USE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE AS AN ESSENTIAL TRANSITION PROCESS IN

LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE IN APPRENTICES

BETWEEN 17 AND 25 YEARS OLD

IN LOWER LEVELS.

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A Research Project

Presented to the Program

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by

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October, 2020

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, who have lived this process with me by the hand, they have seen me fall, start from zero, touch the top and slip, for them, who also lost all hope of seeing this great career culminate, for my daughters, whom I took a lot of time to share with the family, of quality, while they saw me, or better, they did not see me since I was working for and for them; the greatest gratitude, to God who has given me enough time on this earth to be able to get to this moment and finally, to my students who, with great patience and excellent attitude, participated in the different surveys and activities that helped me develop this work .

To all who have helped me in one way or another in this formative process, thank you.

Those who believed in me and those who didn't.

## SPECIALIZED ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

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| Title | Use of the mother tongue as an essential transition process in learning a second language in apprentices between 17 and 25 years old in lower levels. |
| Author(s) | Kelly Johanna Carvajal Becerra |
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| Keywords | Second language, acquisition, interlingua, mother tongue, strategies |
| Description | Research Project |
| Sources | Books – 24<br>Articles – 4<br>Magazines - 12 |
| Contents | Este trabajo investigativo revela algunas de las estrategias que utilizan los aprendices de una segunda lengua al momento de hablar y la utilidad del uso de la lengua materna en los niveles más bajos para afianzar o aclarar su aprendizaje. |
| Research Line | Bilingüismo en la educación a distancia mediada por tecnologías. |
| Conclusions | -Those who are based on the grammatical structures of the mother tongue tend to establish the grammatical rules of the second language more quickly. |

| | -By making use of the mother tongue in the classroom, students feel more free to ask and clarify doubts regarding grammar and correct use of structures and vocabulary |
|---|---|
| Advisor | Edith Grande |

# ABSTRACT

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Syntactic, semantic, phonetic-phonological and pragmatic comparisons between the mother tongue and a foreign language are an important tool that facilitates the process of learning the foreign language especially in adult learners at levels A1 and A2.

In the experience lived as a student of foreign languages, a teaching methodology is perceived on numerous occasions in which it is recommended to put aside or avoid the knowledge that our mother tongue could provide us so that, in a similar way to that it was acquired in childhood, the new language is internalized, to the point where its use is avoided or even, prohibited within the classroom, The theme around which this research revolves arises precisely from the contrast between the afore mentioned attitude that is suggested by many teachers and the fact, undeniable and very frequent, that support is found, sometimes involuntarily, in everything that makes up what could be called the "linguistic world" itself, which determines our mother tongue, as a natural way that responds to the need to associate everything we perceive from outside and that is pre-conceptualized in our minds.

The situation described above opens a field of discussion about the convenience that these comparisons provide the student during the appropriation of English language skills, where it is very useful to systematically analyze the situational characteristics in which their use can be of greater benefit, relating the topic to the basic principles and concepts of areas such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and pedagogy.

Some English students of the AVIANCA SERVICES aviation academy will be taken as the study population. The methodology proposed for the investigation is, in the first instance, to apply surveys to know how these students believe that their second language learning process occurs, what strategies they use and what difficulties they face. Subsequently, it will be theorized in this regard, to analyze the phenomenon of learning a second language, several theories will be taken into account in which the biological and social processes (motivation and sociolinguistic perception) of the individual are addressed and based on the data collected and the theory presented will analyze to what extent a form of learning based on syntactic, semantic, phonetic-phonological and pragmatic comparisons of English versus Spanish is appropriate.

KEY WORDS: Mother tongue, acquisition, second language, learning process, learning strategies, confidence.

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**CHAPTER I**

**Introduction**

Phenomena such as globalization, have made all the world's societies feel directly or indirectly, the need to learn at least a language different from their own to be more competent, productive and improve their quality of life. That is why, in recent years, the increase in population interested in learning foreign languages has been evident, to obtain better job offers or emigrate to other countries in search of a better life, thus proliferating academies, institutes and courses that offer the possibility of learning a language in the short or medium term.

However, most of the efforts and concerns have focused on learning a second language quickly and efficiently, setting aside in a certain way the analysis of how that learning process takes place, and what are the variables that determine whether the process is successful or not. That is why, the following research project, aims to deepen a little in this regard to understand these and other questions, using tests or surveys that account for the process in both situations, one supported in the mother tongue and the other, using only the second language in the classroom, being very useful for us as future teachers of languages and also on a personal level because it allows us to understand the process we do unconsciously in learning a foreign language to design strategies and methods to improve it.

**Significance of the Study**

When appreciating the apparent contradiction suffered in some classrooms where, according to the most widespread current methodology, the mother tongue should not be used as support for the acquisition of the new language, but should provide the student with an environment similar to that he lived when he learned the first language, and where, on the other hand, is the unavoidable resource that is always used by students to make comparisons between everything that makes up their pre-established mental structure and what they perceive from abroad, it is necessary to study accurately, the different applications of these comparisons that are already seen as an irremediably present resource is a sample of the associative natural technique of all individuals, through a delimitation of their true consequences, whether beneficial or harmful on the process and design of a construct on the methodological model for its use, to obtain finally the theoretical bases that allow supporting its real application.

The students of Avianca services of the Flight Attendant program, ASAA, and aircraft technician (aircraft mechanic) definitely need to learn English, since the career they are studying requires it, since their professions demand on the one hand, the knowledge of the English language to interact with passengers of different nationalities, in different countries. On the other hand, mechanics need a minimum level of B2 since all the manuals of the aeronautical industry are in English, the English language is the language of aviation and worldwide, it is the ideal language used as a standard language. or unique and in this way avoid incidents, accidents due to communication errors or misunderstandings.

With this in mind, it is absolutely necessary to find the best way for them to acquire a second language, knowing that there are students who come from distant villages and small towns in which during their school training they never had an approach to the English language as such, so, some of them, it is the first time that they face the acquisition of a new language.

**Statement of the Problem**

**1 The acquisition of a second language**

At first glance, it may seem surprising to note that an exceptionally large part of the world population uses two or more languages to some extent. We have only to take the example of the Indian Subcontinent, where trade between the provinces is carried out either in English (even after independence) or in Hindi, the most widespread Indian language. We can think of another equally rough country, where the official language, Mandarin, happily cohabits with the dialects of each region of China.

The phenomenon (and the need) to acquire a second language is, therefore, very widespread. Among the thousands of bilingual or multilingual people, some have dispositions or talents for acquiring a second language. How to explain this success? Will it be a talent? Will it be a favorable context that explains this linguistic ability? We will have to take each factor into account and explore it.

In this chapter, we will examine a series of problems related, in the first instance, to the differences and similarities between the acquisition of a mother tongue and the acquisition of a second language; Next, we will specify the main acquisition strategies in the specific case of a second language; and, finally, we will examine the different factors that can explain individual differences in the way of acquiring a second language and the mother tongue role.

## 1.1. The mother tongue and the foreign language

Within school societies, the experience of acquiring a second language is clearly distinguished from that of acquiring the mother tongue. Usually, this acquisition occurs only after having a sufficient development of the mother tongue, and that, during a period that covers the end of childhood until the end of adolescence. Another feature is the fact that the processes of acquiring a second language are carried out in an "artificial" way, so the "exposure time" to the foreign language is strongly limited. The student can, thanks to specific methods and effective strategies, make their learning profitable. Finally, during all their schooling, a student receives on average less than one thousand hours of teaching for second language learning. To better represent what a thousand hours of education correspond to, these would be equal to less than three months of the process of acquiring the mother tongue, counting only the daylight hours.

This limited exposure to the second language, compared to the time spent on acquiring

the mother tongue, is sufficient to explain the reason why children living in bilingual settings achieve superior performance in the second language than children do that are developed in school environments. Despite everything, assuming that everyone could benefit from a bilingual context, certain authors would question the fact that most of them achieve perfect proficiency in their second language, even if they had a provision of time proportional to what we have to acquire the mother tongue. According to them, this happens because of the biological differences that operate in the acquisition of a second language. This statement requires deepening.

### 1.1.1. Biological factors

In certain species of birds, song development takes place during a specific period of their lives (critical period). In contrast, remember that in the human species, language acquisition may occur in a less limited way. Even though childhood represents the auspicious period for this acquisition, certain reported cases (for example, "wild children" like Genie) confirm that it is still possible to overcome this critical period, although, of all known cases, no language acquired under these conditions has achieved a perfect development. Adapting our terminology to the human context, we use the term sensitive period, to refer to the period conducive to learning a language. Thus said, it seems that a biological factor, which limits the acquisition potential of a first language, is effectively involved during this sensitive period. In any case, explore whether these limits apply equally to the acquisition of a second language.

According to E. Lenneberg (1967: 125), a process of gradual fixation of linguistic functions, linked to the biological maturation of the brain, would explain the difference; between the powers of acquisition of the child and those of the adolescent. During this period, from fifteen months until puberty, the brain would be able to acquire the language and after this the process would be more laborious and qualitatively different.

Lenneberg supports his hypothesis of gradual fixation on two main arguments. In the first place, children suffering from aphasia have a faster and more complete recovery capacity than that observed in adolescents and adults. This allows us to believe that the transfer of functions located in one region of the brain to other intact regions is easier for the child than for the adult. The second argument has to do with "hemidecorticalization" that is, the ablation of the cortical zone of a hemisphere. It seems that the child is generally able to transfer linguistic functions to his right hemisphere and that few consequences result from this transfer (Dennis and Whitaker, 1976). Neither the adolescent nor the adult manifests the same resilience, the same plasticity; what would come to support the validity of a process of gradual fixation, at least in what has to do with the acquisition of a language.

Following Lenneberg, Scovel (1969) suggests that the plasticity of brain functions in the child facilitates the acquisition of the mother tongue, and also that of a second language. This would account for the difficulties that adults experience in learning a second language.

The publication of Lenneberg's book produced a fertile discussion regarding the sensitive period for the acquisition of a language. In the course of this discussion, it became clear that it was not a matter of assigning predominant importance to the biological criteria. On one hand, the limits of the sensitive period as defined by Lenneberg were questioned and on the other hand, the cognitive changes involved in puberty were considered as a factor of great influence.

Concerning the limits of the sensitive period, it is interesting to note that scholars in the area often do not distinguish between the acquisition of the faculties of production and that of the receptive faculties of language. As we have seen, children give indications of remarkable receptive competencies, from the first weeks of life. It would then be misleading not to take this fact into account, and the hypothesis of the sensitive period should be taken with caution, more precisely as regards the lower edge of this period.

The upper limit of this sensitive period can also be revised. Krashen (1973) notes that according to certain indications related to cortical maturation, the sensitive period ends around five years. For example, lateralization of oral expression in the left hemisphere seems complete, or almost complete, in children older than five years: this is demonstrated by high percentages of persistent language problems that accompany left hemisphere lesions in children who have more of five years. In contrast, it is children under the age of five, who have suffered left hemidecorticalization, who recover their linguistic functions better by transferring to the other hemisphere.

In contrast to the above, it is clear that a large number of children over the age of five can learn a second language perfectly, either in a bilingual context or through a certain type of teaching (immersion programs, for example). On the other hand, about 5% of adults achieve equal success in acquiring a second language (Hill, 1970). It seems more likely then that factors other than biological factors intervene in the process of acquiring a second language and determine the level of competence. It is probably cognitive, affective, and motivational factors.

### 1.1.2. Cognitive and affective factors

According to Piaget (1975), the period of puberty corresponds to the transition to a stage of formal operative thinking, that is, the use of formal logical reasoning. From the linguistic point of view, the child can approach learning by recognizing the rules of a language and applying them consciously, in the manner of mathematical formulas. It is important in this regard to examine whether the formulation of linguistic rules could in some way interfere with the acquisition of a second language.

In our opinion, research indicates that conscious analysis of the rules of a language is not necessarily harmful for acquisition. Quite the contrary, certain results (Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1977, tend to show that the cognitive structure of the adult may have an initial advantage over that of the child. From the staggered application of tests every 4.5 months for a year, on a population of Anglophones between 3 and 67 years old, learning Dutch in the Netherlands, these researchers showed that adults initially

performed better than children in children pronunciation tests. But the former was subsequently reached by the latter. For all aspects related to morphology, syntax and lexicon, the different age groups were equated.

In the same order of ideas, research on the results of immersion programs in Ontario revealed that older students made progress faster than younger students. To do this, a comparison was established between the level of French of the students in the immersion class from the eighth year (1400 hours of French until the tenth year), and the level of French of the immersion students from the preschool ( 4000 hours until the eighth year).

Although the youngest students demonstrated better skills in oral comprehension, the older ones surpassed them in written comprehension and obtained results equivalent to those of the youngest in the global tests. This means that older students achieved in 1400 hours what younger students did in 4000 hours of teaching. These same older students greatly exceeded the performance of students of the same age (1400 hours) who were not in immersion classes (Swain, 1981).

Neufeld (1978) compiled many experiences that tended to disallow the idea that it would be virtually impossible for an adult to learn a second language without an accent. In one of them, we worked with 20 adult English-speaking subjects who had to listen to video graphics records in Chinese and Japanese for 18 hours each. After a learning period of recognition of intonation and subtle articulatory differences, subjects were asked to mimic as much as possible ten sentences in these languages. The subjects were judged by

native speakers of each language. Eleven of 20 subjects were classified as native speakers of Japanese and nine of 20 Chinese. These different indications seem to show that, in favorable circumstances, adults display learning abilities comparable to those obtained by children.

This type of results, therefore, allows us to modify the initial formulation of one of our questions. Why, despite a similar competition between adults and children, does it happen, however, that adults do not update as well as young people their faculties of learning a second language? This phenomenon is addressed in the research of Patrowski (1980) who studied 67 immigrants in the United States for varying periods. These subjects belonged to different age groups. He subjected them to linguistic tests and had them fill out a questionnaire. Of the four variables measured (age of arrival in the United States, number of years spent in the country, degree of exposure to the language and level of formal language studies), he found that the age of arrival in the United States was the which allowed to better predict the degree of syntactic competence. Regarding phonetic abilities, Douglas Brown (1980) indicates that it is rarer for a person to reach a master's degree in pronunciation of a second language than that of his syntax.

Many relatively unexplored factors can probably explain the difference between the acquisition potential of adults and the level of competence they achieve. It is possible, for example, that the socio-affective changes that occur in puberty influence the circumstances of everyday learning in the classroom. Indeed, a teenager begins at this age to become aware as a social being. It often happens to him that he feels uncomfortable

and upset in front of his classmates and is afraid of making mistakes. This provision tends to accentuate among adults.

Another difference has to do with the way of learning. While the child perceives the second language under a playful aspect, adults take the underlying social game more seriously (Stengal, 1939, cited by Schumann, 1975). This reasoning accounts for a large number of results. Therefore, the particular social environment created in immersion or laboratory situations would have the effect of reducing the inhibition of the participants by allowing them to evolve as normal speakers of the language acquired. It is possible, however, that adults who have retained the playful aspect are more successful than others.

It is also plausible that for adolescents and adults, capable of formal operative thinking, learning a second language is partly inhibited by incorrect or incomplete linguistic abstractions (Rosansky, 1975). In this regard, an experience of Bialystock (1979) shows that Anglophone subjects who should judge the validity of French phrases could specify or locate the error, having more success in identifying the correct phrases when they were not given time for reflection. This indicates that subjects who previously rely on their implicit (or unconscious) knowledge of French obtain better results. It is therefore very likely that the child, incapable of a conscious formulation of the rules of the language, relies entirely on his unconscious strategies of discovery and elaboration of the linguistic structure, while the adolescent and the adult allow themselves to be guided in a greater degree, and sometimes wrongly, by the rules learned consciously.

**1.2. Learning strategies**

The next question we will address here has to do with the learning strategies used by the adult. This will allow us, thanks to the identification of erroneous strategies, to reveal certain misunderstandings that occur while learning and, consequently, to make a better definition of effective strategies.

In the first instance, let us clarify the differences, at the terminological level, between the acquisition of a mother tongue and that of a foreign language. We consider here the acquisition of a second language first in terms of learning as opposed to the spontaneous acquisition of the mother tongue. Within our school societies, this learning is carried out consciously and deliberately, but only after the acquisition of the mother tongue. In short, all learning can be conceived in the form of a conscious and deliberate action strategy.

Before examining the learning strategies of a mother tongue, we will outline a brief analysis of what is understood by the strategic structure. In very general terms, we can compare the learning of a second language with the resolution of a problem. This is defined and characterized by the implementation of various actions that are combined or that, due to the exclusion or integration of compatible data, finally tend towards one of the solutions. According to Dewey (1910, cited by Brown, 1980: 83), the solution of a problem consists of five stages: 1) awareness of the problem, a phase that may include perplexity or frustration because of the importance of the problem; 2) the attempt to identify the problem; 3) the formulation of a hypothetical solution from the known

information; 4) the testing of the hypothesis if it is wrong, reformulation of the problem (return to step 2); 5) incorporation of the solution found in the cognitive structure.

Following this model, a French-speaking speaker who learns English will initially be confronted with the awareness that formulating an idea is a laborious thing, since it does not appear spontaneously, and you will find that you need elements to achieve proper expression ( stage 1); Next, you will identify (consciously or unconsciously) the part (s) of the code that you have not learned enough (stage 2); it will subtract from its linguistic "baggage" the information that allows it, badly than well, to formulate its idea (stage 3), to state the most compatible phrase in the code used. At the moment in which he faces the misunderstanding of his interlocutors, he will look for a new formulation (stage 4), thanks to which he will enrich his linguistic performance (stage 5).

The strategies (more or more successful memos) that we will discuss have to do with stage three, whether it is for the manipulation of linguistic resources, used with a view to a good formulation, whether it is a transfer strategy, that is, a person relies on their linguistic knowledge of their mother tongue to develop a representation or formulation in a different language, whether it is a strategy of generalization or knowledge applicable to the language to learn, in short, that it is possible to solve the thanks to an avoidance strategy. Let us now address each of these strategies:

### 1.2.1. The transfer strategy

The linguistic transfer is the use of linguistic information already known in another language. It is a favorable process if a specific condition is considered: the linguistic structure must be similar in both languages. Of course, if this condition is not met, this type of strategy leads to failure. Therefore, there is talk of positive transfers, if the use of the initial language structures produces correct statements in the second language. For illustrative purposes, let's take the following case: the French and German languages both use the present tense with "depuis" ("seit" in German, "from" in Spanish) to describe an event that takes place until a given time, while that in English this preposition ("since") is used with the present perfect:

French: J'attends ici depuis onze heures.

Dutch: Ich watte hier seit 11 Uhr.

English: I've been waiting here since eleven o'clock.

Spanish: Yo espero aquí desde las 11

It is expected then, and with justice, that in those aspects of the structure of French in which German speakers do not make mistakes, Anglophone speakers do so with a certain frequency in phrases such as "Jai attendu ici depuis onze heures" (I have expected here since eleven).

The positive transfer is poorly studied since a correct statement can be understood more

like the fruit of a correct acquisition of the rules of the language than as a transfer

strategy. In contrast, the negative transfer of the mother tongue to the second language

makes it possible to explain a good number of mistakes made by students of language.

Thus, Francophones frequently produce English phrases of the genre:

I'm waiting here since eleven o'clock

instead of: I have been waiting here since eleven o'clock)

Espero aquí desde las once

*My father is teacher in London

Instead of: My father is a teacher in London

Mi papá es profesor en Londres.


These phrases are ungrammatical in English, but they reflect exactly the French (and

Spanish) structure.


This study of linguistic transfer, among second language students, led, after World War

II, to the comparative analysis of languages. The underlying idea was that it would be

possible to predict the most frequent errors, thanks to taxonomies of differences or

similarities between natural languages. The comparative analysis entails two crucial

obstacles that led him to, since 1965, suffer a path of discrediting in favor of systematic

error analysis.


In the first instance, a detailed comparison of the aspects of two languages represents an

extremely long and complex task. More fundamentally, the comparative analysis does not

explain the set of mistakes made by second-language students. Students do not make all the errors foreseen by the analysis compared and vice versa, certain mistakes they make are not foreseen by this analysis.

Thus, according to the comparative analysis, Spanish speakers should not find any difficulty in the distinction between el/ella (he/she) in English, the same for English-speaking English speakers, taking into account the fact that the use of these pronouns is parallel in the two languages. However, this distinction raises frequent problems for Spanish speakers and not English speakers (Selniker, 1972: 42). An equally paradoxical phenomenon is that Francophones include structures such as "composed with" instead of "composed of" ("composed with" instead of "composed of"), made all the more strange given that the English structure corresponds fully with the French structure (example of Dulay and Burt, 1974: 105.)

Additionally, George (1972, cited by Dulay and Burt, 1972: 105) mentions that only one-third of all errors present in a corpus of students can be attributed to mother tongue interference. In this sense (1974: 30) he cites many important studies that attempt to show that not all errors are caused by the transfer. Some of them are very systematic regardless of the mother tongue. Dulay and Burt (1974) interpret these phenomena as incidents caused by generalization or by simplifying rules.

The comparative analysis should not, however, be completely rejected, since it allows to evaluate the distance between different linguistic language structures and predict several

difficulties. Besides, the true importance of the transfer principle (one-third of all errors) makes current research insist on determining in advance the factors involved in this type of strategy. Thus, the transfer could be understood not only from the mother tongue but rather from the second language.

The usefulness of this last approach is demonstrated by the fact that: I see them, about the Je les vois model (I see them) is a mistake that Francophones never produce, while, in contrast, statements such as Je do occur. vois les, error made on the order of English. This can be explained as follows: both French and English maintain the SVO order (subject, verb and object). However, English maintains that order more strictly than French. In English, the object is always located after the verb, while in French, the pronouns (me, te, le, la, etc) stand between the subject and the verb (for example Je te lene (I give it to you) By far, the order of pronouns in French is more complex than in English. In this regard, we note that the acquisition of the SVO order seems to be a long process for French-speaking children than for English-speaking children.

The general use of the SVO structure for English-speaking Francophones can then explain the reason for the fact that the place of pronouns in French expresses an exception to the SVO structure, while it is a more conventional structure in English. Zobi's explanation seems to account for the errors and explains them properly. It highlights a large number of mistakes made with difficult structures, from the point of view of the transfer between two languages, in fact witnessing the generalization strategy of the speaker; where solutions are adopted because of uncertainty induced by the grammatical difficulty in question.

### 1.2.2. The generalization strategy

Through discovery and elaboration strategies, the systematic study of errors puts the active process of learning a second language on the table. In this sense, it is an analogy with the processes of the original language. This language learning strategy could therefore closely resemble the generalization strategy (with effects of overgeneralization) that occurs during the development of the mother tongue. Remember that generalization is the process by which a student applies an existing structure in their language to a new element of the same language. Similar to what happens with the learning of the mother tongue, we find errors of generalization in students of a second language of the type vous faisez (instead of vous faites), or j´ai there (instead of je suis there).

Taylor (1975), when comparing the use of transfer and generalization strategies among English language learners, finds that errors attributable to the transfer occurred mainly in beginners, while those due to overgeneralization appeared at intermediate levels. This phenomenon is explained if the acquisition of a second language is considered as a process of discovering linguistic rules. In fact, every beginner who has only a tiny linguistic knowledge tends to amplify his knowledge based on his mother tongue. In doing so, it makes use of a transfer strategy. On the contrary, the more advanced student can take advantage of his new linguistic support and, emboldened, is more likely to overgeneralize.

This generalization strategy seems to be the manifestation of a more global strategy of grammatical simplification, equally present among children who acquire their mother tongue. Just like the child, the adult tends to simplify as much as possible the system of the language he handles by omitting redundancies, generalizing the rules of grammar and regularizing the exceptions. In this regard, Taylor (1974: 26) quotes Jain (1969) and Buteau (1970), the latter proposing that the errors reveal the internal complexity of the language, rather than the interference of the mother tongue. It follows that this is mostly a simplification strategy. In this regard, it is interesting to point out that Zobi (1980) reaches the same conclusion in his study on transfer. According to him, the transfer usually occurs when the second language structure is uncomfortable to use.

### 1.2.3. Avoidance Strategy

The third and final learning strategy that we will consider here is related to a communication strategy that has been little studied but seems to play an undeniable role in learning a second language. We talk about avoidance strategy when a person is subtracted from the use of a linguistic element because he does not feel confident about how it is used. This linguistic element can be lexical, a morpheme, a syntactic structure, a word that contains a specific phoneme or a difficult to pronounce phoneme sequence. It is clear that we cannot talk about avoidance for all linguistic elements not acquired, this behavior refers mainly to the attitude of a person, who knows the element in question chooses not to use it. It is then, among other things, an index of difficulty.

Kleinman (1977) studied the avoidance strategy with 39 English students, among which: 24 were Spanish and Portuguese, and 15 Arabic. The structures evaluated were the passive, the present progressive, the complement of infinitive and the complement of direct object. According to the results of the comparative analysis, the Arab students had to have more difficulties with the passive and the present progressive than the Spaniards and the Portuguese, while the latter had to have more problems with the infinitive complements and the direct object complement. As for the avoidance hypothesis, she indicated that the group that had more difficulties with a certain structure would tend to avoid it, and consequently, to use it less frequently than the others.

The results corroborated the avoidance hypothesis. A significant difference marked the two groups in their use of liabilities, the complements of infinitive and the direct object. As predicted in the comparative analysis, the Arabs used the passive less, but more frequently than the Spaniards and the Portuguese the infinitive complements and object complements. Given the fact that the two groups manifested similar behavior in the comprehension tests, the differences in use revealed here are probably attributable to the avoidance strategy, rather than to a misunderstanding of the structures. As for the progressive present, Latinos seem to abstain more than Arabs, a phenomenon that was not anticipated in the comparative analysis. Kleinmann comments on these results, stating that two structures similarly but with different functions, such as the present progressive in Spanish, Portuguese and English, present a particular difficulty. On the contrary, for the Arabs, the progressive present seems easier to learn, since it is non-existent in their native language, is not subject to interference or exposed to avoidance strategies.

### 1.2.4. The approximate systems

From the beginning of the seventies, the awareness that the learning of a second language rests, mostly in active processes of discovery, gave rise to the idea of successive stages of learning that constituted coherent systems. These systems possessed, on the one hand, all the characteristics of natural languages and secondly, a structure according to the characteristics of the language acquired: The interlanguage term proposed by Selniker (1972), was adopted to describe these approximate systems.

Interlanguage (IL) is described as a coherent language other than the original language (L1) and the second language (L2), but incorporating certain characteristics of one and the other, as presented in the figure:
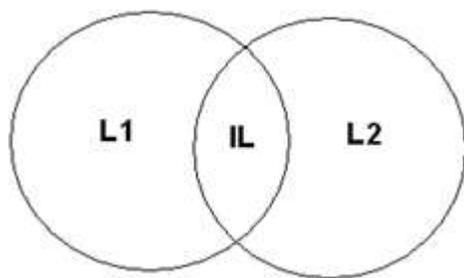


This concept of interlanguage is particularly interesting since it stipulates that certain errors are not interpreted either from the first language or from the second language, but rather that certain characteristics that seem to arise from both. Dulay and Burt (1974:

115) cite the English phrase "his name is Victor" pronounced by a Spanish child. This phrase does not reflect the structure of Spanish, or the structure of English, or even a stage of acquisition of English as the mother tongue. It is possible that within their attempts, the student will overgeneralize or build a different structure, due to an omnipresent awareness of the difference between English and Spanish. Following this path, the child produces a structure that is foreign to both languages.

According to Selniker (1972), there are many errors within the interlanguage. To those who reflect generalization and transfer, Selniker adds errors attributable to the learning method. As a demonstration, Selniker indicates that Serbo-Croats extensively use "he" in English, both to define the male and female references. However, the gender distinction for subject pronouns exists in Serbo-Croatian. The author explains the systematic use of "he" by the contextual contamination of exercises in class, composed almost only from "he". The gender difference is known, it is an integral part of the same categorical distinction, but it cannot be automated except by systematic practice.

Another specific feature of the interlanguage lies mainly in its ability to become fixed. But this does not occur except from the moment when the speaker has sufficient possibilities to express himself, when he is restricted to single learning or for lack of demand on his own improvement. It is a certain phenomenon of fossilization defined and determined by the persistence of a certain formal structure over the years. The typical example, at the level of pronunciation, is offered with the "r" retroflex between English-speaking Anglophones. A fossilized element tends to reappear when attention is relaxed,

even if it has been believed corrected. According to Selniker, all this would demonstrate the psychological reality of the interlanguage.

## 1.3. Individual differences in learning a second language

### 1.3.1. Age

Whatever the cause, individual or combined (biological, cognitive, affective, or social), younger children generally manage to learn a second language more easily. In contrast, major learning problems arise, for most of the population, from adolescence and adulthood. Age-related problems can be largely confined to the factors discussed above, where it is established that biological factors do not seem to impose an absolute limit on learning a second language.

### 1.3.2. Learning duration

Many studies have been mentioned throughout this state of the art that suggests that the duration of learning a second language is generally correlated with the level of linguistic competence achieved. However, remember that studies related to immersion (Swain, 1981) have shown that older students, in total immersion lasting 1400 hours, can exceed the youngest ones in total immersion lasting 4000 hours. We deduce that this factor alone, as well as with age, cannot be a sufficient cause and must be combined with other factors, such as social sensitivity and motivation.

### 1.3.3. Intellectual faculties

It is clear that not everyone has the same talents. Second language learning is no exception to the rule. The importance of this factor is evidenced by a study by Gardner and Lambert (1959) described below. Systematic research seeks to demonstrate the contribution of intellectual faculties to the ease of learning a second language.

### 1.3.4. The motivation

Motivation seems to be one of the determining factors in learning a second language. The theoretical reasoning that supports this position stipulates that every motivated student will increase the number of hours of learning and practice by himself and will be more intensively and systematically devoted to his learning.

Only some studies establish the importance of this factor, among which the most important is that of Gardner and Lambert (1959). This may be the most serious effort so far on the subject. Its authors evaluated among English-speaking subjects who learned French in Montreal, many factors that could affect the acquisition of a second language. The factors evaluated were among others: the success rate in oral and auditory learning (measured by imitation and understanding of French phrases), verbal intelligence (measured by tests of verbal analogies) and student motivation (evaluated from the number of French tasks carried out in class, the preference for the French class, the

favorable use rate of French, the future use of this language and the importance attributed to the knowledge of the language). Also, the authors took into account the students' general linguistic ability, their perception of the relevance of French, their attitude towards French-speaking Canadians and their degree of anxiety in experimental situations.

The factors most strongly correlated with the achievement were motivation and verbal intelligence, while measures of social attitude towards French-speaking Canadians, general linguistic aptitude and anxiety showed no correlation with the success rate.

## 1.3.5. Social sensitivity

Dulay and Burt (cited by Krashen, 1976) mention the existence of an affective filter that can block the acquisition of linguistic data. Without a doubt, the adoption of a positive and motivated attitude would be enough, according to them, to reduce the inhibitory or facilitating effect on the acquisition of a language. The following experiences seem to support this position.

Guiora and Cois (cited by Schumann, 1975) distributed "cocktails" to 87 subjects. These had been divided according to the amount of alcohol received, into five groups distributed as follows: 1) the cocktail had no alcohol, 2) the cocktail contained 9 di of 90% alcohol, 3) the cocktail contained 6 di of alcohol, 4) 4.5 di and 5) 3 di. Ten minutes after the absorption of the cocktail, they applied to the subjects an imitation test of words and phrases of the Tai language. The best results were obtained with subjects who had

drunk preparations containing 3 and 4.5 di of alcohol. A dose that seems sufficient to suppress social sensitivity, but insufficient to create debilitating effects on the intellect.

However, more systematic studies on the importance of social sensitivity should be carried out, considering the relatively ambiguous results of the previous study. Indeed, it is undeniable that alcohol acts more rapidly on the motor system than on intellectual abilities (because of the distribution pathways of alcohol in the brain, which touch the cerebellum before the cortical zone). We can assume that subjects who had absorbed a slight amount of alcohol will experience, ten minutes after ingestion, a decrease in the response of native motor patterns, without still suffering the negative side effects at the level of their intellectual functioning. This would improve the imitation capabilities of a new motor pattern, without necessarily implying the concept of social sensitivity.

### 1.3.6. The socio-psychological aspects of using a second language

Current social psychology insists on the notion of the individual as a component of a social group (Taylor and Bellerose, 1981: 275). According to this point of view, the social group constitutes and refers to the individual through the effect of a mirror, giving them in return their sense of belonging and their solidarity, certain security. Thus, we can talk that a foreign language could represent a potential threat to the individual and that speaking it very well would mean belonging to another linguistic group and risking in this way their belonging to their social group of origin. The individual could build a certain resistance (conscious or unconscious) to learning a second language.

This hypothesis is supported by some informal observations. It is notorious that certain ethnic groups seem more predisposed to learning foreign languages (for example, Dutch, Swiss and Scandinavian) than others (for example, Americans and French). There is nothing surprising about it since this predisposition generally exists in cultures whose history includes a tradition of contact with foreign languages. In the same way, the descendants of these cultures have no feelings of threatened identity. It could be said that speaking foreign languages well constitutes part of their cultural identity.

## Objectives

**General Objective**

To demonstrate the importance of using the mother tongue during the acquisition of a second language, as a natural learning process, by comparing the tests carried out on those who have had use of the mother tongue and those who have not.

**Specific Objectives**

ǀ To describe the complex phenomenon of learning that occurs during the acquisition of a second language.

ǀ To argue, through the scientific method, the true importance of comparisons in each linguistic dimension between Spanish and English during the learning process, to carry out a systematized theory that allows giving light on the most appropriate and beneficial use that can be given, after comparisons of the results obtained in each of the tests referred.

ǀ Describe and apply a critical analysis of how comparisons are being used by students.

ı Use the result of the analysis and the concepts handled in psycholinguistics, in sociolinguistics and in pedagogy, to manipulate the positive and negative aspects thrown by the study towards the construction of a methodology based on comparisons and use of the mother tongue.

# CHAPTER II

## Literature Review

**1. Mother tongue**: The mother tongue, also called natural language, popular language, mother tongue, native language, and first language, is the first language a person learns. All phonemes not assimilated in this first stage of life produce linguistic deafness to the terms in foreign languages. Generally, a child learns the fundamentals of his mother tongue through his family. The ability in the mother tongue is essential for further learning since it is believed that the mother tongue is the basis of thinking. An incomplete ability in the mother tongue almost always makes it difficult to learn second languages. Therefore, the mother tongue has a primary role in education. For example, Cook (2001) argues that the mother tongue should be used for teaching grammar because low-level students possess little linguistic information about the second language, so their mother tongue provides a shortcut to build associations between knowledge. of their native language and the target langue in the minds of the students.

**2. Second language:** Any language learned, in addition to the mother tongue, is called a second language after having acquired the first language. This second language is acquired for convenience, by necessity (in the case of immigrants) or, more commonly, to use it as a lingua franca. Most of the time it is difficult, but not impossible, to achieve the

same fluency and understanding as with a native language. Before reaching puberty it is relatively easier to acquire a complete language instinctively, since it is simply assimilated as another mother tongue.

**3. Lingua Franca:** (or free language) is the language adopted for a common understanding among a group of several coexisting. Acceptance may be due to mutual agreement or political issues, for example. In Europe, Greek and Latin were adopted as frank languages for a part of antiquity.

**4. Foreign language:** It is a language that is not spoken by the population of a certain region or country, for example, English is a foreign language in Japan. Also, it can be understood as the language that is not spoken in the country of origin of a particular person, for example, a native English speaker living in Japan can say that Japanese is a foreign language for him.

Some children learn more than one language from birth or a very young age: They are bilingual. It can be said that these children have two mother tongues, no language is foreign to the child, even if one language is a foreign language for most people in the child's country of birth. For example, a child who learns English from his American mother in Japan can speak both English and Japanese, without being any foreign language to him.

**5. Interlanguage:** A term and a concept that has been successful in the mentalistic theories of language learning, typical of generativism, is that of 'interlanguage' or 'interlanguage', which is defined (Jesner, U., 1966: 117) as the language of the one who learns languages. Actually, 'interlanguage', a term coined by Selinker (1972), is a theoretical construct that underlies the attempts of second language acquisition/learning researchers to identify the stages through which students of a second language go through your path to total competition. It is considered as a natural process that consists of a series of stages, within the continuum that constitutes learning, in which the student reaches increasingly higher levels of competence (with their strategies, without excluding errors, which will be less and less). In other words, all 'interlanguages' are transitory and are replaced by others, in which the mastery of linguistic and communicative strategies is more complete. The teacher's role in this learning hypothesis is that of a facilitator of the various 'interlanguages'. "

An example of interlanguage would be a Hispanic English learner, who in his attempt to communicate in the foreign language does not speak Spanish or English, but rather a kind of hybrid language that contains linguistic elements of his mother tongue and of the language that is learning This linguistic system, interlanguage, has also been called "transition linguistic competence" (Corder, 1967), "idiosyncratic dialect" (Corder, 1974), and "approximate system" (Nemser, 1974). It is also necessary to clarify that the learners of a foreign language do not speak the same interlanguage since the interlanguage of each student undergoes a constant change in the learning process.

**6. Auxiliary language:** (or auxilengua) is a language, built or not, that has been used or intended to be used as a means of communication between groups or individuals with different mother tongues. English is the most widely used auxiliary language and Esperanto, the best-known language among those created as an auxiliary language.

**7. Bilingualism:** When someone has two or more languages as their mother tongue, they are said to be a bilingual person. The order in which these languages were learned is not necessarily their order of mastery. For example, a Francophone couple may have a child who has learned French before other languages, but if he grew up in Spain, he probably ends up having a greater mastery of the Spanish language.

**8. Polyglot:** A polyglot is a person who can speak in many languages. A bilingual person can speak two languages fluently, a trilingual three languages. Someone who can speak six or more languages is a hyperpolyglot.

**CHAPTER III**

**Methodology**

As mentioned earlier, the research focuses on determining the desirability of learning a second language based on the mother tongue in lower levels (A1 and A2), for this, it will seek to theorize a little about how the acquisition of a second language occurs, taking consider different theories and authors, and on the other side, applying different test to the learners to follow their process. The starting point is our target population, which is AVIANCA SERVICES students, because through surveys it will be investigated what strategies they use in learning, how they believe they learn and what difficulties they face in the process.

This is composed by the following phases:

Observational phase: This includes the initial analysis in which the field in which you want to carry out the research, the topic, and the problem to be addressed is determined.

Organizational phase: It is in which the members and functions of the members of the investigative team are established.

Pre-operational phase: In this phase, the hypothesis of the investigation is proposed to start it and establish the action to follow to corroborate or refute it. It also

covers the establishment of the objective of the investigation, its definition and delimitation.

Operational phase: This is the phase in which the investigation takes place and consists of several stages:

• Exploratory stage: This stage is the one that allows, through the search for information, to know the "state of the art", the theoretical and conceptual framework on which the research is going to be developed.

• Data purification stage: It is in which the information is filtered and the collected theories are analyzed in order to select the most pertinent for the development of the investigation and the field of action or the rethinking of the initial hypothesis is clarified.

Once the information has been selected, the third stage of the operational phase takes place.

• Data collection stage: This stage has a process that begins with the decision of the method and strategy to use to apply the research (survey, survey, census…); later it is elaborated and developed and applied in the population that was selected in the delimitation of the research.

• Analytical stage: In this stage, the results of the method applied to develop the research are analyzed following the guidelines that allow reaffirming or refuting the proposed hypothesis.

Conclusive phase: After the operational phase, we have the tools to determine the conclusions and results of the research carried out.

In the TL 1AM group, only the second language is used, in this case, the English language. With the students of the ASAA1EM group, grammar explanations are made in Spanish and the questions they have are also done in Spanish.

An initial test is done in which they are asked to translate 10 questions to know their knowledge, they know that this initial test does not have any grade.

Posteriorly, we are going to compare the results after the first test, taking into account their process during the class, their participation and their progress in it self.

# CHAPTER IV

## Results and Discussion

When the survey of previous knowledge began, the students who had already had a previous learning of English, as well as those who felt very confident of their knowledge, were the first to participate, since self-confidence is their main and important factor. they want recognition from both their peers and the teacher.

Later, by having everyone participate, it becomes clear that some of them had never had contact with a second language, since they come from remote parts of the country and this learning was never relevant.

In the initial test, they are asked to translate some sentences for level A1, however, the results are not as expected, since it is assumed that they come from learning English during school but even a simple sentence such as asking someone's name becomes everything a challenge, they are allowed to use a dictionary and they must correct, but they make use of the literal translation, therefore, the answer is wrong, since they use the grammatical structure of the mother tongue, changing the meaning of the sentence.

From that moment, instruction is given about the structure in the present simple of the English language but not everyone captures the information, it is repeated more

slowly but the result is the same, most of them make a face to understand but in reality they do not understand, so they begin to use the mother tongue with a group, noting immediately that the participation is more active, they ask questions, compare with the mother tongue and correct; With the group in which the mother tongue is not used for the explanations of the first topics, the result is lower marks and less participation, so it is decided to use the mother tongue to explain grammatical functions and structures and immediately, the pace of the class changes, students feel calmer to ask questions and clarify concepts.

With this in mind, the use of the mother tongue is definitely necessary to clarify concepts, to allow students to ask questions in class and to explain grammatical structures.

# CHAPTER V

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- By making use of the mother tongue in the classroom, students feel more free to ask and clarify doubts regarding grammar and correct use of structures and vocabulary.

- Those who are based on the grammatical structures of the mother tongue tend to establish the grammatical rules of the second language more quickly.

- Students of a second language use different strategies that allow and facilitate their learning.

- The transfer strategy is used mainly by basic-level learners, however, it presents certain difficulties:

1. If the mother tongue and the second language do not have the same grammar rules, a mistake is made.

2. Ignorance of certain cognates (similar words in the two languages), taking into account that there are exact, close and false cognates; therefore, the exact ones can be confused with the false ones, with which the meaning of the sentence is altered.

- The avoidance strategy is used at all levels, not only in the learning of a second language, but also in the mother tongue.

- Interlanguage is presented as an option in which linguistic elements from both the mother tongue and the second language are integrated. The use of said interlanguage is the common factor among students of the most basic levels mainly;

as they acquire knowledge, they correct the mistakes they make and that are accepted in that interlanguage.

- Interlanguage is different in learners and is in constant change as the student learns and improves his linguistic competence in the foreign language.

- Those who spend more time studying a foreign language and practice it more make fewer mistakes and their progress is more remarkable than those who do not have the time and dedication.

-  The environment has a transcendental influence on the learning of a foreign language, since factors such as the motivation of the individual in learning it, its functionality and its use are taken into account.

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**APPENDIX**

- The following material reflects the knowledge that the students have on their second day of class, in which it is clarified that they will not be graded. After a while, they are told that they can use the dictionary, so there are studs or amendments.

- What follows, throughout the course is the correction of these 10 sentences, most of the cases, using the mother tongue.
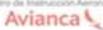
| Centro de Instrucción Aeronáutica<br>Avianca | Centro de Instrucción Aeronáutica<br>CCI – 025 | Fecha de Revisión:<br>2013-01-30<br>GAA 01 |
|---|---|---|

Asignatura: _____  Instructor: _____

Nombre del estudiante: _____

Grupo: _____  Fecha: _____  Calificación: _____

Parcial: _____  Final: ____  Supletorio: _____  Habilitación: _____  Quiz: _____

1. Traduzca las siguientes oraciones:

   a. Yo tengo 20 años

   b. Me gustan las galletas

   c. Vivo cerca de las puertas azules

   d. Al final del camino, está la señal

   e. Me llamo Julián

2. Describase en 5 oraciones: