

Importance of Second Language: Formal and Informal Ways of Learning

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Abstract

Communication is the two-way process of reaching common understanding. In this process, the participants exchange not only information, ideas, feelings and news but also, they create and share meaning. The channel of communication can be visual and aural. Human communication is distinctive in its extensive use of abstract language. Human language can be referred as a set of grammar rules. Thus, language plays an important role in communication. Learning a language normally occurs during human childhood. Thousands of human languages use shapes of sound and gestures for symbols which empower communication with others around them. Language is a human system of communications which uses arbitrary signals include voice sounds, gestures, and written symbols. The study of language is known as linguistics. The language that it being used by a person as his first or native language is known as L1 and the language that is used as other than native language referred as second language or foreign language (L2). The native language is a language that a person has been exposed from birth. In contrast, the second language is any language that a person speaks other than one's first language. Since the child is being exposed to first language from birth, it acquires the first language very fast and easy and it doesn't need any methods and approaches to learn. Learning a second language deals recognized benefits for intelligence, memory, and concentration. Acquiring a language has two different methods: formal and informal. Students who don't use English as their first language are known as English language learners or ELL students. Formal way of learning can lead the students to progress their learning in a more disciplined way. Formal teaching could take place within the classroom in the fixed location. Informal learning being away from set objectives which will lead to nice and relaxed. One learns from his experience in informal learning. Different people respond in different ways to the two methods of learning a second language. What method works for one person, may not work for another person. Whatever it may be, it is considered to be an important factor to acquire a second language formally or informally. In today's world, the ability to communicate in a second language is becoming an essential skill.

Keywords: Second Language, Formal, Informal, Learning

Communication is the two-way process of reaching common understanding. In this process, the participants exchange not only information, ideas, feelings and news but also they create and share meaning. In general, Communication is a means of transferring one's ideas and thoughts to others and connecting people or places. Any kind of transaction and task which require more than one person can complete successfully only with communication. It would be impossible to pass a day without the use of communication. The person who is sending the message is known as the sender and the one who is receiving the information is called as the receiver.

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Language is a common way human beings communicate. It is an essential part in every aspect of our everyday lives. Only human beings use language to transfer one meaning to others whereas many other animals communicate in various other ways. Language is a human system of communications which uses arbitrary signals include voice sounds, gestures, and written symbols. The study of language is known as linguistics. "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols" (Sapir). People use language to tell the people of what one feels and desires and understands. They communicate effectively with words, gestures and tone of voice in a different situation.

The evolution of language starts even from the time of Adam. As soon as the child comes into the world, the penurious thing for the child is the language to communicate. The child can connect himself with the people only through language. Thus language is the most effective source of communication in everyday lives. It is playing a very good role in the evolution of human culture and civilization. The language that it being used by a person as his first or native language is known as L1 and the language that is used as other than native language referred as second language or foreign language (L2). The term "second language" is used to refer to the level of language command in comparison with a primary or dominant language. In this sense, 'second language' indicates a lower level of actual or believed proficiency. Hence 'second' means also 'weaker' or 'secondary'" (Stern).

The native language is a language that a person has been exposed from birth. In contrast, the second language is any language that a person speaks other than one's first language. Since the child is being exposed to first language from birth, it acquires the first language very fast and easy and it doesn't need any methods and approaches to learn. Because the people who are with the child, speak the native language so the child learns the language without any effort. But learning a second language is considered to be a herculean task because the language is completely unexplored by the child. So second language needs

special attention to learn it properly. A second language can be acquired at any time after a child has developed language skills and knowledge. A second language can be often called as target language. The second language can be introduced in part of the school curriculum. The acquisition of second language describes the process of understanding, speaking and writing another language fluently. A young child can learn a second language much faster than an adult can learn the same language.

Learning a second language deals recognized benefits for intelligence, memory, and concentration. Attention to listening comprehension and building a receptive and active vocabulary is essential. It is well known fact that learning another language is the most effective and practical ways to increase intelligence and keep the mind sharp. Second language learning is concerned

With the process and study how people acquire a second language, which is often referred to as L2 or target language, as opposed to L1 (the native language)... the term second language in this context can refer to any language learned in addition to the native language. (Seel 2980)

English as a second language (ESL) is referred as a traditional term for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers. It needs different and special approach to teach English for those whose primary language is not English. English is the global language and it is the second most spoken language in the world. It has become a media for connecting oneself with international communication channels and passing through information highways. Teaching and learning of English has taken a stable place in the education system. The most attractive feature in learning English as a second language is that many educational institutions provide chance to live in an English speaking country as students study. This method is the fastest and effective for learning any foreign languages.

In world, English is not just a language rather it turns as an obligatory resource for the countries. Because it claims as an international language and provides a common means of expressing views and uttering the voices of the people all over the world. The greatest problem in our country is unemployment. Many educated youths are unemployed because they are not fit for challenging in international job market in this concern is lack of proficiency in English. On the other hand, those who have the proper knowledge and skills in English language, can easily compete and move throughout the world and sustain a suitable job. The modern age is considered to be the age of science and technology. All the jargons, technological and scientific terms and versions are almost in English. So those who have less knowledge in English, they tend to have less knowledge in science and technology. So people should acquire English as their second language to communicate with the people of different languages and to gain knowledge in all the recognized fields.

Acquiring a language has two different methods: formal and informal. Students who don't use English as their first language are known as English language learners or ELL students. Their inability to communicate and understand English can hold back their learning. Teachers of ELL students have a main

goal as to provide instruction in English, so that they can become proficient and well-versed in English. The formal language instruction for ELL students includes: well established and constant schedule of ELL classroom, specific goals, norms and objectives for learning which is usually set by the teachers and time spent outside the classroom with an ELL teacher. The ELL teachers are expected to support the students in the classroom and help them to accommodate comfortably in learning.

The English language learners often receive formal support in school where they learn to speak, read and write in English. But they also learn English from other sources like friends, media, newspaper, hearing conversations in public or any other informal opportunities. Learning a language informally is not structured like one has in formal learning, informal way of learning a second language didn't have any specific goals, objectives, norms, rules and structure. Informal language learning is more stress-free and concentrated on the student experiencing the language in its context, but that doesn't mean it happens only outside the classroom. The informal learning can happen even inside the classroom. For example, the child may understand the phrase 'clap your hands' by seeing other students clapping their hands in response to the command.

The ELL students sit in their classrooms and working through exercises and learning the language formally and they also extend their learning at home and with friends, the informal way. Both the approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages. Formal language learning is highly comprehensive and structured while informal language learning is more enjoyable and flexible. Which method is very effective and appropriate has been long debated among teachers.

Formal way of learning can lead the students to progress their learning in a more disciplined way. Formal teaching could take place within the classroom in the fixed location. Informal learning being away from set objectives which will lead to nice and relaxed. One learns from his experience in informal learning. Different people respond in different ways to the two methods of learning a second language. What method works for one person, may not work for another person. Whatever it may be, it is considered to be an important factor to acquire a second language formally or informally. In today's world, the ability to communicate in a second language is becoming an essential skill.

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Colophon

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