

## CONDITIONED AND UNCONDITIONED APPROACH: EXPLORING THE CREATIVITY OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN SECOND LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** This research explicates about the process of learning, acquiring, difference between learning and acquiring, role of parents, teachers and significance of atmosphere in the language learning process. This study also focuses on two different approaches of learning and how it helps an individual to learn and acquire knowledge both in language and psychological aspect,

- Conditioned approach or Conditioned learning
- Unconditioned approach or Unconditioned learning

Experiment is conducted and by examining the results produced by the group of forty five first year engineering students in a heterogeneous classroom. Several tasks were given but this research article explains only about three tasks, its objectives, approaches and its observational outcome as the result is highly witnessed in those tasks. This study postulates that the group which carried out without any learning conditions performed far better and produced excellent results than the group that learned with particular conditions in the process of learning second language (L2). It is certain that unconditioned approach serves better not only in language learning but also for all other aspects of learning.

**Keywords:** Learning, acquisition, second language acquisition (SLA), Role of parents and teachers in language learning, importance of atmosphere in learning process, restricted learning, performance-approach, performance-avoidance, conditioned and unconditioned learning

### LEARNING

Learning is an art that is essential for all human beings. By nature some possess that efficiently and others gain it by practice. The method of learning differs for every individual akin to their personality depending on their environment, psychological factors, parental care and atmosphere of school. Through learning one gets the psychological maturity and perceiving maturity. Thinking never happens if there is no process of learning. There won't be the any inventions and innovations if there is no process of thinking. Thinking improves the level of cognition. Cognitive evolution leads to exploration and revolution; learning fades away the ignorance. So, learning is the change in behavior and maturity level by the experience and knowledge one gained. We are what we learn. There are several types of learning as shown in the mind map below:

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Figure 1

## ACQUISITION

Acquisition and learning have not much difference as words, but there lies lot of difference as the process. Learning is a systematic process but acquisition is a natural process. A child acquires knowledge naturally irrespective of any conditioned system or syllabus unconsciously with the help of its subconscious mind. Noam Chomsky said that, “every child has a ‘language acquisition device’ or LAD which encodes the major principles of a language and its grammatical structures into child’s brain”. But learning is something that is systematized. Knowing the difference between learning and acquisition would help to comprehend this research.

Acquiring is the process that provokes an individual to learn, analyze and evaluate what their brain already structured about something. When a child is put in an atmosphere where it can hear two or more languages frequently it can acquire all the languages. But it is not necessary that the child would know the rules, grammar and system of that particular language. It is good to acquire and learn than learn and acquire.

## Difference Between Learning and Acquisition

Acquiring is the generalized process but learning is a particularized process. One need not know grammatical rules of language by the process of acquiring but one can know the systemized rules through the process of learning. Acquisition is unconditional (not conditioned) process and learning is the conditioned one. No

instructor is needed for the process of acquiring but the instructor is compulsory for the process of learning. The terms learning and acquisition are often confused and misunderstood that they are same, but it is actually not and there lies the thread of difference. However to master the language in all the four basic skills of the language (LSRW) both acquiring and learning is necessary.

## SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

To know what exactly the second language is, proficiency of the first language is required. First language is the language that is learned by the child immediately after they start speaking, hearing and listening. First language can be the mother tongue as well. The second language is the language that is learned by the child for the purpose to survive, communicate and to be one among the society. Knowledge of second language in terms of understanding the grammar, meaning and its usage solely depends on the competency of the first language. Second language is not only about learning but it is also about knowing another culture. Second language learning is very important for one to get good job, to be one among the society and to go other countries to explore.

### Major and Minor Factors for the Process of Learning

To learn a language (both first and second language) there are certain factors to be considered.

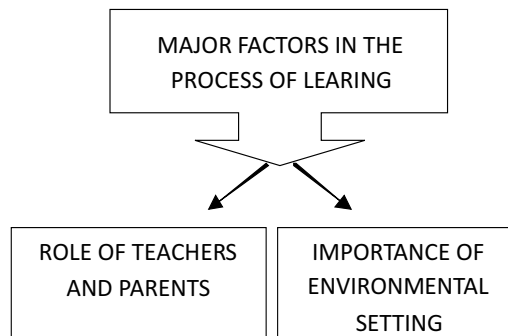


Figure 2

Other Minor factors include:

1. Proper ambiance
2. Interest of learners in performing tasks
3. Continuous practice in speaking/writing/reading the target language
4. Motivation

### Role of Teachers and Parents on Learning Process

In the process of language learning both parents and teachers play a major role. Psychological setting is necessary for students not only in the language learning process but also in all other aspects of learning. A student's attitude towards learning depends on how their parents teach them and how they set the atmosphere for their child to learn. As a teacher one has to involve in the method of teaching that is most suitable for students. The best methods of teaching the students are identified by the process of testing and evaluating. Curriculum is another significant factor to be concentrated in the process of learning. Especially in the process of second language learning, the teachers should have meticulous care in developing the curriculum. Teachers must sort out the learners' needs. The needs of learners are identified when need analysis is done by conducting the research, in which methodology of teaching they have performed well in their previous classes.

### Importance of Environmental Setting in the Language Learning Process

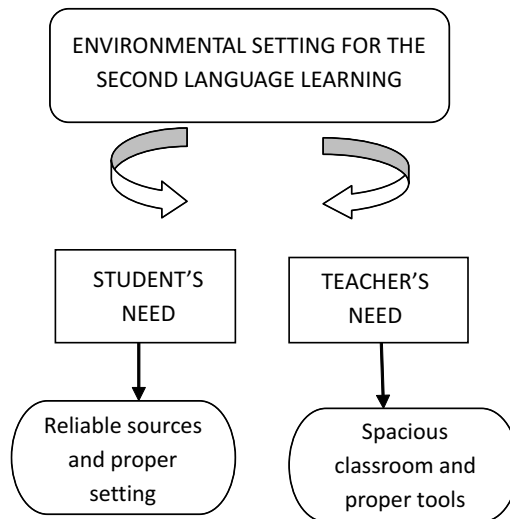


Figure 3

Learning is the process that has a lot to do with psychology. When students are provided with an appropriate environment to study, their understanding and perceiving capacity is so obvious and they would perform their best. Instead, if they are put into a difficult atmosphere, they would find it difficult to concentrate and perceive. For example, if literature students are put in a science laboratory, they will definitely find it hard to understand poetry, and similarly, for science students, if they are not provided with proper equipments and resources, they will never have the clear understanding of what they have been taught.

Psyche of the students depends on both the external and internal factors for which they give priority. Certain external factors that affect students' psychology are desk arrangements in class room, proper tools to study and so on. Some internal factors that impacts on psychology of the students are lack of motivation, lack of proper teaching methodologies and so on. For example if the students are assigned to perform the task, teachers must give proper instruction to the students and students must have good motivation both by their peer group and their teacher. Learner's needs are to be identified by conducting tasks and evaluating them.

Environmental setting plays vital role in schools. Additionally it is also important for students to have proper atmosphere at home. In encyclopedia article on early childhood development it is said by Tamis-LeMonda and Rodriguez that "Children who experience sensitive, cognitively stimulating home environments early in development are at an advantage in the learning process". A child who is supported by both parents and teachers in the process of learning second language will definitely master the language. When parents support the students at home by speaking to them in the second language at home, they will have the proper practice and the process of learning happens automatically.

### **Conditioned and Unconditioned Learning**

Former is better understood when it is said as restricted learning and the later is free learning. Another learning which includes both the learning is partially restricted learning. Krashen said that, "Language is best taught when it is being used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning". Conditioned mind and behavior restricts creativity and innovations, whereas unconditioned mind and behavior explores new things and creativity.

Pavlo and B.F. Skinner are pioneers in conducting experiments on conditioning process. Pavlo conducted experiments on dog and said about classical conditioning and B.F. Skinner said about operant conditioning. Additionally he said about performance-approach goals (do the tasks better than others) and performance-avoidance (stay away from performing defectively than others) goals. He also said that manipulated performance-approach produces better result than performance-avoidance approach. And here it is apparent that, performance-approach leads to creativity where unconditioned learning happens and students would get self motivation. The outcome of partially conditioned learning varies according to the tasks framed and the type of class.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

Methodology used for this study is action research, where a group of forty five first year engineering students were taken. It is a heterogeneous classroom. The target language is same for all students. The process of data collection including observing,

analyzing, testing and evaluating were done consistently. Several tasks were given for students to develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in target language. With all the tasks performed it is identified that approach of teaching makes a lot of difference in language learning process. This study mainly focuses on stating the difference between two different approaches in the process of second language learning. The experiment is conducted on the same set of students applying both the approaches. The classroom consists of forty five first year engineering students. The classroom setting is faultless where they are provided with proper resources and undisturbed atmosphere. Students are interested in performing all the tasks given but the results produced are entirely different when there is a difference in approach. In this article only three tasks among the performed tasks are taken for arguing the study as it is highly evident in those tasks.

The tasks assigned are different in the aspect of choice of the topic. This experiment is done with three assigned tasks. Among the given three tasks, topics of two of the tasks are of students' choice and third one is instructor's choice (restricted and conditioned state of mind). It is observed that the students showed their involvement to do the task in which they are given freedom. Two of the tasks are framed only to develop the writing skill and one of the tasks focused on improving listening, writing and speaking skills.

### **FIRST TASK- STORY DEVELOPING**

#### **Objective**

This task is framed in a way in which listening, writing and speaking skills would improve.

#### **Task**

First task is story developing. In this task after the initiation of a single story line by one of the students each student is asked to say a single line to develop a complete story. Story had unexpected twists. All the other students were asked to listen and at the end of the class they were asked to write the complete story as well. While performing this task interest of students is witnessed. To conclude the story found challenging. Only one student is supposed to conclude the story. But five students came up as the volunteer to say the conclusion and said interesting conclusions.

#### **Approach**

It is an unconditioned approach

**Observational Outcome**

1. Improved listening skills
2. Developed creativity
3. Curiosity in performing tasks
4. No stage freight

**SECOND TASK: STORY WRITING****Objective**

This task is solely framed to develop the creativity and writing skills of the student.

**Task**

Second task is story writing. This task is better compared with the similar task assigned (story writing in the assigned topic). But in this task all students were asked to write the story of their own choice and it is instructed that it should be creative. Students came up with several interesting stories.

**Approach**

It is a unconditioned approach.

**Observational Outcome**

1. Verbal intelligence
2. Evidence of Creativity

**THIRD TASK: SENTENCE COMPLETION****Objective**

This task is framed to kindle their creativity and to enhance their writing skills.

**Task**

In this task the topic “If there were no mobile phones...” is given to all the students and they were asked to complete the sentence.

**Approach**

It is a conditioned approach

**Observational Outcome**

1. Stereotypical ideas
2. Less creativity

## CONCLUSION

Brian Herbert said, “The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice”. Choice is essential both in learning and teaching. Hence, learning language or literature, suitable approach leads to the fullness of the process of learning. Though Learning is possible for everyone, the methods and approaches make the difference. Right from childhood meticulous care is essential for developing the LSRW skills. But the care should be unconditioned. If the care is conditioned and restricted then creativity would also be restricted and less. Teaching English in TEFL classroom is challenging. Teachers should identify the learner’s need and based on that the methodologies and approach for teaching should be framed. When learners are provided with proper ambiance and cognitive independence, they will excel in language learning.

This study postulates the role of parents, teachers, environmental setting and cognitive approach for the creativity in second language learning and acquisition. The findings of this article are, when the approach is unconditioned in both second language teaching and learning serves its purpose better. Gradual developments of proficiency in LSRW skills are observed. When mind is conditioned cognition is also conditioned. Conditioned cognition registers its impact on the language competency. Moreover originality and creativity in second language for the students are stimulated as well. Adding to that, it is also experimented that conditioned teaching and learning is not applicable for developing one’s creativity.

One must have free will to develop the creativity. Creativity is not something to be taught. It is within everyone and it is examined that by unrestricted approach in EFL classrooms the students came up with limitless ideas, interest, involvement, creativity and innovation. And there begins the revolution in language of younger minds.

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