

### Lesson-01: INTRODUCTION TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- ❖ In the sciences and social sciences, the construct “theory” has a particular meaning.
- ❖ A ‘theory’ is a more or less abstract set of claims about the significant units within phenomenon under study. It aims at explanation as well as description.
- ❖ Theories are produced collaboratively and evolve through a systematic enquiry.
- ❖ These are assessed through hypothesis testing and involve a reflexive process.
- ❖ A good theory is supposed to give clear and explicit statements about its claims. It must be testable or falsifiable in some way.
- ❖ The linguists view language as a complex communication which must be analyzed on different levels.
- ❖ The linguists are more interested in ‘property theory.’
- ❖ They are concerned with the structure of the language and how a language changes; how certain words become obsolete; how certain factors lead to the addition of new words and merge them in a language system.
- ❖ In property theory, the language system is important.
- ❖ ‘Transition theory’ is more concerned with the developmental processes of language education.
- ❖ It is interested in finding out the different stages of learning in a second language learner.
- ❖ It can relate to the first language acquisition telling about the different learning stages in a child’s life and how that learning is different or similar to second language learning.
- ❖ Language is the most important phenomenon in the world.
- ❖ From birth to death, all our activities are regulated by language.
- ❖ Language dominates every aspect of human life.
- ❖ In fact, it is a yardstick to separate us from other beings.
- ❖ Language is a mean of communication.
- ❖ Learning of language is not an automatic process.
- ❖ Of course, it is behaviour but not of the type like walking and crawling that comes to child in a natural way.
- ❖ Each language is a unique system.
- ❖ The system of language consists of sounds, structures, and vocabulary.
- ❖ A person who wants to learn a new language will have to learn new sounds, new structures, and new vocabulary.
- ❖ The sound system of language differs from language to language depending upon the culture to which a language belongs.
- ❖ Similarly, each language has its own system of vocabulary.
- ❖ Thus languages are systematic in their own nature.
- ❖ Learning of a language is a skill subject.
- ❖ It is a skill like swimming and cycling.
- ❖ So a lot of repetition for major linguistic skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing is required.
- ❖ Language is the best means of communication and self-expressions.
- ❖ Human beings express their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and emotions through language.
- ❖ In this way language is a means to connect past, present, and future.

- ❖ Each language is governed by a **particular** set of rules.
- ❖ For example, English is **S.V.O.** language.
- ❖ In forming a sentence, we put **subject, then verb, and after verb there comes object.**
- ❖ **Language** is **unique**: Each language is **unique** because it has its own **style** of functioning.
- ❖ The **sounds, vocabulary and structures** of every language have their own **specialty**.

### Lesson-02 NATURE OF LANGUAGE, MODULARITY AND LANGUAGE VARIABILITY

- ✚ Linguists **disagree** over their main focus of interest and study.
- ✚ **Noam Chomsky** prefers competence over performance.
- ✚ By **competence**, he refers to the abstract and hidden representation of language knowledge held inside minds with its potential to create and understand **original utterances** in a given language.
- ✚ However, there are difficulties in studying **competence** as language **performance data** are believed to be **imperfect reflections of competence**.
- ✚ The competence can only be assessed **indirectly**, under controlled conditions, through wide-ranging tests.
- ✚ The best known controversy involves **B. F. Skinner and Noam Chomsky**.
- ✚ **Skinner** advocates behaviorist mechanisms; whereas, Chomsky emphasized the role of innate dispositions that expect natural languages to be organized in particular ways and support the role of **Universal Grammar (UG)**.
- ✚ Further, there are different views on seeing mind as modular or unitary.
- ✚ In **Piaget's view**, language is simply one manifestation of general skill of **symbolic representation** and first language acquisition does not require any special mechanism; whereas, Chomsky considers language as too **complex** to be learnt from **environmental exposure** and too distinctive in its structure to be learnable by general cognitive means.
- ✚ **Universal Grammar** is thus endowed with its own distinctive mechanism for learning.
- ✚ When we talk about errors in **SL** utterances, Behaviorists view errors as a result of '**bad habits**' which can be controlled through rote learning and pattern drilling using **target** language models.
- ✚ **Recent studies** contradict this view by claiming that errors and mistakes are patterned although some of them are caused by **first** language influence, yet this is not true for all of them.
- ✚ **Learner's** language system is unstable and characterized by high degree of **variability** which is a central feature of learner **interlanguage**.

### Lesson-03: CREATIVITY AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

- ✓ **Fossilization** refers to the situation when a learner's SL system seems to 'freeze' or become stuck at some more or less **deviant stage**.
- ✓ **Learners' performance in SL** is influenced by the language/languages they already know which are obvious in their accent as well as in certain characteristic mistakes in their **utterances**.
- ✓ This phenomenon is called **language transfer**.
- ✓ **Behaviorists** view it as an important source of error and interference in **SLL**; whereas, recent theorists find widely differing views on **extent and nature of influences**.

- ✓ **Performing** in a language involves speaking, making sense of data we hear, interpreting, and processing incoming language data.
- ✓ Language input is essential for **normal** language learning.
- ✓ **Behaviorist** theory saw regular (**oral**) practice as helpful in forming correct language ‘**habits**’ whereas the **contemporary** theorists put emphasis on ‘**practice**’ function.
- ✓ For instance, **information-processing** theorists argued that language competence consists of both a knowledge component and a **skill** component.

### Lesson-04 SECOND LANGUAGE USE AND PERFORMANCE PERSPECTIVE

- **Negative evidence** means any kind of input that informs about unacceptable forms in the target language.
- It includes **formal correction** by teacher and informal paraphrasing by a **native-speaking conversational** partner.
- However, corrections often seem **ineffective**; therefore, recent theorist put more emphasis on the provision of **positive evidence**.

### Lesson-05 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

- ❖ This period since the **1950s** can be divided into three main phases: 1950s – 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s onwards.
- ❖ In **1950s** and early **1960s** SLL theorizing was much adjunct to the practical business of language teaching.
- ❖ Language teaching methods at that time had to be justifiable in terms of an underlying theory. ‘**Progressive**’ language pedagogy (**1950s**) drew on a version of structuralism developed by British linguist Palmer.
- ❖ This approach is summed up as follows:

The conviction about finite set of ‘patterns’ or ‘structures’ in language systems

The belief that reception and practice result in accuracy and fluency in foreign language habits

Methodology to teach ‘the basic’ first before encouraging learners to communicate their own thoughts and ideas

### Lesson-06 BEHAVIOURISM AND FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- ✚ **Behaviorists** view language learning (like any other kind of learning) as a formation of habits; that is creation of **stimulus-response** pairing which becomes stronger with reinforcement.
- ✚ In case of **first** language learning, the process is relatively simple as we have to learn a new set of habits.
- ✚ **Second language** learning involves replacing those habits by a set of new ones, which is complicated.
- ✚ If SL structures are similar to the **learners’** first language then learning will easily take place but in case they are different, learning will be difficult.

- ✦ From a teacher's point of view, this approach had **two-fold** implications.
- ✦ **Learning** takes place by imitating and repeating (**practice makes perfect**).
- ✦ **Teachers** needed to focus their teaching on structures which were believed to be difficult, which would be, the areas of **differences**.
- ✦ Therefore, researchers embarked on comparing pairs of languages, termed as '**contrastive analyses**'.
- ✦ In the late **1950s**, the linguistics saw a shift from structural linguistics to generative linguistics, initiated by **Noam Chomsky**. In **psychology** too, **pre-eminent** role for the environment was losing ground in favour of developmentalist views, such as **Piaget's cognitive** development theory.
- ✦ **Chomsky** strongly criticized **Skinner's Behaviorist** views on number of issues and rejected the idea that one can compare the behaviour of rats in a laboratory, learning to perform simple tasks, to the behaviour of children learning language without direct teaching.
- ✦ **Chomsky** claimed that children have an innate faculty that guides them in their learning of language.
- ✦ In **1970s**, **Klima and Bellugi (1966), Slobin (1970), Brown (1973)** found striking similarities in language learning behaviour of young children whatever the language they were learning.

### **Lesson-07 SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND KRASHEN'S MONITOR MODEL**

- ✓ **First Language Acquisition: General Principles;**
- ✓ **SLL: Contrastive Analysis;**
- ✓ **SLL: Error Analysis;**
- ✓ **Krashen's Monitor Model; Acquisition Learning Hypothesis**
- ✓ From the brief and oversimplified account of **1970s first language** acquisition research, following characteristics emerge:
  - Children go through stages. □ These stages are very similar across children for a given language, although individual progress rate varies. □ These stages are similar across languages. □ Child language is rule-governed and systematic, and their rules do not necessarily correspond to adult ones. □ Children are resistant to correction. □ Their processing capacity limits the number of rules they can apply at any one time.
- ✓ These findings caught **SLA** researchers' attention too; because, the predictions made by **contrastive analysis** did not seem to be borne out in practice.
- ✓ **Construction** differences among languages are not necessarily difficult.
- ✓ Neither construction similarities among languages are **necessarily** easy; difficulty sometimes occurs in only one direction.
- ✓ The task of language comparison to design **efficient** language teaching programs now seemed to be disproportionately huge in relation to its **prediction powers**.
- ✓ **Developments** in first language acquisition and disillusionment with contrastive analysis originated '**error analysis**,' the systematic investigation of **SL** learners' errors.
- ✓ Studies reveal that learners' errors do not **necessarily** originate from **first** language.
- ✓ They are neither **target-like nor first-language** like; they must be **learner-internal** in origin.

## ENG504 by (Notes for Quiz 1)

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- ✓ Researchers started classifying them for better understanding and with errors in the mother tongue.
- ✓ In 1972, Selinker coined a term 'inter-language' that refers to the language produced by learners both as a system and as a series of interlocked systems.
- ✓ These studies moved beyond error analysis and focused the learner system as a whole.
- ✓ The theory evolved in late 1970s; it was refined and expanded in early 1980s.
- ✓ It is based around five basic hypotheses:  
The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis 2. The Monitor hypothesis 3. The Natural Order hypothesis 4. The Input hypothesis 5. The Affective Filter hypothesis

### Lesson-08 SLA HYPOTHESES

- According to Krashen, learning system has only one function, i.e., as a monitor or editor.
- It comes into play only to 'make changes in the form of our utterance.'
- Acquisition initiates the utterances and is responsible for fluency, thus, monitor is thought to alter the output of the acquired system.
- This hypothesis is criticized because the monitor doesn't operate all the time as pressures and demands of conversing in real time often doesn't allow it.
- Moreover, it is impossible to test the claims empirically.
- Natural order hypothesis says that we acquire the language rules in a predictable order that cannot be determined solely by formal simplicity.
- This hypothesis is criticized for being too strong.
- It ignores well-documented cases of language transfer or individual variability.
- It is based almost exclusively on the morpheme studies, which reflect accuracy of production rather than acquisition sequences.
- Input hypothesis is linked to the above mentioned hypothesis.
- It claims that we move along the developmental continuum by receiving comprehensible input. Too simple or too complex input will not be useful for acquisition.
- It claims that speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause.
- Speech cannot be taught directly; it emerges on its own as a result of building competence via comprehensible input.
- Further, it says that if input is understood, the necessary grammar is automatically provided.
- This hypothesis is criticized for being vague and imprecise.
- It is impossible to verify the theory as no independently testable definitions are given.
- Nor does the theory specify the internal workings of the 'Language Acquisition Device' where acquisition actually takes place.
- Just comprehensible input is not enough; learners also need to 'let that input in' as it is.
- Affective Filter supposedly determines how receptive to the input a learner is going to be.
- This filter captures relationship between affective variables and acquisition process.
- It posits that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their affective filter.
- Learners' attitude toward second language acquisition determines their input and affective filter.
- Major criticism on this hypothesis claims it to be vague and atheoretical.

- **Schumann's Acculturation Model of SLA:** It views second language acquisition from a radically different angle, and also remained influential during subsequent decades.
- **Schumann** noticed that early **inter-language** resembled pidgin language with characteristic features.
- **SLA** was compared to the **complexification** of pidgins.
- This process was linked to degree of **acculturation** of learners.
- The closer they feel to the target language community, the better learner will 'acculturate' and **vice versa**.
- This model was influential in opening alternative lines of research comparing **SLA** with **pidginization and creolization**, and bringing to the fore social and psychological variables along with their roles in **SLL**.
- According to the model, success depends on the extent to which learners adapt fully to **target** language culture.
- **Two major** factors are identified in acculturation: **social distance and psychological distance**.
- **Social distance** factors refer to those involving the relationship between the internal characteristics of a language group and the ability for the learner to become closer (**socially**) to that target language group.
- Among these factors are the social dominance of the language group, the ability for the **individual** to integrate into the group, the cohesiveness and size of the group, the attitude of both the group and the individual toward each other, and the length of the exposure between the **two**.
- **Psychological** distance factors refer to the extent to which **individual learners** cope **psychologically** with learning an **L2**.
- Among these factors are **anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence**.

### Lesson-09 SECOND LANGUAGE AND UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR

- ❖ SLA **1980s** and Beyond; **SLA: The Role of Internal Mechanisms**;
- ❖ **SLA 1980s**: The Role of First Language;
- ❖ Linguistics and Language Learning: **Universal Grammar Approach**;
- ❖ Aims of Linguistic Research; Universal Grammar: Knowledge of Language
- ❖ By **mid-1980s**, SLL had matured into an autonomous field of inquiry encompassing a number of substantial programs of research with their distinctive theoretical orientations and methodologies.
- ❖ New links emerged with cognitive science, **neuro-psychology and socio-cultural** frameworks that have greatly enriched perception of **SLA but SLL** research agenda continues to focus on fundamental issues carried forward from the **1970s** such as: The role of **internal** mechanisms (like **language-specific issues, cognitive issues**)  
**The role of first language** □ **The role of psychological variables affecting learning (motivation, personality, language aptitude)** □ **The role of social and environmental factors** □ **The role of input**
- ❖ **Universal Grammar Approach (UG)**  
Language is a result of **two** factors' interplay: the initial state – '**language acquisition device**' and the course of experience – '**input**'.
- ❖ This approach is developed by **Noam Chomsky**.

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- ❖ Its aim is twofold: **descriptive adequacy** and explanatory adequacy.
- ❖ **UG is** a property theory that attempts to characterize the underlying linguistic knowledge in SL learners' minds.
- ❖ Linguistic theory aims to:  
**Describe the mental representations of language that are stored in the human mind. □ Define what all languages have in common as well as their distinctive characteristics.**
- ❖ **UG** approach in SLL provides detailed descriptive framework that enables formulation of welldefined hypotheses about the task facing the learner and to analyze the learners' language in a more focused manner.
- ❖ **A transition** theory describes the process of language learning.
- ❖ **UG** is also a transition theory as it is interested in describing the language transition process or learning process that occurs during the learning of the **second** language.
- ❖ In that sense, it does answer the **two** main questions that **Chomsky** said the learners must know or the language theory must answer:
- ❖ it describes the knowledge of the language (**property theory**)
- ❖ to explain how that knowledge is acquired by the learners (**transition theory**).