

From Acquisition to Development: A Conceptual Discussion of Changing Perspectives in SLA

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Abstract

The distinction between language learning and language acquisition has been central to debates in applied linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA) for several decades. Early theorists, such as Stephen Krashen, argued for a strict separation between unconscious acquisition and conscious learning, while others (including Rod Ellis, Jack C. Richards, Michael Long, Merrill Swain, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Diane Larsen-Freeman, and Richard Schmidt) have challenged, refined, or expanded this dichotomy. Drawing on cognitive, interactionist, sociocultural, and complexity and dynamic theory perspectives, this paper argues that the binary distinction between learning and acquisition is theoretically insufficient. Instead, contemporary SLA research supports a dynamic systems view in which language develops through an interplay of implicit and explicit processes. The paper concludes that the term second language development (SLD) offers a more accurate and comprehensive conceptualization than second language acquisition (SLA). Moreover, this paper examines the pedagogical implication in EFL teaching arguing that the view of language as a fixed body of knowledge to be transmitted or 'acquired' in linear stages should transcend to the view of language as a dynamic, evolving, adaptive process shaped by interaction, context, identity, emotions, and social participation. On the surface level it might appear as a terminological shift but it carries a deeper theoretical and epistemological concept; eventually leading to pedagogical implications that cause a change in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education and in how learners learn English.

Key Words: Second language development (SLD), Second language acquisition (SLA), Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), Post-method pedagogy, Learner-centeredness.

ملخص الدراسة:

تُعدّ الثنائية بين تعلم اللغة واكتساب اللغة من القضايا المركزية في حقل اللسانيات التطبيقية واكتساب اللغة الثانية (SLA)، وقد شكّلت محور نقاش نظري ممتد لعدة عقود. فقد قدّم ستيفن كراشن تصوّرًا يفضّل بين الاكتساب اللاواعي والتعلم الواعي، في حين عمل باحثون مثل رود إليس، وجاك ريتشاردز، ومايكل لونغ، وميريل سوين، إضافة إلى ليف فيغوتسكي، وجان بياجيه، وديان لارسن-فريمان، وريتشارد شميدت، على إعادة النظر في هذه الثنائية أو تطويرها أو توسيعها في ضوء مقاربات نظرية مختلفة. وبالاستناد إلى المنظورات المعرفية والتفاعلية والاجتماعية-الثقافية، بالإضافة إلى نظرية الأنظمة الديناميكية المعقدة، يناقش هذا البحث قصور الفصل الثنائي بين التعلم واكتساب اللغة الثانية. ويقترح بدلاً من ذلك تبني رؤية ديناميكية ترى تطور اللغة بوصفه عملية معقدة ناتجة عن تفاعل مستمر بين العمليات الضمنية والصريحة داخل سياقات اجتماعية ومعرفية متعددة. ويخلص البحث إلى أن مفهوم تطور اللغة يمثل إطارًا تفسيريًا أكثر شمولًا ودقة من مفهومي التعلم أو الاكتساب عند النظر إلى طبيعة اكتساب اللغة الثانية بوصفها عملية غير خطية ومتغيرة باستمرار. كما تبحث هذه الورقة في إسهامات أبرز المنظرين في اكتساب اللغة الثانية (SLA) وعلم النفس المعرفي، بهدف المجادلة بأن تطور اللغة ينطوي على تفاعل معقد بين عمليتي التعلم واكتساب اللغة. وفي نهاية المطاف، تدعم الورقة موقف لارسن-فريمان (2011) القائل بأن مصطلح «التطور» يقدم إطارًا أكثر دقة لفهم نمو اللغة؛ بالإضافة إلى أن مصطلح «تطور اللغة الثانية (SLD)» يُعدّ مصطلحًا ناشئًا قد يحلّ تدريجيًا محل مصطلح «اكتساب اللغة الثانية (SLA)».

علاوة على ذلك، تتناول هذه الورقة الآثار التربوية المترتبة على تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغةً أجنبية، إذ تُجادل بأن النظر إلى اللغة باعتبارها منظومةً ثابتة من المعارف الجاهزة التي يُفترض نقلها «اكتسابها» عبر مراحل خطية متتابعة، لم

يعد كافيًا. فبدلاً من ذلك، ينبغي تجاوز هذا التصور نحو فهم اللغة بوصفها عمليةً ديناميكيةً، متحوّلةً وتكيفيةً، تتشكّل عبر التفاعل والسياق والهوية والانفعالات والمشاركة الاجتماعية. وعلى الرغم من أن هذا التحول قد يبدو، في ظاهره، مجرد انتقالٍ اصطلاحي، فإنه ينطوي في عمقه على إعادة صياغة مفاهيمية وإبستمولوجية عميقة، تنعكس بالضرورة على طرائق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية وتعلّمها، وعلى الكيفية التي يُدرك بها المتعلمون عملية التعلّم ذاتها. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** تطور اللغة الثانية (SLD)، اكتساب اللغة الثانية (SLA)، نظرية النظم الديناميكية المعقدة (CDST)، البيداغوجيا ما بعد المنهجية، مركزية المتعلم.

Introduction

Although human beings are born with the capacity for language, language itself is not inherited in a biological sense; it is continuously created, shaped, and recreated by speakers. As Lyons (1981) emphasizes, what is biologically inherited is only “the faculty of language,” while the structures, meanings, and norms of any particular language emerge from human social activity. This view challenges essentialist notions of language as a fixed object that can be transmitted across generations, instead it highlights its dynamic and creative nature. Therefore, human beings inherit a biological capacity for language, but not any particular language system. Languages in terms of their lexicons, grammars, bonds and practices are created, negotiated and continually recreated by speakers in social contexts.

In the context of learning a second language; the question of whether humans ‘learn’ or ‘acquire’ a language has shaped theoretical and pedagogical approaches in applied linguistics. The distinction is commonly attributed to Krashen (1982), who proposed two separate processes: ‘acquisition’, which is unconscious and natural, and ‘learning’, which is conscious and formal. Although influential, this dichotomy has been questioned by subsequent scholars who argue that the processes are interdependent and contextually embedded.

This paper examines the contributions of major theorists in SLA and cognitive psychology; arguing that language development involves a complex interaction of both learning and acquisition processes. Ultimately, the paper supports Larsen-Freeman’s (2011) position that ‘development’ provides a more accurate framework for understanding language growth; in addition to the fact that, ‘Second Language Development (SLD)’ is an emerging terminology which might eventually substitute ‘Second Language Acquisition (SLA)’ in contemporary research publications. Finally, this paper will examine the pedagogical implication of this conceptual terminological shift in EFL teaching that carries a profound epistemological and theoretical concept which has ultimately led to significant changes in approaches to both English language teaching and learning.

1. The Acquisition–Learning Dichotomy: Historical and Cognitive Foundations

As previously stated, a fundamental distinction exists between acquisition and learning in second language development according to Krashen in his Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis (1982). Arguing that acquisition is subconscious and responsible for spontaneous communication, while learning is conscious knowledge used only as a monitor. Although foundational, this hypothesis has been criticized for being theoretically rigid lacking empirical support and for oversimplifying how cognitive systems work. Ellis challenges Krashen’s strict division, proposing that L2 development involves both implicit and explicit knowledge, which may interact under certain conditions. He demonstrates that instructed learners can develop implicit knowledge when instruction emphasizes meaning-focused communication.

Moreover, in his early account, Ellis (1985) acknowledges that adult L2 learners make use of both conscious and unconscious processes in acquiring a second language, although the extent to which each contributes may vary according to the learning context. This view implicitly challenges Krashen by suggesting that conscious processes or what Krashen calls ‘learning’ can contribute to overall development. Thirty years later, Ellis (2015) further refines this critique by explicitly distinguishing between implicit and explicit knowledge, noting that implicit knowledge is intuitive and procedural, whereas explicit knowledge is conscious and declarative. Both types of knowledge play a role in L2 development but may be accessed under different

conditions. "...learners could utilize their conscious understanding of underlying rules in ways that facilitate implicit learning." (2015:27) Taken together, Ellis's 1985 and 2015 formulations which undermine Krashen's strict separation, arguing instead for an interactive, complementary model in which both conscious and subconscious processes contribute to second language development.

The role of awareness, noticing, and practice in developing communicative competence has been highlighted by Richards and Schmidt (2010); who argue that language learning should not be understood as merely an accumulation of rules but as the gradual development of communicative ability. In this respect, Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis further emphasizes the importance of conscious attention in language development, proposing that learners must be attentive and notice linguistic features in input for acquisition to occur. Thus, by foregrounding the role of interaction in facilitating noticing, this perspective conceptualizes second language development as a hybrid process that integrates both implicit and explicit dimensions of learning, where subconscious acquisition and conscious awareness operate together in a complementary rather than mutually exclusive manner. On the other hand, Long (1996) emphasizes negotiation of meaning in interaction, arguing that acquisition occurs when learners modify their input and output through conversational exchanges. Stressing on the importance of output in blending conscious learning with unconscious internalization; Swain (1985; 1995) argues that output is crucial for language development because it prompts learners to notice linguistic gaps, test hypotheses, and reflect on forms.

Furthermore, examining sociocultural perspectives where the idea that acquisition is entirely unconscious is challenged; Vygotsky (1978) proposes that higher mental functions develop first socially, then internally. Language is perceived not an isolated cognitive phenomenon but as a socially situated process shaped through interaction, mediation, and collaborative activity. Language, thus, develops in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through scaffolding and assistance is gradually adjusted and withdrawn as learners gain greater control over the target language. Expanding upon Vygotskian principles, Jerome Bruner (1983) introduced the concept of the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS), arguing that language acquisition cannot be adequately explained through exposure to input alone and that linguistic development emerges through participation in socially organized communicative practices rather than through passive subconscious absorption. Bruner therefore shifts the focus from language as an internally triggered system to language as a collaboratively negotiated process in which meaning is co-constructed through interaction. "Constructivist theories explain how children reconstruct the system of their target language(s) given their emergent social-cognitive abilities, and their growing experience with the ambient language usage." (Behrens, 2021:960) Such a position implicitly attributes a more significant role to conscious engagement, attentional orientation, and contextual mediation than is acknowledged within acquisition-oriented models. From a cognitive development perspective, it is argued by Piaget (1952) that cognitive development precedes language development, with learning understood as an active process of constructing knowledge through assimilation and accommodation both of which require conscious mental engagement. This need for awareness aligns with Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which suggests that conscious attention to linguistic features is a prerequisite for their subsequent incorporation into the learner's developing linguistic system; in other words, conscious awareness is necessary for lasting acquisition. In this view, it is the act of noticing not just mere exposure that enables input to be mentally registered and made available for further processing, a position that stands in direct contrast to Krashen's claim that acquisition proceeds largely without conscious awareness.

2. Emergence of Dynamic Perspectives in SLA

Within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), a comprehensive understanding of language acquisition requires a broad, multi-perspective approach rather than a single

explanatory view. SLA can be more fully understood through the integration of linguistic, psychological, and social perspectives, each contributing essential insights into an inherently complex phenomenon “Ultimately, a satisfactory account of SLA must integrate these multiple perspectives...” (Saville-Troike, 2012:3) When combined, these perspectives move the field towards a more complex and dynamic conception of second language development, one that resists reduction to isolated cognitive or environmental factors. In fact, much of contemporary SLA research suggests that cognitive and social dimensions of language learning are deeply intertwined and cannot be meaningfully separated. This is reflected in ecological (van Lier, 1996) and socio-cognitive (Ellis, 2010; Lantolf, 2006; Atkinson, 2011) perspectives, which emphasize language learning as emerging from the dynamic interaction between cognitive, social, and environmental factors.

Moreover, usage-based dynamic processes similarly view language as emerging through interaction between learners, their environment, and communicative experience. Rather than treating language as a fixed system to be transmitted instead linguistic knowledge develops gradually through use, repetition, and social interaction (Ellis, 1997, 2015; Tomasello, 2003; Bybee, 2010). This perception of language as adaptive, emergent, and constantly evolving resonates strongly with a holistic perspective which is essential for capturing the full complexity of language learning processes. Such an integrated view naturally aligns with Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), which conceptualizes language development as “...dynamic, complex, nonlinear, chaotic, unpredictable, sensitive to initial conditions, open, self-organizing, feedback sensitive, and adaptive.” (Larsen-Freeman, 1997:142).

Developed in the USA, CDST is a multidisciplinary science that emerged during 1960 and 1970. (Siegel & Seedhouse, 2025:2) Within this framework, language is not treated as a single static object to be acquired, but rather as a complex developmental process shaped over time through multiple interacting variables; in other words, “A language is not a single homogeneous construct to be acquired; rather, a complex systems view ...” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008:116) Moreover, as we have previously discussed, throughout the literature both perspectives: the cognitive and social aspects of language learning are deeply connected and inseparable; thus “This CDST view of L2 learning is neither an isolated nor a new perspective in the field of SLA...” (Siegel & Seedhouse, 2024:147) Yet,

CDST is a “meta-theory” (Larsen-Freeman, 2013), which... has no connections to preconceptualized language learning theories, and it considers the individual learners together with the larger community of language users. (ibid)

More recently, Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) has emerged as a framework that integrates Complexity Theory (CT) with Dynamic Systems Theory (DST). Within the context of second language development, the application of Complexity Theory has evolved into what is now recognized as CDST (Larsen-Freeman & Hiver, 2021:217).

3. From Acquisition to Development

While the term Second Language Acquisition has long been accepted in applied linguistics, the word acquisition itself may create conceptual difficulties because it implies the permanent possession of language as a fixed commodity. Larsen-Freeman (2014) challenges this assumption by arguing, from a Complexity Theory (CT) perspective, that language learning is better understood as an ongoing, adaptive and developmental process rather than a simple transfer of knowledge from external input to internal storage.

In her article “*Saying what we mean: Making a case for ‘language acquisition’ to become ‘language development’*” (Larsen-Freeman, 2014); she boldly proposes that the term Second Language Development (SLD) is more suited for the field of SLA. In her argument, she presents twelve reasons for this proposition which, in her opinion, depicts a more accurate reflection of the dynamic, evolving, and non-linear nature of language learning. If “...learning is undeniably a developmental phenomenon...” (Larsen-Freeman & Hiver, 2021:225) then the notion of

'acquiring a second language' is terminologically unsuitable to depict this dynamic, evolving, and non-linear nature of language learning. Through critiquing the 'learning' 'acquisition' dichotomy as a static concept and instead proposing viewing language as a dynamic adaptive system; Larsen-Freeman (2011) argues that language is not acquired but developed through usage, interaction, and continual restructuring. Stating that the term 'second language acquisition (SLA)' is misleading and should be replaced with 'second language development (SLD)', because the former carries with it a commodified, static metaphor of language as a product to be acquired, whereas the latter more accurately reflects the dynamic, evolving, and agentive nature of how people learn and use language. She contends that from a complex-systems perspective we must "...reject the commodification of language implied by the term 'acquisition'" (Larsen-Freeman, 2014: 492) and instead view language as "...an ever-developing resource." (ibid).

Giving the fact that while "Acquisition is irreversible..." (Larsen-Freeman, 2014:293), linguistic skills can 'grow' and 'decline' and this developmental framing better captures the reality that regression, not just progression, is a natural part of learners' growth. The irreversible nature of 'acquisition' fails to explain what is stated in major SLA publications as the "U-shaped pattern of development" (Ellis, 2015:88), while SLD can account for this phenomena and state that:

Even when the conditions of learning remain steady, learners' performance both regresses and progresses from a target-language perspective. In other words, development is not unidirectional. (Larsen-Freeman & Hiver, 2021:223).

Challenging the notion that learners create new patterns from old by analogy when they want to make new meanings, they, however, exceed the limits of their input by creating and going beyond what is present in it; learners, thus, "...actively transform their linguistic world; they do not merely conform to it." (Larsen-Freeman, 2014:500). In other words, this creativity "...does not reside in the linguistic system; rather, it is in the learners' relationship with the environment, including their interlocutors." (ibid: 231) This notion aligns with the concept of communicative competence proposed by Hymes (1972) and later developed by Canale and Swain (1980) to cover grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic competence and discourse competence needed by the learner to interact properly, accurately and effectively in his environment. Therefore, the SLD argument not only redefines the language learning process, but also aligns it with more fluid, non-linear conceptions of human development, privileging agency by giving primary importance to the learner's active role in shaping the dynamic, evolving, and non-linear nature of his language in accordance to his environment.

This leads to the argument that the learner language is a unique version of the target language and might be regarded as deficient when it is not a near native like version; therefore, the 'complex adaptive system' perspective challenges the conventional notions of near-native target-like proficiency concepts and thus

...rejects the notion of a 'final state' in any language system (including the native speaker's) and...claims that small changes are forever ongoing. A system is always in movement and never reaches complete equilibrium although there may be periods of relative stability...then, there is no such thing as fossilization. (Ellis, 2015:32).

While the shift from acquisition to development has become increasingly visible in contemporary SLA research where SLD is used exclusively rather than SLA in recent publications. In their article (van Dijk et al.) the opening line states that "In the past decades, complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) has been used as an important framework for studying second language development" (2025:1). In other publications, where the CDST is discussed, SLD or "L2 development" (Siegel & Seedhouse, 2024, 2025) is a terminologically widespread concept that substitutes SLA. This substitution is not just a superficial existence it rather carries with it a deep epistemological conception and a deep theoretical comprehension

that mirrors its proponents' stream of thought and rooted theoretical origins. Though this present-day perspective is still open to debate both theoretically and methodologically, these dynamic approaches offer a broader way of understanding language learning by focusing on change, variability, and the complex nature of human development. At the same time, some researchers question whether concepts associated with CDST can be clearly applied in empirical research, since ideas such as development and self-regulation may sometimes appear abstract or difficult to measure as CDST challenges "...the notion of discrete stages or fixed and static outcomes or states ..." (Larsen-Freeman, 2014:224).

In addition, although developmental perspectives challenge fixed views of proficiency and native-speaker standards, most educational systems still depend on stable assessment criteria and measurable outcomes, which creates a gap between theory and practice. Since this paper is mainly conceptual, its discussion is limited to existing scholarship rather than empirical evidence. Therefore, more research is needed to determine whether the growing use of the term SLD reflects a genuine shift in SLA theory or simply a different way of describing existing perspectives.

4. Pedagogical Implications

The view of language as a fixed body of knowledge to be transmitted or 'acquired' in linear stages should exceed to the view of language as a complex, developing, adaptive, dynamic process, shaped by context, social participation and interaction; yet this holistic "...CDST view of L2 learning is neither an isolated nor a new perspective in the field of SLA" (Siegel & Seedhouse, 2024:147). Much of contemporary SLA research suggests that cognitive and social dimensions of language learning are profoundly intertwined; van Lier's ecological system as well as socio-cognitive perspectives emphasize language learning as emerging from the dynamic interaction between cognitive, social, and environmental factors.

From the 2000s to the present, language teaching has increasingly reflected postmodern and interdisciplinary perspectives, emphasizing the dynamic, socially situated, and identity-driven nature of language learning. Hence, language teaching has moved beyond rigid methodological frameworks toward more flexible and context-responsive paradigms. Kumaravadivelu (2003) introduces the concept of post-method pedagogy, which reconceptualises teachers as autonomous practitioners capable of theorizing from their own practice rather than merely implementing prescribed methods. This perspective emphasizes contextual sensitivity, pedagogical adaptability, and learner-centeredness as the foundations of effective instruction. Similarly, Ellis (2016) and Larsen-Freeman (2011) advocate for dynamic and complex models of second language acquisition that transcend fixed methodologies and recognize the nonlinear, adaptive nature of learning.

Building on these ideas, Kumaravadivelu (2006) and Ur (2012) support the notion of principled eclecticism, which enables teachers to draw selectively from multiple theoretical and methodological traditions. Within this post-method paradigm, teachers are positioned as strategic, reflective practitioners who actively design and adapt their pedagogy to bridge theory and practice. This approach empowers them to integrate diverse insights into context-sensitive, learner-centered instruction, ensuring that methodology evolves in response to the dynamic realities of the classroom; which broadens applied linguistics through integrating insights from psychology, sociology, anthropology along with emphasizing flexible, learner-centered approaches.

The shift from acquisition to development carries significant pedagogical implications for EFL education as it supports process-oriented instruction, flexible assessment, learner-centered interaction, and the recognition of the dynamic, evolving nature of second language competence. Traditional language teaching, especially in examination-oriented contexts, has largely prioritized measurable outcomes yet a developmental perspective views language growth as recursive, nonlinear, and dynamic. This orientation is reflected in Zimmerman's

(2000) model of self-regulated learning (SRL), which positions learners as active agents who set goals, monitor progress, evaluate outcomes, and adapt learning strategies. Similarly, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle conceptualizes learning as an ongoing process that involves experience, reflection, conceptualization, and action. Humanistic approaches to education, particularly Rogers (1969), further reinforce this perspective by emphasizing learner autonomy, personal meaning, and emotional engagement. Together, these approaches align with CDST in viewing language development as process-based rather than product-based.

From a CDST perspective, variability and nonlinearity in language development means that there will be fluctuations, regressions, and uneven progress which are not considered to be deficiencies but rather natural features. Learners develop at different levels in accordance with motivation, exposure, identity, classroom ecology, and sociocultural context. This view is reflected in Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), which conceptualizes motivation as dynamic and evolving, and in Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), where autonomy, competence, and relatedness interact to sustain intrinsically motivated engagement. Such perspectives challenge linear models of acquisition by emphasizing that language development is adaptive, context-sensitive, and individually variable.

SLD also foregrounds the importance of interaction and ecology in language education; through interactions among learners, teachers, peers, tasks, institutions, and sociocultural environments language development occurs. The Socio-educational model by Gardner (1985) highlights the role of attitudes, motivation, and cultural orientation in language learning, while Tudor's (2001) Ecological perspective argue that pedagogical approaches cannot be transferred mechanically across contexts because they are shaped by a network of interacting factors as learner needs, teacher beliefs, institutional constraints, social and cultural contexts; within this framework, collaborative learning, classroom interaction, and supportive learning environments become central to development. Deci and Ryan's notion of relatedness further emphasizes the importance of positive interpersonal relationships in sustaining learner engagement, while humanistic pedagogy emphasizes low-anxiety environments that encourage participation and communicative confidence.

Traditional acquisition-oriented models often position learners as recipients of input, SLD conceptualizes them as active participants capable of shaping their own developmental trajectories. This perspective is reinforced by the ecological orientation and by self-regulated learning theories along with humanistic approaches, which stress learner voice, autonomy, reflection, and self-direction. Importantly, in Rogers' (1969) Humanistic Learning Theory, autonomy does not imply the absence of teacher guidance it rather suggests that meaningful learning requires facilitation and support and where he

...advocates for a student-centred approach where the role of the teacher shifts from a traditional instructor to a facilitator of learning. Rogers believed that students have an inherent potential to grow and develop provided they are placed in a supportive and empathetic environment. (Patrick & Nordin, 2025:1)

Within learner-centered pedagogy, autonomy is therefore understood as scaffolded and negotiated through participation within supportive educational environments.

Finally, SLD necessitates a reconsideration of assessment practices in second language education. Traditional assessment models have tended to prioritize reliability, standardization, native-like competence, and measurable outcomes, often generating negative washback effects that limit teacher autonomy and learner agency. In contrast, learner-centered approaches emphasize validity, formative feedback, reflection, and developmental growth. Assessment practices such as portfolios, peer evaluation, self-assessment, and project-based tasks are therefore more compatible with SLD because they capture developmental processes rather than merely final products or a snapshot in the learners' developmental phase. Nevertheless,

significant tensions remain between development-oriented pedagogy and examination-driven/product-oriented systems, particularly in EFL contexts where institutional demands continue to privilege standardized performance and product-oriented achievement.

Taken together, these pedagogical implications support the argument that second language development offers a more comprehensive and theoretically coherent conceptualization than traditional notions of language learning or SLA. By foregrounding process, variability, interaction, agency, ecology, and developmental assessment, SLD aligns closely with the principles of CDST and provides a more sophisticated understanding of how language competence emerges and evolves in contemporary language education

Conclusion

Drawing on major strands of SLA research, a comprehensive view of language development emerges that transcends any single explanatory process. From Krashen, we retain the centrality of meaningful and comprehensible input as a foundation for internalizing linguistic forms. Ellis contributes the understanding that explicit and implicit knowledge interact dynamically, shaping learners' evolving linguistic competence. Long and Swain emphasize the indispensable roles of interaction and pushed output in facilitating negotiation of meaning and deeper processing. Building on sociocultural theory, Vygotsky and Bruner foreground the mediating influence of social support and culturally organized activity in enabling learners to operate within and gradually extend their zones of proximal development. Schmidt adds the crucial role of noticing and attentional processes in converting input into intake. Larsen-Freeman advances this synthesis by highlighting the dynamic, nonlinear nature of language development as an emergent system shaped by multiple interacting resources. Taken together, these perspectives underscore that language does not arise from a single mechanism but develops through a complex, interconnected, and nonlinear system rejecting the view of language as an acquired commodity (Larsen-Freeman, 2014).

Research across the field supports this more integrated view and taken together, these perspectives show that language does not emerge from either learning or acquisition alone, but from a complex developmental ecology in which conscious and unconscious processes work together. This paper has also attempted to show that understanding language education through the lens of second language development (SLD) offers important implications for both teachers and learners in contemporary EFL contexts. Rather than viewing language learning as the transmission and accumulation of fixed knowledge, this perspective recognizes language development as dynamic, contextual, and shaped by continuous interaction among cognitive, social, emotional, and environmental factors. For teachers, such perspectives encourage reflective and context-sensitive pedagogical practices that respond to learners' diverse needs, motivations, and experiences. Therefore, an understanding of these perspectives and their rooted theoretical conceptions is vital as

The language teacher cannot teach effectively without understanding varied theoretical positions... (Brown, 1980:13)

The teacher's role therefore extends beyond the delivery of content to facilitating interaction, supporting learner autonomy, and creating conditions that foster meaningful engagement which is unachievable without a profound theoretical and conceptual foundation. For learners, this perspective highlights the importance of active participation, self-regulation, reflection, and personal agency in the developmental process. Overall, the shift from acquisition to development provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding language education and supports more sustainable learner-centered approaches to teaching and professional practice in EFL settings.

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