بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Open University of Sudan

Languages Programme

Applied Linguistics

Eng 4113

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INTRODUCTION

Dear learner,

This course is intended to introduce you to the field of *Applied Linguistics*. The course content is selected, sequenced, and designed especially to help you read and understand the material on your own with minimum help from others.

The field of applied linguistics, as you will see, is an interdisciplinary field of study that attempts to identify, investigate and offer solutions to language-related real-life problems. Some of the academic fields related to applied linguistics are: education, linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology

Dear Learner, you are welcome to the field of applied linguistics with its interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature. The course covers six units. In the introductory unit, a number of definitions of the term will be discussed. In this unit you will soon discover that applied linguistics means different things to different people. The second unit deals with first language acquisition, the third with second language learning, the fourth with learner language, the fifth with learner characteristics, and the sixth with teaching methods.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

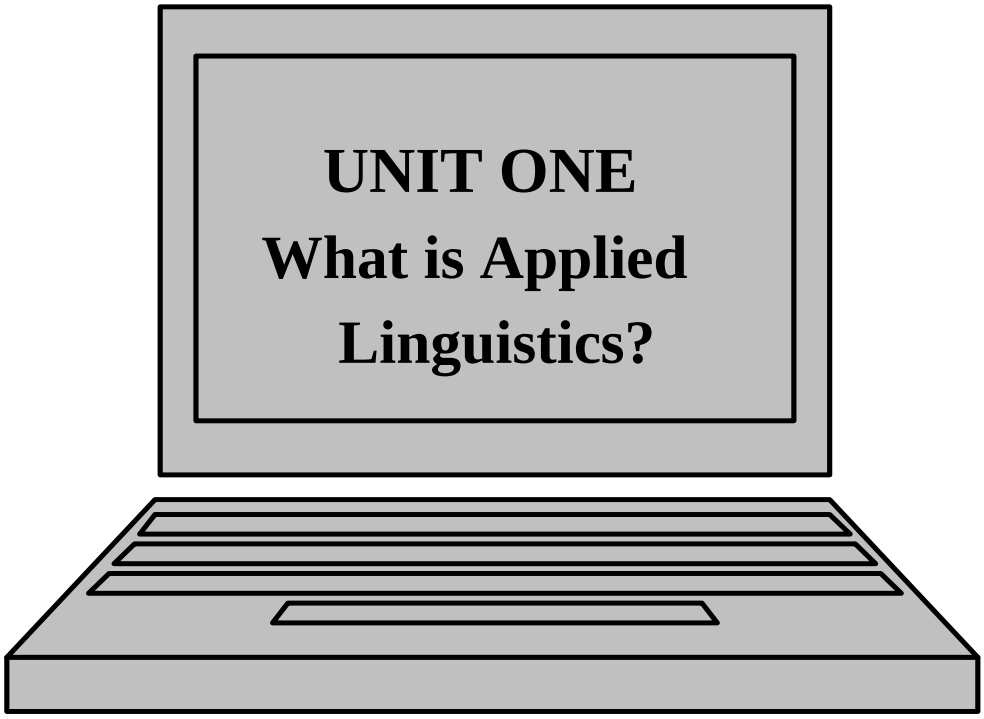


The general objectives of this course are:

1. to introduce learners of English Language to the field of applied linguistics.
2. to encourage learners to develop interest in applied linguistics studies.
3. to help learners improve their abilities of teaching and learning English as a foreign language.
4. to enhance learners' skills and ability to succeed in language studies.

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UNIT ONE
What is Applied
Linguistics?

UNIT CONTENT

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INTRODUCTION

PREVIEW

Dear learner,

In this unit you will learn the definitions of seven significant terms. First an attempt to define "Applied Linguistics" is made; then six other terms are dealt with in the unit. There include: standard language, foreign language, second language, international lingua franca, language acquisition, and language learning. Moreover, the unit provides examples of social and educational problems that applied linguistics is meant to address. Finally a number of SAQs and exercises are provided to help you understand the content of the unit.

UNIT OBJECTIVES



By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define each of the following terms: applied linguistics, standard language, lingua franca, foreign language, second language, acquisition learning.
2. Give examples of problems that applied linguistics is meant to address.
3. Make your own definition of the term applied linguistics.

1.1 Definition of the Term

The term *applied linguistics* is generally used to refer to the teaching and learning of foreign languages although this is only one of many sub-areas of applied linguistics (AL). It is however considered the most important area within the extensive field of AL. Despite its name, AL is not a matter of applying theoretical linguistics or taking developments from linguistics and looking for ways of applying them. Rather it is concerned with the study of language and linguistics in relation to practical problems. Nor is AL based only on linguistics. It uses information from sociology, psychology, sociology, anthropology and education as well as from linguistics in order to develop its own theoretical models of language and language use. It then uses this information to solve problems in such areas as language education, language planning, syllabus design, speech therapy, translation and lexicography. Hence the literal meaning of the term applied linguistics would appear to be obscure or misleading since:

(a) more than simply the application of linguistic theory is involved and

(b) other disciplines than linguistics are involved.

Definitions of the term AL vary. Here is one by S. Corder (1974):

> '*Applied Linguistics is the utilization of the knowledge about the nature of language achieved by linguistic research for the improvement of the efficiency of some practical task in which language is a central component*.'

Here is another definition by R. Carter (1993)

> *', ... the application of linguistic theories, descriptions*

and methods to the solution of the language problems which have arisen in a range of human, cultural and social contexts.'

Although some definitions tend to limit the coverage of AL to foreign language teaching and learning, there is a range of language--related social problems which AL is also meant to address.

SAQs



1. Are these statements true or false?
   a. Applied linguistics is generally used refer to the teaching and learning of foreign language (-----)
   b. The teaching and learning of foreign language is only one of sub-areas of applied linguistics. (-----)
   c. Applied linguistics is only concerned with the study of English language. (-----)
2. Why would the literal meaning of the term 'applied linguistics' appear to be obscure?
3. How does Corder define applied linguistics?
4. How does Carter define applied linguistics?

ACTIVITY



Dear Learner, applied linguistics is-as you must have learned-an interdisciplinary field of study that identifies, investigates, and offers solutions to language-related real-life problems. Some of the academic fields related to applied linguistics are: education, linguistics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Illustrate diagrammatically how applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary branch of knowledge.

1.2 Examples of problems

The following questions represent the kinds of problems that AL is meant to address in language education and in society at large:

a) Language problems in education

- What language skills should children attain beyond basic literacy? (And what is basic literacy anyway? Reading and writing or something more?)
- Should children speaking a dialect be encouraged to maintain it or steered towards **the standard** form of a language? (And, if so, how is that standard form decided and by whom?)
- In communities with more than one language which ones should be used in schools? (And does every child have a right to be educated in the language they use at home?)
- Should deaf children learn a sign language, or a combination of lip reading and speaking? (And are sign languages as complex as spoken ones?)
- Should everyone learn foreign languages and, if so, which one or ones? (And what is the best way to learn and teach them?)
- Should every child study literature? (And, if so, should it be established works or more modern ones? And should they study just their own national literature or that of other countries?)

- Why do adult language learners take years to achieve only limited proficiency in the second language (L2)?
- Do adults learn a second language in the same way as children learning their first? (If so, what kinds of instruction and teaching contexts are most effective for adults?)

b) Social problems of language

- Languages change. Should this just be accepted as an inevitable fact or should change be controlled in some way?
- Some languages are dying out. Should that be prevented and, if so, how?
- Should the growth of English as the **international lingua franca** be welcomed or resisted?
- Is it better for people to learn each other's languages or use translations? (And what is accurate or 'good' translation? Could it ever be done by a computer?)
- Is language being used for political oppression and indoctrination? (And, if so, should something be done about it?
- Which languages should be used in law courts and official documents?

All of these questions, and many others like them, demand answers. To answer them we need to investigate and understand the facts of language use. This is the focus of concern in AL. We can say then that AL sets out to

investigate problems in the world in which language is involved-both educational and social problems like those listed above.

Exercise (1)



Define each of these terms:
- Standard language
- Sign language
- Literacy
- Lingua franca

SAQs



1. Give eight examples of language problems in education that applied linguistics addresses.
2. Give six examples of social problems of language that applied linguistics deals with.

Exercise (2)



Name:
a. Some major branches of applied linguistics.
b. Some major international journals of applied linguistics.
c. Some international societies/ associations of applied linguistics.

1.3 Some Terminology

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to establish some of the terms to be used in the book.

First, we should note that the term **second** language is generally used in two different senses. In its broad sense, it refers to any language learnt after the first language, no matter how many others have been learnt. In its narrower sense, it is used in contrast with **foreign** language. Second language learning refers to the process of acquiring a non-native language in a context where the language is widely spoken by the community where the learner is living (e.g. learning English in Nigeria). By contrast, foreign language learning refers to the process of acquiring a non-native language that is *not* spoken by the surrounding community (e.g. learning English in Sudan). The term second language is also, of course, used to describe a native language in a country as learnt by people living there who have another first language. Thus, Arabic in Sudan would be called the second language of many native speakers of other languages in the country.

These distinctions are obviously important and useful. However, many researchers and writers tend to use second language learning as an umbrella term covering all non-native language learning. In other words, no distinction is made between second and foreign language learning or between the different uses of the term ‘second language’. In this book, we shall follow the example of these researchers and use the term second language (L2) to mean any language acquired by a person in addition to the first language (L1). The learner's L2 will sometimes be referred to as the target language (TL), that is, the language the learner is heading towards.

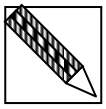
Another distinction which is sometimes made is that between **acquisition** and **learning**. Some writers prefer to reserve the use of the term *acquisition* to the process which results in the knowledge of one's native language, and use the term *learning* for the attainment of a second language through conscious effort and formal classroom instruction. Because the mental processes involved in both learning and acquisition are rather similar, most researchers do not find it necessary to make this distinction, and the terms acquisition and learning are generally used interchangeably. However, there is a growing tendency to use the term **second language acquisition (SLA)** to the whole area concerned with both explaining and describing the process of acquiring a second language. This is now the standard term which we shall use in this book, in addition to the terms acquisition and learning. When it is necessary to give examples of sentences that would be ungrammatical if uttered by native speakers, these are marked with an asterisk (*).

SAQs

?

1. What does second language mean in a general sense? And what does it mean in contrast with foreign language?
2. What does foreign language learning mean?
3. Distinguish between language acquisition and language learning.
4. Can the terms acquisition and learning be used interchangeably?
5. Which term is used to refer to the language that a learner is heading to?

Exercise (3)



Use an asterisk in each case to identify the ungrammatical sentences in the following:

1. These distinctions is obviously important and useful.
2. This distinctions are obviously important and useful.
3. These distinctions are obviously important and useful.

Overview

Dear learner,

In this unit we have attempted to define a number of key terms that include: applied linguistics, foreign language, second language, standard language, language acquisition and language learning, and lingua franca.

Distinctions between related senses of these terms are also highlighted. Examples of language problems in education and social problems of language, that applied linguistics is meant to address are given. Finally a number of SAQs and exercises are provided to help you study and understand the unit.

Preview of Unit Tow

In unit two you will learn about how first language are acquired. Two influential theories of first language acquisition are briefly discussed. Their important contributions to our understanding of children's language development are pinpointed.

ANSWERS KEY

Exercise (1)

- Standard Language

  A standard language (also standard dialect, standardized dialect, or standardized dialect) is a particular variety of a language that has been given either legal or quasi-legal status. As it is usually the form promoted in schools and the media, it is usually considered by speakers of the language to be more "correct" in some sense than other dialects.

  Usually, but not always, based on the tongue of a capital city, a standard language is defined by the selection of certain regional and class marks, and the rejection of others.

- Lingua Franca

  A language adopted for communication over an area in which several languages are spoken. For instance: Swahili in East African, Juba Arabic in Southern Sudan.

- Sign Language

  Movement of the hand, head, etc. used with or instead of words, a language usually used by deaf and dumb persons.

- Literacy

  The ability to read and write.

Exercise (2)

a/ major branches of applied linguistics include:

(a-1) Bilingualism and multilingualism.
(a-2) Computer-mediated communication (CMC).
(a-3) Conversation analysis.
(a-4) Contrastive linguistics.
(a-5) Language assessment.
(a-6) Literacies.
(a-7) Discourse analysis.
(a-8) Language pedagogy.

(a-9) Second language acquisition.
(a-10) Language planning and policies.
(a-11) Pragmatics.
(a-12) Translation.
(a-13) Forensic linguistics.

b/ Journals of Applied Linguistics:
(b-1) Annual Review of Applied Linguistics.
(b-2) Applied Linguistics.
(b-3) International Review of Applied Linguistics.
(b-4) Issues in Applied Linguistics.
(b-5) Language Learning.

c/ Societies/Associations
(c-1) American Association for Applied Linguistics 1977.
(c-2) The British Association of Applied Linguistics 1967.
(c-3) Applied Linguistics Association of Australia 1976.
(c-4) The Jaban Association of Applied Linguistics 1982.
(c-5) International Association of Applied Linguistics.
(http://www.aila.infol)
(c-6) Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics.
(http://www.aclacaal.orgl)
(c-7) Association Françoise de Linguistigics Appliquee
(http://www.afla-asso.orgl)
(c-8) Greek Applied Linguistics Association
(http://www.enl.auth.gr/gala1)
(c-9) Irish Association for Applied Linguistics.
(http://www.iraal.iel)
(c-10) Hong Kong Association for Applied Linguistics.
(http://www.haal.hkl)

Exercise (3)

1. * incorrect
2. * incorrect
3. Correct

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UNIT TWO
First Language
Acquisition

UNIT CONTENT

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INTRODUCTION

PREVIEW

Dear learner,

This is unit two of your course Introduction to Applied Linguistics. It discusses first language acquisition. Two important theories of first language acquisition are introduced. A number of SAQs and exercises are provided to help you read and understand the different section of this unit.

UNIT OBJECTIVES



By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Provide an account of the Behavourist learning theory, and the Mentalist theory of learning.
2. Distinguish between the behaviourist' and mentalist' views of language learning.
3. Evaluate the contributions made by both school of linguistics, to the field of applied linguistics.
4. Define key terms in the field of first language learning.
5. Explain significant concepts that relate to the field of first language learning.

2.1 Introduction

It is a matter of everyday observation that all normal children acquire the language that they hear spoken around them without special instruction. They start talking at roughly the same age and they go through the same stages of language development. The progress that they make is so rapid that, as both researchers and parents have noted, it is hard to keep a comprehensive and systematic record of it. Furthermore, their progress is, on the whole, unaffected by differences of intelligence, and by differences of social and cultural background.

How children acquire language has long fascinated scholars and non-scholars alike. Parents of young children are often amazed at how quickly their babies move from cooing and babbling to making demands in one-word or two-word utterances. Linguists and psychologists, in turn, have been interested in understanding the stages and mechanisms by which children become competent users of language by the age of three or four.

Although as yet no complete theory has successfully dealt with all aspects of language acquisition, the two most influential theories of **behaviourism** and **mentalism** have important insights to contribute to our understanding of children's language development.

SAQs

?

1. Fill in the spaces below, with words from the list provide.

normal, abnormal, learning, hard, attitude, intelligence, teaching, stages, show, rapid, easy, mechanisms, systematic, social, cultural , three, four.

   a. The progress that children make in acquiring their first language is so _____ that neither their parents nor researchers can keep a comprehensive and _____ of it.
   b. All _____ children acquire the language that they hear spoken around them without special _____.
   c. On the whole, children's progress in acquiring their first language is unaffected by differences of _____, and by differences of _____ and _____ background.
   d. Both linguists and psychologists have been interested in understanding the _____ and _____ by language the age of _____ or _____.

2. Name two theories of first language acquisition.

3. Is it true that we are studying these two theories because they are complete and they have successfully dealt with all aspects of language acquisition?

2.2 Behaviorist learning theory

The dominant psychological theory of the 1950s and the 1960s was behaviourist learning theory. According to this theory, as set out by B.F. Skinner, language learning is like any other kind of learning in that it involves habit formation. Habits are formed when learners respond to stimuli in the environment and subsequently have their responses reinforced so that they are remembered. Thus, a habit is a **stimulus-response** connection.

It was believed that all behaviour, including the kind of complex behaviour found in language acquisition, could be explained in terms of habits. Learning took place when learners had the opportunity to practise making the correct response to a given stimulus. Learners imitated models of correct language (i.e. stimuli) and received positive reinforcement if they were correct and negative reinforcement if they were incorrect. For example, learners might hear the sentence 'Give me a pencil', use it themselves, and thereby be rewarded by achieving their communicative goal (i.e. by being given a pencil when they wanted one). It should be clear that behaviourist accounts of language acquisition emphasize only what can be directly observed (i.e. the 'input' to the learner and the learner's own 'output') and ignore what goes on in the 'black box' of the learner's mind.

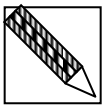
Behaviourism cannot adequately account for language acquisition. This is readily apparent from the descriptive work on learner language. Learners frequently do not produce output that simply reproduces the input. Furthermore, the systematic nature of their errors shows that they are actively involved in constructing their own 'rules', rules that sometimes bear little resemblance to the patterns of language exemplified in the input.

SAQs



1. Briefly answer these questions:
   a. What was the dominant psychological theory of the 1950s and 1960s?
   b. According to the behavourist learning theory, how is language learning similar to any other kind of learning?
   c. When are habits formed?
   d. What is a habit?
   e. Give two reasons why behaviourism can not adequately account for language acquisition.
2. Are these statements true or false?
   a. The behviourist accounts of language acquisition emphasize both what can be directly observed and what goes on in the learner's mind. (_____)
   b. Behavourism can adequately account for language acquisition. (_____)

Exercise (1)



Write a brief biographic paragraph on B.F. Skinner

2.3 A mentalist (nativist) theory of learning

The habit-formation theory of the behaviourists was rejected by the mentalists (or nativists), notably Chomsky and his followers. These nativists maintain that language is not the result of general learning mechanisms but rather is a special innate (inborn) capacity for acquiring language. This view is based on several observations.

First, nativists point out that all children acquire language easily and rapidly. Whereas most adults typically struggle for decades to master the complexities of a second or foreign language, nativists note that children attain command of their native tongue in just a few years, without instruction or any apparent effort. Furthermore, nativists point out that all children, regardless of the language they are learning or the quantity or quality of input they receive, acquire their mother tongue at the same rate and by progressing through the same developmental stages.

Secondly, nativists have argued that the adult speech that young children hear is a poor model - filled, for instance, with incomplete sentences, false starts, and slips of the tongue. Nevertheless, children take this fragmentary input and are able to construct a complex grammar - far more complex than they could have ever learned from reinforcement or general learning mechanisms.

Thirdly, nativists argue that children are not systematically corrected or instructed on language points by their parents or other adults. When parents do correct, they tend to focus on the *content* of the child's utterance rather than its grammatical accuracy. Furthermore, when adults suggest

corrections or provide explicit language instruction to their children, the children rarely pay any attention. They therefore scarcely get or benefit from corrective feedback.

In short, nativists argue that the only possible explanation for the *uniformity* of the language acquisition process, the *complexity* of the linguistic knowledge children possess at such young ages despite the *scarcity* of the feedback they receive, *and the fragmentary nature of the input* is that language must be innate. More specifically, language is claimed to be a species-specific or uniquely human cognitive capacity which is the result of an innate **language acquisition device** (sometimes referred to as the **LAD**). Although the location and content of the LAD remains a topic of debate, the LAD is supposedly what allows children to attend to language and develop an appropriate grammar quickly, without effort, and with no specialized input.

This view of the language acquisition process, therefore, stresses the mental activities of the child himself, and strongly questions the relevance of such external factors as imitation, frequency of stimulus and reinforcement.

In recent writings, Chomsky and his followers no longer use the term LAD, but refer to the child's innate ability as **Universal Grammar (UG)**. UG is considered to consist of a set of principles which are common to all languages. If children are born with UG, then what they have to learn is the ways in which their own language makes use of these principles and the variations of those principles which may exist in the particular language which they hear spoken around them.

There is, however, according to some researchers, a time, also known as a **critical period**, for language acquisition to take place. They say there is

evidence to suggest that after this period has ended (around puberty), complete acquisition of L1 or L2 becomes difficult, if not impossible. They argue that natural language learning by mere exposure can take place only during the critical period, roughly between age 2 and 12. LAD works successfully only when it is stimulated at the right time.

SAQs



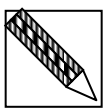
A. Choose the correct answer:
   1. The habit-formation theory is:
      a. the nativist theory of learning.
      b. the mentalist theory of learning.
      c. the behavourist theory of learning.

   2. Noam Chomsky is a prominent figure in:
      a. the behavourism school of linguistics.
      b. the mentalism school of linguistics.
      c. the school of fine arts.

   3. According to the mentalists, language learning is:
      a. the result of general learning mechanism.
      b. the result of a special innate capacity for acquiring language.
      c. the result of general methods of teaching.

B. What are the observations upon which the mentalists' view of language acquisition is based?
C. What does LAD mean?
D. Do Chomsky and his followers still use the term LAD in their writing?

Exercise (2)



Briefly explain each of the following concepts:
a. LAD: Language Acquisition Device.
b. UG: Universal Grammar.
c. Critical Period Pothesis.

2.4 Children's language development

Children quite regularly imitate words and structures which adults in their environment use. Much more frequently, however, their utterances deviate from the language used by adults. These deviations are, furthermore, systematic. Systematic deviations from the language of adults are strong evidence against any theory which seeks to reduce the acquisition of language to a process of imitation and reinforcement. Even in the early stages of acquisition, children use the language *creatively* since they use utterances they can never have actually heard. Nor can it be said that the utterances are simply imperfect attempts to imitate what the child might have heard from the adult. It is difficult to think that utterances produced by children such as *No sit here, Him go shop* or forms such as *goed* and *comed* might have been heard from adults.

These routine errors that a child makes conform to the regular rules in his/her own knowledge of language at a given stage in the process of acquisition. They are only errors when measured against adult speech. The child is not a defective speaker of adult language. He is an active participant in acquisition, engaged in constructing in his mind the rule-system which he gradually adapts in the direction of the adult system. This process by which a child constructs his own rule system from the actual language he hears is described as **creative construction**.

One way to reconcile the behaviourist and mentalist theories is to see that each may help to explain a different aspect of children's language development. The behaviourist theory may explain the acquisition of

vocabulary and grammatical morphemes. The mentalist theory may be said to explain the acquisition of complex grammatical structure.

SAQs

?

1. Are these statements true or false?
   a. Children never imitate words and structures which adult in their environment use. (____)
   b. Very rarely do children's utterances deviate from the language used by adult speakers. (_____)
   c. Systematic deviations from the language of adults are strong evidence that supports the view that language acquisition is a process of imitation and reinforcement. (_____)
   d. Even in the early stage children do use the language creatively. (_____)
2. What does the term "creative construction" mean?
3. How would you reconcile the behaviourist and mentalist theories of language acquisition?

2.5 Habit Formation versus Creative Construction

The behaviourist view that language learning is a matter of habit formation was strongly challenged from the 1960s onwards, especially under the influence of Chomsky's linguistic theories and cognitive psychology. Chomsky and his followers set out a number of powerful arguments against this behaviourist theory of language acquisition. Here are some of these arguments:

1. Much of the technical vocabulary of behaviourism (stimulus, response, reinforcement) cannot, in fact, be shown to have much relevance to the acquisition and use of human language. Language is free from stimulus control. The utterance that someone produces on any particular occasion is, in principle, unpredictable and cannot be described as a response to some identifiable linguistic or non-linguistic stimulus. At any moment, a speaker may produce an utterance which he has never heard before in that identical form, and this utterance will be understood by other speakers of the language who have never before heard an identical utterance. To Chomsky, this stimulus-free property of language use is its **creativity** or **novelty**.

2. Language is not merely verbal behaviour. Underlying the actual behaviour that we observe, there is a complex system of rules. These rules enable speakers to create and understand an infinite number of sentences, most of which they have never before heard or produced. The knowledge of this system of rules is our linguistic **competence** which makes language use, or **performance**, possible. Language use is thus rule-governed behaviour which enables speakers to create new utterances which conform to the

rules they have internalised. This creative aspect of language use cannot be explained by stimulus-and-response habit formation. It can be explained in terms of the internalised system of rules that can generate an infinite number of grammatical sentences that are comprehensible and acceptable.

3. What children acquire, then, is an abstract knowledge of rules (or *competence*). But this is not what they are exposed to. They are exposed only to people's speech (*performance*) which contains examples of how the syntax works and from these examples they extract the rules by which new sentences can be formed. Although children are exposed to different actual speech (input) in different home environments, they arrive at the same underlying rules as other children in their community.

4. Children seem quite rapidly to internalise a highly complicated system of grammar, so that they are able to recognize and produce spontaneously any number of novel (new) utterances. It would seem impossible for the child to acquire this highly abstract system of grammar by some vague process of imitation, reinforcement, and repetition.

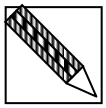
5. Language acquisition is a highly complex task. It is probably more complex than any other task that human beings undertake. Yet all normal children successfully learn their native language with remarkable speed at a time in life when they would not be expected to learn anything else so complicated. Again, this cannot be explained by habit formation.

SAQs



1. State five arguments, as set out by Chomsky and his followers, against the behavourist theory of language acquisition.
2. Distinguish between "competence" and "performance"

Exercise (3)



Write a brief biographic paragraph on Noam Chomsky.

Overview

Dear learner,

In this unit you have learned about first language acquisition. Emphasis has been on two important theories of language acquisition: Behaviourism and Mentalism. Both theories, as you have seen, have attempted to account for first language acquisition.

However, you must remember that as yet no complete theory has successfully dealt with all aspects of language acquisition.

Preview of Unit Three

In the following unit, unit three, you will study the theories of second language learning. The process of second language learning, as you will see, is a complex process that involves many interrelated factors. A number of second language learning theories will be dealt with, however, the focus will be on two main theories: the behavourist and the mentalist theories.

ANSWERS KEY

Exercise (1)

- B.F. Skinner

  Burrhus Frederic Skinner (March 20, 1904 - August 18, 1990) was an American psychologist, author, inventor, advocated for social reform, and poet. He was a professor of psychology at Harvard University from 1958 unit his retirement in 1974. He invented the operant conditioning chamber, innovated his own philosophy of science called Radical Behaviorism, and founded his own school of experimental research- the experimental analysis of behavior. His analysis of human behavior culiminated in his work Verbal behavior.

Exercise (2)

1. LAD

   The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a postulated "organ" of the brain that is supposed to function as a congenital device for learning symbolic language (i.e. language acquisition).

   First proposed by Noam Chomsky, the LAD concept is a component of the naturist theory of language. This theory asserts that humans are born with the instinct or "innate facility" for acquiring a language.

2. U.G

   Universal grammar (UG) is a theory of linguistics postulating principles of grammar shared by all languages, and theory to be innate to humans (linguistic naturism). It attempts to explain language acquisition in general, not to describe specific languages. Universal grammar proposes a set of rules intended to explain language acquisition in child development.

3. Critical Period

   The critical period hypothesis is the subject of a long-standing debate in linguistics and language acquisition over the extent to which the ability to acquire language is biologically linked to age. The hypothesis claims that there is an ideal "window" of time to acquire

language in a linguistically rich environment, after which this is no longer possible. According to this hypothesis the first few years of life is the crucial time in which an individual can acquire a first language if presented with adequate stimuli. If language input does not occur unit after this time, the individual will never achieve a full command of the grammatical system of language.

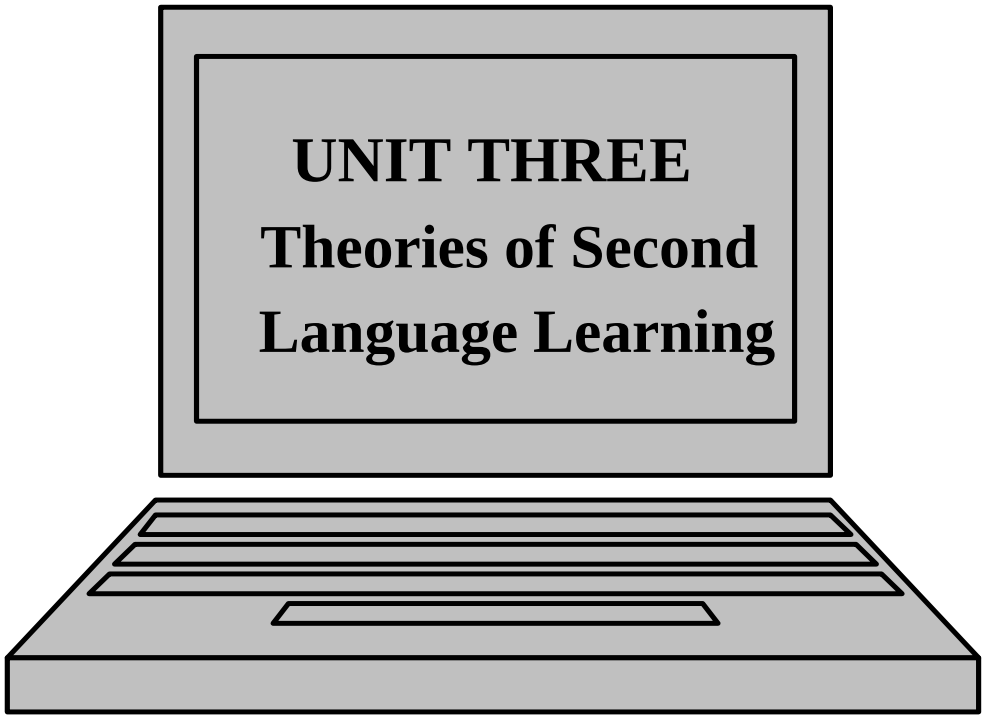
Exercise (3)

Noam Chomsky

Avram Noam Chomsky (December 7, 1928) is an American Linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, political activist, author, and lecturer. He is a professor emeritus of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Chomsky is well known in the academic and scientific community as one of the fathers of modern linguistics. In the 18950s, Chomsky began developing his theory of generative grammar, which has undergone numerous revisions and has had profound influence on linguistics.

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UNIT THREE
Theories of Second
Language Learning

UNIT CONTENT

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INTRODUCTION

PREVIEW

Dear learner,

In this unit, the third unit in your course *Applied Linguistics*, you will study second language learning. A number of theories will be discussed, but the focus will be on two main theories. As in all other units, there are SAQs and exercises which are provided to help you understand the themes discussed, and evaluate your understanding.

UNIT OBJECTIVES



By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Define key terms and concept in the field of L2 learning.
2. Draw an outline of the field of SLA.
3. Provide a historical perspective of the field of SAL.
4. Explain how the mentalism and behaviourism theories have attempted to interpret second language acquisition or learning.
5. Identify and classify various types of language errors.
6. Name and describe various theories of second language learning.
7. Compare and contrast the contributions, made by various theorists, to the field of SLA.

3.1 Introduction

L2 acquisition can be defined as the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom, and ‘Second Language Acquisition’ (SLA) as the study of this. An L2 may be learned simultaneously or successively with the first language (L1). In the latter case, L2 may be learned at various ages (childhood, adolescence, or adulthood). It may also be learned in either an L1 or an L2 environment. In the former case, it is usually learned through instruction, while in the latter case, L2 is usually learned through verbal contact with native speakers in a natural environment (Figure 3.1).

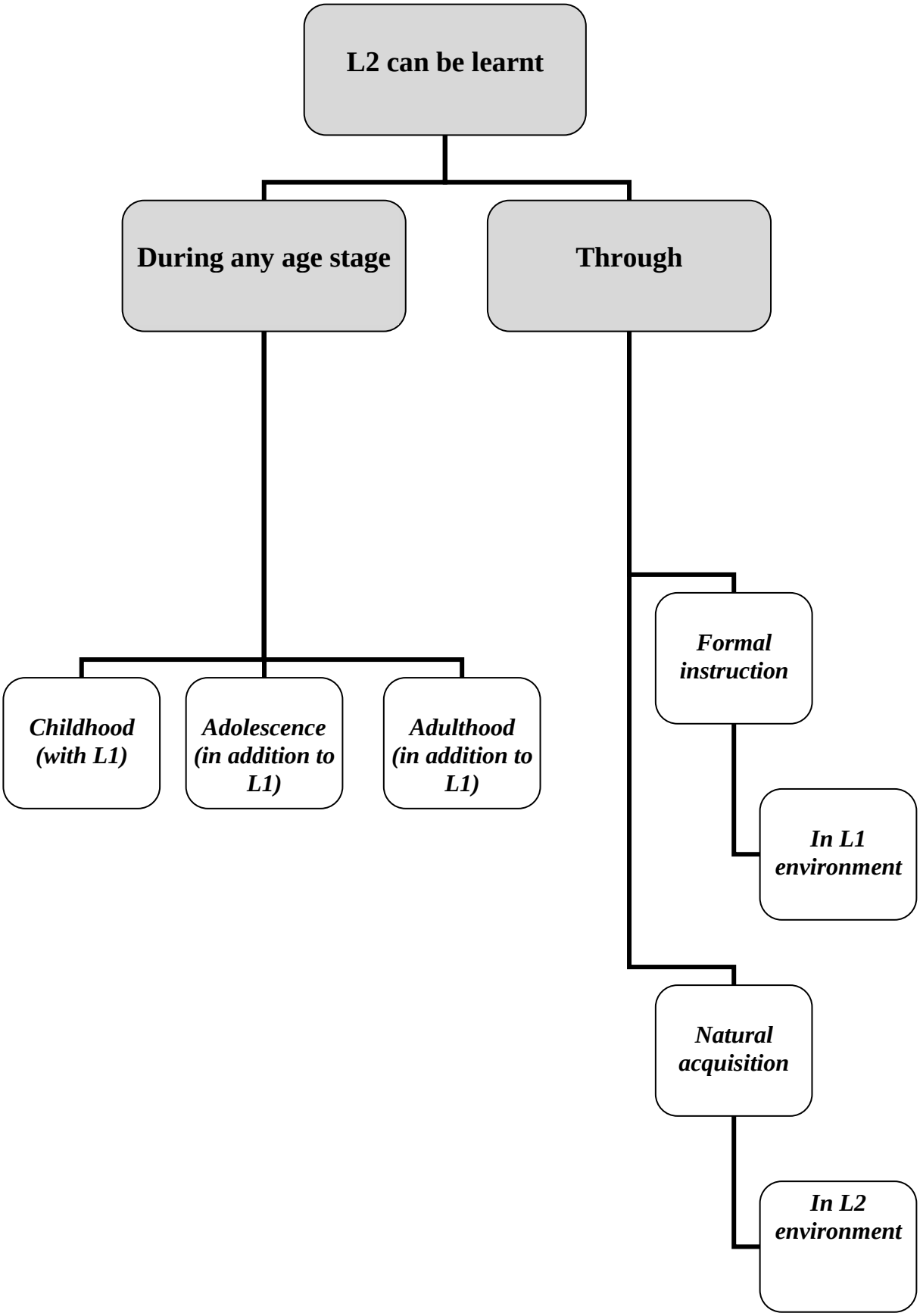


Figure 3.1: Ways of learning an L2

The above-mentioned distinction between L2 learning in an L1 environment (i.e. via instruction) and L2 learning in an L2 environment (i.e. through verbal contact with native speakers in a natural environment) led some researchers (such as Krashen, 1981) to distinguish between *'acquisition'* and *'learning'*. The former *(acquisition)* refers to the subconscious process of 'picking up' a language through exposure (i.e. no formal classroom setting) and the latter *(learning)* to conscious process of studying it (i.e. formal classroom setting).

Second language acquisition (SLA) is a complex process, involving many interrelated factors. Many studies have been carried out to determine the characteristics of SLA and the effect of various factors on the process of SLA. A great deal of speculative thinking about SLA has also been published.

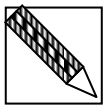
SAQs



Answer these questions

7. What does L2 acquisition mean?
8. Can a learner learn L2 simultaneously with L1?
9. At what age can L2 be learned?
10. Distinguish between acquisition and learning as made by Krashen and some other researchers.

Exercise (1)



Briefly explain each of the following phrases:

2. Verbal contact.
3. Native speakers.
4. Natural environment.

ACTIVITY



Search the Internet or any other available source of information in your area, in order to find countries, societies or situations where:

a. L2 is learnt through formal instruction and in L1 environment.
b. L2 is learnt through natural acquisition and in L2 environment.

3.2 Historical Perspective

The field of SLA investigates how people attain proficiency in a language which is not their mother tongue. Over the years, the study of SLA has been undertaken from a variety of different perspectives. In the 1950s and 1960s, the primary objective was pedagogic. Researchers were interested in trying to improve the way in which an L2 was taught. Hence, they were interested in discovering how those languages were learned. From the 1970s onward, the focus shifted from the teacher to the learner (e.g. in 1973, Oller and Richards published their book entitled: *Focus on the Learner).*

The reason for this shift was related to what was going on in linguistics, psychology, and L1 acquisition research. During the 1960s all three areas shifted their focus from external to internal factors. Linguistics became concerned with the mental grammar processes of the speaker, not just the description of the linguistic structures of a given language. This shift in emphasis was motivated by the need to understand the mechanisms underlying SLA (how an L2 is acquired) and to ascertain whether the processes involved in the acquisition of L1 are similar to those involved in SLA.

In this unit we present an overview of the two most influential theories which have attempted to explain how a second language is acquired or learned.

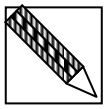
SAQs



Answer these questions

1. What does the field of SLA investigate?
2. What was the primary objective of SLA in the 1950s and 1960s like?
3. How did the focus of SLA shift in the 1970s?
4. When did Oller and Richard publish their book: 'Focus on the Learner'?
5. What was the reason behind the shift of SLA focus for the teacher to the learner?
6. Which two theories of L2 learning are considered the most influential SLA theories?

Exercise (2)



Try to find out the full names of the authors Oller and Richards, when their book "Focus on the Learner", was published and who was the publisher.

ACTIVITY



If you have access to the Internet, try to search for and read about the shift of SLA focus from external factors to internal factors. Search in the fields of linguistics, psychology and L1 acquisition research.

3.3 Transfer and Habit-formation

Leading linguists and psychologists, such as Bloomfield (1933), Skinner (1957), and many others, held that SLA is a process of imitation and reinforcement. That is, learners attempt to copy what they hear, and by regular practice they establish a set of acceptable habits in the new language. This view is based on the behaviourist learning theory that all learning is habit formation, a mechanical not a mental process.

Lado (1957) maintained that acquisition of L2 was essentially a task of overcoming the L1 habits and learning in their place the habits of the L2. Only those elements of the L2 which differed from L1 were considered important for learning. However, it was assumed that L2 learners transfer elements or rules from their L1 to the L2. This **transfer** is considered to be *positive* when it facilitates learning or has a positive influence on the command of a skill or part of the L2 due to the similarity between the two languages. Transfer could also be considered *negative* when it impedes learning or has a negative influence on the command of a skill due to the difference between the two languages. The learner's problem was summed up by Lado in 1957 in a well-known statement: 'Those elements that are similar to the native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult'. For an Arabic speaker learning English, an example of negative transfer would be the appearance of the pronoun *them* in the relative clause of the sentence:

* These are the photos which I took *them*

The error in this example is a type of **interference** or negative transfer from Arabic. The L1 habits hinder the learner in learning the forms of the L2.

Differences between the systems of L1 and L2 were thought to be the main source of difficulty for L2 learners and therefore the phonology and grammatical structures of the two languages were to be compared to predict areas of difficulty. This became formally known as the **contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH)**. Areas of similarity, according to the CA hypothesis are predictable and would facilitate the acquisition process. Conversely, areas of difference are predictable and would impede the acquisition process. This information was supposed to be useful in planning the language-teaching materials which stressed the oral practice of the L2 sentence patterns. The main aim of the behaviourist teaching methods is to form new, correct linguistic habits through intensive practice and to overcome interference errors.

SAQs



1. Match (A) with (B)

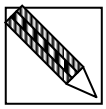
(A)	(B)
1. Bloomfield and Skinner 2. Lado 3. Positive transfer 4. Negative transfer 5. Interference	a. L2 acquisition is essentially a task of overcoming L1 habits and learning in their L2 habits. b. SAL is a process of imitation and reinforcement. c. facilitates L2 learning due to similarities between L1 & L2. d. negative transfer e. Impedes L2 learning due to differences between L1 & L2. f. These are the photos which I took.

SAQs



2. Answers these questions briefly:
   a. What was considered the main source of difficulty for L2 learners according to Lado?
   b. Briefly explain the idea of contrastive analysis hypothesis.
   c. What is the main aim of the behavourist teaching methods?

Exercise (3)



1. Give an example of the behavourist teaching methods.
2. What are the some of characteristic features of this behavourist teaching method?

ACTIVITY



Ask your elder brother, your father, mother, or may be, your grandparents; to tell you about the "NMP (New Method Practice)". A book which was used in teaching English Language, in the Intermediate Schools, in Sudan.

3.4 Transfer, Overgeneralisation and Simplification

The learner does not only **transfer** rules and expressions from L1 to L2 but also within the L2 itself. As with children in L1 acquisition, an L2 learner transfers a rule that has been learnt to items and contexts which are covered by other rules. This kind of transfer is better known as **generalisation**. When generalisation results in an error or errors, this becomes an instance of **overgeneralisation**. In the early stages of acquisition, children as well as L2 learners tend, for example, to overgeneralise the regular rules of grammar to irregular nouns and verbs. A learner of English who has learnt the rule of marking regular plurals with the – s form as in boys and books is likely to produce overgeneralised forms such as *childs* and *mouses*. The use of *breaked* instead of *broke* and *eated* instead of *ate* are examples of overgeneralisation errors. Such errors occur in both L1 and L2 learning. The learner uses these strategies to work out the regular features of the L2.

In addition to transfer and overgeneralisation errors, learners also make errors of **omission**, for example, they leave out the articles *a* and *the* or the *s* of plural nouns. Some learners almost always use the same verb form (e.g. simple present or continuous) regardless of person, number or tense. These errors of omission are better described as **simplification**.

Transfer, generalisation and simplification are of course, fundamental learning strategies in all domains, not only in language. An L2 learner approaches the learning task with these and other active

strategies which help him/her to construct the rules which underlie the second language. This is the creative construction hypothesis.

Errors arising from transfer are described as ***inter*lingual** (between languages), those arising from overgeneralisation are ***intra*lingual** (within the same language). *Intra*lingual (overgeneralisation) errors are far more frequent than *inter*lingual (transfer) errors among L2 learners, irrespective of their L1.

Many of the errors L2 learners make are universal: all learners, no matter whether they are learning naturally or in a classroom, and irrespective of their L1, make transfer, overgeneralisation and simplification errors. Errors are the product of the learner's attempts to work out the regular features of the L2 and apply these regularities in what he or she says. Like the child in L1 acquisition, the L2 learner could be viewed as actively constructing rules from the language data encountered and gradually adapting these rules in the direction of the L2 system. Errors are therefore viewed, not as signs of learning failure, but as a natural part of the learning process. They are necessary, inevitable and systematic stages in the language learning process. L2 learning is clearly not different from L1 acquisition in its trial-and-error nature.

SAQs

?

A. Are these statements true or false?
   1. The L2 learner transfers rules from L1 to L2 only. (____)
   2. The L2 learner transfers rules within L2 as well as from L1 to L2 (_____)
   3. The use of *mans* instead of *men* is an example of an overgeneralisation error. (_____)
   4. Overgeneralisation errors occur only in L2 learning (_____)
   5. Transfer, generalisation are both fundamental learning strategies in all domains, but simplification is a learning strategy only in the domain of language learning. (_____)

SAQs



B. Answer these questions:
   1. What does "Creative Construction Hypothesis" mean?
   2. Distinguish between intralingual and interlingual errors.
   3. How would you look at L2 learners' errors? Are they signs of learning failure or are they a natural part of the learning process?

ACTIVITY



Get an L2 learner whom you know well: a friend, a brother or sister, a relative; then ask them to write a free composition on a topic of their choice. Collect their product and try to indentify and classify the errors.

3.5 Second language acquisition as creative construction

Although Chomsky does not discuss the implications of his mentalist view (cf. 2.3) for SLA, others have proposed an approach which is, in some respects, similar to Chomsky's ideas on L1 acquisition. This approach is sometimes called the *creative construction hypothesis.* On the basis of this hypothesis, a learner 'constructs' a series of internal representations of the L2 system. This occurs as a result of natural processing strategies, such as transfer, generalization, etc. and exposure to the L2 in communication situations. Provided that the right kind of exposure takes place, the learner's internal representations develop gradually, in predictable stages, in the direction of the L2 system.

This hypothesis owes a lot to similar ones proposed for L1 acquisition (see 2.3). Diagrammatically, one can represent it as in Figure 3.2 below.

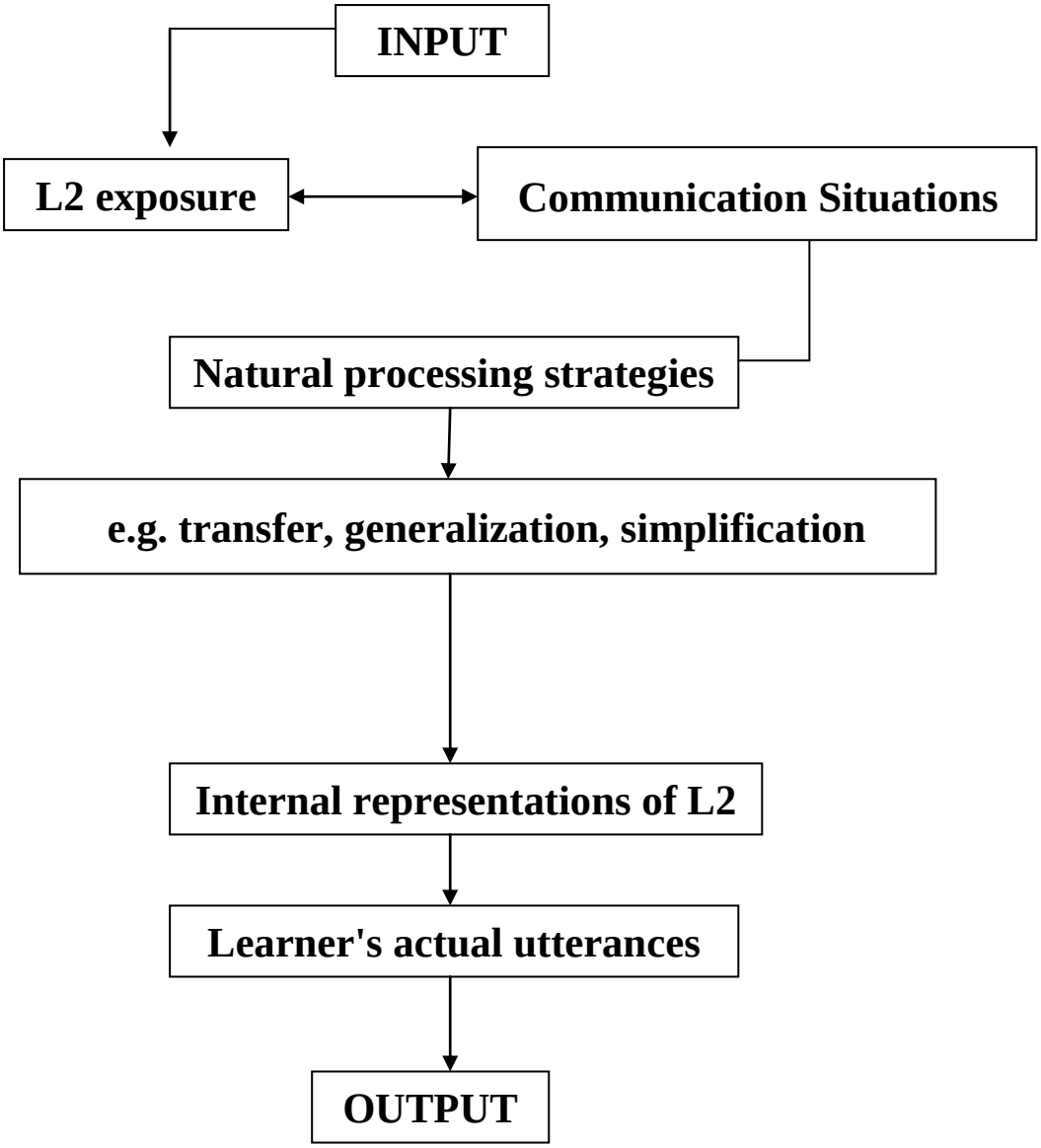


Figure 3.2 SLA as Creative Construction

Most of the evidence for this hypothesis has come from the analysis of learners' errors at various points in their SLA, and the order or sequence in which certain structures are acquired. What is unique about this hypothesis is its claim that internal processing strategies operate on input from the language environment and are not directly dependent on the learners' attempts themselves to produce the language. In other words,

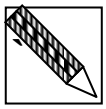
input which is available in the environment will make internal processing strategies operate, but not the learner himself or his attempts to produce the language. That is, the learner need not actually speak or write, in order to acquire language. Acquisition takes place internally as learners hear and read samples of the language that they understand. The speech and writing (i.e. the actual performance) which the learner eventually produces is seen as an outcome of the learning process rather than as the cause of learning, or even as a necessary step in learning. However, learners' utterances still play an important indirect role, since they enable learners to take part in communication situations and thus to gain more input.

SAQs



1. Draw a diagram that represents the creative construction hypothesis.
2. Does Noam Chomsky propose any implications of his mentalist view for SLA?
3. What is unique about the creative construction hypothsis?

Exercise (4)



Answers these questions:

1. Give three other terms that mean the same as overgerneralisation.
2. Name the originators of the theory of the "creative construction hypothesis".
3. State how L2 learners work out language rules, according to the idea of the creative construction hypothesis.

3.6 The input hypothesis model

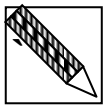
An innatist theory of second language acquisition which has had a very great influence on second language teaching practice is the one proposed by Stephen Krashen (1982). Five 'hypotheses' constitute what Krashen originally called the 'monitor model'. He claims that research findings from a number of different domains are consistent with these hypotheses: (1) the acquisition learning hypothesis; (2) the monitor hypothesis; (3) the natural order hypothesis; (4) the input hypothesis; and (5) the affective filter hypothesis.

SAQs



State the hypotheses that constitute Krashen's monitor model.

Exercise (5)



What does "innatist" in the phrase "An innatist theory of SLA …" mean?

1. The acquisition-learning hypothesis

According to Krashen, there are two ways for adult second language learners to develop knowledge of a second language: 'acquisition' and 'learning'. In his view, we acquire as we are exposed to samples of the second language which we understand. This happens in much the same way that children pick up their first language-with no conscious attention to language form. We learn, on the other hand, via a conscious process of study and attention to form and rule learning.

For Krashen, acquisition is by far the more important process. He asserts that only acquired language is readily available for natural, fluent communication. Further, he asserts that learning cannot turn into acquisition. He cites as evidence for this that many speakers are quite fluent without ever having learned rules, while other speakers may 'know' rules bur fail to apply them when they are focusing their attention on what they want to say more than on how they are saying it.

SAQs



Are these statements true or false?

1. According to Krashen there are three ways for adult L2 learners to develop knowledge of L2. (_____)
2. According to Krashen, L2 learners acquire L2 as they are exposed to samples of L2 which they do not understand, i.e. new to them. (_____)
3. According to Krashen, L2 acquisition happens in much the same way that children pick up their first language-with no conscious attention to language form. (_____)
4. According to Krashen L2 learning is a conscious process of study and attention to form. (_____)
5. According to Krashen, learning can turn into acquisition by practice. (_____)

2. The monitor hypothesis

Krashen argues that the acquired system acts to initiate the speaker's utterances and is responsible for fluency and intuitive judgements about correctness. The learned system, on the other hand, acts only as an editor or ‘monitor’, making minor changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced. Moreover, Krashen has specified that learners use the monitor only when they are focused more on being

'correct' than on what they have to say, when they have sufficient time to search their memory for the relevant rules, and when they actually know those rules! Thus, writing may be more conducive than speaking to monitor use, because it usually allows more time for attention to form. He maintains that since knowing the rules only helps the speaker to supplement what has been acquired, the focus of language teaching should be on creating conditions for ‘acquisition’ rather than ‘learning’.

It is very difficult to show evidence of 'monitor' use. In any given utterance, it is impossible to determine what has been produced by the acquired system and what is the result of monitor use. Krashen’s claim that language which is produced quickly and apparently spontaneously must have been acquired rather than learned leaves us with a somewhat circular definition.

SAQs



1. What is the role of the acquired system and that of the learned system, according to Krashen?
2. Briefly describe the monitor hypothesis.

3. The natural order hypothesis

Krashen based this hypothesis on mere observation that, like first language learners, second language learners seem to acquire the features of the target language in predictable sequences. Contrary to intuition, the rules which are easiest to state (and thus to ‘learn’) are not necessarily the first to be acquired. For example, the rule for adding an -s to third person singular verbs in me present tense is easy to state, but even some advanced second language speakers fail to apply it in rapid conversation.

Further, Krashen observes mar the natural order is independent of the order in which rules have been learned in language classes. Most of Krashen’s original evidence for this hypothesis came from the 'morpheme studies', in which learners' speech was examined for the accuracy of certain grammatical morphemes. While there have been many criticisms of the morpheme studies, subsequent research has confirmed that learners pass through sequences or stages in development. In Chapter 4, we will look at some or these sequences in second language acquisition.

SAQs



Briefly describe the natural order hypothesis.

4. The input hypothesis

Krashen asserts that one acquires language in only one way-by exposure to comprehensible input. If the input contains forms and structures just beyond the learner's current level of competence in the language (what Krashen calls 'i + 1’), then both comprehension and acquisition will occur.

Krashen cites many varied lines of evidence for this hypothesis, most of which appeal to intuition, but which have not been substantiated by empirical studies. In recent years, he has emphasized the value of undirected pleasure reading as a source of comprehensible input. While he acknowledges that some people who are exposed to extensive comprehensible input do not achieve high levels of proficiency in the second language, he retains his conviction that input is the source of acquisition. He points to the affective filter hypothesis to explain lack of success when comprehensible input is available.

SAQs

? Explain the idea of the input hypothesis.

5. The affective filter hypothesis

The ‘affective filter’ is an imaginary barrier which prevents learners from acquiring language from the available input. ‘Affect’ refers to such things as motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional states. A learner who is tense, angry, anxious, or bored may ‘filter out’ input, making it unavailable for acquisition. Thus, depending on the learner's state of mind or disposition, the filter limits what is noticed and what is acquired. The filter will be ‘up’ (blocking input) when the learner is stressed, self-conscious, or unmotivated; it will be ‘down’ when the learner is relaxed and motivated.

What makes this hypothesis attractive to practitioners is that it appears to have immediate implications for classroom practice. Teachers can understand why some learners, given the same opportunity to learn, may be successful while others are not. It also appeals intuitively to those who have tried unsuccessfully to learn a language in conditions where they felt stressed or uncomfortable. One problem with the hypothesis, however, is that it is difficult to be sure that affective factors cause the differences in language acquisition. It seems likely that success in acquisition, may in itself contribute to more motivation or, in krashen’s terms, to a ‘lowered affective filter’.

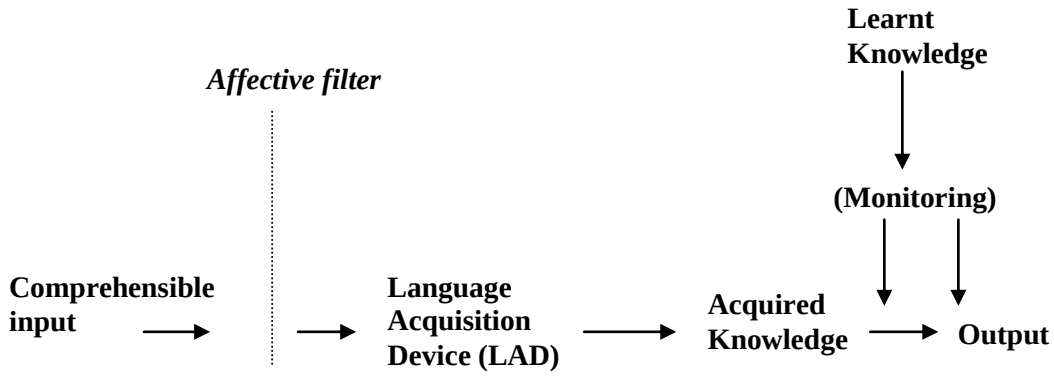


Figure 3.3 The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 Learning and Production ***(adapted from Krashen, 1982, pp. 16 and 32; and Gregg, 1984)***

SAQs

1. Briefly explain: "affective filter", "affect" and "filter out input".
2. In your own words describe the idea of the affective filter hypothesis.
3. Why is the affective filter hypothesis attractive to practitioners?

Exercise (6)

Write a concise paragraph (or two) on Stephen Krashen.

Overview

Dear learner,

In this unit we have examined together, a number of second language learning theories. Although other theories of SLA have been proposed, we have chosen to focus on the two main theories here. As we have already seen, a behaviourist view treats language as environmentally determined, controlled from the outside by the stimuli learners are exposed to and the reinforcement they receive. In contrast, the mentalist theory emphasizes the learner's LAD. It maintains that the learner's brains are equipped to learn language and all that is needed is minimal exposure to input in order to trigger acquisition.

Preview of Unit Four

Dear learner,

The following unit is unit four of your course. In it, we will together study “Learner Language”. Three approaches which attempt to account for the development of the L2 learner’s language will be discussed. These approaches are: contrastive analysis, error analysis, and interlanguage analysis.

ANSWERS KEY

Exercise (1)

1. Verbal Contact
   Verbal, here, means in words, spoken not written; and *contact* means communication. So verbal contact means oral communication.

2. Native Speakers (of a language)
   A native speaker is a person who has spoken a certain language since early childhood.

3. Natural environment

Exercise (2)

1. John W. Oller
2. Jack C. Richards
3. Place of publication:
   U.S.A
4. Publisher:
   Newbury House Publishers in Rowley Mass.

Exercise (3)

1. An example of a teaching method based on behavourism is The Audio-Lingual method, Army Method or New Key or even the Michigan Method.
2. Characteristic Features
   a. New vocabulary and structural patterns are presented through dialogues.
   b. The dialogues are learned through imitation and repetition.
   c. Drills (e.g. repetition, backward build-up, chain, substitution transformation, and question-and- answer) are conducted, based upon the patterns present in the dialogue.
   d. Students' successful responses are positively reinforced.

e. Grammar is induced from the examples given; explicit grammar rules are not provided.
f. Cultural information is contextualized in the dialogues or presented by the teacher.
g. Students' reading and written work is based upon the oral work they did earlier.

Exercise (4)

1. Overgeneralisation
   Over-extension
   Over-regularization
   Analogy
2. The theory was proposed by Dulay and Burt.
3. Dulay and Burt claim that learners work out the rules of their target language by:
   a. using natural mental processes, such as generalisation.
   b. using similar processes to first language learners.
   c. not relying very much on the rules of the first language.
   d. using processing which lead to the creation of new forms and structures which are not found in the target language. For example:
      - She goad to school. (instead of she went to school)
      - What you are doing? (instead of what are you doing?)

Exercise (5)

Innate means "in the mind at birth", innatist theory is a theory held by some linguistics (and philosophers) which says that human knowledge develops from structures, processes, and ideas which are in the mind at birth, rather than from the environment, and that these are responsible for the basic structure of language and how it is learned.

Exercise (6)

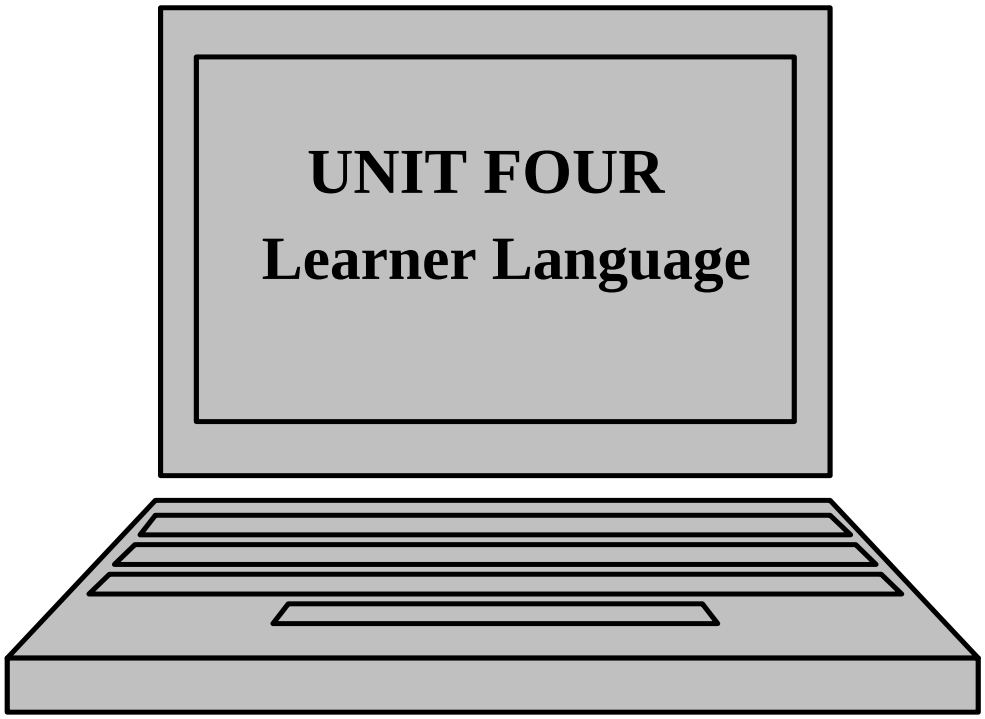
Stephen Krashen was born in 1941, in Chicago, Illinois. He is a linguist and an educational researcher. His title is professor emeritus, at the University of Southern California. Dr Krashen has published more than 350 papers and books, contributing to the field of second language acquisition, bilingual education, and reading. He is credited with

introducing various in fluentail concepts and terms in the study of SLA, including the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the affective filter, and the natural order hypothesis. Most recently, Krashen promotes the use of FREE READING during second language acquisition, which he says “is the most powerful tool we have in language education, first and for most”.

Dr Krashen was inducted into the International Reading Association’s Reading Hall of Fame in 2005. He spent two years in Ethiopia teaching eighth grade English and Science for the Peace Corps. He also holds a black belt in Tea Known Do, and was the winner of the 1978 Venice Beach Open Incline Press Championship.

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UNIT FOUR
Learner Language

UNIT CONTENT

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INTRODUCTION

PREVIEW

Dear learner,

This unit addresses itself to the discussion of L2 Learner Language. Three approaches to the study of learner language are presented and discussed. These are: contrastive analysis which was originally developed by the structural linguistics based on their behaviourist model of language acquisition. The second approach is error analysis. This approach involves the identification and classification of learners' recurring errors first, and then using this as the basis for preparing remedial lessons and designing materials that help learners overcome such errors. The third and final approach to be discussed in this neither L1 nor L2, it is a type of language produced by second-and foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language.

UNIT OBJECTIVES



By the end of this unit, you are expected to be able to:

1. List and describe the major approaches to the study of learner language.
2. Explain in your own words the basic idea(s) of contrastive analysis, error analysis, and interlanguage.
3. Conduct contrastive analysis studies between English and Arabic languages at one or more level(s) such as the phonological level, syntactic morphological, or even the semantic level.
4. Identify, classify and make use of learners' errors in order to design your lessons and prepare your material in ways that may help learners overcome recurring errors.
5. Define key concepts such as: Learning Strategies, fossilization, backsliding, interlangauge continuum, mental grammar, interlingual (transfer) errors, and intralingual (overgeneralization) errors.

4.1 Introduction

The period between the late 1950s and early 1970s witnessed the successive evolution of three approaches to account for the development of the L2 learner's language-namely, contrastive analysis (CA), error analysis (EA) and interlanguage analysis (IA). CA differs from the other two in so far as it does not actually take the L2 learner into account. This approach is based on the similarities and differences that exist between two languages. EA focuses on the L2 learner and seeks to investigate the nature and causes of deviation from the L2 norm. IA is a new approach in so far that the focus of attention is no longer on deviations from the L2 norm at a given point, but on the learner's own system as a whole as it develops closer towards the L2.

SAQs



Answer these questions

1. What are three main approaches to the study of learner language?
2. How does CA differ from EA and IA?
3. What is the basis of CA?
4. Which approach is the newest?

ACTIVITY



Collect data on and about Robert Lado, then try to assess his contribution to the CA approach.

4.2 Contrastive analysis (CA)

Lado (1957) provided the earliest procedural statement of this approach. The approach as a whole was developed by the structural linguists based on their behaviorist model of language acquisition. This model made the following assumptions:

1. A language is a set of habits.
2. Old habits (i.e. the native language) are hard to break while new habits (i.e. the second or foreign language) are hard to acquire.
3. The native language will of necessity interfere with the learning of a second or foreign language.
4. The differences between the native language and the foreign language will be the main cause of errors.
5. A linguistic CA can make these differences explicit.
6. Language teachers and textbook writers must take the linguist's CA into account when preparing teaching materials.

The fundamental assumption is transfer. There is little doubt that a learner's L1 influences the acquisition of L2. This is most apparent in the pronunciation of L2. It is quite common, for example, to detect certain foreign accents and to be able to tell from the speech of the L2 learner or speaker alone where he comes from. English learners from such native language backgrounds as Arabic, French, and Japanese, for example, can readily be detected by native English speakers by their different accents. Arabic-speaking learners of English, for example, tend to have problems pronouncing /p/ and /v/ because these sounds do not exist in Arabic. These learners are also known to add the vowel /i/ or /e/ before consonant clusters

in English with /s/, as in *istand*, *ischool*, *istudy*, *ispring* etc. Speakers of different languages speak the L2 with different foreign accents.

Although L1 interference in the pronunciation of L2 is predictable, syntactic, semantic or lexical interference is less predictable. However, some of the errors produced by L2 learners reflect interference at all these levels and are known as transfer errors. The following are examples of transfer learners errors made by Arabic speaking learners of English:

1. *I *opened* the TV to *see* the news. (Lexical-*opened* and *see* as in Arabic)
2. *Mobile phone is the *last* invention of this time (lexical-one word in Arabic for *last* and *latest*)
3. *What are you thinking to do tonight (Arabic construction-thinking of doing)
4. *Look what you did (instead of *have done*-past is used in Arabic which has no equivalent to English present perfect tense)
5. *He is good *in the* English (good at English-Arabic construction: preposition and article as in Arabic)

The limitation and shortcomings of CA hypothesis have long been recognized. First, the basic assumption that differences between languages cause learning difficulty was called into question. Just because grammatical structures in two languages are different, this does not necessarily mean that the L2 learner will find them difficult. Second, as noted before (3.4), teachers and researchers have found that many errors predicted by CA have often not occurred, whereas many actual errors would not have been predicted. Third, the results of CA have often been more reliable on the phonological (pronunciation) level than on the lexical or grammatical level.

Finally, certain kinds of differences between two languages seem to cause greater difficulty than others.

As a result of these criticisms CA lost its prestige and fell out of favour in the early 1970s. This led to the development of error analysis (EA).

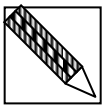
SAQs



A. Answer these questions
   1. Who provided the earliest procedural statement of CA?
   2. Who developed the CA approach as a whole?
   3. On which language model is CA based?
   4. What are the assumptions made by the behaviourist model of language?
   5. Which of these assumptions is the fundamental one?

B. Complete these statements:
   1. There is _____ doubt that a learner's L1 influences the acquisition of L2. (no, little)
   2. The effect of L1 on L2 acquisition is apparent in the _____ of L2. (pronunciation, vocabulary)
   3. Errors that reflect interference at all language levels are known as _____ (lexical, transfer)
   4. Certain kinds of (similarities, differences) between two languages seem to cause grater difficulty than others.
   5. The limitation and shortcomings of CA hypothesis have long been _____. (recognized, ignored).

Exercise (1)



Read this statement then answer the questions:
"English learners from different language background can readily be detected by native English speakers by their different accents".
Do you agree or disagree? Why?

4.3 Error analysis (EA)

Trained and experienced language teachers have undoubtedly applied EA of one kind or another for decades. They have studied their students' recurring mistakes, classified them into categories, and used them as the basis for preparing remedial lessons and materials designed to help students overcome such errors. Traditionally, errors were regarded as signs of learning failure and had to be eradicated. In the early 1970s a number of researchers began to take a different approach to analyzing L2 learners' errors, which became known as error analysis (EA). This involved a detailed description and analysis of the kinds of errors L2 learners make. This approach is different from CA in that it did not set out to predict errors on the basis of interference. Rather, it sought to discover and describe the different kinds of errors in an effort to understand how learners process the L2 input or data. Error analysis was based on the assumption that the speech of L2 learners, like that of children in L1, is a system in its own right-one which is rule-governed and gradually developing in the direction of the language system.

SAQs



Are these statements true or false:

1. Traditionally errors were regarded as signs of learning failure. (_____)
2. Novice teachers of language have undoubtedly applied EA of one kind or another for ages. (_____)
3. EA involves a detailed analysis and description of the kinds of errors L2 learners make. (_____)
4. EA is like CA in its endeavour to predict L2 learners' future errors. (_____)
5. EA assumes that the speech of an L2 learner is a sub-system of the speech of children in L1. (_____)

Researchers proposed a three-way classification of errors:

1. *interlingual* (transfer) errors caused by the interference of L1.
2. *intralingual* (overgeneralization) errors originating within the structure of L2 itself i.e. the negative transfer of items within the language, or the incorrect generalisation of rules within L2.
3. *developmental* errors which resemble the errors made by children learning their L1 and reflect the learner's attempts to make the task of learning and using the L2 simpler.

Errors of overgeneralisation and simplification are common in the speech of all L2 learners irrespective of their L1. We have already seen a sample of *interlingual* (transfer) errors. Below are some examples of *intralingual* (overgeneralisation) errors and *developmental* (or *simplification*) errors made by L2 learners of English.

Intralingual (overgeneralisation) errors:

1. *He sleeped in my bed (instead of slept-overgeneralised past tense form).
2. *Who did write this book? (overgeneralised rule for inserting *do* in questions-who wrote…)
3. *Where they are going today? (overgeneralised declarative sentence structure-are *they going*).
4. *I'm not liking school (overgenerlised rule of forming progressives-I *do not like*)
5. *He gave me good informations (overgeneralised *plural-s marker*)

Intralingual (simplification) errors:

1. *The bus always full of people (omission of *is*)
2. *He is good boy (omission of *a*)
3. *Ali not come to the party (omission of *has*)
4. *When began the game? (omission of *do* + inversion).
5. *I don't know what is his name? (omission of inversion-what his name is)

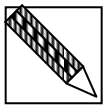
EA like CA proved to be limited in accounting for the process of L2 acquisition. Two main criticisms were leveled at EA. First, EA is restricted by defition to what the learner *cannot* do, and no attention is paid to what he *can* do. Second, EA traditionally gives no more than a static picture of L2 learning behaviour at some stage in the leaning process. These criticisms paved the way for the development of interlanguage (IL).

SAQs



1. Give examples of:
   (1-a) overgeneralization errors.
   (1-b) simplification errors.
2. Distinguish between interlingual (transfer) errors, intralingual (overgeneralisation) errors, and developmental errors.
3. What were the two main criticisms leveled at EA?

Exercise (2)



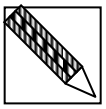
1. State three reasons why L2 teachers study and analyse the errors made by second language learners.
2. Match (A) with (B):
   (A)
   1. overgeneralization errors
   2. Simplification errors
   3. developmemntal errors
   4. communication-based errors

5. induced errors
6. errors of avoidance
7. errors of overproduction

(B)

a. structures being used too frequently
b. resulting from failure to use certain target language structures because they are thought to be too difficult.
c. errors resulting from strategies of communication.
d. those reflecting natural stages of development.
e. errors caused by extension of target language rules to inappropriate contexts.
f. errors resulting from learners producing simpler linguistic rules than those found in the target language.
g. those resulting from transfer of training.

Exercise (3)



1. What do we call the measure of the effect that errors made by people speaking a second language, have on communication or on other speakers of the language?
2. Which of these two sentences causes grater interference with communication and shows a greater degree of error gravity?
   a * Since the harvest was good, was rain a lot last year.
   b * The harvest was good last year, because plenty of rain

4.4 Interlanguage

The term **interlanguage** (often abbreviated IL) was introduced by Selinker to describe the L2 learner's language. According to Selinker, an L2 learner at a particular point in time is in fact using a language system which is neither the L1 nor the L2. What he is using is a ***third*** language which is intermediate between L1 and L2 and which also needs to be described. L2 development then seems to consist of an increasing adaptation of L1 rules to L2 rules. Analysis of a learner's interlanguage has shown that it has some characteristics of L1, some characteristics of L2, and some characteristics which are present in neither L1 nor L2, but which seem to be very general and tend to occur in all or most interlanguage systems.

The concept of interlanguage involves the following assumptions about L2 acquisition:

1. The learner constructs a system of abstract linguistic rules which underlies comprehension and production of the L2. This system of rules is viewed as a **mental grammar** and is referred to as an 'interlanguage'.

2. The learner's grammar is open to influence from the outside (i.e. through the input). It is also influenced from the inside. For example, the omission, overgeneralization, and transfer errors which we considered in this and the previous unit constitute evidence of internal processing.

3. The learner's grammar is transitional. Learners change their grammar from one time to another by adding rules, deleting rules, and restructuring the whole system. This results in an interlanguage

continuum. That is, learners construct a series of mental grammars or interlanguages as they gradually increase the complexity of their L2 knowledge. For example, initially learners may begin with a very simple grammar where only one form of the verb is represented (for example, *stay*), but over time they add other forms (for example, *staying* and *stayed*), gradually sorting out the functions that these verbs can be used to perform.

4. Learners employ **various learning strategies** to develop their interlanguages. The different kinds of errors learners produce reflect different learning strategies. For example, omission errors suggest that learners are in some way simplifying the learning task by ignoring grammatical features that they are not yet ready to process. Overgeneralization and transfer errors can also be seen as evidence of learning strategies.

5. The learner's grammar is likely to **fossilize**. Selinker suggested that only about five per cent of learners go on to develop the same mental grammar as native speakers. The majority stop some way short. The prevalence of **backsliding** (i.e. the production of errors representing an early stage of development) is typical of fossilized learners. **Fossilization** does not occur in L1 acquisition and thus is unique to L2 grammars.

This concept of interlanguage offers a general account of how L2 acquisition takes place. It incorporates elements from mentalist theories of linguistics (for example, the notion of a 'language acquisition device') and elements from cognitive psychology (for example, 'learning strategies'). It is

also somewhat vague in that it does not offer a very precise explanation of what takes place.

SAQs



1. Define interlanguage.
2. What is the abbreviation used to stand for interlanguage?
3. Who introduced the term 'interlaguage'?
4. What has the analysis of learner's interlanguage shown?
5. State five assumptions that the concept of interlanguage involves.
6. Do you think the term *interlanguage* captures the essence of the process of L2 acquisition?

Exercise (4)



Define each of the following terms:

1. learning strategies.
2. fossilization.
3. backsliding.

ACTIVITY



Collect and gather biographic information on each of the following theorists:

a. Robert Lado.
b. S. P. Corder.
c. Selinker.

Overview

Dear learner,

In this unit we have attempted to show how CA, EA and IA have evolved and how they have all contributed to descriptions of the L2 learner's output and what the features of the output can tell us about the nature of L2 learning, or what we can infer about the process from the product of learning. As we have seen, within CA an earlier focus on interference as a source of errors has led to the development of EA studies. But EA proved to be limited because it could only account for what the L2 learner *cannot* do. It was therefore felt that a richer model was necessary. This led to elaboration and development of EA into the study of what the L2 learner does with input in his attempt to approximate the target language. This most recent approach became widely known as interlanguage (IL).

The main conclusion to be drawn from the study of errors in the interlanguage systems of learners is that learners are creatively operating on a second language, constructing either consciously or subconsciously, a system for understanding and producing utterances in the language. That system should not be treated as an imperfect system. It should rather be looked upon as a flexible approximative system, which gradually approaches the target language, although it seldom merges with it totally.

Preview of Unit Five

In the following unit, unit 5, we shall look at some learner characteristics which are considered to be responsible for relative success or failure in second language learning. From your experience as a student or teacher of English, you must have seen some learners in the same classroom setting, progress rapidly while others make very show progress. Have you ever asked yourself: why some learners find L2 learning easy and enjoyable while others experience difficulty and boredom? The answer to this question is discussed in this unit. Six learner characteristics, which are thought to be the cause of success or failure in L2 learning, will be discussed. These are: language aptitude, motivation, intelligence, personality, and age.

ANSWERS KEY

Exercise (1)

Agree: English learners from such native language backgrounds as Arabic, French, and Japanese, for example, can readily be detected by native English speakers by their different accents. Arabic-speaking learners, for instance, tend to have problems pronouncing |p| and |v| because these two sounds do not exist in Arabic. These learners are also known to add the vowel |i| or |e| before consonant clusters in English with |s|, as in *istand*, *ischool*, etc… Speakers of different languages speak the L2 with different foreign accents.

Exercise (2)

1. Error analysis may be carried out in order to:
   (1-a) identify strategies which learners use in language learning.
   (1-b) try to identify the causes of learner errors.
   (1-c) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid to teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.
2. Interlingual errors result from language transfer. They are caused by the learner's native language. Intralingual errors result from faulty or partial learning of L2, rather than from L1 transfer. Intralingual errors may be caused by the influence of one L2 item upon another. For example a learner may produce *He is comes*, based on a blend of the English structures *He is coming*, *He comes*.
   Developmental errors are errors in the language use of a first or second language learner which are the result of a normal pattern of development, and which are common among language learners. Later on, such errors (developmental errors) disappear as the learner's language ability increases.
3. 1.e
   2.f
   3.d
   4.c
   5.g
   6.b
   7.a

Exercise (3)

1. Errors gravity
2. Sentence (a) causes a greater degree of error gravity.

Exercise (4)

1. Learning strategies:
   (1-a) In language learning, a learning strategy is a way in which a learner attempts to work out the meanings and uses of words, grammatical rules, and other aspects of language, for example generalisation and inferencing.

   (1-b) In L2 language learning, studying, reading, etc.; international behaviour and thoughts that learners make use of during learning in order to better help them understand, learn, remember new information. These may include focusing on certain aspects of new information, analyzing and organizing information during learning to increase comprehension, evaluating learning when it is completed to see if future action is needed.

2. Fossilization:
   In L2 learning, fossilization is a process which sometimes occurs in which incorrect linguistic features become a permanent part of the way a person speaks or writes a language. Aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and grammar may become fixed or fossilized in L2 learning. Fossilized features of pronunciation contribute to a person's foreign accent.

3. Backsliding:
   The regular appearance of features of a learner's interlanguage which were thought to have disappeared. Sometimes a learner who appears to have control of an area of grammar or phonology will have difficulty with particular linguistic features in situations which are stressful or which present the learner with some kind of communicative difficulty. Errors may then temporarily reappear.
   Research into backsliding suggests that such errors are not random but reflect the linguistic system the learner had learned at an earlier stage of his or her language development.

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UNIT FIVE
Learner
Characteristics

UNIT CONTENT

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INTRODUCTION

PREVIEW

Dear learner,

Welcome to unit five of your course *Applied Linguistics*. In this unit we are going to study together, me and you, some learner characteristics which are considered to be responsible for the relative success or failure in second language learning. As in all other units, there are a number of SAQs, exercises and activities to help you study and understand the materials on your own.

UNIT OBJECTIVES



By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. State some learner characteristics which are thought to be responsible for success or failure in L2 learning.
2. Describe in detail how each of these learner characteristics functions in the process of L2 learning.
3. Mention and briefly discuss some of the research studies that have attempted to investigate learner characteristics.
4. Define key concepts that are used to describe learner characteristics.

5.1 Introduction

As we saw in the previous units, theories of language acquisition seek to explain how people learn a language, what common characteristics there are in all L2 learning. However, it is evident that there are also many individual differences in L2 acquisition. It is common knowledge that learners show greater differences in the speed and degree of success in learning an L2. This is true whether learning is taking place in the classroom or naturally outside the classroom.

Although all normal individuals acquire their mother tongue naturally and effortlessly and can later learn one (or more) additional language, it has been observed that there is often considerable variation in the degree of success with which people acquire and learn to use this L2. In the same environment or classroom setting, some students progress rapidly while other struggle along making very slow progress. Some learners never achieve more than a limited proficiency after many years of study. Are there personal characteristic that make one learner more successful than another? If so what are they?

In this unit, we shall look at some learner characteristics which are considered to be responsible for relative success or failure in L2 learning.

SAQs

?

Are these statements true or false?

1. Theories of language acquisition attempt to explain how people learn linguistics. (_____)
2. Theories of language acquisition attempt to determine common characteristics in all L2 learning. (_____)
3. There is no evidence that there are individual differences in L2 acquisition. (_____)
4. L2 learners never show any significant differences in the speed and degree of success in L2 learning. (_____)
5. All abnormal individuals acquire their mother tongue naturally and effortlessly. (_____)
6. There is often a considerable variation in the degree of success with which people acquire and learn to use an L2. (_____)

5.2 Language Aptitude

While it is true that some learners seem to have a special talent or gift to learn language, the fact that everyone acquires an L1 is proof that we all have language learning aptitude. However, there is no doubt that some learners possess this aptitude to a greater extent than others.

The exact nature of this language aptitude is not known. It has been investigated most intensively by researchers interested in developing tests which can be used to predict whether individuals will be good language learners in a classroom setting before they actually begin a course. One of the best known of these tests was devised by John Carroll and Stanley Sapon (1958). Carroll believed that he had identified four independent abilities constituting L2 learning aptitude.

1. the ability to identify and memorise new words.
2. the ability to understand the function of particular words in sentences.
3. the ability to figure out grammatical rules from language samples.
4. memory for new words.

Research into language aptitude has focused on whether and to what extent language aptitude is related to success in L2 learning. There is strong evidence that it is. Learners who score highly on language aptitude tests seem to learn rapidly and achieve higher levels of L2 proficiency than learners who obtain low scores. Learning rapidly appears to be the disguising feature of aptitude.

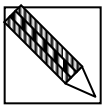
SAQs



Answer these questions

1. What is the proof that we all have language learning aptitude?
2. Can you describe the exact nature of aptitude? Why?
3. Who have intensively investigated aptitude?
4. What are the four independent abilities that constitute L2 learning aptitude, in Carroll's view?
5. What appears to be the disguising feature of aptitude?

Exercise (1)



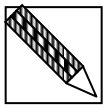
Define the term language learning aptitude.

5.3 Motivation

Motivation is another characteristic that varies considerably across L2 learners. The commonsense view is that motivated language learners who are willing to devote more time and energy to achieving fluency in the target language are more successful. Some researchers have even claimed that motivation is the single most important individual difference influencing success in l2 acquisition.

Motivation is a complex phenomenon and includes many components: the individual's drive, need for achievement and success, need for stimulation, desire for knowledge and so on. These factors play a role in every kind of learning situation.

Exercise (2)



What is motivation?

One of the best-known studies of motivation in L2 learning was carried out by Robert Gardener and Wallace Lambert (1972). Their studies led them to distinguish between two basic kinds of motivation, which they call *integrative* and *instrumental*.

1. integrative motivation: a learner with integrative motivation has a genuine interest in the L2 community. He wishes to integrate himself within the culture and become a part of that community.
2. instrumental motivation: a learner with instrumental motivation is more interested in how the L2 can be a useful instrument towards

furthering other goals such as passing an exam, getting a better job, or gaining admission to university.

These and other studies have shown that integratively motivitated learners are more likely to achieve grater proficiency than instrumentally motivated learners. Some other studies have shown that instrumental motivation is more effective than integrative motivation in L2 learning. These findings are not necessarily contradictory. They suggest rather that there is no single means of learning an L2. Some learners in some contexts are more successful in learning an L2 if they are integratively oriented, and others in different contexts benefit from an instrumental orientation. Also it is clear that the two kinds of motivation do not exclude each other: most learners are motivated by a mixture of integrative and instrumental reasons for learning an L2.

The relative importance of an integrative or instrumental motivation depends to a large extent on the context in which language is learned. Instrumental motivation seems to be particularly effective in situations where the L2 is used as an international means of communication, as is the case with English in many third world countries including Sudan. In many parts of the world, English serves as a *lingua franca* either within a multilingual country, such as India or Nigeria, or between people from different countries who do not speak each other's native language. In both of these situations, it is instrumental motivation that seems to be the major force behind the desire for and success in learning an L2.

The overall findings show that motivation is related to success in L2 learning. Unfortunately, research cannot indicate precisely *how* it is related.

We do not know whether it is the motivation that produces successful learning or successful learning that increases motivation. As noted by one researcher (Skehan, 1989), the question is: are learners more highly motivated because they are successful, or are they successful because they are highly motivated.

Studies also show that motivation can change during the learning process from day to day and even from task to task. A learner's motivation additionally appears to be affected by such factors as the learning environment and the instructional materials and activities. Varied and challenging instructional activities help learners to stay focused and engaged in learning and facilitates the L2 learning process.

SAQs



1. Complete the following statements with suitable words from the list given.

motivation, successful, phenomenon, integrative, instrumental, exclude, situation

1. Motivated language learners who devote more time, energy and patience to achieving fluency in L2 are more _____
2. _____ is a learner characteristic that varies considerably across L2 learners.
3. Motivation is a complex _____ and includes many components.
4. Wanting to learn a language because it will be useful for certain goals such as getting a job, passing an examination, reading a foreign newspaper, is _____ motivation.
5. Wanting to learn a language in order to communicate with people of another culture who speak it, is _____ motivation.

SAQs



2. Choose the best answer:

(2-a) Motivation is a complex phenomenon that excludes:

a. the need for achievement and success.
b. the need for stimulation and desire for knowledge.
c. the need for modernization and welfare.

(2-b) A well-known study of motivation in L2 learning was carried out by _____.

a. Gardener and Robert.
b. Gardener and Lambert.
c. Wallace and Lambert.

(2-c) The relative significance of an integrative or instrumental motivation depends to a large extent upon _____.

a. The context in which language is learned.
b. The type of the language being learned.
c. The language policy of the country in which L2 is learnt.

ACTIVITY



Dear Learner,

So far you have learned about motivation,. Now, stop for a while and try to think about your own situation. Find out what type of motivation you have: is it integrative, instrumental or both?

5.6 Intelligence

A link between intelligence and second language learning has been reported by several researchers. Over the years, many studies using a variety of IQ (intelligence quotient) tests and different methods of assessing language learning have found that IQ scores were a good means of predicting how successful a learner would be. Some recent studies have shown that these measures of intelligence may be more strongly related to certain kinds of second language abilities than to others. For example, in a study of learners of French in Canada, it was found that, while intelligence was related to the development of French second language reading, grammar, and vocabulary, it was unrelated to oral productive skills. Similar findings have been reported in other studies. What this suggests is that, while intelligence, especially as measured by verbal IQ tests, may be a strong factor when it comes to learning which involves language analysis and rule learning, intelligence may play a less important role in classrooms where the instruction focuses more on communication and interaction.

It is important to remember 'intelligence' is complex and that individuals have many kinds of abilities and strengths, not all of which are measured by traditional IQ tests. Experience shows that many students whose academic performance has been weak, have achieved considerable success in second language learning. This confirms that L2 underachievers are not inferior in their intelligence, but their failure may be due to other non-linguistic factors.

SAQs



1. What does (IQ) stand for?
2. Can all human abilities and strengths be measured with traditional IQ tests?
3. Is there a link between intelligence and second language learning?
4. It is said: "underachievers are not inferior in their intelligence", why do you think, they fail in L2 learning, then?

Exercise (3)



1. Define the term intelligence.
2. Name two IQ tests.

5.6 Personality

In studies of personality within psychology a number of personality characteristics or traits have been identified and distinguished. One of the main distinctions made is that between *extroversion* and *introversion*. An extrovert person is sociable, outgoing and friendly; an introvert person is generally unsociable, shy and quite.

A number of personality traits (i.e. characteristics) have been proposed as factors which are likely to affect second language learning, but it has not been easy to demonstrate their effects in empirical studies. As with other research investigating the effects of individual characteristics on second language learning, different studies measuring a similar personality trait produce different results. For example, it is often argued that an extrovert person is well-suited to language learning.

However, research does not always support this conclusion. Although some studies have found that success in language learning is correlated with learners' scores on characteristics often associated with extroversion such as forcefulness and adventurousness, others have found that many successful language learners do not get high scores on measures of extroversion.

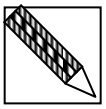
Another aspect of personality which has been studied is inhibition. It has been suggested that inhibition discourages risk-taking which is necessary for progress in language learning. This is often considered to be a particular problem for adolescents, who are more self-conscious than younger learners.

Some learners, especially adolescents, are shy or unduly sensitive and therefore easily embarrassed or upset if found to be wrong or not understood. They usually prefer to say nothing than run the risk of expressing themselves incorrectly.

Several other personality characteristics such as self-esteem, empathy, dominance, talkativeness, and responsiveness have also been studied. However, in general, the available research does not show a clearly defined relationship between personality and second language acquisition. One explanation which has been offered for the mixed findings of personality studies is that personality variables may be a major factor only in the acquisition of conversational skills, not in the acquisition of literacy skills (reading and writing skills). The confused picture of the research on personality factors may be due in part to the fact that comparisons are made between studies that measure communicative ability and studies that measure grammatical accuracy or language analysis. Personality variables seem to be consistently related to the former, hut not to the latter.

Despite the contradictory results and the problems involved in carrying out research in the area of personality characteristics, many researchers believe that personality will be shown to have an important influence on success in language learning. This relationship is a complex one, however, in that it is probably not personality alone, but the way in which it combines with other factors, that contributes to second language learning.

Exercise (4)



Define each of the following terms:

(1-a) personality.
(1-b) psychology
(1-c) inhibition

SAQs



1. Distinguish between extroversion and introversion.
2. Who is more self-conscious adolescents or younger learners of L2?
3. What are the various aspects of personality that have been proposed as factors which are likely to contribute to L2 learning?

ACTIVITY



How would you describe yourself? Are you an extrovert or introvert? Do you think your personality affects your English language learning? How?

5.7 Age

Another individual difference that is believed to play a key role in L2 learning is age. It has been widely observed that children from different families eventually speak the language of their new community with native-like fluency whereas their parents rarely achieve such high levels of mastery of the new language.

The most common explanation for this difference is the claim, as in L1 acquisition, that there is a critical period for L2 acquisition (2.4), during which it is believed the brain is flexible and language learning can occur naturally and easily. After the brain reaches its mature state at puberty, natural acquisition from mere exposure to a given language is no longer possible and an L2 has to be taught and learnt through a conscious and laboured effort. Language learning after the end of the critical period, it is claimed, would be both difficult and incomplete. In accordance with the critical period hypothesis (CPH) then, children are naturally better L2 learners than adolescents and adults.

SAQs



Briefly discuss how age is believed to be an individual difference that plays a key role in L2 learning.

The CPH has been criticised in recent years on several grounds. From a biological standpoint, there seems to be no evidence that puberty is accompanied by changes in the brain which are crucial to language learning. Also, experience shows that many adolescents and adults do acquire a high

level of proficiency in an L2, which provides strong evidence that older learners have not lost the capacity for natural language learning. Furthermore, some studies of L2 development of older and younger learners have shown that, at least in the early stages of learning, older learners are more successful than younger learners. In educational research, it has been reported that learners who began learning an L2 at the primary level did not do better in the long run than those who began in early adolescence.

In one experimental study, researchers (Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978) found that older learners outperformed younger learners in the early stages: teenagers did best, then adults, then younger children. Another study (Patkowsky, 1980) supported the hypothesis that native-like proficiency in the syntax of an L2 is only possible if the learning occurs before the end of puberty. In a review of optimum age studies, Krashen, Long and Scarcella, (1977) suggest that adults do better in initial learning but that younger learners do better in the long run. It is not clear whether age-related difference in L2 learning ability apply to all aspects of language or to some but not others. The results of an investigation by Fathman (1975) of the learning of English by non-native children of 6 – 10 years and adolescents of 11 – 15 years in a formal teaching situation showed that the adolescents acquired the morphology and syntax more rapidly than the children who acquired the phonology (pronunciation) more rapidly than the adolescents. Some other researchers found that adolescents and adults acquired a more accurate pronunciation of L2 faster than children. Research evidence in this area is conflicting and inconclusive.

Taken as a whole, the research does not strongly support any optimum age hypothesis – neither' the younger the better' nor 'the older the better'. Overall, the weight of evidence seems to suggest that while success in

acquiring an L2 may be much more likely for children, it is still possible for adults.

The early introduction of foreign language teaching in primary schools in many countries around the world is no doubt based on the common belief that young children learn new languages faster than adolescents and adults. However, there has recently been a decline in some countries for the support of movements to start L2 language learning at an early stage in the primary school.

SAQs



1. What are the criticisms against the CPH?
2. Describe the findings of the experimental research study conducted by Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle.
3. What have Krashen, Long and Scarclla suggested with regard to age and L2 learning?
4. Taken as a whole, does research strongly support the optimum age hypothesis?
5. Which study supports the hypothesis that native-like proficiency in the syntax of an L2 is only possible if the learning occurs before the end of puberty?

Overview

Dear learner,

In this unit we have examined five L2 learner characteristics which are considered to be individual differences which play fundamental roles in L2 learning. Language aptitude is thought to be a combination of various abilities. A person with high language aptitude can learn more quickly and easily than a person with low language aptitude, all other factors being equal. The second characteristic discussed in the unit, is motivation. Two types of motivation are explained: integrative and instrumental motivation. The concept of motivation is complex and it does include many components. The research findings show that motivation is related to success in L2 learning. The third learner characteristic is intelligence. This is the mental ability or power of perceiving, learning, understanding and knowing. A link between intelligence and L2 learning has been reported by several researchers. The fourth trait is learner personality. Several personality features have been studied. These include: extroversion, introversion, self-esteem, empathy, dominance, inhibition, talkativeness and responsiveness. The research, however, and in general, does not show a clearly defined relationship between personality and L2 learning. Age is the last characteristic we studied in this unit. It is believed that age plays a key role in L2 learning.

Preview of Unit Six

Dear Learner,

The following unit is unit six and it is the final unit of your course. It deals with foreign language teaching methods. The aim is to study these methods carefully in order to be able to improve your own teaching of English as a second or foreign language.

ANSWERS KEY

Exercise (1)

Language Learning Aptitude

The term language aptitude refers to the ability to learn a language, not including intelligence, motivation, interest, etc.

Language aptitude is thought to be a combination of various abilities, such as the ability to identify sound patterns in a new language, the ability to recognize the different grammatical functions of words in sentences, rote-learning ability, and the ability to infer language rules.

Exercise (2)

Motivation

Motivation refers to the factors that determine a person's desire to do something. Two type of motivation are distinguished: instrumental and integrative. In language learning, learning may be affected differently by different types of motivation.

Exercise (3)

1. Intelligence:

   Intelligence is the power of perceiving, learning understanding and knowing. (mental ability).

2.

Exercise (4)

1. Personality:

   Qualities that make up a person's character.

2. Psychology:

   Science of, or study of the mind and its processes.

3. Inhibition:

   To inhibit is to hinder or restrain. Inhibition means restrainton, habitual shrinking from, an action for which there is an impulse or desire.

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UNIT SIX
Teaching Methods

UNIT CONTENT

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INTRODUCTION

PREVIEW

Dear learner,

You are welcome to the last and final unit of your course. A number of language teaching methods will be discussed. These include: the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Method and the Communicative Language Teaching. The aim of studying these methods is to understand their nature, to weigh and assess them, to compare and contrast them and eventually to be able to choose the one (s) that best suit (s) your own teaching situation. We wish you every success in your endeavour.

UNIT OBJECTIVES



When you have finished studying this unit, we expect you to be able to:

1. List-at least- four foreign language teaching methods.
2. Describe some foreign language teaching methods.
3. Assess and evaluate the suitability of language teaching methods to various language teaching situation.
4. Implement the methods and techniques, described in this unit, in your own teaching situation.
5. Experiment new techniques and adapt old ones to your own teaching situation.

6.1 Introduction

For a long time in the history of language education, the focus of attention had been on the activity of teaching ─ *what* and *how* to teach a second language. Learning, however, continued to be taken for granted as the mere outcome of teaching. It was believed (and still is) that what is taught, gets learnt.

Second languages have been taught for centuries by a variety of methods, many of which are still in use in one form or another in many countries around the world. But none of these L2 teaching methods, however sound they may have appeared in theory, seem to have produced effective learning. This is why, since the early 1970s, the focus of attention has shifted from the teacher and teaching to the learner and learning. It was felt that what we teach and how we teach should revolve around the basic question: how do learners learn languages?

This, of course, is the core question which SLA research seeks to address, as we have attempted to show in all of the preceding units. In this unit we turn to teaching and examine the major L2 teaching methods that have been in use during the last hundred or so years. Language teaching methodologies reflect ideas about the processes and purposes of language learning. In discussing these methods, we shall attempt to indicate where some of them have drawn on theories of learning. Some of these methods, however, are better described as approaches. An *approach* is a general and theoretical view of how language ought to be taught, while a *method* includes a developed procedure for teaching.

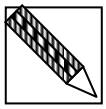
SAQs



Are these statements true or false?

1. In the history of language education, the emphasis had for a long time, been on language learning. (_____)
2. All language teaching methods have up to now, produced effective learning outcomes. (_____)
3. Since the early 1970s, the focus of attention has been on the learner and learning. (_____)
4. An approach to language teaching is a general and theoretical view of how language ought to be taught. (_____)
5. A method is an application of views on how a language is best taught and learned. (_____)

Exercise (1)



Distinguish between approach and method (in language teaching).

6.2 The Grammar-Translation Method

This is one of the earliest teaching methods for foreign language learning. It was devised and developed for use in the secondary schools of England and Europe during the 19th century. At the close of the 19th century, the teaching of modern foreign languages (e.g. French in England, English in Germany, German in France, etc…) was heavily influenced by the more established study of the dead classical languages, Latin and Ancient Greek. In this traditional method, the way into the new language was always through the student's own first language. Grammar rules were explained to the students in their own language, vocabulary lists were learnt with translation equivalents and then sentences (specially constructed to contain only the grammar and vocabulary which had already been covered) were translated in writing, into and out of the students' L1. As in the teaching of Latin and Greek, spoken language was neglected and using the language meant written translation. Success was measured in terms of the accurate use of grammar and vocabulary rather than effective communication. It was assumed that the processes of learning the language and eventual use of it could be separated.

The label **grammar-translation method** was coined by the late 19th century critics who wanted to draw attention to the two features they most disliked: the teaching of grammar in isolation from texts and the excessive use of translation in both the teaching of meaning and in practice exercises. These critics also pointed out that the emphasis on learning *about* the second language leaves students quite ignorant of how the language is used in communication situations. It was said that many English-speaking learners leaving school with high grades in French

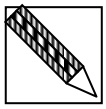
found themselves at a loss when confronted with the way the French in France actually used their language.

SAQs



1. When was the Grammar-Translation method devised and developed?
2. Why was it devised and developed at that time?
3. Are these true or false? Correct the false ones:
   (3-a) French in France is a second language. (__)
   (3-b) English in France is a foreign language (__)
   (3-c) Latin and Greek are classical languages. (__)
   (3-d) In the grammar-translation method, grammar rules are explained in L1. (___)
   (3-e) In the grammar-translation method the spoken language is emphasized. (___)

Exercise (2)



Describe some characteristics of the Grammar-Translation Method.

6.3 The Direct Method

In the early years of the 19th century, there was continuous mass immigration by speakers of many languages from Europe into the United States. Throughout the century, there was growing international trade, tourism and an increase in vocational language learning. This created a new kind of language learning populations in both Europe and America. In the language schools and evening classes, which catered for them, the students did not necessarily share the same first language, which made it impossible for teaching to proceed through L1 explanation and translation. In addition, this new type of student needed spoken as well as written languages and needed it fast. This lead to a growing demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages: a demand which the grammar-translation method could not possibly meet.

In the 1850s, language learning experts responded to this with radical new ideas about how languages should be taught. They shared a common belief that students learn to understand the language by listening to a great deal of it, and that they learn to speak it by speaking it, associating speech with appropriate action. This, they observed, was the way children learnt their native language and this was the way children who had been transferred to a different environment acquired a second language, apparently without difficulty. They therefore advocated a Direct Method in which only the target language was used in the classroom. The target language was to be its own medium of instruction.

The cardinal principles of the direct method (as first used in the Berlitz Schools) were very clear and straightforward: no translation under any circumstances, a strong emphasis on oral work, avoidance of

grammatical explanations and the maximum use of question-and-answer techniques. This goes to show that the method originated largely in reaction to the grammar-translation method.

Grammar was not explicitly taught and no grammatical rules were formulated or given. Learners were to acquire grammatical structure (inductively) by practising with complete and meaningful sentences. The meaning of new vocabulary was to be conveyed through direct association of words and phrases with objects, pictures and actions, without the use of the L1 by teacher or student. The ultimate aim was to develop the ability to think in the language, whether one was speaking, reading or writing.

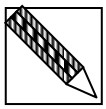
In practice, the direct method did not live up to its own principles. Many of the characteristics of grammar-translation had survived. There was still explanation of grammar rules and the language was divided into separate areas such as vocabulary or pronunciation practice. Teachers had to do much as they had done before without the use of translation or detailed grammar explanations. This meant that grammar rules had to be worked out by learners from examples. After a sharp decline in the first few decades of the 20th century, the direct method regained a lot of attention in the 1950s.

SAQs



1. State the reasons behind the emergence and development of the direct Method?
2. How does the Direct Method differ from the Grammar-Translation Method?
3. Mention some of the principles of the Direct Method.

Exercise (3)



Distinguish between explicit and implicit grammar teaching.

ACTIVITY



Think about your own teaching and learning situation. Which of these two language teaching methods would you prefer and why?

6.4 The Audiolingual Method

The Audiolingual Method, originally called the Oral Approach when it emerged in America around 1945, can be seen as growing out of the direct method, partly because of the emphasis on spoken language as the primary teaching objective and partly because of the teaching procedures advocated.

Based on the principles of behaviourism and drawing on contrastive analyses of the L1 and L2, the audiolingual method claimed that language learning was essentially habit formation, requiring imitation, repetition, feedback, extensive practice and over-learning to form habits. There was not much emphasis on meaning. Grammatical structures were presented one at a time in sequence, and it was seen as important to provide positive reinforcement for learners' correct responses while suppressing their errors. The use of L1 by teacher or learner was avoided, although this was not established as an absolute principle.

The audiolingual method aimed at developing listening and speaking skills first, as the foundation on which to build the skills of reading and writing. Structural patterns were taught using repetitive drills, with little or no grammatical explanation. Vocabulary was strictly limited and learnt in context without translation.

During the late 1950s and 1960s, the audiolingual method made much use of tapes, language labs and audiovisual aids which were found to be very useful for practice in listening in sound production as well as practice with grammatical structure.

Though the audiolingual techniques enabled students to achieve success in developing comprehension and fluency in speaking the language within a limited body of language material, teachers were discovering that their students had difficulty in using what they have learnt in expressing their own meanings. In other words, they were unable to use the acquired language material in contexts other than those in which they have learnt them. The learners were not learning the communicative functions of language.

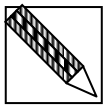
The audiolingual method gained wide acceptance between 1950 and 1965, and some versions of it still exist today.

SAQs

?

1. What was the audiolingual method called when it first emerged?
2. When and where did the audiolingual method first appear?
3. State two reasons why the audiolingual method is seen as growing out of the direct method.
4. Complete the following statements:
   (4-a) based on the principles of _____ and drawing on _____ of L1 and L2, the audioligual method claimed that language learning was essentially _____, requiring _____, _____, feedback, _____ practice and over-learning to form habits.
   (4-b) the audiolingual method gained wide acceptance between _____ and _____ and some versions of it still exist today.
5. Describe the main characteristic features of the audiolingual method.

Exercise (4)



Match (A) with (B)

(A) Technique	(B) Method
a. repetition b. reading aloud c. grammar rules are presented with examples d. collaborative learning	1. grammar-Translation 2. Direct Method 3. Audilolingual Method

ACTIVITY



We have examined some techniques and principles of the audiolingual method. Try not to think about your own situation; which of these techniques can be used in your own teaching situation? Which techniques require adjustment to be used? Which techniques cannot possibly be used? Why?

6.5 The Communicative Approach

The **Communicative Approach** or **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** emerged in the late 1970s partially as a reaction against the artificiality of pattern practice (of the audiolingual method), and also against the belief that consciously learning the grammar of a language will result in an ability to use the language. It rapidly became, and still remains, the dominant idea in progressive language teaching. There are few subjects in applied linguistics which attract as much attention as CLT does.

The essence of CLT is a shift of attention from the language system as an end in itself to the successful use of that system in context; that is to say, from an emphasis on formal structure to an emphasis on communication. Language learning success is to be measured neither in terms of accurate grammar and pronunciation for their own sake, nor in terms of explicit knowledge of the rules, but by the ability to use the language in real-life situations, appropriately, fluently and effectively. Consequently, CLT shifted its attention from practice of grammar rules and the learning of vocabulary to communicative activities.

Second language teaching by whatever method has until quite recently been largely a matter of structural or grammatical treatment of the language. It was assumed that the purpose of language instruction in schools was to help learners to learn the underlying system of the language as a communicative resource for its future use. Language was therefore mostly taught (and still is) as a subject rather than as a medium of communication. It is a common observation that children learn their first language in the process of communication without focusing on

linguistic forms and structures. By contrast, the experience of learning a second language by first learning its formal structure, as is commonly done in the language class, has been far less successful.

What the proponents of CLT are advocating then, is that a language is learnt when the learner becomes involved in real communication so that he or she is a user of the language rather than an observer who analyzes and rehearses the language for later use. Since the function of language is communication, all teaching must involve communication. 'Communication is not a late phase that follows language instruction; it must be part of that instruction from the very beginning.' (Stern, 1992; 179)

If learners are to develop the ability to use the language, it is essential for the language syllabus to include a strong component of communicative activities in addition to the language forms and structural elements. Learners need to be trained to use the language forms and structures appropriately in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. This could be achieved through such communicative activities as discussion, role-play, problem solving, games, informal talk tasks and the like. What matters in these activities is that learners should have a desire to communicate. They should have a communicative purpose such as making an invitation, offering advice, buying an airline ticket, writing a letter of complaint to a newspaper, solving a puzzle by sharing information and engaging in what are known as information gap exercises. These activities should attempt to resemble, as closely as possible, purposeful communication in the real world. Only through active attempts at expressing meaning in this way does the learner become confident in using the language to express personal meanings.

Traditional structural practice *alone* does not seem to prepare learners well enough to use language for communication which is the final goal of all language learners.

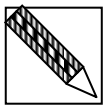
It is important to emphasize that CLT is not a concrete methods but a general approach reflecting theories about the nature and processes of language learning. Even so, it has come under attack for not being suitable for large classes and for sometimes being seen to have undermined the explicit teaching of grammar, resulting in ungrammatical utterances and sentences on the part of the learners.

SAQs



1. Describe the main features of communicative language teaching.
2. How is communicative language teaching similar to, and how is it different from, the other language teaching methods, you have studied?

Exercise (5)



1. Adherents of CLT advocate the use of language materials authentic to native speakers of the target language.
   (1-a) what does (authentic materials) mean?
   (1-b) why do they advocate the use of authentic materials?
2. Distinguish between communicative competence and linguistic competence.

ACTIVITY



Truly communicative activities (according to Morrow) have tree features in common: information gap, choice, and feedback. Discuss these features with a colleague.

Conclusion

As we have seen, all the major methods discussed here have their shortcomings. This, of course, is also true to say about all other language teaching methods in use around the world today or in the past. There is no one true or single method which is best under all circumstances. Nor has research produced any evidence for the definite superiority of one method over another.

The fact of the matter is that today most language teachers do not strictly follow one method or another, but instead use a combination of techniques from different approaches and methods, depending upon the objectives of the lesson, the characteristics of their learners and institutional constraints among other things.

No, it seems we have not yet found the answer to the question of how people learn a second language. Despite significant advances over the past 50 years or so, there is much that remains to be uncovered. The language teaching-learning process is far too complex to be captured by any one method or approach. The search continues.

Overview

In this unit we have attempted to display and highlight the essential features of four language teaching methods: The Grammar-Translation Methods, the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Methods and Communicative Language Teaching. A knowledge of methods is part of the knowledge base of teaching. With it, teachers can interact with other teachers, on one hand, and they can expand their repertoire of techniques, on the other. A number of SAQs, exercises, and activities have been offered. We hope that you will now be in a better position to think about and try to improve your own teaching situation.

ANSWERS KEY

Exercise (1)

Approach:

Theories about the nature of language and about how languages are learned. (Theoretical view about how language ought to be thought).

Methods:

Different ways of teaching language. (developed procedures for teaching).

Exercise (2)

Some characteristic features of the Grammar-Translation Methods:

(1) The use of grammar and translation as the main teaching and learning activities.

(2) Emphasis is on reading rather than on the ability to communicate in L2.

(3) Students memorize native-language equivalents for target-language vocabulary items.

Exercise (3)

Explicit and Implicit grammar teaching.

Implicit grammar teaching means “grammar is acquired from examples of language use without reference to rules”, as in the case of the audiolingual method.

Explicit grammar teaching means explicit rules of grammar are presented and discussed. Students apply rules to examples they are given.

Exercise (4)

1-c

2-b

3-a

Exercise (5)

(1-a) authentic adj., authenticity n. is the degree to which language teaching materials have the qualities of natural speech or writing. Examples of authentic materials are: texts taken from newspapers, magazines, etc... . Also, tapes of natural speech taken from ordinary radio or television programs.

(1-b) Because the use of authentic materials is representative of the natural use of language in communication.

(2) Communicative competence is the ability to use language that is appropriate and relevant to the context of situations. Linguistic competence is knowledge of the underlying system of the language.

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GLOSSARY

backsliding

This is said to occur when learners employ a rule that belongs to an earlier stage of development than the learner's current stage.

behaviourist learning theory

A general theory that views all learning as the formation of habits through environmental stimulation.

communication strategies

The strategies used by both native speakers and L2 learners to overcome communication problems resulting from lack of linguistic resources or inability to access them.

comprehensible input

That part of the total input that the learner understands and which is hypothesized to be necessary for acquisition to take place.

contrastive analysis

A set of procedures for comparing and contrasting the linguistic systems of two languages in order to identify their structural similarities and differences.

creative construction

A theory that L2 acquisition is a process by which a learner constructs his own rule system (internal representations) for the language being learned. These internal representations are thought to develop slowly in the direction of the full second language system in predictable stages.

critical period hypothesis

This states that target-language competence in an L2 can only be achieved if learning begins before a certain age (e.g. the onset of puberty) is reached.

errors

Deviations in usage which result from gaps in learners' knowledge of the target language: cf. mistakes.

fossilization

The processes responsible for the cessation of learning some way short of target-language competence. Most L2 learners' interlanguages fossilize.

input

The samples of oral and written language a learner is exposed to while learning or using a particular L2.

input hypothesis

The hypothesis advanced by Krashen to explain how learners subconsciously acquire language from input they comprehend. See comprehensible input.

instrumental motivation

The degree of effort a learner puts into learning an L2 as a result of the desire to achieve some functional goal (e.g. to pass an exam).

integrative motivation

The degree of effort a learner puts into learning an L2 through an interest in a desire to identify with the target-language culture.

interlanguage

A term coined by Selinker to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 that is independent of both the target language and the learner's L1.

interlanguage continuum

The series of interim systems that a learner constructs in the process of acquiring an L2.

intrinsic motivation

The degree of effort a learner makes to learn an L2 as a result of the interest generated by a particular learning activity.

L1 transfer

The process by which the learner's L1 influences the acquisition and use of an L2.

language acquisition device (LAD)

According to Chomsky, the innate language faculty responsible for L1 acquisition: cf. **Universal Grammar (UG)**.

language aptitude

The special ability that people have, in varying degrees, for learning an L2.

learner language

The term given to the language that learners produce in speech and writing during the course of language acquisition,

learning strategy

A behavioural or mental procedure used by learners to develop their interlanguages. See **communication strategies**.

lingua franca

A language that is used for communication between different groups of people, each speaking a different language. The lingua franca could be an internationally used language of communication (e.g. English) or it could be the native language of one of the groups (e.g. Arabic in Sudan).

linguistic context

The language that surrounds a particular grammatical feature and which may influence the particular form a learner chooses to use.

mentalist

A mentalist theory of language learning emphasizes the learner's innate capacity for acquiring a language.

mistakes

Deviations in usage that reflect learners' inability to use what they actually know of the target language: cf. errors.

motivation

The effort learners put into learning an L2 as a result of their desire or need to learn it. See also i**ntegrative motivation, instrumental motivation, intrinsic motivation**.

negative evidence/feedback

Information given directly or indirectly to learners that an interlanguage hypothesis is incorrect.

negative transfer

Language transfer that results in errors. See L1 transfer.

omission

Deviations in usage that arise when learners leave out words or parts of words (e.g. omission of the article In 'He went into shop').

overgeneralization

The oversuppliance of an interlanguage feature in contexts in which it does not occur in target-language use (e.g. 'He atedice-cream.') Overgeneralizations result in errors.

positive transfer

Language transfer that facilitates the acquisition of target-language forms. See L1 tarnsfer.

poverty of the stimulus

The inability of input to provide the linguistic information needed for language acquisition.

psycholinguistic context

The aspects of the context in which communication takes place which influence the extent to which learners are able to plan or self-correct what they say or write.

restructuring

The process by which learners reorganize their interlanguage in the light of new evidence about the target language. It can occur as a result of a shift from item learning to system learning.

restructuring continuum

This refers to the idea that interlanguage development consists of learners gradually replacing L1 rules with target-language rules.

rule

A mental representation of some abstract property of grammar. Rules are part of grammatical competence and allow a speaker to construct entirely novel sentences: cf. **formulas**.

sequence of acquisition

The stages of development through which learners pass when acquiring grammatical structures such as past tense or learning how to perform language functions such as requests.

standard

A socially favored variety of a language.

system learning

Learning the abstract rules that underlie the use linguistic items, e.g. learning when a French noun takes 'la' and when it takes 'le' .

target language

The language that a learner is trying to learn.

transfer

See. L1 transfer.,

transitional constructions

The interim grammatical structures that learners manifest during the **sequence of acquisition**. Different interim structures are evident at different stages of development.

universal grammar (UG)

Chomsky's term for the abstract principles that comprise a child's innate knowledge of language and that guide L1 acquisition.