

Second Language Acquisition: Real Life Learning versus Classroom Teaching

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Abstract:

Language is considered as the most mysterious yet greatest invention of mankind upon which the whole of civilizations rest upon. It is often misunderstood only as a tool of communication which is a conceptual metaphor which effaces the real purpose of language, that is to sketch the interiority of human mind and language is the only way to do that. Thereby language learning is a valuable endeavour that aids not just communicative purposes but also the expression of human mind. Moreover, in the modern scenario acquisition of language has become an important skill for the principal development of an individual. There arises the importance of second language procurement that also yields in providing competitive edge in career choices and improve memory and skills. According to Stephen Krashen's acquisition learning hypothesis, this second language acquisition occurs through two independent systems: "Acquired system" and "learned system." And this paper tries to assert the supremacy of acquired system over the learned system, where an individual acquires language more from life rather than from the classroom. This assertion is validated through a comparative survey conducted among classroom learners and acquired ones. The paper also attempts to show the comprehensive language learning method which is more practical based and skill focused.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a human brainchild that is pivotal for forging civilisation, preserving humanity and crafting reality. It transcends its elementary purpose of communication to a higher germaneness. Language could be delineated as the primordial invention that could be traced back from the ancient time of Adam which aids in cataloguing totality of world's actions into words and transmitting thoughts to vast reaches of space and time. Thus language learning is of paramount importance for aeons and its procurement is an essential endeavour for survival. It is an important skill for the principal development of mankind.

The holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne aforesaid "to have another languages to possess a second soul." This is only reaffirmed in the prevailing epoch of globalisation. In this era of worldwide integration, the world is becoming smaller with enhanced communication

facilitated by technology; consequently people's interaction has surpassed their local communities and emerged into a global platform. Hence they no more adhere to their mother tongue alone but learning or acquiring new languages has become a primary requisite for existence. Moreover learning multiple languages augments memory power, dexterity and provides competitive edge in career choices.

Thus second language intelligence gained momentum with the emergence of 'World Wide Web' and 'Global Village.' People began to learn foreign languages with a renewed passion propelled by rising employment fortuities that led to improved living conditions, with the advent of industrialisation in Occidental and much later in Oriental countries. An increase immigration also leveraged the attainment of second languages as a result of the imperative need for human interaction.

As a result of the sudden surge in people to learn

second language (L2) piqued the interest of linguists to venture into the subject of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and formulate the methods and identify the factors that account for the learner's acquisition of L2.

Many linguists began to approach this domain with variant theories. One such linguist is Stephen Krashen, a proficient in the field of linguistics, who in 1970s and 1980s formulated a group of five hypotheses on Second Language Acquisition. One of the integral and favoured hypotheses among them is Acquisition Learning hypothesis, according to which SLA procurement occurs through two independent systems: "Acquired system" and "Learned system."

"Acquired system" is the acquisition of second language which ensues through passive proceedings where an individual unconsciously acquires the language through association with communities or film and media. The practical need for communication facilitates the acquisition. Though this natural development occurs solely because of self-effort without any kind of peripheral constraint, the meaningful interplay in the language is a requisite for the acquisition of second language. The naturally acquired method of learning possesses a long term memory owing to the learner's own motivation. A learner of "acquired system" is impassive to the grammatical constructions of the language the individual intends to learn instead he or she focuses their attention on the communicative prospect. It ensures an adequate fluency in the target language yet the chances of errors are very high due to the lack of faultless source thus resulting in increased chances of inaccuracies in the language use.

"Learned system" is the learning of the second language that occurs through an active involvement where a learner consciously studies the target language through classroom education. This intentional exercise involves academic instructions that are mandatory to be followed by the learner. The remembrance and repetition of grammatical rules is emphasised over the communicative facet of language, where the learner meditates upon the form of utterance. However, it makes the learner more cautious about his performance and avoids the chances of errors that are caused due to ignorance. Thus the knowledge of language gained through a legitimate source makes a substantial reduction in creating inaccuracies yet it is short lived.

On these grounds, this paper attempts to assert the supremacy of acquired system over the learned system,

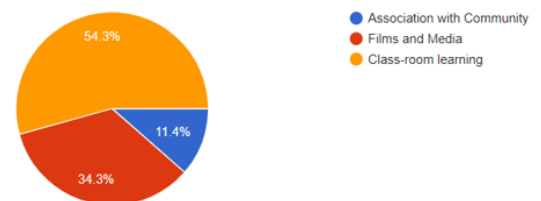
where an individual acquires language more productively from community and media rather than the conventional form of classroom education. Thus the research paper elucidates the comparative merits of acquired learners and class room learners for second language acquisition with an intention to prove the primacy of the former by conducting a survey on Second Language Intelligence among a group of acquired and classroom learners ranging from the age of 18 to 35. The survey is carried out through a set of 15 questions aiming to analyse the second language understanding of individuals in English, Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi.

The results of the survey depict a clear distinction between the acquired and learned languages and its benefits opposed to the years of exposure or training. In accordance with the results obtained regarding the four languages, the second language learners of Tamil and Malayalam are the acquired ones whereas English taught in every educational institution in India and thus the language is procured conventionally through classroom system of education and the knowledge of Hindi consists of both learned ones and acquired ones.

HINDI

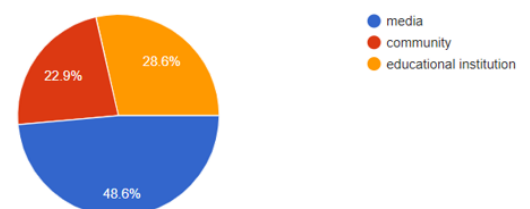
How did you learn this language?

35 responses



Your present familiarity of knowledge of language is benefited from _____

35 responses



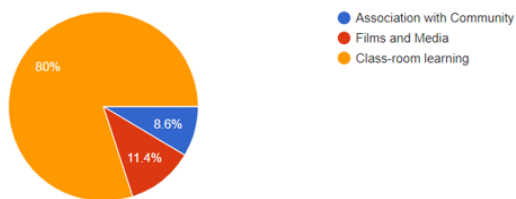
The results evidently depicts that Hindi is a second language taught in schools yet almost 48.6% claim that their present familiarity of the language is benefitted from media. This testifies the drawbacks of classroom learning which make the learners attribute their knowledge of Hindi to self effort with the aid of external

resources. This fact is further reinforced when 48.6% claims that they know more than 300 words in the language and 42.9% claims that they are able to use complete sentences. Another significant finding is that, even when the majority sticks to classroom education (54.3%) and trained conventionally for more than half a decade (42.9%), the grammatical knowledge is only gained by 17.1%

ENGLISH

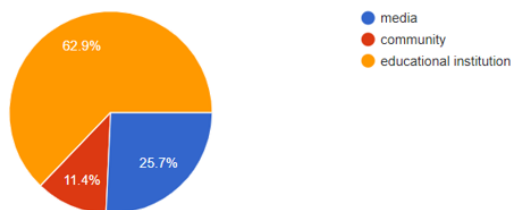
How did you learn this language?

35 responses



Your present familiarity of knowledge of language is benefited from _____

35 responses

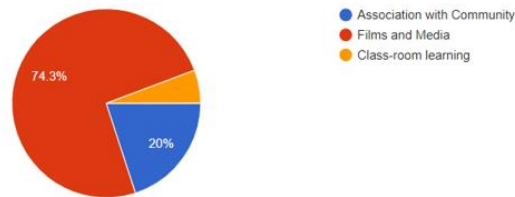


English being a global language, it is a compulsory course in conventional education where individuals are trained in it from childhood to adulthood due to which the benefits of learned system are prominent here. The LSRW skills are very high thereby proving the efficiency of conventional method of education provided; the training period should par a decade. Another important observation is that 85.7% are able to correctly identify the verb in the sentence 'The bag is lying on the floor 'yet 42.8% are doubtful regarding their proficiency in grammar. This shows the lack of conviction of learners in their knowledge of grammar despite their decade long training, thereby pointing out the fissure left in the class room education

TAMIL

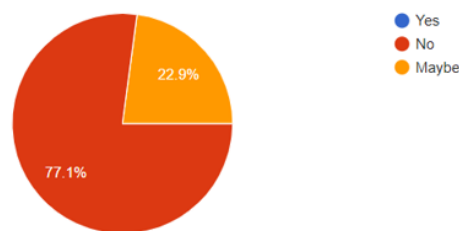
How did you learn this language?

35 responses



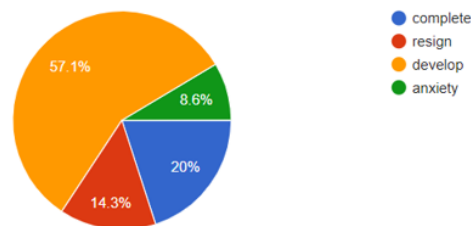
Are you thorough with the grammatical rules in the language?

35 responses



Which word means the same as 'Uruvacka'(உருவாக்க) ?

35 responses



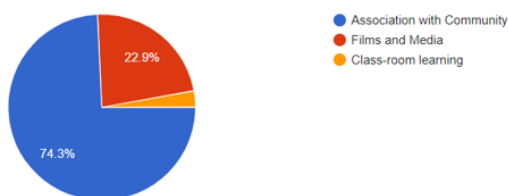
As Tamil is an acquired language for the majority of non-natives, 73.3% claims that their knowledge regarding the language is benefitted from films and media. Since they lack conventional learning, their knowledge of grammar is very limited as 77.1% individuals lack grammatical knowledge, this testimonies the deficit eloquence of acquired ones. Yet their LSRW skills elucidates that 77.2% are able to speak and 62.9% are able to comprehend the language though only 8.6% and 0% are able to read and write respectively. This attest Krashen's theory of acquired system where self-effort enables a skill oriented language understanding though they lack theoretical knowledge of the language regarding the rules and regulations. In addition, the majority (57.1%) are able to

decipher the meaning of the complicated word and sentence 'Uruvakka' and 'enaku en kuzanthaipparuvamninaivirukirathu' respectively. This observation coupled with 51.4 % claiming to be benefitted from their acquired knowledge of language in their practical life corroborates the above said theory.

MALAYALAM

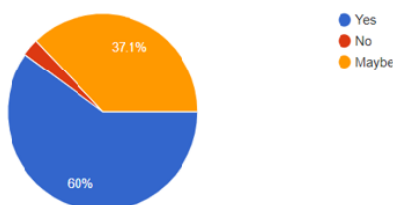
How did you learn this language?

35 responses



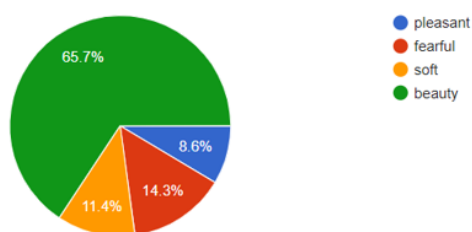
Can you name at least two objects present near you at the moment in this language?

35 responses



Which word means the same as 'ഭംഗി' (Bhangi) ?

35 responses



Malayalam is an acquired language for most of the second language learners where 74.3% procured the language through association with community. The lack of conventional classroom learning yielded in limited grammatical knowledge where 91.4% claims to have no knowledge of rules and regulations of the language. Regarding the LSRW skills of these acquired individuals 91.4% are able to comprehend and 74.3% are able to speak the language whereas only 3% are able to read and write in the language. Another important observation is that 60% are able to name two objects from their

immediate surrounding and 74.3% believe that their knowledge of the language benefitted them in their practical life. Moreover, 65.7% of acquired ones are able to decipher the meaning of the word 'bhangi' it validates the knowledge of acquired individuals. Thus, this result also reaffirms Krashen's theory of acquired system which uphold the practical use of language over the mere mugging up of rules.

II. CONCLUSION

Analysing the survey report carried out among the acquired ones and learned ones it could be estimated that for the intelligence of Hindi as the second language, which is taught in most of the schools of India, the learners lack of grammatical knowledge despite the conventional training in the language in classroom mode of education. Similar is the case of English, which despite the learning of language for more than a decade, the learners lack fortitude regarding their proficiency in the language. Yet the individuals who attribute their present familiarity of language to media and institution are able to speak, comprehend, read, write and also to decipher the meaning of words and sentences of the respective languages.

With respect to the intelligence in Tamil and Malayalam as second languages, for the non native learners it could be analysed that they have secured the knowledge of the language through acquired system obtained from media and association with community. Even though they are not familiar with the rules of the language they are able to answer the correct meaning of words and sentences as well as to believe that their knowledge has enabled them to relate and identify with their surroundings.

Thus, it could be observed that classroom education or the learned system has several drawbacks as the memory of grammatical knowledge is not retained in the mind of Hindi and English learners despite their training whereas the acquired ones are more forward in their practical knowledge of the language. Despite the LSRW skills being high in learned system as compared to acquired system, the former seems to be lacking in comparison regarding the grammar when one takes into account of the years taken to train. Henceforth, acquired system of learning have a sterling merit of its own elicited by the self-motivation and practicality that is absent in the learned system.

III. APPENDIX

The following questionnaire was used to carry out the Second Language Intelligence Survey

1. How did you learn this language? *

- a) Association with Community
- b) Films and Media
- c) Class-room learning

2. Your LSRW skills regarding this language *

- a) Ability to Comprehend
- b) Ability to Speak
- c) Ability to Read
- d) Ability to Write

3. How many words do you know in this language? *

- a) 0-50
- b) 50-150
- c) 150-300
- d) 300+

4. Your range of fluency in this language *

- a) Eloquent
- b) Few words
- c) Broken sentences
- d) Complete sentences

5. Are you thorough with the grammatical rules in the language? *

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Maybe

6. How long were you trained in the language? *

- a) 2 yrs.
- b) 5 yrs.
- c) More than 5 yrs.
- d) not applicable

7. Your duration of exposure to films or community? *

- a) 2 yrs.
- b) 5 yrs.
- c) More than 5 yrs.
- d) not applicable

8. Your present familiarity of knowledge of language is benefited from _____ *

- a) media
- b) community
- c) educational institution

9. Whether the knowledge of this language benefited you in your practical life? *

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Maybe

10. Can you name at least two objects present near you at the moment in this language? *

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Maybe

11. Which word means the same as 'satisfied'? *

- a) angry
- b) fearful
- c) pleased
- d) confused

OR

Which word means the same as 'ഭംഗി' (Bhangi) ? *

- a) pleasant
- b) fearful
- c) soft
- d) beauty

OR

Which word means the same as 'Makkal' (மக்கள்) ? *

- a) child
- b) people
- c) student
- d) daughter

OR

Which word means the same as 'ऊपर' (upar) ? *

- a) below
- b) above
- c) under
- d) before

- a) Yes
- b) No

OR

Do you know the meaning of the sentence 'ninkal eppadi irukkirungal'?

- a) Yes
- b) No

OR

12. Which word means the same as 'Resolute'?

- a) resolve
- b) cold
- c) strong-willed
- d) pretentious

OR

Do you know the meaning of the sentence

'मैठीकहुँ'?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Which word means the same as 'ഹൃദയസ്സ്പ്രിക്സ്' (hridayaspriku)?

- a) startle
- b) stubborn
- c) strong-willed
- d) heartfelt

OR

14. Do you know the meaning of the sentence 'Due to unavoidable reasons I was late for the meeting'?

- a) Yes
- b) No

OR

Which word means the same as

'Uruvakka'(ഉരുവാകക)?

- a) complete
- b) resign
- c) develop
- d) anxiety

OR

Do you know the meaning of the sentence

'ഒഴിച്ചുകൂടാനാകാത്ത

സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾകൊണ്ട്ഞാൻവൈകിപ്പോയി'?

- a) Yes
- b) No

OR

Which word means the same as 'शामिल'(shamil)?

- a) follow
- b) conclude
- c) include
- d) evening

Do you know the meaning of the sentence 'enaku en kuzanthaip

paruvam ninaivirukirathu'?

- a) Yes
- b) No

OR

13. Do you know the meaning of the sentence 'The dog is sleeping near the door'?

- a) Yes
- b) No

OR

Do you know the meaning of the sentence

'दुनियाभरमेंबहुतसेलोगोंकोअच्छापानीउपलब्धनहींहै।'?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Do you know the meaning of the sentence 'ഞാൻപോകുന്നു'?

15. Identify the Verb in the sentence 'The bag is lying on the floor'

- a) on
- b) bag
- c) lying
- d) floor

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