

# Second Language Acquisition

## 1- What is the Study of Second Language Acquisition?

- In second language learning, language plays an institutional and social role in the community. It functions as a recognized means of communication among members who speak some other language as their native tongue.
- In foreign language learning, language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learned in the classroom.
- The distinction between second and foreign language learning is what is learned and how it is learned.

## 2- It is the study of:

- how second languages are learned;
- how learners create a new language system with limited exposure to a second language;
- why most second language learners do not achieve the same degree of proficiency in a second language as they do in their native language; and
- Learners acquire a second language by making use of existing knowledge of the native language, general learning strategies, or universal properties of language to internalize knowledge of the second language.
- These processes serve as a means by which the learner constructs an interlanguage (a transitional system reflecting the learner's current L<sub>2</sub> knowledge).
- Communication strategies are employed by the learner to make use of existing knowledge to cope with communication difficulties.
- why some learners appear to achieve native-like proficiency in more than one language.

## 3- The Language Learner

- Individual differences affect L<sub>2</sub> acquisition. These may include: (1) the rate of development and (2) their ultimate level of achievement.
- Learners differ with regard to variables relating to cognitive, affective and social aspects of a human being.

- Fixed factors such as age and language learning aptitude are beyond external control. Variable factors such as motivation are influenced by external factors such as social setting and by the actual course of L<sub>2</sub> development.
- Cognitive style refers to the way people perceive, conceptualize, organize and recall information.
- Field dependent learners operate holistically. They like to work with others. Field independent learners are analytic and prefer to work alone.

#### **4- Learner Strategies**

Learner strategies are defined as deliberate behaviours or actions that learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable.

- Cognitive strategies relate new concepts to prior knowledge.
- Metacognitive strategies are those which help with organizing a personal timetable to facilitate an effective study of the L<sub>2</sub>.
- Social strategies include looking for opportunities to converse with native speakers.