

# **A DESCRIPTION OF SOME RECENT RESEARCH INTO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE MALAYSIAN CONTEXT**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This study seeks to describe some recent research into second language acquisition which might help teachers develop a better approach towards more effective second language teaching.

In recent years, there have been attempts by teachers of foreign language to analyse some of the general findings of psycholinguistic research with the hope of drawing analogies between first and second language acquisition, and even to the extent of justifying certain teaching methods and techniques on the basis of first language learning principles. They have begun questioning the theories of language learning that had given support to the particular methods which they were practising in the classrooms.

Practically, all teachers have a theory of learning and they are the ones who decide what students will learn and how they will learn it. A teacher plans his or her scheme of work in the belief that a careful selection and arrangement of the teaching material will facilitate learning.

Nevertheless, in most cases, a teacher's views about language learning may not be explicit but which exist as a set of covert beliefs. As a result, such teachers may not only be uncritical but also resistant to change. More often than not, they might vary and modify their teaching methods in an unprincipled manner and adhere blindly to the most recent trend in language teaching.

It is my fervent hope that this study, besides providing a brief description of the ideas which have surfaced from some recent research into second language acquisition, may well aid language teachers in modifying their approach towards effective second language teaching.

This study is organised into three chapters. Chapter I deals with the theory of language acquisition, giving insights into first language acquisition, second language learning, and contrastive and error analyses.

Chapter II is devoted to the survey of relevant second language theories, focussing on psychological aspects of language learning.

Chapter III discusses pedagogical implications of the main ideas postulated by the various theories.

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

#### 1.1 First Language Acquisition

The question of how we learn our native language or how we acquire it and the mechanisms and human capacities involved in it have been subjected to various research for centuries by philosophers, psychologists and linguists.

The underlying assumption is that the oldest language<sup>1</sup> is innate and will develop automatically if there is no environmental interference. Therefore, though language is believed to be innate, the importance of the environment is also recognised because, unless the child is isolated, he will supposedly learn the language spoken in his environment.

It was in 1960s and 70s when researches begin to analyse child language systematically and try to discover the nature of the psycholinguistic process which enables every human being to gain fluent control of an exceedingly complex system of communication.

Before the 1960s<sup>2</sup>, the study of child language was monopolised by the 'behaviourist' approach to language and learning. Behaviourists affirm that all of human thought and behaviour can be explained in terms of habits which are a result of conditioning. In other words, if a certain kind of behaviour is reinforced, it will very likely to occur again.

B.F. Skinner<sup>3</sup> claims that there are different variables which control verbal behaviour and he describes these in terms of stimulus, reinforcement and deprivation.

The behaviourist theory, though able to explain certain aspects of human behaviour, has not been able to give a satisfactory answer to the problem of creativity of a native speaker of a language and to the fact that children learn to speak regardless of the poor environmental speaking conditions in which they might be raised.

McNeill (1970) pointed out that children seem to develop their own grammar different from that of adults to whom they are constantly listening. Therefore, the reinforcement theory seems unable to give an adequate explanation to explain these facts.

Chomsky, in his criticism of Skinner's idea regarding verbal behaviour, questioned the entire concept of language learning and language acquisition primarily through external factors. He exposed the failure of behaviourism to regard man as a thinking animal and as such, his internal structure cannot be disregarded in an analysis of his verbal behaviour.<sup>4</sup>

Chomsky declares that knowledge of a language does not depend on the degree of intelligence a person has and also does not depend on the child's personal experiences. Any child having adequate exposure to oral language will learn it without much difficulty.

Moreover, Chomsky affirms that the structure of language is determined by the way the human mind is structured and as such, explains the existence of universal properties of human language which are called language universals. These properties are common to every human being.

## 1.2 Second Language Learning

Questions have been raised: Does second language learning follow the pattern of native language acquisition? Do mechanisms and processes involved in the use of native language help students to acquire a second language or will they hinder it?

If the first and second languages are learned in the same way, the materials selected and the patterns to be taught will be similar to those that the native speaker uses. The order of difficulty will increase as the complexity of the structures the native speaker acquires increases.

According to the behaviourist, when first language habits are helpful in acquiring second language habits, this is positive transfer.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, when errors occur because old habitual behaviour is different from the new behaviour that is being learned, this is negative transfer.<sup>6</sup>

Lado (1957) sums up the learner's problem in a simple formulation:

*Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.*

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If the knowledge of a first language interferes with the learning of a second language, it is necessary to emphasise in teaching, as some methods used at present do, those aspects of language in which interference might be stronger. Thus, teaching will be directed to emphasise the differences between the first and the second language spontaneously.

To achieve this, a systematic and exhaustive contrastive analysis of the language, the first and second language being learned, is needed. Predictions can be used in deciding which items need to be given special treatment in the courses taught or materials written. Intensive techniques such as repetition or drills can be applied in order to overcome the interference and establish the necessary habits.

### 1.3 Contrastive and Error Analyses

Contrastive analysis was developed to overcome the areas of difficulty faced by second language learners imposed by their second language. This was based on the belief that it was possible to predict what problems the learner of a particular second language would face by establishing the linguistic differences between the first and second language.<sup>7</sup>

However, later research showed that many of the errors predicted by contrastive analysis did occur. Thus, several steps were taken to modify the contrastive analysis hypothesis<sup>8</sup> to take account of avoidance, the need for there to be a 'degree of similarity' between the first and second language items for interference to take place, and the multi-factor of learner error.

Numerous studies carried out into first language acquisition has shown that a child's speech is no longer regarded just as a faulty version of the adult's but recognised as having its own underlying system.

Littlewood (1984) elaborates:

*As the system develops towards that of the adult, the child contributes by actively forming rules, sometimes overgeneralising them, and gradually adapting them. Some of the clearest evidence for this process comes from utterances which are unlike anything which the adult would produce, since it is these deviant utterances that reflect most clearly the child's idiosyncratic system.*

Thus, in the same way, second language learners could be viewed as actively constructing rules from the input they encounter and gradually adapting these rules in the direction of the second language. Learners' errors need not be regarded as signs of failure but are clear evidence of learner's developing systems.

As we would expect all of the learner's incorrect notions to be a result of transferring rules from their first language, error analysis plays a more important role in predicting errors compared to contrastive analysis.

There are also errors, sometimes called 'interlingual errors' implying that learners are processing the second language in its own terms. Then, there is also the 'intralingual errors', rather similar to those produced by the child in the first language, suggesting that the second language learning is employing similar strategies, notably generalisation and simplification.

The knowledge about errors enables us to see how learners process the second language and develop underlying systems of rules. However, we cannot wholly assume that the speech produced is a direct reflection of their 'competence' in the second language since errors also result from more superficial influences such as immediate communication strategies and performance factors.

It is not easy, though, to determine whether an error is the result of a communication strategy or of an internalised rule. Normally, communication strategies are more likely to occur at the level of consciousness and their occurrence are less regular in the learner's speech and performance factors.

Performance errors are sometimes termed 'lapses' or 'mistakes' to differentiate them from the more systematic 'errors'. Again, like communication strategies, the most reliable evidence of performance errors is that of regularity of occurrence. A learner will be able to realise his mistakes and correct them at once.

Some errors may also be a direct result of concepts ingrained through faulty teaching or materials. Lack of proper explanation concerning the distinction between two forms will give rise to confusion on the part of the students. Too much emphasis on certain grammatical forms may have the undesired effects of over-use and over-generalisation.

Usually, we would expect a learner to progress towards achieving a near-native competence whereby less and less errors are made. On the contrary, once they have obtained sufficient second language knowledge to fulfill their communicative and emotional needs, they may stop learning. This results in what Selinker (1972) calls fossilisation.<sup>9</sup>

No matter how much input and form is provided, the learner does not learn. Some errors will remain fossilised and become permanent features of the learner's speech.

## CHAPTER II

### SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES

There has been endless theorising about second language acquisition. However, there is no one theory, so far, that has been successful in explaining every aspect of second language acquisition. Each theory has its own setbacks and inadequacies.

In this chapter, I shall attempt to survey relevant second language theories, focussing on the psychological aspects of learning a language.

#### 2.1 The Monitor Model<sup>1</sup>

Krashen's Monitor Model consists of five central hypotheses:

1. The acquisition learning hypothesis
2. The natural order hypothesis
3. The Monitor hypothesis
4. The input hypothesis
5. The affective filter hypothesis

##### 2.1.1 The acquisition learning hypothesis

This hypothesis is relevant to the process of internalising new second language knowledge, to storing this knowledge and also to apply it in actual performance.

This theory states that adults have two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language: acquisition<sup>2</sup> and learning<sup>3</sup>. It also claims that adults still acquire languages and that this ability does not disappear at puberty.

Error correction has little or no effect on subconscious acquisition but is thought to be useful for conscious learning.

This hypothesis suggests that parents pay more attention to the truth value of what the child is saying rather than the form.

### **2.1.2 The natural order hypothesis**

This theory claims that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable way, that is, certain grammatical structures and acquisition for second language is different from the order of acquisition for first language, although there are some similarities.

### **2.1.3 The Monitor Hypothesis**

This hypothesis states that acquisition and learning are used in specific ways. It is acquisition that initiates utterances in a second language while learning only acts as a Monitor or editor. Learning merely makes changes in the form of our utterance after it has been produced by the acquired system.

Krashen (1982) gives three conditions for the use of the Monitor:

- i) there must be enough time
- ii) the focus must be on form and not meaning
- iii) the user must know the rule

Editing can also take place using acquired competence. This is referred to as editing by 'feel'<sup>4</sup>.

### **2.1.4 The input hypothesis<sup>5</sup>**

This hypothesis relates to acquisition, not learning. It takes place as a result of the second language learner having understood input that is a little beyond the current level of his competence (i + 1 level). Thus, input that is comprehensible to the learner automatically be at the right level.

### **2.1.5 The affective filter hypothesis**

This hypothesis deals with how affective factors such as the learner's motivation, self-confidence or anxiety relate to second language acquisition. It claims that learners with high motivation and self-confidence and with low anxiety have low filters<sup>6</sup> and so obtain and let in plenty of output.

On the contrary, learners with low motivation little self-confidence, and high anxiety have high filters; thus receive little input and let in even less.



## 2.2 The Acculturation Model

This hypothesis is based on the work of John Schumann (1978). Acculturation<sup>7</sup> is defined by Brown (1980 : 129) as the process of becoming adapted to a new culture. This and hence, second language acquisition is determined by the degree of social and psychological distance between the learner and the target language culture

Schumann outlines a socially good learning situation is when:

1. the target language and second language groups view each other as socially equal;
2. the target language and second language groups are both desirous that the second language will assimilate;
3. both the target language and second language groups expect the second language group to share social facilities with the target language group;
4. the second language group is small and not very cohesive;
5. the second language group's culture is congruent with that of the target language group;
6. both groups have positive attitudes to each other; and
7. the second language group envisages staying in the target language area for an extended period.

The psychological factors are affective in nature. They include:

1. language shock (that is, the learner faces doubt and confusion when using the second language.)
2. culture shock<sup>8</sup> (that is, the learner experiences disorientation, stress, fear, etc.)
3. motivation
4. ego boundaries

This hypothesis claims that social and psychological distance influence second language acquisition by determining the amount of contact with the target language that the learner experiences, and also the degree to which the learner is open to that input which is available.

### **2.3 Accomodation Theory**

This theory is based on research by Giles (1977) and associates into the intergroup uses of language in multi-lingual communities such as Britain and perhaps, Malaysia. His aim is to investigate how intergroup uses of language reflect basic social and psychological attitudes in inter-ethnic communication.

The Accomodation Theory is quite similar to the Acculturation Model in that both try to account for successful language acquisition through the relationships that hold between the learner's social group and the target language community. However, Giles explains in terms of perceived social distance and not in terms of variables that create actual social distance<sup>9</sup> as explained by Schumann.

This theory claims that motivation is the primary determinant of second language proficiency. When an individual learner is highly motivated, he will acquire a high level of proficiency.

The high level of motivation may be due to favourable socio-psychological attitudes such as identification with ingroup, inter-ethnic comparison, perception of ethno-linguistic vitality, perception of ingroup boundaries and identification with the other social categories.

### **2.4 Discourse Theory**

This theory was proposed by Hatch (1978) whereby communication is treated as the matrix of linguistic knowledge and that language development should be viewed in terms of how the learner discovers the meaning potential of language by participating in communication.<sup>10</sup>

The main principles of this theory are:

1. second language follows a 'natural' route in syntactical development;
2. native speakers adjust their speech in order to negotiate meaning with non-native speakers;

3. the conversational strategies used to communicate meaning, and the resulting adjusted input, influence the rate and route of second language in a number of ways:
  - a) the learner learns the grammar of the second language in the same order as the frequency order of the various features in the input;
  - b) the learner acquires commonly occurring formulas and then later analyses these into their component parts;
  - c) the learner is aided to construct sentences vertically; vertical structures are the precursors of horizontal structures.
4. the 'natural' route is the result of learning how to hold conversations.

In this chapter, I have touched upon the main ideas and aspirations propagated by four theories of second language acquisition. Of course, there are other theories, though not mentioned but which are related and applicable in some ways in providing implications for classroom teaching.

Other useful ideas put forward through the relentless efforts of Robert Stockwell, Heidi Dulay and Marina Burt, Ronald Wardhaugh, Lozanov, Tracy Terrell, Rod Ellis and many others can also be taken into consideration in suggesting teaching methods.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING**

Recent discoveries and findings in the field of second language acquisition have opened up various possibilities and alternatives in the search for the more effective approach to language teaching.

In this chapter, I propose to suggest how language teachers would be able to modify their approach to language teaching in view of ideas put forward by several theories of second language acquisition.

### **3.1 Teachers should emphasise on communication of meanings.**

With reference to Krashen's acquisition learning process, the most important point brought up is that the learner's ability to communicate develops almost entirely through the subconscious aspects of learning, better defined as acquisition.

Thus, teachers should concentrate towards creating contexts for language through listening and reading activities, discussions, communication tasks and role-playing. These contexts would enable students to learn language in a similar way as in the natural environment and go through the same sequences of development as a natural learner.

In other words, effective learning takes place where there is communication in meaning. Students must be able to understand the various types of conversation that are being conducted from time to time by the teacher in the classroom and the teacher should check to see that pupils have really understood.

In a way, this implies that form-oriented procedures such as conscious drilling or correction should be avoided as far as possible. Teachers should not over-indulge in meaningless mechanical drills hoping that students would be able to memorise the forms irrespective of whether they would be able to use them correctly in their daily speech.

### **3.2 Teachers should make the teaching sequence reflect the natural learning sequence.**

Taking into consideration the idea put forward by Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis, it seems useful for teachers to have adequate knowledge concerning natural learning sequences. They should be aware of the sequence in which the learner's internal mechanisms become ready to acquire different items and rules. Moreover, knowledge of the natural learning sequence enables teachers to predict what errors are likely to occur.

Often in the past, items which are taught by the teachers are not learned by students simply because of the conflict between the external and internal syllabuses. Teachers tend to be over-dependent on the teaching syllabus which is itself not always reflecting the learning sequence.

Thus, teachers should not be reluctant to modify the teaching syllabus so that it would be consistent to the natural learning order.

At the same time, teachers should adopt a less negative stance towards errors as teachers now realise that they represent normal stages in the development of communicative skills. They should be selective in error correction and may not correct them at all if this would interfere with the learner's inbuilt syllabus processing the language.

### **3.3. Teachers should emphasise more on sub-conscious learning.**

A lot of research seems to show that the successful acquisition of language depends more on the filter and organiser rather than the monitor. With this in mind, teachers need to emphasise more on sub-conscious learning where communication of meaning and comprehensibility of input are the main focus.

This situation would 'open up' the filter and activates the organiser ensuring optimal input. Teachers should make sure that students do not feel anxious or emotionally disturbed as this tends to cause the filter to drastically restrict the input and thus hinder effective learning.

Another aspect that should be considered here is what is known as a 'silent period' in the initial stages of learning. This arises from the assumption that the internal processing mechanisms operate more effectively when the learner is not producing language himself but already constructing a system which will enable him to speak when he is ready.

The effectiveness of the silent period has been proven to be true. Students learn better when there is no pressure on them to speak the second language. They listen to comprehensible input and develop their competence while they are silent.

Probably, for the first ten minutes or so, teachers can ask the students to just sit and listen to a tape recording of a dialogue or a story read by the teacher. Afterwards, questions may be asked to elicit student response to see if they have understood the given material.

In the following step, the students may be asked to act out the dialogue or story. This would create an interesting atmosphere where they participate and cooperate with each other.

### **3.4. Teachers should provide a rich and sufficient variety of comprehensible linguistic data for students to process.**

Another view relating to language teaching put forward by Krashen in the Input Hypothesis is that we acquire language through linguistic input and not through output. This means that we acquire language from what we hear and not from what we write. We acquire fluency in speech not by practising talking but by understanding input. However, output does have an indirect influence in encouraging acquisition.

The classroom situation must be able to provide a rich and sufficient variety of comprehensible linguistic data for the students to process. The input must be interesting and relevant and need not be grammatically sequent (in fact, it should not be so).

Input can be made very interesting by supplying the students with reading materials which appeal to them such as photographs, cartoons, drawings, newspaper cuttings, and posters. It would be beneficial if input is a little above the existing linguistic competence of the students.

### **3.5 Teachers should be able to motivate students.**

Motivation is one of the most important psychological factors which influence the course of learning. There are three kinds of motivation namely, instrumental, integrative and 'social group identification'. All of them are important.

In the Malaysian context, however, instrumental motivation is more important since students need the English language for specific purposes, like going abroad for further studies, chairing meetings, giving speeches, commercial transactions and others.

Thus, teachers can best motivate students by telling them how important it is for them to learn and master the language to ensure better prospects for the future. A highly motivated group will make the teaching task much easier and exciting, resulting in better performance on the part of the students.

Integrative and 'social group identification' can also help in overcoming the psychological setbacks in language learning but to a lesser extent.

### **3.6 Teachers should be able to win over students' confidence in them.**

As mentioned earlier, the best learning environment is where there is communication of meaning and the emphasis is on the expressing and understanding of ideas. In spite of this, effective learning may be hindered if students show indifferent attitudes towards the second language community or to the teacher personally.

This may be due to the fact that students' personal beliefs, either cultural or religious, are different from that of the teacher. Perhaps, they might not like the teacher's personality.

All these can be true in a multi-racial country like Malaysia where often enough, unhealthy feelings in relation to social group identification tend to predominate.

With reference to the ideas raised in both Schumann's Acculturation Model and Giles's Accommodation Theory, unfavourable socio-psychological attitudes as mentioned above will make language learning and teaching unsuccessful. Teachers become frustrated and impatient, and students make no attempt to learn.

To overcome all these undesirable elements, teachers need to win over students' confidence in them and show that they care very much for their success in the learning process. Teachers should show seriousness in their teaching, help them to overcome their weaknesses and encourage them to work harder.

Teachers should avoid harsh remarks and punishments when not happy with students' work. They ought to offer them advice and make attempts to get to know each student personally. For the weaker students, slowing down the pace of lessons and personal attention would help them a lot.

Teachers should not hold any prejudices towards students but inculcate in them the feeling of togetherness and cooperation in striving for common goals. Students of different background should be encouraged to mix and any moves to form racial cliques should be stopped.

### **3.7 Teachers should encourage students to participate in communication.**

Observations of natural learning has shown that students do not follow a step-by-step progression through the separate parts of the system. Rather, they

encompass the whole of the second language system but reduce it to a simpler system consisting of only the most basic distinctions. Gradually, as the student progresses, this system will be filled with more and more distinctions until it becomes more refined as a means of communication.

Relating the above point to Hatch's idea in his Discourse Theory, several pedagogical implications can be seen.

The main one is that teaching objectives should not be set in terms of individual items which have to be mastered to perfection. It has to be set in terms of a global communicative system. In other words, the classroom should provide more opportunities for communicative development to take place. At the same time, the traditional item-by-item syllabus can still be retained as the main framework of the course.

Teachers should encourage students to have confidence in their own system and make full use of it for communication. Inferiority complex and lack of confidence should not occur.

To overcome inadequacy in expressing due to gaps in their linguistic repertoire, communication strategies can be used. They include adjusting the message, using paraphrase, using approximation, creating new words and occasional switching to the mother tongue.

## CONCLUSION

Research into second language acquisition is a relatively new field. There are questions still left unanswered and it is almost impossible to single out any approach of theory as being the most accepted.

In this study, I have chosen only a few of the main ideas which result from second language research. I have also suggested implications that they might have for language teaching.

However, I would like to stress here that this study is meant to describe rather than prescribe. Much is still not known regarding the study of second language acquisition and that there exist many other related variables which have to be considered.

It would be useful though, to look upon this brief study as an attempt to highlight a few of the many possibilities towards achieving more effective teaching procedures, taking into account the peculiar constraints of the second language situation in our country.



## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

- 1 The earliest known attempt to understand child language acquisition, as reported by Herodotus, was made in about 600 B.C., when the Egyptian king Psameticus ordered two children to be brought up in a speechless environment to find out which language they would speak first. Since the first word the children reportedly spoke was **bekos**, the Phrygian word for "bread", king Psameticus declared Phrygian to be an older language than Egyptian.
- 2 Modern research on child language acquisition dates back to the late eighteenth century when the German philosopher Dietrich Tiedemann recorded his observations of the psychological and linguistic development of his young son.
- 3 He is the best known proponent of the behaviourist approach. In his book, **Verbal Behaviour**, he describes how a child acquires language:

A child acquires verbal behaviour when relatively unpatterned vocalizations, selectively reinforced, gradually assume forms which produce appropriate consequences in a given community. In formulating this process we do not need to mention stimuli occurring prior to the behaviour to be reinforced. It is difficult, if not impossible, to discover stimuli which evoke specific vocal responses in the young child. There is no stimulus which makes a child say **b** or **a** or **e**, as one may make him salivate by placing a lemon drop in his mouth or make his pupils contract by shining a light into his eyes. The raw responses from which verbal behaviour is constructed are not "elicited". In order to reinforce a given response we simply wait until it occurs. (Skinner, 1957:31)

- 4 Chomsky in "A Review of Verbal Behaviour by B.F. Skinner" says

One would naturally expect that prediction of the behaviour of a complex organism (or machine) would require, in addition to information about external stimulation, knowledge of the internal structure of the organism, the ways in which it processes input information and organises its own behaviour. (Chomsky, 1959:27)

- 5 For example, the English pattern subject-verb-object sequence in declarative sentences (eg. The dog eats the meat) can be transferred directly into French (Le chien mange la viande), as far as word order is concerned. See Littlewood (1984:17)

6 However, when we replace the object with a pronoun, for English, the same order is retained as before (The dog eats it), but French places the object before the verb (La chien la mange). Also see Littlewood (1984:17)

7 Lado (1957), one of the pioneers of Contrastive Analysis clarifies:

The teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide for teaching them.

The roots of Contrastive Analysis were therefore, pedagogic.

8 Ellis (1985:40) states that the latest development, known as 'Contrastive Pragmatics' gives the impression that interest in Contrastive Analysis has shifted to reflect current developments in linguistics which give focus on communicative uses of language.

9 It has been assumed that fossilisation will normally occur when a learner realises subconsciously that the errors do not hinder him in satisfying his communicative needs at the functional or social level.

## CHAPTER II

1 It has enjoyed considerable prominence in second language acquisition research and is so far the most comprehensive of existing theories. (Ellis, 1985:2611)

2 Acquisition is a subconscious process. (Krashen, 1982:10) It is a result of participating in natural communication where the focus is on meaning.

3 Learning occurs as a result of conscious study of the formal properties of the language. (Ellis, 1985:261)

4 This aspect of second language performance is not clarified by Krashen.

5 The input hypothesis is very consistent with what is known about "caretaker speech", the modifications that parents and others make when talking to young children (Krashen, 1982:22)

6 Krashen incorporates the notion of the Affective Filter as proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977). The filter controls how much input the learner comes into contact with, and how much input is converted into intake. (Ellis, 1985:263)

- 7 It is seen as an important aspect of SLA, because language is one of the most observable expressions of culture and because in second (as opposed to foreign) language settings the acquisition of a new language is seen as tied to the way in which the learner's community and the target language community view each other (Ellis, 1985:251)
- 8 Peter Adler (1972:8) describes culture shock in more technical psychological terms:

Culture shock, then, is thought to be a form of anxiety that results from the loss of commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols of social intercourse. The individual undergoing culture shock reflects his anxiety and nervousness with cultural differences through any number of defense mechanisms: repression, regression, isolation and rejection. These defensive attitudes speak, in behavioral terms, of a basic underlying insecurity which may encompass loneliness, anger, frustration and self-questioning of competence. With the familiar props, cues, and clues of cultural understanding removed, the individual becomes disoriented, afraid of, and alienated from the things that he knows and understands.
- 9 Brown (1980) criticised Schumann's idea because there is no objective means of measuring actual social distance. It is how the learner views his own culture in relation to the culture of the target language community that affects second language acquisition.
10. Halliday (1975) views first language acquisition this way.

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