ENG 408A SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Lecture 1

Some Key Concepts

Introduction to the course

- Looks at acquisition of English as a second language mainly in Indian contexts

- Different perspectives on SLA – linguistic (only basic theories), psycholinguistic and sociological

- Discuss some important government policies and documents related to teaching English in Indian contexts

Course Policies

- Course will be conducted on mooKIT
- Contact hours structure: 2 lectures (audio lecture supported with ppts) per week; every Monday discussion/ Q & A session b/w 5.00 pm to 6.00 pm
- Links for additional readings will be posted for every week
- Quizzes: 60%; Mid-sem: 15%; End-sem: 25%
- Make-up exams as per policies decided by the institute

- Assessment: Quizzes every Friday on mooKIT from 5.00 pm to 5.30 pm
- Quizzes will cover the lectures posted for that particular week and also the additional reading
- Please do not ask for any change in the schedule

Some key terms…

- Language
- Language Acquisition
- Second Language
- Second Language Acquisition

What is language?

- Language – a medium of communication (personal/semi-formal/ formal)
- Dissemination of knowledge
- Entertainment/ recreation

What does it consist of?

Primarily speech – writing systems

- Sounds
- Words
- Sentences/ structures
- Meaning
- Pragmatics

- Human language vs animal communication systems
- Human language – systematicity and complexity

What is language acquisition?

- Two terms: Acquisition – learning
- Using a language
- How do we decide if someone has acquired a language?

What is second language?

- First language/ mother tongue (L1)
- Second language – any language learnt after L1
- Are there Third/ Fourth/ Fifth languages?

What is second language acquisition?

- Why study it separately?
- How is it different from L1 acquisition?

Here are some statements about L1 acquisition. Do you agree or not?

- Children learn their L1 mainly through imitation.

- Parents usually correct grammatical mistakes that the children make while speaking.