



Introduction to Learner Language Analysis: Developmental Sequences in German as a Second Language

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Outline

Theoretical Foundations

Basic concepts: GFL/GSL, SLA, Learner Language Analysis

Linguistic foundations for establishing developmental sequences in Learner Language

Developmental Sequences for verb placement in German

Empirical Studies

Longitudinal case studies of learners of German as a Second Language

Some methodological issues

Some results on developmental sequences

Getting to know each other

Attendance List

Short Introduction of Everyone

- your name
- country of origin
- which languages do you speak
- areas of interest in your study

My own research interests:

German as a Second Language,
Multilingualism

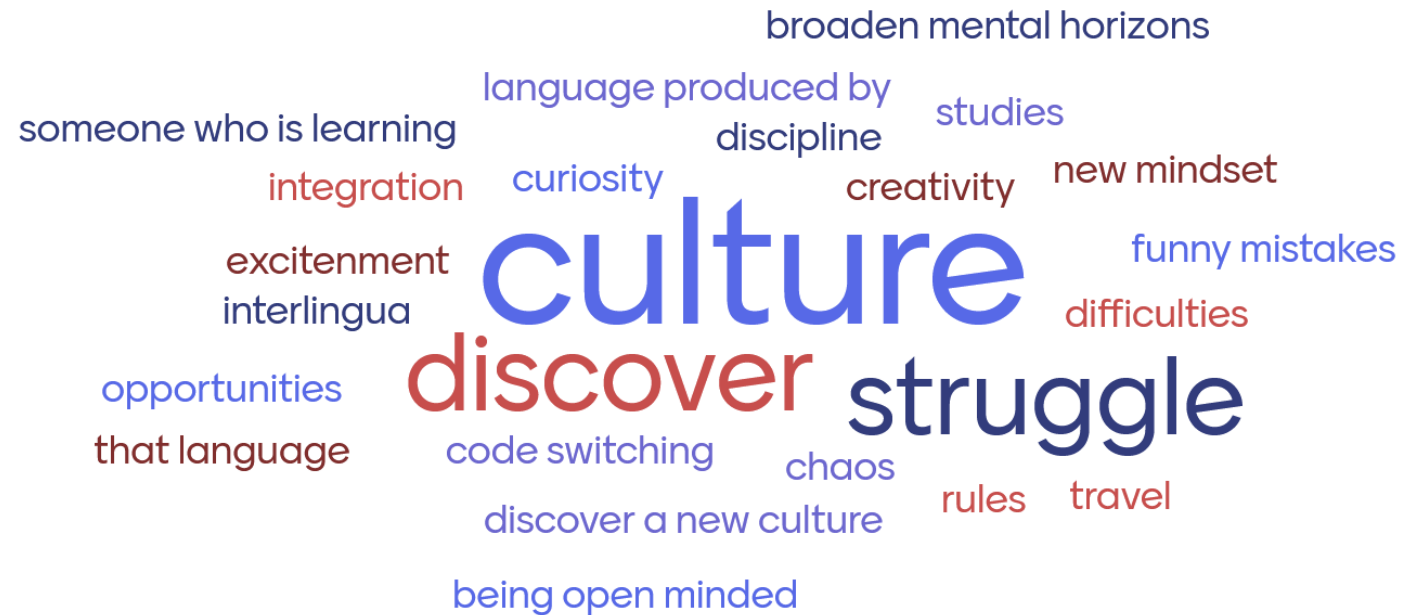
Second Language Acquisition, Grammar
Acquisition

Literacy Acquisition of Adolescents and Adults
in a Second Language

Website see <https://www.gw.uni-jena.de/33814/czinglar-christine>

Publications see [ORCID](#)

What do you associate with learner language?



Some basic notions

German as a ...



Foreign Language (GFL, L2)

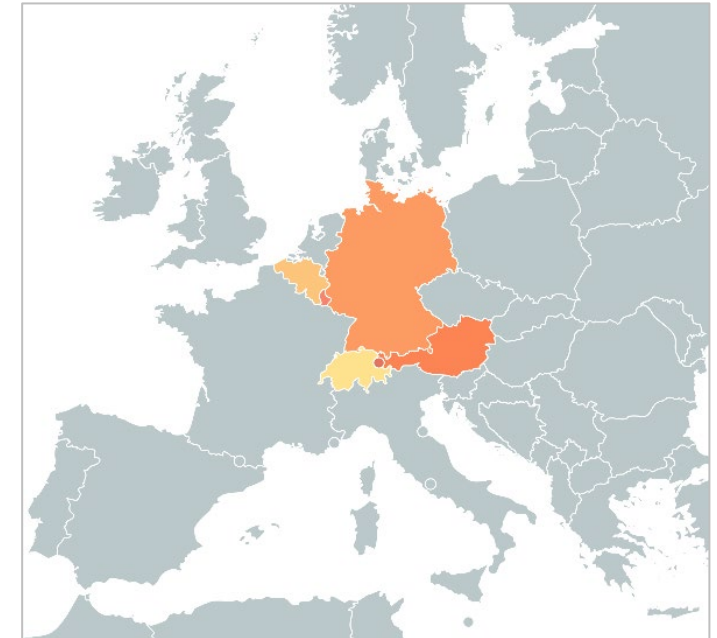
- ❖ place of learning: non-German-speaking country/context
- ❖ learning context: class room
- ❖ mostly tutored
- ❖ „homogene“ group of learners

German as a foreign language

Second Language (GSL, L2)

- ❖ place of learning: German-speaking country/context
- ❖ learning context: everyday life
- ❖ mostly untutored
- ❖ heterogene group of learners

German as a second language

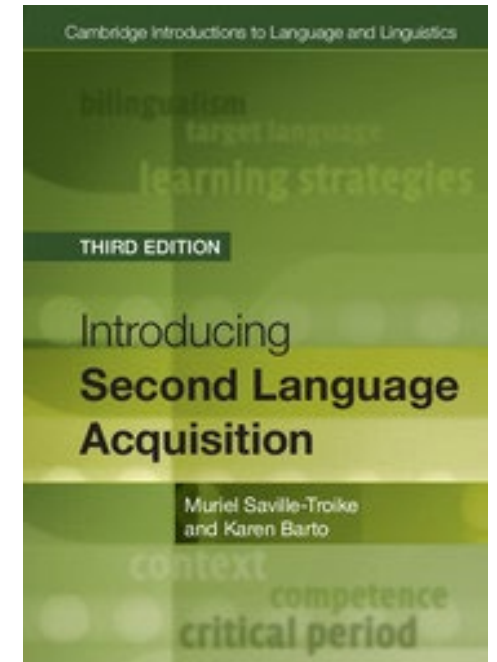


different acquisition contexts

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language **subsequent to learning their first language (L1) as young children**, and to the process of learning that language.

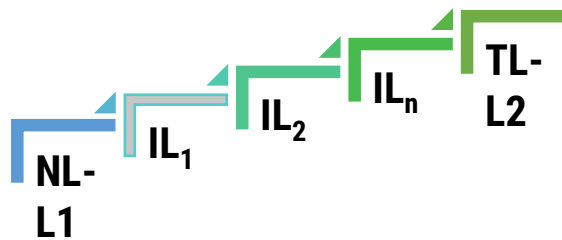
- The additional language is called a **second language (L2)**, even though it may actually be the third, fourth, or tenth to be acquired. It is also commonly called a **target language (TL)**, which refers to any language that is the aim or goal of learning.
- The scope of SLA includes **informal L2 learning** that takes place in naturalistic contexts, **formal L2 learning** that takes place in classrooms, and L2 learning that involves a mixture of these settings and circumstances.



(Saville Troike 2006, Saville Troike & Barto 2016)

SLA Theory and Learner Language

Learner language development



Schematic development of interlanguage or learner language (intermediate states 1, 2 ...n)

The purpose of **SLA theory** is to better understand the **nature of learner language**, its development, and what impacts upon both (Myles 2013).

Learner errors provide evidence of the **system of language** that a learner is using at any particular point in the course of L2 development (Corder 1967), they are “**windows into the language learner’s mind**” (Saville Troike 2006).

Building on Corder (1967), Selinker (1972) coined the term **interlanguage (IL)** to refer to the **intermediate states** (or interim grammars) of a learner’s language as it moves toward the target language (TL or L2).

There is much evidence that most **learner’s productions** in early stages are unlike both the L1 and the L2. Instead of just comparing L1 and L2, **learner language** needs to be investigated **in its own right**: its internal structure, its development, the ways in which it deviates from the L2 input (TL).

Possible L1 influences are theorized within sophisticated analyses of **cross-linguistic differences** between languages which go beyond surface contrasts (Myles 2013).

Analysis of Learner Language

The term **learner language** refers to the respective **individual language system**, which learners construct in the process of language learning /acquisition at any given point in time.



systematicity

systematic characteristics that many learners share
e.g. going through the same developmental sequences



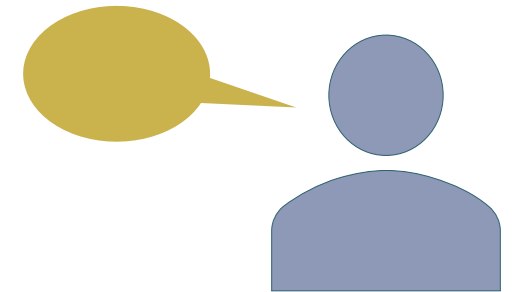
individuality / variability

individual characteristics that vary across learners
e.g. different influencing factors that impact the rate of development

Data base for learner language analysis

- ❖ oral or written production
- ❖ analysis of different linguistic areas, e.g. syntax (verb position), morpho-syntax (finiteness), complexity, register ...

Wisniewski, Lüdeling & Czinglar (2022)



Developmental Sequences

One of the most significant breakthroughs in second language acquisition (SLA) research was the discovery in the early-to-mid 1970s that **second language (L2) learners develop their L2 in very similar ways, irrespective of socio-economic status, education, personality, and even first language (L1)**. This is not to suggest that everyone learns an L2 at the same speed or with the same ease, nor that they ultimately enjoy the same success (...).

= **sequences of interlanguage variants through which a linguistic form approximates a target-like manifestation**

Abrahamsson (2013)

Critical of developmental sequences: Dynamic Systems Theory (DST)

e.g. Lowie & Verspoor (2015),
de Bot, Lowie & Verspoor (2007)

- developmental sequences can only be determined in average group scores of intersectional studies
- no distinct sequences in individual developmental paths, as there is high intra- and interindividual variability



Linguistic Foundations

Verb Placement in German



Verb Placement in German

1. Martin **trinkt** Rotwein.
Martin ***drinks*** *red wine*
- Martin **drinks** red wine.

S-V-O

German
English

?

Verb Placement in German



2.	Martin	wird		Rotwein	trinken.
	<i>Martin</i>	<i>will</i>		<i>red wine</i>	<i>drink</i>
	Martin	will	drink	red wine.	

(S-V) O-V
German

(S-V) V-O
English
Russian

Verb Placement in German



3.	Gestern	hat	Martin	Rotwein	getrunken.
	<i>yesterday</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>Martin</i>	<i>red wine</i>	<i>drunk</i>
	Yesterday, Martin	drank		red wine.	

Adv-V-S-O /OV

**S-V-inversion
V2 German**

Adv-S-V-O

SVO English

Verb Placement in German



3. Was **hat** Martin

what has Martin

Rotwein **hat** Martin

red wine has Martin

gestern

yesterday

gestern

yesterday

getrunken?

drunk

getrunken.

drunk

X - V - S

**V2
German**



Verb Placement in German

4. ... **dass** Martin Rotwein **getrunken hat**
that Martin red wine drunk has

S-O-V
German



Verb Placement in German

4. ... **dass** Martin Rotwein **getrunken hat**

that Martin red wine drunk has

... **that** Martin **has drunk** red wine.

S-O-V
German

S-V-O
English

German is a basic SOV-language with V2-property.

e.g. Koster (1975) for Dutch; for German: Wöllstein-Leisten, Heilmann et al. (1997); Eisenberg (1999); DUDEN (2006)

German: SOV plus V2



verb bracket

	prefield	left verb bracket fin.V in V2	middle field		right verb bracket inf.V & fin.V in VE	postfield
1.	Martin	trinkt		Rotwein.		
	<i>Martin</i>	<i>drinks</i>		<i>red wine</i>		
2.	Gestern	hat	Martin	Rotwein	getrunken.	
	<i>Martin</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>Martin</i>	<i>red wine</i>	<i>drunk</i>	
3.	Rotwein	hat	Martin	gestern	getrunken.	
	<i>red wine</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>Martin</i>	<i>yesterday</i>	<i>drunk</i>	
4.		dass	Martin	Rotwein	getrunken hat	
		<i>that</i>	<i>Martin</i>	<i>red wine</i>	<i>drunk has</i>	

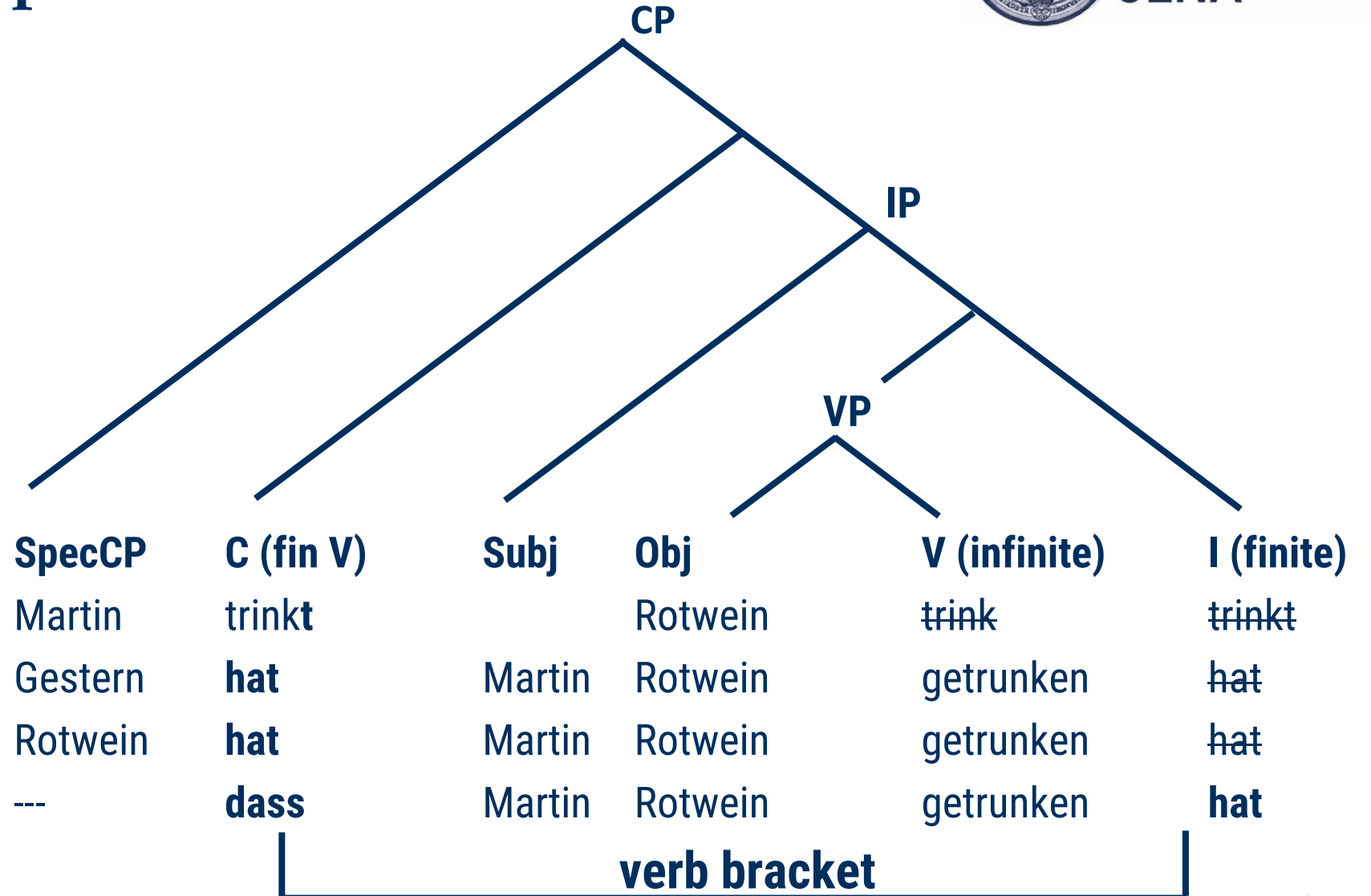
Topological Field Model for German
(Drach 1937; Höhle 1986; DUDEN 2006; Wöllstein 2010)

German: SOV plus V2



Generative Framework for German

e.g. Wöllstein (2014)
Truckenbrodt (2014)
Ludwig, Ofner & Tracy
(2012)





Verb placement in L2 German

3 properties of German verb placement:

1. **OV = lexical verb-end (verbfinal VP)**
(infinite) lexical verbs follow their objects
2. **V2 = finite verb second**
finite verbs in V2-position in main clauses
3. **VE = finite verb-end**
finite verbs in VE-position in embedded clauses

L1 and early L2-acquisition

This is exactly the way verb placement is acquired in German during the first 4 years of exposure.

one word phrase

1. OV: Brot essen. „bread eat“
2. V2: die winkt auch „she waves too“
3. VE: dass der da raus kann
„that he there out can“

ex. Schulz & Tracy (2011)


Clahsen (1982), Tracy (1981, 2006), Rothweiler (2006), Thoma & Tracy (2009)



Untutored and Late L2 Acquisition of German

untutored = informal // late L2-acquisition = age of exposure 4-5 years (cf. Meisel 2009)

Developmental sequence for verb placement in German (based on Meisel 2013)

Phase I:	SVO order (Adv-SVO)	typical for late L2: initial SVO-Hypothesis
Phase II:	Verb bracket with infinite verbs in clause-final position (OV)	
Phase III:	V2 with subject-verb inversion in <i>wh</i> -questions, with fronted objects and adverbials	Phase I: Adv-SVO is remedied by Phase III: V2/inversion
Phase IV:	Finite verbs in clause-final position in embedded clauses	

(cf. Clahsen, Pienemann & Meisel 1983, Haberzettl 2005, Vainikka and Young-Scholten 2011 ...)



Empirical Studies

Empirical Questions

1. Do the learners investigated go through the reported developmental sequences for late L2-acquisition?
2. Are there differences in the order of acquisition?
3. Are there differences in rate and what might explain them?

Methodological Question:

How do we establish a developmental sequence in a longitudinal study?

Longitudinal Case Studies

two longitudinal corpora of two comparable learners

- ❖ untutored late L2-acquisition
- ❖ spontaneous speech interaction with native speakers
- ❖ Transcription CHAT/CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000)
- ❖ Coding of verb placement after Haberzettl (2006), Czinglar (2014), Griebhaber (2012)

DaZ-AF Corpus

- ❖ Deutsch als Zweitsprache Altersfaktor (German as a Second Language Age Factor)
- ❖ DaZ-AF project by Ursula Stephany & Christine Dimroth (MPI Nijmegen)
- ❖ 1h audio recording, 68 data points (weeks) per learner week over 18 months



Czinglar (2014)

DaZ-UMF Projekt

- ❖ Deutsch als Zweitsprache bei unbegleiteten minderjährigen Flüchtlingen
- ❖ 30-60 minutes audio recordings, only 4-7 data points over 2,5 years
- ❖ first observations: Czinglar (2018)
- ❖ MA-thesis on verb placement: Heidemann (2021, 2024)

Methodology DaZ-AF

Sub-Korpus for study (Czinger 2014)

- 21 parallel recordings of 1 hour per learner
- 21 hours of spontaneous speech with native speakers
- standards of the **CHAT-transcription** format of the **CHILDES system** (MacWhinney 2000)
- transcriptions double-checked with the recordings and recoded for a clause-based analysis
- excluded: repeated, non-spontaneous material



NAS: und gestern waren wir in [] Phantasialand .
*INT: hm@ia .
*NAS: wir dachten, als wir am achten juni da waren [>], das [//] eh@fp eh@fp das Galaxy ganz schrecklich ist .
*INT: hm@i [<] .
*INT: was ist Galaxy ?
*NAS: Galaxy, eh@fp da fährt man so durch kosmoser .
*INT: hm@ia .
*NAS: ja, aber da fährt man nicht .
NAS: da guckt man so ein riesigen [] eh@fp so ein kino .
*INT: hm@ia .
NAS: aber der [] ist voll riesig .
*INT: hm@ia .
*NAS: wie dieser hauch [?] .
*INT: hm@ia .
*NAS: so fff@o .
*INT: (ei)n ganz grosses kino .
*NAS: ja, und da guckt man so .
*INT: hm@ia .
*NAS: und eh@fp der wagen bewegt sich .
*INT: hm@ia .
*NAS: wie wir dahin fahren, <wo es da eh@fp sieht> [//] [>] wo das man [*ov] sieht .
*INT: hm@ia [<] .
NAS: und die frau vor [//] &dav na wenn [□□] wir vor dem fahren, sagt .
*NAS: +" hm@i eh@fp sie brauchen diese maske .
*INT: hm@ia .
NAS: +" eh@fp und <wir wünschen ihnen einen eh@fp &g guten eh@fp &f> [//] &d wir wünschen ihnen einen guten fliegenden [] [% cc kontext: flug] +/.
*INT: flug, einen guten flug [>] .
*NAS: flug mit L_T_U .
*INT: oh@i .
*NAS: ja, das sagt sie .
*NAS: und als sie mir diese maske gezeigt hat, dann, letztes mal, hat Mama gesagt .
*NAS: +" nein, das ist nicht für Nastja .



Task DaZ-AF: Transcript

You are listening Nastja and Dasha. Take a look at the **transcript**, while listening. Answer the following questions:

1. Which differences did you notice between the two learners?
2. Look at the transcript in simplified CHAT format: Which notations are used to transcribe oral speech?
3. Are there any sentences that should not be analyzed?

Both have 9 months of exposure to German. Both are very motivated to relate their experience of Phantasialand, hence both narrations are very well comparable.

**Nastja & Dasha
(Czinger 2014)**

 **DAS**

 **NAS**

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