - **Comprehensible input**
  - **Comprehensible output**
  - **Developmental stages**



# THE MORPHEME ORDER STUDIES

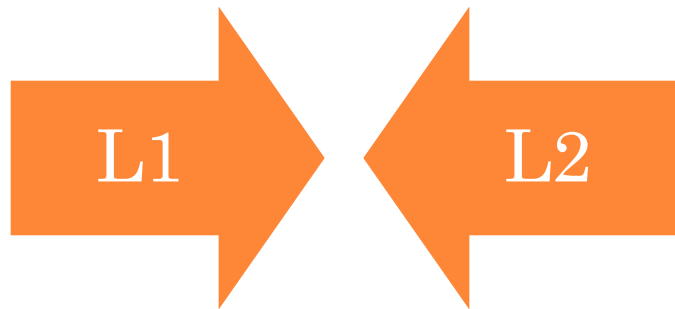


“...a natural  
sequence in how  
L2 grammars  
are learned?”



# DOUBTING THOMAS!!!

## Language Transfer



-interferences from the L1 which affect language abilities in the L2; such as cultural, differing grammatical structures, pragmatic differences, phonemes, etc.



# LANGUAGE TRANSFER

**Positive: helps learners acquire properties of the L2**

- Same basic structures
- Results unnoticed
- Learner very aware of similarities and uses them to his/her benefit

**Negative: interferences from the L1 which hinders learners in the L2**

- The transferring of items and structures that are not the same in both languages



# LANGUAGE TRANSFER FORMS

- Chinglish (Chinese)
- Czenglish (Czech)
- Denglich (German)
- Denglish (Dutch)
- Engrish (or Japlish)(Japanese)
- Finglish (Finnish)
- Franglais (French)
- Hinglish (Hindi);
- Konglish (Korean)
- Manglish (Malaysian);
- Poglish (Polish)
- Porglish (Portuguese)
- Runglish (Russian)
- Serblish (Serbian)
- Spanglish (Spanish)
- Swenglish (Swedish)
- Taglish (Tagalog)
- Tanglish (Tamil)
- Tinglish (Thai)
- Turlish (Turkish)
- Yinglish (Yiddish)



# CONSCIOUS LEARNING VERSUS SUBCONSCIOUS ACQUISITION

## Conscious learning

- Focuses on grammatical rules

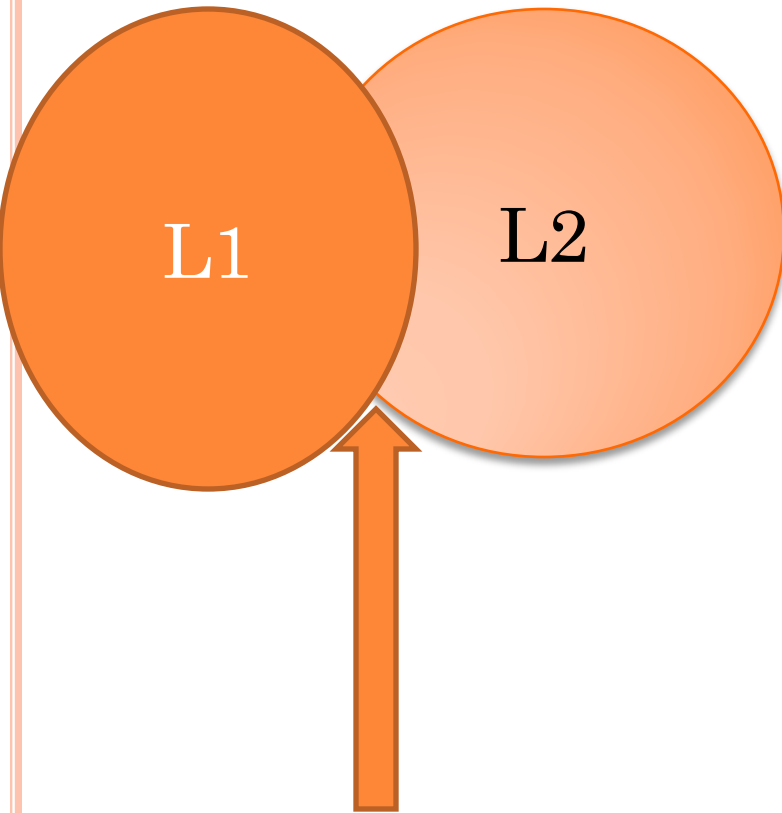
## Subconscious learning

- Knowing when & how to use language to communicate meaning
- Relies upon a learners background knowledge, knowledge of the world around him/her, culture, etc.

Krashen believed that without both of these factors, acquisition cannot take place.



# INTERLANGUAGE




- The learner constructs a system of abstract linguistic rules which underlies comprehension & production of the L2. This system of rules is viewed as a ‘mental grammar’.





# INTERLANGAUGE

- The learner's grammar is open to influence from outside world. For example, omission, overgeneralization and transfer errors are apparent in language patterns
  - The learner's grammar changes from time to time by adding rules, deleting rules and restructuring the system.
  - Learners employ various learning strategies to develop their interlanguage.
  - The learners grammar is likely to fossilize
- 



# COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

**Comprehensible input means that students should be able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them.**







# USING COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT IN THE CLASSROOM

- Use context or visual cues
- Asking for clarifications
- Provide relevant background knowledge and content
- Provide instruction that draws on the experiences of students





## OTHER TECHNIQUES FOR PROVIDING COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT IN THE CLASSROOM

- Use of consistent language
- Frequent use of visuals
- Providing frequent opportunities for students to express their ideas





# COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT

## Instructional dialogues

- Focus on accuracy of content
- Interactive teaching methodologies

## Student opportunities to use oral language

- Cooperative learning
- Peer tutoring strategies
- Dialog journals



## COMPREHENSIBLE OUTPUT

- When there is a gap in the linguistic knowledge of the second language and the learner notices it, they can change their output in order to learn something new about the language.



# COMPREHENSIBLE OUTPUT

- We obtain knowledge when we attempt to convey a message but fail, but the learner eventually finds the words right words to get people to understand and ends up learning new knowledge about the language.

# COMPREHENSIBLE OUTPUT



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Output is what the language learner produces.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Comprehensible output is important because we want students to learn in the classroom and gain knowledge about the second language.
- When the student is given good comprehensible input, enough wait time, feedback, and help from peers, output is achievable.



# KEY RESEARCH

- When providing an opportunity to continue practicing the language they are trying to learn, the greater chance that they will move towards comprehensible output.
- The greater the students comprehensible output the more the student will succeed in school.



Comprehensible  
input



Success in School





# KEY RESEARCH

- External and internal feedback is extremely important when trying to learn a L2 because that is when a learner notices a gap in their original output.
- Teachers should help students with external feedback (asking for clarification) in a way that will help and encourage the student to find a new way to convey their message.
- Students should be given the opportunity to figure things out on their own (internal feedback) as well as to collaborate with peers to learn more about the L2



# WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO INCREASE COMPREHENSIBLE OUTPUT?

## Do's

- Give positive feedback
- Put students in small groups so they can help each other
- Give students appropriate wait time
- Model to the students how to solve their language problems themselves
- Give students the opportunity to correct themselves on their own

## Don'ts

- Use words or concepts that are beyond the reach and understanding of the students
- Have the students work independently all of the time
- Talk down to students if they aren't understanding the concept quickly
- Rush students
- Autocorrect students mistakes immediately



# DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

- Grammatical items can be sequenced into a series of stages
- Complexity of item makes demands on short term memory
- This affects a learners speech pattern



## EXAMPLE: THIRD PERSON --S

1. Whether the subject is in the third person or not: He walks versus I walk.
2. Whether the subject is singular or plural: He walks versus They walk.
3. Whether the action is present tense or not: He walks versus He walked.
4. Whether the action is habitual or going on at the moment of speaking. He walks to school versus He is walking to school.





# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING STRATEGIES & ACQUISITION

- Defining learning strategies
- Learner types
- Strategy training and task performance

# DEFINING LEARNING STRATEGIES

“The mental and communicative processes that learner use to learn a second language.”



# HOW DO WE NAME AND ORGANIZE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING?

## Metacognitive strategies for Learning

- Organize/plan (What do I do before I start?)
- Manage (What do I do while I'm working on the task?)
- Monitor (How do I make sure I am doing the task correctly?)
- Evaluate (What do I do after I have finished the task?)

## Tasked-based strategies for Learning

- 16 task based strategies
- Divided into four categories:
  - 1) Use what you know
  - 2) Use your imagination
  - 3) Use your organizational skills
  - 4) Use a variety of resources








# LEARNER TYPES

Type	description
Concrete learners	Tend to like games, pictures, films, video, using cassettes, talking in pairs, and practicing English outside the classroom
Analytical learners	Like studying grammar, studying English books and reading newspapers, studying alone, finding their own mistakes, and working on problems set by the teacher
Communicative learners	Like to learn by watching, listening to native speakers, talking to friends in English and watching t.v. in English, using English out of class in stores, trains, and so on, learning new words by hearing them , and learning by conversations
Authority-oriented learners	Prefer the teacher to explain everything, like to have their own textbook, to write everything in a notebook, to study grammar, learn by reading, and learn new words by seeing them.



# THE GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER

- Thinks about how s/he is learning
  - Is willing to experiment and take risks
  - Is realistic
  - Is independent
  - Is organized and active
  - Has a balanced concern for communication & accuracy
- 

## HOMWORK: WRITE A ONE-TWO PAGE ESSAY ON ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

- Why is second language acquisition fundamentally different from first language acquisition?
- What is the critical period and what is it meant to explain?
- Explain the concepts of language transfer and interlanguage.
- Discuss comprehensible input and output.
- How do differences in learner characteristics affect second language acquisition?



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