KEY ISSUES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LEARNING

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AIMS

The main aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with a general overview of what is currently known about second language acquisition (SLA) and second language learners (SLL) in the light of research. Specific aims of this chapter are as follows:

- Review main aspects of SLA and some factors that influence success in SLA.
- Become aware of what research can do for the language teacher and the mplications for the class.
- Discuss individual learner factors/variables and how they affect SLA.
- The role of input and output in SLA.

1. Introduction

The studies on SLA understood as the processes by which people develop proficiency in a second or foreign language, are relatively recent. They started around the end of the 1960s. The first serious research began in the seventies with diverse studies carried out at the University of UCLA. At first, the research was focused on the possible similarities of the processes and the acquisition order between the mother tongue (L1) and the second language (L2). It was thought that learning a second language consisted of replacing the L1 with a series of norms of the L2. Other issues that were object of research were factors that were supposed to contribute to individual differences such as aptitude or motivation. From the start, research on SLA had among other aims to provide new data about how the

human mind works and to find out and understand how a second language is learnt in order to bring light on how to teach better. The body of SLA research has centred especially on describing the characteristics of L2 learner language and how these change as acquisition takes place and, on theory construction which has given place to lots of SLA models, theories and frameworks. Apart from these two fields of research, having to do with the study of learners and the study of learning, a subfield has emerged in the last decades: the study of classroom L2 acquisition.

Ellis (1985, 1994) has pointed out the importance that SLA research can have in language pedagogy. Because teachers are normally the ones to decide what classroom learners will learn and what order they would learn it in, how the L2 will be taught, SLA research becomes a relevant source of information to them, as it can provide a body of knowledge to evaluate their own pedagogical practices. According to him, the main reason why language teachers need to be familiar with SLA research is because "…unless we know for certain that the teacher's scheme of things really does match the learner's way of going about things, we cannot be sure that the teaching content will contribute directly to language learning" (Ellis 1985:1). In order to manage the process of language learning and teaching, teachers follow some methodological principles. The issue is that there is no guarantee that the methodology chosen by the teachers will conform to the way in which the learner learns the language. Teachers should be aware of the implications that their classroom decisions can have on their students learning. The methodological decisions that we as teachers make may not be the more adequate in the light of the findings about L2 learning. SLA research can be a guide to teachers that want to examine critically the principles upon which the selection and organization of teaching have been based and also the methodological procedures they have chosen to employ. Besides, all language teachers make pedagogical decisions about content or methodology based on assumptions and beliefs about how learners learn and on a theory of language learning In most cases, these theories and beliefs are not explicit. The study of SLA can help teachers to make explicit their theories, the principles by which they teach and examine them critically in the light of what is actually known about how L2 learning takes place, the process of language learning. SLA research can thus provide teachers with insights which they can use to build their own explicit theory or to revise their existing one. Because there is not comprehensive theory of SLA, SLA cannot provide teachers with recipes for successful practice. However, teachers will do better if they work on a basis of a explicit language theory. Apart from SLA research there are other sources of information of relevance to language teachers. Stern (1983) identified five areas that language pedagogy draws on for its "fundamental concepts"-the history of language teaching, linguistics, sociology, psychology, and education.

Before pointing out some key issues concerning research in SLA and how can it be applied to the class, it is important to define what is understood by SLA. On the one hand, there have often been a tendency to consider the learning of a second language as the acquisition of the grammar of the target language. Phonology, lexis, or the importance of the pragmatic and sociocultural aspects of the lan-

guage have been left aside or (not properly taken into consideration). The fact that form and function cannot be separated has been omitted. There is a need to know more about the pragmatic competence and the importance of the context when we are performing a communicative act. On the other hand, the field of SLA has been centred on the description and explanation of the learner's competence without taking much into consideration that, in order to understand how the acquisition of a second language takes place, the learner's performance has to be observed. Finally the validity of the distinction made by Krashen between acquisition and learning should be reconsidered. According to Krashen (1982: 10) "acquisition" is a subconscious learning process that is produced spontaneously through the communicative act. On the other hand, "Learning", refers to the conscious knowledge of the rules, the grammar of a specific language. In Krahen´s opinion, conscious learning does not result in acquisition of the language. However, the position expressed by Rivers (1980), Stevick (1980), Sharwood-Smith (1982) y Gregg (1984) seems more appropriate. According to them, when the learnt knowledge becomes automatized through practice it becomes acquired knowledge, that is to say, available for being used in spontaneous conversation.

Research on SLA distinguishes between two types: a) naturalistic SLA, that is to say, the acquisition of a second language through the exposure of the learner to the target language in a natural medium, "at the street" and b) classroom learning SLA, the formal study of the language within the classroom context. Although it might be thought that exposure on the part of the individual to the language in a natural medium would be the best way to facilitate the learning process of a second language, it is in many cases the language class the only chance that the individual has to learn a foreign language. This is why, lately, the role of formal teaching in the learning of a second language has become the focus of attention and debate on the part of researchers.

Given the variety and the state of the research on SLA, it seems convenient to act cautiously when applying the results of the investigations on SLA to the language class, as many of the studies are contradictory and can only be considered provisional. However, research on SLA is important as it can provide the teacher with different models and methodologies concerning how to observe the teaching and learning processes that are going on in their classes, and, what is more important, research on SLA should be useful as a base and guidance/orientation for teachers willing to do some action research in their classes.

2. Some factors that influence success in SLA

Learners differ in a number of ways which affect L2 acquisition, in particular their rate of development and their ultimate level of achievement. Some of the general factors contributing to individual differences on the SLA process and success are among others: age, aptitude, social-psychological factors (motivation, attitude), personality, learning strategies, cognitive style, hemisphere specialization. These

factors may explain partially why some learners acquire their second language with more or less effort.

Apart from individual differences, there are two other aspects considered crucial in SLA: the role of input and interaction and the role of output.

2.1. Individual learners differences

2.1.1. Age

The effects of age on SLA have been object of study since the fifties and up to now no definite research findings have been attained.

Some questions that have been addressed and investigated are how the age at which one is first exposed to the language might affect acquisition (the effect on acquisition of first exposure to the L2), whether there is or not an optimal age to start learning a foreign language; the possible existance of a critical or sensitive period for L2 acquisition; if learners of different ages learn languages in different ways, or up to what point is it possible for an adult to reach native-like levels in differerent linguistic domains, specially pronunciation. Knowledge of these issues can give educators guidance on issues such as prediction of the degree of success of students of different ages, which approaches or material to use or how to plan and set up different language teaching programmes. On the whole, the research literature concludes that the younger one starts the better, although adults seem to learn faster than children at the beginning of their learning. Different studies point out different conclusions. Some researchers claim that younger learners do better than adults, attaining higher degrees of accent-free second language (SL) performance (e.g.Oyama 1976; Seliger 1978; Krashen, Long and Scarcella 1979; Scovel 1981; Patkowski 1980; Harley 1986). Others think that children and adult can be equally successful in SLA. Larsen Freeman and Long (1991) point out four possible explanations for age-related differences: social-psychological, cognitive, related to input issues and neurological. With respect to neurological explanations, the controversy centres around whether there is a critical period for L2 acquisition, and if so, when it ends. By critical period it is understood a given time in the learner's life, normally placed up to adolescence, in which L2 acquisition can only be completely successful. The first studies carried out by Penfield y Roberts (1959) y Lenneberg (1967) claimed that there was a critical period for L2 learning before puberty. After that, with adolescence, and coinciding with the period of specialization for different functions of the two hemispheres of the brain, the process called lateralization, the brain loses its plasticity and its ability to learn languages. Penfield and Roberts (1959) established the optimum age for L2 learning between 8 to 10 years old, just before adolescence. In their opinion, the special abilities that children have during those years to imitate, their expressivity and spontaneity, their curiosity and their lack of inhibition in comparison with adolescents and adults, should be exploited in class to facilitate their language learning. More recent studies are concerned with what has been called a "sensitive period" for the acquisition of SL, that is to say, a period in the life of the learner in

which acquisition of a second language could be easier. The studies have mainly centred on phonology and grammar and have shown different results. Some researchers claim that learners who commence learning an L2 after the onset of puberty and perhaps earlier, are unlikely to acquire a native-speaker accent, while those who begin after the age of about 15 years are less likely to develop as much grammatical ability as those who begin before. This could be explained partly by social-psychological reasons, the fact that children have less peer pressure than adults or as pointed out by H.Brown (1987:51) less inhibitions of children, less negative attitudes towards speakers of the target language and their vision of a SL as less threatening to their identities than in adults. According to Long (1990) the acquisition of a native-like accent is not possible by learners who begin learning after six years of age and furthermore, acquiring native-like grammatical competence becomes very difficult when learners start at puberty. Scovel (1988) places the critical period for a native-like pronunciation around 12 years old and he claims that the evidence in favour of a critical period for grammar is equivocal. Larsen Freeman and Long (1991) situate the critical period to get an accent-free pronunciation and intonation around six. However, Neufeld (1978, 1979) conducted several studies much criticized for having some limitations, that made him claim that accent-free second language performance is possible and there is no sensitive period for SLA. His research seemed to imply that foreign and second language learners sometimes achieve high levels of pronunciation and intonation. Finally, Seliger (1978) claims that there may be multiple critical/sensitive periods for different aspects of language. So, for example, the period to acquire a native accent seems to end sooner than the one to acquire a native grammar. In general the existence of the sensitive period notion in SLA, understood as a period in which acquisition is easier, although is still controversial, is accepted.

Age-related differences in SLA might also have a cognitive explanation. Cognitive development, especially the ability to think abstractly might be an issue in language learning. A study carried out by Snow & Hoefnagel (1978), concluded that although age seems to be an important determining factor of the capacity to learn languages, performance may peak in the teens, between 12 to 15 years, just when the child starts thinking in abstract terms. After the age of 15 or so, the ability to learn languages without much effort declines. According to several researchers child and adult SLA might involve different processes. Children using LAD (Language acquisition device) as in L1 acquisition and adults applying general problem solving abilities.

The features of the input adults and children get can also explain age-related differences. Several studies Hatch(1976), Snow (1983), Peck (1978) suggest that younger learners receive better input than adults (more "here and now", less complex, clearer L2 samples).

With respect to the effects of age on the route and on the rate or success of SLA and the ultimate level of achievement, research suggests that age does not alter the route of acquisition in adults or children, but it does influence the rate and success of SLA. Where rate of development is concerned, although it is a common belief that children learn faster and more efficiently than adults, this fact has not been demonstrated by research and cannot be upheld, as has been pointed out

by Ellis (1985). It is only in pronunciation, as we have mentioned before, that children seem to exceed adults. Age seems to improve language learning capacity, reaching their peak learning point from 12 to 15 year old. Age seems to be a factor only when it comes to morphology, syntax and negotiation of meaning, adults being superior to younger learners and there is not much difference with respect to the rate of development in pronunciation, even in what concerns to children. A predominant conclusion is that under similar conditions of time and exposure circumstances and at the beginning of their language learning, adults seem to learn faster and more efficiently than children but at a certain stage their learning becomes slower and younger learners, not so much small children, progress faster. Adults´ memoristic capacity is bigger than young learners and they can also learn consciously about the language, studying grammatical rules. Children, on the other hand, do not learn as fast as adults. In order to develop their grammatical competence in the L2, they need to be exposed to activities centred on meaning. Small children, however, have the advantage with respect to adults of not having preconceived attitudes about the L1 and L2 and they are less inhibited to speak incorrectly. These are important affective factor that are known to make the acquisition of a second language difficult.

Success in SLA appears to be related also to issues such as length of exposure to the L2 and the starting age. The number of years of exposure to the target language have an effect on the overall communicative fluency of the learners, but not so much in the grammatical or phonological accuracy. The age when SLA is commenced, on the other hand, affects the rate of learning but does not affect the route of SLA. The starting age determines the levels of accuracy achieved, particularly pronunciation. It is nowadays commonly accepted that younger learners do better in pronunciation, while adolescents do better than either children or adults in grammar and vocabulary when the length of exposure to the foreign language is held constant.

2.1.2. Aptitude

Language aptitude, that is to say, the special ability for learning languages, is one of the main factors contributing to individual differences and has been found to be one of the best predictors of L2 learning. General aptitude was defined by Carroll (1981: 84) as "capability of learning a task", which depends on "some combination of more or less enduring characteristics of the individual." It constitutes a relatively immutable factor that does not vary much through training. It has been hypothesized that people possess a special ability for learning an L2. This ability, known as "language learning aptitude," is considered to be separate from the general ability to master academic skills, often referred to as "intelligence". Various tests have been designed to measure language learning aptitude.

Much of the early work on aptitude focused on developing tests to measure it. The two main instruments to measure aptitude were developed in the 1950s and 1960s. The best known test of language aptitude is the Modern Aptitude Test (MLAT) developed by Carroll and Sapon (1959). It was designed to measure fo-

reign language aptitude in adolescents and adults. Pimsleur (1966) developed another test called the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB).These tests feature mainly knowledge of the grammar and sound systems but do not assess the ability to communicate. They conceptualised aptitude in modular form. Different modules measured different skills. Carroll (1965), cited in Ellis (1994) and Larsen Freeman and Long (1991) identified four major components of foreign language aptitude:

1. Phonetic coding ability: an ability to identify foreign sounds, to form associations between those sounds and symbols representing them and to remember them.
2. Grammatical sensitivity: the ability to recognize the grammatical functions of words in sentences.
3. Inductive language learning ability: the ability to identify, infer or induce the rules governing a set of language materials, given samples that allow such inferences.
4. Rote learning ability: the ability to learn and remember associations between sounds and meanings.

Aptitude as defined by Carroll emphasizes the linguistic as opposed to the communicative aspects of aptitude. The effects of aptitude on language learning have been measured in terms of the proficiency levels achieved by different classroom learners.

The relationship between aptitude and intelligence is still much discussed and it is not clear to what extent intelligence and aptitude are separate concepts. There seem to be some consensus in the fact that intelligence is an important part of aptitude. The research carried out by Skehan (1985) suggests that intelligence is a concept more related to the academic/literacy skills than to oral/aural proficiency. According to him, aptitude provides a more precise assessment of language processing ability and the ability to handle decontextualized language. Aptitude, he concludes is a more powerful predictor of language learning success than intelligence.

Although some individuals may have a special propensity for learning an L2, that improves the rate and ease of learning, all humans are capable of achieving a reasonable level of proficiency. The capabilities for language learning is determined by general intelligence, but other factors such as affective factors or personality influence in great measure the learner's SL attainment.

2.1.3. Personality

Language is linked to cognitive and affective factors. The relationship between personality variables and L2 learning is not yet clear. However, they seem to have an effect on the rate of learning and the ultimate level of L2 attainment.

We need to investigate how personality characteristics interact with type of instruction. Not all personality types respond equally well to the same instructio-

nal practices. The main problem is that there is often no theoretical basis for predicting which personality variables will be positively or negatively related to which aspects of L2 proficiency.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) point out the following issues having to do with the personality variable: self-esteem, extroversion, anxiety, risk-taking, sensitivity to rejection, empathy, inhibition and tolerance of ambiguity.

- **Self-esteem.** The more self-esteem the language learner has the more possibilities to be successful in SL learning. At the same time, the more successful the learner is, the better possibilities to increase his self-esteem.
- **Extroversion.** Extroversion is linked with language learning success, especially it seems to facilitate the development of basic interpersonal communication skills. Because extroverted learners are more sociable than introverted, they tend to participate actively in oral communication, get more input, have more opportunities to practice the language and consequently are more successful in communicating in the L2. Extroversion is believed to help learners learn at a faster rate than introverts. However the results of empirical research are inconclusive. Introversion, on the other hand, has been linked with the developing of cognitive academic language ability/skills but there is no clear support for this claim in the research done up to now. Introverted learners tend to spend more time than extroverted learners reading and writing. An aspect to consider is the fact that different cultures value personality traits differently and this could affect the way in which personality traits influence SLA.
- **Anxiety.** What causes state or situation anxiety and what effect anxiety has on learning are two of the key questions research on this issue is still trying to find an answer. The conditions under which anxiety will have an effect have still not been determined. The degree of anxiety learners have can have a positive or negative effect on L2 learning. Alpert and Haber (1960) distinguished between facilitating and debilitating anxiety. Facilitating anxiety can motivate the learners to face the task, prompting them to make extra efforts to overcome their feelings of anxiety and can enhance performance. Debilitating anxiety, on the other hand, can cause the learners to "flee" the new learning task in order to avoid the source of anxiety. It can have a paralysing effect and hinder SLA. Moderate anxiety can be facilitating. Three different types of anxiety have been identified: 1) *Trait anxiety*, having to do with a characteristic of a learner's personality, a predisposition to be anxious. 2) *State anxiety*, that is to say, apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in response to a definite situation. It is a combination of trait and situation-specific anxiety. 3) *Situation-specific anxiety*, the one that is aroused by a particular type of situation or event (for example competitiveness in the class, teacher's questions). There is also anxiety produced as a result of fear or experience of "losing oneself" in the target language, losing your identity as a member of a specific culture and language. Anxiety related to the use of the L2 seems to be restricted mainly to speaking and listening and it has been normally researched through diary studies.

- **Risk-taking.** The willingness to take risks, to guess meanings, to communicate in the target language, even though one can commit errors, or to use the knowledge of the target language to produce novel utterances, seems to have a positive effect on SLA. The only drawback is the possibility of fossilization of errors. Moderate risk-taking is linked with achievement.
- **Sensitivity to rejection.** The fear of ridicule might cause avoidance or lack of participation which may lead to less successful SLA.
- **Empathy.** The individual's ability to put oneself in another's place. Presumably, empathic individuals have more ego permeability which facilitates learning.
- **Inhibition.** The hypothesis is that the defensiveness associated with inhibition discourages the risk-taking which is necessary for rapid progress in a L2.
- **Tolerance of ambiguity.** Individuals with a low tolerance of ambiguity may experience frustration and diminished performance as a result. They normally appeal to authority, request definitions for every word, or tend to jump to conclusions.

2.1.4. Attitudes and motivation

Learners attitudes may or may not predispose them to make efforts to learn the L2. Issues such as the more or less positive or negative attitudes towards the target language, its speakers and its culture; the social value of learning the L2, the particular uses of the target language and the learners or members of their own culture, or their attitude to their own language, have an effect on L2 learning and the proficiency achieved.

Motivation in L2 constitutes one of the most fully researched areas of individual differences. Little attention has been paid however to the effect of motivation on the process of learning (as opposed to the product).

The role of attitudes and motivation has been extensively researched by Lambert and Gardner and it has been normally measured through self-report questionnaires. Their studies are based on the assumption that the main determinants of motivation are the learners attitudes to the target language community and their need to learn the L2. Motivation has been defined by Gardner (1985:10) as " the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language." Motivation refers thus to the effort which learners put into learning an L2 as a result of their need or desire to learn it. It is a clearly variable factor, as it can change over time and is influenced by external factors. Motivation is directly related to achievement and has a major impact on learning in both formal and informal learning contexts. From a sociolinguistic point of view, Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguish between two kinds of motivation: instrumental and integrative. The former refers to the more utilitarian uses of linguistic achievement, such as passing an exam, getting a good job, higher education or better opportunities. The learner's goals for learning the L2 are functional. This kind of motivation is more self-oriented in the sense

that the individual benefits from it. The latter refers to willingness to integrate into the community. The individual is interested in learning more about the culture of the dominant group; he might be prepared to adopt aspects of behaviour which characterize members of that community. His attitudes towards the members of the dominant group as well as his ethnocentric tendencies are believed to determine how successful he will be in learning the new language. The two types of motivation are not mutually exclusive and they both can lead to learning. However, Integrative motivation seems to be a powerful predictor of success in formal contexts and be strongly related to L2 achievement. Learners with integrative motivation are more active in class and are less likely to drop out. Motivation seems to have an effect on the rate and success of SLA, rather than on the route of acquisition.

Apart from these two types of motivation above mentioned, other types have been identified: 1) "*Task motivation*" or "*intrinsic motivation*", which is the motivation or interest that learners experience in performing different learning tasks. Keller (1984), cited in Crookes and Schmidt (1989) identifies "interest" as one of the main elements of motivation, defining it as a positive response to stimuli based on existing cognitive structures in such a way that learners curiosity is aroused and sustained. It is this view that underlines discussion of motivation in language pedagogy. One way in which intrinsic interest in L2 learning might be achieved is by providing opportunities for communication. Motivation to learn an L2 can be enhanced when students experience the need to get meaning across and are able to communicate successfully. Crookes and Schmidt (1989) suggest a number of other ways in which teachers seek to foster intrinsic motivation. They try to make sure that the learning tasks pose a reasonable challenge to the students-neither too easy nor too difficult. They provide opportunities for group work. They base tasks on their perceptions of learners needs and wants and they try to provide for plenty of variety in classroom activities. Above all, perhaps they try to ensure that motivation is engendered as a result of a good rapport with the learners. 2) "*Machiavellian motivation*"(Oller and Perkins, 1978), the desire to learn a language that stems from a wish to manipulate and overcome the people of the target language. Some people may be motivated to excell because of negative attitudes towards the target language community, and 3) "*Resultative motivation*," the motivation that results from success in learning the L2 (Hermann 1980). Motivation is thought to be strongly affected by the learner's achievement. Success contributes to motivation rather than vice-versa. Hermann study suggests that learners who do well are more likely to develop motivational intensity and to be active in the classroom. Ellis (1994) concludes that it is likely that the relationship between motivation and achievement is an interactive one. A high level of motivation does stimulate learning, but perceived success in achieving L2 goals can help to maintain existing motivation and even create new types. Conversely, a vicious circle of low motivation=low achievement=lower motivation can develop.

Ellis (1994: 210) after reviewing the researched carried out on this area concludes that "In general, learners with positive attitudes towards their own ethnic identity and towards the target culture can be expected to develop a strong motivation and high levels of L2 proficiency while also maintaining their own L1. Suc-

cessful L2 learning is also possible, however, in learners with non-integrative attitudes towards the target culture."

2.1.5. Learning styles

Learning style refers to the preferred way in which individuals learn things, process information or approach a task. Individuals use different solutions to learning problems. Ausubel (1968: 170) defines cognitive style as "self-consistent and enduring individual differences in cognitive organization and functioning. The term refers both to individual differences in general principles of cognitive organization…, and to various self-consistent idiosyncratic tendencies…that are not reflective of human cognitive functioning in general." The way individuals internalise their total environment determines people's cognitive styles. Since that internalisation process is not strictly cognitive, physical, affective and cognitive domains merge in cognitive style. Individuals normally show general tendencies to one style or another, but they can have different styles depending on contexts.

Learners differ in their preferred approach to L2 learning, but it is impossible to say which learning style works best. Learners have different learning modalities and preferences when trying to solve a problem. So, some learners prefer an aural or visual mode of presentation (for example, readying and studying charts, listening to audiotapes or lectures). Others like kinaesthetic or tactile learning (for example, activities that involve physical responses, hands-on learning such as building models). Other learners are inclined towards reflectivity (thinking things over, calculating more when making a decision) or to impulsivity (making quick guesses when faced with uncertainty, or a problem). Others analyse components of the language or approach language in a more holistic or gestalt-like manner. To measure learning style different categories are used: resistance to ambiguity, predominance of one of the brain hemispheres, field dependence and field independence, impulsive versus reflective thinkers, a visual or auditory character, kinaesthetic learning, tactile learning. Many cognitive styles have been identified but we will examine briefly some of the ones second language researchers consider more relevant.

One of the main learning style distinction is between *field dependence (FD) and field independence (FI)*. According to the description made by Witkin, Oltman, Raskin, and Karp (1971: 4):

> In a field-dependent mode of perceiving, perception is strongly dominated by the overall organization of the surrounding field, and parts of the field are experienced as "fused". In a field-independent mode of perceiving, parts of the field are experienced as discreet from organized ground… "field dependent" and "field independent", like the designations "tall" and "short" are relative."

A FI style enables the individual to distinguish parts from a whole, to perceive a particular, relevant item, to concentrate on something and analyse separate variables without the contamination of neighbouring variables. On the other

hand, a FD style enables you to perceive the whole picture, the general configuration of a problem or idea or event but not to analyse parts of the whole. It seems obvious that in order to solve cognitive and affective problems, a certain degree of both styles would be useful.

Although the research into FI/FD has shed little light on the relationship between cognitive style and L2 learning, H. Brown (1987) has suggested that some learners may have "flexible" cognitive styles depending upon the context of learning, combining field independence and field dependence modes of processing and adapting their approach to suit different learning tasks. FD and FI might be connected to two different kinds of language learning. FI is closely related to classroom learning that involves analysis, attention to details, and mastering of exercises, drills, and other focused activities. There seems to be a correlation of FI style with language success in the classroom. FD styles, on the other hand, seem to aid the mastery of communicative aspects of a second language, it facilitates face-to-face communication.

Left and right brain functioning is also related to second language learning. Preferences for left and right functioning are found to differ across individuals and across cultures. Although the two hemispheres operate together and are involved in most of the neurological activity of the human brain, the left hemisphere is associated with logical, analytical thought, with mathematical and linear processing of information. The right hemisphere, on the other hand, perceives and remembers visual, tactile, and auditory images, it is more efficient in processing holistic, integrative, and emotional information. In the learning of a second language, the right hemisphere seems to be more active at the early stages, perhaps because the learner feels the need to perceive whole meanings. It is connected to strategies like guessing of meaning or use of formulaic utterances. Left-brain-dominant SL learners seem to prefer a deductive style of teaching, while right-brain-dominant learners appear to be more successful in an inductive classroom environment. Stevick (1982) concluded that left-brain-dominant SL learners are better at producing separate words, gathering the specifics of language, carrying out sequences of operations, and dealing with abstraction, classification, labelling, and reorganization. Right-brain-dominant learners, on the other hand, appear to deal better with whole images, with generalizations, with metaphors, and with emotional reactions and artistic expressions. Finally, FD/FI and hemispheric preference seem to show a strong relationship.

Tolerance of ambiguity is another category considered to be important in SL learning to measure learning style. By tolerance of ambiguity it is understood the degree to which an individual is willing to tolerate ideas and propositions that run counter to his own belief system or structure of knowledge. Tolerance of ambiguity allows a higher degree of creativity, acceptance of exceptions to the rule in the L2, acceptance of the lack of exact correspondence between the words in L1 and L2 or acceptance of a cultural system distant from that of the native culture.

The existence of multiple cognitive/learning styles have several implications for language learning and teaching. Teachers should diversify language instructions as much as possible based upon the variety of cognitive styles represented among their students. In order to find out and diagnose their students styles teachers can

use self-reports questionnaires. Learners on the other hand, should be exposed to the concept of learning styles so they can use the appropriate style according to the context. To sum up, as pointed out by Tumposky (1984: 306), cognitive style…

> *"Is a significant factor which must be considered in instruction. In order to be successful, materials and methodologies should be able to accommodate different dimensions of personality and cognitive style….It follows that materials lacking such flexibility may contribute to poor performance and must be considered in any overall assessment of a learning program."*

2.1.6. Learning strategies

Learning strategies are the actions, techniques, behaviours or procedures that learners use to try to master the target language and develop their interlanguages. Learning strategies account for how learners acquire and automatize L2 knowledge. They are also used to refer to how they develop specific skills.

Different methods have been used to investigate learning strategies: observing learners performing a variety of tasks, usually in classroom settings and using structured interviews and questionnaires, both of which call for retrospective accounts of the strategies learners employ; diary studies and think-aloud tasks have also been used to collect information on the strategies students employ while performing a particular task.

The field of second language acquisition distinguishes between two types of strategy: *learning strategies* and *communication strategies*. The former relates to "input"-to processing, storage, and retrieval and, as defined by Tarone (1980), are concerned with the learners attempts to master new linguistic and sociolinguistic information about the target language. The latter has more to do with "output"-or how we express meaning in the language, how we act upon what we already know or presume to know.

During the 1970s and 1980s, different research was carried out to describe "good" language learners in terms of personal characteristics, styles, and strategies and to offer advice to students on how to become better learners (Rubin, 1975, Rubin y Thompson 1982; Stern 1975, Naiman et al, 1978). According to these studies, attention to form and monitoring one's own and other's speech seem to be the most common strategies used by good learners. Ellis (1994:546)) after reviewing different studies on this area has come with five major aspects of successful language learning: 1) a concern for language form, 2) a concern for communication (functional practice), 3) an active task approach, 4) an awareness of the learning process, and 5) a capacity to use strategies flexible in accordance with task requirements. From the descriptions of the characteristics of "successful" language learners, research has moved to classifying and defining specific learning strategies. The frameworks developed by Chamot (1987) and Oxford (1990) provide a basis for studying which strategies or combinations of strategies are effective in promoting learning. Chamot (1987) distinguishes three major types of strategy: 1) **Metacognitive strategies**. These strategies make use of knowledge

about cognitive processes and involve planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one´s production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Some examples are: *directed attention* (deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors), *self-management* (understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions), *advance preparation* - planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task- 2) **Cognitive strategies.** These strategies, defined by Rubin (1987) as "the steps or operations used in problem-solving that require direct analysis, transformation or synthesis of learning materials" are more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Among the cognitive strategies listed by Chamot (1987) are: *repetition* (imitating a language model), *note-taking* (writing down information presented orally), *elaboration* (relating new information to other concepts in memory), *translation.* 3) **Socioaffective strategies.** They have to do with the way learners interact with other learners and native speakers. Examples are: *cooperation* (working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity), *question for clarification* (asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrase, explanation and/or examples). The general taxonomy of Oxford (1990), on the other hand, makes a distinction between direct and indirect strategies. The former consists of "strategies that directly involve the target language" in the sense that they "require mental processing of the language" (Oxford, 1990: 37). Strategies included under this category are: memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. The latter "provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other means" (Oxford, 1990:151). They include metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

The fact that learners learn despite methods or techniques of teaching has underlined more the importance of individual variation in language learning. The learner's choice of learning strategies is determined by individual learner differences such as beliefs, affective states, general factors, and previous learning experiences and by various situational factors (the target language being studied, whether the setting is formal or informal, the nature of the instruction, and the specific tasks learners are asked to perform). These then influence two aspects of learning: the rate of acquisition and the ultimate level of achievement. The success that learners experience and their level of L2 proficiency can also affect their choice of strategies. Also, the fact that learning strategies vary according to learning task suggests that it might be possible to change learners strategic behaviour through training. Wenden (1985:7) suggests that language teachers should no longer be content to regard their subject matter simply as language. Instead:

> *Learners must learn how to do for themselves what teachers typically do for them in the classroom. Our endeavours to help them improve their language skills must be complemented by an equally systematic approach to helping them develop and refine their learning skills. Learner training should be integrated with language training.*

For him, it is very important to identify successful strategies in students of second languages. Because learner strategies are the key to learner autonomy, language training should have as one of its main aims the facilitating of that autonomy.

Teachers should be aware that there is a variety of ways of learning, and students may or may not use different learning modes and strategies when facing a problem. Teachers should also be aware of the individual characteristics of their students and try to meet their needs. They should understand what makes learners successful and unsuccessful and use different approaches in the class for the realization of successful strategies. Learners, on the other hand, should be taught to explore, develop and use learning strategies appropriate to the different tasks performed in class.

2.2. Input and interaction

In order for L2 acquisition to take place, the learner has to have access to input in the target language. In language learning, input refers to the language which the learner hears or receives and from which he can learn. Not all input the learner gets becomes acquired language and is incorporated by the learner. Krashen (1982, 1985) hypothesized that "we acquire…only when we understand language that contains structure that is "a little beyond where we are now" (1982:21). In order for acquisition to take place two conditions are necessary. The first one is to provide learners with comprehensible input containing i+1, structures a bit beyond the acquirer's current level of interlanguage development ("i") and "+1", input that is challenging but not overwhelming to the learner, and second, a low o weak affective filter to allow the input "in". Only a part of the input the learner receives becomes "intake", that is, is integrated, taken in the learner's interlanguage system. It is not clear though if incomprehensible input is of no value to the language learner and most important, mere exposure to comprehensible input does not seem to be enough to promote language development. Long (1983a,1985) goes beyond Krashen and proposed a model to account for the relationships between negotiated interactions, comprehensible input, and language acquisition. According to him, interactional input and specially the modifications that take place in negotiating meaning when a communication problem arises are more important than non-interactive input in the process of acquiring a language. In his opinion, conversation has an important role in getting comprehensible input. It is important to know under what conditions the input the learner gets becomes intake and is interiorised by the learner. One of the major questions with respect to input is what are the characteristics of the input that L2 learners typically receive. For example: modified input such as foreigner talk or interlanguage talk. Input and verbal interaction are crucial for language learning to take place.

The study of input and interaction has involved the description of the linguistic/conversational adjustments which are found in language addressed to learners (i.e. foreigner talk and teacher talk) and also the analysis of discourse in-

volving L2 learners (interlanguage talk). Native speakers (NSs) of all human languages seem to know intuitively when to make adjustments and modify their speech when talking to non-native speakers (NNSs). They know how to use appropriate forms to make a message comprehensible to a listener who does not have full understanding of the language or to make it easier for him to take turns talking. Several reduced or simplified registers, produced by different speech communities and in different languages, have been identified and studied by diverse authors: the language addressed to young children, "baby talk" or "caretaker speech"(Snow and Ferguson 1977, Ferguson 1964); the "foreigner talk" addressed to foreigners who do not know or have not mastered one's language (Ferguson 1975, Clyne 1968, for example); a foreign language instruction register (for example Henzl 1979, 1983); the language addressed to retarded or hard-of-hearing people and so on. Since these registers in some ways seem to be simplified versions of the normal language they have been called "simplified registers." The function of the simplification and modifications that take place in those registers is multiple. According to Roger Brown (1977), they have two main functions: a) to promote communication, and b) to express affective characteristics. This last function includes the register of the language between lovers, language to babies, to pets, language to plants and so on. A third function that has implications for language teaching should be added: simplification of input, in the sense of providing students with comprehensible input adjusted to their level of understanding. Modified input is believed to play an important role in SLA.

The term foreigner talk, as used by Ferguson (1975), refers to a particular simplified register used primarily to address foreigners, i.e. people who do not have full native competence (or possibly any competence at all) in one's language. In general, the features that characterize this type of register are: simple phonology, morphology, choice of words and syntax. Many of these characteristics, however, also appear in the conversation of adult native speakers and are not exclusive to the FT register. The kind of linguistic modifications that occur in foreigner talk has been much researched to determine, among other things, how speech to NNSs differs from that of NS conversation and whether the differences aid comprehension and/or acquisition. Long (1983b), in an article dealing with the modification observed in NS-NNS conversations, points out two kinds of phenomena in FT: a) linguistic adjustments, and b) conversational adjustments. Among the linguistic adjustments one important question is the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of FT and how it affects SLA. The supposed ungrammaticality of FT continues to be one of the main objects of research because of contradictory findings. Some authors see significant differences between the syntactic complexity of NS/NS speech and NS/NNS speech. Others see no significant difference in syntactic complexity and finally, some consider NS/NNS more syntactically complex than NS/NS. Ferguson (1975) conducted an early study of FT through an elicitation procedure in which his students at Stanford University were asked to rewrite ten sentences as they thought they would pose them to illiterate non-European who spoke languages other than English. He reported that NSs of English switched to an ungrammatical variety of their language when addressing NNSs.

The ungrammaticality observed was the result of three main processes: 1) *omission*, which involves deletion of features ordinarily present in normal language, such as articles, copulas, prepositions, inflectional morphology, conjunctions and subject pronouns: "she live ten years France"); 2) *expansion*, which consists of adding features not normally present (e.g. addition of tags such as yes? ok? no? to questions-"You have some money, no?- or insertion of subject pronoun *you* before imperatives: "you meet me at five"), and 3) *replacement/rearrangement* of features so that similar semantic value is conveyed by different forms or constructions (e.g. uninverted question forms, forming negatives with *no* plus the negated item-"me *no like* food," replacing subject with object pronouns-"*me* go", or converting possesssive adjective-plus-noun constructions to noun-plus-object pronoun-*mother me* instead of *my mother* or a preference for uninverted question forms with deletion of the *do* auxiliary: "you come". Long (1983c) after reviewing the literature on the topic of ungrammaticality, comes to the conclusion that ungrammatical input is more likely when:1) the native speakers have zero or very low second language proficiency; 2) the NS either is or perceives him or herself as being of higher social status than the non-native interlocutor; 3) The NS has prior FT experience, but only with NNSs of low SL proficiency; and 4) when the conversation occurs spontaneously. Factors 1, 2 and 4 appear to be necessary conditions for ungrammatical FT to occur, but no single condition alone seems sufficient.This kind of speech often has racist and/or class overtones, involving "talking down" to inferiors, when the inferiors are for example undocumented migrants, immigrant workers. The question arises of up to what point a SL acquirer exposed either only or predominantly to ungrammatical FT will acquire a marked substandard variety of the target language as some studies seem to indicate. Research since Ferguson (1975) though, has shown that ungrammaticality in FT does not occur as often as was thought. Deviant input is not the norm in SLA and most speech addressed to second language acquirers is a well formed, correct, simplified and modified version of the target language. On the other hand, studies indicate that teachers´ speech in foreign language classrooms is no more distorted than that used with children. Further identification of the variables which predict grammatical and ungrammatical input is still necessary, as the results of research are normally contradictory.

The other type of modification observed in FT and mentioned by Long (1983c) is conversational adjustments. Studies of these modifications focus on structural characteristics of NS/NNS conversations in which FT occurs, i.e. the study of foreigner talk discourse (FTD). It is the higher frequency more than the actual characteristics of the devices used in FTD that distinguishes FTD from NS/NS conversations. Analysis of the features in FTD thus requires looking both at NS/NNS conversations and NS/NS conversations in comparable situations so that fair conclusions about what really characterizes FT may be drawn. Besides, the question of how NSs know when and how to use FT has to be further explored.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 125-126) point out the following characteristics of the linguistic and conversational adjustments to NNSs in grammatical foreigner talk discourse:

Linguistic and Conversational Adjustments to NNSs in Grammatical Foreigner Talk Discourse (taken from Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 125-126):

Phonology
- slower rate of delivery
- more use of stress and pauses
- more careful articulation
- wider pitch range/exaggerated intonation
- more use of full forms/avoidance of contractions

Morphology and syntax
- more well-formed utterances/fewer disfluencies
- shorter utterances (fewer words per utterance)
- less complex utterances
- more regularity/use of canonical word order
- more retention of optimal constituents
- more overt marking of grammatical relations
- more verbs marked for present/fewer for non-present temporal reference
- more questions
- more yes-no and intonation questions/fewer WH-questions

Semantics
- more overt marking of semantic relations
- lower type-token ratio
- fewer idiomatic expressions
- higher average lexical frequency of nouns and verbs
- higher proportion of copulas to total verbs
- marked use of lexical items
- fewer opaque forms (greater preference for full NPs over pronouns, concrete verbs over dummy verbs, like *do*)

Content
- more predictable/narrower range of topics
- more here-and now orientation
- briefer treatment of topics (fewer intonation bits per topic/lower ratio of topic-initiating to topic-continuing moves)

Interactional structure
- more abrupt topic-shifts
- more willing relinquishment of topic-choice to interlocutor
- more acceptance of unintentional topic-switches when a communication breakdown occurs
- more use of questions for topic-initiating moves
- more repetition (self-and other-, exact and semantic, complete and partial)
- more comprehension checks
- more clarification requests
- more expansions
- more question-and answer strings
- more decomposition

The linguistic and conversational adjustments just mentioned above have been observed among all groups and types of speakers. Similar linguistic modifications do also take place in the speech of children and upper-middle, middle and working class adults, individuals with or without prior FT experience, second language teachers and non-teachers.

Very important also, is the question of what NSs react to in interactions with NNSs that induces them to start making adjustments. In contrast with the fairly large numbers of studies describing FT and FTD, very little research has been carried out to determine what causes linguistic/conversational adjustments by NSs. Long (1983c, 1985), after reviewing the literature on the issue, suggested five possibilities: a) the physical appearance (perceived foreignness of the NNSs); b) one or more features of the NNS´ interlanguage; c) the NS´s assessment of the NNS´s level of comprehension of what the NS is saying; d) the comprehensibility to the NS of what the NNS is saying; e) combinations of two or more of these factors. He came to the conclusion that although comprehension of what the NS is saying is a crucial variable in stimulating NSs´reactions to NNSs , in general NSs react to a combination of all the factors mentioned. The NS´s reactions also have been found to vary according to whether the person making adjustments has or has not had prior FT experience. The individual with such experience normally reacts to perceived foreignness (accent or physical appearance) but subsequently readjusts to the norms of NS-NS talk, and will adjust his language to the level of proficiency the NNS shows.

The study of the language NNSs are exposed to can help teachers understand better how students learn a L2 and consequently provide some insights into what features of FT can promote SLA. However, although linguistic input understood by learners is thought to be an important factor in promoting L2 learning, it is obviously not the only one. Speech modifications and comprehensible input alone may be insuficient to aid learning. Verbal interaction and negotiation of meaning between NS-NNS as well as conversational maintenance on the part of NNSs seem also to play a significant role in the learning process and should be taken into account as important variables. A further question is whether FT should be used at all stages and levels of language learning or, on the contrary, should be restricted to beginners. If it is true that certain linguistic adjustments help learners in their language development, especially at the beginning, more research should be conducted to determine which specific features of FT aid or impede learning and comprehension. Finally, the question whether some modifications observed in FT prevent language learners from getting real input should be addressed. The repeated use of FT (intentionally or not) when addressing NNSs who already possess a command of the L2, the continuous use by NSs of restricted registers in their conversations with NNSs, can promote fossilization of the L2 in learners. There is a danger of supplying NNSs with inadequate input if NSs monitor their language as soon as they perceive any of the *foreignness* described by Long (1983c).

The quality of interlanguage talk, that is to say, the input L2 learners get from other L2 learners, is also of considerable importance given the current emphasis placed on small group work in communicative language teaching. The research

to date of NN/NN conversations in and out of classrooms (Long et al. 1976; Porter 1983; Pica & Doughty 1985; Pica et al.1986; Varonis & Gass 1985) indicates that conversational practice between NNs is as useful for SLA as NS-NNS conversation. The studies suggest that small-group and especially pair work seems to provide more opportunities for negotiation of meaning leading to make input more comprehensible than in teacher-led discussions. In several studies Pica and Doughty (1985, 1986) concluded that group-work appears to encourage a linguistic environment suitable for SLA, as long as learner groups work on a task which involves a two-way exchange of information, thereby requiring all members to participate. They also pointed out how pair-work might even be more conducive to increased interaction than small-group work.

2.3. Output

The last factor that will be discussed in this chapter is the role of output in promoting acquisition.

Output is the language produced by the learner. It can be comprehensible or incomprehensible to an interlocutor. There are two main positions with respect to learner output and acquisition. According to Krashen (1985), interaction has no direct effect in acquisition and it does not contribute to interlanguage development. Following Krashen (1989) two different hypotheses on the role of output have been identified. One is the *skill-building hypothesis* which states that rules or items are first learnt consciously and then gradually automatized through practice. The second hypothesis Krashen considers is the *output hypothesis*. According to him, the hypothesis comes in two forms. First, there is "output plus correction." The learners try out rules or items in production and then use the corrections they receive from other speakers to confirm or disconfirm them. Schachter (1986) points out that metalinguistic information relating to the correctness of learners production is available both directly (through corrections) and indirectly (through confirmation checks, clarification requests, and failure to understand). The second form of the output hypothesis involves the idea of *comprehensible output*. Although some learners may learn best by simply paying attention to what other people are saying, rather than by saying something themselves, and this should be taken into consideration by teachers, the efforts that learners make to be comprehensible are thought to play an important part in acquisition. Making the effort to produce comprehensible output may force them to revise their internalised rule systems. Swain (1985), basing her hypothesis on the research carried out in French immersion programmes in Canada, has put forward the *comprehensible output hypothesis*. She arguments that while comprehensible input may be sufficient for acquiring semantic competence in the target language, learners must try to make themselves understood, produce "pushed output," if they are to gain grammatical mastery of the target language and are to reconstruct their interlanguages. The developing of certain grammatical features of the language would come about as a result of the negotiation in the process of interacting. In her opinion, production will aid acquisition only when the learner is pushed. She also ar-

gues that production may encourage learners to move from semantic (top-down) to syntactic (bottom-up) processing. Whereas comprehension of a message can take place with little syntactic analysis of the input, production forces learners to pay attention to the means of expression. Both versions of the output hypothesis attribute considerable importance to feedback, both direct and indirect. In the case of "output plus correction," feedback is necessary to supply learners with meta-linguistic information, while in the case of "comprehensible output" it is necessary to push learners to improve the accuracy of their production in order to make themselves understood.

Connected with the output issue is one area of research that has become important in the last decades: the study of teachers questions and how they can or cannot provide opportunities for learner output and L2 acquisition in general. Although the findings of the studies on teachers questions and the relationship between question type and learner output are still inconclusive to prescribe questioning strategies in teacher education, it seems reasonable to train teachers to ask specific types of questions such as referential questions or more "deep" comprehension questions instead of superficial rote questions.

On the other hand, some studies on how teachers respond to learners errors in error correction in second language classrooms (Brock et al. 1986, Fanselow 1977, and Bruton & Samuda 1980) as well as on caretaker speech, indicate that immediate error correction on the part of the teacher does not always have an effect on students production. Teachers often correct students more for errors in meaning than errors in grammar. They tend to treat as errors student answers that do not correspond to what they expect. Brock et al. (1986) concluded in their study that learners being corrected by their partners during certain communication games quickly incorporated the corrections in their interlanguage. Bruton and Samuda (1980) investigated the issue of learners incorporating other learners errors into their own production when doing group work. In their results, they concluded that picking up other students errors was very rare.

3. Excercises and activities

a) Point out the differences between language acquisition and language learning.
b) What is the so called "motherese"?
c) What does LAD stand for?
d) Say the difference between "integrative motivation" and "instrumental motivation."

Activity:

If you have a brother or sister, child, or relative who is less than two years, try to record him/her regularly up to the age of five. You can draw your own conclusions about how children acquire language.

Key to the exercises:

    a) Language acquisition is a natural unconscious way resulting in understanding and speaking that language (usually a mother or second languge), while learning implies an effort and a conscious process which focuses in mastering the language (a foreign or second language).

    b) It is the simple speech used by mothers, fathers, babysitters, etc. when they talk to young children who are learning to talk.

    c) Language Acquisition Device.

    d) A person with "integrative motivation" would like to learn a language in order to communicate with people of another culture who speak it, as it is the case of immigrants coming to Spain.. However, in the hypothetical case of a Spanish person who wants to become a pilot, for example, he/she would have to master the English language, therefore his/her motivation would be just "instrumental".

4. Glossary

Acquisition: According to Krashen, *acquisition* is a subconscious process of rule internalization which results in the knowledge of a language. The learner's attention is focused on meaning rather than form.

Affective filter hypothesis: A hypothesis proposed by Krashen and associated with his monitor model of second language development. The hypothesis is based on a theory of an *affective filter*, which states that successful second language acquisition depends on the learner's feelings. Negative attitudes (including a lack of motivation or self-confidence and anxiety) are said to act as a filter, preventing the learner from making use of input, and thus hindering success in language learning.

Caretaker speech *(also Motherese, Mother Talk, Baby Talk)*: The simple speech used by mothers, fathers, babysitters, etc. when they talk to young children who are learning to talk.

Comprehensible input: Language which contains linguistic items that are slightly beyond the learner's present linguistic competence.

Foreigner Talk: The type of speech often used by native speakers of a language when speaking to foreigners who are not proficient in the language.

Fossilization: (in second or foreign language learning) 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 second or foreign language learning. Fossilized features of pronunciation contribute to a person's foreign accent.

Input: Language which a learner hears or receives and from which he or she can learn.

Input Hypothesis: A hypothesis proposed by Krashen to explain how acquisition takes place. For language acquisition to occur, it is necessary for the learner to understand input language which contains linguistic items that are slightly beyond the learner's present linguistic competence.

Intake: It is input which is actually helpful for the learner. Some of the language (i.e. input) which a learner hears may be too rapid or difficult for the learner to understand, and therefore cannot be used in learning (i.e. cannot serve as intake).

Interlanguage: The type of language produced by second- and foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a language.

Interlanguage Talk: The input that L2 learners get from other L2 learners.

LAD: Language Acquisition Device. A device which contains information about the possible form that the grammar of any language can take.

Language Learning Aptitude: An ability for learning an L2.

Language Learning Attitudes: The attitudes which speakers of different languages have towards each other's languages or to their own language.

Learning: According to Krashen, learning is a conscious process which results only in "knowing about the language".

Learning Strategies: The actions, techniques, behaviours or procedures that learners use to try to master the target language and develop their interlanguages.

Learning Style/Cognitive Style: The particular way in which a learner learns things, processes information or approaches a task.

Monitoring: Listening to one's own utterances to compare what was said with what was intended, and to make corrections if necessary. The interjections and self-corrections that speakers make while talking show that monitoring is taking place, and are usually for the purposes of making meaning clear.

Motivation: The factors that determine a person's desire to do something.

A- Instrumental Motivation: wanting to learn a language because it will be useful for certain "instrumental" goals, such as getting a job, reading a foreign newspaper, passing an examination.

B- Integrative Motivation: wanting to learn a language in order to communicate with people of another culture who speak it.

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