

Second Language Acquisition

LG 376 — Semester 2, 2021 (Jan-May 2022)

CLASS 16: SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF L2 ACQUISITION

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Outline

- Recap: Motivation
- Social dimensions of L2A
 - Social turn in SLA
 - Cognition, interaction, grammar, and identity are social
- Group work
- Looking ahead: Week 17

The slide features a central white rounded rectangle with a double black border. The word "Recap" is centered within this rectangle in a bold, pink-to-red gradient font. On the left side of the slide, there are three vertical bars: a thin green one, a thin blue one, and a thicker grey one. At the bottom, there are two horizontal bars: a thin grey one and a thicker orange one.

Recap

Setting the scene: Cognition, conation, affect

- Cognition: how information is processed & learned by human mind
 - Aptitude → cognitive construct (Chapter 7)
- **Conation**: how humans use will and freedom to make choices
 - ★ • Motivation → conative construct (Chapter 8)
- **Affect**: how humans feel toward information, people, objects, actions
 - Affect (Chapter 9)



The traditional approach



- **Socioeducational model** → Motivation narrowly defined:
 - Effort (Motivational intensity)
 - Enjoyment (L2 learning attitudes)
 - Investment (Desire to learn L2)
- Motivational quantity measured by Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire
 - Seven-point Likert scales (“strongly agree” [7] to “strongly disagree” [1])

L2 motivational self system



- Application of Self-Discrepancy Theory in social psychology
 - **Possible selves:** we have current self and a self we'd like to become
 - Successful learners negotiate steps to reduce discrepancy
- L2 motivational self system:
 - L2 users will invest time & efforts in learning an L2
 - if they can see themselves as future speakers of the L2; and
 - if they can execute plans to close gaps b'w current and future images

L2 motivational self system



- Three key constructs shaping motivation:
- ★ • **Ideal L2 Self:** Who do I want to become?
 - Internal desires and wishes; “a speaker who can do A and B in X and Z”
- **Ought-to L2 Self:** Who should I be to meet external expectations?
 - External pressures; “a good student who passes the test”
- **L2 Learning Experience:** What’s the impact of learning experience?
 - School/curricular/instructional experience (positive & negative)

Social dimensions

Setting the scene: The social turn in SLA

- Starting in mid-1990s, several SLA researchers began to express dissatisfaction with emphasis on L2A “inside the skull”
 - Universal learning processes from cognitivist-interactionist frameworks
 - Insufficient theorizing of L2A from social aspects
- Study of L2/Ln learning is not only shaped by the social context in which it happens; it is bound inextricably to such context
 - “SLA as chameleon” metaphor: Social forces are central to understand living agents

Setting the scene: The social turn in SLA

- **Social constructivism**
 - Reality isn't given naturally but is created by agents and social groups
- **Socioculturalism**
 - Reality emerges anew in each contextualized activity
- **Poststructuralism** (overlaps postmodernism)
 - Reality emerges through discourse (e.g., through language & practices)

Socioculturalism: Cognition is social

- Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934)
 - **Cognition** (mental operation: Lg., literacy, numeracy) **is social**
 - **Zone of proximal development** (ZPD) characterizes a person's mental development
- Vygotsky's insights in SLA → **SocioCultural Theory** (SCT)
 - Introduced, developed by James Lantolf
 - Popularized by Merrill Swain's rethinking of SLA cornerstones (output, interaction)

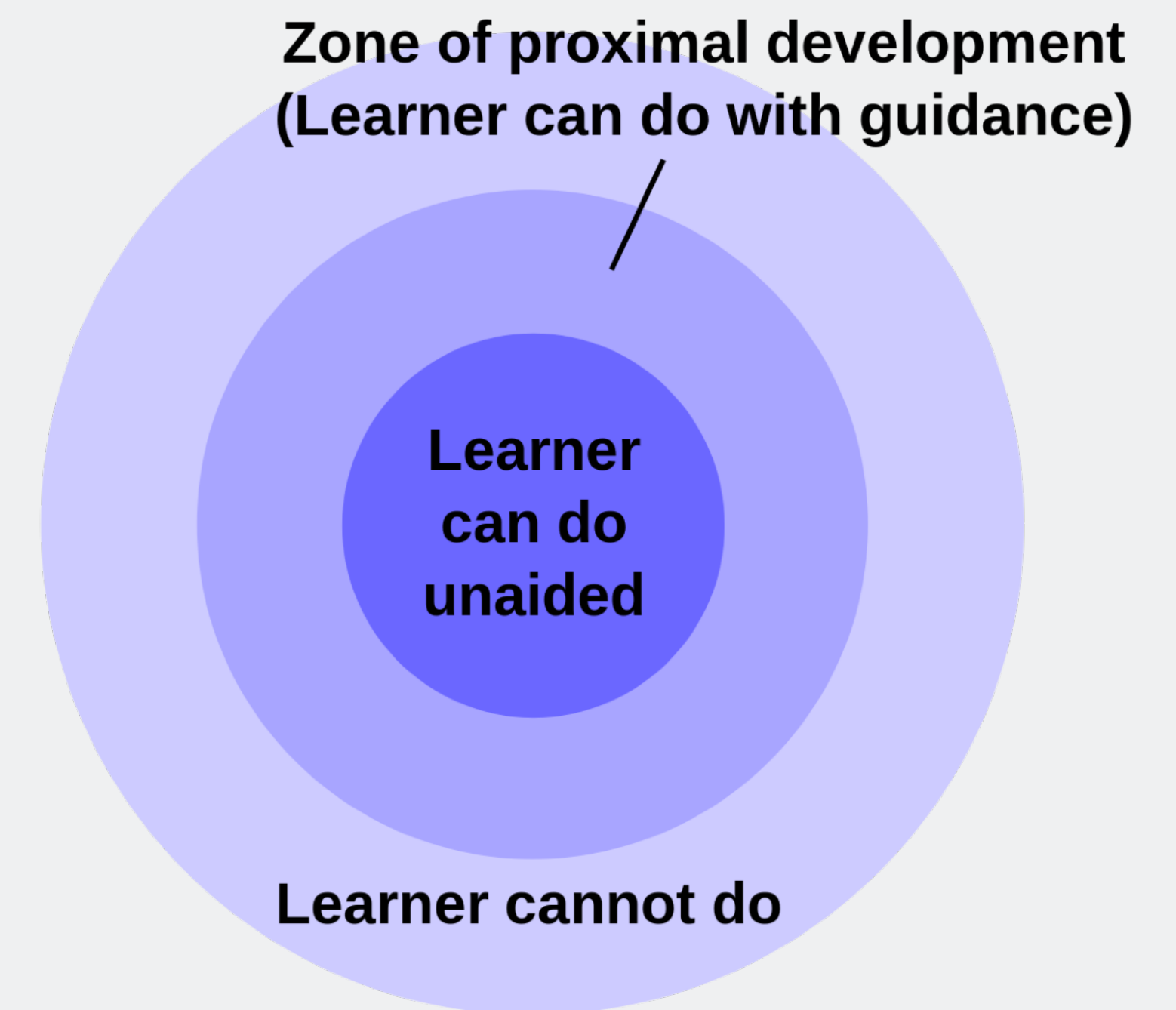


Vygotsky's insights & SLA

- **Self-regulation** and **language mediation**
 - Human actions are regulated (enabled/disabled) by 3 sources:
 - **Objects**: tools (+), obstructions (-)
 - **Others**: physical (e.g. mothers), linguistic (social speech)
 - **Self**: with the aid of private, **inner speech** directed to self
- Self-regulation in an L2 shows L2 development

Vygotsky's insights & SLA

- **Social learning** in the form of **ZPD**
 - All (higher) cognition appears *inter*personally before *intra*personally
- **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)** in L2
 - distance between assisted & unassisted L2 ability
 - “potential” for learning in each individual



Interaction is social: Conversation Analysis

- **Conversation Analysis (CA)**
 - developed by UCLA researchers (Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson)
 - first applied to L2 by Alan Firth and Johannes Wagner
 - oral interactions among NNS of English for business-related purposes
 - dubbed CA-for-SLA by L2 researchers
 - Numa Markee, Paul Seedhouse, Gabi Kasper, Junko Mori

Conversation Analysis in a nutshell

- **Goal:** discovery of context-free (universal) machinery for organizing talk/social life
 - turn-taking, repair, sequential design
- **Approach:** **emic** perspective
 - evidence of the machinery sought in local interaction
 - No *a priori* categories, but *a posteriori* OK with witnessable evidence in transcriptions

Example of CA-for-SLA

- L2 interaction is another way of “doing” communication (neither random nor deficient)
 - In CA, linguistic problems → interactional resources
- Carroll (2005) L1 Japanese learners of English
 - extra vowel at the end of certain words (e.g. *what-o*, *what-u*, *have-u*, *raining-u*, *dark-u*) → holding the floor

Grammar is social: Systemic-Functional L.

- **Systemic-Functional Linguistics:** Grammar is for meaning making
 - developed by M.A.K. Halliday
 - dominant in Australia
- Analysis → meaning-making within social contexts
 - focuses on above-sentence level + functions
- US-based researchers: Mary Schleppegrell, Heidi Byrnes, etc.



Sense of self is social: Identity

- Started with Bonny Norton's (BN) study of 5 immigrant women in Canada
 - **Identities** → socially constructed and constrained as well as dynamic and contradictory
 - **Investment**: BN's version of motivation
 - **Communities of Practice** (real or imagined) are targets for investment



Never just about language

- Many/most/all L2 users study an L2/Ln for various reasons
 - transform their worlds or seek material, symbolic, affective, self-affirming returns
- L2 social contexts are sites of struggle
 - proficiency ≠ success
- How can/should L2 teachers promote empowerment, social transformation?

Group project: Group work

Next week...

- **Topic**: Wrap-up!
 - What did we cover? What did we not?
 - Course evaluation
- **Reading**:
 - No reading! 🎉