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First Language Development in Children: Major Explanatory Approaches and Stages

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Abstract

In this article four major theories about the process how first languages are acquired by the children are discussed. While Behaviourist theorists explain this as a chain system of imitation, reinforcement and habit formation, Innatists argue that language is the innate ability of every normal child who only needs some language input from the environment to ignite this mechanism in the brain and thereby develop the skill of using their first language. Again, cognitive psychologists explain language acquisition as a part of child's cognitive development interacting with environment. On the other hand, some recent linguists analyze the process as an application-based usage-oriented skill. The major developmental stages of acquiring the first language and a child's respective progress in these stages are also pointed out.

Introduction: How languages are learnt by the children is an age-old question. After birth a child stays with parents and gradually becomes able to speak and comprehend the language of the parents. This language is usually referred to the mother tongue or the first language or the L1 of the child. Nowadays it is quite acknowledged fact that a child does not learn L1 but acquires L1. Learning is a formal and conscious process while acquisition is a spontaneous and unconscious process. Learning a language usually occurs in institutions, like schools. Unlike learning, acquisition does not tell about the language rather it develops language skills in the children. One child may acquire two languages at the same time as L1. And this usually happens in the cases of those children whose parents are from two different language communities. The first language acquisition process begins from the birth of a child and though it is a lifelong process, it peaks its top pace during the pre-adolescent period and thereafter a decrease in the speed is noted. In this article we are trying to discuss four major theories trying to explain the

**Power Struggle & Strategies from an Inferior Position
in Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*****Arnab Mukherjee**M. Phil., M.A., in English
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Panchthupi, Murshidabad, West Bengal**Abstract**

Gertrude Morel, a middle class educated girl, the heroine of the novel - *Sons and Lovers*, fell in love in with Walter Morel an uneducated labour in the coal mines and married him. But within a year of their marriage she gets disillusioned with this marriage and finds several faults with Walter and tried to reform him. Walter resisted it. She turned cold to him and started to despise him. Walter turns to heavy drinking and sometimes attacked her physically. Their relation remains only in the physical level. There is no mental connection. As a result of this kind of relation they have 4 children. Mrs. Morel turns her entire attention to her children, completely neglecting the existence of her husband. This starts a fight between them which lasts till the end of her life. Being physically and economically in an inferior position to her husband, she uses several strategies to defeat her husband in this struggle. She even goes to the extent of using their children as her ally in this fight against their father and completely alienates Walter in his own house. Thus she makes her husband a non-entity in the eyes of their children and becomes the driving force of the family.

Key words: Struggle, Dominance, Class, Strategies, Ally, Alienation.

Sons and Lovers by D.H. Lawrence develops the story of a post Victorian family in which domination is an important characteristic. The novel represents a microcosm of the society of that time and its themes are continuing modern preoccupations. The struggle for dominance in the Morel family establishes the pattern of Lawrence's later novels since the conflict in *Sons and Lovers* is qualified basically by the strength of the mind (in the mother) against the body (in the father). The struggle is shown in terms of the mother's rejection of the father exactly because of her superior mind. However, trying to explain this struggle through feminist approaches may lead to a simple conclusion that the horror in *Sons and Lovers* is the 'madness' induced by patriarchy and male power and Mr. Morel being male oppressor representing patriarchy is obviously the winner of this struggle over Mrs. Morel who is a stereotype of Victorian 'angel in the house' also representing the marginal-the suppressed 'other'. Being inferior both physically and economically she inevitably loses the battle.