

9月10日(土) シンポジウム第7室(本館211)

Second Acquisition Research: A Grammar Perspective

< 応用言語学研究会企画 >

Moderator: Shigeru Tabé (University of Tsukuba)

Panelists: Sandra Fotos, Ph.D. (Senshu University)

Kevin Gregg (St. Andrew's University)

Toshihiro Shimizu (Junshin College of Nagasaki)

Kevin R. Gregg

St. Andrew's University

(Momoyama Gakuin Daigaku)

SLA theory addresses two central questions:

- 1) What is the L2 competence of a learner?
- 2) How is this competence acquired?

These two questions are often referred to as the logical problem and the developmental problem, respectively, of SLA. The two problems require two rather different types of theory: what Cummins (1983) calls a 'property theory' and a 'transition theory'.

A property theory asks questions of the form, 'In virtue of what does system S have property P?' or 'How is P instantiated in S?' Thus one could ask e.g. how heritability is instantiated in an organism, or solubility in a compound, or authority in a society--or, of course, linguistic competence in a mind. The typical approach to answering such a question is to analyse the system into its component parts, showing the functions of each part. In the case of linguistic competence this is done with a generative grammar.

A transition theory, on the other hand, answers questions of the form, 'What causes S to have P?' In so far as a learner's linguistic competence changes over time, we need to know how those changes came about.

Most research dealing with L2 learners does not directly address either of these two questions. This is not to say, of course, that such research is necessarily irrelevant or misguided (although a lot of it is); in any case I will not talk about it here, concentrating instead on research that is centrally concerned with the issue of L2 competence. I will briefly discuss a small number of questions:

- 1) the question of 'access to UG': Is L2 competence properly characterized in terms of UG? If not, how should it be characterized?
- 2) the role of input, especially negative input: To what extent, if any, do input modification or negative input (correction, explanation, etc.) contribute to acquisition?
- 3) the transition theory
- 4) the question of explanatory power: Does UG have a non-metaphorical existence? Should we be talking about competence at a more truly biological level?