



### **Abstract**

The requirement of language in day to day communication and the development of it has always been a interesting topic for research. The subject a permutation and combination of different segments of history, literature study, human psychology and also biological influences. This present paper goes through the topic of 'Language acquisition and language learning'. The paper explores the common philosophical and psychological aspects of learning and acquisition to comment on the difference between the two and also narrates upon the fundamental concepts of language to evoke the relation between language and humans. The paper mainly consists of two segments. The first one talks of the involved terms in general, whereas the other, marks out the psychological and biological sciences hovering the topic suggested by linguists and researchers.

## **Introduction**

In this gigantic universe, the evidence of being is communication. Not only the living beings need to communicate, but every single thing, that exists physically, needs to communicate to each other. That's how nature works. The lives of every individual is seemingly a monologue itself. Our existences play unique roles, however small, still significant, and holds the symphony of the universe. We are unique in all aspects of life. We think differently, we live differently, we dream differently, we do differently.

Therefore, to connect to each other, we need to communicate. The means of communication is the language, the code of expression. Hence, to use a language one has to know how to code his/her feelings or messages in a language that is understandable in a specific community of people. That's why the concept of learning and acquisition comes into the scenario.

## **About Learning, About Acquisition**

Instead of starting with the topic itself, I'll try establishing an overall idea of Learning and acquisition. Grammatically, these two terms are quite comparable. They, in their own ways, state the process of holding a grip on something.

At a very basic stage, this is all about the living beings; more precisely, the humans. Everything a living entity does, is pretty much natural. And, all the natural processes are majorly governed by the psychology, the environment, the circumstances; resulting in a vague nature within themselves. So, clearly we can't define them like we do to a physical or chemical phenomena. 'Learning' and 'Acquisition' is no exception. 'Learning' has its own characteristics, its own behaviour, its own

way of approach and so does 'Acquisition'.

Acquisition of something changes the knowledge and experience of a person without a formal notice to his/her conscious mind; rather it works quite spontaneously, subconsciously, effortlessly and internally. It involves imitation of frequent incidents, intuition or the sixth sense of the person and the culture of his/her ambience.

"Language acquisition is based on the neuro-psychological processes" (Maslo, 2007). On the other hand, Learning is more informed to the learner; it's more planned and focused. It involves motivation towards achieving a definite goal and requires lots of intellectual effort and deductive reasoning. (Ricardo Schütz)

"Learning is standardly held to involve both explicit and implicit psychological processes:

- Explicit learning

The learner will be consciously aware that he/she has modified his/her knowledge base.

- Implicit learning

There will be a change in the learner's knowledge base but this will be outside his/her conscious introspection."(D. Anderson)

"Language learning is a conscious process, is the product of either formal learning situation or a self-study programme" (Kramina, 2000).

### **Language In General**

Language is the verse of existence. We express as we continue to exist.

What is language? My answer would be, it's a versatile medium of expression that can describe the existential state of anything in this universe.

When we perceive the word 'Language', very generally, what we process in our head is the verbal language, e.g, Bengali, English, German, French etc. But, logically, that's one specific form of language. Other than that, language exists in many different shapes and forms.

Everything surrounding us has its own language. Be it living, be it non-living, be it existent and even non-existent, it does have a possession over its own way of expression. There's Visual language, auditory language, body language, facial language; and more broadly, the non-living things have their language heralding their physical and materialistic existence. Independently we develop a sense towards all these languages differently. Unlike the verbal language, the abstract languages (e.g- visuals, expressions, sounds etc.) has no grammar to be followed. A person, that's why can train his/her mind on how to react towards different situations as narrated by his/her overall senses. This training or rather, this development thrives upon numerous parameters. It's acted upon by the environment, the experiences of the person, childhood feelings and traumas, the person's exposure to different art and culture, his/her psychological state, his/her way of thinking and the way he/she perceives and treats his/her ambience. This clearly explains why the same instrumental music generates different moods inside the listener; why abstract painting, visual compositions, vibrance, hues and tones of colours connects directly to observers subconscious; why some body language pleases a person and irritates another.

### **Verbal and written language**

Now, coming back to the day-to-day language we speak in, the Verbal language.

It is the language for direct communication. Through-out centuries, the verbal language has developed vastly. There is certain grammar in a language that binds the code into a recognizable and concrete pattern. Change of place and community, however changes the speaking style, the vocabulary and its grammatical databases. The grammar and vocabulary, is therefore is spontaneous, changing and growing. We give our messages to the desired ones with consent of our conscious mind through verbal languages.

In terms of learning, verbal language can be divided into two basic parts. One is the 'Native language' and the other being the 'Foreign language'

Native language (L1):- Native language is said to be the language to a person who, from the very beginning of his/her life starts to think and communicate in. It is also named as the ‘First Language (L1). As the person is being habituated and familiar to his/her native language from such an early age, he/she finds himself/herself comfortable in it. He/she develops a spontaneous fluency and flawless syntax of that language.

Foreign Language (L2):- Foreign language to a person is all the languages but his/her native language. If somebody grown up absorbing more than one language then, excluding those languages, every other language is foreign to him/her. It is also named as the ‘Second Language (L2). People learn foreign language in either their personal interest or professional requirement(s). As the learning of such language generally starts after adulthood, a stiffness and disconnection may be observable in a person speaking in foreign language. Although practice and involvement with the language reduces these parameters drastically with time.

One acquires his/her native language (L1) but learns a foreign language (L2).

### **Synergy between Language Learning and Language Acquisition**

The present research on the synergy between language acquisition and language learning is built upon the the System-Constructivist Theory. The system-constructivist approach to learning introduced by Reich (Reich, 2005) emphasises that, human being’s point of view depends on the subjective aspect (Maslo, 2007). Every human being has their unique internal and external perspective (Rudzinska, 2008).

If the development of the native language begins with free, spontaneous use of speech and is culminated in the conscious realisation of linguistic forms and their mastery, then the development of a foreign language begins with conscious realisation of language and arbitrary command of it and culminates in spontaneous, free speech. But, between those opposing paths of development, there exists a mutual dependency just as between the development of scientific and spontaneous concepts” (John-Steiner by Robbins, 2007).

While comparing language learning and acquisition with other formats of learning, Vigotskis states, “Scientific concept learning differs from spontaneous concept acquiring as foreign language learning differs from native language acquiring. The development of scientific and spontaneous concepts is interrelated as foreign and native languages relates to each other” (Vigotskis, 2002).

### **Biological Explanation of Language development**

#### **Critical period hypothesis (CPH)**

Critical period hypothesis is a debated topic of linguistics that states the biological connection with language acquisition. As per this hypothesis, there’s a certain age barrier of a person to acquire a language easily is a linguistically rich environment, after which the acquisition becomes more and more difficult.

The critical period hypothesis was first proposed by Montreal neurologist Wilder Penfield and co-author Lamar Roberts in their 1959 book *Speech and Brain Mechanisms*.

Lenneberg (1967) – proposed two related hypotheses:

- (1) Certain biological events related to language development can only happen in an early stage of development termed the critical period.
- (2) Certain linguistic events must happen during the critical period in order for language development to proceed normally.

The second hypothesis, which is further experimentally supported, tends to elaborate that a child, in his/her growing stage must be instilled with adequate amount of linguistic elements for the proper development of his/her language skills.

Supporting evidence for the second hypothesis comes from cases of children raised in conditions of linguistic deprivation, e.g. so-called wolf children, children raised by deaf non-signing parents, or children who are victims of abuse, such as Genie. (D. Anderson Michaelmas Term 2007).

## Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that language acquisition is more efficient than that of learning. The fundamental conceptualisation of the two processes can be done but not can't be defined in single sentences. There's both analogy and difference between the same and further studies on human psychology and behaviour may reveal numerous details that will continue to fascinate us for years.

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