CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Overview

Miles and Huberman (1994) defined a conceptual framework as a visual written product, one that, “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, the key factors; concepts or variables- and the presumed relationships among them”.

This chapter describes the conceptual framework that underlines the choice of variables, theories of language and theories of language learning in general.

2.1 Language and Thinking

Language and Thinking are related events. The ability of a child to handle concepts or ideas is related to their language development. A person’s language imposes a particular world view and cognitive processes are in some way inevitably affected by the structure of language. Vocabulary differences provide one instance of how language is presumably related to thought. For instance Eskimos have several different words for labeling snow, depending upon its characteristics, whereas only one is widely used in English. Downhill skiers, of course, do distinguish between several different kinds of snow using words like “cornstarch” or “powder” describing its consistency. Does this mean that different people have different perceptions about snow? According to Whorf (1956), the range of words, or labels, available influences the range of cognitive activities in which human being may engage. People having a number of descriptive labels that they can apply to a range of events presumably are able to think about these events in more ways than people having only a few labels.

One of the important components of intelligence is thinking. It is assumed to be an abstract psychological process that manipulates knowledge. Thinking includes categorizing, reasoning, and solving problems. Thinking is also a private activity, where one manipulates, categorizes and combines various information, through which one tends to know something new. The purpose of thinking generally means problem solving. The problem may involve simple classification or they may require the construction, testing and evaluation of complex plans of action. Language plays a vital role in thinking as we think words. However, one also thinks with shapes and images.
2.2 Developmental Stages in Thinking

Piaget insists that language and thought of the child are aspects of cognitive processes. The intellectual development of the child can be understood through his/her language and thought processes. Piaget mentions three levels of intellectual development.

- Sensory-motor activity
- Egocentric thought and Language
- Rational Thought.

The stage of Sensory-Motor activity (Infancy): During this period the infant explores the world and comes to deal with it as something apart from the self. At this stage the infant learns that symbols are closely related to the objects and happenings around him/her.

The stage of Egocentric Thought and Language (Early Childhood): Piaget calls this stage a Pre-operational stage. It is also identified as representational intelligence because the child is able to represent reality as language and mental imagery. For the child it is a period of magic during which words, pictures, emotions, fantasies and dreams all seem part of an external reality. The child sees everything from a single point of view, its own. Thus during this stage the child’s thinking and language can be said to be passing from absolute egocentric to social egocentric.

The stage of Rational Thought (seven to eleven years): By this age the child would have developed the ability of logical and rational thought. The mental maturity and added experiences improves one’s ability to attend to the problems at hand with more complex patterns of thinking. Teachers handling different levels of students in school will experience the different types of explanations of causal relations offered by students at different age groups.

2.3 Factors Influencing Language Development

The rate and extent of Language development are the result of numerous factors. Some of these factors are listed below:
Physiological Maturation plays a major role in language development. Sex differences in language development may be related to maturation. Girls tend to develop language facility more rapidly than boys during the preschool periods. Though it is difficult to determine the exact extent to which the language superiority of girls remain apparent throughout total development period, generally it appears that at all age levels girls tend to have greater verbal facility than boys.

Environmental factors appear to influence the language development of the children. The child who is brought up in an environment where the language he/she hears is limited to simple communication rather than concrete ideas or objects, it does have many opportunities for learning words or expressions that are more abstract. If the language of the people in the environment is grammatically incorrect, or loaded with slang and colloquialism, the child naturally will adopt these speech and thinking patterns.

The ordinal position in the family also appears to influence the language and thinking pattern in the children. There are evidences to believe that first born children particularly boys, are given special attention by their mothers. This attention results in considerable instruction and mature verbal stimulation which leads to greater word understanding. There are also studies to support the idea of younger children developing better language skills. The younger child have greater opportunity to learn because of contacts with elder siblings who have mastered speech.

Bilingualism: Children from homes in which two languages are spoken tend to be slow in acquiring any one of the languages, when compared to children from monolingual homes.

2.4 Applied Linguistics

Applied Linguistics has been defined as, “the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue” (Brumfit, 1995), for example: problems of miscommunication in social life, institutional discourses of courtrooms, classrooms and hospitals, language policies and testing procedures. In addition it has been, since its inception of the foundational field of research for second language acquisition and learning.
Terms like ‘second language’, ‘second language learning’, second language acquisition’ and ‘theory’ need to be explained. The term second language refers to any languages other than the learner’s native language. The concept of learning includes all learning, whether formal, planned and systematic or informal and unstructured. Krashen (1981) have proposed a distinction between formal conscious learning and informal unconscious learning. He argues that adults have two different ways of developing competence in a language, language acquisition and language learning. Language acquirers are not consciously aware of the grammatical rules of the language, but rather develop a feel for correctness, acquisition is just picking up a language. Language learning on the other hand refers to the conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. Theory on the other hand is an abstract set of claims about the units that are significant within the phenomenon under study, the relationship that exist between them and the processes that bring about change.(Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

2.5 Second Language Vs Foreign Language Vs Heritage Language

A Second Language (SL) is a language other than the Mother Tongue, learned in an environment in which that language is the dominant language (eg; English in the USA, French in France, for immigrants or minority learners), or where the language is an international language of commerce and industry( eg; English in Korea or Hungary, German in Poland or Russia).The learning of second language takes place in a variety of formal and informal site: in schools, in adult classes, and at the work place. Teaching methodologies and textbooks are published in the target country (eg by TESOL in the USA, The Goethe Institute in Germany) and promoted by the country’s private, public or state institutions around the world. Emphasis is on the development of communicative competence and the ability to become a functioning member of a cultural, occupational or professional community.

A Foreign Language (FL) is a language that is learned in an instructional environment or during a temporary sojourn abroad as part of general education or for professional purposes. Instruction is delivered in classrooms and in language media centers with the help of instructional technology.
A Heritage Language (HL) is a language that is learned by member of an ethnic group desirous to connect with culture of their ancestors, for example Mandarin, Chinese, Armenian, Korean etc.

2.6 Language Learning Vs Language Education

Both language learning and language education have to do with the process of learning another language, but language learning sees the learner as a singular individual seeking personal, economic or professional opportunities. Whereas language education sees the learner as a student in an educational setting taking a foreign language as one of his/her school subject. While language learning responds to the needs of immigrants, tourists and professionals or all ages seeking contact with speakers of languages other than their own, language education is inscribed within the schooling career of adolescents and young adults.


Applied Linguistics emerged in the second half of the 20th century, when the demand for English was growing around the globe for employment and business purposes, much of the research on the learning of English as second/foreign language. Its main research focus has been the acquisition of spoken language, pragmatic skills, conversational strategies, and the learning of the conventional written genres-for example the academic essay, the research report, the job application and the statement of purpose.

The changes brought about in the last 25 years by the rise of a multinational business class and the explosion of information-processing technologies have transformed English from just another foreign language into the world language of trade and industry. The case of English, more than any other foreign language, is emblematic of the close link between language teaching and the clash of national interests and international power struggle taking place at the present time in the technological, economic and cultural spheres. These changes have created conditions favorable to the emergence of what has been called a Communicative approach to language pedagogy or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT has imposed itself on the teaching of all foreign languages around the world.
Unlike language teaching based on philology, CLT has been based on social scientific applied linguistic research. Applied Linguistics theory insists that:

- Language is not primarily a mode of representation of some textual truth, but interpersonal communication; not historical knowledge, but information to be exchanged. The target model is not primarily the truth and accuracy of the written text, but the authenticity and trust worthiness of the native speaker. The purpose of language learning is to communicate with native and other nonnative speakers of the language in a grammatically accurate, pragmatically appropriate and discursively coherent way.

- The emphasis is on spoken language, the focus is on lexical knowledge and lexicalized grammar, on idiomatic phrases, pre-fabricated chunks, procedural know how, fluency in production and the skillful management of conversation.

- Language learning emerges from comprehensible input, interaction, participation and collaboration in authentic contexts of use in which meanings are expressed, interpreted and negotiated.

- It is a cognitive process of structuring and restructuring knowledge that can be facilitated by a task-based pedagogy.

- The learning and communication strategies of good language learner can and should be taught explicitly.

- Pair and group work in a student-centered classrooms aimed at collaboratively solving real-world tasks greatly facilitates language learning.

2.8 Individual Differences in Second Language Learning

Robert G. Gardner (1959) talks about four main variables

- Language Aptitude
- Attitude and Motivation.
- Language Anxiety.
- Language Learning Strategies.

Language Aptitude

Language aptitude is a term that has been used to identify those ability characteristics that influence how well individuals can learn a second language.
**Major Contributions:** The modern era began in 1959 when Carroll and Sapon published the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT), which attempted to measure abilities that seemed to be involved in language learning. This test developed from a series of studies that investigated the factor structure of verbal ability measures hypothesized to be related to achievement in a second language. Based on this research Carroll and Sapon (1959) proposed that achievement in a second language was influenced by four different abilities: Phonetic coding, grammatical sensitivity, rote memory and inductive language-learning ability, each of which was measured in the MLAT.

**Attitudes and Motivation**

Attitudes and Motivation are often treated together, which is quiet meaningful given that attitudes have motivational properties and motivation has attitudinal implications. Within this general area, it is possible to distinguish between two classes of attitude variables-educational and social, and two classes of motivational variables-general and task centered.

**Major Contributions:** The modern day era for this research began in 1959 when Gardner and Lambert demonstrated that two factors, linguistic (language) aptitude and motivation were related to achievement in a second language. A series of studies followed and led in turn to the development of the socio-educational model of second language acquisition and the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB).

The socio-educational model of SLA proposes that six variables (language aptitude, motivation, attitude towards the language situation, integrativeness, language anxiety and an instrumental orientation) play roles in Second Language Achievement, but that motivation and language aptitude are dominant variables. Research using AMTB has demonstrated that attitude; motivation and language anxiety were related to second language achievement, classroom behavior, dropping out of language study and participation in bicultural excursion studies. It has also been shown that there are changes in these attributes as a function bicultural excursion programme, regular language programme and intensive language programme.
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A major assumption underlying the model is that learning another language involves adopting aspects of another language community and thus the student’s attitude towards the target language community and other communities in general, as well as an interest in learning the language for integrative reasons influences the individuals’ level of motivation.

Language Anxiety

The concept of language anxiety is considered in many of the models of motivation and language learning. Horwitz and Cope (1986) developed the (FLCAS-Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale), claiming that such anxiety is a composite of communication apprehension, social evaluation and test anxiety. He states that language anxiety includes both negative affect that could impair learning, and beliefs and expectations about proficiency that could impair performance.

Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies refer to techniques that researchers and teachers propose to promote successful language acquisition or to approaches and procedures that individuals use to help them to learn a language.

2.9 Mother Tongue and Foreign Language Learning

These five basic theories are, furthermore, very much complementary to each other, serving different types of learners or representing various cases of language learning. They must not automatically make us presume that first and second language learning is identical or alike processes, though second language learning is strongly tied up with first language acquisition. Obviously, native language growth must pave way for foreign language growth. Then these five basic language learning theories are fundamental pillars of language learning whose relevance to education is undeniable.
2.10 Theories of Second Language Learning

The Behaviorist Theory

Behaviorism focuses on objectively observable behaviors and discounts mental activities. It states that all learning verbal or non-verbal takes place through habit formation. It insists the role of environment in language learning, the learners adapt to their environment. In learning to speak, learning takes place by imitating and repeating the same structures or patterns time after time through a process involving imitation, rewards and practice. In addition effective teaching would concentrate on areas of difference. This assumption led to the emergence of contrastive analyses which states that the second language learner has innate set of habits that are applicable in learning a second language. It is assumed that transferred first language/mother tongue habits either facilitate or inhibit the process of second language habit formation. The learner can acquire it easily if there is a similarity between first and the second language. In learning to speak another language, learners usually tend to think of what they want in their mother tongue and then transfer it to the target language. This is known as language transfer who could be positive in the case of differences. This theory led to the implication of audio-visual techniques and the practice of oral skills in a controlled learning context.

The Cognitive theory

Cognitive psychology came into existence in 1970’s. It places emphasis on unobservable constructs like mind, memory, attitudes, motivation, thinking, reflection etc. The basic concept of this theory is that, the behavioral change of an individual is the indicator of what is going in the individual thinking faculty. The learners are viewed as active participants in the learning process. Cognitivists do not believe that language is separate from other aspects of cognition. They argue that human mind is geared to the processing of all kinds of information although highly complex. Greater importance is given to understanding language structure than to using it. The cognitive theory is often known as the compromise between behaviorist and innatist theory. “Cognitivists believe that not only do cognitive and maturational factors influence language acquisition, but also the process of language acquisition itself may in turn affect cognitive and social skill development” (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004)
The Innatist Theory

This theory is also known as nativist approach. It states that learning is natural for human beings. Innatist believe that babies enter the world with a biological propensity, an inborn device, to learn language (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). This human built-in device for learning language has been called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), the function of which is to initiate, supervise, and facilitate the language acquisition process. The innatist theory does somewhat explain how children can generate or invent language they have never heard. Chomsky defined this theory by stating that children use the LAD to generate and invent complex speech. Though his theory provides a reasonable explanation about acquiring language, it has several limitations. One such aspect is that the timing of language learning varies greatly within cultures, environment shapes how much and what language is learned, and feedback from other language users affects language acquisition.

The Social Interactionist Theory

This theory is generally known as Sociocultural theory. It is a psycho-educational perspective of individual development within social and cultural contexts based on the work of Vygotsky. Internalization, inner speech, and the zone of proximal development are the core concepts of this theory. It holds that language learning is not only a cognitive task but more of social activity where the process participating in the knowledge-building community, a community of practice, or a community of second language learners. This theory assumes that language acquisition is influenced by the interaction of a number of factors—physical, linguistic, cognitive and social. M.A.K. Halliday believes that children learn language out of the need to function in society. Babies acquire language in order to survive, have their need met and express themselves.

Humanistic Theory

According to Wang (2005), Humanism is originally a psychological term. It emphasizes the importance of the inner world of the human being and places the individual’s thoughts, feelings and emotions at the front part of all human developments. Among its prominent figures are Rogers and Maslow. Carl
Rogers (1969) advocates that human beings have a natural potential for learning, but this will take place only when the subject matter is perceived to be of personal relevance to the learners and when it involves active participation of the learners. Another prominent humanistic theory is Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs. Although the two have different ideas, their theories are all connected with humanism and their theories contribute greatly to the appearance of humanistic approach.

Humanistic approach is a language teaching method which emphasizes humanism as the most significant element in the teaching process. According to Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, the definition of ‘Humanistic Approach’ is (in language teaching) a term sometimes used for methods in which the following principles are considered important: development of Human values, growth in self-awareness and in the understanding of others, sensitivity to human feelings and emotions, active student involvement in learning and in the way learning takes place.

From Humanistic approach, there arise three prominent methodologies: the silent way, Suggestopedia and the Community Language Learning. In general, the implications of this approach to language teaching and learning can be listed as follows:

- Developing the “whole person” of students intellectually as well as emotionally.
- Teachers have genuine trust and acceptance of the students as worthy, valuable individuals and help them to build up positive self-support.
- Teachers should be real facilitators of learning and focus more on how to learn than what to learn.

**Constructivist Theory**

Formalization of the theory of constructivism is generally attributed to Jean Piaget (1970), who articulated mechanisms by which knowledge is internalized by learners. This theory states that learning is an active process of creating meaning from different experiences. He insists that an individual to know an object must act upon it, either physically or mentally. These physical or mental actions can displace objects or connect, combine, take apart and reassemble them. These activities that people
perform on objects are known as Schemas. Schemas are not particular actions or responses, they are what can be repeated and generalized in particular acts.

Piaget further talks about two more concepts: Assimilation and Accommodation: Assimilation is the process of interpreting the world in terms of existing knowledge. In this process the individual extracts from the environment what is needed for developing and maintaining schemas. To Piaget, the child’s intelligence develops in the environment. To put it differently the child needs the environment in order to construct new schemas and to maintain old schemas. Assimilation is not exclusively dependent upon what is available in the environment, but upon the schemas already constructed and available in the child.

Accommodation is the process of modification of existing knowledge to incorporate a new experience. In other words it is change of schema by the elements it assimilates. The progressive modification of schemas through accommodation allows the child to develop the capabilities beyond the point of dealing only with the immediate physical environment. In this way the child can reach a stage, when it can deal with symbols and abstract ideas and solve problems mentally. Finally Piaget talks about Equilibrium; it is the process of seeking mental balance between assimilation and accommodation. As the child grows, it attempts to understand more complex aspects of the environment. The simpler schemas at its disposal then become insufficient for achieving assimilation or accommodation. In such an instance, the child faces disequilibrium. The child can achieve equilibrium only after the construction of new schema and perform more and more complex activities to attain perfection or equilibrium. Thus equilibrium becomes a process that produces progressive equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation. It is a process of finding new centration. At each level of equilibrium the child reaches a centration. Then when it encounters new experiences, knowledge or skills, the child enters into de centration, which leads to the construction of new schemas and reach of new equilibrium. Similarly in learning a new language an individual encounters various stages, where he/she assimilates, accommodates to attain the stage of equilibrium.
2.11 Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) of learning domains formulated a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. Bloom and his associates identified three domains of educational activities.

**Cognitive:** deals with knowledge.

**Affective:** deals with feelings and attitudes.

**Psychomotor:** deals with manual or physical skills.

He identified six levels within the cognitive domain ranging in terms of difficult from the simple recall or recognition of facts to the highest order which is classified as evaluation. The affective domain was divided into four categories dealing with feelings, values, motivations and attitudes. The psychomotor domain includes physical movements, coordination and use of motor skill areas. This taxonomy has its implications in planning lessons, stating objectives, identifying learning procedures and assessing learner’s development. It is assumed that a proper use of Bloom’s taxonomy would improve both teaching and testing. For instance speaking skill of an individual could be developed if the domains and subdivisions mentioned in Bloom’s taxonomy if properly planned. Moving from a simple level to a higher level and so on to reach the most complex level as described creates a relaxed and encouraging atmosphere to speak. In order to be able to speak a language, learners need to know its vocabulary and grammatical structure, to understand meaning and ideas, to apply the gained information in different contexts, to analyze, compare and contrast, and judge their thoughts and ideas. This represents the cognitive domain of the taxonomy. Learners need to have a good attitude towards the language learnt so that they would be willing to learn it, respond to it positively, and build a set of values into priorities to be internalized. Finally providing learners with tasks which require performing physical activities like miming, use of gesture and acting represent the psychomotor domain and considered to be effective and memorable devices in teaching speaking.
2.12 Gagne’s Conditions

Gagne (1965) ideas has affected second language learning and teaching (Brown 2002), multimedia learning (Gagne 1993) and General Instructional Design (Gagne, Briggs and Wagner 1992). He presents a highly teacher-centered approach meant to influence the learner’s internal cognitive process. He suggested that there are five categories of learning. Each type indicates a different class of human performance and each requires a different set of instructional conditions for effective learning. After objectively analyzing the condition for learning Gagne says: “Since the purpose of instruction is learning, the central focus for rational derivation of instructional techniques is the human learner. According to him any rationally sound instructional procedures must take into account learner characteristics such as innate capacities, experiential maturity, and current knowledge status. Therefore only these factors should form parameters of the design of any particular program of instruction. The five basic skills are:

1. **Intellectual skills:** These skills are the capabilities that make the individual competent. They enable him to make effective response to his environment.

2. **Cognitive Strategies:** These skills are the ones that govern the individual capability to perceive, discriminate, generalize, learn, think and remember.

3. **Verbal Information:** The ability to understand and use verbal information in the memory system to recall when needed is included in this category. The originality, fluency and elaboration are considered as the creative verbal skills.

4. **Motor Skills:** The capability to make effective use of body parts in dealing with environmental challenges. Few examples are, ability to regulate our breathing, our movements, use of limbs fingers, toes and so on to write, to draw, to conduct experiments, to ride a bike, drive a car and so on.

5. **Attitudes:** Attitude heavily influences the ability of an individual’s success in the task at hand. The right attitude ensures support and benefits from intellectuality, interest, aptitude in a person.
Gagne’s theory stipulates that there are several different types or levels of learning. The significance of these classifications is that each different type requires different types of instruction. His contentions is that different internal and external conditions are necessary for each type of learning to provide significant insight into the task of instructional design. For example, for cognitive strategies to be learned there must be a chance to practice and develop new solutions to problems; to learn attitudes, the learner must be exposed to a credible role model or persuasive arguments.

He suggests that learning tasks for intellectual skills can be organized in a hierarchy according to complexity: stimulus recognition, response generation, procedure following, use of terminology, discriminations, concept formation, rule application and problem solving. The primary significance of the hierarchy is to identify prerequisites that should be completed to facilitate learning at each level. Similarly in language learning individuals pre-requisites has to be analyzed and the instructional strategies has to be planned in such a way that he/she learns each category step by step and finally attain the target language. In sum, Gagne’s work focuses on highly structured, teacher controlled, systematic, deducted, step-by-step, “micro” processes of learning and teaching.

2.13 Socio-cultural Theory

Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory is widely cited by educators even today, as they formulate plans on how to get most from students, challenging them to reach their highest potential. He believes that social interaction leads not only to increased level of knowledge, but that it actually changes a learner’s thoughts and behaviors. In contrast to Piaget, he focused on mental activity at the individual level. His account prioritizes the social nature of learning. According to Vygotsky knowledge exists between individuals before it can exist within an individual.

“Any function of the child’s cultural development appears on two planes. First, it appears between people as an inter-psychological category and then within the child as intra-psychological category. This is casually true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts and the development of volition” (Vygotsky,, 1981).
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Vygotsky’s theory is not only a theory of learning: it also offers a theory of teaching, since language is the prime medium for sharing knowledge in formal context such as schools and informally in the home. Adults control the child’s representation of the world from birth onwards and the presence of more knowledgeable others is crucial condition for the development of higher mental functions. Two major concepts or contribution of Vygotsky are the **Zone of Proximal Development** and **Scaffolding**.

**The Zone of Proximal Development**

This refers to the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined under adult guidance or in collaboration with more able peers. Two implications: learning through guidance or assistance as a normal but important part of the development. Here the child’s inter-mental ability ultimately becomes intra-mental ability by appropriate interaction. The second one is that learning can be made more effective through appropriate teaching. The essential question is whether adults can or do pitch their interventions at the appropriate level when interacting with children so as to make effective teachers.

**Scaffolding**

It means by which adults structure and simplify the environment to facilitate children’s learning. Scaffolding may occur in a variety of contexts, for example by pointing out the next jigsaw puzzle, or offering the child a sock rolled down to make it easier to put on.

His theory suggests that there are three ways in which learning is passed along to an individual. Initiative learning is the first, where the child simply copies another person. Second is instructed learning, where a child recalls direction given by a teacher and then puts into play, and the third is collaborative learning? Collaborative learning happens when a peer group cooperates to learn or achieve a specific goal while working to understand one another.

Vygotsky’s explanation of the relationship between language and thought provides a compelling illustration of this process of appropriation. In his book (1981) ‘Thought and Language’ he has more accurately rendered in the active voice as
‘Speaking and Thinking’, which captures the notion that speaking and thinking are ways of acting on the material and social world. In Vygotsky’s analysis, the changing functional relationship between speaking and thinking is most compelling example for the general process of development in which social tools are appropriated and transformed into individual tools of thinking and problem solving. The movement from the social plane of the individual and internal plane of functioning, however, requires active engagement by children in social interaction with peers and supportive adults. In social interaction, the child uses speech and gesture to regulate joint attention, to identify and label objects, to classify, to elaborate experiences, and to offer explanations. It is the socially situated use of language that enables the child at a later time to recapture, reflect on, and transform experience. The opportunity to use speech as a means of making sense of experiences with other participants is a crucial step, therefore, towards independent intellectual functioning.

Vygotsky’s concepts are framed below as conditions of learning.

- Humans inherit socio cultural art facts and knowledge that can add to their genetic inheritance.
- Emotion, sensation, perception and all human learning including second language learning are suffused with social concepts and language.
- Children as well as adults learn by interacting with others (social mediation) through language.
- Language is the most important semiotic (symbolic) tool human possess.
- The more experienced are capable persons has dialogues with the learner, and the learner internalizes and transforms the key elements of these dialogues, turning them into higher mental functions, such as planning, organizing, evaluating, analyzing and synthesizing.
- Three stages are required for this internalization and transformation: social speech (the inter psychological plane), egocentric speech and inner speech (intra psychological plane). Thus learning starts out as “other – regulation” but through a series of dialogues with more capable people, becomes inner speech, which can become self-regulation.
The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the difference between the individual’s current level and the potential level that can be reached with assistance.

As a corollary, “dynamic assessment” is essential, because it measures the area of potentiality, not just the present level, which is only the level measured by what Vygotsky disparages as “static assessment”.

The theory, when applied to the second language field awakens second language teachers and researchers to crucial conditions for learning an additional language. Despite some limitations, such as an explanation of how the teacher can hold a dialogue with 20 or 30 students in a class at the appropriate level of their individually differing ZPD’s. His work is now viewed as seminal and extremely important in the L2 field. His theory is related in culture, history and personal relationships.

2.14 Situated Cognition in Communities of Practice:

Situated cognition as viewed today has at least two different meanings (1) learning that is based (anchored, situated) in a specific real-life, interesting, challenging problem to be solved by learners, and (2) learning that is situated in a community of practice (ie) a group of people who share an interest in a domain of human endeavor and engage in a process of collective learning that creates bonds between them.

Lave and Wagner (1991) is authors of the term “communities of practice” which they coined while studying apprenticeship as a model for learning: we all have experience as apprentice in various communities of practice at home, at work, in educational institution.

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• Three elements characterize a community of practice: domain, community and shared practice, the last of which is a repertoire of knowledge, skills, beliefs, artifacts, documents and strategies.
Apprenticeship is not just a relationship between a student and a master, but instead a complex social relationships. Learning by the apprentice is an integral part of generative (creative) social practice in the live –in world.

A person might be an expert (old timer) at the center in one community of practice, while being a novice (“new comer” or “apprentice”) at the edge or periphery of other communities of practice.

Communities of practice are dynamic: with peripherally participating members moving toward the centers as experts over time and with slightly more experienced apprentices teaching newer apprentices.

The whole community learns because learning occurs not just in an individual mind, learning also occurs collectively in a distributed way.

In communities of practice, participants are constantly constructing and altering identities through interaction. When identities are shaped, threatened or reshaped in communities of practice, other learner factors-values, emotions, motivation and performance –are naturally engaged in the process.

2.15 Krashen’s Model


The Acquisition –Learning Hypothesis

According to Krashen (1981) there are two independent systems of second language performance: ‘the acquired system’ and ‘the learned system’. The ‘acquired system’ or acquisition is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language .It requires meaningful interaction in the target language-natural communication-in which speakers are concentrated not in their form of utterances, but in the communicative act. The ‘learned system’ or ‘learning’ is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the language, for example knowledge of Grammar rules. According to Krashen ‘learning’ is less important than ‘acquisition’. The acquisition-learning distinction hypothesis claims that adults do not lose the ability to acquire languages the way that children do.
Just as research shows that error correction has little effect on children learning a first language, so too error correction has little effect on language acquisition.

**The Monitor Hypothesis**

Krashen claims that the language, that one has subconsciously acquired “initiates our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency whereas the language that we have consciously learned acts as an editor in situations where the learner has enough time to edit, is focused on form, and knows the rule. This conscious editor is called the Monitor. Krashen also suggests that there is individual variation among language learners with regard to ‘monitor’ use. He distinguishes those learners using the ‘monitor’ all the time (over-users); those learners who have not learned or who prefer not to use their conscious knowledge (under-users), and those learners using the monitor appropriately (optimal users). The monitor over-users try to always use their monitor, and end up “so concerned with correctness that they cannot speak with any real fluency;”

**The Natural Order Hypothesis**

The natural order hypothesis states that “the acquisition of grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others are late, regardless of the first language of a speaker”. However, Krashen points out that the implication of the ‘natural order hypothesis’ is not that a language programme syllabus should be based on the order found in the studies. It does not mean that grammar should be taught in this natural order of acquisition.

**The Input Hypothesis**

In this hypothesis, Krashen’s attempt is to explain how the learner acquires a second language. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the ‘natural order’ when he/she receives second language ‘input’ that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage one, then the acquisition takes place when
The following conditions are based on his hypotheses:

- Second language acquisition involves unconscious, creative communication. L2 acquisition, “is a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their first language.”

- Comprehensive input is required for second language acquisition. L2 develops only when the individual receives ‘comprehensible input’, that is input slightly above his or her current level of comprehension.

- Affect is important for second language acquisition, comprehensible input must occur in an atmosphere in which the students ‘affective filter’ is low, that is a situation with a little anxiety as possible.

- Acquisition occurs without Grammar instruction.

- Acquisition involves natural order: Acquisition of second language grammatical structures occur unconsciously in a natural order.

- Speaking must be allowed to emerge spontaneously. Speaking production ability emerges spontaneously after learners have developed enough linguistic competence through comprehensible input. A silent period is expected.

- L1-L2 transfer error occurs. When a person tries to produce the second language beyond his or her acquisition level, he or she tends to employ L1 rules erroneously.

- In contrast to L2 acquisition, L2 learning is conscious and hence limited. L2 learning is a conscious, declarative process that occurs in typical, formal classrooms.

- “Learned” knowledge involves the monitor. Learned knowledge serves as an editor (monitor). To use the monitor, the individual must have sufficient time to think about and use conscious rules, must attend to form rather than meaning, and must know the rules.

- Adults and children operate differently. Acquisition is the single route possible for children to internalize the L2, just as they absorb the L1. However adults have two possible routes, acquisition and learning.

The next chapter deals with **Review of related studies.**