SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Critical Concepts in Linguistics

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Language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language—natural communication—in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. Error correction and explicit teaching of rules are not relevant to language acquisition (Brown and Hanlon, 1970; Brown, Cazden, and Bellugi, 1973), but caretakers and Second language acquisition, or SLA, has two meanings. In a general sense it is a term to describe learning a second language. More specifically, it is the name of the theory of the process by which we acquire - or pick up - a second language. This is mainly a subconscious process which happens while we focus on communication. It can be compared with second language learning, which describes how formal language education helps us learn language through more conscious processes. The problem of second language acquisition has been studied by researchers of different countries for many years. Their interest to the problem is not a groundless one. For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of non-native speakers of English increased dramatically in the past decade (International Reading Association, 1993). More and more people come to Russia to study or to work and they also need to learn the second language quickly and effectively.