# REVIEW ARTICLE

# ENHANCING SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION WIELDING SMART CLASS ROOM TECHNIQUES IN KERALA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## *Manju, P.K.

Asst Professor in English Education, Arafa Institute for Teacher Education, Attur

**ABSTRACT**

English language has emerged as the most sought after second language in the world. Mother tongue is learnt quite automatically, whereas a second language is learnt consciously. Learning a second language is a painful process and it requires a lot of practice. A second language is learnt, mainly to use the target language in the society. As stated in the theories on language acquisition by Noamchomsky and Stephen Krashen, second language acquisition demands a comprehensible input for its proficiency. The advent of Smart classrooms in schools of Kerala laid the foundation for an easy and interesting way for second language learning. Conscious and legitimate use of technology can create an acquisition rich environment in the English classroom, boosting up the sensory experiences of the learners. This paper intends to explore the enormous application of technology in enhancing second language acquisition.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is the most important phenomenon in the world. From birth to death, all our activities are regulated by language. The human knowledge and culture is stored and transmitted in language. Language is a skill subject and hence it can be acquired only through constant practice. Second language is not easy to learn like the first language, it needs additional training and practice and also it has so many obstacles to overcome. On learning a second language, the learners should be able to use the language in his life situations. English has a wide spread prestigious status in our society and has been selected as the second language in the state. English education was deep-rooted in Kerala since the first half of nineteenth century. During the colonial period, medium of instruction in most of the schools was English especially in schools started by Missionaries. English language acquisition in Kerala has faced a number of problems in classrooms due to the lack of a proper environment. The amount of exposure to the target language is extremely an important element in second language acquisition. Almost any second language learner who is provided with sufficient exposure to the target language will outperform.

*Corresponding author:* **Manju, P.K.,**
Asst Professor in English Education, Arafa Institute for Teacher Education, Attur.

The emergence of Smart classrooms acts as a very innovative and powerful support for language acquisition. It supports the second language teaching process in many ways: it helps the presentation of new linguistic and cultural elements; it supports interaction with the class; and it promotes the teacher's organizational skills. The classrooms can be made an acquisition rich environment with the assistance of modern technology oriented smart classrooms. Interesting activities for enhancing language skills are abundantly available. Also visual media provides easiness in relating the new language items with real life experiences. The paper examines and explains the following topics;

- Second language acquisition
- Obstacles in Second language acquisition
- Major Theories on second language acquisition
- Incorporating the theories in a Smart Class Room
- Smart class rooms in Kerala

**Second Language Acquisition:** Acquisition is a subconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language while learning is a conscious process that students are aware of and what is expected of them. First language is the language a child acquires from his/her birth through the interaction with his/her family, surroundings and culture; whereas a second language is the language that is learned in addition to our

mother tongue. The child practices the mother tongue without much consciousness but a second language is learnt deliberately. Many people are unconsciously involved in making a child learn his mother tongue. Since natural resources are not much available in the case of learning a second language, classrooms should take its full role in giving opportunities to develop proficiency in developing a second language.

***The six stages of second-language acquisition:*** The six stages of second language acquisition can be ordered as follows;

- **Pre-production:** This is also called "the silent period," when the student takes in the  new language but does not speak it. This period often lasts six weeks or longer, depending on the individual.
- **Early production:** The individual begins to speak using short words and sentences,  but  the emphasis is still on listening and absorbing the new language. There will be many errors in the early production stage.
- **Speech Emergence:** Speech becomes more frequent, words and sentences are longer,  but the individual still relies heavily on context clues and familiar topics. Vocabulary continues to increase and errors begin to decrease, especially in common or repeated interactions.
- **Beginning Fluency:** Speech is fairly fluent in social situations with minimal errors. New contexts and academic language are challenging and the individual will struggle to express  themselves due to gaps in vocabulary and appropriate phrases.
- **Intermediate Fluency:** Communicating in the second language is fluent, especially in social language situations. The individual is able to speak almost fluently in new situations or in academic areas, but there will be gaps in vocabulary knowledge and some unknown expressions. There are very few errors, and the individual is able to demonstrate higher order thinking skills in the second language such as offering an opinion or analyzing a problem.
- **Advanced Fluency:** The individual communicates fluently in all contexts and can maneuver successfully in new contexts and when exposed to new academic information. At this stage, the individual may still have an accent and use idiomatic expressions incorrectly at times, but the individual is essentially fluent  and comfortable communicating in the second language.

**Obstacles in Second language acquisition:**  A great threat to second language learning is the pull of mother tongue. The situation in learning a second language is different from that of learning a mother tongue. He is tossed between the verbal signaling system of both mother tongue and the second language. A child who is always accustomed of hearing his/her mother tongue will be much disturbed by its influence upon second language learning. Opportunity for free expression in the target language is minimum and when chances come pronouncing in second language becomes a tedious task. Constant and sustained practice alone can help the learner of second language to some extent. The teacher has to feel the importance of situations to learn English as a second language and accordingly design the activities that can develop language skills in the students.

**Major Theories on Second Language Acquisition:** Nativist theory explores the linguistic aspects of language acquisition and provides an answer to the question of how people acquire a second language. In 1965, Noam Chomsky, a pioneering linguist, proposed the Universal Grammar theory which states that all people have an innate, biological ability to acquire a language. He theorized that people possess a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), a sort neurological wiring that, regardless of the language to be acquired, holds the fundamental rules for language. It allows a child to listen to a language, decipher the rules of that language, and begin using the language at a very young age. Chomsky suggests that, if provided with the correct input, the LAD predisposes all people to the acquisition of a second language in basically the same manner as they acquired their native language. Language acquisition is the growth of the mental organ of language triggered by certain language experiences. To acquire language, the child needs not only Universal Grammar but also an acquisition rich environment. Hence Language teaching should explore the possibility of providing triggering evidence. Chomsky himself wrote that 'we should probably try to create a rich linguistic environment for the intuitive heuristics that the normal human being automatically possesses' (Chomsky 1968).

Stephen Krashen, another expert in the field of linguistics developed the Monitor Theory based on Chomsky's concept of LAD. Krashen's theory has been widely known and had a large impact in all areas of second language research and teaching since the 1980s. Krashen proposes that children need comprehensible input to activate the LAD and begin acquisition of a second language. Language Acquisition Device present in every child becomes activated when the child attends to language input. Real conversational contexts provide meaningful practice. The Monitor Theory is composed of four hypotheses that provide a framework for teaching a second language. They are as follows;

- The Input Hypothesis
- The Natural Order Hypothesis
- The Affective Filter Hypothesis, and
- The Acquisition vs. Learning Hypothesis

Chomsky's theory was based mostly on innate knowledge. Krashen's hypothesis were based more on social factors, such as the input  and a natural order independent of the learner's age and  mother tongue background. Even though Chomsky and Krashen viewed second language acquisition from different points of view, both of them equally highlights the need of a comprehensible input for language acquisition.

**Incorporating the Theories in a Smart Class Room:** Second language teaching has always been an arduous task since natural resources are not much available to the learners as in first language acquisition. The need of a comprehensible input thus becomes very essential for Second language teaching. The input may be written or heard language that can be understood by a second language teacher. The input becomes comprehensible when teacher employs certain interesting approaches in language teaching. The smart classrooms available at present in many of the Kerala schools provide an easy way in its implementation. By enabling students to match what they hear to what they see and experience, teachers can ensure that students have access to meaning. Experiential, hands-on activities and contextualized practice of language

skills make input comprehensible. This can be made possible making use of interactional learning strategies and visiting various websites through smart classes.

Smart classrooms support the teaching process of Second language in many ways.

- It helps the presentation of new linguistic and cultural elements in an easy and interesting manner. The instructor can make use of the varied writing features; to overwrite, underline, highlight or circle the elements he wants the students to focus on. The instructor can not only project a web site, he also can overwrite it to emphasize linguistic elements (vocabulary, idioms, structures etc).
- It supports interaction within the class, the projection makes it easier to start a conversation on a topic since it allows a group to watch a document at the same time and focus on the same point of the classroom.
- It is also possible to have students' present projects on SMART Board. They are able to present and speak about the subject without having to concentrate on the mouse. Pictures and text are shown without delay with a simple finger touch on the board to support what they have to say. This places oral production in the target language in the foreground.
- It promotes the teacher's organizational skills. Presented to the whole class, a web document enhances oral interaction in the classroom and opinions or ideas will be exchanged. Teachers can show pictures or visuals to accompany new vocabulary words and communicative concepts. Listening to rhythms and music and physically acting out situations make a lesson more comprehensible and memorable.
- Proper language habits are formed through practicing accurate sentence patterns and memorizing dialogues.
- It also provides personally meaningful contexts for language learners to study in an environment in which they can practice new acquired language skills.

This magic board brings true excitement in the classroom. Many studies show how much this excitement and positive attitude is important for learning.

**Smart Classrooms in Kerala:** KITE (Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education) is a Govt of Kerala establishment set up to foster, promote and implement modernization of educational institutions in the State of Kerala, owned by the State or run under the aid of Government. KITE is registered as a Section 8 Company, by transforming the erstwhile IT@ School Project, which revolutionsed the education system of the State. The spectrum of KITE include Information & Communication Technology, Capacity Building, Content Development, Connectivity, e-Learning, Satellite based education, Support and Maintenance mechanism, e-Governance or other related activities. KITE has covered three-fourths of the Hi-Tech School project creating 33,775 smart classrooms. All classrooms of 2,967 schools now have a laptop, ceiling-mounted multimedia projector, projection screen / painted wall and sound system. They also have broadband connectivity and access to Samagra resource portal. KITE aims to upgrade the Government sector educational institutions at par with international standards in terms of infrastructure, facilities, resources, curriculum, pedagogy, etc.

It also aims to formulate and implement projects for the use of ICT as a tool for the improvement of the education quality in the State of Kerala. 'Samagra' e-Resource Portal is an online learning platform developed by KITE and SCERT under the Public Education Rejuvenation Mission of the State Govt. This is to enrich the Hi-Tech school project with the right content along with ICT equipments and trained teachers. Samagra is a repository of digital resources of all subjects from Class 1 to 12 covering syllabus based teaching resources in the form of videos, animations, audios, stimulations, interactive contents, pictures etc. The scope of SAMAGRA is vast as it serves as a complete online learning management system beneficial for students, teachers, public and academicians. E-Resources available in SAMAGRA can be downloaded from anywhere and also it provides e-texts of all subjects. It also enables specific forums for teachers to carry out discussions to clarify their doubts. 'Little KITEs' IT Clubs, SchoolWiki are some other features developed by KITE to provide rich learning experiences to students.

### Suggestions and Conclusion

English plays a very major role in our educational system. It is taught as a compulsory subject in almost all the states in the country. Learning a foreign language as a second language is much difficult. Language teaching method incorporating techniques available in a smart class room setting avoids undue stress in any particular aspect of learning. Any such undue stress would result in neglect of several important aspects of learning. The pace of learning today has exponentially increased with the multimedia in education. Technology is more handy to the English teachers than other subject teachers. The use of it would help transform the process of teaching and learning from the traditional instructional teacher-centred endeavour to a learner-centred approach. Therefore, teachers need to equip and acquaint themselves to the use of technology for pedagogical practices which would lead to improved efficiency. Proper use of smart classrooms would definitely bring a drastic change in English language use of upcoming generation. English will open up new vistas of knowledge and that will give them all prosperity.

### REFERENCES

Chomsky, N. 1968. 'Noam Chomsky and Stuart Hampshire discuss the study of language.' *The Listener* 79/2044:687-91.Retrievedfrom http://www.viviancook.uk/Writings/Papers/AL85.htm

Cook, V.J. 2010. *Chomsky's Universal Grammar and Second Language Learning.* Retrieved from https://wenku.baidu.com/view/01df7e95dd88d0d233d46a30.html

Escamilla, Kathy. 2014. *A Brief Description of Second Language Acquisition,* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242579123.

Gerard, Fabienne; Greene, Martina; Widener, Jamey.(1999). *Using SMART Board in Foreign Language Classes.* Retrieved from https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/8223

Heidelberg, Verlag Berlin. 2011. *Integrating Smart Classroom and Language Services,* Chapter 17; Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226670668

Krashen, S. (Ed.). 2009. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* Retrieved from

http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles and practice.pdf.

Krashen, Stephen. 1988. *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Prentice-Hall International

Rafeeque Ahmed. 2015. A study on English Aquisition in Kerala Primary schools; Present Scenario; Issues & Concerns. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275212352

Repová, K. 2004. *Testing Krashen's Input Hypothesis: A Case Study in a Male Czech Adult Acquiring English*. Retrieved from is.muni.cz/th/14768/ff_m/text.pdf Putnam, H. (n.d.).

Sureshkumar, N. 2002. "Evolving a new english language acquisition programme at primary level - A cognitive interactionist approach" Thesis. Department of English, University of Calicut.

Yang Hong. "*On teaching strategies in second language acquisition*", Jan. 2008, Volume 5, No.1 (Serial No.38) US-China Education Review, ISSN1548-6613, USA

*******