

Features of Behaviorism in Second Language Acquisition (SLA): An Empirical Excerpt from Applied Linguistics View

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Abstract

Three decades roughly when Skinner proposed behaviorist theory in the context of L1 acquisition exploiting sociolinguistic approach specifically. Subsequently, there have been dearth of studies conducted validating the claims of behaviorism in the field of applied linguistics. Thus, RQ1 highlights the principles of behaviorism towards L2 competence with tantamount research assumption. Taking into account the data presented, it reveals that there practically are features of behaviorism which contributed to the successful L2 acquisition by the L2 learners. This involves reward, habit formation as well as stimulus-response linguistic processes leading to the acceptance of the first assumption. Reward fosters positive attitude to further explore the unknown. It leads to an affirmative language attitude necessary to discover the full details of L2 learning. RQ2 delineates the possible linguistic factors that are contributory to the collective L2 performance during the investigation time frame. Primary linguistic factors could have been the minimal L2 exposure of the students to the target language due to transition phase which forced the students to switch codes occasionally to complete the cycle of communication. This study is valuable to the learners and teachers of ESL/EFL worldwide as it offers some pedagogical implications necessary to understand the learning pace, lexical index, comprehensible input (CI), and language attitude of L2 learners. EFL teachers could likewise provide appropriate teaching materials and communicative activities to bring the students to a high level of competence by degrees.

Keywords: Behaviorism, Linguistic Factors, Reinforcement, Reward, Stimulus-Response

1. Introduction

Three decades approximately when renowned linguist Skinner (1985) proposed his behaviorist theory in the context of L1 acquisition exploiting sociolinguistic approach specifically. Thenceforth, there have been dearth of studies conducted validating the claims of behaviorism in the field of applied linguistics particularly. If any, these are on the interconnectedness of L1 to L2 acquisition such as the studies explored by Alghazo (2018); Bingjun (2013); De La Fuente (2020). The former accentuates that role of L1 in L2 acquisition comprises 6 different tenets: (1) with the behavioral theory to clarify the SLA, concentrating on the role of conditions; (2) to illuminate the interaction of SLA, highlighting communication and social needs; (3) to expound the SLA with the cognitive theory, accentuating the logic and thinking procedures; (4) with the nativist theory or biological theory to describe SLA, stressing the innate genetic capacity; (5) to underscore the learner and learning strategies. (6) L1 transfer in L2 acquisition of phonetics, lexicology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. As for Alghazo (2018), the value of using the L1 as a teaching strategy may be overtly relayed to L2 teachers in training courses and workshops in order to capacitate teachers with the prerequisite skills to efficaciously undertake a teaching assignment. Taking into account other relevant perspectives, Storch et. al. (2003) accentuate that the use of learners' L1 in L2 education has been a debatable linguistic issue. Language learners are typically discouraged to use their L1 during communications and classroom activities with the belief of less likelihood of successful L2 acquisition. Be that as it may, Iswati et al. (2018) refuted the previous claim and stressed that the role of L1 both by teachers and learners in English classrooms at tertiary level has undoubtedly been indispensable. This is vouched by the findings that 70% of the teachers stated that L1 should be used in their class whilst 87% of students postulated that L1 should be used during explanation of difficult concepts of L2. First language likewise lessens learners'

affective filter as it makes them more secure, comfortable, and eventually confident to use the target language.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Behaviorism in SLA

Behaviorist theory claims that infants learn oral language from other human role models through a progression period involving imitation, rewards, and practice. Human role models in an infant's environment offer the stimuli and rewards (Reutzel & Cooter, 2004). When a child attempts oral language or emulates the sounds or speech forms they are usually praised and given affection for their efforts. Accordingly, praise and affection becomes the rewards. However, the behaviorist theory is scrutinized for a variety of reasons. Mohamad Nor et al. (2018) conclude that there is no one solid linguistic theory which can provide the ultimate explanation of L1 acquisition and L2 learning as there are many interrelated factors that influence the success of language acquisition or language learning. The implication is that teachers should base their classroom management practices and pedagogical techniques on several theories rather than a single theory as learners learn and acquire language differently. Interestingly, the limited studies locally and internationally as well as the perceived research gaps on behaviorism theory and its relevance to L2 acquisition in applied linguistics context are what the researcher hopes to fill. According to behaviorist theory, Skinner (1985) equated learning a language to verbal behavior. Therefore, he believes that language acquisition like any other behavior can be observed, rather than trying to explain the mental systems underlying these types of behaviors. To him, children are born with a blank state of mind or *tabula rasa*. Children acquire L1 through stimuli given to them and the responses of children are conditioned through reinforcement. A positive response will be conditioned through positive reinforcement like reward or praise and vice versa for a negative response which is conditioned with punishment. In applied linguistics context, the preceding vista of Skinner (1985) is further supported by the studies of Alghazo (2018); Bingjun (2013); De La Fuente (2020) who correspondingly accentuated that L2 acquisition does not necessitate tedious drills; instead L1 shall be made as the bridge language to eventually acquire the target language (L2) in the classroom. This way, children feel accepted, comfortable and become less anxious whenever they attempt to use L2 both in written and oral form (Iswati et. al. 2018). The present study, therefore, attempts to challenge and validate the principles of behaviorist theory in second language acquisition in the context of applied linguistics by taking into account grammar and reading activities as means to L2 acquisition by the subjects of the study.

2.2 Empirical Studies on Behaviorism

As for Ambridge & Lieven (2011) Skinner argued that children learn language based on behaviorist reinforcement principles by associating words with meanings. Correct utterances are positively reinforced when the child realizes the communicative value of words and phrases. For example, when the child says 'milk' and the mother will smile and give her some as a result, the child will find this outcome rewarding, enhancing the child's language development. However, the transfer from L1 to the target language (L2) is a different story and more intricate. In the case of the subjects of the study, they had been exposed to L1 from Kinder to Grade III currently in different language learning process from the what is familiar to what is to be discovered in terms of rules. In fact, L2 has different morphology, phonology, syntax and typology (see illustration below) from which linguistic challenges and problems arise. Moreover, Lardiere (2008); Muroya (2019); Slabakova (2008) posit that inflectional morphology is deemed as one of the difficult linguistic area as far as second language (L2) acquisition is concerned. Second language learners commit linguistic variability (i.e., misuse, overuse, omission) in the attempt to use functional morpholexical items (e.g., copulas, auxiliaries, markers for tense, aspect, agreement, determiners). For this, recent research in L2 acquisition has accordingly elucidated possible causes of the persistent divergence through the function of formal features (phonological, syntactic, and semantic) (Slabakova 2016). Additionally, Hwang (2021) inferred that L2 learners adapt their production preferences following immediate and cumulative experience with a syntactic structure when an L2 structure differs from an L1 structure in terms of verb subcategorization frame and argument structure [(1) Jen had her computer fixed; (2) Jen- NOM computer-ACC fixed]. In the highlighted sentences, Korean learners of English described causative events in English in a picture-matching game. Taking into consideration all the suppositions and assumptions relative to L2 acquisition from the lens

of L1 learners. Islam (2013) posits that all the theories provide some fresh insights into the psychology of language learning. Additionally, SLA studies follow sequential progress of FLA theories as well as interlanguage theories. Granting that each theory may not be a complete model for further inquiry of language acquisition, each of them provides a unique perspective of language acquisition. Interlanguage is a theoretical construct which underlies the attempts of SLA researchers to identify the stages of development through which L2 learners pass on their way to L2 proficiency. SLA follows a 'universal' path that is principally uninfluenced by such factors as age of the learners, the context in which learning takes place, or the learners L1 background itself. According to this vista of SLA, the controlling factor is the faculty for language that all human beings have. On a final note, to establish a complete grasp of L1 to L2 transfer which basically is one of the chief purposes of the conduct of this case study, Cummins (1983) suggests a "dual-iceberg" analogy to delineate the transfer of bilingual learners' first language to the second language. In Cummins' model, L1 and L2 proficiencies intersect with the common sector, which is below the "surface". In the separate sectors we find the surface features of the respective linguistic structures of L1 and L2.

3. Problem Statement, RQs, and Assumptions

In Philippines, the enactment of R.A. 10733 covers Kindergarten and 12 years of basic education (six years of primary education, four years of Junior High School, and two years of Senior High School (SHS) to provide sufficient time for mastery of concepts and skills, develop lifelong learners, and prepare graduates for tertiary education, middle – level skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship. The preceding act was contributory to the use of English as a medium in teaching the core subjects such as Mathematics, Science and of course English as a subject (Estremera, 2017) to the participants of the study. These pupils, in fact, are in transition stage to the extent that they had been exposed to Bicol Sorsogon, the Lingua Franca (L1) from kinder to Grade III as a subject and a medium of instruction. Thus, Mohammad (2016); Oracion et. al. (2020) similarly theorize that at the end of 12 grades, the new curriculum is supposed to develop learners who are integrative, who are savvy with information, have media and technology skills, effective communication and life career skills, produce all forms of texts (e.g. written, oral, visual, digital) based on solid grounding on Philippine experience and culture; an understanding of the self, community and the nation; competency in formulating ideas/arguments logically, scientifically and creatively. In the same vein, according to Trance & Trance (2020), students must likewise have clear appreciation of one's responsibility as a citizen of a multicultural Philippines and a diverse world, systematically apply knowledge, understanding, theory and skills for the development of the self, local and global communities using prior learning, inquiry and experimentation. The preceding expectations set by the Department of Education, Philippines became the guiding principles of the teachers to at least meet the yardstick of achieving quality education coupled with some issues of L2 proficiency. The present paper endeavors to establish how EFL learners assimilate Philippine English (PhE) as one of the Englishes in the outer circle (Kachru, 1996). It encompasses grammar learning as well as reading activities that involve teacher and pupils' activity during the TLP to eventually learn grammar rules and reading skills toward second language (L2) functionality. Thus, this study aims to address the following research questions (RQs):

- *How do the features of behaviorism influence in SLA of the student participants adopting applied linguistics view?*
- *What specific behaviorism features and linguistic factors have contributed to the L2 acquisition based on empirical investigation?*

For the preceding questions, the following assumptions were proposed to guide the researcher in the acceptance or rejection of research findings:

- *Features of behaviorism have significant role in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) of EFL learners.*
- *There are varied linguistic factors which contributed to the L2 acquisition based on empirical exploration adopting applied linguistics view.*

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design and Context

To provide philosophical findings to the preceding questions, pure qualitative research design was deemed

most appropriate. Besides, intervening variables could have been delineated accordingly using the accentuated approach. In this exploration, an empirical excerpt was considered to validate the features of behaviorism in the site of interest where I am a non-participant observant. According to Lam (2020), language studies may best be investigated by qualitative research methods because they can capture the unique characteristics and processes of narrative frames, retrospective verbal reports, the draw-and-talk technique, and social media tools. The context involves the 23 Grade IV pupils at Marinas I Elementary School for S.Y. 2019-2020 which is 90% of the class. Other students in the featured class were excluded because of their low linguistic competence particularly in reading, speaking and writing skills which may affect the outcome of the study. Moreover, this grade level is ideal for the study since pupils are expected to at least communicate in the target language or be able to write and converse simple to complex sentences at least. The transition phase from L1 exposure in lower grade levels added to the suitability of the research site. Furthermore, the researcher has chosen the site due to his personal encounter to the participants as one of the faculty members of the said school contributing to the reliability of the study. The linguistic background of the students likewise spurred the researcher to conduct the qualitative inquiry in order to help promote academic excellence via data-driven intervention activities in the school level.

4.2 Data Collection Procedures

To commence the validation of behaviorism features, researcher adopted purposive sampling as it strategically chose the participants of the study on the basis of data that can potentially be gathered from the said participants subjected under case study (Estremera, 2021a; Estremera, 2021b). Marinas I Elementary was the research site for practical reasons foremost. The researcher is one of the faculty members of the preceding school. Interestingly, the site of interest uses approximately three languages [Bicol Sorsogon, Filipino as the national language, and English as L2]. This diversity in spoken languages used by the participants in and outside of the school provided rich insights to this study. Eventually, the research site provided likewise a valuable opportunity for this undertaking because of the personal experiences of the researcher being a permanent Grade Six teacher for almost twelve years in the city division of Sorsogon. The researcher, therefore, holds credibility with the participants because of his interest in language researches and occasional association to the participants. The researcher primarily sought the approval of the school head and the concerned subject teacher teaching English for potential guidance and support. Needed data were carefully and tediously collected from last week of August until November 2019. Sources include Focused Group Discussion (FGD) among the Grade IV teachers, classroom observations and classroom interviews. Multiple data sources provided opportunities to fully understand the experiences of the participants from various angles. The focused method was undertaken because it allowed for discovery of a range of opinions over several groups. As Krueger and Casey (2008) state, the focused group presents a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others – just as they are in life. To the degree that the one of aims of this research was to understand how the participants assimilate Philippine English, the researcher assumed that participants would converse and participate actively during the FGD. Two teachers from Grades 2-4 were invited for a discussion to compare and contrast data across groups. Semi-structured and open-ended questions were constructed based on the question statements. The guiding questions for focused groups had been submitted to the professor for comments and suggestions prior to the FGD sessions. The researcher employed the nonparticipant technique of observation. In this manner of observation, the researcher did not participate in the activity being observed but rather “sit on sidelines” and watch; they are not directly involved in the situation they are observing. Meanwhile, the open-ended observation protocol focused on two areas: (i) Behaviorism influence to the assimilation of PhE as L2; and, (ii) provide input as to how do learners learn through the principles of Behaviorism. However, in the process of observations, additional notes were included due to its relevance to the topic. The teacher participant was consented for a classroom observation. For the present undertaking, the researcher took into account the view of Frankael & Casey (2010) who both stated that interviewing is an important way for a researcher to check the accuracy of the impressions he has gained through observation. It also the most important data collection technique a qualitative researcher possesses. The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is on their minds – what they think or how they feel about something. Explicitly, a structured and semi structured type of interviews

dependent upon the uncontrollable situation along the research process are helpful. These kinds of interviews consist of series of questions designed to elicit specific answers from participants. Often they are used to obtain information that can later be compared and contrasted

4.3 Codification and Demographics

As for Lester et. al (2020), a code is simply a short, descriptive word or phrase that assigns meaning to the data associated to the researcher's analytic interests. Even though coding is frequently completed in an unstructured manner, insofar as thematic analysis is concerned, it is pivotal to think of coding as arising in multiple phases.

Table 1 (see appendix 2) delineates the demographic profile of the student participants depicting their age, sex, 2nd quarter rating and reading level. These variables are perceived to directly or indirectly influence the outcome of the study. As a matter of fact, in the study conducted by Silva et. al. (2017), variables such as age, gender, education, income and health- in the explanatory models of e-inclusion of senior citizens, while ignoring macro variables, such as the welfare systems and public policies in each country are likewise considered as essential elements.

4.4 Ethical Concerns

Ethics in research must have been observed in order circumvent future plights (Burles & Bally, 2018; Yip et al 2016; Bruno & Haar 2020, Estremera & Fruto, 2023). Hence, parents of the minor respondents were notified through a permit letter that their children will be the subject of study. The school head, in effect, had been informed thru a communication of the purposes of the conduct of research. In the process of research, the data and information that were taken from the respondents had been held with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Ensuing research ethics and rules had also been aptly observed by the researcher to circumvent future problems relative to plagiarism, intellectual dishonesty and the like. Cited researchers and authors can be verified as highlighted in the succeeding pages.

4.5 Data Analysis

This study exploited the combination of TA with EA to accordingly delineate the intervening variables (i.e. teachers' activity, students' responses, etc.). Besides the preceding methodological approaches fall under the umbrella of qualitative inquiry under phenomenological and case study categories (Collins & Stockton, 2018). According to Saldaña & Omasta (2018, p. 257), there are at least three primary applications of theory in qualitative research: (1) theory of research paradigm and method (Glesne, 2011), (2) theory building as a result of data collection (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2010), and (3) theory as a framework to guide the study (Anfara & Mertz, 2015). In order capture the relevance of Skinner's theory to the transitory context of L2 acquisition in the research site, there is need to analyze fully the principles and salient tenets of Behaviorism to be able to arrive at a close prediction of the intervening variables. This is underpinned by Jasso (1998) who hypothesized that the chief goal of theoretical work is a theory in two parts (postulates and predictions). This involves the two main activities of theoretical analysis: (i) speculative thinking, whereby the theorist identifies the starting ideas for the postulates; and (ii) formal reasoning, whereby the theorist constructs the postulates and derives predictions from them.

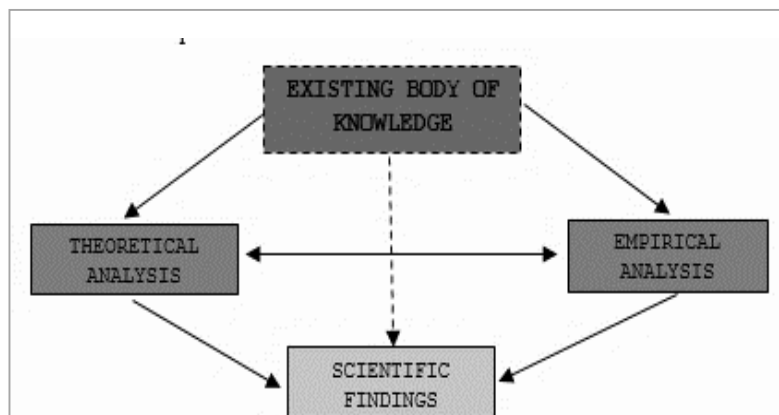


Figure 2: Convergence of T A and EA

To link the present paper to existing body of knowledge, there is a need to document, transcribe and, record data to capture the linguistic phenomena in the process of language acquisition by the subjects of the study (e.g. oral language attempts, code-switching, language reinforcement activities, language extension activities, reading activities, grammar drills, language tone, student-student interaction, students-teacher communication, speech atmosphere, and of course rewards application by the teacher, attitude of students towards L2, and the like). These linguistic occurrences have been deemed part and parcel of language acquisition both in L1 and L2 context. This is where EA of the data comes in to arrive at some scientific findings (Huebner et. al. 2016). As a matter of fact, empiricism is the idea that knowledge is primarily received through experience and attained through the five senses. Empiricism as opposed to rationalism, highlights the fact that knowledge is fundamentally achieved the thorough investigation of concepts, deduction, intuition, models, theories and revelation. EA, therefore, is deemed integral to the scientific method and is the typical methodology used to examine subjects for a probable answer through quantified observation of empirical evidences. Empirical inquiry does not redound to an absolute answer, nevertheless, only a most likely answer based on probability (Cooper et al. 2017).

5. Results

5.1 Features of Behaviorism in SLA

I now validate the features of behaviorism in L2 acquisition which involves grammar drills, reading activities and extension activities, recognition for positive language attitude.

Excerpt: Prior to the excerpt, the teacher commenced the lesson by reviewing the past lesson on possessive nouns. This is where empirical inquiry commenced to document how the participants assimilate PhE by capturing the teacher's activity (see Figure 4) and students' activity. Teacher's activity includes the materials used, number of questions thrown and classroom reinforcement activities to complete the parts of the lesson [objectives, subject matter, procedure, evaluation, and assignment] as inputs to assimilating the structure and semantic components of PhE. Students' activity, on the other hand, includes number of responses to questions asked by the teacher (see Figure 5), number of sentences constructed, frequency of recitations as attempts to learning Philippine English, and reading activities to broaden participants' vocabulary stockpile. During the procedure part of the lesson, the teacher organized a group activity (see Figure 6) for the EFL learners to concretize abstract concepts.

Excerpt

X² What was our lesson yesterday class? Anybody can remember?



Figure #4

X³ *Ano po mam...*

**I guess teacher...*

X⁴ Tungkol sa possessive nouns.

**It's about possessive nouns.*

X⁵ What about the possessive noun? Anybody can give an example?

X⁶ Ana's bag *po*.

X⁷ Lito's chocolate *po mam*.

(Lesson progresses to practice L2)

X⁸ Can you use the examples of abstract and concrete nouns?

X⁹ Maria is happy.

X¹⁰ Our school is beautiful



Figure #5

[Lesson continues...]

X¹¹ Now, for our group activity, you will help one another to answer the inside the envelope. There must a leader to present afterwards. It that clear? You should do that without disturbing others.

(Students attempted to present their output using L2)



Figure #6

- X¹² His chair is strong and tall.
- X¹³ Mario have a very eyes and black hairs.
- X¹⁴ My father is have a big house and we are happy.
- X¹⁵ The tree is tall in the school and many.

[another episode]

- X¹⁶ Now class, you are going to read a short selection altogether. Stand-up and read.



Figure

- #7
- X¹⁷ What is the selection you read about?
What does it tell you?
- X¹⁸ the environment *po mam*
- X¹⁹ the trees important to people
- X²⁰ the effect of kill trees
- X²¹ the taking care of the plants and the trees

(lesson continues)

- X²² Who are the characters in the story?
What did they do to the trees? Why?
- X²³ ...mam..mam...the people cutting trees
- X²⁴ ahah!..nice answer, who else?
- X²⁵ the community using the trees
- X²⁶ The people cut the trees to make their house
- X²⁷ So from you have read class, what have your realized?
Is it okay to cut trees? What should people do after cutting trees?
- X²⁸ trees is important

- X²⁹ mam..mam..plant more trees
- X³⁰ I will plant trees
- X³¹ Wonderful answers children. It's you practice speaking in English.
- [another set-up]
- X³² Good morning class. Today we will have a lesson in reading subject. I want you to look at the picture posted. Describe and tell about it.
- X³³ teacher...that is a picture of a lady bug.
- X³⁴ Great answer!...So today we will read a short story again.



Figure #8

[lesson progresses]

- X³⁵ Now for our reinforcement activity, I will group the class into 5. The envelop contains the instructions for the activity.



Figure # 9



Grammar drills are knowingly one of the requisites towards mastery of the structure of the target language. It enables learners to use and practice the target language in various forms such as speaking, writing and listening. For the present study, it aims capture empirically how this significant area of language learning plays a role in the acquisition of L2 from a transition view since participants are not exposed to L2 in their primary levels. In line X², the teacher activated the schema or prior knowledge of the students by reviewing the past lesson to make sure that students have learned the pre-requisite skills on grammar which is about the identification and use of possessive nouns in real life situations. Fortunately, the review question was responded to accordingly by the students. As observed, many have raised hands and aired their answers. Some have gotten the exact answer while others did not. In one way or another, L2 attempts had been noted. In fact, in line X⁴, X⁶, and X⁷, one noticeable response is the use of L1 preceded by L2 lexical terms to complete the sentence. Words such as *po* and *mam* are politeness markers in Philippine culture whenever there are communication cycle especially formal conversations. Be that as it may, there is one student who was able to respond accurately using L2 (line X⁴). After ensuring the readiness of the pupils for the new lesson in grammar acquisition, the teacher understudy presented a short story by which students picked-out the examples of abstract and concrete

nouns found and mentioned on the story read. Students read altogether also, and those who are not attentive were given attention and requested to reread the story for scaffolding of ideas. The teacher then continued the lesson (*Figure 3*) and threw follow-up questions based on the story previously listened to and read. In this scenario, participant students practiced the use of L2 by making sentences and phrases upon recognition by the teacher as part of the lesson strategy and to elicit the L2 attempts of the students. Hence, line X⁹ and X¹⁰ are concrete proofs of L2 attempts by two of the students. Semantically and structurally, the sentences uttered by the concerned students are accurate. In fact, many tried to construct sentences using the examples of abstract and concrete nouns. Empirically, those students who answered with errors in grammar are accepted by the teacher and corrections were given in the latter part of the lesson. To further concretize the abstract concepts of students, the teacher initiated a group activity (*Figure 4*) to make sure that patterns, argument structure and morphological order in simple sentences are imbibed by the students. Prior to the group work, teacher communicated the rules in performing the task. Pupils were likewise allowed to converse in L1 to trigger active participation of all members to contribute to the given task. After accomplishing the reinforcement activity in grammar lesson, each leader of the identified group presented their collaborative works. As a matter of fact, all assigned leaders used the target language in presenting their outputs. This is manifested by some of the captured sentences during the class observation. Discourse line X¹², X¹³, X¹⁴, and X¹⁵ are evidences of L2 attempts by the students with noted slight flaws on argument and morphological structure. Nonetheless, the slight errors can be negligible as they do not necessarily indicate a clear picture of collective grammatical incompetence. These sentences are an epiphany of students' collaborative work and grammar prowess at an early age learning L2 patterns from L1 exposure. In truth, line X¹³ and X¹⁴ show grammatical flaws but this can be acceptable at a transition stage. Line X¹⁵, likewise, manifests the influence of L1 morphological structure associated to literal translations by the learners. To supplement the empirical study, the evaluation part given by teacher was a 5-item test on using concrete and abstract nouns in sentences. In effect, 15 pupils got a perfect score. The rest of the pupils obtained a score of 4. This definitely means that participants are able to imbibe the lesson as instructed by the teacher. In this case, teacher's instruction and quality of stimulus activated paved the way for the assimilation of new concepts. Students were able to differentiate abstract from concrete nouns through reinforcement activities. To recapitulate, the above linguistic episode highlights the grammar prowess of the participants in exploring the target language. Collectively, they have acquired the basic linguistic requirements in order to use L2 effectively. Slight syntactic and morphologic errors are noted but soon learnt due to series of stimulus-response linguistic episodes inside the classroom. The low affective filter by the teacher and affirmative learning atmosphere fostered during TLP also contributed to the successful L2 acquisition. Students explored the target language during classroom discourse, written outputs, and reinforcement activities. Use of L1 both by teacher and participants whenever necessary allows for the establishment of good learning environment which made the participants confident to attempt using L2 gradually. The current paper also recognizes the fact that reading skills are essential features to learning second language (L2), the Philippine English (PhlE) in the case of the participants. In effect, reading and reading comprehension are interrelated skills. In order for students to be able to comprehend what they are reading, they have to develop comprehension skills in reading. Accordingly, to be able to present how reading relates to L2 acquisition, the researcher conversed to the teacher participant as to when will be the schedule for the teaching of reading skills. The initial empirical investigation was done October 8, 2019 observing research protocols. The reading lesson is on "Identifying the elements of the story". The lesson began with two pictures of lady bug. Out of the pictures, the teacher immediately asked: "What do you see in the pictures?". At this point, one pupil [ApEr] raised his hand immediately and uttered "Mam that is a pictures of a bugs". The teacher then immediately affirmed the reply of the pupil by saying "Oh that's a nice answer from you Jude". From the researcher's viewpoint, the sentence uttered by the pupil coded as [ApEr], though grammatically incorrect, is a nice L2 attempt from his level. Semantically, he was able to convey to his classmates and teacher what is inside his mind unaware of the error committed. As the lesson continues, the teacher flashed a piece of manila paper with five unfamiliar words and its definitions. This is where the unlocking of difficulties is found prior to the reading of the texts. The pupils then read altogether the text silently and then orally afterwards. This is followed by during-reading activities considered commonly as the discussion proper. The teacher discussed the elements of the story by emphasizing one by one about the setting, characters, and plot by throwing questions to the pupils. To check whether the pupils have understood the lesson, the teacher initiated a group

activity where a task will be done by a group of 5 members. The teacher distributed envelope to the 4 groups of pupils. Each member has a leader to present their outputs after orally in front of their classmates. Inside the envelopes are instructions on how to accomplish the task. Empirically, only three groups made it to have their outputs presented and received a high remark from their teacher. An evaluation was done by the teacher using the textbook. Thereafter, each has exchanged papers for checking. For reinforcement activity, the teacher gave anew another activity that served as assignment of the pupils to be submitted the following day. Based on the transcribed conversation, there are pupils who are using their L1 in answering the questions of the teacher. As for the teacher, she sometimes shifts codes when clarifying and explaining the lessons. During the interview, the teacher confirmed that code-switching is necessary for those who are behind and slow when it comes using the L2. Another claim shared was the short-period of exposure of the pupils to English language; hence, language production is directly affected. To provide more empirical evidences, on October 10, 2019, a week ago prior to the scheduled 2nd periodic test, the researcher opted to observe again how the participants learn PhE as their L2. The subject matter is related to enhancing the reading skills of the pupils about “Noting Details to a Selection Read”. The teacher started the lesson by checking the preparations of the pupils (line X¹⁶). It was followed by a picture about the selection to be read by the pupils. At this juncture, the teacher presented the lesson objectives and standards in reading. Tips on how to note details were also clarified by the teacher to guide the pupils in the reading activity. According to the teacher, the pupils have to keep their eyes focused on those statements answerable by wh-questions. In fact, line X¹⁸ to X²¹ are responses of students under study using L2. These sentences show L2 attempts of the students with negligible grammar errors. Semantically students are able to express what they want to convey based on linguistic stimuli. As the lessons progresses, another selection was presented by the teacher that served as bridge towards forming generalization before an evaluation was given to the pupils. In line X²², teacher asked questions about the selection read where students are expected to answer using L2. In this episode, phrasal and independent clauses are accepted by the teacher thereby establishing a low affective filter in language assimilation (X²⁴). [e.g. ...mam...mam...the people cutting trees (X²³); the community using the trees (X²⁵); The people cut the trees to make their house (X²⁶)]. Moreover, line X²⁷ indicates how significant is the question & answer to lead the students towards generalization of the lesson thereby honing their linguistic prowess in terms of language practice and usage inside the classroom. Teacher asked what have the students realized based on the selection read serving as moral lesson of the story. In the course of the lesson, there were attempts to construct sentences from the pupils answering *wh-questions* about the story. The teacher gave a 5-item test aligned with the lesson objectives. The lesson ended with an assignment to reinforce assimilation of language structures. To further document the significance of reading activities towards L2 acquisition, researcher opted to observe and record significant L2 episodes in the site of interest. Hence, line X³² reveals the preparatory reading drills before exploring the main lesson. Teacher immediately proceeded to a new lesson after ensuring that students are ready to learn a new by asking the students to describe the picture posted. After hearing some of responses from students (X³³ to X³⁴), teacher instructed the students to read altogether the related selection. This gave the teacher a hint who among her students are good in reading and who needs remediation in order to cope with the mainstream. In the long run, to quantify the grammar and reading competence of the pupils the 2nd periodic test was administered by the teacher on October 16 -17, 2019. As for the teacher concerned, it aims to measure the listening, reading, grammar, and writing skills of the pupil participants. Before the test was given, the teacher reminded the pupils of the examination rules. Thereafter, a short selection was read by the teacher and five questions were raised. The pupils also answered test on SVA; Using Pronouns; Using collective nouns; and, Writing a summary of the story aimed primarily to measure the grammatical competence of the pupils in the context of PhE.

Table 2: Classroom Discourse Excerpt

Classroom Discourse Transcript	Teacher's Activity	Student's Activity	Behaviorism Feature
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<p>clear? You should do that without disturbing others.</p> <p>[Students attempted to present their output using L2]</p> 			
<p>Figure #6</p> <p>X¹² His chair is strong and tall.</p> <p>X¹³ Mario have a very eyes and black hairs.</p> <p>X¹⁴ My father is have a big house and we are happy.</p> <p>X¹⁵ The tree is tall in the school and many.</p> <p>[another episode]</p> <p>X¹⁶ Now class, you are going to read a short selection altogether. Stand-up and read.</p>	<p>Group Activity/ Practical Work Approach</p>	<p>Reading/ Writing</p>	<p>Stimulus- response & Reinforcement</p>
	<p>Organizing</p>	<p>Listening / Speaking</p>	<p>Habit- formation</p>
<p>Figure #7</p> <p>X¹⁷ What is this selection you read about? What does it tell you?</p> <p>X¹⁸ the environment po mam</p> <p>X¹⁹ the trees important to people</p> <p>X²⁰ the effect of kill trees</p> <p>X²¹ the taking care of the plants and the trees</p>	<p>Inferring</p>	<p>Listening / Reading</p>	<p>Habit- formation</p>
<p>[lesson continues]</p> <p>X²² Who are the characters in the story? What did they do to the trees? Why?</p> <p>X²³ ..mam.mam..the people cutting trees</p>	<p>Visualizing</p>		

6. Discussion

6.1 Features of Behaviorism

The excerpt confirms some features of behaviorism in L2 acquisition. From the dataset, reading skills or oral discourses are essential to learn Philippine English (Estremera, 2018; Zalbidea, 2021). In truth, stimulus-response as one of the features of behaviorism has paved the way for the grammatical competence and reading prowess of the participants. This involves question-answer, reading & speaking drills, infused with written activities as prelude to L2 acquisition (Holland, 2008; Nazir, 2018; Wu et. al. 2019). In the same vein, habit formation as another feature of behaviorism has likewise been indispensable in L2 acquisition of EFL learners which involves grammar drills, speaking in the target language and extension activities initiated by the teacher (Magulod, 2019; Meşe & Sevilen, 2021). A positive response will be conditioned through positive reinforcement like reward or praise (Leis, 2021) and vice versa for a negative response which is conditioned with punishment. In applied linguistics context, the preceding vista of Skinner (1985) is further supported by the studies of Alghazo (2018); Bingjun (2013); De La Fuente (2020) who correspondingly accentuated that L2 acquisition does not necessitate tedious drills; instead L1 shall be made as the bridge language to eventually acquire the target language (L2) in the classroom. This way, children feel accepted, comfortable and become less anxious whenever they attempt to use L2 both in written and oral form (Iswati et. al. 2018). The present study, therefore, acquiesces to the principles of behaviorist theory in SLA by taking into account grammar and reading activities as means to L2 acquisition by the subjects of the study.

6.2 Linguistic Factors

Construing from the excerpt, there could have been several linguistic factors to the collective linguistic prowess of the participants such as vocabulary power, lexical index, and attitude towards the target language. Other interrelated factors such as transition period and language policy of the Department of Education (DepEd) may have directly and indirectly influenced the L2 acquisition of the students (Ferrerós Pagès, 2021). Overall, students possess basic to advance grammatical and reading competence pivotal to successful L2 acquisition. This finding is linked to the enactment of R.A. 10733 titled "An Act Enhancing the Philippine Basic Education System by Strengthening Its Curriculum and Increasing the Number of Years for Basic Education, Appropriating Funds therefor and for Other Purposes. The previous act was instrumental to the use of English as a medium in teaching the core subjects such as Mathematics, Science and of course English as a subject (Estremera, 2017) to the participants of the study. These pupils, in fact, are in transition stage to the extent that they had been exposed to Bicol Sorsogon, the Lingua Franca (L1) from kinder to Grade III as a subject and a medium of instruction. In the same vein, according to Trance & Trance (2020), students must likewise have clear appreciation of one's responsibility as a citizen of a multicultural Philippines and a diverse world, methodically apply knowledge, understanding, theory and skills for the improvement of the self, local and global communities using prior learning, inquiry and experimentation.

7. Conclusion

RQ1 highlights the principles of behaviorism towards L2 competence with tantamount research assumption. Taking into account the data presented, it reveals that there practically are features of behaviorism which contributed to the successful L2 acquisition by the L2 learners. This involves reward, habit formation as well stimulus-response linguistic processes leading to the acceptance of the first assumption; that, features of behaviorism plays an essential role in Philippine English (PhE) L2 acquisition of the participants in classroom setting. Reward fosters positive attitude to further explore the unknown. It leads to an affirmative language attitude necessary to discover the full details of the L2 learning. Conversely, habit formation is responsible for the acquisition of basic grammar patterns and construction of simple sentences and clauses towards a more complex and substantial course of L2 acquisition. Empirically, stimulus-response allows for the development of speaking, reading and listening skills of L2 students. Teacher is able to monitor the reading, writing and speaking prowess (Yamson, 2022) of the students via this behavioristic feature as confirmed based on FGD. Moreover, RQ2 delineates the possible linguistic factors that are contributory to the collective L2 performance during the investigation time frame. Primary linguistic factor could have been

the minimal L2 exposure of the students to the target language due to transition phase which forced the students to switch codes occasionally to complete the cycle of communication (Pańka, 2021; Papaja & Wysocka-Narews, 2020). Although the previous grade levels have English as a subject and a medium of instruction, it did not give students ample linguistic processes to fully use L2 during classroom discourses. Be that as it may, the dataset indicates that student participants exhibited positive language attitude. The short span of exposure to the target language are reflected in the negligible errors generally. With these premises, researcher now accepts the second assumption that there are varied linguistics factors which contributed to the L2 acquisition based on theoretical and empirical exploration.

8. Limitations & Recommendation

This study is valuable to the learners and teachers of ESL/EFL worldwide as it offers some pedagogical implications necessary to understand the learning pace, lexical index, comprehensible input (CI), and language attitude of L2 learners (Estremera, 2021; Fakher Ajabshir, 2021), specifically early language education (Ben Maad, 2022). EFL teachers may be able to teach the target language more efficiently and effectively by considering the salient points of this academic piece, multiculturalism as well as affective factors to language learning (e.g., disengagement of the early starters due to language practices of the classroom) (Pfenninger, 2016; Turebayeva, 2020). EFL teachers could likewise provide appropriate teaching materials and communicative activities to bring the students to a high level of competence by degrees (Estremera, 2021; Estremera & Gilbas, 2022; Tilahun et. al. 2022). School administrators may be able to come-up with programs, innovations, and school-level interventions geared towards improving the linguistic competence of their learners taking into account the relevant factors to successful L2 acquisition. Considering the lens of applied linguistics, the present empirical and theoretical exploration has limitations and suggestions subject to further inquiry and parallel study. To the degree that class observations were done in short span of time, it is recommended that longer research gathering be done to document comprehensively the functions of behaviorism in L2 acquisition. It may also lead to an additional and modernized feature of behaviorism that could add to the body knowledge. This may redound to an enhanced or reinforced version of behaviorism depicting new language learning process of the 21st century linguistic epoch. Additionally, higher intermediate levels who have already been exposed to the target language are potential research participants.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Author declares no conflict of interest to any entity in any form or means

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Appendix 1

(Acronym and Abbreviations)

- CI** - Comprehensible Input
- EA** - Empirical Analysis
- L1** - First Language
- L2** - Second Language
- NNS** - Non-native Speakers
- PhE** - Philippine English
- R** - Response
- S** - Stimulus
- SLA** - Second Language Acquisition
- TA** - Theoretical Analysis
- TLP** - Teaching Learning Process

Appendix 2

(Participants' Demographic Profile and Assigned Code)

Code	Age	Sex	2 nd Quarter Rating in English	Reading Level in PHILIRI
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Dr. Michael L. Estremera Features of Behaviorism in Second Language Acquisition (SLA): An Empirical Excerpt from Applied Linguistics View

ApEa	10	M	76	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEb	11	M	78	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEc	10	M	79	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEd	10	M	80	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEe	10	M	86	<i>Instructional</i>
ApEf	10	M	91	<i>independent</i>
ApEg	11	M	89	<i>Instructional</i>
ApEh	10	M	93	<i>Independent</i>
ApEi	10	M	80	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEj	11	M	80	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEk	10	M	80	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEl	10	M	81	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEm	10	M	83	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEn	10	M	80	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEo	10	F	80	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEp	10	F	82	<i>Frustration</i>
ApEq	10	F	89	<i>Instructional</i>
ApEr	10	F	90	<i>Independent</i>
ApEs	10	F	88	<i>Instructional</i>
ApEt	10	F	87	<i>Instructional</i>
ApEu	10	F	85	<i>Instructional</i>
ApEv	10	F	84	<i>Instructional</i>
ApEw	10	F	82	<i>Instructional</i>