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Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning

FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

2ND SEMESTER 2020

ASSIGNMENT 2

**SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
(SLA721S)**



Dear Student

Thank you for submitting your second assignment on time. It was our pleasure to mark it. Hope your marks are good if not work hard in the final test, which is scheduled for the last of before the semester break. It was evident that many fail to still follow instructions as outlined in the assignment. There are still students who are failing to reference, both in the text and when compiling a reference list. There is some improvement in terms of plagiarism. It is important to note that all sources consulted should be acknowledged at all times. Direct quotes should be accompanied by page numbers. Some students tend to copy texts that do not fit well with the question. It is evident that many did not read the recommended books but simply rely on the study guide and website articles. Please read more on the course and topics to enrich your mind and share knowledge. Issues such as structuring paragraphs, punctuations, aligning sentences/paragraphs were not well attended to. You need to improve on all identified matters. Remember that you usually lose marks for not following instructions. Read the comments that you find in your assignment. If there is anything that you are still unsure of, do not hesitate to contact the marker-tutor.

We wish you all the best in test 2.

Regards,

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Course Name: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Course Code: SLA721S

Department: COMMUNICATION

Course Duration: SEMESTER 2

NQF Level and Credit: LEVEL 7, 14 CREDITS

Your marker-tutor for SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The Namibia University of Science and Technology has appointed **ANNELI NGHIKEMBUA** as marker-tutor for **SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

ANNELI NGHIKEMBUA will be at your service, should you experience any problems with your studies or with the assignments. Contact details are as follows:

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E-mail: anghikembua@nust.na

Your moderator for SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The Namibia University of Science and Technology has appointed Dr Nauseb as the moderator for **SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Email: lnamaseb@unam.na



ASSIGNMENT 2

This assignment covers the following aspects:

- Why study second language acquisition
- Theories of second language acquisition

Learning outcomes:

- *Evaluate and discuss the importance of studying* second language acquisition
- *Critique* theories of language acquisition

Assignment 2 [50 Marks]

Question 1 [25]

1.1) Write an essay of not more than 2 pages, in which you argue why the study of second language acquisition is important to you as a student studying towards a Bachelor of English.

Title & intro [2], Discussion/argument [15], layout [3], references [5]

- ***Responses may vary among students. Students argue from their own perspectives. Some students do not seem to have read the question carefully and mistook it for a discussion on why learn a second language. Instead of focusing on the study of the course self. The course outline clearly stipulates why study this course, what may you gain from it. Below are just some pointers.***

The study of second language acquisition is important for teaching and learning. The main goal of SLA is to find out how learners acquire a second language (L2). One gets to learn the diverse interpretation of the underlying theories that have eventually paved the way in understanding the very nature of SLA and their functions to language learning and teaching. Studying SLA enable one to develop a set of hypotheses and/or claims about how people acquire a second language and learn this language at a later stage.

Some of the specific goals of SLA thus will include the following:

- The description of L2 acquisition.
- The explanation; identifying the external and internal factors that account for why learners acquire an L2 in the way they do.



- The social environment in which learning takes place that is, the social conditions influence the opportunities that learners have to hear and speak the language; and the attitudes that they develop towards it.

Question 2

[25]

2.1 Distinguish between social interactionist and mentalist (innatist) view on language acquisition.

[Students responses will vary. Below are some points for consideration]

Interactionist theory

The father of this theory is Vygotsky. He states that social interaction plays an important role in the learning process and proposed the zone of proximal development (ZPD), where learners construct the new language through socially mediated interaction (Brown in Shanon, 2005). The basic concept in interactionism, or sometimes called social-interactionism, states that:

1. children have some innate knowledge of the structure of language
2. but also require meaningful interaction with others

A child who is not exposed to people speaking some kind of language will not be able to acquire language at all. Thus, a child learns a language that the people around him or her speak. In contrast to the work of Chomsky, more recent theorists have stressed the importance of the language input children receive from their care-givers. Language exists for the purpose of communication and can only be learned in the context of interaction with people who want to communicate with you. Interactionists such as Jerome Bruner suggest that the language behaviour of adults when talking to children (known by several names by most easily referred to as child-directed speech or CDS) is specially adapted to support the acquisition process. This support is often described to as scaffolding for the child's language learning. Bruner also coined the term Language Acquisition Support System or LASS in response to Chomsky's LAD.

Innatist [mentalist]

The father of most nativist theories of language acquisition is Noam Chomsky, who brought greater attention to the innate capacity of children for learning language. Nativist linguistic theories hold that



children learn through their natural ability to organise the laws of language, but cannot fully utilize this talent without the presence of other humans. Chomsky claims that children are born with a hard-wired Language Acquisition Device (LAD) in their brains. They are born with the major principles of language in place, but with many parameters to set (such as whether sentences in the language(s) they are to acquire must have explicit subjects). According to nativist theory, when the young child is exposed to a language, their LAD makes it possible for them to set the parameters and deduce the grammatical principles, because the principles are innate.

There are important arguments both for and against Chomsky's view of development. One idea central to the Chomskian view is the idea of Universal Grammar, which posits that all languages have the same basic underlying structure, and that specific languages have rules that transform these underlying structures into the specific patterns found in given languages. Another argument is that without a propensity for language, human infants would be unable to learn such complete speech patterns in a natural human environment where complete sentences are the exception.

2.2 From the two views, which one would you side with and why? Provide arguments. You may also draw from what you have learnt from the course.

You may also draw from other readings to substantiate your responses. This depends on arguments that students would give. Relevant examples are required.

END OF ASSIGNMENT 2



2. Plagiarism and Deduction of Marks

Students should be informed that marks will be deducted if they do not adhere to the rules of the University according to Rule AC3.2.

All assignments should be submitted through Turnitin, the similarity software that is integrated into the MOODLE Learning Management System. If plagiarism is detected, marks should be deducted as follows:

% Similarity Detected	FCI	FNRSS	% Marks Deduction
0 – 20	10% - PhD 15% - Masters 20% - Other	10% - Honours and above 15% - Third Year 20% - First & Second Year	0
20 – 40			10
40 – 60			25
60 – 100			100

*** Please note that the % shown above is an average % for all Faculties and should be used as a Guideline.**

Assignments found with a similarity report above 20%, will not be allowed to apply for a remark or a re-check of marks. For students who fall into the 60-100% similarities group, Rule AC3.2 will apply, and the misconduct procedure will start.