

Second Language Acquisition: The Case of Filipino Migrant Workers

Joel C. Meniado*

The Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, PO Box 30436, Yanbu, 41912, Saudi Arabia

Corresponding Author: Joel C. Meniado, E-mail: meniadoj@rcyci.edu.sa

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: September 02, 2018

Accepted: November 17, 2018

Published: February 28, 2019

Volume: 10 Issue: 1

Advance access: January 2019

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

Key words:

Language Acquisition,
Second Language Acquisition,
L2 Learning,
Overseas Filipino Workers,
Adult Learners

ABSTRACT

Many Filipino migrant workers (overseas Filipino workers) in their status as adult learners struggle in learning the local language of their host countries to native-like proficiency level. With the aim of establishing a second language (L2) acquisition pattern that may be useful in designing responsive adult training and welfare programs, this study examines how these workers acquire their L2s and what factors influence their rate and success in L2 learning. Utilizing mixed methods research design with 15 overseas Filipino workers as samples who learned various local languages in 10 different host countries, this study reveals that immersion and actual use of the target language in authentic communicative situations can make language acquisition easier. Findings of this study also confirm that instrumental and integrative motivation coupled with strong target language (TL) community support can make L2 learning faster, while old age and non-necessity of the L2 at work can make the whole process slower. In terms of communication strategies, findings show that syntactic avoidance is the most common communication strategy used, followed by direct appeal to authority (native speakers) and use of gestures, facial expressions, and translation tools. As foreign workers, their motivational orientations in learning their L2 are for employment, cultural understanding, and cultural integration. Implications of these findings are discussed in relation to second language teaching among adult language learners and overseas workers.

INTRODUCTION

Filipino migrant workers, also called overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), represent approximately 3.33 per cent of the Philippine's total labor force. In April to September 2017, there were 2.33 million OFWs working in many parts of the globe, 85.5% of which were contractually employed in various Asian countries while 14.5% were in Europe, North and South America, Australia, and Africa combined (Bersales, 2018). Most OFWs are employed as domestic helpers, construction and factory workers, craft and related trade workers, service and sales workers, clerical support workers, technicians and associate professionals, professionals, and managers. Due to their significant contribution to Philippine economy, they are honored as the country's modern day heroes. However, behind this recognition are narratives of struggles with various challenges and difficulties entrenched in their new environment.

One of the challenges encountered by most Filipino migrant workers is social and cultural adaptation (Ofreneo & Samonte, 2005). This includes difficulties in adjusting to their host country's local lifestyle and in using its local language as medium of communication at work, in schools, stores, banks, restaurants, hospitals, government offices, public transportations, and many other essential establish-

ments. Since most OFWs do not have sufficient language background or the desired level of proficiency in their host country's native language prior to migration or deployment, they struggle with language barriers, which adversely affect their socialization, work performance, and quality of life.

Based on observations and relevant literatures, many OFWs struggle in learning a new foreign language (aside from English) to a native-like proficiency level. Though a small fraction can communicate in a new foreign language fluently despite their short exposure with it, majority especially those in their adulthood stage find learning foreign language almost impossible. What makes second language acquisition/learning slow and difficult? According to Orillos (1998), second language acquisition (SLA) is a complex process that involves interplay of several factors within the learner and the learning environment. In the case of adult Filipino migrant workers or OFWs, what are these factors?

This study aimed to examine what propels and deters Filipino migrant workers' acquisition and learning of a new foreign language in their status as adult learners. Specifically, it tried to find answers to the following questions: 1) How do Filipino migrant workers acquire/learn a second language in their new environment?; 2) What are the factors affecting their acquisition/learning of a second language?;

3) What strategies do they use to deal with language barriers encountered when communicating with native speakers of the target language?; and 4) What are their motivational orientations in learning a new second/foreign language?

Few researches have been conducted on SLA focusing on migrant workers acquiring a second language in the context of adult education. As this study endeavors to explore processes, factors, motivations, and strategies involved in second language acquisition in adult education context, it is hoped that it can yield valuable insights to second language learning and teaching. Also investigating how adult learners (Filipino migrant workers) acquire or learn a second language, this study is expected to establish a pattern of L2 acquisition, confirm SLA theories, and fill the gaps in literatures about adult language and literacy education. In addition, it is also assumed that it can help language teachers or trainers in designing appropriate and responsive curricula, teaching methodologies, and assessment tools relevant to adult education. Lastly, it is hoped that by uncovering the motivational orientations and communication difficulties encountered by migrant workers, this study can help concerned authorities in designing programs that empower migrant workers to be globally competitive, flexible, and culturally adaptive.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition (SLA) is the conscious or subconscious process of acquiring or learning a language other than the native language in a controlled or uncontrolled situation (Ellis, 1997; Orillos, 1998; Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2014; Deng & Zou, 2016) to develop a certain degree of proficiency (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985). It is also a complex mechanism that can adapt to different conditions present within the learner and his surrounding environment (Ellis, 1986; Menezes, 2013). As a discipline, it involves studying the factors that influence the rate of acquisition and learning and the varying degree of proficiency in a language being learned (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003; Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Since its inception as a field of study, SLA has been viewed and approached differently by various schools of thoughts and notable personalities. For the behaviourists, it is a habit formation. It is like any other kind of learning that consists of building up chains of stimulus–response links, which could be controlled and shaped by reinforcement. For the nativists/cognitivists, on the other hand, it is an internal affair. They believe that every person has the natural capacity to learn any language due to the presence of the so-called internal Language Acquisition Device (LAD). According to them, stimuli or inputs from the environment only serve as “trigger to activate the device” (Orillos, 1998 p. 205).

Theories of Second Language Acquisition

Schumann (1975) with his Acculturation Theory claims that socio-cultural factors control the degree to which the learner

acquires the target language. His theory postulates that when the second language learners (2LL group) have more contact with the speakers of the target language (TL group) and are willing to embrace TL group’s culture, it will be easier for them to acquire the target language. If there is greater distance between the two groups, language acquisition/learning will be difficult.

Building on Schumann’s model, Andersen’s Nativization/Denativization Theory believes that SLA is the result of two general forces – the nativization and denativization. This theory upholds that SLA is an internal processing mechanism where the learner performs assimilation and adjustments with TL’s inputs and his own internalized system. During the SLA process, the learner matches the input to his own internalized view of what makes the L2 system (nativization), and sometimes, he also adjusts his own internalized system to fit into the input (Orillos, 1998).

Giles’s (1979) Accommodation Theory underlines the important role of motivation in developing L2 proficiency. This theory suggests that when learners’ needs and interests are accommodated or given consideration in the process of language acquisition/learning, they will be motivated to learn, hence potentially develop L2 proficiency. Also, this theory regards the perceived relationship of the learner’s social group (in-group) and the target language community (out-group) as dynamic and fluid depending on the changing views of identity of each group vis-a-vis the other (Giles, 1979; Orillos, 1998).

Another theory that highlights the role of social relationship and group interaction is the Discourse Theory. It contends that language learning evolves out of learning how to carry on conversations. According to Cherry (1979), it is through communication where actions are accomplished and rules of language structure and use are developed. Related to Krashen’s natural order hypothesis, the theory believes that SLA follows a natural route in syntactical development and that the natural route is the result of learning how to hold conversations. In other words, learners learn a second language by interacting their personal circumstances with the environment which in turn give them inputs that further enhance their language learning.

Still in the context of communicative interaction, the Variable Competence Model approaches SLA within the framework of language use. It suggests that language use should be understood in terms of distinction between competence and capacity (Widdowson, 1978). Claiming that there is single knowledge store containing variable interlanguage rules, a learner can vary his use of form (competence) depending on the need of the communicative situation (contextual variability). A learner can hone his competence by engaging in a discourse in situational and linguistic contexts.

Krashen (1982) in his Monitor Model asserts that adult second language learners have two means of internalizing the target language – the acquisition which is the subconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language and the learning which is the conscious attention to form, rules, and processes, thereby contending that fluency in second language performance is not due to what the person

learned but due to what he acquired. Aiming to explain phenomena in second language learning, he came up with several hypotheses. Foremost of which is the input hypothesis claiming that for language acquisition to be more challenging and meaningful, the language which learners are exposed to should be higher than their existing level of competence. Second is the affective filter hypothesis which claims that a learner acquires/learns a second language faster if his motivation and self-esteem are high and his anxiety low. The third is the natural order hypothesis which asserts that parts of a language are learned in natural and predictable order that no amount of explanations, drills, and exercises can alter it (Krashen, 1982).

Corollary to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, the Interaction Hypothesis maintains that conversational interaction allows learners to be immersed in meaningful comprehensible inputs that facilitate SLA (Long, 1985). When learners engage in interactive communication where meaning is negotiated, input comprehensibility is increased leading to enhanced linguistic competence and capacity (Ariza & Hancock, 2003). Interactionists further point out that interacting with advanced speakers of TL using scaffolding structures can help L2ers become proficient speakers.

Contrary to the belief that external forces facilitate language acquisition, the Universal Hypothesis asserts that SLA is innate (Latu, 1994). It believes that though human languages are different in forms or systems, they share basic similarities (Chomsky, 2000). These innate similarities are called Universal Grammar consisting of system of principles, conditions, and rules, which are common elements, or properties of all human languages (Latu, 1994; Orillos, 1998). With varied languages having the same linguistic universals, this theory claims that deep down there is only one human language, which facilitates SLA and prevents learners from producing flawed or inaccurate sentences.

Another theory that shows the naturalness of language acquisition is the Neurofunctional Theory. It tries to explain how the brain processes the development and use of a language. It mainly holds the view that there is a connection between language function and neural anatomy. Certain parts of the brain are genetically programmed to enable human being to discharge different linguistic functions and that impairment of which causes such problems in speech, comprehension, writing, etc.

Patterned after Chomsky's cognitivist theory of language learning is the Cognitive Variations in Language Learning maintaining that L2 learning is mainly cognitive processes utilizing different types of learning. It holds further that since every individual is unique, it also follows that learner learns differently using various strategies and styles in order to master the language.

Still on the natural aspect of language learning, another theory related to the neurofunctional theory and Universal Hypothesis is the Natural Approach. It believes that most second languages are not learned in academic situations but rather acquired naturally. It claims that 'people of all ages and backgrounds acquire second languages often without the help of formal education or special courses' (Orillos, 1998, p.227). Somewhat related to Krashen's affective fil-

ter hypothesis, this theory concludes that language learning takes place when a person is highly motivated to learn the language for survival or growth and development purposes.

Filipino Migrant Workers as Adult Language Learners

Based on the 2017 statistics, there are more than two million documented OFWs all over the world working in various sectors (Bernales, 2018). Passing through stringent screening on the basis of qualification and experience prior to deployment abroad, OFWs are generally perceived as competent, persevering, committed, and compassionate; thus, they are preferred by most foreign employers (Al-Maglooth, 2008). In addition, they are also perceived as adaptive and highly trainable individuals. They tend to welcome new learning in order to be effective and efficient in their job.

As foreign workers, one of the areas of development they have to deal with is learning a new language to enhance their communication, interpersonal, and intercultural skills. However, with their capacity as adult learners (early twenties onwards), is learning a new foreign language still possible? Will it still be as easy as they did in acquiring their L1? According to Smith & Strong (2009), adult language learners have characteristics that make them better than younger learners. They are generally goal-oriented and highly motivated to learn to fulfil a particular need or demand. As mature, competent, experienced, and multi-talented individuals, they have the wealth of life and educational experiences that they can use to direct their learning in their own unique ways. Also, having multifaceted identities and roles in their dynamic and changing lives, they possess greater confidence, greater cognitive and linguistic capabilities and conceptual complexity that can help them learn new language better and easier.

Naznean (2009) characterizes adult language learners as individuals who can make decisions on what need to be learned, can capitalize on previous experience to learn something new, can validate truthfulness of information based on beliefs and experiences, and can identify usefulness of learning outcomes in real life situation. With the foregoing, Deng & Zou (2016) maintains that adult language learners can acquire/learn a new language easily because they have high cognitive level, clear logical analysis, and strong self-monitoring abilities.

Motivation in Second Language Acquisition/Learning

Motivation is a fundamental factor that influences success in second language learning (Oxford, 1996). It provides reason that drives an individual to accomplish something (i.e learning L2) and keeps him continually interested and committed until he fulfils his goal (Dornyei, 2001; 2002). It also determines 'the extent of active, personal involvement in foreign or second language learning' (Oxford, 1996, p.121). Dynamic in nature, motivation comes in two forms – integrative and instrumental (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In L2 context, integrative motivation refers to the wanting to learn the target language in order to identify with the community that speaks the language, while instrumental motivation refers to

the desire to learn a new language to meet needs and goals such as employment, salary increase, rank promotion, purchase of goods at better price, use of public transportation, etc. (Orillos, 1998; Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

In the study of Gardner (1985), he found that integrative motivation promotes SLA. Naiman, et al. (1995) also found L2ers who have high intrinsic motivation (inner drive related to human need for self-esteem and self-confidence) are likely to succeed in L2 learning. With the aim of determining which motivation differentiates learners, Gonzales (2010) investigated the motivational orientation in foreign language learning of Filipino foreign language learners. The motivational orientations are categorized into six: 1) desire for career and economic enhancement; 2) desire to become global citizen; 3) desire to communicate and affiliate with foreigners; 4) desire for self-satisfaction in learning; 5) self-efficacy; and 6) desire for cultural integration. Using quantitative method, the study revealed that Filipino foreign language learners' motivation orientation is towards cultural understanding, cultural integration, and self-satisfaction.

Factors Affecting Second Language Acquisition

Success in L2 acquisition may depend on a range of factors. One of these is age. It is believed that SLA is easier and faster for children than adults (Roherick, 1983; Latu, 1994; Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2014) due to their brain's plasticity within the critical period of language acquisition (Lenneberg, 1967). Beyond this period, it is almost impossible to acquire a new language. The maturation and lateralization of the brain deprive adults the physiological and neurological advantages in acquiring a new language, hence difficult for them to reach native-like proficiency level (Deng & Zou, 2016). However, according to Khasinah (2014), the critical period hypothesis seems to be true only in naturalistic learning setting. In a formal learning environment, adults appear to be better than children especially in syntax and morphology.

In the study of Wang (1999), she investigated the effect of early onset for SLA to L2 proficiency outcomes among adult learners. Comparing two groups of migrant adult learners according to age of arrival (AOA) and exposure to English language in Canada, she found that those who arrived at a younger age (25-35) learned L2 (English) easier than those who arrived at a later age (40-55). Similarly, Major (2014) also conducted a study investigating the effect of age on the L2 proficiency of Spanish adult learners. Grouped into four according to age of arrival (AOA), those Spanish adult learners who started learning L2 (English) at a younger age tended to have greater proficiency.

Aside from age factor, aptitude also plays important role in second language acquisition. It is the natural specific ability of an individual to learn a language (Ellis, 1986; Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985). Described in terms of phonemic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, inductive language learning ability, and rote learning ability, aptitude is found to be a predictor of second language achievement. Hence, it is claimed that a person with high language aptitude can learn a new language faster and easier (Khasinah, 2014).

Another cognitive factor that affects SLA is intelligence, the general ability to master academic skills (Ellis, 1986). Measured in terms of linguistic and logical-mathematical abilities, it is proved that it can predict one's success in SLA in formal language instruction. Those who are gifted with high intelligence quotient (IQ) tend to learn a new language faster and easier regardless of age and level of motivation. Also, Gardner (2011) in his Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory claim that those who are linguistically inclined are more attentive to spoken and written language and can use it in various functions to accomplish a goal.

In addition to intelligence, learning (cognitive) style is also believed to have influence in SLA. It generally refers to a learner's peculiar way of learning something, shaped by genetic background, culture, and previous learning experience. There are four types of learning modalities: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile (Reid, 1987). Visual learners learn best when they see pictures or videos, texts, or graphs, while auditory ones prefer to learn with the aid of things or activities involving sounds. Kinesthetic learners, on the other hand, learn by being active, while tactile learners learn through touching. Though learning styles do not always result to successful L2 learning as found in the study of Newton and Miah (2017), they can be efficient means to achieve desired results (Khasinah, 2014).

Personality, the affective domain of learning, is also a strong element that can hinder or enhance rate of language acquisition/learning. It covers such factors as self-esteem, inhibitions, empathy, extroversion, aggression, and motivation. Self-esteem refers to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself (Orillos, 1998). The higher the self-esteem is, the more positive and open a learner tends to be when it comes to second language learning. While self-esteem seems to be facilitative, inhibitions on the other hand can be deterrent. Guiorra (in Orillos, 1998) has found that inhibitions also called defenses prevent a person in communicating in a foreign language. Empathy is also a social and communicative mechanism which can enhance language acquisition. If the learner feels empathy from the TL group, he does not feel insecure. Consequently, he will be confident in using the language. Extroversion and introversion are also potentially important factors in SLA. Though they are not yet clearly established, it can be inferred that they can somehow be instrumental to social dynamism and harmony which are conducive states for language learning. Like extroversion and introversion, aggression could also facilitate L2 learning since it contributes to high level of motivation. The last personality factor is motivation. Many researches claim that there is positive relationship between motivation and language proficiency. Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Spolsky (1989) assert that motivation is an important requirement, absolutely essential in successful second language learning.

According to Latu (1994), learner's knowledge of first language (L1) also contributes to the success or difficulty in L2 learning. Based on behaviorist learning theory, the habits formed in L1 can facilitate the forming of habits in L2, most especially when the structures of both are related (positive

transfer). However, if they are totally different, transfer of habits can be hindered (L1 interference), hence causing difficulties and errors. Based on this premise, a Filipino learner may find learning English as a second language easier due to his L1's similarities in the alphabet while more difficult to learn Japanese, Chinese, or Arabic due to significant differences in both forms and structures.

Aside from internal factors such as age, intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation, cognitive styles, and L1 knowledge, external (environment) factors also account to learner's success in L2 learning. These include learning opportunities or exposure to the target language, curriculum, instruction, culture and status, and access to native speakers (Frankfurt International School, 2018). According to Spolsky (1989), the 'outcome of language learning depends largely on the amount and kind of exposure to the target language' (p. 166) and the opportunities created and provided to learners to use the target language in authentic situations. This was found true in the case of a Filipino migrant worker in Saudi Arabia who mastered the Arabic language with an authentic Bedouin dialect (Al-Mazini, 2017). As a camel herder for a Bedouin in the desert for two years, he would each day spend several hours talking with his sponsor (employer) about different things using the language. After two years of using the language, he achieved native-like proficiency. Indeed, it is in using the target language in authentic and meaningful contexts that learners gain mastery.

Strategies in Second Language Learning

A second language can be learned in naturalistic, formal, or immersive conditions. Learners can learn the L2 when they are exposed to a variety of natural discourses native speakers use in their daily conversations or when they attend a class with a teacher providing grammar instruction and comprehensible input. They can also learn when they are immersed in a TL community where they deeply engage with native speakers and get ample opportunities to use the language in natural, meaningful situations.

In learning the language through formal instruction, learners use their peculiar ways to gain control over the process and improve their L2 knowledge and performance. These are called learning strategies which basically include mental or behavioural activities that facilitate the whole learning process, making the experience more effective and transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990). During the process, learners perform overt and covert mechanisms that facilitate SLA. They transfer their previous knowledge and experience in L1 to facilitate the second language learning process. They also generalize concepts based on their observations of particular instances. Lastly, they simplify events or concepts for easier storing and retrieval.

Oxford (1990) categorized learning strategies into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include memory strategies (i.e. memorization, repetition, taking notes on vocabulary, etc.), cognitive strategies (analyzing and reasoning, recombination, practicing with sounds and writing systems, etc.), and compensation strategies (i.e. guessing meaning, using synonyms or gestures, code switching, circumlocution,

approximation, etc.). Indirect strategies, on the other hand, include metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's way of thinking and learning process), affective strategies (creating relaxed and stress-free learning situations to develop self-confidence in engaging into active language learning), and social strategies (i.e. interacting with other people to learn the new language).

Studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between the use of strategies and success in L2 learning (Tukiainen, 2003; Kalati, 2016). L2 learners who use a wide variety of strategies tend to be more successful in L2 learning. Successful learners are those who are keen to both form and meaning, aware of their learning process, and use appropriate strategies to address specific learning difficulties.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Since the aim of this study was to explore in depth the processes, factors, motivations, and strategies involved in second language acquisition of adult learners working in different contexts as overseas Filipino workers (migrant Filipino workers), the mixed methods approach was used. According to Cresswell (2015), mixed methods combines quantitative data (statistical trends) with qualitative data (personal narratives) to draw a strength that provides a better understanding of the research problem. It is appropriate when there is a need to verify and supplement data or to look at different angles and aspects of the problem with breadth and depth to make results more generalized for future studies and examinations (Cresswell, 2009; Hesse-Biber 2010). Investigating the factors affecting the Filipino migrant workers' acquisition of a second language, their L2 learning strategies, and their motivational orientation in learning a new foreign language needs both quantitative and qualitative analyses, hence this approach.

Sample

The samples of this study were fifteen (15) selected overseas Filipino workers employed across different occupations in ten (10) different countries. Since the purpose of this study was to investigate how adult L2 learners acquired their second/foreign language and what factors affected their acquisition, purposive sampling technique was used. Only those OFWs aged 18 years and above who learned a second language other than Filipino and English were contacted. Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents.

Instrument

To gather quantitative data on the demographic information of the respondents, their mode of L2 acquisition and learning, the factors affecting their acquisition/learning process, the strategies they use in coping with language barriers or communication difficulties, and their motivational orientation in learning L2, an open-ended questionnaire was used. To validate, triangulate, and supplement the data gathered

Table 1. Demographic Data of the Respondents

Pseudonym	Age	Occupation	Country of Employment	No. of Years in the Country	L2 Learned
John	57	ESL Teacher	Saudi Arabia	24	Arabic
Romeo	27	Salesman	Saudi Arabia	2	Arabic
Anne	35	Hotel Receptionist	United Arab Emirates	13	Arabic
Marielle	30	Service Crew	United Arab Emirates	5	Arabic
Amie	33	Bus attendant	South Korea	2	Korean
Juliet	34	Domestic Helper	Hong Kong	6	Cantonese
Margie	33	Domestic Helper	Hong Kong	8	Cantonese
Eric	35	Staff Nurse	Saudi Arabia	9	Arabic
Jayson	28	Factory Worker	Taiwan	6	Chinese
Alex	38	College Instructor	Kazakhstan	7	Kazakh
Jeanie	39	International School Teacher	Japan	6	Nihonggo
Michelle	50	Nursing Lecturer	Oman	5	Arabic
Robin	30	Manager	Singapore	9	Chinese
Christopher	45	Teacher	Qatar	4	Arabic
Enrique	35	Hotel receptionist	Spain	7	Spanish

through the questionnaire, a structured interview was conducted face-to-face and online. The development of the questionnaire and interview questions was framed based on the problems under investigation, informed by relevant literatures. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire and the interview, the researcher sought the recommendations of colleagues for improvements in terms of the validity and reliability of the questions.

Data Collection

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire and interviews, the researcher contacted and invited potential participants of the study based on the set criteria. As they were based in different countries at the time the study was conducted, they were contacted through their email and social media accounts. Upon receipt of their willingness to participate in the study as respondents, the link to the questionnaire designed using Google Forms was sent to them. After receiving their responses in the survey questionnaire, a schedule was set for the individual structured interview. Those who were based in Saudi Arabia were interviewed face-to-face, while those outside the country were interviewed through Facebook Messenger app. During the interview, the participants were asked to give more detailed examples and situations on their experiences in L2 acquisition and learning. Ethical considerations were upheld during the whole process of data collection.

Data Analysis

The data gathered through the questionnaire and interviews were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The responses on age, occupation, country of employment, number of years in the country of employment, and the second language learned were recorded and summarized in matrix form

to serve as ready and easy reference in the analysis of the internal and external forces affecting the L2 acquisition process. The responses in the structured interview on the other hand were analyzed through thematic analysis. Similar or related ideas were grouped together to form a theme or core ideas to facilitate analysis in light to the problems under investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Filipino Migrant Workers' Mode of Second Language Acquisition/Learning

The respondents of the study reported that they naturally acquired their L2 through meaningful and comprehensible inputs from their friends, colleagues, and other people in the community. According to them, their regular exposure to the language in authentic communicative situations with the help of supportive and stress-free environment allowed them to subconsciously pick up the target language. Moreover, they learned the language from basic to complex pattern – from word level (nouns and verbs) to phrasal and sentential levels. The foregoing L2 acquisition processes confirm Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Natural Order Hypothesis. The presence of authentic, comprehensible inputs from friendly native speakers of the target language can help learners acquire L2 freely and spontaneously and can allow them to develop competence and proficiency in naturally sequential manner.

Situated in a community where the target language is spoken, they had enough opportunities to use the language. According to them, using the L2 as they carryout conversations with native speakers gave them confidence of their language ability. Moreover, spending some time conversing and communicating with people around them using the L2 enabled them to acquire the language naturally. This supports the Discourse Theory, which contends that language

learning evolves out of learning how to carry on conversations (Cherry, 1979).

They also informally attended to L2's forms and structures in their own many unique ways. For example, in studying the grammatical system, they compared L1 and L2 systems and tried to establish what to them is a legitimate system of language. They studied how sounds are formed and how words are organized to form meaningful sentences in both languages (L1 & L2) and then tried to unlock the code or deduce the rules by comparing their similarities and differences, hence learning through analogy (Orillos, 1998). In some instances, they did things right in the target language (L2) but most often they did them wrong. Such practice manifested interlanguage phenomenon, which often creates interlanguage errors (Latu, 1994). Most often they committed grammatical errors. However, fortunately their colleagues/students/employers corrected them and gave them reinforcements which directed and enriched their second language learning, thus, learning through correction and reinforcement (Orillos, 1998).

Having lived in their host countries for many years mingling with the friendly and accommodating people who speak the target language, they admit they also learned the language through imitation. Whenever they listened to native speakers of the L2 conversing with each other or when they watched TV shows where the L2 was used, they paid attention to sounds of their words and utterances as well as the situations where they use such. This way, even if they do not fully understand what they mean, they can partly understand them by reading their facial expressions, gestures, and tones (non-verbal communication). Also, whenever they heard some new words, they jotted them down or recorded on their mobile phones then asked their meanings later when they meet their friends (using a learning strategy). Also, whenever they encounter difficulties in communicating to people using the L2, they use compensatory strategies such as using simple words even if sometimes they are no longer appropriate for a particular situation. Further, they use symbols, gestures, and facial expressions to convey their message. Repeating these strategies somehow improved their competence with the language.

The respondents' mother tongue (i.e. *Iloko, Kankana-ey, Maranao, Cebuano, Filipino, etc.*) and their new second/foreign language are extremely different in their many respective features. Differences in phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse system evidently caused their errors in using the language. Language inputs were usually acquired through independent learning and informal learning with some friends. When communicating with them, they were corrected with their mistakes. With this they believe that they also learned through immersion and application in a communicative environment, hence, subscribing to communicative learning theory (CLT) and discourse theory. They believe that though they have the innate capacity to learn the language, it was further enhanced through exposure with and application of the language in meaningful and authentic communicative situations.

Despite extreme difficulties in learning the target language, the very welcoming and supportive attitudes of their

foreign friends inspired them to keep on. Foreigners are usually very happy when they see someone trying to learn their native language. In the case of the respondents, they reported that their L2's native speakers were not socially dominant. They exerted extra effort to understand the respondents' erroneous sentences/utterances and tried to correct them as much as they could, hence confirming Schumann's (1975) acculturation model. They also entertained questions on forms and meanings. With this kind of environment, the respondents felt that they were accepted by the community of the native speakers of the target language; hence, they did not experience shyness, reservations, and stress. According to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, a learner acquires a language better and easier if he is situated in a welcoming and stress-free learning environment. Such hypothesis is confirmed based on the subject's case.

Though they can already express themselves in basic proficiency level with the help of their friends and colleagues, they are still generally considered beginners. They did not yet reach the more mature level of acquiring the language though they have already adjusted themselves with the way of life and language (acculturation) of the TL group. Also sometimes they do assimilation (nativization) and accommodation (denativization) to learn the language.

On the case of Universal Grammar, they use their existing knowledge on their L1 in acquiring the linguistic system of their L2. Comparing their L1 and L2, they have some similarities though mostly extremely different. They have some similarities in classifying and ordering colors, objects, numbers, length, time, and degrees of relationship. While they use different terms, they use the same concepts. Using these lexical and grammatical concepts in their L1 somehow helped them understand their equivalent concepts in L2; hence, universal hypothesis is confirmed in this case. Also, their experiences support other previous findings that learning a second language is easier if mother tongue is already mastered.

Factors Affecting the Filipino Migrant Workers' Acquisition of a Second Language

All of the respondents claimed that the most influential factor that helped them acquire/learn their L2 was their significant exposure in it. Surrounded with native speakers of the target language everyday, they were able to observe the contexts where certain words or expressions are used. By being able to see facial expressions and gestures and hear voice intonations when certain words or expressions are uttered, they were able to figure out gradually the meanings and functions of such utterances. This is related to the case of a Filipino herdsman who mastered the Bedouin Arabic through exclusive exposure with the language (Al-Mazini, 2017). Being exposed with the language in natural setting allows a L2 learner to acquire language naturally (Spolsky, 1989). However, as Liu (2011) cautioned, exposure is not enough. L2 learner still needs to exert efforts in order to develop language proficiency at a faster rate.

Another factor that can facilitate easier and faster L2 acquisition is the opportunity to apply or use the target language in actual situations, as suggested by the Discourse Theory

and Krashen's (1982) Interaction Hypothesis. According to Juliet and Margie, both domestic helpers in Hong Kong, actual use of Cantonese in their workplace (in this case with their Chinese employers who do not speak English at home) was more effective than the Chinese language orientation they had in the Philippines prior to their deployment. This was confirmed by Eric, a staff nurse in Saudi Arabia, saying *"Being forced to speak Arabic to my patients who cannot speak English at all helped me learn the language faster."*

The need to survive at work and in the community (motivation) also helped the respondents learn their target language. As particularly pointed out by Romeo, he needed to learn at least basic Arabic to be able to sell more products to his Arab customers. Anne and Enrique also believed that being able to speak Arabic and Spanish respectively would allow them to attract more hotel customers and serve them better. Lastly, Ahmed, Anne, Juliet, and Margie thought that learning their L2 could help them perform better in their job.

Support from native speakers of the target language also plays important role in L2 learning, as suggested by Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. In the case of John and Christopher (English teachers), Alex (college instructor), Jeanne (international school teacher), and Michelle (nursing lecturer), they learned with the help of their supportive colleagues, friends, and students who are all native speakers of their L2s.

"Whenever I speak Arabic in class or in my office, my students or my colleagues try to correct me in terms of pronunciation and grammar." (John)

"Khazakh people are very friendly. They teach me some words when I buy something from stores." (Alex)

"Spanish people taught me the language. They even helped me find a job" (Enrique).

While some of the respondents progressed in learning the language, others remained at the Basic User (Beginner) level due to lack of interest to go further. This was due to the nature and context of their work. As reported by John, Alex, Jeanne, Michelle, and Christopher (all teachers), they did not need to be proficient or master in their L2 because it was not needed in their job. They were all teaching in schools and colleges where English is the medium of instruction, so they had to communicate in English. This realization resulted to low motivation and weak determination.

"I learned only the basic Arabic because I work mostly with international community. As you know, 70% percent of people in Dubai are expatriates, so we speak English in the restaurant most of the time" (Marielle)

"I hear Chinese here in Singapore most of the time, but I understand only a few. I am not interested to master it because I can survive without it." (Robin)

Aside from lack of interest, according to John and Michelle, their age could also be a deterring factor. At 57 and 50 respectively, they already find memorizing new words and structures difficult. This confirms the critical period hypothesis claiming that acquiring new language is easier before puberty stage (Roherick, 1983). The younger the person is, the more successful he will be in learning a second language (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2010).

Strategies used to Deal with Language Barriers or Communication Difficulties

Most of the respondents reported that they encounter language barriers or difficulties when they communicate with native speakers of their L2s in their host countries. The most common strategy they use to deal with such difficulties is avoidance. They use simple words and simple structures, setting aside accuracy, to express information. They also paraphrase or sometimes switch languages (*in this case English and the target language, considering that English is the common language both parties can understand*) in an attempt to communicate an idea. According to Bialystok (1990), these manifestations are called syntactic avoidance. They avoid topics, forms, or structures which they think are beyond their linguistic knowledge. As beginners, they ask native speakers to speak slowly and stress important words for them to clearly understand the utterances. When they speak, they mainly utter the subject and verb to emphasize their idea.

Another frequently used strategy is gestures and facial expressions. When they cannot express themselves in words, they use actions coupled with facial expressions. In the case of Eric, Marielle, and Enrique, Google Translate is also a great help. Whenever they do not understand something especially with written texts, they use the translation app in their phones. In difficult situations, some respondents stop the conversation or admit non-competency with the L2 and decide to seek help from other native speakers to translate spoken or written L2s for them. Bialystok (1990) calls this manifestation as direct appeal to authority. Some instances are shown below:

"When I find difficulties explaining nursing terminologies or concepts to my Omani students, I ask the advanced student/s in my class who are good in English to explain the concepts to their classmates in their native language." (Michelle)

"When I speak to my Bedouin patients who know only Arabic, I ask the help of another nurse who speaks Arabic well to explain some procedures in my behalf." (Eric)

While the foregoing responses present strategies of language use rather than language learning, they can contribute indirectly to learning by helping the learners absorb more inputs. According to Krashen (1982), more comprehensible inputs mean more opportunities for learning, and more strategies used can lead to more successful L2 learning (Tukiainen, 2003; Kalati, 2016).

Motivational Orientation in Acquiring/Learning a New Second Language

Success in learning a second (foreign) language is influenced by certain motivational orientations. In the current study, all respondents reported that they wanted to learn the native language of their respective host countries in order to be able to interact with people both at work and in the community. Since the preferred medium of communication in all essential places, offices, or establishments is the local

language of the country, they had to learn the language at least to a certain extent in order to survive. For example, in the case of John, Alex, Jeanne, Michelle, Christopher, Juliet, and Margie, they decided to learn their L2 to be able to perform their tasks easier. Romeo, Anne, Marielle, Robin, and Enrique, on the other hand, learned L2 to be able to serve customers better in order to increase company's revenue. These motivation orientations can be attributed to the fact that they are all adult workers contractually working in a foreign land. They need to learn new skills to survive in their job, to satisfy their employers, so their contracts can be renewed. With their families back home depending from them financially, they have to perform well at work. In addition to the foregoing reasons, Amie, Eric, Jayson, Alex, Michelle also believed that learning their target language (L2) could help them socialize with native speakers and eventually gain more friends, make themselves feel more comfortable in the community, and develop broader intercultural perspectives. This is similar to the findings of Gonzales (2010) revealing that Filipino foreign language learners' motivation orientation is towards cultural understanding, cultural integration, and self-satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the Filipino migrant workers' mode of L2 acquisition and learning, the factors affecting their L2 acquisition/learning process, their strategies used to deal with communication difficulties, and their motivation orientations in learning their new second/foreign language. The findings of this study reveal that the respondents naturally acquired their L2s through immersion and actual use of the target language in authentic communicative situations. Analyses of responses also reveal that they learned through analogy, imitation, non-verbal communication, and use of varied learning strategies and compensatory strategies. Their acquisition/learning patterns support acculturation, accommodation, nativization, denativization, discourse, and variable competence models as well as Krashen's different SLA hypotheses. Their significant exposure coupled with opportunities to use the language, their need to survive at work, and overwhelming support from native speakers of their target language were identified as influencing and facilitating factors that helped them acquire their L2s, while old age and lack of interest to progress further due to perceived non-necessity of the L2 in their job served as deterring factors. When faced with difficulties in communicative situations, the respondents resorted to syntactic avoidance and direct appeal to authority (native speakers) as communication strategies. They also used gestures, facial expressions, and Google translate. In general, respondents were motivated to learn their L2 for employment, cultural understanding, and cultural integration orientations.

The findings imply that second language learners learn best when they are immersed in the target language and given substantial opportunities to use it in meaningful contexts. Moreover, they will also learn faster when they see a need to learn the target language for survival either at work or in their new environment. While age can be a deterring fac-

tor, it can be augmented with the use of varied learning and communication strategies. Therefore, in teaching second/foreign language among adult learners, it is important that teachers provide them with varied, authentic, and meaningful opportunities to use the target language and extend them support in friendly and accommodating environment. As learners with clear purpose and high motivation, adults should also be given regular feedback on their progress in L2 learning and be taught with various learning and communication strategies to help them survive in challenging communicative situations. Lastly, as Orillos (1998) pointed out that formal instruction is facilitative to the rate/success in second language acquisition/learning, foreign language centers offering formal instruction of local language/s in every country where there are OFWs should be established under the supervision of the Philippine Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and Department of Foreign Affairs. This is to ensure that Filipino workers can cope with the linguistic and cultural demands of their chosen occupations in their countries of employment.

While this study offers valuable insights to second language learning and teaching, Filipino migration, and adult language and literacy education, it acknowledges its limitations in generalizability and reliability considering its scope and sample size. The study dealt only with data gathered through questionnaire and interviews from limited number of respondents from different countries. Future researches along this line of inquiry may consider conducting large-scale case studies with wider scope and more diverse participants to draw more innovative and inclusive findings in SLA.

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