**COMPARING SIX THEORIES**

**Theories Perspectives**

The key six theories namely Behaviorism, Generativisim, Cognitivism, Constructivism, Monitor-Model and Socio-cultural have been compared witheachother based on the factors that influence learning, role of memory, transfer occurrence, types of learning, and teaching paradigms. Language learning perspectives vary as per the uniqueness of their domains and research covering:

* Behavior
* Innateness
* Mental processes
* Experiences
* Interaction
* Role of society

**Role of Memory and Transfer Occurrence**

Memory is the process by which we encode, store, and retrieve information. Long-term memory is our brain’s system for storing, managing, and retrieving information. Working memory is the short-term memory wherein the information is kept in mind for a short-time before either dismissing it or transferring it to long-term memory. Transfer occurrence refers to application of knowledge from one language to another.

It has been observed that the role of memory and language transfer appear to vary in Behaviorism, Generativisim, Cognitivism, Constructivism, Monitor-Model and Socio-cultural theories. It has also been noted that the generativist and cognitivist theories share the role of memory; whereas, language transfer perspective is observed in generativismto some extent.

**Types of Learning**

Some of the major types of learning include:

* Learning is known as an act of acquiring or modifying new knowledge.
* Learning is seen as a process whereby new knowledge is built based on the previous knowledge.
* Declarative Knowledge
* Procedural knowledge

Other more general types include:

* Formal learning
* Technology-based learning
* Monolingual/mono-cultural context learning
* Multilingual/multicultural context learning
* Practical/functional learning
* Personalized learning

The types are best explained in terms of their specific learning domains. These domains are:

* Learning is acquisition or ‘getting.’
* Learning is retention of information or skill.
* Retention implies storage systems, memory, and cognitive organization.
* Learning involves active, conscious focus on and acting upon events outside or inside the organism.
* Learning is relatively permanent but subject to forgetting.
* Learning involves some form of practice, perhaps reinforced practice.
* Learning is a change in behavior (Brown, 2006).

**Classroom Application**

Theories application in classroom aims to address the issues of learners’ needs and adopt appropriate learning procedures to cater those needs. The application of SLA theories in classroom provide teachers with better understanding of learners’ needs and an insight on their teaching practices. Teaching methodologies are evolved over the period of time, and these are practiced as per specific requirements. The broader aspect of theoretical application has been preferred to address the wide range of teaching issues as there is no single, straightforward solution to learning. Furthermore, the relationship between teaching and learning determines the relevancy of a particular theory.

The following factors address classroom teaching and research associated with one another:

1. Methods based on the behaviorist theory of language learning lay emphasis on accuracy and form and do not allow errors.
2. Methods based on the interactionist theory give learners the opportunity for conversation where they receive meaningful input from teachers and students.
3. Methods based on the ‘comprehensible input’ theory, most closely associated with Stephen Krashen, do not put emphasis on interaction, but on providing input through listening and/or reading.
4. Methods based on teaching what the learner is ready to learn.
5. Methods that not only ‘recognize the role for instruction, but also assume that not everything has to be taught’ (Lightbown&Spada, 1993, p. 97).

**Language Learning Factors**

Language learning factors contribute significantly in the understanding of processes involved in SLA. The study of SLA covers broadly from pure linguistic units of a language to cognitive and social/interactionist models. The key factors include comprehensive analysis of factors responsible for particular processes in a specific model, nature of stages learners go through, the pace at which learning takes place, and the outcomes.

Learning factors are of the following two types:

**Internal Factors:**Age, Personality, Motivation (intrinsic), Experience, Cognition, and Native language

**External Factors:**Culture and status, Motivation (extrinsic), Access to native speakers, Curriculum, and Instruction

**Age**

The Age factor is a matter of great interest to SLA researchers. They have been making numerous researches to establish the relations between the age and SLA. Researchers like Ellis (2008), Larsen-Freeman (2008), and Mayberry & Lock (2003) state that younger learners are more successful in language study than aged ones. Cook (1991) claimed that children with exposure to SLA at the early stage demonstrate the ability to perform native-like which the adults fail to do so. Krashen et al. (1979) believe that older is faster, but the young is better.

The ‘Critical Period Hypothesis’ is widely referred to in the study of age factor. Defined as ‘the period during which a child can acquire language easily, rapidly, perfectly, and without instruction’ (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 145), the hypothesis has been opposed by Singleton (2004) who claimed that Dutch learners, who started learning English in the classroom after the age of twelve, were able to gain native-like accent. Others seem to have diverse views on the matter as Harley & Hart (1997) cited in DeKeyser, 2007 that the importance of memory in young learners and of analytic abilities in older learners have been observed as the differences. Ekstrand (1978) described it as the age effects according to which older learner outscored younger ones can be explained by the teaching and testing techniques (Lightbown and Spada, 1993).

**Motivation**

Motivation has been defined as ‘a psychological construct that refers to the desire and incentive that an individual has to engage in a specific activity’ (Hall, 2011). Another definition by Loewen&Reinders (2011, p. 119) is that ‘it provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process’ (Dornyei, 2005, p. 65).

**Three Views of Motivation**

**1. Behavioristic:** This view of motivation deals with the factors like anticipation of reward, desire for positive reinforcement, and external individual forces in control.

**2. Cognitive:** Driven by basic human needs, degree of efforts expended, and internal individual forces in control are the factors considered in cognitive view of motivation.

**3. Constructivist:** Social context, community, social status, security of group, and internal and interactive forces in control are some of the factors, constructivists focus on, for studying motivation in learners.

Motivation follows certain phases that determine its sustenance. Dornyei’s model presents three phases:

* Setting goals and getting started
* Keeping the motivation intact while carrying out the tasks
* Performance reflection

Moreover, ‘Integrative Motivation’ and ‘Instrumental Motivation’ affect language learning process.

**Relevant Learning Factors (Anthropological Evidence)**

Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) was a model that was primarily concerned with LI. Lateralization of the brain was thought to be a key to learning languages. It explains the maturity of brain and how the language functions are controlled in the left hemisphere.

Eric Lenneberg (1967) and others suggested that ‘lateralization is a slow process that begins around the age of two and is completed around puberty. During this time the child is neurologically assigning functions little by little to one side of the brain or the other; included in these functions, of course, is language.’

(Scovel, 1988) introduced ‘Sociobiological Critical Period’ which refers to the development of a socially bonding accent at puberty that enables species to form an identity and attract mates of ‘their own kind’ in an instinctive drive to maintain their own species. Scovel concludes that there are ‘foreign’ accents after puberty. Some adults have been known to acquire an authentic accent in a second language after puberty, but such individuals are very few.

Anthropologist, Jane Hill (1970) provided a response to Scovel‘s (1969) study by citing anthropological research on Non-Western societies that yielded evidence that adults can, in the normal course of their lives, acquire second languages perfectly. Based on anthropological evidence, Sorenson claims that during adolescence individuals can actively speak two or three other languages to which they had been exposed at some point.

**Relevant Learning Factors (Linguistics Considerations and Cognitive Ability)**

‘Linguistic Consideration’ deals with the linguistic and cognitive processes of second language learning in children which are believed to be similar to first language processes. It is believed that the first language affects the processes positively by providing facilitation. Adults have the more solid foundation, achieved from the first language learning, which makes them cognitively secure.

**Factors for Understanding Linguistics Consideration**

* Bilingualism
* Interference between L1 and L2
* Interference in adults
* Order of acquisition

**Cognitive Ability**

It is the ability to carry out any task from the simplest to the most complex. It is more to do with the mechanisms of how we learn, remember, problem solve, and pay attention rather than with any actual knowledge (brain based skills).

**Relevant Learning Factors (Cognitive and Affective Considerations)**

‘Cognitive Consideration’ refers to the understanding of cognition process and explains its rapid development in initial sixteen years of life and gradual/less rapid development later on. The notions of cognitive considerations have been addressed by Jean Piaget and Ausubel.

Jean Piaget proposed following stages of ‘Intellectual Development’:

* Sensorimotor Stage [birth to 2 years of age ]
* Preoperational stage [2 to 7 years of age]
* Operational stage [7 to 16 years of age]
* Concrete operational stage [7 to 11 years of age]
* Formal operational stage [11to 16 years of age]

Ausubel (1964) claimed that:

* Adults may in fact be benefitted from certain grammatical explanations and deductive thinking that would be pointless for a child.
* The benefits of such explanations however, depend upon the suitability and efficiency of the explanation, the teacher, the context, and other pedagogical variables.
* Young children are generally not ‘Aware’ that they are acquiring a language, nor are they aware of societal values and attitudes to one language or another.

‘Affective Consideration’ highlights that our mental state and our emotions influence our thinking and behavior. The main affective factors are: empathy, self-esteem, extroversion, inhibition, imitation, anxiety, attitudes, etc.

**Direct Strategies**

Oxford (1990) defines ‘Learning Strategies’ as ‘specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations.’ Dansereau (1985) considers language strategies as ‘special thoughts or behaviors that learners use to help them comprehend, retain and/or use the information.’ According to Stern (1992), with language learning strategies, ‘learners engage in activities to achieve certain goals, ...a choice of procedures, ... some form of long term planning.’

A language learning strategy system was developed by Rebecca Oxford which consists of Direct and Indirect strategies.

* **Direct strategies** involve use of language; these are sub-divided into memory (mnemonics), cognitive and compensation strategies.
* **Indirect strategies** do not directly involve using the language, but support language learning (Ehrman& Oxford, 1990). These are further divided into metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Lee 2010).

**Demonstration of Direct Strategies**

**Explanation**

* Students were already familiar with concepts of implied main idea as well as major and minor details, as done in previous weeks. But this article was delivering new information; thus, students applied their existing knowledge to come up with correct answers. This displayed a use of meta-cognitive learning strategy.
* Based on this, students were asked to form an outline and write a paragraph on their understanding of the article. This helped students to develop a piece of work based on their existing knowledge and new knowledge by using cognitive learning strategy.
* In the third session, students were asked to form mnemonics in the form of abbreviation or images to memorize the content of the article.
* At the end of the activity, students were asked to give their feedback about the use of these strategies.
* According to students, it was very helpful for them to use their learned concepts on the article. This did not only help them in working practically on class content but also in memorizing the important incidents in the article.

**Indirect Strategies**

Oxford (1990) explained ‘Indirect Strategies’ as a support and management system for language learning without directly involving the target language. Communicative competence is the key contribution of indirect strategies because the activities are designed and implemented to provide learning with real-life situation for developing communication competence. The indirect strategies consist of metacognitive strategies that help learners to regulate their cognition and to focus, plan, and evaluate their progress; affective strategies that develop self-confidence; social strategies that increase interaction and empathy in communication.

**Demonstration of Indirect Strategies**

**Explanation**

* Four students were picked randomly and asked to pick another three students from class to form a group. Then, they were given a topic ‘Revival of cricket in Pakistan’ and asked to generate points about the topic through group discussion. This is a use of ‘Social Learning Strategy’ in which students interact with each other and work on the assigned activity, based on grouped input.
* After this, students were asked to elect one member from group to give presentation in front of mirror.
* After presentations, their own groups were asked to give feedback about overall presentation skills like posture, body language, eye contact, dress code, etc. According to students, eye contact was the major issue in all the presenters. This is an example of ‘Affective Learning Strategy’ where students developed self-confidence and positive attitude by getting feedback from their own class fellows. Moreover, this was also affirmed by the feedback from each presenter, who appreciated the positive feedback from their class fellows and showed constructive attitude towards learning.
* In the third part of the session, teacher gave demonstration to the students about the identified weak points in their presentation skills. This was a display of ‘Compensatory Strategy’, in which the teacher helped learners to compensate for their limitations in knowledge regarding presentation skills.

**Intelligence and Multiple Intelligence**

Individual differences among learners vary based on the intelligence which has been defined by Moaafian (2008, cited in Hernandez et al., 2010) as a very general mental capability that among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience. Researchers believe that individuals demonstrate different results even after being exposed to the same learning procedures which is due to the differences of intelligence.

Wagner and Sternberg (1985) proposed three conceptions of intelligence.

1. **The Psychometric View**equates intelligence with mental capacity.
2. **The Piagetian View** defines intelligence in terms of stages of development based on maturity and experiences.
3. **The Information Processing View** focuses on the way the brain represents and processes information.

Sternberg (1985, 2002) distinguishes three types of intelligence:

1. **Analytical**—the ability to analyze, compare, and evaluate
2. **Creative**— the ability to produce novel solutions to problems
3. **Practical**—the capacity to adapt, to shape, and to select environments suited to one’s abilities

Howard Gardner (1983) proposed ‘**Theory of Multiple Intelligence (MI)**’ which focuses on different ways in which human beings are intelligent. Eight categories of skills and abilities are introduced by Gardner to be considered crucial for understanding individual intelligences, namely, naturalistic, linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily, kinesthetic, and musical. He also provided the following principles of ‘multiple intelligence’:

1. Emphasis on the development of certain intelligences
2. Utilizing all intelligences in developing different teaching methods
3. Based on the concept of multiple intelligences, instructors should review lesson plans and ensure they have variety, fairness, and richness
4. Provide students with the opportunity to choose learning activities and assessment methods
5. Provide students with the opportunity to use the dominant intelligences to develop the weaker
6. Use the intelligences to fully comprehend broad subjects (Gardner, 1983)

**Language Aptitude and Language Learning**

With regard to the differences that individuals have in the development of learning a foreign language, language aptitude is considered to be one of the most determining factors. It explains the ease and the rate of satisfaction of individual’s achievement. Gardner and Lambert (1972, p. 2) define this term as ‘a knack’ for learning a foreign language.

Carroll believed that ‘Foreign language aptitude is considered as the individual’s initial state of readiness and capacity for learning a foreign language’ (Carroll, 1981, p. 86). He introduced the following four major components of language aptitude:

* Phonetic coding ability
* Grammatical sensitivity
* Rote learning ability for foreign language materials
* Inductive language learning ability

Language aptitude is specific to learning style which according to Cornett (1983, p. 9*)* is ‘the overall pattern that give general direction to learning behavior.’ The learning styles have been classified as:

* **Sensory Preferences:**Visual (seeing), Auditory (hearing), Kinesthetic (moving), Tactile (touching)
* **Personality Types:**Extrovert/Introvert, Intuitive-random/Sensing-sequential, Thinking/Feeling, Judging/Perceiving
* **Degree of Generality:**Holistic/Analytic, Field dependent/Field independent
* **Strategies (Oxford 1990):** Cognitive, Metacognitive, Memory based, Compensatory, Affective,and Social strategies

**Affective factors: Self-Esteem, Attribution Theory, and Self-Efficacy**

The Affective domain is primarily concerned with the emotional state of a person. It can be best understood in the words of Oxford (1990, p. 140), ‘the affective side of the learner is probably one of the most important influences on language learning success or failure. Good language learners are often those who know how to control their emotions and attitudes about learning.’

Oxford (1990) further divided affective strategies as follows:

* making positive statements
* taking risks wisely
* rewarding oneself

Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies are the major groups of strategies dealing with affective factors.

**Self-esteem** has been defined by Beane, Lipka& Richard (1986, p. 6) as ‘the evaluation one makes of the self-concept description, and more specifically, to the degree to which one is satisfied or dissatisfied with it, in whole or in part (...).’ Oxford (1990, p. 141) states ‘it (self-esteem) is a self-judgment of worth or value, based on a feeling of efficacy, a sense of interacting effectively with one’s own environment.’

**Attribution Theory** introduced by Weiner (1980, 1992) is based on the notion that learners’ motivation is subject to the pleasant outcome of being able to feel good about themselves; whereas, self-efficacy emphasizes learner’s self-perception of his/her ability to perform well.

According to attribution theory, three sets of characteristics explain success and failure:

* Internal and external causes
* Stable and unstable causes
* Controllable or uncontrollable causes

**Language Attitude and Motivation**

Attitudes to language are phenomena that cannot be observed directly but are demonstrated through actual behavior. It can affect the language proficiency based on two types, namely, positive attitude and negative attitude.

1. Positive attitudes toward self, the native language group, and the target language group enhance proficiency.
2. Negative attitudes may lead to decreased motivation, input and interaction which can lead to unsuccessful attainment of proficiency.

Attitude to language relies on the level of learner’s motivation which has been defined by Gardner (1985) as ‘a combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language’ (Williams and Burden, 1997, p.116). Another definition by Slavin (2003, p. 328) states that motivation ‘is concerned with the factors that direct and energize the behavior....’Concepts of ‘intrinsic and extrinsic motivation’ were proposed by Deci (1975) as internally rewarding and externally reinforcing factors of motivation respectively.

**Language Anxiety**

Spielberger (1983, p. 1) defined anxiety as ‘the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.’ It causes demotivation and often results into a failure of a task. More uneasy a learner feels about certain task, more are the chances of failure. Language anxiety specifically deals with a learner’s feelings of fear and apprehension once being exposed to the target language. Empathy and extroversion are the personality traits that affect the second language acquisition process. Empathy refers to people’s willingness and ability to identify with others. It helps in developing an accommodating behavior and overcoming language anxiety. The feeling of alienation that a learner experiences while being exposed to the target language, is often removed with the sense of empathy.

**Willingness to Communicate, Inhibition,and Risk Taking**

It has been observed that in the context of non-native speaker taking an initiative to communicate in the second language is a highly complex task. Willingness to communicate requires the communicative opportunity and encouragement to initiate communication in SLA context. The Pyramid Model has been established that describes learners’ use of L2. As the learner moves up the pyramid, the learner has more control over the act of communicating in the target language. The models have six layers and, from top to bottom, they are:

* Communication Behavior
* Behavioral Intention
* Situated Antecedents
* Motivational Propensities
* Affective-Cognitive Context
* Social and Individual Context

Closely connected to the willingness factor is the feeling of **‘Inhibition’** which makes one self-conscious and unable to act in a relaxed and natural way. It is based on certain set of defenses that all human beings build to protect the ego, especially language ego as meaningful L2 acquisition does involve some degree of identity conflict.

**‘Risk Taking’** has been defined by a number of linguists as the ability of being eager to try out new information intelligently regardless of embarrassment in linguistics.According to Brown, ‘interaction requires the risk of failing to produce intended meaning, of failing to interpret intended meaning, of being laughed at, of being shunned.’ The rewards, of course, are great and worth the risks (2001, p. 166); he further explained that ‘the key to risk-taking as a peak performance strategy is not simply in taking the risks. It is in learning from your failures.’

**Learner as a Social being, Stereotyping, and Generalization**

Language is a social phenomenon which engages human beings for communication purposes. It is not viewed as a simple code which only involves learning vocabulary and the rules for constructing sentence. Language is a dynamic process of communication, a social practice of meaning-making, and interpretation. The speaker has to be an assertive participant in a communication in order to be a social being. When language is used to construct our messages according to our intentions, our constraints and possibilities, our roles and relationships, it becomes a social practice. ‘Stereotyping’ and ‘Generalization’ are the two basic components of social functions of a language. Stereotyping is the cognitive component in the perceptions of group members, the positive or negative beliefs that we hold about the characteristics of social group; whereas, generalization is the process of identifying the parts of a whole, as belonging to the whole. It is based on the notion that our statements and beliefs about a group of people, although factual, might not be true of every single person of that group.

**Second Culture Acquisition and Social Distance**

Second Culture Acquisition is closely related to second language acquisition (SLA). The process of SLA and its success are the subjects accompanied by Second Culture Acquisition (SCA) (e.g., Hamers& Blanc, 1989; Schumann, 1978). SCA asserts that acquiring of new cultural knowledge enables learners to be more proficient in SL.

**Stages of Culture Acquisition**

1. **Stage 1:** is a period of excitement and euphoria over the newness of the surroundings.
2. **Stage 2:** is about culture shock that emerges as individuals feel the intrusion of more and more cultural differences into their own images of self and security.
3. **Stage 3:** is a very gradual stage that represents tentative and vacillating recovery. This stage is typified by what Larson and Smalley (1972) called ‘culture stress’; some problems of acculturation are solved while other problems continue for some time.
4. **Stage 4:** represents near or full recovery, either assimilation or adaptation. It is acceptance of the new culture and self-confidence in the ‘new’ person that has developed in this culture.

Social Distance deals with the cognitive and affective proximity of two cultures that come into contact within an individual. Instead of creating a gap, the term ‘Distance’ is used to depict dissimilarity between two cultures. Schumann proposed the following parameters of social distance:

* Dominance: Dominant, non-dominant, subordinate
* Integration: Integration pattern; assimilation, acculturation or preservation
* Cohesiveness: Size of L2 group
* Congruence: Similarities of values and beliefs in two groups and their attitudes towards each other
* Permanence: Length of residence in target language

**Language, Culture, and Thought**

Language, culture, and thought are interconnected. Relationship between language and culture focuses on the language as the embodiment of linguistic and cultural knowledge and culture as the manifestation of beliefs and norms. Language represents culture; therefore, looking it as a mere code is indeed its restricted view. According to Kramsch (2005), language expresses cultural reality as speakers communicate their ideas, feelings, and facts through language both in inter and intra societal setups.

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis about ‘Language and Thought’ enjoys great popularity in the field of SLA. They refer that the structure of a language people habitually use influences the ways they think and behave; different languages offer people different ways to express the world around, they think and speak differently. They proposed:

**Linguistic Determinism:** Individuals experience the world based on the structure of the language which they habitually use.

**Linguistic Relativity:** What we perceive is limited by language in which we think and speak; different languages give different patterns of thought.

**Criticism on Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**

* If language determines thought then it must precede thought.
* Not all activities involve language but do involve thought.
* Even pre-linguistic babies can think.
* Differences are not in thought but in ways of expressing the same thought.
* Otherwise it would be impossible to translate.

**LANGUAGE LEARNING PEDAGOGY**

**Nature of Language Learning Theories, Pedagogy,and Developing Relevant Theories**

Halliday (1993, p. 94) explained the relationship between language and learning on the ground that when children learn a language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many, rather, they are learning the foundation of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning–a semiotic process, and the proto typical form of human semiotic. The success of learning takes into account linguistic and cultural diversity.

**Developing Relevant Theories**

SLA research has made relevant contributions to language pedagogy (Le., Lightbown, 2000; Long, 1990; Mitchell, 2000), there are others who perceive a gap, sometimes a truly, almost unsurmountable conflict of interests between researchers and practitioners (Le., Block, 2000; Crookes, 1997; Markee,1997) between researchers and practitioners. They believe that these differences emerge from diverse conceptions of teaching. SLA views teaching as intuitive knowledge that takes the form of theories (teaching as cognition) or as a craft where the context guides the teacher’s moment-to-moment decisions (‘teaching as interpretation’) (Tragant& Munoz, p. 2004).

‘Design-based Research’ (also known as design experiments) by Collins et al. intends to address several needs and issues central to the study of learning. These are as follows:

* The need to address theoretical questions about the nature of learning in context
* The need for approaches to the study of learning phenomena in the real world situations rather than the laboratory
* The need to go beyond narrow measures of learning
* The need to derive research findings from formative evaluation

**Conducting Classroom Research**

Classroom research is a recent trend that has been emerging due to severe need of designing lessons according to specific needs of learners. As pointed out by Long (1983), classroom centered research is ‘eminently practical’ because it is ‘concerned with what actually goes on in the classroom as opposed to what is supposed to go on’ (p. 284). By definition, Classroom-Centered Research (CCR) views classroom as the ‘object’ of research, and not simply the ‘setting’ for research. The CCR determines not only what happens in the classroom but also the conditions that can affect teaching and learning processes. It is observed that sometimes simple research results do not leave any impact unless they are empirically tested.

**Making Research Accessible to Teachers and Facilitating Action Research**

For effective teaching practices, it is imperative to make research accessible to teachers. It contributes to the professional development of teachers and equips them with the updated methodologies.

**Ten Generalizations from SLA Research (Lightbown, 1985)**

1. Adults and adolescents can ‘acquire’ a second language.
2. The learner creates a systematic inter-language which is often characterized by the same systematic errors as committed by the native child, learning the same language as the first language, as well as others which appear to be based on the learner’s own native language.
3. There are predictable sequences in L2 acquisition that certain structures have to be acquired before others can be integrated.
4. Practice does not make the learner perfect.
5. Knowing a language rule does not mean one will be able to use it in communicative interaction.
6. Isolated explicit error correction is usually ineffective in changing language behavior.
7. For most adult learners, acquisition stops . . . before the learner has achieved native-like mastery of the target language.
8. One cannot achieve native-like or near native-like command on a second language in one hour a day.
9. The learner’s task is enormous, because language is enormously complex.
10. A learner’s ability to understand language in a meaningful context exceeds his/her ability to comprehend decontextualized language and to produce language of comparable complexity and accuracy.

For the facilitation process of the research, researchers propose that research forums should be provided for sharing and learning. Collaborative action research should be promoted and teachers should be encouraged to be engaged in developing a professional research culture. Teachers should also be provided with autonomy to make informed decisions based on their teaching experiences.

**DYNAMICS OF LEARNING STYLES**

**Types of Styles**

The Learning Styles have been defined as a mode of learning – an individual’s preferred or best manner(s) to think, process information, and demonstrate learning. Learning styles focus on the individual’s adoption of their own particular style which he/she considers specific and appropriate to a particular learning situation. This calls for specific learning activities which should facilitate learning in varied situations.

The Learning Styles reflect learning preferences of the learners. Learning preferences indicate their learning choices e.g. individual learning or group learning, using graphics or texts, etc. ‘Refer to the conditions, encompassing environmental, emotional, sociological and physical conditions, that an individual learner would choose, if they were in a position to make a choice’ (Dunn et al., 1989).

Four types of styles have been proposed by Honey-Mumford Model that people use while learning:

1. **Activists**:Activists prefer to learn by doing; ‘give anything a try’.
2. **Reflectors**: Reflectors stand back and observe; ‘look before they leap’.
3. **Theorists**: Theorists like to adapt and integrate; emphasis the framework and its implementation.
4. **Pragmatists**: Pragmatists look for the practical implications of any new ideas or theories before making a judgment.

**Types of Learners**

Types of learners are determined by their inclinations toward specific learning styles. Researchers have introduced different types of learners based on the styles but the most distinctive model of the learners’ types has been proposed by Myers and Briggs. The Myers-Briggs Model (Briggs & Myers, 1975; or Briggs *et al., 1980)* classifies the individuals according to their preferences on scales derived from the theories of psychological types developed by Carl Jung who believes that behavior is never random and reflective of one’s distinctive mental capacities.

According to the Myers-Briggs Model, learners may be:

1. **Extroverts:** Learn best when they can work with a friend and learn by trying something themselves.
2. **Introverts:** Learn best when they can find quiet places to work and have enough time to reflect on.
3. **Sensors:**Learn best when they can ask their teacher to explain. They like to use computers, watch films etc.
4. **Intuitors:** Learn best when they can find ways to be imaginative and creative.
5. **Thinkers:** Learn best when they have limited time to do their work, or when they are able to put information in a logical order.
6. **Feelers:** Learn best when they can work with a friend and have opportunities to choose topics. They care about and help others.
7. **Judgers:** Learn best when they have short-term goals, and they are able to make a plan of action.
8. **Perceivers:** Learn best when they find new ways to do routine tasks in order to generate interest.

**Learning Styles Model**

The following three models broadly cover the Learning Styles:

**1. Kolb’s Learning Style Model**

Kolb’s model is based on a four-stage learning cycle which proposes that the learning styles contain concrete vs. abstract and active vs. reflective dimensions. Concrete experiences rely on accommodating and diverging components as feelings specific whereas abstract conceptualization focuses on converging and assimilating as thinking and doing continuum. Both active and reflective domains are observed on the processing continuum.

**2. The Felder-Silverman Model**

Richard Felder and Linda Silverman introduced the model based on determining the learning style differences among engineering students and providing engineering instructors with the knowledge to design relevant teaching to cater to students learning needs. Later on, it did not remain specific to engineering students only.

The Felder-Silverman model proposes that students have preferences in terms of the way they receive and process information. The model presents the following four dimensions that are indicative of learning preferences:

1. **Active and Reflective Learners:** Some people learn best by doing. Others prefer to think things through instead. These differences distinguish between active and reflective learners.
2. **Sensing and Intuitive Learners:** Some courses require significant memorization of facts. Others focus on theoretical or conceptual ideas.
3. **Visual or Verbal Learners:**Visual learners tend to prefer images, graphs etc. while verbal learners are more inclined towards written or spoken words.
4. **Sequential or Global Learners:** Sequential learners prefer learning linearly with logical steps; whereas, global learners prefer a holistic approach.

**3. The 4MAT System**

It was developed by Bernice McCarthy in 1972 with 4 major learning styles; each of the styles displays different strengths during the learning process.  The model is constructed along two continuums. First, **perceiving** – how people judge new information and second, **processing –**what people do with the new information. It proposes the learners’ styles based on addressing what, why, if, and how.

**SOCIAL CONTEXTS IN SLA**

**Language Community and Communicative Competence**

Language Community has been defined as a group of people who share knowledge of a common language and its use. The language community involves language and culture as both are closely connected to each other. Language community consists of monolinguals as well as multi-linguals, and both use knowledge of language rules appropriate to the given social contexts. Social groups have common ways of using language for social needs. These groups are called ‘Discourse Communities’ and have the following characteristics:

* A discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals.
* A discourse community has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members.
* A discourse community uses its participatory mechanism primarily to provide information and feedback.
* A discourse community utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims.
* In addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis.
* A discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discourse expertise.

Communicative Competence is the ability to use the language appropriately in a given situation. It is divided into:

* Mind Competence which has language, extra-linguistic codes, cultural values, language abilities, and behavior abilities
* World Performance which has communicative events

**Societal and Environmental Factors in Learning Setting**

The societal factors are influenced by large social groups based on their norms, beliefs, and customs in a given society and community, and affect the learning process. Praveen (2016) proposed a comprehensive list of societal factors which include social change, transmission of culture, social problems as issues for curriculum, economic issues, technology, home/family, technology, diversity, environment, political factors, and religion. Richards (2001) proposed the following societal factors: policy makers in government, educational and other government officials, employers, business community, politicians, tertiary education specialist, educational organization, parents, citizens, and students. These societal factors affect the learning settings and contribute in determining the relevant processes.

Learning Environment refers to the diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn. The learning environment takes into account all the physical conditions including classroom, text books, as well as cultural norms. It also equips teachers to organize educational settings to facilitate learning. The term also encompasses the culture of a school or class—its presiding ethos and characteristics, including how individuals interact with and treat one another—as well as the ways in which teachers may organize an educational setting to facilitate learning.

**Microsocial Factors**

The Microsocial factors are primarily concerned with language acquisition process in the immediate social contexts which includes: language production, interpretation, and interaction. The factors affect the level of formality, relationship of participants, and the nature of interaction as the immediate microsocial contexts refer to the social elements in the immediate contexts. The frameworks of ‘Accommodation Theory’ and ‘Variation Theory’ serve as the basis of the microsocial factors.

The Accommodation Theory, also known as Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), was developed by Howard Giles in 1971. It argues that people adjust their communication according to others’ responses. The theory has two elements, namely, **divergence** which highlights group identity and **convergence** which occurs when there is a strong need for social acceptance.

The Variation Theory was introduced by Marton with emphasis on four patterns of variation**: Contrast**seeks to distinguish different and unlike things**, Separation** is the awareness of critical features and/or dimensions of variation, **Generalization** is a purposeful contrast to explore whether an observed pattern can occur while certain aspects vary, and **Fusion** integrates critical features or dimensions of variation into a whole under simultaneous co-variation.

The Microsocial factors include:

* L2 Variation: It occurs during language acquisition when language learner and native speaker use different linguistic codes. L2 variety is acquired from the social networks, the learner has.
* Input and Interaction: Language input is necessary, and simple interaction between L2 learner and native speaker can facilitate learning.
* Interaction–basic genesis of language: Interaction is at the core of language acquisition. It refers to interpersonal and intrapersonal communication as key components of language interaction.

**Macrosocial Factors**

The Macrosocial factors are concerned with the broader and fundamental structures within a society, such as economic or political systems, social and cultural institutions, demographic (especially ethnic) groupings, etc. Macrosocial factors draw primarily on the frameworks of the ‘Ethnography of Communication’ and ‘Social Psychology’ for analyzing social contexts’ effects on SLA.

The theory of ethnography of communication was developed by Dell Hymes in 1960. It explains that how people use language in real situations with the help of communicative competence. It highlights the importance of the language rules and their learning by the children. He introduced the following mnemonic S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G to explain the communication process:

S: Setting

P: Participants

E: Ends

A: Acts sequence

K: Key

I: Instrumentalities

N: Norms

G: Genres

Social Psychology is a sub-field of psychology that studies how others influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions. The theory of social psychology examines the effects of large social forces and the ways different people act in the same and different situations. It involves the following factors:

* **Social Influence**–one’s behavior affected by others presence
* **Social Cognition**–ways of thinking about others
* **Social Interaction**–people relating to others

The **macrosocial** factors include:

* Global and National Status of L1 and L2: Language represents power and status symbolically and practically at the national and international levels.
* Boundaries and Identities: The territories of nations often act as language barriers but sometimes useful for acculturation processes whereby a new culture and behavior are acculturated.
* Institutional Forces and Constraints: These factors are concerned with the impact of social control, political and religious practices, and educational and economic opportunities for L2 knowledge and its use.
* Social Categories: Age, gender, ethnicity, educational background, occupation, and economic statuses are some of the major social categories that might affect the learning processes.
* Circumstances of Learning: Learners’ previous experiences influence L2 learning.

**ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE FOR L2 USE**

**Academic Competence**

There are two fundamental types of communicative competence for the purpose of L2 learning: ‘Academic Competence’ and ‘Interpersonal Competence’.

**Academic Competence:** is the ability to demonstrate the language knowledge which the learner acquires for some subjects and use it as medium for developing research. It focuses on the acquisition of specific vocabulary for reading and writing purposes.According to Dipernaand Elliot Model, the academic competence consists of ‘the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of learners who contribute to success in the classrooms.’ (p. 294)*.*

To develop the academic competence, the learners must have the academic self-efficacy which is the learners’ belief that they can accomplish any academic task successfully*.* Academic outcome expectations and academic efficacy expectations are the two general elements of academic self-efficacy.

**Interpersonal Competence**

It refers to the learners’ ability to use the appropriate L2 vocabulary, primarily in the face-to-face interaction with other speakers. The learner must be equipped to adjust his/her interaction according to other people’s responses. The interpersonally competent people have the following characteristics:

* They use this awareness to better understand others and to adapt their behavior accordingly
* Interpersonally competent people build and nurture strong, lasting, mutually beneficial relationships.
* Interpersonally competent people resolve conflict in a positive manner. UCLA researchers (1988) proposed five dimensions of interpersonal competence:

1. Initiating relationships
2. Self-disclosure
3. Providing emotional support
4. Asserting displeasure with others’ actions
5. Managing interpersonal conflicts

Priorities for L2 communicative activities: For academic competence, these are reading, listening, writing, and speaking; whereas, for interpersonal competence, the order is listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are further divided into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (writing and speaking).

**Receptive Activities**

Receptive Activities are designed to develop the receptive skills. Listening and Reading are called receptive skills as the learner receives the input and does not produce the language. They are sometime referred to as passive skills, but the learner is still required to participate in the process by comprehending the input to create meaningful learning. Reading, as a receptive skill provides the learner with knowledge of technological developments, world news, and scientific discoveries etc. It includes the following prerequisites of L2 linguistic knowledge:

* Recognition of vocabulary of both basic and subject-specific terms, including their meaning, graphic representation etc.
* Complex sentence structures, and punctuation conventions
* Organization of features at the sentence level
* Organization of features at the discourse level and texts structuring (Grabe, 2002)

For effective communication, listening plays an important role because if listening is not clear, it might lead to the lack of appropriate comprehension on the part of the learner. Its continuum consists of listening tasks–on a continuum from ‘reciprocal to non-reciprocal communication’(Lynch, 1998).

**Productive Activities**

Productive Activities are designed for the development of the productive skills. Speaking and writing are known as productive skills as they produce language. Writing is the most important productive activity for L2 learners to express themselves for developing relevant texts according to the target situation requirements. The learners need to follow the following steps for writing proficiency:

* Formulating mental concepts, that are to be expressed centrally, requires content knowledge*.*
* Recognizing what content will be relevant for intended readers, and what will be shared versus new information, requires context knowledge*.*
* Constructing text within socially defined conventions of expression (including selecting linguistic forms and organization patterns that are appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience) also requires other aspects of knowledge of culture*.*

L2 learners use speaking for interpersonal as well as academic or professional purposes. It consists of speech acts and pragmatic competence. ‘Speech Acts’ are theutterances which fulfill certain actions of what is said by people in the course of interpersonal communication. Learning how to perform these acts in the L2 is central to language learning, and knowing when to deploy them is basic to what we call pragmatic competence.