

11-10-2021

SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Zafar Kholkhodjaevich Abdullaev

Jizzakh State Pedagogical Institute, abdullaev@jspi.uz

Follow this and additional works at: <https://uzjournals.edu.uz/tziuj>



Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Abdullaev, Zafar Kholkhodjaevich (2021) "SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING," *Mental Enlightenment Scientific-Methodological Journal*: Vol. 2021 : Iss. 06 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://uzjournals.edu.uz/tziuj/vol2021/iss06/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by 2030 Uzbekistan Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Mental Enlightenment Scientific-Methodological Journal* by an authorized editor of 2030 Uzbekistan Research Online. For more information, please contact sh.erkinov@edu.uz.

SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Zafar Kholkhodjaevich Abdullaev

**Lecturer, Head of Department of Foreign Languages in Social and
Humanitarian Sciences**

Jizzakh State Pedagogical Institute

E-mail address: abdullaev@jspi.uz

Abstract: The current paper covers an investigation of second language learning, an overview of the various teaching factors, and issues related to the teaching of English language in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, different learner types, attitudes and social backgrounds are discussed.

Key words: Interference, interlanguage, fossilization, anxiety, aptitude

INTRODUCTION

There are different definitions of the term 'second language learning', however, it can be broadly defined to include the learning of any language other than the learner's native language or mother tongue, at any level, provided only that the learning of the 'second' language takes place sometime later than the acquisition of the first language (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). For some linguists, a distinction should also be made between 'second language learning' and 'second language acquisition'. The term 'acquisition' is used to refer to picking up a second language through exposure, whereas the term 'learning' is used to refer to the conscious and planned study of that language. As a result, there has been a debate on the distinction between language acquisition and language learning. Much of that debate revolves around positions attributed to Stephen Krashen (1981).

Needless to say that learning a second language has many benefits on the personal level, in terms of community, and pragmatically as well. On a personal level, learning a second language exposes people to the customs of entirely different groups of people and expands their views into a deeper understanding of

how other people think. In terms of community, learning a second language will also increase understanding and compassion for other cultures. Pragmatically, with the advent of globalization, knowing a second language is almost a requirement of the job-seeking professional and sharing information and culture. New research by the UK Subject Centre for Languages (2004) has identified more than 700 reasons to study languages. It concludes that the strongest of these reasons are the personal benefits and enjoyment that people gain from learning a language. The reasons cover themes such as citizenship; communication; economic, social and political dimensions; democracy; diversity; employability; environmental sustainability; equal opportunities; globalization; identity; intercultural competence; international dimension; key skills; language awareness; mobility; multilingualism; personal and social development of the individual and values (Gallagher-Brett, 2004).

However, in the context of Uzbek students it could be claimed that the reasons for learning any language other than Uzbek are summarized as follows:

- Work
- Travelling and studying abroad
- Immigration

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Uzbek is a monolingual country in which Uzbek is the medium of study and communication. People in Uzbekistan look at English language from different perspectives. The overwhelming part of society looks at English as a foreign language that should be learnt just for specific purposes (ESP). As a result, it should be spoken only in the contexts of those purposes. Some people have hostile attitude towards languages of the West in general and English language in particular as a reflection of their political and religious beliefs. For them, such languages should be neither learnt nor spoken. It could be assumed that a few number of Uzbek people learn English for its sake, i.e. for advancement or to know the culture of other societies. These people are representatives of the third part in Uzbekistan.

One of the most widely recognized facts about second language learning is that some individuals are more successful in learning a second language than others. One might be surprised when some learners acquire a second language with relative ease and others find it difficult to master though both are exposed to the same input. As a result, the main challenge for the concerned researchers has been to explain not just success with L2 and foreign languages but also failure. Most researchers pursuing this line of inquiry have looked at affective factors on L2 learning. These factors can be divided into language factors and non-language factors. In spite of this classification and the fact that each factor is discussed separately, it is important to realize that each of them affects the other in a dynamic process and it is impossible to come to exact conclusions about the effect of any of the factors in isolation. The following factors greatly influence the L2 learning either positively or negatively:

Language Transfer (interference)

Interference or, more commonly, language transfer is a psycho-linguistic process that occurs when people try to acquire or communicate in a language other than their L1. It refers to a form of cross-linguistic influence that involves carrying over of mother tongue patterns into the target language. Transfer could be phonological, morphological, syntactic, or semantic, and either positive or negative. Negative transfer refers to the case where the structure of L1 differs from that of L2 so learners become confused and generate erroneous structures. In contrast, aspects that are similar between L1 and L2 can be helpful in acquiring the L2 (positive transfer). Researchers set out to use the techniques of error analysis to evaluate to what extent learner errors could be explained with reference to L1 transfer or to the process of creative construction. Such studies as Richards (1971) and Dulay & Burt (1974) (cited in Gass and Selinker, 2008) set out to test the rival claims by investigating corpora of learner errors. The role of transfer has continued to attract the attention of the concerned researchers (eg. Gass & Selinker, 1983; Odlin, 1989; Wode, 1980). The current view is that transfer is a major factor but

various constraints govern when and where it occurs. L2 research over the last several decades has made available considerable evidence showing L1 as a strong competing causal factor. Despite decades of controversies, however, certain generalities that were drawn in the early days of SLA research are still widely accepted today. One such generality was that the L1 constitutes the initial point of L2 acquisition (e.g., Corder, 1967, 1983; Nemser, 1971; Selinker, 1972), and this very same view is still held by many current researchers (e.g., Bialystok, 1994; Carroll, 2001; MacWhinney, 2001; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996), though from perspectives different from those of the early researchers. Schwartz and Sprouse (1996) (cited in Gass and Selinker, 5 2008), for example, propose a Full Transfer/Full Access model that stipulates that 'the initial state of L2 acquisition is the final state of L1 acquisition'.

Interlanguage

The idea of interlanguage is founded upon the assumption that L2 learners, at any particular moment in their learning sequence, are using a language system which is neither the L1, nor the L2. It is a third language, with its own grammar, its own lexicon and so on. The rules used by the learners do not reflect either in their own mother tongue, or in the Target Language. The term 'interlanguage' was first used by Selinker (1972) to reflect two related but different concepts. First, interlanguage refers to the structured system which the learner constructs at any given stage in his development. Second, the term refers to the series of interlocking systems which form what Corder (1967) called the learner's 'built-in syllabus', i.e. the interlanguage continuum (Ellis, 1985).

Fossilization

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language defines fossilization in the following way: "to become permanently established in the interlanguage of a second language learner in a form that is deviant from the target-language norm and that continues to appear in performance regardless of further exposure to the target language" (cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Vygotsky (1978 cited in Johnson, 2004) explains fossilization in terms of mental processes that undergo prolonged development. He acknowledges that these processes are difficult to study because "they have lost their original appearance, and their outer appearance tells us nothing about their internal nature". According to Han (2003), this phenomenon of non-progression of learning despite continuous exposure to input, adequate motivation to learn, and sufficient opportunity for practice – generally referred to in the literature as ‘fossilization’– became a central concern for SLA researchers almost as soon as the research field itself came into existence, and may even have propelled the field into existence. Han also states that to date there is no uniform answer to the question: what is fossilization? However, from the miscellaneous conceptions, two broad and uncontroversial features are deductible, namely: (1) that fossilization involves premature cessation of development in defiance of optimal learning conditions; and (2) that fossilizable structures are persistent over time, against any environmental influences, including consistent natural exposure to the target language and pedagogic interventions. It has been argued that fossilization occurs locally rather than globally, and that it is an observable process, with the product only being inferable (Han, 2003).

Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the factors affecting learners' ability to speak not only a second or foreign language but sometimes L1 as well. However, anxiety is not always a negative factor. It has a notable effect on performance: low levels help, whereas high levels hurt. Horwitz (2001) in a review of the literature noted that there is something unique about L2 learning anxiety separate from other types of anxiety. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) in a study of learners of French attempted to induce anxiety by having a video recorder introduced during a vocabulary test. Correlations showed a relationship between anxiety and performance.(Gass and Selinker, 2008). According to Krashen (1981), there appears to be a consistent relationship between various forms of anxiety and language proficiency in all

situations, formal and informal. These studies have shown a relationship between low anxiety and language acquisition. Carroll (1973) noted a small negative correlation between test anxiety and accomplishment in intensive foreign language courses.

Aptitude

The relationship between aptitude and second language learning success is a very important one. With regard to language aptitude, it refers to one's ability to learn another language. Even though aptitude is clearly of crucial importance, it has not always been a focus of investigation. In studies where it has been included, aptitude has been shown to be an important differentiating factor. Skehan (1989) stated that "aptitude is consistently the best predictor of language learning success". The British studies found that there is an even greater correlation between second language aptitude and social class and parental education. Foreign language aptitude, which Carroll (1973) defines as the "rate at which persons at the secondary school, university and adult level learn to criterion", has most recently been measured by standardized test such as the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and the Language Aptitude Battery (LAB). According to Carroll (1973), there are three major components of modern aptitude tests. The first, phonetic coding ability is the ability to store new language sounds in memory. Grammatical sensitivity, the second component, is defined as "the individual's ability to demonstrate his awareness of the syntactical patterning of sentences in a language" (Carroll, 1973). Carroll contrasts this sort of knowledge of a language with the subconscious or tacit knowledge entailed in Chomsky's term "competence": A third component of aptitude is labeled "inductive ability". This is the ability to "examine language material... and from this to notice and identify patterns and correspondences and relationships involving either meaning or grammatical form" (Carroll, 1973).

Motivation

It is widely agreed upon that individuals who are motivated are able to learn another language faster and to a greater degree. It is also quite clear that some degree of motivation is involved in initial decisions to speak another language and to maintain learning. Furthermore, numerous studies have provided statistical evidence indicating that motivation is a predictor of language learning success. Gardner, through his early work with Lambert (1972) and in later work with colleagues, has become a primary figure in the field of motivation in second language learning. "Motivation involves four aspects, a goal, effortful behavior, a desire to attain the goal and favorable attitudes toward the activity in question" (Gardner, 1985). A question regarding motivation and its effect is whether it is better to say that motivation predicts success, in that the more successful one has been in language learning, the more motivated one will be to learn more. This can be broken down into at least two specific questions: (a) Can motivation change over time? And (b) What is the effect of success on performance?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Many researchers have investigated these questions and reported that success comes as a result of motivation. However, when it comes to systematically investigating the effect of motivation on language learning, it appears that it is a rather difficult concept to operationalise. Everyone will agree that motivation is related to someone's drive to achieve something, but what is the exact nature of motivation and how can we measure it? A very influential explanation is given by Gardner and Lambert (1972), who distinguish integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. A majority of the Uzbek students are not motivated enough to speak English and they just learn it for short term goals like passing an examination or getting a job. Other factors that are believed to be of some effect can be listed as follows:

Previous educational background

In learning a second/foreign language, the previous educational background of learners affects their progress either positively or negatively. The learners'

experiences with the target language in terms of success or failure are reflected in their performance. Learners who have good exposure to the target language in the early stages of learning are proved to be much better than their peers who have less opportunity to get exposed to the target language. This is evident from the variation in case of Uzbek students at university level.

Teachers' attitude and teaching style

The teachers' attitude towards the target language has a direct impact on the teachers themselves and indirect impact on their students. The way a teacher thinks of a target language is reflected in his/her motivation to teach, in developing teaching skills and methods, in preparation, and in the actual teaching practices in classroom. Teachers with positive attitude towards a second/foreign language usually transfer such attitude to their learners by exhibiting themselves as ideal models. The opposite is observed in case of the teachers with negative attitude towards a target language or those who rely on poor teaching style. A majority of Uzbek teachers could be taken as an example.

Individual differences

One of the most challenging duties of teachers is taking into account the individual differences among their students. Individual differences in language learning are mainly reflected in learning styles and strategies. Other major areas of individual differences relate to learning aptitude, gender, culture, age, and other demographic variables. The availability of learners vary in the mentioned aspects is a natural phenomenon but dealing with that is a hard task. In Uzbekistan, instead of paying attention to these differences, attention is paid to good learners by involving them and giving them priority in the tasks and activities practiced.

Role of instruction

Using the target language as a medium of instruction in classroom has many advantages. First, the repetition of instructions makes the learners get familiar with them and enriches their vocabulary. Second, it creates some interaction among learners in which they ask each other about what their teacher wants/means or ask

the teacher himself for explanation. Third, it removes the feeling of fear and confusion resulting from the rare use of the target language. Uzbek students, who join English Departments for the first time, are shocked when they find their teachers use L2 all the time and may ask them to translate into L1.

Lack of interaction

The importance of interaction and its role in acquiring a second/foreign language has been emphasized and in turn led to the emergence of the Interaction Approach. The Interaction Approach accounts for learning through input (exposure to language), production of language (output), and feedback that comes as a result of interaction (Gass, Mackey, and Pica, 1998). Gass (2003) puts it this way: interaction research "takes as its starting point the assumption that language learning is stimulated by communicative pressure and examines the relationship between communication and acquisition and the mechanisms (e.g., noticing, attention) that mediate between them". Interaction involves a number of components including negotiation, recasts, and feedback. The absence of the first and second features and the presence of the third led to the deterioration of interaction between teachers and learners in the context of Uzbek schools and universities.

Socio-cultural influence

The influence of society and culture shape the learners' beliefs and attitudes of the target language. As a result, a new trend asserting that the materials used in teaching should be socially and culturally appropriate has emerged. This is truer in monoculture and conservative societies such as Uzbekistan in which people do not feel comfortable with the western culture. Practically, this creates a lot of problems for learners and teachers.

Negative feedback

Negative feedback is considered to be the source of the learners' inhibition. Teachers should realize that their students' inhibition and hesitation while attempting to speak the target language are due to their (teachers) overcorrection in

the class. Therefore, teachers should respond to learners with more tolerance, adopt recasts, and develop positive attitudes towards their errors.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, a brief discussion of the principles pertaining to SLL was given. Teaching English and its status in Uzbekistan in the light of the scope of second/foreign language teaching was placed in a historical perspective. And it ends with the hypotheses for the study about the failure of Uzbek student-teachers in speaking English and the possible measures to be adopted.

To conclude, it is true that there is no one teaching method or style that is best because students are very different from one another and so are teachers. Teachers need to be trained in a variety of methods. Teaching is a complex art and the more methods a teacher has the better he or she will be able to use the right one at the right time. In addition, some methods will work for some students and teachers but not for others. What has been presented above is just a summary of the various methods and approaches.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [2]. Ellis, R. (1992). *Second Language Acquisition and Language Pedagogy*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- [3]. Gass, S.&Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*, New York: Taylor & Francis.
- [4]. Carroll, J. 1973. "Implications of aptitude test research and psycholinguistic theory for foreign language teaching." *Linguistics*. Vol. 112. No. 5.
- [5]. Corder, S. 1967. The significance of learners' errors. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*. Vol. 5.
- [6]. Gallagher-Brett, A. 2004. Seven hundred reasons for studying languages www.llas.ac.uk/resourcedownloads/.../700_reasons.pdf.

- [7]. Gardner, R. and Lambert, W. 1972. Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- [8]. Gass, S., Mackey, A. and Pica, T. 1998. The role of input and interaction in second language acquisition – Introduction to the special issue. *Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 82.No. 3.
- [9]. Han, Z. 2003. Fossilization in Adult Second Language Acquisition, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- [10]. Krashen, S. 1987. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Herts: Prentice-Hall International(UK).
- [11]. Mitchel, R. & Myles, F. 2004. Second Language Learning Theories, London: Hodder education company.
- [12]. Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*. Vol. 10.
- [13]. Skehan, P. 1989. Individual Differences in Second-Language Learning. London: Edward Arnold.
- [14]. Hartz CS, Sindorf MAG, Lopes CR, Batista J, Moreno MA. Effect of inspiratory muscle training on the performance of handball athletes. *J Hum Kinet*, 2018; 63: 43-51.
- [15]. Mazurek K, Zmijewski P, Makaruk H, Mróz A, Czajkowska A, Witek K, Bodasiński S, Lipińska P. Effects of short-term plyometric training on physical performance in male handball players. *J Hum Kinet*, 2018; 63: 137-148.