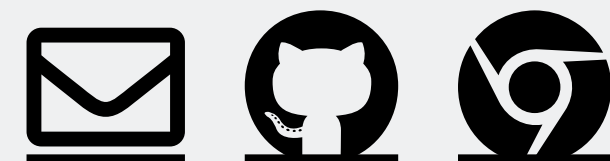# Second Language Acquisition

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

CLASS 17: WRAP-UP
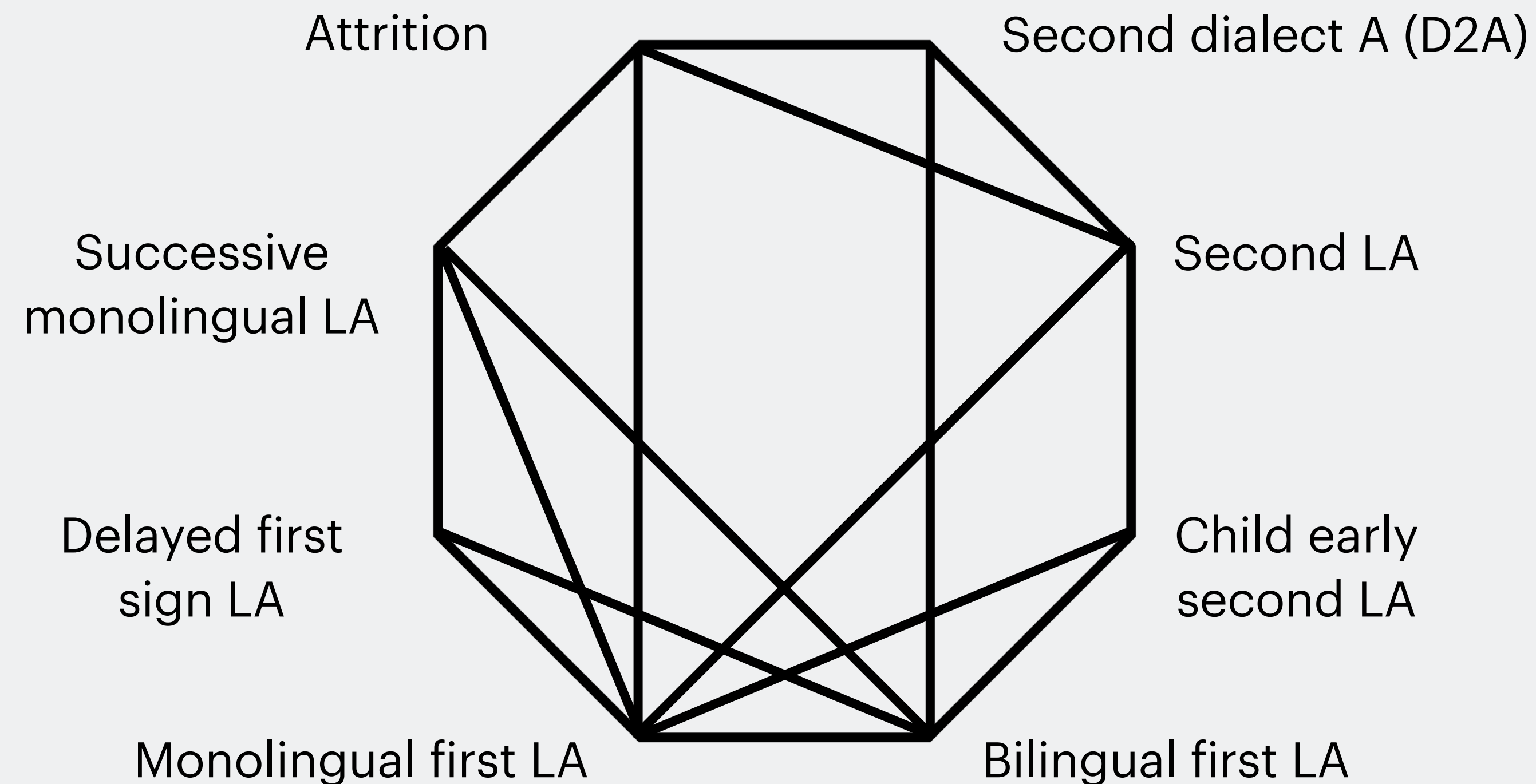
Sakol Suethanapornkul

How are languages learned?

Open-ended discussion

- How are languages learned? What makes it possible for us to learn any Ls?

- Is learning a language later in life more, less, or as difficult than/as doing so early in life?

- What factors are most important in language learning in adolescence and adulthood?

SLA: Our definition

SLA is one of many non-pathological language acquisition & attrition

Source: Ortega (2013). *Language Learning*

Defining success in L2A

Bilingual

Late

Adult L2A
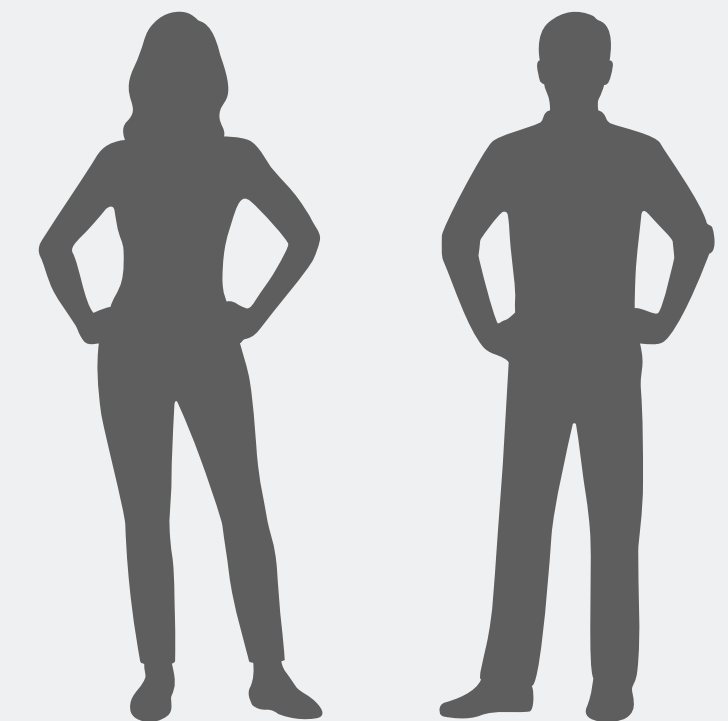
≠

Single-language competencies during early childhood

Multiple-language competencies later in life

Early

Monolingual

Child L1A

Defining success in L2A

a monolingual native speaker bias

- Tacit assumptions

  - L2 systems are a deficient, incomplete version of L1 systems (a target deviation perspective, Klein [1998]).

  - L2 learning is always hindered by cognitive & maturational constraints.
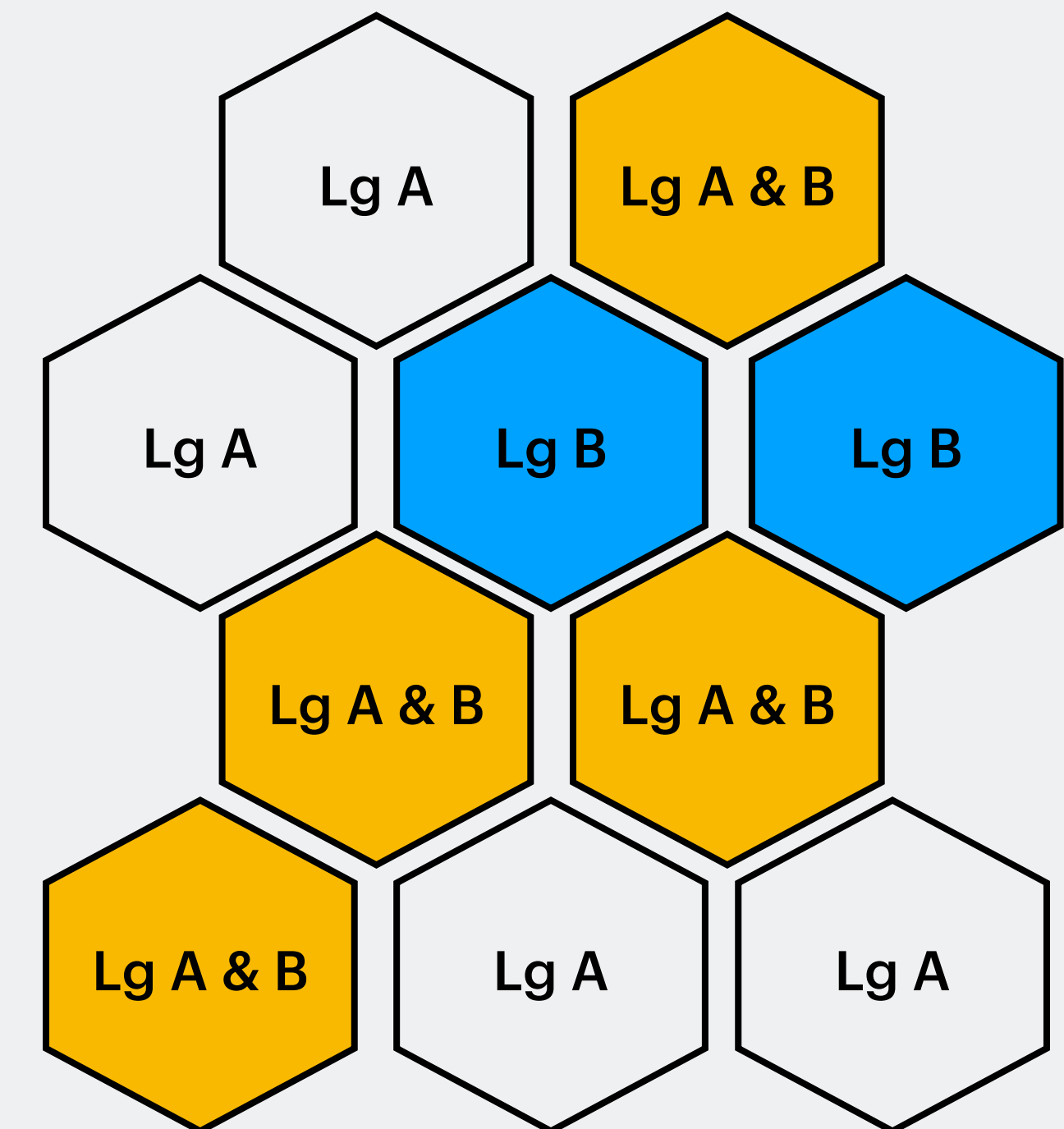
Defining success in L2A

- In (from-birth) native bilingualism, linguistic success is not always 100%

  - **Unbalanced bilingualism** is expected and normal

Complementarity Principle (Grosjean, 2008, p. 23)

Languages mapped differently across domains of life and social networks

Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)

Critical period:

- begins and ends abruptly (e.g., a clear cut-off)

- period beyond which a damage is irreversible

Sensitive period:

- begins and ends gradually

- period of maximal sensitivity (e.g., unsuccessful later on)

Image source: <u>road closure</u> and <u>detour</u>

Are children or adults better L2 learners?

- Krashen et al. (1979) gathered studies conducted in **second language** (**SL**) contexts between 1962 and 1979

  - Adults & older children faster than young children initially

  - Young children catch up and surpass late starters after a year or so*

- This finding is replicated in newer studies!

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Vol. 13, No. 4
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*Age, Rate and Eventual Attainment in Second Language Acquisition**

Stephen D. Krashen, Michael A. Long, and Robin C. Scarcella

This paper presents evidence for three generalizations concerning the relationship between age, rate, and eventual attainment in second language acquisition:
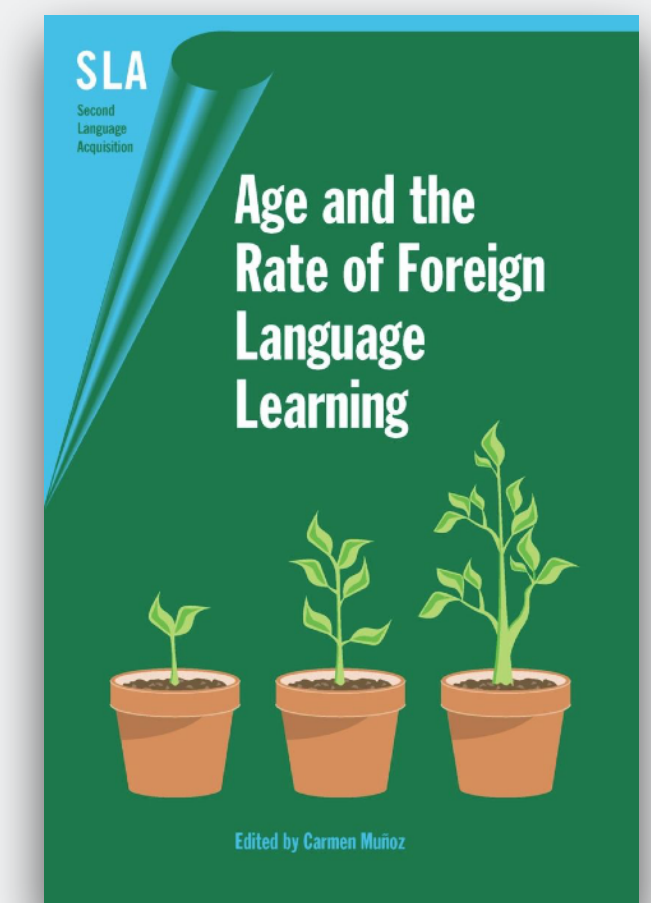
(1) Adults proceed through early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children (where time and exposure are held constant).

(2) Older children acquire faster than younger children (again, in early stages of morphological and syntactic development where time and exposure are held constant).

(3) Acquirers who begin natural exposure to second languages during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults.

While recent research reports have claimed to be counter to the hypothesis that there is a critical period for language acquisition, the available literature is consistent with the three generalizations presented above.

Are children or adults better L2 learners?

- Muñoz (2006) presents evidence of age in **foreign language** (**FL**) contexts (English in Catalonia), involving ~ 2,000 school-age children

    - Late starters maintained a slight advantage throughout

    - Younger children did not catch up!

- Muñoz (2014) showed that a better predictor of success in FL contexts is **quality and quantity of input**, not starting age

SLA
Second Language Acquisition

Age and the Rate of Foreign Language Learning
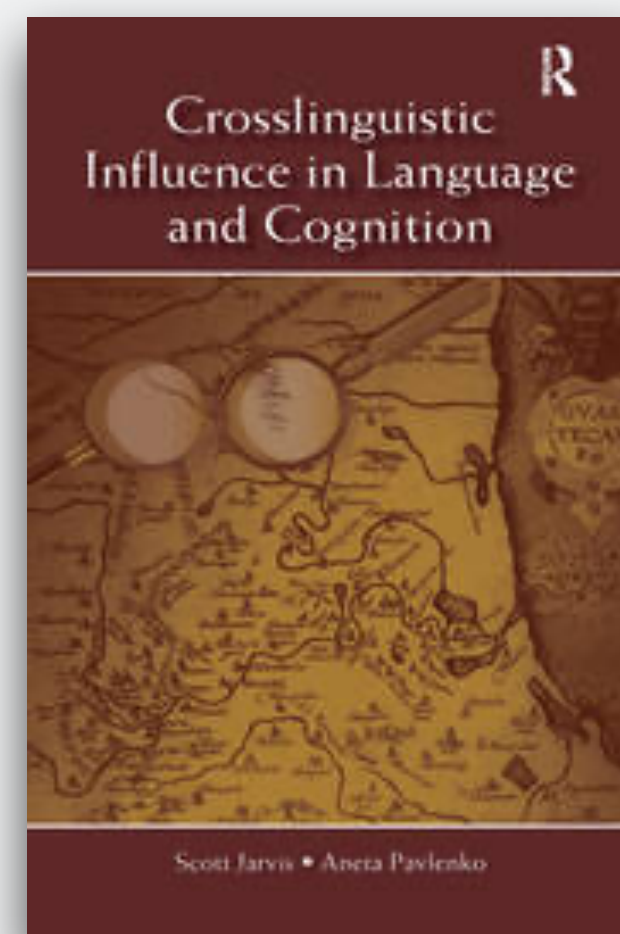
Edited by Carmen Muñoz

What exactly is ultimate attainment?

- Full linguistic competence attained at the end state of L2 acquisition

- Success indistinguishable from the competence of native speakers

- Research:

  - participants in second language contexts (minimum: 5 to 10 years)*

  - **correlational** studies of age of arrival (AOA) and language scores

  - **exceptional "cases"** (or groups)

Crosslinguistic influences? What?

"...the influence of a person's **knowledge** of **one language** on that person's **knowledge or use of another** language."

Aneta Pavlenko

University of Oslo

Scott Jarvis

University of Utah

L1 influences on developmental sequences

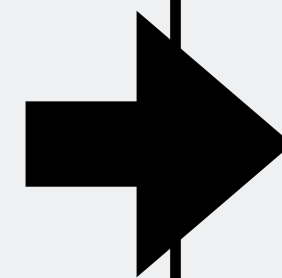- Long-held: L1 knowledge affects **rate** of development (not route)

Negation

Stage 1:

Negative element before verbs

No bicycle
I no like it
Not my friend

Stage 2:

No/not alternating with 'don't'

He don't like it
I don't can sing

Stage 3:

Negative element may be after auxiliaries

You can not go there
She don't like rice

Stage 4:

'Do' marked for tense, person, number

It doesn't work
*I didn't **went** there*

L1 influences on developmental sequences

- Recent view: L1 knowledge affects **route** of development

Morphemes

Group 1:

-ing
plural -s
copula be

Group 2:

auxiliary be
articles

Group 3:

irregular past tense

Group 4:

regular past tense
third-person -s
possessive 's

Between-L1 trajectories: 🇰🇷 🇨🇳 🇯🇵 possessive > plural -s & articles (Luk & Shirai, 2009)

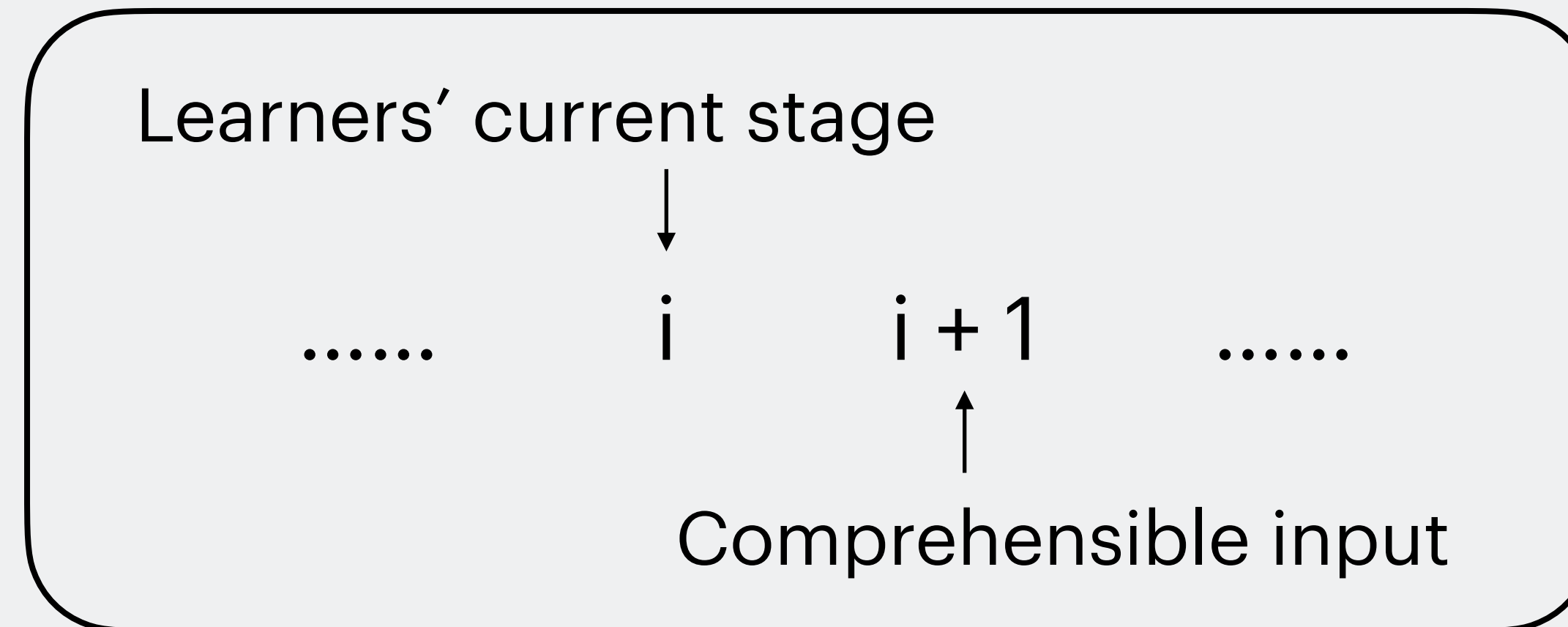🇩🇪 🇨🇳 Article: German > Chinese (Murakami & Alexopoulou, 2016)

Transferability

- Similar forms in L1* and target language → better learning

  - L2 users do not simply "copy-and-paste" forms

- But what makes "transfer" happen?

- **Transferability** (or **psychotypology**)

  - Learners' intuition about how transferable a given phenomenon is

  - Transfer is a psychological process

  - *Interlingual identification* and *Transfer to Somewhere*

Krashen's Monitor Model

Comprehensible Input (i+1): language data slightly above Ls' level

Learners' current stage

↓

...... i i + 1 ......

↑

Comprehensible input

Interaction and negotiation for meaning

Michael Long's Interaction Hypothesis:

- Input becomes comprehensible through **modified interaction**

Modified interaction during **negotiation for meaning** includes:

- Comprehension checks

- Clarification requests

- Self-repetition or paraphrase

- Feedback to let learner know when communication fails

Output and syntactic processing
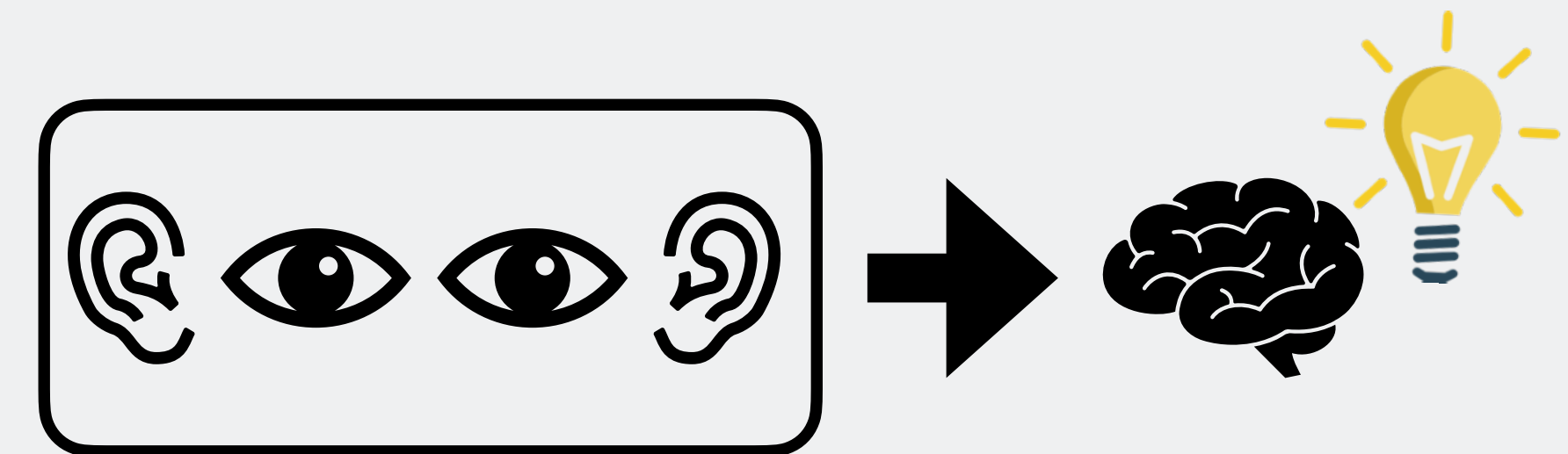
Output promotes...

- noticing of gaps in linguistic knowledge

- metalinguistic awareness

- hypothesis testing

    - Pushed output groups are found to produce more language and more complete information

Noticing as a moderator

- Negotiated interaction and pushed output are key, but…

  - Learning will likely depend on learners' **noticing**

- **Noticing Hypothesis**

  - Learners need to notice relevant linguistic materials in the environment

    - Noticing → learning (to some degree)

    - Analysis → (more) understanding

Image source: lightbulb

Studying cognition

- The term **cognition** from Latin → "to get to know"

  - SLA research asks *what* it takes to get to know an L2/Ln well

  - Methods & tools come from psychology & neuroscience

- Major challenges:

  - Differentiate between processing of known and novel L2 information

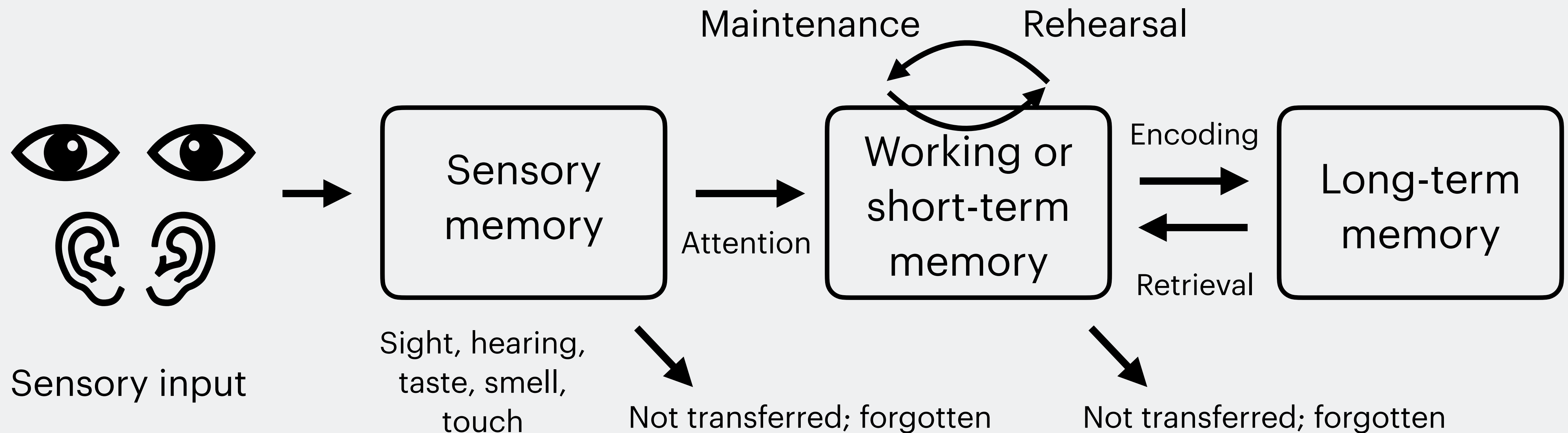 - Methods and evidence (RTs in milliseconds, blood oxygenation, etc.)

Image source: window

Skill acquisition theory in SLA

- "Practice makes perfect!"

  - Begin with a declarative knowledge via explicit explanations

  - Engage learners with *sustained* and *deliberate* practice

- Practice helps with future access (less effort, more automatic)

- Final outcome: **automaticity**

  - Fluent, automatic language performance + procedural knowledge

"Stages" of memory

- Three "stages" of memory:

Maintenance   Rehearsal

Sensory input

Sensory memory

Sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch

Attention

Working or short-term memory

Encoding

Retrieval

Long-term memory

Not transferred; forgotten

Not transferred; forgotten

Declarative/procedural model

- When adults acquire an L2, both words and grammar are supported by declarative memory systems

- but how we initially learn an L2 influences how it is encoded!

	Procedural LTM	Declarative LTM
L1	Grammar	Words
L2		Grammar & Words

Attention and L2 learning

- Attention came into L2 researchers' awareness as part of the **Noticing Hypothesis**…

- Some key characteristics of attention:

  - limited in its capacity-wise

  - selective (*bottleneck* or *filter* metaphors)

  - voluntary

  - regulating access to consciousness

Incidental

Explicit

Implicit

Learning without intention?

- **Incidental learning**

  - *Can L2 be learned incidentally? In other words, can L2 users learn new L2 materials without intention, while doing something else?*

I'm going to bed, before either of you come up with another clever idea to get us killed. Or worse, **_expelled_**.

Image sources: Harry Potter and Hermione

Learning without attention?

- **Incidental learning**

  - *Can L2 be learned incidentally? In other words, can L2 users learn new L2 materials without intention, while doing something else?*

- Intention ≠ attention

  - Can new L2 materials be learned without attention?

  - Schmidt's **Noticing Hypothesis**

    - Strong version: What learners notice in the input becomes intake

    - Weak version: More noticing leads to more learning

Learning without rules?

NOTE: the difference between this and skill acquisition theory

- **Implicit vs. explicit learning**

  - *Can L2 be learned with no intervention of controlled attention? In other words, can L2 users learn an L2 without being given explicit rules?*
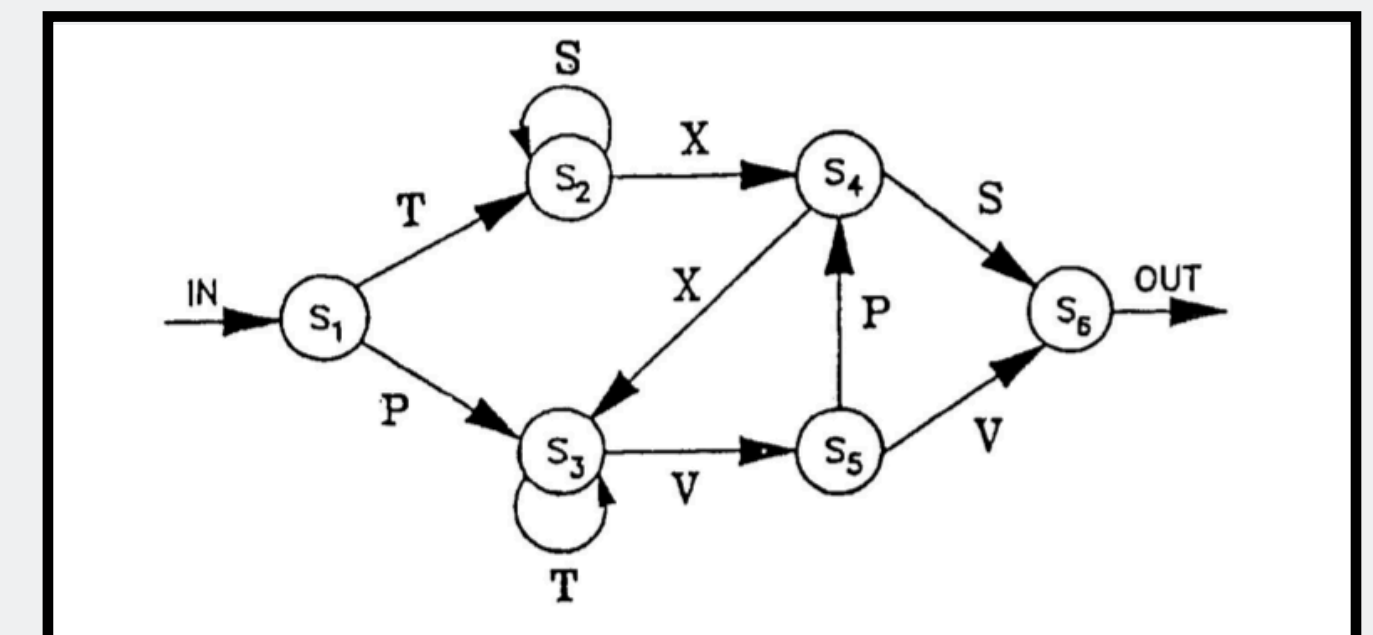
- Motivations:

Learning without rules?

- Implicit vs. explicit learning inside SLA

  - What can't be learned implicitly by adult L2 learners? Why does awareness lead to better learning?

- Implicit learning outside SLA

  - How does implicit, **statistical learning** work in adult L2 learners?

  - Reber's artificial grammar learning (AGL)

Winter & Reber (1994)

Interlanguage: More than the sum of L1 & L2

> *She...runned away*   (L1 Japanese)
>
> *...he falls a piece of note into dough by mistake*   (L1 Korean)
>
> *A wall was falled down in order to get a bigger green house*   (L1 Spanish)

- Important generalizations about interlanguage:

  - different from L2 input

  - different from L1 representations

  - similar to children's developing L1

Changes in interlanguage development

- **Interlanguage (IL)**: language system that learner constructs at each point in development (Selinker, 1972)

- Interlanguage changes (and grows) in **systematic** and **predictable** ways though changes are:

  - non-linear (u-shaped accuracy)

  - unevenly paced (rate of development)

Major findings have been documented in morphology and syntax

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)
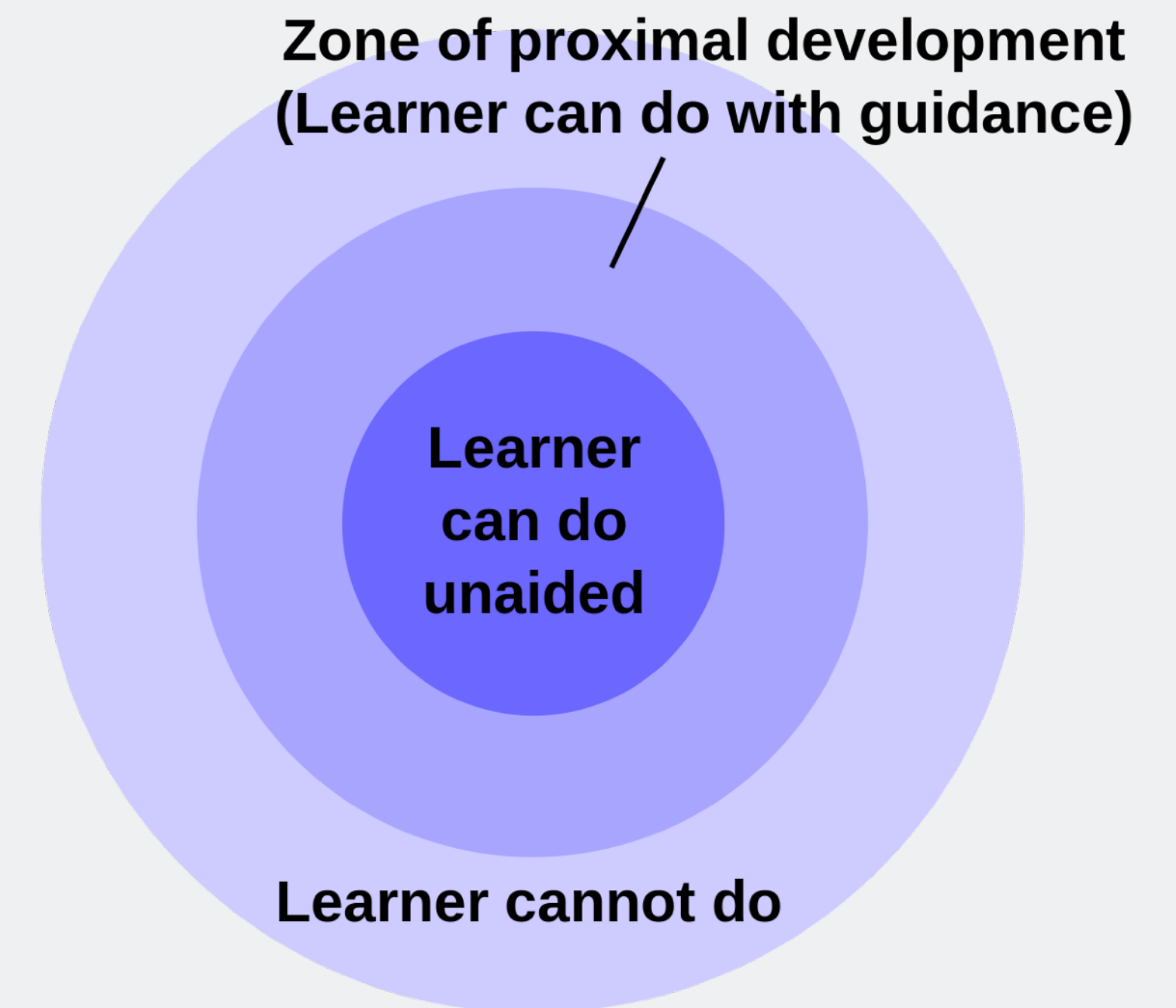
Socioculturalism: Cognition is social

- 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

- **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

Zone of proximal development (Learner can do with guidance)

Learner can do unaided

Learner cannot do

Image source: Wikipedia

SLA….one last time

- Adult learners (yes, you!):

  - complex emotional and social needs

  - sophisticated cognitive abilities and skills

  - unlike child learners in many different ways

- This course:

  - only scratched the surface

  - did not get to cover every issue dealt with in SLA