

# Paradigms of Second Language Acquisition: A Neurolinguistic Perspective

A. Delbio, M. Ilankumaran

*Abstract---* Second language acquisition is an enormously a complex phenomenon. Second language means learning any language next to the learner's first language. This paper brings out the approaches of second language acquisition and the perceptions of learners. The approaches are linguistic, neurolinguistic, cognition, and socio cultural. It is not possible for the learner to describe the language system, because the second language learners find hard to develop it. In learning a new language formal and informal way of learning takes place. Formal learning means classroom based learning, in which the learner acquires the language in a systematic way. In informal learning, the learners acquire the language through picking up from the native speaker or through internet. Stephen Krashen distinguishes this formal and informal as conscious learning and unconscious learning. The theoretical perspectives of second language acquisition are discussed in this paper. Universal grammar approach is the most influential linguistic theory in the field of acquiring the second language. This theory attempts to find out the linguistic knowledge in second language learners' mind. This paper also deals with how the features of language input affect language learning through input based perspective and learner based perspective. It also analyses the role of memory in language learning through cognitive approach. This paper also brings out the sociolinguistic perspectives and its impact in the field of second language learning.

*Keywords---* Second Language Acquisition, Universal Grammar Approach, Cognitive Approach, Linguistic Approach, Sociolinguistic Perspective, Input Based Perspective, Process based Perspective.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is basically a human action with the purpose of communication and inseparably bound up with culture. The learner acquires the first language unconsciously, but the second language is acquired through conscious way. The learner learns the second language only for a purpose or to adopt a new culture. As English language is considered to be the global language, it is given more importance in the education field. In the ground of education, the students as well as the teachers consider English as a subject rather than a language. It is the main problem faced by the learners of second language. Several teaching methods are there to teach the second language. The teaching methods are the practical application of theories. It is important to have a clear understanding of the theories of language acquisition. The main approaches of the theory of language acquisition are cognitive approach, linguistic approach, neuro linguistic approach and socio cultural approach. This paper deals with the theoretical perspectives of second language acquisition.

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## II. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Second language acquisition means acquiring the second language, like that of the first language. Brown says that acquisition does not happen only in the minds of the learner, but the interaction of mind and social context. He also says that domain of language and mind is established within linguistics and psychology. In India, English is considered to be the second language. It is one of the main subjects from school to higher education. Learning English is considered a form of learning for all purposes. In schools and colleges, English is taught as the second language, because an individual can achieve their higher proficiency with the help of English language. Even the people from rural areas wish to acquire the language. It is a window of modern technology and modern world and it is accepted as the second language by all groups of people. In all boards of education, English is taught as the second language. In acquiring the second language, the learner faces a lot of psychological factors. Those factors can be rectified through language learning approaches. The approaches are

- Cognitive Approach
- Linguistic Approach
- Socio cultural Approach
- Neuro linguistic Approach

## III. COGNITIVE APPROACH

The learners use general learning mechanisms in order to extract structure and patterns from the language input, which the learners want to expose. Based on the necessity of the learners grammatical rules and other formal aspects of language emerge. Input related factors and learner related factors are the influential factors in language learning.

### *Input Related Factors*

The main input related factors are naturalistic input and classroom input. In naturalistic input, parent's education plays a main role and based on the environment of the student, classroom and natural input are categorised. Input related factors focused on the phenomenon called competition model. It is also known as unified competition model. In this model, the learner's task is to discover the strength of particular form and function relationships in the language system. Second language learners may be interested in competition model. It investigates the influence of the strength of the first language in second language acquisition. In competition model, learning is accounted by general cognitive mechanism.

MacWhinney says that this cognitively oriented study sees the input driving in first language and second language acquisition. The validity, detectability and reliability of cues play a main role in language acquisition.

#### *Learner Related Factors*

Learner related factors comprise associative learning of grammatical structure. Construction based learning involves in learning and recycling the construction of the sentence. It symbolically unites and associates morphological, syntactic and lexical form with semantic, pragmatic and discourse functions. In the wake of transformational grammar and cognitive psychology, grammar translation theory and approach can be modified for the conscious acquisition of language as a meaningful system. Carroll, Driller and Chastain are the main proponents of cognitive method. New insights from psycholinguistics and pedagogy have given rise to the cognitive theory. A language is to be learned as the manifestation of a meaningful system. In the place of several methods like Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Reading method and others, the cognitive theory proposes an explicit conscious learning of the grammatical elements of the language.

In modern times, there has been a greater focus on learner factors in language teaching and learning. Learner factors such as age, aptitude, attitude, motivation and personality traits count a lot in learning a language. Usually second language learning starts at the age of eight and ten, by that time, the first language would have been acquired thoroughly. The insight gained from the first language will sustain and promote the learning of a new language. Learners, who start their second language acquisition later may bring with it greater maturity of mind, greater cognitive power and generalizing ability. The attitude to the language learned and to the native speakers who speak that language may hinder the learning. The desire to communicate with the people of that language also promotes the learning. A positive attitude to the language is essential for learning.

There are many schools in rural areas in which they learn English just to get marks but they are not fluent and thorough in grammatical principles. In the conscious mind students show their full attention in learning, a simple distraction can affect their learning process. Anxiety, fear and shy are some of the main reasons which affect the second language learning. The students consider English as a foreign language and feel difficult to read or speak it properly. Some students have a fear of making mistakes while they speak or read and what others would think about them if they make a mistake. Some students have the talent to speak English but in rural areas they will not get any proper appreciation and so they curtail themselves leading to a problematic situation.

Lack of training and proper drills, no proper motivation and negative reinforcement are some of the factors which affect L2 learning. In some institutions, the teachers just want the student to complete the grade with pass mark and they do not give any proper drills for the students to improve in a language. If there is no motivation about the importance of second language, the learning process will be a complete waste. The students are not the native speakers and they may make a lot of mistakes. The teacher should maintain

politeness while explaining again because negative reinforcement leads to the development of inferiority complex in the mind of the student. They consider themselves that they cannot learn English language.

Lack of proper learning environment can be a secondary problem which affects L2 learning. In some situation, there may be no chance for the children to clarify their doubts because of illiterate parents. In some educational institution, there may be lack of some resource persons who deal with grammatical principles and rules. In such situation, the students learn language without any grammatical principle and it is not accepted when they go for their higher education or profession in reputed institution.

Lack of interest is another main reason and it is caused by low quality in teaching and misunderstanding of concept. Language cannot be taught in a regular classroom. It should be acquired rather than learning and thus regular classroom teaching will not make a student master in the language. Grammatical rules are the major part in a language teaching but the students get bored during grammar class. They do not want to listen grammar class due to lack of interest in grammatical rules.

Society is a basic problem in most of the students. In some societies, the people consider learning another language will spoil their culture and tradition and so they are against second language learning. The elders are not ready to allow their children to learn a foreign language. In Tamilnadu, most of the politicians want all the students to do their higher education in Tamil rather in English.

#### *Cognitive Approach & Memory in Language Acquisition*

Memory power improves the skills of learning a second language. A man who knows more than one language has a good planning skill and decision making skill. The size of the brain's language centre and hippocampus increases the ability in learning a foreign language. The area of the brain is responsible for storing and retrieving memories. A Swedish study was conducted in which the brain was tested before and after the language training. After the acquisition of foreign language, the study reveals that there is an increase in the size of hippocampus. The hardest thing for the memory is to understand a language. In learning a second language, the comparative study is made on the brain. Language is complicated and earning a new language demands undivided attention. Hardworking process is a good exercise for the brain which makes it stronger. Learning another language is an effective process. Practically it increases the intellect. In this way, the mind becomes stronger and sharper. Many researches have been conducted on the functioning of brain in learning a new language. David T. Hakes discusses the locus of bilingualism in the individual mind. A comparative study is made on the functioning of brain between the first language acquisition and second language learning and the results prove that a person, who is bilingual or multilingual, has better cognitive ability than the one who is monolingual.



#### IV. LINGUISTIC APPROACH

Linguistic has given new insight into the nature of language and also given a description of the theoretical components of particular language. Linguistic gives rise to the idea of a pedagogical grammar and universal grammar.

##### *Pedagogical Grammar*

There is often a discrepancy between descriptive information on a second language and the needs of pedagogy. Sometimes linguistic descriptions are too detailed, too technical and too theoretical, so that an intermediate device the pedagogical grammar has been suggested. A pedagogical grammar is characterized as interpretation and choice of language for educating purposes. It is a depiction of a language and it is not only based on linguistics, but for academic and instructive criteria. It includes inventories of language items, suggestion for pedagogical presentation and arrangement, essential linguistic concepts, and other relevant information on the language. Pedagogical grammar forms the linguistic resources for curriculum development, making of teaching materials and the evaluation of language programmes.

The writer of a pedagogical grammar decides to provide appropriate ways of arranging and presenting the materials in the light of linguistics and psychology. The main objective of this pedagogical grammar is to determine the frame of grammar among the students. A linguistic grammar is an account of competence, which means the knowledge of language system can be acquired through native speaker. Stern says that "A pedagogical grammar ... is a formulation of grammar of a foreign language with the objective of the acquisition of that language; it embodies those considerations which are relevant as the learner is put in contact with that which is to be learned" The valid point that a language curriculum cannot be founded on linguistic consideration alone and the factors can be borne in mind while composing a pedagogical grammar.

##### *Universal Grammar*

The way towards contemplating language acquisition has raised a variety of research techniques, approaches, tests, thoughts, assessments and articulations. The term Universal Grammar is considered to be stand out amongst the most talked about and controversial issue. Universal grammar is regularly connected with Noam Chomsky, a well-known American language specialist and thinker. He claims "that language is governed by a set of highly abstract principles that provide parameters which are given particular settings in different languages." The hypothesis of Universal Grammar structure expresses that all the language depends on similar standards and in this way they are associated with one another. The standard and parameter clarification implies that the standards are the reason for all language and parameters are activated uniquely in contrast from one language to another. Besides that, the widespread of the language standards are announced to be natural, which implies that they should be explicit to people and developed in the human personality. The Universal Grammar structure hypothesis is likewise frequently called the "innateness hypothesis" which, furthermore, demonstrates that language securing is totally not at all like different sorts of learning or

acquisition. All inclusive syntax has never been intended to clarify all parts of language and its acquisition.

##### *Socio Cultural Approach*

Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, a Russian therapist who lived amidst the Russian Revolution, built up a hypothesis of improvement known as the Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development. Vygotsky's fundamental declaration was that student is established in various sociocultural settings and their subjective improvement is progressed through social cooperation. The student enhanced with increasingly gifted and dynamic in procuring the language. The Vygotsky hypothesis of psychological improvement is for the most part worried about more mind confusing subjective exercises of the student. Vygotsky's sociocultural hypothesis is additionally one of those in charge of laying the preparation for constructivism. According to Vygotsky, "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people and then inside the child. This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals." A second part of Vygotsky's hypothesis is the possibility that the potential for subjective advancement is restricted to a zone of proximal improvement. This zone is the part of investigation for which the understudy is subjectively arranged, yet it requires help and social association to develop completely. An instructor or increasingly experienced peer can give the student 'scaffolding' to help the student's advancing comprehension of information areas or advancement of complex aptitudes. Community oriented learning, talk, displaying, and framework are systems for supporting the scholarly information and abilities of students and encouraging deliberate learning.

#### V. THE NEUROLINGUISTIC APPROACH

The neurolinguistic approach deals with second language learning that gives another paradigm for viable acquisition of communicative abilities in a second language in classroom setting. The two components of effective communication are implicit competence and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is conscious knowledge and implicit competence is the unconscious knowledge. Neuro-linguistic programming is the new technique which can be used in the classroom to develop the implicit and explicit knowledge among the learners.

#### VI. NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Neuro-Linguistic Programming is used to teach English language. In general one's failure and success is determined by the behaviour and thought. If those patterns and thoughts are modified in right way, language can be taught to an individual in a successful way.



Neuro-Linguistic Programming basically works on representational system of sensory organs. The visual sense includes pictures, graphs, videos, use of blackboards and charts. The teacher uses flash cards and charts to make the students understand about a word and its meaning.

## VII. NLP TECHNIQUES IN L2 LEARNING

The NLP techniques are used as a tool to enhance language learning. In most of the language classes and institutions, these techniques are used to acquire English language. In most of the countries, English is considered to be second language and the NLP techniques make it easy to learn. The techniques include visual, auditory and kinesthetic which are given through sense organs. In digital world, smart class, video lessons are some of the basic techniques followed in classroom. These techniques are very interesting which make the students actively take part in language learning. Some of the basic techniques which can be used to improve L2 learning are;

- Anchoring
- Modelling
- Audio Visual aids
- Reframing
- Building Rapport
- Digital Learning
- State Management
- Reflection Technique
- Speech Training

### *Anchoring*

Anchoring is the NLP technique which is used to stimulate the emotions of an individual with some words or actions. It is the best technique which is used by the trainer to make the learners listen. This method is used to shape the mindset of the student before starting the class. A speech can deviate a student towards learning and so the teacher should be a good anchor. The trainers are allowed to use gestures, movements and words to deviate the mindset of the students. The trainer should set a goal what he has to gain from the student. In general class room motivation is a form of anchoring by which the teacher gets the attention of the students. The students should be the active participant in this method. The teacher will ask some question in order to recall the previous lessons learned during the previous class. This method helps in reducing stress, fear and anxiety. This method is also used to bring the internal feeling of an individual and those problems can be resolved. This technique can be used to drag the learners who are upset or not interested in learning. Anchoring is an extremely powerful way of strengthening the relationships with students by a teacher in a classroom. This technique is used to improve the activity of the students in English language class.

### *Modelling*

Modelling is the important NLP skill for language learning and by observing and copying the ways of others to achieve the high results. The students are asked to follow a model to improve his learning skills. For a language learner, the instructor instructs him to watch and listen to the native speaker to improve their language. The native speaker is

always considered a good model to enhance language learning. The students keenly listen to the speech, intonation, body posture and lip movement of the native speaker. If this method is practiced daily without knowing themselves, the student will start to speak as like the native speaker.

### *Audio Visual Aids*

Sense organs are the gate way of learning and gathering knowledge. Among them the sense of seeing and hearing are important. Most of the knowledge gained from the environment is through the eyes and ears. Children learn the best from the environment and from their surroundings. In the entire situation on the contrary the child cannot learn from the environment. For example, if the students want to learn about Eskimos, they cannot go to the polar region. The situation in the polar can be brought in front of them with the help of new materials is called audio- visual aids. The researches have proven that use of audio-visual aids in classroom will improve the quality of teaching learning process.

### *Reframing*

In the NLP, a Reframe is changing the importance of a correspondence by changing the specific situation, The casing size or different changes that put in the communication into a circumstance where the significance is modified. The changing idea of the meaning depends on user's point of view. This replacement in meaning paves the way to the change in the behavioral responses of the persons. It helps the learners by reframing their learning disabilities. If a student does not love a class because of the teaching style the teacher should change her frame or teaching style in order to make the student to listen. This reframing technique brings out the problem within the students and suggests way to change the frame in order to get rid of the problem. This method is like constructing ideas in human brain. A student writes a word wrongly and the teacher points out that word and explains the correct spelling. The frame made by the student is reframed by the teacher and it gets constructed in students' brain. This technique is more supportive to reduce errors in learning. It allows teachers to create a new frame for the students to improve in language learning. It enhances reading, speaking and writings skills and the mistakes made in these skills are corrected.

### *Building Rapport*

This technique is based on communication between two individuals. Students are allowed to choose their pair for communication. In the NLP centres they fix an English man for the students so that the student can learn the clear pronunciation and stress of the native speaker. The individual is motivated to follow their body postures according the situation. Dialogues, question and answer are some of the simple method which is followed in this technique. In schools dialogue writing is the best example for this technique yet oral skill is given more importance than writing.



### Digital Learning

Digital tools are the modern innovative things which please the students of this generation to practice language skills. Once they build language lab and other facilities to enhance language learning. The students do not want to follow those outdated materials. The students want everything to be in their fingertips rather than moving here and there. This mind set of the students is responsible for the vast development of technology. Normal classroom is changed to online class room and distance class with the help of internet. Nowadays language labs are replaced by mobile phones and computers.

A mobile phone has all the facilities in which meaning, voices, and videos can be recorded and played. It can do multi works and it is cheap when it is compared to language lab. Language labs have to be updated every three years and it is highly economical but mobile phone does not have such problems. IPads, tabs and digital projector are some of the new invention which replaces language lab.

### State Management

State management means control the state or situation of mind. This technique actively controls over the emotional and mental status of an individual. The students are given with a task and they are evaluated as to how they face the task. In the NLP training centres they give simple activities like how to book a train ticket, how will to ask way for super market. This technique is used to control the daily activities and how to use a language for the daily needs.

### Reflection Technique

This technique is completely based on an individual. The students are advised to stand in front of the mirror and train themselves. The students could see themselves in the mirror and they are able to correct themselves. Body posture, gesture and movements, lip movements can be noticed by them and they can change themselves. This method motivates the students to improve themselves to be a good part in the society. This method completely focuses upon the self-interest of the students.

This method directly stimulates the brain and each activity of themselves is noted in the brain. According to the information collected, the brain gives correct command to correct those mistakes. The teachers are passive in this method, they just explain the method and listen to the students' performance. The teachers are advised not to disturb the students while they are at practice.

### Speech Training

Speaking is the main function in language learning. An individual who is master in a language without using that language in daily life is completely wasted. So, it is important to use language. Group discussion, panel discussion is the best example for speech trainings. Group discussion is practised by a group of people and monitored by a moderator. The moderator is the trainer who gives a topic to discuss among the group. The people should use English as the medium to express their view. There are some rules to be followed by the participants. All should be given equal chance to express their idea. At the end, the moderator explains the mistakes done by the participants and they are

motivated to correct those mistakes. This method makes the students to be bold in a group and it will give them a good scope in their future career. If this method is practiced daily, the fluency, listening skill, politeness of the individual will develop unconsciously. Panel discussion is also conducted in the same format in order to find a solution for the problem which is discussed.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper brings out various approaches in second language acquisition. It analyses cognitive, linguistic, socio-cultural and neuro-linguistic approaches in acquiring the language. It also deals with the new technique called Neuro-Linguistic Programming. It is considered a recommended method in language acquisition. It trains the human mind and develops positive thinking. It develops creative thoughts and problem-solving skills. The NLP improves the teaching-learning process. The students can be free from worries and psychological pressure. The teacher must respect and support the student's personality and they must be kept engaged in different language activities like listening, speaking, taking points, comprehending the passage presented for listening or reading, discussing, debating and working out grammar exercises. The teacher's talk is the major language input for students. The teacher and the students must be active participants in acquiring the second language. It is not enough to have general theories and methods for successful language teaching. A language teacher can also plan strategies and successful techniques to ensure language learning. Use of techniques and methods are not only to attract the students, but need to make them effective learners.

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