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BILINGUAL BEHAVIORS: LEARNING CONTEXT IN SECOND LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION

By
Sydney Fulton

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the
University Honors Program

Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
The University of South Dakota
May 2022

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ABSTRACT

Bilingual Behaviors: Learning Context in Second Language Acquisition

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Language separates human beings from other species in the animal kingdom. Not only does language provide humans with a means to communicate, but it represents one's family, cultural identity, and personality. There are over six thousand spoken languages in the world today, and around half of the earth's inhabitants speak more than one language. First language acquisition is a natural process for all humans that begins before birth. The human brain can acquire multiple languages during infancy, but many people acquire a second language after the brain has fully developed. Knowledge of more than one language allows one to make deeper connections with other cultures and is important to connect with people around the world. This thesis aims to highlight the most important factors in attaining fluency in a second language, as well as analyze previous research on second language acquisition, study abroad, negative feedback, and motivation within second language learning.

KEYWORDS: Language Acquisition, Bilingualism, Foreign Language

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Introduction to Second Language Acquisition

What is Language?

The world is filled with language and communication. When living beings come together, they communicate in some form. Humans have created a system of communication through verbal, written, or nonverbal gestures that we use to share thoughts, emotions, and information. Language is used to express humor, feelings, personal identity, and it is a manner to transfer thoughts from one person to another through speech, writing, or signing. When a person knows a language, they can communicate with others who know the same language, and people have the capacity to produce sounds that have certain meanings and understand the sounds produced by others (Crystal 33).

Linguistics helps us to describe our knowledge of a language by formulating a grammar. A grammar is "a set of rules which characterizes all and only the sentences of the language that we as speakers are able to produce and understand" (Crain and Lilo-Martin 5). When we master a language, we master the rules of the mental grammar. When a human acquires a language, they are able to put meaning towards a sound or a sequence of sounds, and they learn the relationship between the sounds and the meaning they represent.

Language is what separates humans from other species. A human infant will acquire a language with ease when exposed at a young age, while any other animal in the animal kingdom would not be able to speak a human language if they were exposed to the same environment as the human child. Language is "a system for expressing thoughts, which can incorporate any one of several signaling systems" (Fitch 297). Signaling systems include speech, which is different than language and considered a complex articulated vocalization. Language relies on speech modality, except when the audio-vocal modality is unavailable, as for the deaf (Fitch 297).

Language is largely verbal, but it is much more than just speech. Those who are unable to use verbal communication such as those in the deaf community communicate through gestures of sign language. Those who use sign language can produce and understand a language in the same capacity as a spoken language. Language is not only a form of communication but a form of identity. The language someone speaks, and even their dialect of that language can give information about the person and where they are from, and what kind of culture they are influenced by. Of the estimated 6,000 languages spoken in the world, linguists predict that half of them are in danger of extinction within this century due to globalization, neocolonialism, and linguicide. Some endangered languages can vanish in a single instant with the death of the last surviving speaker, while other languages are gradually lost in bilingual cultures. Indigenous languages are typically not spoken in school, on television or in public places such as the market, causing the dominant language of the community to overshadow and push out indigenous tongues. The loss of languages is especially common amongst those languages that do not have a written form. When they disappear, they leave no record of the knowledge and history of the culture (Crystal 85).

The Origin of Language

There is difficulty with tracing the beginning of language and studying the evolution of language due to the lack of evidence. Ancient spoken languages do not leave physical evidence of its existence. Looking at human fossils of skulls can only show us the size and shape of the brains of early hominids, but do not give any information on the abilities of the brain during their time on the earth. It is predicted that early hominids had a language that used a restricted range of consonants and vowels, and the difference in hominid speech versus speech today is the ability to speak faster and to be more expressive (Rousseau and Herder 13). Language evolution

and origin include a mixture of mythology, philosophy, religion, as well as scientifically inspired speculation. Large amounts of information about our history are inscribed in the content of the languages that are spoken today. One thing we can conclude about languages is that they evolve, and they do so rapidly. New words arise and others are completely replaced over time. Grammar morphs, sounds change, and languages split into dialects and eventually shift into distinct languages (Gray et al, 1090).

Humans produce sounds the same way that other mammals do, by vocalizing through apparatuses that initially evolved for eating and breathing. Humans and mammals also use the same respiratory, phonatory, and articulatory subsystems in a similar way. Individual sounds are produced by “a unique complex of movements that modulate the flow of air coming out of the mouth in such a way as to produce a unique acoustic pattern” (MacNeilage 5).

The syllable is a universal unit in speech, defined as “a nucleus with a relatively open vocal tract, and margins with a relatively closed vocal tract” (MacNeilage 89). The motor frame for speech evolved from "mandibular cyclicities" such as chewing and suckling and eventually paired with phonation to form syllables. Human speech is different from animal communication by the externalization of concepts. Human language is flexible in the way that we can use language to represent anything we can think of, whether it's visual, abstract, musical, etc. (MacNeilage 89).

There is a division in research on how and when human language began. This split divides philosophical views of universal ideas that are shared by all humans and Aristotelian views that language is a cultural phenomenon that is learned in social contexts (Fitch 296). Linguistic history suggests that spoken languages have existed for tens of thousands of years, but the earlier written records of language are only six thousand years old. These records do not give

information about the origin of the language because they appear so late into the development of language. The book of Genesis contains the oldest mention of the origin of language: “and out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field” (Genesis 2, 19-20). God himself did not know what Adam would choose to name the animals, signifying that words are arbitrary and each word does not have a specific relationship with the object it represents. Biblical ideas had a great influence on western views towards the development of language, and for many years people did not propose a new theory about language origins that discredited the Bible (Fitch 390).

In Plato’s *Cratylus*, (cited in Bredin 556) Plato debated whether words have a relationship to their meanings (onomatopoeia) or if they are wholly arbitrary and conventional. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) proposed the Onomatopoeic theory of the origin of words, also referred to as the "Bow Wow Theory." He claimed that words developed from sounds and innate cries, and this was a rational, non-religious explanation of language development. This theory solves two problems with the arbitrary theory: how the crucial linguistic link between sound and meaning could be made, and how this link would automatically be understood by others. Many modern languages have onomatopoeic words, but most words are not (Bredin 556). Herder realized that onomatopoeia cannot be the source of all words, so he later proposed Protolanguage: “an intermediate stage between the communication system possessed by our non-linguistic hominid ancestors and modern fully evolved language” (Fitch 392). Ancient customs and myths do not give much information about the origin of language, but they do explain the importance of language throughout history.

First Language Acquisition

Noam Chomsky is one of the most well-known linguists of our time, and he proposed the idea of "Universal Grammar" (UG). UG includes laws that pertain to all languages, and it is the basic blueprint that all languages follow and that all humans are born with. Children are able to acquire language so effortlessly because they do not have to understand grammatical rules, only those that pertain to their particular language (Nowak et. al 114). Most children acquire at least one language at the beginning of life with relative ease. Many argue that children acquire language so easily because it is in their genes to do so. Chomsky developed the idea of a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which is a theory that proposes that knowledge of language is innate and includes principles of the Universal Grammar. Babies are exposed to language before they are even born, and they are programmed to learn languages from the minute they enter the world. Typically, when an adult speaks to a baby, they use "baby talk" or "motherese" which is speaking in a sing-song manner, with repetition of simple words and phrases and is usually done with pursed lips. While a baby does not comprehend the words that it hears, it begins to pick up on the rhythm of the language that others are speaking. Each language has a different rhythm and babies are able to distinguish these rhythms as different languages (Crystal 7).

Every human has the capacity to acquire a language- but external input is required to utilize language to its full capacity. One example of a human who was stripped of language input at an early age is a Ugandan boy named John Ssebunya, who fled into the jungle after witnessing his mother's murder at age three. He lived with vervet monkeys for almost three years and when he was found he could only imitate birdsong and monkey alarm calls. Since he was found at the young age of six years old, he was integrated into society and was able to learn Hutu and French

fluently (Dutta). John was on the brink of death when he had been found, but if he had somehow survived and had been integrated into society at an older age, he would not have been able to learn and speak human languages. While outside input is required to acquire a language, children learn language without explicit instruction from their parents or caregivers, as they “pick up” language just from observing others speak in their first years of life (Tecumseh Fitch 74). There are cases of humans inventing languages when there is no input of other languages, for example, Nicaraguan Sign Language “is the only language spontaneously created, without the influence of other languages, to have been recorded from its birth.” (Parks). The first Nicaraguan deaf school did not teach American Sign Language, but focused on Oralism, which is the speaking and lip-reading of Spanish. In Managua during the 1980s, deaf children were being taught Spanish in the classroom, but once they left the classroom the students were developing their own method of communication through sign language. Today with the advances in technology, there is an increase in American Sign Language in Nicaragua, but Nicaraguan Sign Language continues to dominate in the deaf community (Parks).

Humans have different stages and methods of learning a language. Within the first few months of life, babies don’t speak, but rather vocalize noises. At the age of three months, babies create sounds in a more controlled manner. They begin to produce recognizable sounds such as ‘ba’ ‘ma’ or ‘pa.’ Once babies are around six months old, they enter the babbling stage, where we will hear sounds such as ‘na na na’ ‘da da da’ ‘bu bu bu’ and so on. This is the child practicing the sounds they can create with the different positions of their tongue, lips, and mouth (Crystal 9). Children are able to recognize many words before they are able to speak them, and once they learn how to say these words and what their meanings are, they can piece together words to form sentences as their vocabulary grows.

Language development is internally driven, but outside factors have a large influence on a child's acquisition of language. Children are programmed to acquire language, but there are several methods that parents use to help the process. Methods of language acquisition include imitation, corrective feedback, expansion, and motherese. These methods are not successful in language acquisition on their own, but all are commonly used together to promote an expanded vocabulary. Imitation is when a child repeats or imitates their parent's talk. Corrective feedback is when parents correct mistakes in the child's speech, but this method tends to be more successful with those learning a second language. Children are always going to have incorrect grammar when speaking, and while their verb conjugations may not be correct, parents can typically understand the message the child is attempting to convey, so corrective feedback is not the sole method of language learning. Expansion is when a parent expands on the utterance of a child; for example, if a child says, "Mommy book" the mother might expand on that and say, "That's right, this is mommy's book." Parents use simple speech with their children at the early stages of language development and gradually increase in complexity as the child acquires a larger vocabulary (Crain and Lillo-Martin 12).

Bilingualism

Around half of the people in the world are speakers of more than one language, meaning that as they grew up, they had regular exposure to these languages and became native speakers. Bilingualism and multilingualism are considered very normal in many countries such as those in the continent of Africa, but several Western countries are considered monolingual. Learning multiple languages is a natural phenomenon for humans- the brain can learn, memorize, and store multiple languages (Crystal 78).

While children acquire languages with relative ease, an adult L2 learner does not acquire language as spontaneously as infants do. An adult already knows one language upon exposure to their L2, and the processes between L1 and L2 acquisition are very different for those who choose to acquire a second language later in life. The simplest method of language acquisition is simultaneous acquisition in early childhood. Another method of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is learning a language in an instructed setting through classes with teachers or professors. This method involves an instructor who has a native-like competency of the language and exposes the learners through their speech and instruction. Within the teaching method, there are many strategies a teacher can implement to have the learners reach fluency most efficiently. One of these strategies is the Direct Method, also known as the Oral or Natural method, which requires the student to speak and listen to the language in realistic situations, consisting of gradual acquisition of the structure of grammar and vocabulary. This method has the student hear the language before seeing it in a written format. The Grammar-Translation method is based on the use of reading comprehension and translation exercises, involving memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules. A third method, the Audio-Lingual method is a self-teaching method where the learner listens to and repeats dialogues and phrases. A learner can also travel to a country where the target language is spoken and acquire the language through immersion. The term second language acquisition, L2 acquisition, or sequential bilingualism is used to refer to the acquisition of a language by a child or adult who has already acquired their first language. Bilingual language acquisition or simultaneous bilingualism is the acquisition of two languages beginning in infancy (Hartshorne 3).

One phenomenon in bilingualism research is the mixing of languages during simultaneous acquisition at the time of infancy. Many parents become concerned when their

child begins to mix two languages, and some stop raising their child in a bilingual environment due to this concern, but modern research recognizes that the mixing of languages in early childhood does not indicate any language issues and is a normal part of language development. According to research by Virginia Volterra and Traute Taeschner (2000), it was concluded that bilingual children “construct a unitary grammatical system before separating the systems of the various languages acquired” (304). These researchers conducted experiments on the gradual learning process through which a child becomes bilingual, and they distinguished three stages of development. The first stage is when the child has one lexical system that includes words from both languages they are exposed to. This stage is similar to the language development in a monolingual child, resulting in vocabulary from both languages to frequently occur together during speech. The second stage is when the child begins to distinguish two separate lexicons, but they apply the same syntactic rules to both languages. Finally, the third stage is when the child speaks two languages that are different in both lexicon and syntax (Volterra and Taeschner 304). Their research supports the Unitary System Hypothesis (USH), which states that bilingual children construct one collective grammar and lexicon for the languages they acquire simultaneously.

Recent research such as a study conducted by Julia Berger-Morales and Manola Salustri favors the Separate System Hypothesis (SSH), which states that “from the onset of acquisition, the bilingual child forms separate grammatical systems for each of the target languages involved” (Berger-Morales and Salustri 264). This means that bilingual children develop their grammar similar to monolingual children as if a bilingual child were two monolinguals in one brain.

Another area of focus within bilingual research is the relationship between language input and proficiency. Every bilingual child varies in their language skills due to the variability in their language and acquisition experience. During the early 20th century, scientists argued that dual language exposure was detrimental to the child, and it negatively affected the child's ability to learn either language. This hypothesis has been since proven erroneous, yet the "range of normal individual differences in language development is large" (Hoff and Core 2). The language growth of bilingual children is split between the two languages they acquire. While bilingual children build their linguistic skills and knowledge at a rate similar to, or greater than, those who acquire one language, bilingual children may be delayed in language milestones in comparison to monolingual children (Hoff and Core 3).

There are several methods and strategies for raising a bilingual child. Parents essentially need to decide whether their child will learn two languages at once, called Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA), or will learn a second language after the first language has already been established, called Early Second Language Acquisition (Early SLA). When a child learns two languages through Bilingual First Language Acquisition, they will have two first languages and will acquire the languages similar to that of a monolingual child. The Mixed Language Policy (MLP) is a practice where parents switch back and forth between languages depending on the setting and topic of discussion. The parents may speak to the child about school in the language used at school, or they may switch to their family language when speaking about familial matters. This promotes a separation of the languages to avoid confusion between the two, but this method is not the most successful in achieving native-like competency with both languages, due to an imbalance in the language exposure. A child may grow up being exposed to one language more than the other, which will hinder their development in their

second language. To reach native-like fluency, a child acquiring multiple languages will require equal amounts of input from both languages (Pearson 139).

Benefits of Bilingualism

Knowledge of languages provides many opportunities to those who acquire them. Bilingualism promotes intellectual benefits such as mental flexibility, as well as enhanced creativity, and allows the learner to connect with new cultures and people different than their own (Pearson 5). Many parents who raise a bilingual child do so intending to connect their child to their ancestors and culture, others do so for practicality. If parents do not have a family connection to a language, the decision to teach the language to their child tends to be for intellectual purposes rather than emotional connection. Other benefits of speaking multiple languages can aid one's career. Many connections and professional opportunities arise when one can communicate in multiple languages, and this ability is highly sought after in many occupational fields.

Emotional motivation refers to the “desire to learn a language as a form of intellectual and cultural enrichment or to integrate with and have a sense of belonging to the social group that speaks the language” (Pearson 9). Children who grow up speaking languages of their culture tend to feel more accepted into the community where that language is spoken. One of the most common reasons for bilingual motivation of parents is for their child to be able to connect with extended family, giving their child a sense of closeness and connection to their identity and cultural heritage (Pearson 10).

L2 vs L1 Acquisition

While it is most beneficial to acquire a second language in the early years of life, this is not always the case with learners. Many people are introduced to their second language after they

have achieved complete proficiency in their first language (L1). Learning a second language (L2) is much more challenging when done later in life in comparison to early exposure, but it is not impossible. While adult L2 acquisition is common, it is more appropriate to use the term "conscious learning." Acquisition typically signifies subconscious learning, which can be done without awareness of the process. Conscious learning takes place in an explicit, formal, and instructed setting (Ipek 158).

The Critical Period Hypothesis states that there is a biologically determined period during life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire. The biologically determined critical period for language acquisition is between the ages of two and twelve and is when a language is easiest to acquire. After the critical period, the acquisition of grammar becomes increasingly more difficult, and sometimes complete fluency is never fully achieved. When a child does not receive proper exposure to language during their critical period, they do not achieve native-like grammatical competence. With very few exceptions, adult L2 learners typically do not achieve full fluency at a native-like level, especially with pronunciation. Adult learners tend to speak with an accent, and they make morphological or syntactic errors like that of a child acquiring their first language. Starting at birth, speech muscles slowly develop until the age of five. From age five until puberty, these muscles maintain their flexibility, making it easier for children within this age gap to acquire a native-like competency in both their L1 and their L2. After puberty, the flexibility of these muscles declines, causing difficulty for adult L2 learners (Ipek 159).

One's ability to acquire a second language depends on several different factors: age, age of first exposure, the intensity of exposure to the language, motivation, etc. In a study by Joshua

Hartshorne, it is estimated that "grammar-learning ability changes with age, [and] it is preserved almost to the crux of adulthood (17.4 years) and then it declines steadily" (Hartshorne 1).

Attitude and motivation have a large impact on the success of L2 acquisition. A young child who is acquiring multiple languages does not possess attitudes towards race and culture associated with the languages, but once the child reaches school age, the target language culture and its speakers can influence the language learning process. Negative attitudes towards such aspects in language acquisition can impede the process, while positive attitudes can enhance one's learning (Ipek 159).

Bilingual Bias

It is normal for the brain to acquire multiple languages as a child grows up, and many cultures and communities use multiple languages daily. Many people speak one language at home, another at work or in school, and sometimes even a third at the market or in public places. While it is acceptable and encouraged in many countries to learn multiple languages, there are other countries where monolingualism is the norm. The United States does not have one official language. Many languages co-exist in the country, but "English is considered the de facto language for government, business, and social use" (Stein-Smith 6). Throughout history, different languages were more predominant at different times. French, Spanish, and English in the U.S. are a part of a "postcolonial legacy," where other languages have been brought by immigrants over the centuries. There are also many native languages that existed in the U.S. before colonialism and are still practiced today. In the United States, Americans are least likely to learn more than one language in comparison to other countries, and this U.S. foreign language deficit negatively impacts national and economic security, business, and career prospects, affecting individuals as well as society as a whole. There also tends to be racial bias behind

bilingualism in places all around the world. Foreign language knowledge impacts safety and security; there is a need for foreign language skills in government positions at the federal, state, and local level, in courts, law enforcement, military, hospitals, etc. However, there is a shortage of qualified foreign language teachers in the United States, resulting in a decline in foreign language majors and overall foreign language speakers (Stein-Smith 5). On an individual level, one's quality of life is enhanced by knowledge of foreign languages and cultures. Americans are less likely to watch films, listen to music, or read literature in another language, as well as less likely to connect with locals during travel (Stein-Smith 5).

Language has a strong tie to culture and identity, and when people are multilingual, it can be difficult to feel a sense of acceptance in every aspect of life. Throughout history, multilingualism created prejudice and racism in many cultures and communities. In places where for centuries the people only spoke one language, other languages were seen as inferior. Other languages that happened to be spoken in those countries were dismissed as unimportant, and in some cases banned from being used or spoken in public places. In the 1940s and 1950s, the ruler of Spain, General Franco, banned any language that was not Spanish in public. Galician, Basque, and Catalan, which are all local languages of Spain were repressed, and the languages slowly lost popularity (Crystal 81). In the United States, indigenous languages were spoken by native Americans for centuries. Once the colonizers arrived, indigenous languages were labeled as inferior, and even though colonizers were a minority group, indigenous people were banned from using their native languages, and were punished when they did.

While the United States does not have an official language, bilingualism often comes with the connotation of immigration. This is not always the case, but many people have a prejudice against those who speak languages other than English in the United States. One

popular yet incredibly inaccurate assumption is that those who speak Spanish in the U.S. are undocumented citizens. According to the Pew Research Center, less than 18 percent of Latinos in America are undocumented. This assumption is racially driven and contributes to negative attitudes towards bilingualism. In many countries around the world, bilingualism is a positive quality to possess. Bilingualism promotes creative thinking, improved memory, cognitive flexibility, and a greater ability to appreciate diversity and other cultures (Maness).

The Brain

The brain is the most complex organ found in the human body. Containing over 100 billion neurons, the cortex of the brain receives messages from all the sensory organs, initiates actions in the body, and stores all our memories and knowledge of language. It controls thought, memory, emotion, touch, vision, motor skills, and all body-regulating processes. Linguists study the brain to understand the relationship between the brain and the way we communicate through Neurolinguistics, the term for the study of the biological and neural foundations of language. The brain has two cerebral hemispheres, the left, and right hemispheres, and they are joined by a network of fibers called the corpus callosum. The corpus callosum allows the two sides of the brain to communicate with each other. The brain functions contralaterally, meaning the two hemispheres control the opposite side of the body- the left hemisphere controls the right side of the body, and the right hemisphere controls the left side of the body. "Language, logical and analytical operations, generally occur in the left hemisphere of the brain, while the right hemisphere is superior at recognizing emotions, faces and structures of things without analysis" (Ipek 159). The term lateralization is the separation of structure and function in the hemispheres.

There are seven regions of the brain that relate to language production and reception and two additional areas that relate to the motivation of second language development. These nine

areas of the brain reflect what we know about language production, usage, and reception. The structure related to speech is in the left temporal lobe, called the Wernicke's area. Information is then transferred through the arcuate fasciculus to Broca's area in the left frontal lobe where a signal is sent to the muscles in the face, mouth, lips tongue, larynx, and other muscles to create a spoken word. Regarding hearing and processing, sounds are heard in the primary auditory cortex in the temporal lobe and are then passed through the Wernicke's area to be decoded as a verbal message (Tokuhama-Espinosa 104).

Language Development in the Brain

Most of what we know about the brain surfaced within the past few decades. The brain has been an interest to scientists, philosophers, and physicians for centuries, but the tools to measure brain activity have only been available since the second half of the 20th century. Information on the brain was scarce until the 1600s when brains began to be studied after death. Thomas Willis published *Anatomy of the Brain* in 1664 which brought details of the brain to light. Research on bilingual and multilingual brains was sparse until the 1900s. One of the first publications on the multilingual brain was by W. Penfield and L. Roberts in 1959, stating that until age nine to twelve, a child can learn three languages as easily as one. In the late 1970s, experiments were carried out to document multilinguals' brains, and research reported in *The Bilingual Brain* that there are regions of the brain responsible for different languages, but they had a point of overlap (Ojemann and Whitaker 1978).

In the early stages of life, the left hemisphere of the brain begins a process called lateralization of language. Lateralization refers to the separation of structure and function in the hemispheres of the brain. Scientists suggest that there is a relationship between lateralization and second language acquisition. Before puberty, the plasticity of the brain allows for L1 and L2

acquisition to occur with ease, but after puberty, the brain slowly loses its plasticity and lateralization is complete. Lateralization makes it difficult for adults to easily acquire native-like competency, fluency, or pronunciation of another language (Ipek 159).

Every child is born with a set number of neurons, and the connections made between the neurons are dependent on the child's experiences and interactions with the world. Every small life experience forms a connection or reinforces an already-made connection. By the time a child is nine months old, these synaptic connections of neurons become connections between groups of neurons, which creates myelin insulation in the brain. The stronger the connections of neurons, the greater the myelin insulation, the quicker one can retrieve information and store it in the brain (Tokuhama-Espinosa 97).

One general agreement among language development research is that humans do not learn equally well over their lifespan. Adults cannot learn a new language at the same capacity as an infant, and there is a focus on an explanation for this phenomenon. Lenneberg (cited in Kuhl 5) hypothesizes that the corpus callosum affects language learning. Similarly, E.L. Newport proposed a hypothesis that "less is more" suggesting that infants' "limited cognitive capacities actually allow superior learning of the simplified language spoken to infants" (Kuhl 5).

Language Acquisition Research Analysis

Languages have been the object of study for thousands of years, and they continue to be an important topic in the research world. Upon reflection on my experiences with learning Spanish as a second language, I selected the following studies that are discussed below, which include "Second language acquisition in a study abroad context: A comparative investigation of the effects of study abroad and foreign language instruction on the L2 learner's grammatical

development" by Martin Howard, "Negative Feedback and learner uptake in analytic foreign language teaching" by Katja Lochman, and "On the Role of Passion in Second Language Learning and Flourishing" by Xinjie Chen, Robert J. Vallerand, and Amado M. Padilla. The following studies have been conducted on factors associated with second language acquisition, which include a study abroad context, teaching styles of foreign languages, and the role of passion in learning a second language. These specific studies represent the factors I deem most important in second-language learning. They were selected for analysis in this paper due to their reliability as a learner of a second language. I will now analyze the three sources and their factors towards second language acquisition, as well as reflect on my personal experiences.

Study 1

Throughout my years of education in the Spanish language and culture, I have always been told that it is near impossible to become fluent in a language without traveling to a country where it is spoken and immersing oneself in the language for extended periods. After spending ten weeks in Spain, I could understand significantly more Spanish, and my confidence in speaking the language increased as well. The main reason a student would study abroad is to improve their language proficiency but studying abroad can lead to personal and academic growth, as well as a better understanding of another culture.

Previous research on the impacts of study abroad includes a study by Barbara Freed in 1998 that investigates the grammatical skills of American learners of the French language who were participating in a study abroad program in France in comparison to instructed learners in the United States. A comparative analysis was made of the written productions of both groups of learners. Results showed that there were no differences between the two groups concerning their grammar. Results of reactions of native speakers of the language also failed to identify any

differences. A similar study by Thom Huebner (1995) investigates grammatical development in the early stages of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and it also fails to find differences between American learners of Japanese studying in Japan versus instructed learners of Japanese in the United States. His results reveal that in the early stages of SLA, study abroad is no more beneficial than classroom instruction, and vice versa. A third study by Dekeyser (1991) compares American learners of Spanish who were spending a semester in Spain and instructed learners of Spanish in the United States. His results also do not show a higher positive effect of studying abroad on the learner's grammatical accuracy, but the learners did have significant gains in fluency and lexical development.

While studies such as these show that studying abroad does not have a higher impact on grammar in comparison to classroom instruction, several other studies have shown that studying abroad greatly benefits the learner's fluency. In her comparative study, Barbara Freed concludes that study abroad learners speak significantly faster and have longer streams of continuous speech compared to classroom learners. Finally, the most beneficial effect of studying abroad has been noted to be the learner's lexical acquisition. In a study of British study abroad students learning Spanish in Spain, the researchers find that the learners not only demonstrated a "native-like organization of their lexicon" but also a more expansive lexical range (Ife et al.).

The first study examined in this paper is "Second language acquisition in a study abroad context: A comparative investigation of the effects of study abroad and foreign language instruction on the L2 learner's grammatical development" by *Martin Howard*. Howard investigates the effect of study abroad and foreign language instruction. This study in particular focuses on grammar accuracy among three groups of L2 learners. The study was conducted with

18 Irish university students who were all in their twenties and learning the French language. For data collection, the learners participated in a sociolinguistic interview that lasted approximately one hour and followed conversational modules proposed by William Labov in *Principles of Linguistic Change. Volume I: Internal Factors* (1994). These modules are intended to elicit natural spontaneous speech from the learners. Following the data collection and interview process, the learners were classified into three groups depending on their level of instruction and their residence in the target language community. Group 1 learners were at the time of the study, about to participate in a study abroad program in France, following their two years of instruction at the university level. Group 2 learners had a similar experience of instruction but had just returned from an academic year studying in France. They took French courses but did not receive formal language instruction in French. Group 3 learners had not participated in any study abroad program and had taken another year of language instruction at their university instead.

Martin Howard states that when analyzing the differences in classroom instruction versus study abroad, it is important to identify whether linguistic development is “uniform across the various components which constitute the learner’s global linguistic repertoire in the L2, or whether study abroad facilitates greater developments on certain components which classroom instruction does not, and vice versa” (Howard 496). This study includes a comparative investigation of Irish advanced learners of French in a study abroad context versus classroom instruction. Howard’s results show that immersion in study abroad is more beneficial than instruction alone. This study focuses on “the issue of the specificity of linguistic development facilitated by study abroad as opposed to foreign language instruction” (Howard 497). It particularly reports on the effect of study abroad as opposed to foreign language instruction on the development of the learner’s grammatical skills.

The investigation focused on factors of grammatical aspect, inherent lexical aspect, and discourse grounding, as well as the effect of verb (ir)regularity, syntactic context, and the presence/absence of temporal adverbials. His findings concluded that the study abroad learners of group 2 demonstrated a higher level of accuracy than the other groups regarding their grammar in the preterit and imperfect tense. No significant differences were found between the instructed learners of groups 1 and 3, and their accuracy in the use of past tense forms do not differ greatly. Finally, the results show that study abroad and classroom instruction do not have extreme differences in the learner's grammatical skills, yet the study abroad learners' use of aspectuo-temporal markers and overall flow of speech is positively impacted by their study abroad experience.

The reasoning behind a study such as that conducted by Martin Howard is to further understand how much more beneficial it is to immerse oneself in a foreign language for extended periods, in comparison to exposure to a foreign language through an instructor in a classroom. Investigation into such issues is important within the field of second language acquisition, and it can provide information on the potential of the second language acquisition process across different contexts of learning.

Study 2

The second study in this analysis is “Negative Feedback and learner uptake in analytic foreign language teaching” by Katja Lochtman. This study focuses on feedback and error correction in foreign language instructors. The questions that Katja Lochtman poses in this study are "what kinds of oral corrective feedback constitute a foreign language teaching context where

the focus is on forms?" and "how can the different kinds of oral corrective feedback be accounted for in terms of noticing the feedback?" (Lochtman).

When learning a second language, there are typically two or more parties involved: the learner and the instructor. There are many methods of teaching a second language (L2), and each student will respond differently to each teaching method. When learning a foreign language, it is common for students to be provided with negative feedback on their errors. The way teachers give this feedback is dependent on different factors such as the teacher's personality and attitude towards negative feedback. According to Michael Long in "The Role of Implicit Negative Feedback in SLA", focusing on correcting the form of students when teaching a foreign language "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (358). Foreign language teaching activities depend on the context of instruction of foreign language acquisition. Another feature of foreign language teaching is a negotiation of meaning, which is an interaction between the instructor and the learner and serves the purpose of solving problems in understanding, as well as breaking down and repairing language errors. This occurs in situations where the teacher or language instructor initiates a correction, and the student is given the opportunity to correct themselves. This helps students to notice the feedback they are given and so they are more likely to notice these corrections in the future. Negotiation requires students to actively take part in meaningful interaction, which parallels "real language use," as it is a characteristic of parent and child roles in first language acquisition. Several studies investigate the benefits of meaningful interaction within language acquisition, but on its own it is not enough for complete fluency or high levels of accuracy in the second language.

In a study by Karin Kleppin and Frank Königs (1991), students were investigated on their corrections of the foreign language and retention of the correction. Through analyses of classroom recording, questionnaires, and retrospection, it was found that only one-third of the students remembered that they had been corrected, but corrections that were explicit and had a repetition of the correct answer were more memorable to the students.

Oral corrective feedback in foreign language acquisition should be used with the negotiation of/for meaning to provide the most appropriate correction. Explicit error correction is not common in everyday speech, nor is it used outside of a foreign language classroom, which has caused researchers to look for means of using negative feedback in less direct ways. Michael Long characterized implicit negative feedback as "recasts" that occur "in the form of implicit correction immediately following an ungrammatical learner utterance" (359).

A recast is a reformulation by the teacher of the student's words, with the error removed from the sentence. Recasts help learners to make an immediate comparison between their errors and the target language. As mentioned before, studies show that students do not always remember their corrections during a class period, but "when consistent with psycholinguistic principles, recasts can deliver negative feedback favoring cognitive insight involving the noticing of inter-language vs target language differences" (Lochtman 338).

Lochtman's study is classroom-based. Three teachers of German were observed during their classes where they required the L2 learners to read a short text aloud. The teachers' oral corrections were recorded - and the data analyzed consisted of 12 lessons of 600 minutes. A correction initiated by the teacher was used as the unit of analysis, and for a correction to occur, there needed to be first an error spoken by the student. A correction can be a teacher-initiated

teacher correction (CT), or a teacher-initiated pupil correction (CP). According to Lochtmann (341), a teacher-initiated student correction consists of four correction moves:

1. Clarification requests. This creates an opportunity for the learners to clarify their errors by rephrasing or expanding.
2. Metalinguistic feedback. The teacher raises the learner's awareness using comments that explicitly indicate that an error has occurred.
3. Elicitations. These refer to situations where the teacher allows the learner to "fill in the blank," indicating that the learner should reformulate their utterance.
4. Repetitions. This refers to the teachers repeating, in isolation, the learner's error.

In these four types of feedback, the correct form is not provided by the teacher.

During the 600 minutes or ten hours of recordings of the German Foreign Language classes, there were 394 correction sequences identified for the three teachers combined.

Lochtmann's first question of what kinds of oral corrective feedback constitute an FLT context where the focus is on form can be answered by her findings that teachers are more likely to push their students to correct themselves through metalinguistic feedback and elicitations. To answer her second question of how different kinds of oral corrective feedback can be accounted for in terms of noticing the feedback, the uptake findings in the study show that in 52% of the CTs (teacher-initiated teacher correction) there is zero uptake, whereas with the CP's (teacher-initiated pupil-corrections) more than 95% result in uptake.

One dilemma found in the results is that previous studies suggest that negotiations of form "foster opportunities for classroom foreign language learning because learners are likely to notice that they are being corrected and are pushed to produce output as well" (Lyster et al. 38).

Lochtman's findings indicate that the outcome of negotiations was not very successful. Over 50% of the uptake included a new error or still needed correction in another manner. The students only noticed the gap in less than 50% of the teacher-initiated student-generated attempts at repair. Since the uptake is so high, it can be concluded that the students at least recognized that they needed to produce a new output.

A question to further investigate from this study could be whether one kind of corrective feedback is preferred and more effective as opposed to another correction form. Multiple factors play a role in determining the most effective method of correcting mistakes made by students. Further research in this area can help to find whether learner uptake is considered an effective indicator that learners recognize the feedback given by teachers.

Study 3

I was in seventh grade when I realized that I was not only interested in the Spanish language, but I loved learning it and I became determined to achieve fluency. Passion and interest can be a "make or break" factor when it comes to learning an L2, and it is a necessary component to become bilingual.

According to the Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP), passion is defined as "a strong inclination toward a specific object, activity, concept, or person that loves (or at least strongly likes) and highly values, that is part of identity, and that leads one to invest time and energy in the activity on a regular basis" (Vallerand 2015). According to Xinjie Chen (3), there are two types of passion, Harmonious Passion (HP) and Obsessive passion (OP). HP is a person's strong liking towards an activity, with voluntary engagement for pleasure. Harmonious passion allows people to be involved in their desired activity while remaining in control of it. Obsessive Passion

refers to “one’s participation in the beloved activity due to internal or external pressure” (3). People with OP are likely to experience conflicts between aspects of their life and their passionate activities. OP leads to a conflict between the self and one's life because the OP originates in a controlled internalization of the activity, and eventually the person loses control over the passionate activity.

The DMP model predicts that HP tends to lead to more cognitive, affective behavioral outcomes in comparison to OP. In a recent review of 100 studies, T. Curran investigated the impact of passion on well-being, motivation, cognitive outcomes, and behavioral performance. This research showed that HP "leads to more adaptive outcomes than OP across different types of outcomes and a host of activities ranging from sports, work, education, leisure, etc." (Curran et al. 635). Another benefit of HP is that it improves aspects of life outside of the passionate activity, in contrast to OP. People with harmonious passion find a sense of enjoyment and identity in the activity they are passionate about and can transfer these positive emotions to areas in all aspects of life to find enjoyment elsewhere. People with obsessive passions experience fewer positive emotions and experiences while participating in the activity, which can create negative reactions to their psychological well-being such as burnout. Passion connects identity with an activity and getting involved in a passionate activity can aid one to develop one’s sense of self by incorporating the activity with one’s identity, thus causing positive experiences and outcomes (Chen et al. 6).

The goal of the third study by Xinjie Chen, Robert J. Vallerand, and Amado M. Padilla was to "examine the positive side of L2 learning, by focusing on the role of passion in learning an L2 and associated psychological processes that may contribute to positive outcomes related to L2 learning and psychological well-being" (Chen et al 2). The authors sought to investigate how

passion contributes to L2 learning, and they did this by testing a process model that combines passion mastery goals, flow in L2, mastery goals, and adaptive outcomes in second language learning as well as outside of the activity in a person's life. It was predicted that mastery goals and flow in L2 would positively impact willingness to communicate in L2 and flourishing. The participants were 260 high school students in Taiwan, and they completed a survey that assessed their experiences of L2 learning with Chinese as their first language and English as their second. The questionnaire included demographic questions as well as a scale that assessed their level of interest and passion in L2 learning (Chen et al 6).

It was hypothesized that HP and OP would predict L2 flow and L2 mastery goals, and in turn, they were expected to lead to flourishing and willingness to communicate in the L2. The results suggest that Harmonious Passion strongly predicts positive L2 experiences of flow and mastery goals more than Obsessive Passion. Similarly, L2 flow and L2 mastery goals are found to lead to a willingness to communicate in L2 and psychological flourishing outside of the L2 learning experience. The main conclusion of the study is that passion has an impact on second language acquisition. Passion predicted several outcomes when applying the Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP). The two types of passion predicted mastery goals and flow in L2 learning, whereas HP had a more positive relationship with the flow and mastery goals in comparison to OP. HP leads to a higher level of self-improvement and engagement. Another conclusion is that positive L2 experiences of flow and mastery goals "mediate the link between passion and other outcomes in the L2", and that passion in the L2 activity can lead to less anxiety and negative emotions during the activity (Chen et al. 12). This study suggests that mastery goals in L2 lead to outcomes outside of the L2 activity such as flourishing in one's life. Positive experiences within L2 learning are associated with one's well-being. Finally, passion, more specifically Harmonious

Passion contributes to self-growth and directly contributes to flourishing through mastery goals. HP can motivate a person to learn a second language while also having positive emotions and experiencing a balanced lifestyle. Future research in the area can be used to determine other outcomes such as long-term L2 proficiency and retention, or desire to travel to the host country of the L2 (Chen et al. 14).

Reflection of Personal L2 Learning Experience

My family moved to Denver, Colorado when I was five years old, and we have lived there ever since. The demographics of Denver are predominantly Caucasian where most of the inhabitants speak English. According to the World Population Review, “74.46% of Denver residents speak only English, while 25.54% speak other languages. The non-English language spoken by the largest group is Spanish, which is spoken by 19.15% of the population” (Denver, Colorado Population 2022). Outside of school, there was little Latin-American influence and or exposure to the Spanish language in everyday life. I am of Caucasian descent, and everyone in my immediate family grew up speaking only the English language in the home. I attended a gifted and talented magnet school from kindergarten through eighth grade where Spanish was a required foreign language.

Elementary through University Level Spanish Education

My first few years of Spanish classes included many songs and games, which allowed me to build my vocabulary. Some activities that stood out the most to me in elementary school were the school-wide events the Spanish department organized. We used to dedicate entire school days to turning the classrooms into a restaurant, or a Mercado where the students would be assigned a role and had to order food or negotiate using Spanish. Soccer games were held in which the students would take on roles as athletes, referees, coaches, etc. and we would use

soccer vocabulary to communicate throughout the entire game. We, students, even had to teach our parents how to cheer and watch the game using Spanish. These activities not only allowed us to practice using our Spanish knowledge but also taught us aspects of culture in Spanish-speaking communities.

My school instilled the importance of learning a foreign language very early in the students' education, which I am very appreciative of. Learning Spanish would have been much more difficult if I had started later, and I would not have had the same passion and interest in the language. Starting foreign language classes early allowed me to be accustomed to the L2 learning process, ultimately making it easier for me to acquire the language.

It wasn't until the end of middle school that I started to take my Spanish classes much more seriously, and I began to fall in love with the language. My Spanish classes in the first years of middle school do not particularly stand out in my memory, but I remember seventh-grade Spanish very clearly. My teacher was a passionate woman who was very strict when it came to class, and many of my peers dreaded going to her class. I learned so much during that year, and to this day I still remember the songs she taught us to remember verb conjugations. This year was when my passion for Spanish sparked, and I knew that it would take on a big role in my future education.

By the beginning of high school, I knew that I wanted to become fluent in Spanish and pursue studying the language and culture in college and use it in my future career. I took Spanish classes every semester, and they were always my favorite. My high school Spanish teachers were very supportive and helped me to get on the right track for college. I learned early on the benefits of traveling when learning a second language. It is very difficult to become completely fluent in a language by classroom instruction only. Immersion in a language and culture is

necessary to fully master a language. I was planning on participating in a college study abroad program before I knew what I wanted my major to be.

During the spring semester of 2021, I took a Spanish conversation class at the University of South Dakota to prepare myself for my study abroad program the following summer. In this class, we spent time each week conversing with students from Lima, Peru who were studying English as their second language. This class, more specifically the activities with the Peruvian students, greatly improved my confidence in holding a conversation in Spanish, and these skills were implemented and further strengthened during my time abroad.

Study Abroad

During the summer before my final year in college, I participated in a ten-week study abroad program in Granada, Spain. The program was an intensive Spanish language course where I had two sessions of advanced Spanish grammar classes. Studying abroad was one of the most beneficial things I could have done to aid my development with the Spanish language. Not only did my conversation skills improve, but I gained confidence as a Spanish speaker and learned much about the city of Granada and the history of Spain. Living in a new country inspired me to travel and live abroad post-graduation. Before my study abroad experience and the classes leading up to it, I was very reserved when it came to speaking in Spanish outside of a classroom setting. I had no issues regarding class participation, but the thought of having a full conversation with a native Spanish speaker made me incredibly nervous. Even though I could carry out a conversation, I held back in fear of being judged for not having perfect grammar or pronunciation.

My first week in Spain was very overwhelming and busy. It was filled with tours and orientation meetings, all while battling jet lag and using a language that is different than what I am used to at home. Once classes started, I was fully adjusted to the new city and was already feeling more confident in using Spanish. I noticed that all the thoughts in my head would be in English, and then in Spanish. I would subconsciously think something, and then translate that in my head, even if I wasn't expressing the thought out loud. I began to journal about my experiences abroad and I wrote down all the new vocabulary words I learned in a little notebook. Each weekend we traveled to another city in the southern region of Spain, Andalusia. While I stayed in this region for the duration of my trip, I met many Spaniards from other regions and learned a lot about the different dialects common in Spain. The director of my study abroad program was from northern Spain, she spoke clearly and was much easier to understand in comparison to my host family, who spoke quickly, and cut off the final letters of most words.

Classes were held in the Center for Modern Languages at the University of Granada, where I attended four hours of class each weekday. These classes were some of the most difficult Spanish courses I have taken, but the amount of information I learned in a short summer was equivalent to an entire year of instruction in the United States. My professors were born and raised in Granada, and they had much more to teach us than just grammar and writing. They shared many stories about the history, culture, and the locals of Spain, and they taught me things that I wouldn't learn in a typical classroom in the United States.

I stayed with a host family which consisted of an elderly woman named Isabel, and her sister Lucita. The two spoke very little English but were very helpful and patient regarding communication. I spoke the most Spanish when I was in the home with Isabel and Lucita. Dinner

time is very important for Spaniards- it is a time to converse with the family over traditional Spanish cuisine, and sometimes it can last for hours. This was when I did the most conversing in Spanish, and my skills were strengthened the most. My host mother did not know much English, so it was difficult at times to translate certain words, but I rarely had to use the translator on my phone. Isabel and I would find ways to explain words to each other that the other was not familiar with, and we talked about topics ranging from my personal life in the U.S. to secrets that only the locals of Granada knew. Dinner time was not only a time for bonding with my host family and learning more about the city but was my main outlet for practicing and improving my Spanish without judgment or pressure.

One struggle during the program abroad was attempting to use Spanish in public with the locals. Depending on the location, Spaniards are more or less likely to converse with you in Spanish rather than in English. At many restaurants or stores, the staff can tell when a foreigner enters the establishment, and they will automatically resort to English due to the high numbers of tourists, especially during the summer. While this can be comforting at times, my goal was to push myself out of my comfort zone during study abroad and to use Spanish in as many situations as possible. Many times, at a restaurant or similar establishment, a server would welcome me in English, but once I expressed that I was learning Spanish they were more than happy to engage in a Spanish conversation. Other times, they would get impatient and continue to speak to me in English.

Being uncomfortable in public settings made it easy to resort back to what was comfortable: speaking English with the other students in my program from the United States. We spent a lot of time together, and it was very easy to speak to each other in English rather than

continue to use Spanish after a long day of classes. While we did speak in English when we were overwhelmed by our classes and host families, we challenged each other every day to continue to improve our Spanish skills, and we wanted to take advantage of every opportunity to practice. There is a difference in the flow of a conversation between a non-native speaker and a native speaker versus two non-native speakers of the language. In a conversation where one party is fluent, they can guide the other speaker and explain what is misunderstood. In a conversation with two non-native speakers, it typically has a slower pace and requires lots of patience.

The hardest challenge I faced in Spain was learning humor in Spanish. It is a difficult task to understand humor in a different language, which can be disheartening and frustrating to many L2 learners. Not only does humor vary from language to language, but also throughout different countries and regions. Humor is commonly used to "break the ice" in a conversation and understanding humor requires more than one's linguistic ability; it requires an understanding of cultural context. One must have a skilled proficiency in the language to fully comprehend humor, and it can feel isolating when one does not have this ability. Understanding and implementing humor was very challenging during my trip to Spain because humor is a large part of my colloquial speech in English. I use humor when meeting new people, as it is a good tool to use when attempting to make friends. It was difficult to put myself in that position while using Spanish when my knowledge of the language included factual speech rather than colloquial humor. It is not always amusing to have serious conversations continuously, and not fully comprehending Spanish humor made it difficult to not resort back to English to be more comfortable.

After my program abroad, I returned to school in the United States. I was eager to see how Spanish classes at my university would be different after my time in Spain, and I started the school year with Spanish Literature and Linguistics classes. Before traveling abroad, I was able to understand my professors when they spoke in Spanish, but I had to be mindful of what they were saying, and sometimes had difficulty hearing when they spoke quicker than usual. Upon returning from Spain, I could comprehend 100% of what my professors said and did not have to actively translate what they were saying. In both my classes that semester, the curriculum included the history of Spain and even the city of Granada. It was exciting to learn more about the country I had recently lived in while being able to relate the things we learned about to the experiences I had just weeks before. To this day I keep in touch with Isabel, and she is always interested in my classes in the United States and is very pleased to hear when I am studying about her country and home.

Negative/corrective feedback.

When learning a new language, the learner must make mistakes. If the learner says something incorrectly, and they are not made aware of the mistake, there is no way for them to correct themselves and avoid that same mistake in the future. This can seem intimidating to some students, myself included. Throughout high school, my fear of making a mistake in front of my classmates and teachers prevented me from participating to a great extent during class, which also inhibited me from practicing speaking Spanish as much as I needed to. I did not realize the full importance of making errors and being corrected by peers and professors until my college courses. When I was paired with a Peruvian student in my Spanish conversation class, I was very nervous to speak to her in her native language, thinking that she would lose patience with me if I

was struggling to say something or judge me if I said something incorrectly. I was quickly proven wrong because my partner was equally nervous to speak to me in English. We helped each other when one of us was stuck in the translation, and it was a very comfortable experience. This helped my overall confidence in holding a conversation in Spanish because I realized that without making errors and grammatical mistakes in my speech, I will not improve at my desired rate.

As discussed in the language acquisition research analysis, every L2 learner responds differently to different teaching styles. Katja Lochtmann investigated the effects of negative feedback in a foreign language classroom, and her research shows positive improvements in students who were corrected by their instructors during class time. The most effective method was found to be when instructors notified the student that they have made an error and pushed the student to correct themselves. This allows the student to not only recognize their mistake but to find the correct answer to their mistake, further implementing it into their memory.

I have had a variety of Spanish teachers and professors throughout my education. Some left a more positive influence on my Spanish language journey than others. I found that I learn best when corrected by an instructor. Earlier in my education, I would be so embarrassed if I was corrected during a class, and this embarrassment would prevent me from making that same mistake ever again while speaking Spanish. This is something that many professors and language instructors need to take into consideration when teaching a language. Some students will feel discouraged if they are constantly being corrected for their errors. Some errors will be left uncorrected by an instructor to prevent unnecessary frustration that will cause the student to refrain from participating further. Later in my education, I became more comfortable with

making mistakes and being corrected, and making errors would serve as a learning opportunity rather than an embarrassing moment.

One teacher I had in high school used negative feedback during her class, but she used it in a way that was not the most beneficial to students. When someone spoke and made an error, she would tell them they made an error, but then would move on and would not elaborate on the error or allow the student to correct themselves. This caused lots of frustration amongst the students and did not create an ideal learning environment. Other teachers I have had would correct a student without letting the student make the correction on their own. While this still gives the student the correction to their mistake, it does not allow the student to reach the correct answer on their own, further removing a learning opportunity. The professors and teachers who help the students to recognize they made an error and guide them to the correct answer are those who promote a positive and successful learning environment.

Motivation and passion

As discussed, motivation and passion play a large role in second language acquisition, especially with an adult learner outside of the critical learning period. An adult does not simply acquire a second language in the same way that infants do, and active conscious learning is required to achieve fluency. If one is not inspired and driven to learn a second language, fluency is not attainable. I was set on becoming bilingual early on in my Spanish studies, and if I had not found joy in the language that one specific year in middle school, I would not have pursued Spanish to the extent that I did in high school and college.

Throughout all the Spanish classes I have taken, there has been a variety of students. I have met classmates who were only taking Spanish classes for the foreign language requirement, and others like myself who intended to become fluent in the language to pursue it as a career. Those who genuinely enjoyed learning a second language tended to have greater success in the class, as reflected by their grades and overall improvement with the language. Even during my study abroad experience, each student had a different goal regarding the outcome of their time abroad. Some students had the intention of mastering the language, others were specializing in another area of study but wanted to be able to use Spanish in that field of work, and others simply wanted a summer of travel with a low priority for learning the language. Regarding their ability to converse in Spanish, those who took full advantage of the study abroad program by immersing themselves in the language and culture showed the biggest improvement from the beginning to the end of the summer. This was reflected in their confidence in speaking the language as well as through their grades in class. There were weekly "culture exchanges" at different bars and restaurants that the students were able to attend to practice their conversational skills while meeting new people. Local Granadans would attend in hopes of practicing their English in return for helping international students with their Spanish. These opportunities for extra practice added up in the long run and those who were motivated to learn as much as they could in the short time we had in Spain were the ones who showed the most improvement in their language skills.

Regarding passion and motivation in second language acquisition, every learner will find their interests within a language. Some may be drawn towards the literature, some towards the cultural aspects or the history. My foreign languages classes leading up to college were broad grammar and writing classes in Spanish, but once I reached the University level, I was able to

take more specific Spanish classes tailored to my interests. I quickly realized that Spanish phonetics and linguistics were something I loved to learn about. I wanted to learn about all the dialects of Spanish and how the language varies across the world, further fueling my desire to travel.

In conclusion, the process of acquiring a second language has many contributing factors that affect the overall fluency of the speaker. Age of exposure, level of input, intensity of exposure or studying as well as person motivation all play a role in second language acquisition. Knowledge of multiple languages can provide many cultural, intellectual, and occupational opportunities as well as provide someone with a sense of belonging to a community.

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