

The Effect of First Language (L1) Acquisition on Second Language (L2) Acquisition

Malek

Ahmad Kord¹, Assistant Professor, Resalat University Zahedan (Sisitan & Baluchestan) Branch, Iran

Elahe Rahvareh^{2*}, B.A student, Resalat University Zahedan (Sisitan & Baluchestan) Branch, Iran

Atefe Raisie^{3**}, B.A student, Resalat University Zahedan (Sisitan & Baluchestan) Branch, Iran

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Abstract

There are many factors that affect second language (L2) acquisition and one of this factors that may affect learning a second language is first language. The purpose of this paper is to find out how the first language (L1) affects L2 acquisition and for that at first the constative analysis is explained. Then some of the second language theories are mentioned, especially the ones that have the use of L1 as part of their structures. After that in order to find out in what ways L1 and L2 are alike or different there is some explanation about some of L1 and L2 similarities and differences. In the next section some of the methods that learning from L1 can help toward learning L2 are discussed. After that there is a brief explanation of L1 supporting L2 teaching and the last section is a discussion about language transfer from L1 to L2.

Keywords: First and second language acquisition, theories of language acquisition, learning from L1 towards learning an L2.

1. Introduction

Perspectives on language teaching bring a wide range of vital features that need to be considered; one of them includes the native language. This feature plays an important role that might be overseen once language teachers begin instructing. The first language or L1 will become the first source for a learner to understand how a language works. The learning of foreign languages helps students to understand their native one, and they resort to their method of L1 to relate to the L2. In this sense, it is relevant to point the significance of students' first language when learning a foreign or second language (Romero & Manjarres, 2017).

During the first year of school, it is necessary that the first language is developed in students. First language development is required in order to have good strategies to transfer to the new language. If students do not have proper strategies in their mother tongue, they will not have desirable strategies to transfer to the new language, and consequently the cognitive development will be reduced (Salmona Madriñan, 2014).

First language acquisition

Language acquisition is the method whereby children acquire their first languages. All humans (without exceptional physical or intellectual disabilities) have an innate functionality to acquire language. Children may also collect one or more first languages. For example, children who develop up in an environment in which solely English is spoken and heard will gather only English as their first language. However, children who grow up in an environment in which both Telugu and English are spoken and heard equally will acquire both Telugu and English as their first languages. Acquisition occurs passively and unconsciously through implicit learning. In other words, children do not need explicit instruction to learn their first languages but alternatively seem to simply "pick up" language in the same way they learn to roll over, crawl, and walk. Language acquisition in children just seems to happen (Vaidya, 2017).

First language is being termed via different names such as native language, major language and mother tongue (e.g., Hindi). This language is assumed to be one which is acquired in the course of early childhood- starting before the age of about 3 years (Sinha et al., 2009).

It is clear that children learn language with wonderful speed, however how they do it remains a mystery. The fantastic way in which young children gather their first language has long interested linguists and developmental psychologists. Language is an ability that children grasp by the age of three with notable ease and speed, regardless of the complexity of the task (Masykur, 2017).

Analogy can assist in learning first language in some instances but not in most cases. Children frequently hear their parents' utter phrases or sentences and they use these as their models in developing their own. They substitute some words in the phrases or sentences. But on occasion this creates serious problems as the meanings may also change. This occurs especially when the children do not recognize the policies governing the acceptable association of words in sentences (Meniado, 2016).

Second language acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers to the study of how students learn a second language (L2) additionally to their first language (L1). Although it is referred as Second Language Acquisition, it is the process of learning any language after the first language whether it is the second, third or fourth language. Therefore, any different language aside from the first language is called a second language (SL) or additionally referred to as a target language (TL). To distinguish between Second Language and Foreign Language, The Collins Dictionary defines Second Language as the language that a person learns after his or her native language and Foreign Language as a language that is used in a country other than one's native country. There are unique approaches to acquire second or overseas languages. It can be in a formal way as in a classroom environment or casual way such as when the learner picks up the

language by being culturally active participant of the society. This can be achieved by means of attending school in the target country, watching local television, listening to radio or/and reading newspapers in L2. By being actively concerned in the learning environment, the learner is continuously in contact with the target language via normal daily routines (Gogolin, 2011).

In the second language acquisition process, it can be beneficial for instructors to teach the new language using the mother tongue as aid in order to develop not only the target language but also the cognitive development required to be academically and professionally successful. It is a totally crucial element in education due to the fact second language instructors in bilingual schools need to make certain that their students acquire a level of proficiency as a way to permit them to deal with academic content all through the school year. It has been discovered that the use of first language in the second-language classroom allows students make connections with their current knowledge of the mother tongue, facilitating the process of understanding. Research indicates that the first language should not be banned in the second-language classroom however that neither should its use be continuously encouraged, in any other case the mother tongue may replace the target language rather than help it (Salmona Madriñan, 2014).

2. Research questions

The purpose of this study is to find out what are the effects of first language on the second language acquisition. Specifically, the study has focused in two primary objectives:

1. Is there any relationship between first and second language acquisition?
2. How Does the First Language Have an Influence over second language acquisition?
3. Contrastive Analysis

One of the key elements that needs to be regarded when talking about the effect that the L1 has over the learning of a foreign language is contrastive analysis (CA). contrastive analysis can be described as: “the systematic comparison between two or more languages, with the goal of describing their similarities and differences”. This variety of analysis generally has a pedagogical motive and it is commonly carried out to have better descriptions of the learners’ overall performance and pick out better teaching materials for the learners. When someone is learning a foreign language, it is common to make errors in pronunciation or grammar as a result of the interference of the first language; it is here where CA is essential because it permits the instructor and the learner to be aware of the distinction that exist between two languages in order to learn the correct use of the foreign one (Romero & Manjarres, 2017).

3. Theories of Second Language Acquisition

There are a number of factors that have impact on learning a second language and it is important to discuss the theories behind second language acquisition and attempt to find out how we learn a language and what factors needs to be present for a successful language acquisition (Gogolin, 2011).

Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition

Stephen Krashen has influenced the world of SLA as he has studied and researched language acquisition for many years. His theory is primarily based on five distinctive hypotheses which include (Friedrichsen, 2020):

- Acquisition-Learning hypothesis: Students should learn by using natural and meaningful communication, much like we did as children learning our L1, and emphasizes more on the communicative act instead of the learning of grammatical rules (Crowley, 2014).

- Monitor hypothesis: Explains the student's relationship with their own self- correction mechanism. Some students under-use, over-use, or optimally use this feature to correct their speech and production (Crowley, 2014).

- Natural Order hypothesis: Claims that there is a natural order in which people acquire language, and is primarily based on many statistical findings (Crowley, 2014).

- The Input hypothesis: The most influential and important hypothesis of Krashen's model because of the significance that he puts on comprehensible input (Friedrichsen, 2020). This strategy suggests that students learn one step past their current level of competence (Crowley, 2014).

- The Affective Filter hypothesis: A learner need to be open and willing to acquire information in a new, targeted language in order for it to reach one's language acquisition device and result in obtaining the information completely. One's affective filter is based around one's mood about learning a new language which consist of motivation, self-confidence, self-image and anxiety as possible factors that lower or elevate the affective filter. When the affective filter goes up, the input will not be internalized because of the "mental block" that has been put up in one's mind (Friedrichsen, 2020).

Interlanguage Theory

Interlanguage is a temporary grammar which is used to bridge one's information and use of their native or first language (L1) to their second language (L2). Interlanguage is a kind of grammar that is always altering as one moves via the acquisition process and applies the rules that govern the language. Grammar rules can also be over generalized or underutilized as one's cognitive abilities acquire the L2 while making an attempt to apply what one knows about L1 or has been taught about L2. Interlanguage is thought to show up in both children and adults learning a second language. Interlanguage also accounts for the possibility of never entirely acquiring a second language (Friedrichsen, 2020).

Interlanguages have some frequent characteristics with L1 acquisition, due to the fact both share similar developmental sequences. Some of the characteristics of L2 acquisition show similarities with L1 acquisition, while others show differences (Hulya, 2009)

4. Similarities and differences between L1 and L2 acquisition

Similarities between L1 and L2 acquisition:

Developmental Sequences

Researchers have carried out several studies to understand the nature of first and second language acquisition. These studies have revealed that both first and second language learners follow a pattern of development, which is in most cases followed despite exceptions (Hulya, 2009).

Acquisition Order

Researchers have tried to discover out if there is an order of acquisition in acquiring grammatical morphemes. The findings are vital but contradictory and have implications on first and second language acquisition. There seems to be an order of acquisition in both first and second language acquisition. Hence, one should be cautious not to declare for an invariant order of acquisition however for a more flexible order of acquisition and be aware of the variations affecting this order (Hulya, 2009).

Input

The input a first language learner receives is simple and comprehensible at the beginning and is getting slightly more complicated. input need to be slightly above the level of the language learner. Only in doing so can the second language learner go forward. The second language learner should be exposed to the target language as much as possible and that the lack of comprehensible input will cause the language learner to be held up in his development. It is believed that the same arguments for the inadequacy of input in first language acquisition also account for second language acquisition. Consequently, when learning a first language, learners have to rely on the information they are equipped with; and when learning a second language, learners have to rely on the L1 (Hulya, 2009).

Behaviorist Views of Language Acquisition

Basing on the Behaviorist Approach it is assumed that an individual learning a second language begins with the habits related with the first language. These habits intervene with those needed for second language speech and new habits of language are formed. Errors produced through the second language learner are considered as first language habits interfering with second language habits. This approach advises the instant treatment of learner errors (Hulya, 2009).

Differences between L1 and L2 acquisition:

The Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis learning does not turn into acquisition. first language acquisition and second language acquisition are two distinct phenomena. Acquisition might also occur in the school room when communication is emphasized via dialogues, role playing, and other significant interaction. As a language teacher, one should be cautious when

evaluating the claims related to acquisition and learning. Through focused input and focused practice learning may turn into acquisition (Hulya, 2009).

The Critical Period Hypothesis

The critical period indicates concrete differences between L1 and L2 acquisition due to the fact that it is based on the internal factors of the learner. The arguments of the critical period are primarily based on pronunciation, neglecting grammatical and semantic competence (Hulya, 2009).

4.2.3 Fossilization

Fossilization is used to label the process via which non-target norms become fixed in Interlanguage. The possible reasons for fossilization are recommended to be age (learners' brains loose plasticity at a vital age, therefore, certain linguistic features can't be mastered), lack of desire to articulate (learners' make no effort to adopt target language norms because of various social and psychological factors), communicative stress (the learner is forced to communicate ideas above his/her linguistic competence), lack of learning opportunity, and the nature of the feedback on learners' use of L2. Based on the factors associated to fossilization it can without difficulty be inferred that fossilization is unique to L2 acquisition. It is hardly possible to see a child acquiring his/her first language to fossilize certain varieties of language (Hulya, 2009).

5. Learning from L1 towards Learning an L2

Natural Pedagogy

In the beginning stages of learning a new language, as infants do, generalizable information might also be best taught at first instead of jumping right into episodic information. It is sensible to assume, after all, that generalizable information (things that are static), from the infant, child, or adult's point of view, are more liable to repetition, and thus become simpler to remember. This applies generally to beginner students of a language, however in reality, it can work for any new topic to any level of language learner: a thorough study and practicing of any word or phrase bank before tackling episodic information may be extra efficient in the long run, and is supported by the order in which we learn as infants (Crowley, 2014).

Ostensive Signals and Dialogical Teaching in L2 Teaching

In Dialogical teaching the concept is basically not to just have the student be a passive listener to the teacher, but rather to get the student to be actively engaged in the process of reading during the activity. And that is the main point of ostensive signals as well: to express intentionality, and by doing so employs the interactive and social mode of our brains which is better suitable for learning. Through constant interactive play and prompting, it might also be possible for an L2 student to reap the same advantages as a child learning their L1 (Crowley, 2014).

6.L1 Supporting L2 Teaching

Many teaching activities ought to be tailored around using the student's L1 (whenever possible in an L1 unmixed classroom setting). One of the first language acquisition features, which the baby surely has but we cannot expect to recreate, is a blank mind. And so, while the infant and child can rapidly put connections of words and phrases with the world around them, adults or late children's learners already have an interfering interface with natural language absorption — their first language. So, to think for a second that we can impinge upon this interference with any success is wishful thinking, since in reality beginner to intermediate students will always be translating in their head whether the teacher knows about it or not. And we should not discourage the disuse of the student's L1, however instead embrace it and even use to enhance the learning process (Crowley, 2014).

7.Language Transfer from L1 to L2

Instructors need to take into account students' levels of development in their first language in order to make sure not only the second language acquisition, but also full cognitive development. Research has shown that in order to read and write fluently, a child needs to understand the spoken language and understand how this spoken language is represented in written structure through the use of symbols. In fact, the literacy development process, previous understanding and personal background are used as equipment to assist students move from the first stage of literacy to the next one. If children already understand the symbolic function of characters or are familiar with letters, they can easily start reading and writing. It is through students' experiences that children become familiar with traits of their language and develop an understanding of the features of literacy. Therefore, it is in the classroom that the second language background is built, using the first language as a bridge between previous and new knowledge (Salmona Madriñan, 2014).

The second language will constantly activate first language associations, no matter what degree of proficiency the person has. Even if instructors keep away from and forbid the use of the first language in the classroom, the connection and links between both languages will always exist in the learners' minds. In the early stages of second language acquisition, learners process the new language, making connections with their mother tongue. The links between both languages can make learning contexts even richer. Although certain language skills can be positively transferred and may additionally aid in the development of corresponding skills in another language, the first language have to be sufficiently developed before exposure to the new language (Salmona Madriñan, 2014).

Conclusion

Various theories are put ahead to describe first language (L1) acquisition and second language (L2) acquisition. In order to apprehend the nature of L1 and L2 language acquisition, many aspects had been examined, compared, and contrasted. Results from these comparisons and contrasts have precious implications for language teachers which can help them to design

their syllabuses, classroom activities and teaching process. These outcomes also allow the language teacher to understand his/her students' learning processes (Hulya, 2009).

In some ways L1 and L2 are connected to each other. There are many similarities between each of them but there are many differences too. In order to have a positive effect and not a negative one in using L1 for acquiring L2 there should be consideration of these similarities and differences and careful use of the right methods of using L1 for learning L2 in different situations.

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