Second Language Teaching and Learning Principles

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In order to promote learning a second or foreign language effectively and efficiently, teachers need to have a good understanding of second language learning principles and current approach(es) to second language teaching and learning that apply the principles, and have practical knowledge of how to put theories into practice in the classroom. Three articles discussing the three areas will be published in this bulletin.

This article, *Second Language Teaching and Learning Principles*, is the first of three articles aiming to review the literature briefly in order to draw out a number of general second language teaching and learning principles from relevant current SLA theories. The principles will primarily be drawn from studies looking at learner language, the role of input and interaction, the role of output, the need for focus on form, and the significance of individual differences in L2 learning.

1. Learner language

Second and foreign language learners, like children learning their first language, generally commit errors which result from the learners' gap in their L2 knowledge when comprehending and producing the target language (see Ellis, 1985; 1994). As far as production errors are concerned, errors include *omission* (i.e. excluding a linguistic item that is obligatory in a grammatically correct utterance), *addition* (including a linguistic item which is not required in a grammatically accurate sentence), *misinformation* (mixing up the use of linguistic items), and *misordering* (placing linguistic items in inappropriate order) (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982). In addition to making linguistic errors, learners also commit pragmatic failures, namely *pragmalinguistic failure* (i.e. errors as a result of expressing oneself in a linguistically inappropriate way), and experience *sociopragmatic failure* (i.e. errors occurring when learners perform acts which are socially inappropriate) (Thomas, 1983).

A number of linguists have proposed several possible sources of errors (for example Richards, 1971; Lott, 1983; Taylor, 1986). Basically, sources of errors can be classified into three types (Ellis, 1997a). Errors may result from the learners' attempts to make the L2 learning task and L2 use easier or less complicated. This causes errors of *omission* to be made. Errors are also committed when learners *overgeneralize* rules. In addition, errors are made when learners apply their first language rules to the target language use. In other words, learners *transfer* L1 rules or norms to the L2 use. However, *positive transfer* (e.g. the transfer of L1 rules which are identical with L2 forms when using L2) can facilitate learning (Odlin, 1989). It is *negative transfer* (e.g. the use of L1 rules that are dissimilar to L2 forms in L2 production) which create errors.

According to the strong form of the *contrastive analysis hypothesis*, L2 learning difficulties or learner language errors can be predicted on the basis of the differences between L1 and L2 rules (see Ellis, 1994). In areas where differences exist, learning difficulties and errors are expected. However, this is not always the case because L1 and L2 rule differences can lead to *avoidance*, i.e. learners avoid using L2 rules which they find difficult because the rules do not exist in their L1 (Schachter, 1974). This avoidance

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phenomenon can result in the *over-use* of particular forms. For instance, Japanese learners of English use simple sentence structures rather than complex ones which involve relative clauses as Japanese do not have relative clauses (Ellis, 1994). In addition, errors may actually reflect a form of learner communication strategy, where L1 knowledge is used in communicating in L2 while there is still a gap in their L2 knowledge (Newmark, 1966 in Ellis, 1994). Whereas errors of omission and overgeneralization are similar in all L2 learners regardless of the L1, errors of transfer are influenced by the particular learners' mother tongue.

L2 learners construct their own interlanguage (Selinker, 1972; Gass and Selinker, 1994) which is systematic but different from both the target language and the learners' mother tongue rules (see McLaughlin, 1987; Towell and Hawkins, 1994). This knowledge of L2 is constructed by the learners by partially drawing the rules from the learners' mother tongue and the target language. This systematic L2 grammar knowledge underlies the learners' use of the language both in their production and comprehension and is regarded as the 'mental grammar'.

Considering that learners naturally make errors, in the second language teaching and learning process, *making errors is acceptable and is considered as a part of the learning process (principle 1).*

2. The role of input and interaction

Language input directed towards learners has a number of characteristics. As far as L1 learners are concerned, they are exposed to a special register called caretaker talk with three main characteristics. First, this register employs grammatically correct sentences. Second, the language is linguistically adjusted to the development of the children (but Ochs, 1980 in Long, 1981 finds that adults in Western Samoa do not modify their speech when they interact with children). And third, caretaker talk assists L1 learners to set up and develop topics they are interested to talk about (Ellis, 1994).

Input received by L2 learners, especially in naturalistic settings, which is termed foreigner talk (FT), is similar to caretaker talk. In his review of studies of FT studies, Long (1981, 1983) identified a number of properties of FT that can aid comprehension. First, FT is simplified in terms of phonology, lexis, and syntax. In relation to phonology, FT is charactererised, among other things, by slow rate of speech and clear pronunciation. As regards vocabulary, FT is characterised by frequent use of synonyms and paraphrases, and avoidance of low frequency vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. As far as syntax is concerned, FT employs shorter sentences and less complex syntax. Occasionally FT is ungrammatical, the errors resulting from modifications that include *omission* (e.g. omitting features such as articles and inflections), *expansion* (such as adding 'you' before imperatives), and *replacement* or *rearrangement* (for instance making negatives by having 'no' plus verb such as 'no have') (see also Wesche, 1994).

Second, FT involves interactional modifications. These modifications are made to manage interactions and repair communication breakdowns. Like caretaker talk, FT is made in an attempt to get the meaning across. Long (1983) identifies several interactional strategies (e.g. devices to avoid conversational trouble) and some tactics (e.g. devices to repair breakdowns) that native speakers employ. The strategies include passing the control of the subject matter of the conversation to the non-native speaker, selection of salient topics, treating topics briefly, making new topics salient, and comprehension checks. The tactics

involve accepting unintentional topic change, requesting clarification, confirming own comprehension, and tolerating ambiguity. Long further suggests that native speakers use devices such as slow pace of speech, and repeating their own and other's utterances.

The role of comprehensible input in SLA has received much attention (e.g. Krashen, 1982; 1985; 1987; Lightbown, 1985; Tsui, 1991; Ellis, 1995; Mackey, 1999; Ellis and He, 1999). According to the *Input Hypothesis* (Krashen, 1982; 1987) we acquire language subconsciously by understanding comprehensible input, that is language containing structure a bit beyond our current level of competence *(i + 1)*. This hypothesis claims that when learners are engaged in an interaction, and the communication is successful, *i + 1* will be provided automatically for them. This hypothesis also claims that "production ability emerges; it is not taught directly" (Krashen, 1987, p. 22).

Krashen proposes that optimal input for subconscious acquisition should be comprehensible, interesting and/or relevant, not grammatically sequenced, and sufficient in quantity. To make input comprehensible, linguistic and non-linguistic aids can be employed. As suggested by Hatch (1978), linguistic simplifications can be made by means of:

a. slower rate and clearer articulation, which helps the acquirers to identify word boundaries more easily, and allows more processing time
b. more use of high frequency vocabulary, less slang, fewer idioms
c. syntactic simplification, shorter sentences.

Linguistic simplification can also be made through the use of caretaker speech, foreigner-talk, and teacher-talk (see for example Long 1981; 1983; Krashen, 1987; Ellis, 1994; Wesche, 1994). However, Krashen (1987) proposes that a teacher does not need to consciously plan to simplify the language. Rather he or she is to adjust the input automatically when presenting the language. A teacher's task is to make himself or herself understood. When the messages are successfully conveyed, the input is comprehensible. The teacher can check the learner's understanding by using various means such as comprehension check questions and observing the student's verbal and non-verbal responses.

It should be noted, however, that linguistic simplifications are criticised for a number of reasons. In reviewing the disadvantages of linguistic simplification, Yano, Long and Ross (1994), for instance, argue that such modifications, among others, frequently result in 'choppy and unnatural discourse models' and do not always assist comprehension. In addition, they assert that the omission of unfamiliar linguistic features from the passage, despite their potential of increasing comprehensibility, prevents the learners from accessing features they require to understand. Despite such criticisms, simplified input is an essential part of learning materials for second language learners of beginning and intermediate levels; authentic texts are too demanding for such learners as they generally contain too many new words that the learners are not familiar with (Nation and Deweerdt, 2001).

An alternative to aid comprehensibility is through elaborative text modification (e.g. Ellis, 1994; Yano, Long and Ross, 1994; Oh, 2001). This technique is derived from conversational adjustments made by a native speaker when conversing with a nonnative speaker (of low proficiency). The native speaker elaborates the text and keeps much of the text's lexical and syntactic complexity. Text elaboration is attempted through content and

structural clarification (e.g. through greater topic saliency and use of topic-comment, rather than subject-predicate constructions) and through the provision of redundancy (e.g. through the use of repetition, paraphrase, and the retention of full noun phrases that would be unnecessary for a competent native speaker reader).

Non-linguistic tools can also be used to aid comprehension. These tools include objects, pictures and the student's knowledge of the world. The use of objects and pictures is similar to the use of "here and now" in encouraging first language acquisition. The presence of objects and pictures helps the acquirer understand messages containing language (e.g. structures and vocabulary) that is a little beyond the current level of proficiency. With regard to background knowledge, it is believed that input containing subjects in which the learner has some background knowledge or expertise is easier to understand than input presenting a topic of which the learner does not have any prior knowledge (Siegler, 1986).

Interesting and/or relevant input is that which meets the learner's academic and social background, needs, and interests. The learner's background knowledge and interest can aid input comprehensibility (e.g. Carell and Wise, 1998). Pattern drills and dialogues for memorization are not interesting and relevant despite their potential comprehensibility (Krashen, 1987). In an effort to provide interesting and relevant input, a teacher may need to do needs analysis.

As discussed later, however, relying on comprehensible input alone is not sufficient; second language learning processes in formal classrooms require comprehensible output and explicit instruction of form.

While admitting that non-interactive input such as modified input and context can aid comprehensibility and SLA, Long (1981; 1983; 1985) emphasizes the significance of interactional modifications that are made for meaning negotiations during the interaction, especially when communication breakdowns occur. Long (1981) proposes that "participation in conversation with native speakers, made possible through the modification of interaction, is the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA" (p. 275). Long (1983) states that by participating in conversations that involve interactional modifications, learners get the input they need for acquisition. In her review of studies of negotiated interaction, Pica (1994) indicates that interaction promotes conditions and processes that are necessary in SLA. Pica further writes that learners may notice linguistic features through the utterances that are paraphrased, repeated, and reorganised to assist comprehension. Foster (1998) also notes that it is generally believed that involving learners in interaction helps them learn the target language since interaction provides the learners with the opportunity to produce the target language, manipulate and modify their speech, and negotiate for meaning. By participating in interactions, learners get comprehensible input and produce comprehensible output.

In a study of input, interaction and SLA, Mackey (1999) shows that active participation in interaction promotes grammatical development and thus she stresses the importance of involving learners in interaction participation. Pica, Porter, Paninos and Linnell (1996) report that interaction among L2 learners can provide limited modified input, modified output, and opportunities for feedback. (But note that Foster (1998: 1) finds that 'negotiating for meaning is not a strategy that language learners are predisposed to employ when they encounter gaps in their understanding').

Given the role of comprehensible input in SLA, *exposure to comprehensible input is essential in language instruction (principle 2)*. Further, the importance of interactions means that *learning tasks facilitating learners to engage in interactions are crucial (principle 3)*.

3. The role of output

In addition to investigating the role of comprehensible input in acquisition, there have been a number of studies researching the effects of output in acquisition. While Krashen (1987) claims that acquisition has resulted from comprehensible input, Swain (1985, 1993) proposes that when L2 learners produce the TL, they will on occasion become aware of a linguistic problem (see also Swain and Lapkin, 1995). This awareness will push them to modify their output to be more target-like. She further states that one of the functions of output (both oral and written) in second language learning might be to make the learner move from the semantic processing prevalent in comprehension to the syntactic processing needed for production. Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) also suggest that pushing learners to modify their output results in the increased ability to deploy existing grammatical knowledge more accurately. Results of studies by Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara, and Fearnow (1999) and Izumi and Bigelow (2000) indicate that the learners' use of grammatical items can be improved by having the learners produce the target language.

Awareness of the inadequacy of comprehensible input as the condition for complete acquisition has resulted from findings in immersion programs. Despite their high level of fluency, immersion students cannot produce highly accurate language in their speaking and writing. Students can express their ideas, and their utterances can be understood by others, but their accuracy is not that of a native speaker. The students' productive language accuracy seems not to develop further to native-like proficiency (Swain and Lapkin, 1995; Kowal and Swain, 1997). Thus, in addition to being exposed to comprehensible input, *learners need to be encouraged to produce the target language (principle 4) as producing the target language facilitates learning*. However, it should be noted that *although language production may be encouraged from the early stage in the learning process* (see for example Marton, 1988), *it is reasonable to allow a silent period (principle 5)*. As observed in the early stages (see for example Saville-Troike, 1988), particularly in an untutored L2 learning process, learners, especially children, experience a *silent period* where they do not produce the target language to express themselves. However, they do learn the language through the language they are exposed to for real communication (Dunn, 1994). Accordingly, at this stage learners need to be exposed to comprehensible input and this should be facilitated with comprehension activities and/or tasks requiring no or minimum language production.

4. Focus on form

With the birth of the Communicative Approach to language teaching, and more recently with the advent of task-based language instruction, explicit grammar instruction has tended to be minimized, if not avoided. One of the arguments has been that learners are able to acquire the language through the communicative activities they perform. Another argument from Krashen (1987), as discussed earlier, asserts that acquisition will automatically occur provided the learner is exposed to sufficient comprehensible input. In fact, in discussing the place of grammar, Krashen argues that consciously learned grammar learning will never become acquired knowledge (acquisition) which is responsible for fluency. He claims that learned grammar will only function as a 'monitor' that edits the

language produced by the learner. Further he states that conscious grammar learning will only be part of 'language appreciation' (linguistics study). Thus, grammar should be learnt subconsciously through the learner's attempts in understanding comprehensible input (Krashen, 1987).

Other research suggests that there is a natural order of acquisition (see, e.g. Dulay and Burt, 1974; Larsen-Freeman, 1976). Grammar instruction is likely to be useless unless the grammatical item that is taught is the one that will be acquired next according to the natural order. In addition, instruction may only be helpful in item learning (i.e. the learning of separate and discrete linguistic rules), and not useful in system learning (i.e. the learning of the abstract rules governing the use of language rules) (Ellis, 1994).

Recently, however, the avoidance of explicit grammar instruction has been reassessed (see, e.g. Schmidt, 1990; Fotos and Ellis, 1991; Ellis, 1995; 1998; Skehan, 1996; Williams and Doughty, 1998; Helen, 1999; Richards, 1999; Williams, 1999). Schmidt's (1990) 'noticing hypothesis', for instance, proposes that consciousness, in the sense of awareness of specific forms in the input in the level of noticing (conscious attention), is necessary for language learning to take place. This hypothesis lends support to a number of findings such as that of Leow (1997) which shows that more awareness of form leads to more recognition and accurate written production of the noticed forms. Williams (1999), citing Long (1996) states that:

> … instruction that includes focus on form has at least two advantages over purely meaning-focused instruction: It can increase the salience of positive evidence, and it can provide often essential negative evidence, in the form of direct or indirect negative feedback (p. 584).

Recent research also suggests that the integration of a focus on form in second language classroom that emphasise meaning and communication is of help in second language acquisition (see Doughty and Williams, 1998). As noted earlier, evidence from immersion programs suggests that despite the high level of fluency, the students' accuracy is not that of a native speaker (Swain and Lapkin, 1995; Kowal and Swain, 1997), and thus focus on form is necessary to improve their accuracy.

In sum, *focus on form is necessary in second language instruction (principle 6)*. Grammar is an important language element that enables the learners to understand and express themselves in both spoken and written language. Hence, grammar needs to be presented systematically. However, focus on form should be incorporated with learning activities requiring the learners to communicate meaning in the four language skills (e.g. Long, 1991).

5. Individual differences

Individual differences in SLA have been discussed to a considerable degree (e.g. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982; Singleton, 1989; Skehan, 1989; Harley, Howard, and Hart, 1995; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow, 2000). Studies in this area have investigated issues such as language aptitude, age, personality, learning strategies, affective state, and attitude and motivation in its relations to SLA.

a. Language aptitude

Language aptitude is one of the most important factors determining L2 learning success (see, e.g. Skehan, 1989; Spolsky, 1989; Cook, 1991). There is a positive correlation between language aptitude and L2 learning success. In other words, those with more language aptitude learn faster than those with less language aptitude. For example, learners who have a higher sound discriminating ability and better memory may be able to learn L2 more successfully than those who possess a lower ability and memory (Spolsky, 1989). However, it is suggested that learners both with and without aptitude can successfully learn L2 when enough time is allocated. As Skehan (1989) notes, aptitude should be defined "in terms of *rate* of learning, and *not* in terms of some people being incapable of successful foreign language study" (p. 40).

One of the teaching and learning implications is that, according to their aptitude, students may be grouped into fast and slow groups (Cook, 1991). However, this suggestion is impractical because educational institutions such as public schools generally do not group students on the basis of language aptitude. In terms of language aptitude, a class is generally heterogeneous. Every class tends to have some learners who have high language aptitude, some who possess average aptitude, and others who have lower aptitude. It means that the students do not learn at the same pace; some students learn fast and some others learn slowly. This leads to a principle that *L2 teaching and learning pace should be made flexible for both learners with higher and lower language aptitude (principle 7).*

b. Personality

In terms of personality, some learners are extrovert and others are introvert (Skehan, 1989). An extrovert person may be described as one who:

> is sociable, like parties, has many friends, needs to have people to talk to, and does not like studying by himself. He craves excitement, takes chances, often sticks his neck out, acts on the spur of the moment, and is generally an impulsive individual. He ... always has a ready answer, and generally likes change ... (Eysenck, 1965 in Skehan, 1989, p. 100).

On the other hand, an introvert person is one who:

> is a quiet, retiring sort of person, introspective, fond of books rather than people; he is reserved and distant, except with intimate friends. He tends to plan ahead ... and distrusts the impulse of the moment. He does not like excitement, takes matters of everyday life with seriousness, and likes well ordered mode of life ... (Eysenck, 1965 in Skehan, 1989, p. 100).

It is hypothesized that extroverts will learn basic interpersonal communication skills better than introverts as extroverted learners, with their sociability, tend to practise, get more input, and attain better speaking skills, and that introverts will do better in developing their cognitive academic language ability than extroverts as introverted learners prefer to learn through reading and writing (see Ellis, 1994). While there is some evidence supporting the notion that extroversion has a positive correlation with the acquisition of basic interpersonal communication skill, there is no straightforward evidence indicating that introversion is related to the attainment of cognitive academic language ability (see Cook, 1991; Ellis, 1994). Some studies have failed to show that there is a positive relationship between personality and learning achievement (see

Skehan, 1989). What is commonly suggested is that extroverts like activities involving group work, while introverts prefer learning activities involving individual work (Cook, 1991). Extroverts and introverts can both learn L2 successfully provided the learning tasks are compatible with their personalities (Gass and Selinker, 1994). As classes generally consist of extrovert and introvert learners, tasks suitable for both should be used. In other words, *language learning tasks should be varied to cater for the needs of both extrovert and introvert learners (principle 8).* Thus there need to be balanced deployments between tasks requiring learners to work and interact in groups and tasks that have them work individually.

c. Learning strategies

Studies of learning strategies have generally described the different kinds of learning strategy within various theoretical frameworks (see Skehan, 1989; Cook, 1991; Towell and Hawkins, 1994). O'Malley and Chamot (1990), for instance classify learning strategies into three categories: metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. However, the studies have not been able to explain clearly the influence of particular strategies on acquisition (Towell and Hawkins, 1994). One of the most important conclusions of learner strategy studies might be the identification of the strategies employed by 'good' language learners as follows.

1) Good language learners attend to form and monitor their and other's speech.
2) Good language learners attend to meaning.
3) Good language learners show active involvement in language learning.
4) Good language learners are aware of the learning process.
5) Good language learners make use of metacognitive knowledge to help them assess their needs, evaluate progress, and give direction to their learning (Ellis, 1994).

In addition, effective learners employ different kinds of strategies in their learning, and are able to select the appropriate ones for particular tasks (Chamot, Kupper, and Impink-Hernandez, 1988).

Given the characteristics of good language learners, *learning tasks should encourage learners to attend to both meaning and form and be varied in order to accommodate learners with different learning strategy preferences (principle 9).*

d. Affective state

Earlier it was discussed that comprehensible input is vital for acquisition. However, according to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, comprehensible input will not be processed if the input is obstructed by affective filters such as low self confidence and anxiety (Krashen, 1987). Despite criticisms (for example McLaughlin, 1987), some evidence supports this claim. A number of studies indicate that there is a negative correlation between anxiety and learning achievement (see Krashen, 1987; Skehan, 1989; Spolsky, 1989). However, Spielberger (1966 cited in Skehan, 1989) finds that with learners with high ability, anxiety facilitates their achievement; it is with learners whose ability is average or low that anxiety tends to interfere with achievement.

Anxiety may be categorized into three types: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety refers to a more permanent predisposition to be anxious and is viewed as an aspect of personality. State anxiety refers to a fear that is

experienced at a particular moment in time in response to a definite situation. Situation-specific anxiety is that which is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examinations, or class participation (see Ellis, 1994). It is the situation-specific anxiety that is most related to teaching and learning practice. Reviewing several studies of anxiety in language learning, Ellis (1994) conclude that situational anxiety in the learning process may appear in various situations such as the following:

1) when the learners compete with one another
2) when the learners find themselves less proficient than others
3) when the teacher asks questions
4) when learners face tests
5) when learners experience culture shock.

This brief overview of affective state studies suggests that in order to be effective, *a teaching and learning process should minimize learner anxiety (principle 10)*. The learning process is likely to occur more optimally when the classroom atmosphere is friendly, not intimidating. This could be achieved in many ways such as using more group work rather than individual work that may lead to competition, giving more successful learning experiences to learners through the use of tasks with suitable levels of difficulty, creating learning tasks that do not tend to test the learners, avoiding excessive negative comments, and anticipating culture shock.

e. Age

Studies of age in relation to second language acquisition have investigated issues such as the effects of age on the rate of learning, level of attainment, and the process of learning. Research in this area has resulted in a number of inconclusive findings, many of which are contradictory, with several hypotheses such as the notion that children are better L2 learners than adults (see Singleton, 1989; Cook, 1991; Ellis, 1994). Reviews of research findings on age and language acquisition indicate that:

1) Adult learners learn faster at the initial stage (Krashen, 1987; Singleton, 1989; Cook, 1991; Ellis, 1994).
2) Older children acquire the target language faster than younger children, time and exposure held constant (Krashen, 1987).
3) In naturalistic contexts, learners who begin their learning in childhood in general eventually surpass those who start learning in adulthood (Krashen, 1987; Singleton, 1989; Cook, 1991).
4) Only child learners are likely to be capable of acquiring a native accent in naturalistic learning contexts (Ellis, 1994).
5) Children may be more likely to acquire a native grammatical competence. However, adults can also attain native levels of grammatical competence in speech and writing, and even full 'linguistic competence' (Ellis, 1994).
6) Children and adults manifest similar processes of learning especially in the acquisition of L2 grammar (Ellis, 1994).

One implication of the findings concerns the age at which it is best to start L2 learning. Swain (1981) suggests that as far as the majority language child is concerned, second language learning should be started as early as possible (also see Cook, 1991) for three main reasons. First, the children will get more opportunities to use the second language to communicate in real situations, which is an essential part of the promotion of basic

interpersonal skills in the second language. Second, despite early instruction, the children will not lose their first language because their first language is widely used in their environment. Third, children are usually more motivated than adolescent learners (Swain, 1981). In addition, with regard to input, starting learning earlier will tend to make the learners get more exposure to L2.

Although it appears that children and adults undergo similar processes in L2 acquisition (Ellis, 1994), they tend to have different learning preferences. Spolsky (1989) suggests that children prefer to learn in informal situations; thus they are likely to enjoy informal learning tasks. Children enjoy activities such as listen-and-do activities, story telling, singing, classifying objects, modelling, doing puzzles and games such as matching games, memory games, and hide and seek (Willis, 1996; Dunn, 1994). In addition, children enjoy drawing and colouring activities. Adolescents may prefer tasks that do not require public presentations such as role-play and simulations since these techniques can make them feel anxious. Adults may feel uneasy when they are asked to perform childish tasks (Cook, 1991). On the other hand, older learners may enjoy analysing the language, a task that may not be suitable for younger children.

Besides differences in activity preferences, young and adult learners also differ in terms of needs and suitability of subject matter. Concerning the subject matter, for example, 'here and now' objects and topics may be more suitable for children rather than adults. On the other hand, abstract issues are more appropriate for adult learners than children (Cook, 1991). Thus, with regard to age, *the choice of teaching and learning tasks and content (subject matter) should be based on learner age (principle 11),* as age differences entail differences in learning approach preferences, needs and topic relevance.

f. Motivation

Motivation is generally considered a very, if not the most, powerful drive in learning (Gardner, 1985; Harmer, 1991; Williams and Burden 1997). It is important to enable learners to continuously process input and practise using the language. It is only through willingness to process the input and use the target language that the learner will acquire it (Willis, 1996).

Williams and Burden (1997) define motivation as:

> a state of cognitive and emotional arousal which leads to a conscious decision to act and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals) (p. 120).

This definition suggests that in doing an activity, a person's motivation is initiated by some kind of arousal which may be generated by motives or influences coming from the person him or herself (internal motives) or outside the person (external factors). This motive drives the person to consciously make a decision to do an action in a particular manner in order to reach some goal(s). When the activity has been started, the person is required to sustain effort in order to attain the pre-determined goal(s) (Williams and Burden, 1997). In an interactive model of motivation, they present this interrelationship as follows.

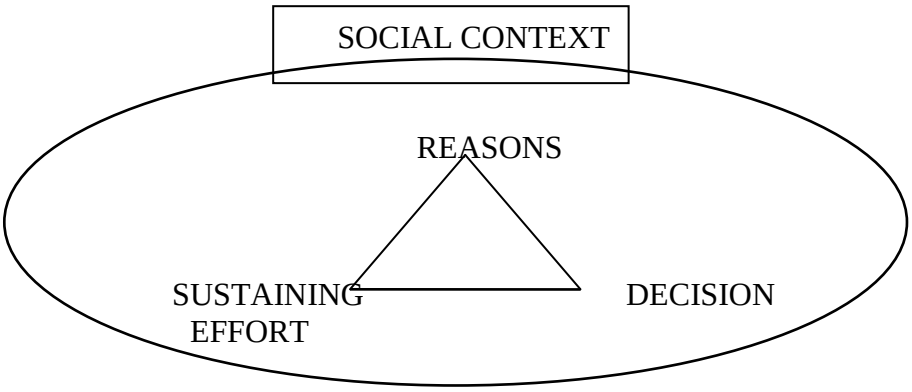

Figure 1: An interactive model of motivation (Williams and Burden, 1997, p. 122).

Motivation is a complex issue. It is not only a matter of creating interesting learning tasks. The presence of arousal, decision on whether to do an action and persistence in doing an activity for some goal(s) are not a simple matter; they are influenced by internal and external factors (Williams and Burden, 1997). Some of the internal factors include curiosity, personal relevance, attitude, confidence, developmental age and stage, and gender. The external factors include both immediate contexts such as classroom, school and home, and wider contexts like cultural, social, educational and political contexts. These internal and external aspects together influence the learner's attitude towards the L2 and L2 learning. For example, when the society and the government have a positive attitude towards English, such as by considering that this language plays significant roles in social, educational, economic and political lives, L2 learners in that context are likely to develop a positive attitude which will foster motivation (see also Spolsky, 1989).

Considering the significant roles that motivation plays in L2 learning, *efforts should be made in order to arouse and maintain learner's learning motivation (principle 12).* The question is how can motivation be aroused and maintained?

Studies indicate that both integrative motivation (which involves an interest in learning an L2 due to a personal interest in the target language community and culture) and instrumental motivation (which involves an interest in learning an L2 in order to achieve a particular goal such as finding a good job, developing one's business and studying abroad) can lead to successful L2 learning (see Spolsky, 1989; Cook, 1991; Ellis, 1994). While motivation may be seen as the cause of learning achievement (for example Gardner, 1985), some studies suggest that the learner's motivation can be caused by learning achievement (Hermann, 1980; Strong, 1984). In other words, better learning achievement or learning success leads to stronger learning motivation. On the other hand, a learning failure can lower motivation. As Siegler (1986) states,

People and other animals, when given a series of unsolvable problems, tend to react by giving up (p. 377).

This leads to the existence of resultative motivation, i.e. motivation that emerges as a result of success in learning. Accordingly, it is essential that achievable learning objectives be set up in order to raise and maintain learning motivation. Learning tasks with objectives that are too demanding may discourage and frustrate learners.

6. Conclusion

The literature review on learner language, the roles of input, output, and explicit grammar instruction as well as the significance of individual differences has suggested a number of teaching and learning principles to consider in developing sound second/foreign language instruction. The principles are as follows:

a. Making errors is natural and is considered as a part of the process in acquiring the target language.
b. Exposure to comprehensible input is crucial.
c. Learning tasks facilitating learners to engage in interactions are essential.
d. Learners need to be encouraged to produce the target language as producing the target language facilitates learning.
e. Although language production may be encouraged from the early stage in the learning process, it is reasonable to allow a silent period.
f. Focus on form is necessary.
g. Second language teaching and learning pace should be made reasonable for both learners with higher and lower aptitude.
h. Language learning tasks should be varied to cater for the needs for both extrovert and introvert learners.
i. Learning tasks should encourage learners to attend to both meaning and form and be varied in order to accommodate learners with different learning strategy preferences.
j. Teaching and learning processes should foster motivation and minimize learner anxiety.
k. The choice of teaching and learning tasks and content (subject matter) should be based on learner age.
l. Learning tasks should arouse and maintain learners' learning motivation.

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