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FEATURE ARTICLE

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Second language learning and teaching: From theory to a practical checklist

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Over the past several decades, applied linguistics and second language (L2) acquisition and teaching have been areas of prolific research and have undergone continual development. The purpose of this article is to identify essential themes in the field of applied linguistics, focusing more intensely on teaching and learning second languages in a classroom setting. Given that the current professional literature enjoys a vast selection of high-quality, comprehensive books on second language acquisition, the purpose of this article is to provide a concise yet overarching summary of the most pivotal aspects of second language acquisition research and their implementation in L2 teaching. The article provides theoretical background on linguistic factors involved in L2 learning (exposure and input, output, vocabulary, repetition, and automaticity) and extralinguistic factors (attitudes, motivation, culture, and the teaching/learning experience). Following the description of the theoretical background, pedagogical implications are suggested for each of the theoretical points covered. The discussion is situated in the framework of 21st-century multilingualism in general and translanguaging approaches in particular.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, applied linguistics and second[1] language (L2) acquisition/teaching have been areas of prolific research and have undergone continual development. Language learning

[1]For the sake of simplicity, I refer to foreign, second, third, and additional languages by the more widespread term *second languages*.

professionals and researchers have access to a wide variety of studies by researchers in fields such as linguistics, education, psychology, and sociology. Following years of wide-ranging, meticulous, qualitative and quantitative, short- and long-term studies searching for the most reliable method for teaching additional languages, the field has accumulated a respectable repertoire of teaching approaches. Notwithstanding, teachers and researchers might avoid pointing to one single most successful method that advances learners to a fully functioning level in the target language. As such, this article does not attempt to formulate an explicit, clear-cut answer to the pressing question: How should additional languages be taught? Rather, it identifies essential themes in the field of applied linguistics, focusing explicitly on teaching and learning second languages in a classroom setting.

Given that the current professional literature includes a vast selection of high-quality, comprehensive books on second language acquisition, teachers might feel intimidated by the prospect of scrutinizing full-length second language acquisition books. Therefore, the purpose of this article is twofold. First, it attempts to provide a concise yet overarching summary of the most pivotal aspects of second language acquisition research and their implementation in L2 teaching. Some of the main approaches available are reviewed, and a balanced and encompassing stance to which instructors should aspire is suggested. Second, it invites both beginning and seasoned teachers to ponder their teaching practices and consider implementation of varied alternatives.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 | Linguistic factors involved in L2 learning

2.1.1 | Exposure, input, and intake

How do infants acquire the language of their environment? There is a general consensus that under natural and healthy circumstances, all children learn their native language (L1) as long as they have adequate exposure to the language (Berko-Gleason, 1985; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). This understanding is based on Chomsky's (1959) *universal grammar hypothesis*, which postulates that every healthy individual has an inherent mechanism that allows him or her to develop the grammar of the language to which he or she is exposed. For example, through exposure to the plural form in English, children will naturally discover or develop the grammatical rule of plural formation in English and add /s/ to words when they wish to express the plural. Indeed, children learn the language of the environment regardless of whether they receive reinforcement for correct output or negative feedback for output that deviates from the L1 norm.

Through the years there have been strong repercussions of Chomsky's theory on the field of second language acquisition, underscoring the vital role of exposure in the process. In particular, Krashen's (1985) largely influential *input hypothesis* holds that language is acquired when the second or foreign language learner understands and conveys messages. According to this approach, the role of the teacher is to provide *comprehensible input* (input that is at a slightly higher level than the learner's knowledge) and to create opportunities for the learner to be exposed to L2.

Yet, to shape a more comprehensive theory of language acquisition, Pinker (1996) pointed to additional factors involved in the second language learning process. He stressed that learning is facilitated not only by exposure, but also by the learners' readiness, the learning context, and a series of mental actions that turn input into linguistic knowledge. Moreover, Schmidt (1990, 2001) emphasizes conscious noticing of input as a prerequisite for acquisition. He points out the fact that mere input is not sufficient. Rather, learners need to be attentive to input and aware of it. What

they notice is what carries learning potential, namely, what becomes *intake.* In summary, *exposure* is the language available to the learner, *input* is what "goes in" from all that is available, and *intake* is what is absorbed or internalized.

2.1.2 | Output

Although the input hypothesis furnished researchers and practitioners with answers to theoretical and pedagogical questions, it did not explain, for example, why students in immersion programs,[2] who were exposed to a second language during most of the school day for years, were not as proficient in the L2 as expected. Consequently, careful investigations concluded that exposure and input might not be sufficient. This was fertile ground for the maturation of the *output hypothesis*, which maintains that language production (speaking and writing), under appropriate circumstances, is a fundamental part of the language acquisition process (Swain, 1985, 2005). Output, then, is an integral part of learning and not to be encouraged exclusively after successful and complete mastery of linguistic structures by the learner.

The output hypothesis proposes three major functions of language production in the language acquisition process. First, when attempting to produce language output, learners notice what they do not know in the target language. In other words, output functions as a noticing factor that raises the learner's awareness regarding gaps in his or her linguistic knowledge. This increased awareness triggers cognitive actions leading to an exploration and subsequent acquisition of new knowledge (vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar). The second role of output is hypothesis testing. Output, from the learner's perspective, gives an opportunity to experiment with the language and test hypotheses regarding how to transform an idea into a clear linguistic message in the target language. This hypothesis testing occurs mainly when the interlocutor/reader does not understand the message produced by the learners, thus encouraging them to reformulate the language output. This process of discovery and investigation is seen as an invaluable factor in the second language learning process. Finally, the *metalinguistic* function of the output is to enable the learner, through language production and negotiation of meaning with peers, to reflect on his or her and others' language and language use. This function is based on Vygotsky's (1978) *sociocultural theory*, according to which learning stems from social experience and from mediating actions with peers or with oneself (Swain, 2005). This forms a solid theoretical foundation for the use of the target language in the classroom, through activities such as retelling a story in pairs or in groups, role-playing, writing, and other activities that entail active (albeit at times imperfect) language production.

Within this framework, it is imperative to consider the employment of writing activities to foster language learning. Manchón (2011) refers to two dimensions of L2 writing: the commonsense dimension of *learning to write* whereby L2 students learn to translate ideas into the written form of L2 and the less often considered *writing to learn* dimension. The latter presupposes that writing expedites language learning beyond writing skills. In fact, writing should be used to learn content and to learn the language itself. The use of writing in the language learning process has been supported by investigations carried out by several researchers such as Cummins (1990), Hyland (2011), and Williams (2013). These studies reveal that writing augments learners' focus on form, their ability to reflect on language, and their deep processing of the language.

[2]Immersion programs are educational settings in which the student is immersed in the target language (foreign or second) throughout the school day. Language is used to teach part or all of the curriculum and not studied as a subject.

It is important to situate additional language use in the framework of 21st-century multilingualism in general and translanguaging approaches in particular. Whereas "native-like proficiency" has been the ultimate goal of language teachers and learners for decades, more recent translanguaging research invites practitioners to adopt a more dynamic stance regarding second language learning and use. Translanguaging refers to multilingual proficiency as a set of integrated linguistic systems (Canagarajah, 2005). Similarly, Cook (1995) rejects the idea that bilingual proficiency is equivalent to two separate and parallel monolingual abilities and maintains that multicompetent speakers must not be judged according to monolingual standards. Speakers of an additional language should be seen as successful L2 users rather than failed native speakers. Translanguaging-based additional language pedagogy draws on learners' complex multilingualities, linguistic repertoires, and multilingual selves as a resource—not as a problem (see Ruiz, 1984, for a discussion on language as a resource).

2.1.3 | Interaction

Interactional approaches to language acquisition emphasize that an integration of both concepts described above (input and output) are paramount in successful language learning processes. In general, classroom activities that are based on cogent allocation of comprehensible input and opportunities for interaction "transcend individual factors and have been shown to be far more predictable for success among all learners, young and old" (Pica, 2010, p. 5). During in-class small-group conversations, both input and output are present, leading speakers to engage in negotiation of meaning. This, in turn, brings about greater comprehension than that attained when the listener processes unmodified input. Negotiation of meaning also helps novice L2 users become attentive to the effectiveness of message encoding (Mackey, 2013). This attention is vital to the learning process in an interaction, because it may lead the learner to reformulate ungrammatical utterances (Gass & Mackey, 2007). Additionally, in an interaction, the natural occurrence of repetitions, comprehension checks, and clarification requests promotes cognitive processing of, and metacognitive reflection about, linguistic input. Lastly, interactions provide the learner with opportunities to notice the gap in their L2 knowledge as well as gaps between their interlanguage and the input they receive. This gap is noticed either by speakers in their attempt to produce a message or by means of feedback offered by native speakers, teachers, or classmates (Gass & Mackey, 2007; Mackey, 2013).

Recent studies have investigated the potential benefits of interaction in second language learning. Saito and Akiyama (2016) examined the impact of video-based L2 activities on oral production during one academic semester. In their study, Japanese students in an English course in Japan engaged in regular online video conversations with native speakers of English in the United States. After one semester, the Japanese learners displayed gains in various aspects of oral production, such as comprehensibility, fluency, and vocabulary. Similarly, Seedhouse and Walsh (2010) stressed the centrality of social experiences in language acquisition and their impact on classroom methodology. For them, understanding the value of social interaction in language learning entails the implementation of classroom interactive activities in second language teaching approaches. Classroom interaction lends itself to the enactment of several strategies that are conducive to learning. It also offers opportunities for development of numerous aspects of language with or without teacher intervention.

2.1.4 | Vocabulary

In current second language acquisition (SLA) research there is general agreement regarding the significance of vocabulary in the language acquisition process. Researchers have noted, for example, that grammatical errors might reveal nonnativeness without compromising comprehension, whereas a grammatically correct sentence with a lexical mistake will likely lead to its unintelligibility. Vocabulary researchers noted that knowledge of the majority of words in a given text is required for an adequate understanding of its content (Laufer, 1992). Consequently, it is understood that teachers should direct their students' vocabulary expansion and create opportunities for the constant learning of new words.

What are the optimal circumstances for L2 vocabulary learning in classroom settings? Many researchers maintain that deliberate vocabulary learning and teaching are the best predictors of effectual vocabulary development (Elgort, 2011; Laufer, 2005). In a meta-analysis of numerous L2 vocabulary learning studies, Schmitt (2008) concluded that every language course must have an explicit focus on vocabulary with the purpose of maximizing learning and long-term retention of lexical items. He points to the major role that explicit learning tasks play in the vocabulary acquisition process. Schmitt stresses that in order to maximize learning, tasks should include purposeful engagement with, and repeated exposures to, the target words.

A different line of research suggests that the benefits of incidental acquisition of vocabulary through input cannot be ignored, though the process and its outcomes are not fully understood (Huckin & Coady, 1999). In their review of vocabulary acquisition studies, Huckin and Coady (1999) conclude that incidental learning is central to second language vocabulary development, while acknowledging that some conditions apply for this type of implicit learning to occur. These include a lexical knowledge threshold of a few thousand words, an ability to guess from context, repeated exposure to the same lexical items, and input modification. Peters and Webb (2018) list additional word-related factors affecting incidental vocabulary acquisition: word relevance and word cognateness. Accordingly, vocabulary acquisition is partially accounted for by extensive input (Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010) and through extensive reading (Day, 2002). Paradoxically, for incidental learning to occur, some level of attention to target vocabulary is inevitably necessary. Thus, it is suggested that explicit learning tasks be paired with extensive reading for enhanced competence and performance. More recently, Day (2015) extended Day's (2002) principles of extensive reading to include concepts such as supervised extensive reading, independent extensive reading, and blended intensive and extensive reading.

Finally, it is contended that in order for new vocabulary items to be acquired and retained, learners need to engage in deep processing of words. Deep processing occurs when learning necessitates investment of effort, thought, and involvement with the word in context. This stance is supported by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002), who stress the importance of deep processing and rich engagement with words for vocabulary acquisition. Sökmen (1997), too, concluded that activities beyond repetition or translation are more contributive to vocabulary acquisition. Eckerth and Tavakoli (2012) considered writing as advantageous for deep processing and subsequent higher long-term retention, in comparison with activities that required shallower processing.

2.1.5 | Repetition and automaticity

Automaticity in language recognition and production refers to actions such as reading or speaking performed effortlessly, rapidly, and unconsciously (Segalowitz & Hulstijn, 2009). For example, automatic recognition and processing of a written word is done without investment of energy and

attention; likewise regarding the retrieval and production of a vocabulary item when speaking. This level of automaticity, coveted by learners and users of a second language, is often a measure of proficient and fluent speech. It is achieved by consistent and continuous multimodal repetition of language structures. In an investigation of the development of oral fluency through training, De Jong and Perfetti (2011) demonstrated that repetition leads to long-term enhancement of fluency that is sustained across topics. In reading, repeated exposure to printed materials is crucial for the development of automaticity, which in turn is fundamental for reading comprehension (Grabe, 2004).

Traditional teaching methods have recognized the importance of controlled repetition, that is, through reading and printed materials that contain target structures to be practiced and mastered. This is many teachers' preferred method, because they can furnish students with tangible and concrete language exercises (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). Yet it is of utmost importance to facilitate repetition in a creative and communicative context by providing opportunities for new linguistic structures to be used in relevant situations where a genuine need for its use is present (Segalowitz & Gatbonton, 1988). In this context, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) go on to propose the ACCESS (automatization in communicative contexts of essential speech segments) methodology for communicative language teaching that enables specific focus on essential speech segments. In other words, specific language structures are practiced and automatized through genuine interaction in the classroom.

2.2 | Extralinguistic factors involved in L2 learning

2.2.1 | Attitudes

A number of extralinguistic factors have an impact on additional language acquisition. For instance, research points to a reciprocal relationship between language learning and attitudes. When learners have a positive attitude toward the target language and its speakers, they learn more readily than when languages are viewed in a less positive light (Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, & Shohamy, 2004; Gardner, 2010; Gardner, 1985). Gardner (2010) found that, in addition to the impact of positive attitudes toward learning a new language, achievement is correlated with parental attitudes toward the language and its speakers. Knowledge of outgroup members' language, in turn, improves learners' attitudes toward that language, its culture, and its speakers. Studies showed that participation in language courses improved learners' attitudes toward the population that speaks that language (Bekerman, 2005; Guimond & Palmer, 1993). Similarly, Dubiner (2010) found that Jewish elementary school children who studied spoken Arabic as a second language in school judged the Arabic language and the Arab community more favorably than children who did not.

Abu-Rabia's (1995) study showed how negative attitudes toward the target language form a barrier to the comprehensive acquisition of the language and completion of reading comprehension tasks. In his study, Abu-Rabia investigated the relationship between stances and existing knowledge regarding the target culture and second language reading comprehension in three contexts: Israeli Arabs (Hebrew L2), Israeli Jews (Arabic L2), and Canadian Arabs (English L2). Findings showed that the reading comprehension of Israeli students (Jews and Arabs alike) improved significantly when the story was related to their own culture and not the one of the target language, whereas Canadian students, who did not live in a conflict area, did not display an apparent influence of the content of the story on reading comprehension ability.

In an article reviewing dozens of studies in the field, Masgoret and Gardner (2003) summarized findings that suggest a clear relationship among attitude, motivation, and achievement. Learners

possessing positive attitudes toward a language or a community that speaks a certain language will have higher motivation to invest effort in language learning.

2.2.2 | Motivation

Motivation, etymologically related to the word *motor*, is characteristic of people who have the initiative and the persistence (or a "motor" that mobilizes them) to complete a task or reach a goal. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) define a motivated person as someone who "wants to achieve a certain goal, invests considerable effort to reach this goal, and his/her experiences relating to goal achievements bring him/her joy" (p. 2). In addition to this definition, Gardner (2010) describes additional characteristics of motivated people and notes that they persevere until the goal is met; they have goals, aspirations, and wishes; they find pleasure and interest in the attempts to reach the goal; they become disappointed with failures; and they take deliberate steps to achieve their goals. We refer to inherent motivation, then, when learners are internally prone to learn a language (e.g., due to intellectual curiosity or the personal need for achievement; Dörnyei, 2003).

Motivation for language learning can be measured according to three dimensions: *motivational intensity* (level of invested effort to learn the language), *desire to learn the target language* (to what extent the learner wishes to reach a high level of command in the target language), and *attitudes toward the language* (emotional aspects of the language learning experience; Gardner, 2010). Gardner (2010) goes on to note that within the broader concept of motivation, there are two types of orientations. *Integrative orientation* refers to learners' affinity with the target language speech community and their desire to become part of it: the combination of this positive attitude, the desire to learn the language, and the willingness to invest work in order to learn it form the concept of integrative motivation. The second type of orientation in learning additional languages is *instrumental orientation,* referring to practical reasons for acquiring an additional language, such as academic success and the desire to obtain better employment opportunities. There is no connection between this type of orientation and the speaker's desire to become a member of the target language speech community. Instrumental orientation in the context of school-based language instruction refers to practical reasons for success in the school context.

Although past research focused mostly on social and pragmatic aspects of motivation to acquire additional languages, additional studies expanded on Gardner's model. These added components such as external motivation, which refers to multiple environmental and contextual factors that motivate students to learn (e.g., anticipating external rewards such as good grades). Additional motivational factors affect the learning situation, including the nature of classroom tasks, class atmosphere, team spirit, subject matter, and learning materials. In this regard, task motivation is a significant element of the second language teaching enterprise. This kind of motivation is present when the task itself is so interesting or challenging that it lends itself to completion, even to the seemingly most unmotivated learner. Usually given in a classroom setting by the teacher, motivating tasks drive students to engage and subsequently learn in a classroom setting (Dörnyei, 2003). In this respect, Oxford (2016) asserts that "learners become engaged in that which they consider meaningful and try to avoid that which they feel is not meaningful" (p. 25). It is crucial, then, that teachers maximize diversity and interest when preparing learning tasks for their students.

2.2.3 | Culture

There exists a clear relationship between L2 knowledge and familiarity with the target culture. Knowing the cultural background of the population that speaks the target language contributes to

its understanding, and vice versa—as language proficiency increases, so does the level of knowledge and familiarity with the target culture. As observed by Schulz (2007), familiarity with the target culture improves the communicative abilities of the learner due to the acquisition of tools that bring about the understanding of sociolinguistic rules such as pragmatics (the study of language use in its social context). The understanding and transmission of messages often requires knowledge that stretches beyond the mere correct use of words: The speaker must be knowledgeable of the social rules reflected in and by the language. For example, when a speaker says, "Don't ask what happened to me today," his or her intention is actually the opposite of the literal message expressed by the words. The social function of this sentence is to introduce the topic or to invite the listener to request further elaboration.

Similarly, exposure to the target language culture permits understanding of the cultural behaviors (Schulz, 2007). As such, a curriculum adding target culture studies as an inseparable part of foreign language learning perceives the learner not as a recipient that receives and recycles linguistic knowledge, but as an entity embedded in a sociocultural space (Kramsch, 2000). This can be extrapolated to reading research. Studies on content schemata have shown that reading comprehension is facilitated by familiarity with the cultural context of the text (Hudson, 2007).

Hence, language educators should take into consideration the cultural fabric of the learner's social context and equip him or her with tools to foster successful participation in new sociolinguistic and cultural dynamics. As posited by MacIntyre (2016), "the close ties between language and culture suggest that interventions in SLA that are based on positive psychology must also take cultural similarities and differences into account" (p. 16). Indeed, experts identify the lack of learners' cultural competence as one of the major obstacles of the noncommunicative approaches to language learning such as grammar translation.

In summary, familiarization with the target language could trigger more positive attitudes toward it, thus improving the learning experience and subsequently also academic achievements. Studies of L2 teaching in different countries show that in schools where a certain L2 is taught, students' stances toward that language, culture, and population become more positively rated than the stances of students whose school did not teach the language.

2.2.4 | The learning/teaching experience

A great deal of importance is given to the abundance of variables in the phenomenon of foreign language acquisition in a school setting. Nevertheless, the factors that lead to a more favorable additional language acquisition and positive attitudes toward the target language include the quality of the lesson and the learning experience, as well as the relationship with the teacher. Gardner (2010) stressed how positive attitudes toward the learning situation facilitates learning. Likewise, Krashen's (1985) model of second language acquisition postulates that, inasmuch as the learning experience is associated with negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, embarrassment), a learner's *affective filter* is raised and acquisition is hindered. Additionally, teachers play a meaningful role in assisting students to cope when difficulties arise in the language learning process. In fact, Komorowska (2016) discusses how teachers' careful intervention might help a learner process and channel negative emotions into positive action targeting language learning.

Studies reveal that teaching skills, along with students' positive class experiences, have a strong impact on foreign language learning. Clearly, there is a positive relationship between enjoyment from the learning experience, the materials, and the teacher and the student's motivation to learn the target language (Abu-Rabia, 1995; Agawa & Takeuchi, 2016). In addition, teaching quality often plays a key role in helping shape students' stances regarding the language and the language

learning experience. Teachers that are caring, charismatic, assertive, and skilled trigger more positive student attitudes than teachers whose personality is less captivating and teaching style and teaching skills less efficient.

3 | PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS: HOW DOES RESEARCH INFORM PRACTICE?

3.1 | Linguistic factors to be considered

The theoretical basis detailed above lays the foundation for expert language teaching and well-directed learning actions. Teachers should ascertain that their students have the optimal conditions that allow for satisfactory L2 learning in classroom settings. A few recommendations are listed below.

3.1.1 | Teachers should maximize exposure to the target language

In order to enhance learning opportunities, teachers should ascertain that they create enough opportunities for relevant exposure to the target language in the classroom and outside so that learners receive sufficient input in the target language. Although native language use in the classroom might be advisable and advantageous under certain circumstances and for specific purposes, teachers need to constantly monitor themselves to avoid overusing L1 in the classroom, hence precluding their students from receiving as much input as possible in the target language. With careful monitoring and determination, this is possible at every grade level. Even the most experienced teachers might be surprised at how many opportunities for L2 use they have missed; recording one's own lesson and inviting peer observations are beneficial tools to enhance self-monitoring.

3.1.2 | Teachers should provide opportunities for language output in the target language

Although exposure and input are critical to the language acquisition process, teachers often wait until their students have internalized the material before they require or expect that learners produce output in the target language. As seen above, research suggests that output is part of the language learning process and not only evidence of having learned the materials. Consequently, in order to promote learning, teachers should aim to include activities that necessitate language output in every class meeting. Persistent writing and speaking activities reinforce learning of specific structures, vocabulary, and general language proficiency. Oral activities also ensure that constructive interaction takes place, thus realizing the principles of socially situated learning. These can include a few minutes of exchanging the previous day's experiences with a classmate or answering reading comprehension questions orally in pairs or in groups.

Teachers who implement translanguaging practices (Canagarajah, 2013) in their second language pedagogy "can incorporate the complex, mobile language repertoires and identities of their students, and in so doing enhance learning" (Creese & Blackledge, 2015, p. 33). This of course does not mean that "anything goes" and that teachers should overlook standard target language structures. Yet perceiving linguistic backgrounds as a resource might produce positive outcomes in the classroom.

3.1.3 | Teachers should be determined to capitalize on the benefits of interaction

Engaging in interaction, as seen above, increases the time learners spend actively producing language output. It follows that interaction is a way of developing automaticity through contextualized and genuine repetition of language structures. Teachers are often reluctant to have students engage in group and pair work for various reasons, ranging from classroom management to doubts about the language learning potential of such an approach. Time spent in group arrangements, the lack of controlled output, and fear that students might learn each other's mistakes are tangible and realistic motives behind teachers' reluctance to have students engage in pair or group work in class. Nonetheless, students can safely benefit from activities such as role-playing, dictogloss, peer testing, jigsaw, and many others. There are excellent resources with a gamut of interactive activities for language learning. It is advisable that teachers and schools have these available for consultation.

3.1.4 | Teachers should provide students with tools for effective vocabulary building

Language educators and learners generally recognize vocabulary knowledge as a key factor in second language learning and proficiency. Ordinarily, however, lesson plans do not include training in vocabulary learning strategies. As a result, students are often left on their own (and at a loss) when attempting to learn required vocabulary. Teachers must present students with a variety of vocabulary learning strategies and invite students to try out new ones, thus finding the most suitable strategies for their own learning style. In addition, teaching practice should capitalize on vocabulary acquisition research findings and allow students ample opportunities for deep processing of, and involvement with, new vocabulary items.

Second language researchers stress the powerful influence of strategy use on cognitive processes that bring about favorable learning outcomes. The above-mentioned exploration of strategies by the learner necessitates careful teacher guidance and instruction. Whereas some learners discover and use strategies independently and effectively, others need overt and meticulous guidance in making sense of strategic learning. Teachers ought to instruct learners as to how to learn a language, for example, by teaching and modeling strategies for learning and retaining new vocabulary. They must also promote development of metacognitive skills—for example, by encouraging students to explore the use of different strategies and determine which ones work best for them.

3.1.5 | Teachers should tailor teaching practices to realize principles of repetition and automaticity

Repetition of language in general and vocabulary items in particular leads to continuous activation of lexical items, finally leading to satisfactory levels of automaticity. The expected outcome is attainment of higher levels of vocabulary retention and retrieval, accuracy, fluency, and general L2 proficiency. Naturally, as seen above, repetition is best achieved when implemented in a communicative and significant way. Contextualized repetition necessitates classroom activities that allow for productive (and not merely receptive) recycling of grammatical structures and vocabulary items in a relevant and meaningful context (see Appendix A for suggested resources).

3.2 | Extralinguistic factors to be considered

As discussed above, social and emotional factors also determine the extent to which language can be learned and whether input is noticed and efficiently internalized. Consideration of these factors may enhance effective teaching and sustainable language learning. A few guidelines for implementation of concepts that emerge from research are listed below.

3.2.1 | Teachers should make an effort to understand students' attitudes and the attitudes of their parents

Understanding attitudes toward the target language, speakers of the target language, and the learning context might aid teachers in identifying possible obstacles for language acquisition. Although attempts to modify negative attitudes to entire speech communities (speakers of the target language) may often be well beyond the reach of teachers and the scope of their jobs, attention to attitudes may serve as an incentive for tackling attitude issues, resulting in more positive and sustainable teaching outcomes. Culturally rich materials that increase learners' familiarity with the target culture and populations might be a step toward the development of positive attitudes.

3.2.2 | Teachers should take steps to understand and influence students' motivation to learn

Viewing motivation as a componential concept rather than as an amorphous, monolithic asset that learners either possess or do not may help teachers face the task of increasing students' motivation in a more productive way. This might aid in reducing possible feelings of helplessness and increase agency with regard to student motivation. In other words, understanding the different elements that compose the motivation construct might create among teachers a less fatalistic stance in which all responsibility for lack of motivation is placed on the student (lack of inherent motivation). Realization of the impact of additional motivational factors (such as task motivation) is the beginning of a change in teacher perception of their ability to be agents of change with regard to student motivation to learn.

3.2.3 | Teachers should include culture-rich materials in the curriculum

Effective teaching necessitates awareness of the reciprocal relationship between cultural knowledge and language learning. Teaching practices can reflect this understanding in a number of ways. Using reading materials that discuss known cultural content might reduce a learner's need to cope with unknown schemata. This can improve reading comprehension and free cognitive effort, allowing the learner to concentrate on language issues. Conversely, texts with little linguistic complexity that include cultural content can help develop familiarity with the target culture. For example, Kitai and Chan (2015) discussed how Japanese *anime* cartoons, *manga* comics, and TV shows can be utilized to foster not only language learning but also critical understanding of the Japanese culture. They added that cultural learning occurs more effectively when cultural matters and keywords are explicitly highlighted by teachers.

3.2.4 | Teachers should understand and define parameters of good teaching

In this regard, Crabbe (2003) discusses teaching quality from the perspective of the learners' experience. Whereas much importance is attributed to a variety of factors influencing second language acquisition, the learning experience should be placed in the center. Crabbe claims that in spite of the common discourse in journals and teacher lounges regarding the quality of teaching, it is rare to see (or hear) detailed parameters according to which that quality is measured. In an attempt to rectify this situation, Crabbe offers a list of *components* or *learning opportunities*. Each has to be present in the learning experience to maximize chances of success. Some of these components coincide with the concepts discussed above: input (reading or hearing the language), output (opportunities to produce the target language), interaction (opportunities to have real-life conversations or simulations), and rehearsal (deliberate contextualized oral recycling of the material during class activities).

Keeping excellent teaching in mind, teachers should constantly revisit, review, and renew. Educators at times become too comfortable with their successful, established practices, methods, and materials. However, quality teaching is a necessary derivative of the continual revisiting of one's teaching. Relying only on old habits might cause teachers to remain in a safe place, thus risking stagnation in teaching methodologies. High-quality teaching and enhanced student motivation may be directly connected to teacher enthusiasm for and application of new endeavors, methods, and materials. Faculty and principals should keep an updated library of teaching resources for teachers to consult (see suggestions in Appendix A). Also, encouraging peer observations and collaboration is highly valuable in teacher development, for both novice and seasoned professionals.

4 | CONCLUSION

Language teachers may have either a gratifying or a thankless job, depending on the outcome of the journey that is expected to culminate with sustainable and acceptable second language proficiency. Language proficiency, in turn, should be seen through the critical lens offered by translanguaging approaches to additional language pedagogy.

Having clear teaching parameters and models that are informed by research might be of assistance to teachers in their continual and dedicated endeavors toward their students' success. Reference to materials such as the research described above might have a positive impact on teachers' engagement in devising curricula, lesson plans, and classroom practices that enhance learners' chances of transforming class materials into situated and concrete second language abilities.

Teaching necessitates critiquing; critiques in turn can be referred to as *epistemic curiosity* (Freire, 2015), or wanting to know more. A teacher's curiosity about his or her teaching allows for constant self-monitoring and self-assessment. To assist this constructive self-critique, and to ascertain that the necessary conditions for optimal learning are being offered to the learner by the teacher, an evaluation form is provided in Appendix B. Periodical use of this form echoes reflective teaching, fostering critical understanding and evaluation of individual instructional practices (Lee, 2005).

It is recommended that teachers work closely with the checklist to avoid impressionistic and subjective, and possibly misleading, self-assessment. Used occasionally or on a regular basis, the checklist in Appendix B is a useful tool for teachers who seek to maximize the learning potential of their students and their own teaching capability. The frequency of teacher engagement in reflective self-evaluation reported in research varies. Reflections can be undertaken every lesson (Eilam,

2017), two to three times per week (Lee, 2005), monthly (Gilbert, Bull, Stevens, & Giroux, 2015), or yearly (Makki & Holliday, 2016), to name a few possibilities. Readers are encouraged to experiment with the frequency that is suitable for their goals, and language coordinators are encouraged to guide their staff into an exploration of periodical self-evaluation. Clearly, not all elements in the checklist in Appendix B are suitable for daily self-inspection, but they may serve as a helpful guide. Hopefully, enhanced knowledge of research and critical reflection on one's teaching might provide learners with the necessary conditions for language learning.

5 | THE AUTHOR

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APPENDIX A

Helpful sources

Richards, J. C. (Ed.). *New ways in TESOL series innovative classroom techniques*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL International Association. (This is a series of books that focus on different skills and provides practical and easy-to-implement classroom activities.)

Enhancing input

Murphey, T. (1992). *Music and song*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

TED Talks. https://www.ted.com/

TED Talk transcripts. https://www.ted.com/search?q=transcript

Promoting output

British Council—Teaching resources. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-teens/resources

Klippel, F. (2013). *Keep talking: Communicative fluency activities for language teaching*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Ur, P., & Wright, A. (1992). *Five-minute activities: A resource book of short activities*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Vernon, S. A. (2012). *ESL games, fluency activities and grammar drills for EFL and ESL students.* Createspace Independent Publishing Platform. https://www.teachingenglishgames.com/

Developing cognitive and metacognitive strategies

O'Malley and Chamot's list of strategies. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/274080524_tbl1_TABLE-1-Classification-of-Language-Learning-Strategies-O%27Malley-Chamot-1990

APPENDIX B

Self-evaluation form: Am I teaching effectively?

This form might assist you in regulating the emphasis on the factors that influence learning discussed in this article. Keep this form handy and occasionally fill in the "In general" column to gain periodical insights regarding the focus of your teaching. Use the "This week" or "Today" column when you wish to judge whether you are including the factors discussed in this article in your teaching on a regular basis.

Linguistic factors	In general	This week	Today
Did I provide maximum exposure to the target language?			
Did I create opportunities for language output?			
Did I plan and implement interactive activities?			
Did I provide tools for effective vocabulary learning?			
Did I create opportunities for repetition and automaticity?			
Extralinguistic factors	In general	This week	Today
Did I make an effort to understand students' attitudes?			
Did I take steps to increase students' motivation to learn?			
Did I define my/my staff's/my school's parameters of good teaching?			
Did I revisit, review, and renew methodology and activities?			
Did I teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies?			