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INTEGRASI SECOND LANGUAGE (SLA) THEORY INTO INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN: IMPLICATIOONS FOR EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING

INTEGRASI TEORI AKUISISI BAHASA KEDUA (SLA) TERHADAP EFEKTIVITAS PENGEMBANGAN DESAIN INSTRUKSIONAL

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Abstract

The integration of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory into instructional design has become a relevant approach to enhancing the effectiveness of language learning. This article aims to analyze the major concepts and theories of SLA and examine their application in the development of instructional design for language learning. The study employs a qualitative approach using a library research method. Data were collected from various relevant academic sources, including journal articles, books, conference proceedings, theses, and other scholarly publications. Data analysis was conducted through a descriptive-analytical approach using content analysis of the concepts of comprehensible input, interaction, language production (output), noticing, and sociocultural theory, as well as instructional design components. The findings indicate that the integration of SLA principles can support the development of more systematic, communicative, and learner-centered instruction. The implementation of comprehensible input, interactive activities, language production, scaffolding, collaboration, and feedback has the potential to enhance learners' engagement, comprehension, retention, and communicative competence. However, its implementation faces challenges related to differences in learners' abilities, limitations of time and instructional media, and teachers' competencies. Therefore, optimizing the integration of SLA into instructional design requires adaptive learning design, continuous professional development for teachers, effective utilization of learning resources, and ongoing evaluation.

Keywords : Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Instructional Design, Language Learning, Communicative Competence, Learner-Centered Learning.

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Abstrak

Integrasi teori Second Language Acquisition (SLA) dalam desain instruksional menjadi salah satu pendekatan yang relevan dalam meningkatkan efektivitas pembelajaran bahasa. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep dan teori utama SLA serta mengkaji penerapannya dalam pengembangan desain instruksional pembelajaran bahasa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan (library research). Data diperoleh dari berbagai sumber akademik yang relevan, seperti artikel jurnal, buku, prosiding, tesis, dan publikasi ilmiah lainnya. Analisis data dilakukan secara deskriptif-analitis melalui analisis isi terhadap konsep comprehensible input, interaksi, produksi bahasa (output), noticing, dan sociocultural theory, serta komponen desain instruksional. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi prinsip SLA dapat mendukung pengembangan pembelajaran yang lebih sistematis, komunikatif, dan berpusat pada peserta didik. Penerapan comprehensible input, aktivitas interaktif, produksi bahasa, scaffolding, kolaborasi, dan umpan balik berpotensi meningkatkan keterlibatan, pemahaman, retensi, serta kemampuan komunikatif peserta didik. Namun, penerapannya menghadapi tantangan berupa perbedaan kemampuan peserta didik, keterbatasan waktu dan media, serta kompetensi guru. Oleh karena itu, optimalisasi integrasi SLA memerlukan desain pembelajaran yang adaptif, pengembangan kompetensi guru, pemanfaatan sumber belajar secara optimal, dan evaluasi berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci : Second Language Acquisition, SLA, Desain Instruksional, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Kemampuan Komunikatif

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a complex process because it involves not only the mastery of vocabulary and linguistic structures but also the ability to understand and use language in various communicative contexts. The success of language learning is largely influenced by how the learning process is designed and implemented. In educational settings, instructional design should take into account learners' characteristics, learning objectives, instructional materials, strategies, media, learning activities, and assessment procedures (Solihudin & Chamalah, 2025). Therefore, a solid theoretical foundation is needed to help educators understand how learners acquire and develop language proficiency effectively.

One of the fields of study that is highly relevant to this issue is Second Language Acquisition (SLA). SLA is a discipline that investigates the process through which individuals acquire a language other than their first language. This field focuses not only on learning outcomes but also on the various processes involved when learners receive, comprehend, produce, and use a second language. Understanding these processes is important because it provides a foundation for developing language instruction that aligns with learners' language acquisition characteristics (Almohawes, 2024).

Over time, SLA has produced various theoretical perspectives that explain the factors influencing language acquisition. Input Theory emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input, while the Interaction Hypothesis highlights the role of interaction and meaning negotiation in language development. The Output Hypothesis focuses on the importance of language production, the Noticing Hypothesis stresses learners' awareness of linguistic forms, and Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the significance of social interaction and scaffolding in the acquisition process. These perspectives collectively demonstrate that language acquisition is a process involving both cognitive and social dimensions (Loewen & Sato, 2024).

Nevertheless, the existence of SLA theories does not automatically guarantee effective language instruction. SLA principles must be translated into classroom practice through systematic planning. It is at this point that instructional design plays a crucial role. Instructional design provides a framework that connects learners' needs analysis, objective formulation, selection of instructional materials, learning strategies, media, activities, and assessment procedures (Weng & Chiu, 2023). Therefore,

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instructional design serves as a means of implementing SLA principles in a more structured and purposeful manner within the learning process.

Instructional design that fails to consider the language acquisition process may result in learning that is overly focused on content delivery. Learners may acquire knowledge about language rules, yet they may not receive adequate opportunities to use the language in authentic communicative contexts. Instruction that emphasizes only vocabulary memorization or grammatical knowledge may also limit learners' opportunities to receive input, engage in interaction, produce language, and obtain feedback (Ajabshir, 2022). This situation highlights the need for a stronger connection between language acquisition theory and the development of instructional design.

The integration of SLA theory into instructional design can be achieved by incorporating the principle of comprehensible input into the development of instructional materials. Learning materials should be adapted to learners' proficiency levels while still introducing new linguistic elements that promote language development. Furthermore, learning activities should provide opportunities for learners to interact and produce language through dialogues, discussions, group work, language games, and communicative tasks (Jin & Webb, 2024). In this way, instruction not only provides knowledge about language but also offers meaningful experiences in language use.

The principles of *scaffolding* and collaborative learning also occupy a significant position in the integration of SLA into instructional design. Learners possess diverse abilities, experiences, and learning rates, requiring different forms of support. Teachers can provide assistance through examples, guidance, language models, prompting questions, or feedback, and gradually reduce such support as learners become more proficient. Interaction with peers likewise provides opportunities for learners to support one another, negotiate meaning, and use language within a more dynamic social environment (Sun, 2024).

The integration of SLA principles also has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of language learning. Instruction that provides comprehensible input, interaction, language production opportunities, and feedback can increase learners' engagement in the learning process. Repeated language use across various contexts can further strengthen language comprehension and retention. Moreover, communicative activities can support learners' ability to use language for conveying and understanding messages, making instruction more oriented toward the development of communicative competence (Gao et al., 2024).

However, the implementation of SLA principles in instructional design is not without challenges. Differences in learners' abilities, time constraints, limited instructional resources, and teachers' professional competencies may affect the successful application of these theories. Consequently, strategies that consider the realities of educational settings are required, including learners' needs analysis, gradual material sequencing, optimal utilization of available resources, collaborative learning practices, and continuous evaluation. Support from educational institutions and instructional material developers is also necessary to ensure the consistent implementation of SLA principles.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the integration of SLA theory and instructional design represents an important area of inquiry because both complement one another in the development of language instruction. SLA theory provides insights into how languages are acquired, while instructional design offers a systematic framework for applying these principles in educational practice. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the integration of SLA theory into instructional design and to examine its effectiveness, challenges, and optimization strategies in language learning. It is expected that this study will provide both theoretical and practical contributions for teachers, instructional material developers, and educational institutions in designing language instruction that is more effective, communicative, and learner-centered.

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2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research method. This method was selected because the study focuses on a theoretical examination of the integration of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory into the development of instructional design for language learning. The research data consisted of secondary data obtained from various academic sources, including scholarly journal articles, books, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, and other relevant scientific publications. The reviewed sources addressed Input Theory, Interaction Hypothesis, Output Hypothesis, Noticing Hypothesis, and Sociocultural Theory, as well as the concepts and components of instructional design. Sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research focus. Through this approach, the study sought to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between SLA theories and instructional design.

Data collection was conducted through documentation and literature review procedures, involving the identification, reading, note-taking, and classification of information relevant to the research focus. The collected literature was subsequently analyzed according to several major themes, namely SLA concepts and theories, instructional design concepts, the integration of SLA principles into language instruction, the effectiveness of their implementation, and the challenges and optimization strategies associated with their application. Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive-analytical approach and content analysis. Information from various sources was compared and interpreted to identify connections between language acquisition principles and instructional design components. The analysis focused on understanding the implementation of comprehensible input, interaction, language production, scaffolding, collaboration, and feedback in language learning.

To ensure data trustworthiness, source triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from various relevant academic publications. This comparison was conducted to verify the consistency of information and strengthen the arguments presented in the discussion. The findings were then organized into a conceptual synthesis concerning the integration of SLA theory into instructional design. This synthesis encompasses the relationships between SLA principles and needs analysis, learning objectives, instructional materials, teaching methods, media, learning activities, and assessment. Through this method, the study is expected to provide a theoretical perspective on how the integration of SLA can support language instruction that is more effective, communicative, adaptive, and learner-centered.

3. RESULT AND DISCCUSSION

A. Major Concepts and Theories Of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a field of study that examines the process through which individuals acquire and develop the ability to use a language other than their first language. SLA research focuses not only on the final outcome of language proficiency but also on the cognitive, linguistic, psychological, and social processes involved in learning a second language (Almohawes, 2024). As such, SLA is closely related to language education because it provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how learners receive, process, and produce the target language.

Second language acquisition differs fundamentally from first language acquisition. A first language is generally acquired naturally during childhood through interaction with the surrounding environment, whereas a second language may be acquired either through natural exposure or through structured instruction. In educational contexts, second language acquisition often occurs through instructional processes designed and facilitated by teachers (Almohawes, 2024). Nevertheless, formal instruction tends to be more effective when learners are provided with opportunities to experience language acquisition through meaningful input, interaction, language production, and language use in relevant communicative contexts.

One of the most influential theories in SLA is Krashen's Input Hypothesis. This theory emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input, namely language input that learners can understand even when it contains linguistic elements slightly beyond their current level of competence.

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This principle is commonly referred to as i + 1. In language teaching, this concept suggests that instructional materials should neither be too easy nor too difficult, allowing learners to comprehend the message while simultaneously encountering new linguistic features that facilitate language development (Gass, Mackey, & Montee, 2025).

Beyond input, the Interaction Hypothesis highlights the crucial role of interaction in the language acquisition process. Interaction enables learners to use language directly, seek clarification, resolve misunderstandings, and negotiate meaning. Through these processes, learners do not merely receive language passively but actively participate in communication that promotes language development. Consequently, language instruction should incorporate activities such as dialogues, discussions, language games, group work, and other communicative tasks that encourage meaningful interaction.

Another important perspective is the Output Hypothesis, which emphasizes the significance of language production. According to this theory, learners should not only receive input but also actively use the target language through speaking and writing activities. When attempting to produce language, learners often become aware of gaps in their linguistic knowledge and are motivated to search for more accurate forms of expression. As a result, output activities contribute to the development of both linguistic accuracy and fluency (Papi, 2025).

The Noticing Hypothesis further argues that learners' awareness of linguistic features plays a critical role in language acquisition. Learners need to consciously notice specific language forms within the input before those forms can be effectively processed and learned. In formal instructional settings, noticing can be facilitated through examples, highlighting particular vocabulary items or grammatical structures, comparing language forms, and providing corrective feedback. Therefore, instructional design should assist learners in directing their attention toward the linguistic features targeted in the learning objectives.

Meanwhile, *Sociocultural Theory* views language acquisition as a process deeply embedded in social interaction and cultural contexts. Language development occurs through social activities that allow learners to interact with individuals who possess greater linguistic competence, including teachers and peers. Within this framework, the concept of *scaffolding* is particularly important because gradual support enables learners to perform tasks that they would not be able to accomplish independently. Such support can then be progressively withdrawn as learners gain greater proficiency and autonomy (Liang & Zhang, 2025).

Taken together, these five theoretical perspectives demonstrate that second language acquisition is a complex process that cannot be explained by a single factor alone. Input provides the linguistic material that learners need to comprehend, interaction creates opportunities for language use and meaning negotiation, and output enables learners to actively produce language. At the same time, noticing helps learners focus on specific linguistic features, while social interaction provides a supportive context for language development. Integrating these perspectives offers a more comprehensive understanding of how language learning takes place.

In educational contexts, SLA theories are highly relevant because they provide a foundation for determining how language instruction should be designed. Teachers are expected not only to deliver linguistic content but also to create learning environments that enable learners to experience meaningful language use. Instructional materials should be tailored to learners' proficiency levels, while learning activities should maintain a balance among receiving input, engaging in interaction, noticing language forms, and producing output (Poehner & Lantolf, 2024).

Therefore, SLA theory serves as a valuable foundation for developing language instruction that emphasizes the acquisition process. The application of SLA principles allows language teaching to move beyond a narrow focus on grammatical rules or vocabulary memorization and instead promote learners' ability to use language in meaningful and communicative contexts. This relevance underscores the importance of integrating SLA theory with instructional design so that every

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component of instruction can be systematically developed based on an understanding of how languages are learned and acquired.

B. Concepts and Components of Instructional Design

Instructional design is a systematic process of planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating instruction to achieve predetermined learning objectives. It is not merely concerned with the preparation of instructional materials but encompasses the entire process of identifying learners' needs, formulating learning objectives, selecting appropriate strategies and media, designing learning activities, and determining assessment methods capable of measuring the achievement of intended outcomes (Almohawes, 2024). Consequently, instructional design serves as a fundamental element in creating effective and well-structured learning experiences.

In language education, instructional design assumes an even more significant role because language learning differs from forms of instruction that focus primarily on the acquisition of knowledge. Language is a skill that requires continuous practice and repeated use in diverse contexts. Therefore, instructional design must provide opportunities for learners not only to acquire linguistic knowledge but also to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Systematic planning helps ensure that each of these language skills receives appropriate attention within the instructional process.

The primary objective of instructional design is to create learning experiences that are effective, efficient, systematic, and responsive to learners' needs. Effectiveness refers to the extent to which instruction enables learners to achieve the targeted competencies. Efficiency concerns the optimal utilization of time, resources, media, and instructional efforts. Meanwhile, systematicity implies that all instructional components are logically interconnected so that objectives, content, strategies, activities, and assessment procedures support one another coherently (Weng & Chiu, 2023).

A fundamental principle of instructional design is its learner-centered orientation. Learners differ in terms of characteristics, needs, proficiency levels, experiences, and learning preferences. Therefore, instructional planning should not be based solely on the content that instructors intend to deliver but should also consider who the learners are and what learning needs must be addressed (Weng & Chiu, 2023). Such an approach allows instruction to become more relevant and responsive to learners' actual conditions and expectations.

The first component of instructional design is needs analysis. Needs analysis is conducted to identify learners' initial conditions, existing competencies, learning difficulties, instructional goals, and specific needs that should be addressed through the learning process. In language education, needs analysis may include learners' vocabulary knowledge, grammatical competence, communicative skills, reading comprehension abilities, and language-use requirements in particular contexts. The results of this analysis serve as the foundation for designing subsequent instructional components.

Once learners' needs have been identified, the next component is the formulation of learning objectives. Learning objectives should clearly describe the competencies that learners are expected to achieve after participating in instruction. Clearly articulated objectives assist teachers in selecting appropriate content, strategies, activities, and assessment methods. In language learning, objectives should extend beyond learners' ability to recognize vocabulary or grammatical structures and should also specify their ability to use these linguistic elements appropriately in communicative situations.

Another essential component is instructional content or learning materials. Instructional materials constitute the content through which learners achieve the intended objectives. The selection of materials should take into account learners' proficiency levels, needs, contexts, and characteristics. Language materials should be sequenced progressively, beginning with simpler forms and gradually advancing toward more complex structures. Furthermore, contextualized materials can help learners understand the relationship between linguistic features and their practical use in real-life situations.

Teaching methods and instructional strategies represent another important component, determining how content is delivered and how learners engage with it. The selection of instructional methods should align with learning objectives and learner characteristics. In language education,

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communicative language teaching, task-based learning, collaborative learning, and activity-based approaches can provide learners with opportunities to use language actively. Consequently, instructional methods function not only as mechanisms for content delivery but also as means of creating meaningful learning experiences.

The component of instructional media also plays a significant role in instructional design. Media can facilitate the presentation of information in ways that are more concrete, engaging, and comprehensible. In language learning, instructional media may include images, audio recordings, videos, vocabulary cards, digital texts, learning applications, and various authentic resources. The selection of media should consider alignment with instructional objectives, learner characteristics, available facilities, and the learning context to ensure that media use contributes effectively to competency development.

In addition to media, learning activities are crucial because they determine learners' level of engagement throughout the instructional process. Activities should be organized progressively, beginning with comprehension-oriented tasks and gradually advancing toward the application of knowledge and skills. In language learning, activities may include listening to conversations, identifying vocabulary items, answering questions, participating in dialogues, role-playing, engaging in discussions, reading texts, and composing written responses. Such a variety of activities provides learners with opportunities to use language through multiple skill domains.

Another important component is assessment and evaluation. Evaluation is conducted to determine the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved and to provide information regarding learners' progress. In language education, assessment should not be limited to measuring vocabulary recall or grammatical knowledge but should also evaluate learners' ability to use language meaningfully. Therefore, assessment may include written examinations, speaking performances, writing tasks, listening comprehension tests, reading comprehension tasks, projects, and classroom observations.

Evaluation also serves as a basis for improving instructional design. When assessment results indicate that learning objectives have not been achieved optimally, teachers can identify aspects requiring revision, whether related to content, methods, media, activities, or instructional strategies. Consequently, instructional design should not be viewed as a fixed blueprint but rather as a dynamic process that evolves based on evidence and instructional experience.

Ultimately, the relationships among instructional design components should be characterized by constructive alignment. Needs analysis should inform the formulation of objectives; objectives should guide the selection of content and strategies; strategies should determine appropriate activities and media; and assessment should measure the attainment of those objectives. Misalignment among these components can reduce instructional effectiveness, whereas their integration can create more purposeful and meaningful learning experiences (Gass et al., 2025).

Based on the discussion above, instructional design can be understood as a system that connects various instructional components in order to achieve learning objectives effectively. Integrating SLA principles into this system enables language instruction to be designed according to how learners actually acquire language. Therefore, an understanding of the concepts and components of instructional design provides an essential foundation for examining how SLA theory can be integrated into instructional design development to enhance the effectiveness of language learning.

C. Integration of SLA Theory into Instructional Design

The integration of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory into instructional design represents an effort to connect language acquisition principles with the planning and implementation of instruction. SLA theory provides insights into how learners acquire language through input, interaction, language production, attention to linguistic forms, and social support. Instructional design, on the other hand, offers a systematic framework for translating these principles into learning objectives, instructional materials, teaching methods, learning activities, media, and assessment procedures (Loewen & Sato, 2024). The integration of these two domains is expected to produce

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language instruction that is not only well-structured but also aligned with the natural processes through which learners acquire language.

One important form of integration is the application of the concept of *comprehensible input* in the development of instructional materials. Learning materials should be understandable based on learners' existing language proficiency while simultaneously introducing new linguistic elements that promote language development. In this context, instructional content should not be excessively difficult, as this may hinder learners' ability to comprehend the intended message. Conversely, materials that are overly simple may provide insufficient challenge to stimulate language growth.

The implementation of *comprehensible input* can be achieved by organizing instructional materials in a gradual and contextualized manner. New vocabulary, sentence structures, and language expressions may be introduced through images, dialogues, short stories, audio recordings, videos, or communicative situations that are familiar to learners' everyday experiences. The use of meaningful contexts enables learners to infer language meaning without relying exclusively on direct translation (Truscott, 2024). Consequently, instructional materials can function as meaningful input while simultaneously providing opportunities for learners to discover and internalize language patterns progressively.

The integration of SLA theory should also be reflected in the design of interactive learning activities. Language learning cannot be reduced to the mere presentation of content followed by memorization; rather, learners must be given opportunities to use language for communication. Interaction between teachers and learners, as well as among learners themselves, creates situations in which information exchange, meaning clarification, and authentic language use can occur. Activities such as dialogues, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, language games, and pair work can be employed to facilitate meaningful interaction.

Interaction should subsequently be followed by opportunities for language production, or *output*. Learners need opportunities to produce language through speaking and writing activities that correspond to their proficiency levels. For example, after being introduced to new vocabulary and language expressions, learners may be asked to construct sentences, engage in simple conversations, describe images, or present information orally. Such activities enable learners not only to understand language but also to use it actively in various communicative situations.

Within instructional design, interaction and output activities should be sequenced progressively, moving from highly supported tasks toward more independent performance. At the initial stage, learners may be provided with model dialogues or sentence patterns as references. They can then be asked to modify these models according to different contexts. In later stages, learners may be assigned more open-ended tasks that encourage them to produce language based on their own understanding and experiences. This gradual progression facilitates a systematic and developmental learning process.

The principle of *scaffolding* also constitutes an essential element in the integration of SLA theory into instructional design. *Scaffolding* refers to the support provided to learners when they are engaged in tasks that they cannot yet perform independently. In language learning, such support may take the form of examples, instructions, vocabulary lists, pronunciation models, guiding questions, or corrective feedback from teachers. This assistance is tailored to learners' needs and is gradually withdrawn as their competence develops (Mardena & Herrington, 2024).

The effectiveness of scaffolding can be enhanced when combined with collaborative learning. Learners may work in pairs or groups to complete language-related tasks. Through collaboration, learners have opportunities to support one another, discuss meanings, refine language use, and learn from peers with different levels of competence. Such interaction creates a learning environment that supports language development while simultaneously increasing learner engagement in the instructional process (Mardena & Herrington, 2024; Qiu et al., 2024).

Collaboration also allows teachers to adopt a more flexible role as facilitators of learning. Rather than serving solely as the primary source of information, teachers can guide interactions, provide support when necessary, and create conditions that encourage active language use. As a result,

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instructional designs informed by SLA theory tend to position learners as the central agents of the learning process, while teachers function as facilitators who provide guidance and support according to learners' needs.

Another important aspect is the provision of **feedback** on learners' language use. Feedback helps learners identify aspects of language use that are accurate as well as those requiring improvement. Within SLA research, feedback serves not only to indicate errors but also to direct learners' attention toward specific linguistic forms (*The Motivational Aspect of Feedback*, 2024). Therefore, feedback should be provided constructively and adjusted to learners' proficiency levels so that it encourages rather than discourages communicative participation.

Feedback is closely related to the development of language awareness, commonly referred to as *noticing*. Learners need to be guided to recognize differences between the language forms they produce and more appropriate or target-like forms. Teachers may employ various techniques, such as providing comparative examples, highlighting particular vocabulary items or grammatical structures, asking learners to revise sentences, or encouraging reflection on language use. Such practices help learners become more conscious of linguistic features that they may previously have overlooked.

In summary, the integration of SLA theory into instructional design can be realized through the coordinated application of *comprehensible input*, interaction, output, *scaffolding*, collaboration, feedback, and *noticing*. These principles do not operate independently; rather, they complement one another in creating meaningful language learning experiences. Instructional materials provide comprehensible input, learning activities generate opportunities for interaction and language production, *scaffolding* offers necessary support, collaboration strengthens the social dimension of learning, and feedback together with *noticing* promotes greater linguistic accuracy. Through this integration, instructional design becomes more responsive to the language acquisition process and has the potential to enhance the overall effectiveness of language learning.

D. The Effectiveness of SLA Integration in Language Learning

The integration of *Second Language Acquisition* (SLA) theory into language instruction has significant implications for improving both the quality of the learning process and learning outcomes. The application of SLA principles enables instruction to be designed in accordance with how learners receive, comprehend, produce, and use language. By incorporating *comprehensible input*, interaction, output, *noticing*, and *scaffolding* into instructional design, learners are provided not only with knowledge about language but also with meaningful opportunities to use language actively and purposefully (Loewen & Sato, 2024).

One important indicator of the effectiveness of SLA integration is increased learner engagement in the learning process. Instruction that provides opportunities for learners to interact and use language tends to create more active learning experiences than teacher-centered approaches that rely primarily on explanation and information delivery. Activities such as dialogues, language games, discussions, group work, and speaking practice encourage learners to participate directly in classroom activities. Such engagement is essential because language acquisition requires continuous exposure to and use of the target language (Qiu et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2024).

Learner engagement can also be enhanced when instructional materials are aligned with learners' proficiency levels and prior experiences. The principle of *comprehensible input* allows learners to encounter content that is understandable while still presenting an appropriate level of challenge. When learners can comprehend instructional materials and successfully complete learning tasks in a gradual manner, they are more likely to participate actively in the learning process. Therefore, matching the difficulty level of instructional content with learners' capabilities is a crucial factor in promoting effective language learning.

The integration of SLA theory also has the potential to improve learners' comprehension of the target language. Contextualized input helps learners understand linguistic meaning through authentic situations and meaningful contexts. For instance, new vocabulary items are not merely introduced through word lists and translations but are presented within sentences, dialogues, stories, images, or

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communicative situations. This approach enables learners to connect linguistic forms with meaning and context, resulting in deeper and more meaningful understanding.

In addition to enhancing comprehension, the application of SLA principles can contribute to improved language retention. Repeated exposure to and use of language through various learning activities provide learners with opportunities to revisit previously acquired knowledge. Vocabulary and grammatical structures that are practiced through listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities are more likely to be retained than information encountered only once (*Vocabulary Learning Through Viewing Dual-Subtitled Videos*, 2024). Consequently, the use of language across multiple contexts strengthens both memory storage and retrieval processes.

Retention can be further reinforced through the relationship between input and output. After receiving comprehensible input, learners are given opportunities to use the newly acquired linguistic elements through productive activities. The process of producing language requires learners to retrieve previously learned knowledge and apply it within meaningful contexts. When such activities are repeated and supported by appropriate feedback, learners become increasingly familiar with the vocabulary and language structures they are learning.

Another important outcome of SLA integration is the enhancement of communicative competence. Interaction-oriented instruction provides learners with opportunities to use language as a tool for communication rather than merely as an object of study. Through communicative activities, learners practice conveying information, asking questions, responding to others, and interpreting messages. These experiences contribute to the development of learners' ability to use language appropriately according to specific communicative purposes and contexts.

Communicative competence extends beyond speaking ability and encompasses multiple language skills. Therefore, instructional designs informed by SLA principles should provide opportunities for learners to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated manner. Learning activities can be designed to connect these skills, such as having learners listen to a dialogue, discuss its content, read related texts, and subsequently present the information orally or in written form. Such integration promotes comprehensive language development across skill areas.

The integration of SLA also encourages a shift from predominantly teacher-centered instruction toward learner-centered learning. Within this approach, learners do not merely receive information from the teacher but actively construct knowledge through interaction, practice, exploration, and language use. Teachers function as facilitators who provide input, organize learning activities, offer support, and deliver feedback according to learners' needs. This shift in instructional roles can create a more participatory and engaging learning environment (Jakonen & Duran, 2024).

Learner-centered instruction also accommodates differences in learning processes and rates of progress. Each learner possesses unique language proficiency levels, experiences, and learning needs. Through *scaffolding*, teachers can provide support tailored to the specific requirements of individual learners or groups. Learners requiring additional assistance can receive greater support, while more advanced learners can be challenged with more demanding tasks and activities.

Furthermore, SLA integration can foster a more collaborative and communicative learning environment. Interaction among learners allows them to assist one another in understanding instructional content and using language effectively. Pair and group work reduce learners' dependence on teachers while increasing opportunities for each learner to engage in language use (Qiu et al., 2024; Mardena & Herrington, 2024). Such environments also provide valuable social experiences that align with the sociocultural perspective that language acquisition develops through interaction with others.

In summary, the effectiveness of integrating SLA theory into language learning can be observed through its positive impact on learner engagement, comprehension, retention, communicative competence, and learner autonomy. SLA principles provide a foundation for ensuring that language instruction is not solely focused on content delivery but also on creating meaningful language-learning experiences. When *comprehensible input*, interaction, language production, *scaffolding*, collaboration, and feedback are implemented in an integrated manner, the learning process becomes more engaging,

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meaningful, and effective, ultimately supporting the development of learners' overall language proficiency.

E. Challenges and Optimization Strategies for SLA Integration

1. Differences in learners's Proficiency Levels

Differences in learners' language proficiency constitute one of the primary challenges in integrating *Second Language Acquisition* (SLA) theory into instructional design. Learners within the same classroom often possess varying levels of language competence. These differences may be reflected in vocabulary knowledge, grammatical understanding, listening skills, speaking ability, reading comprehension, and writing proficiency. As a result, a particular form of input or instructional activity may not provide the same level of comprehension or learning opportunities for all learners (Roehr-Brackin, 2024).

Such differences are also associated with learners' prior language-learning experiences. Some learners may have been exposed to the target language through family environments, media, or previous educational experiences, while others may have had only limited exposure. From an SLA perspective, variations in input and learning experiences can significantly influence language acquisition processes. Therefore, instructional design should take learners' initial conditions into account through comprehensive needs analysis and diagnostic assessment before instruction begins.

One strategy for addressing these differences is the implementation of **adaptive and progressive instruction**. Learning materials can be organized from simple to more complex levels while providing support according to learners' individual needs. Teachers may also employ activities with varying degrees of difficulty so that learners can engage with tasks appropriate to their proficiency levels. The application of *scaffolding* is particularly important because it enables teachers to provide assistance to learners experiencing difficulties and gradually withdraw that support as their competence develops (Sun, 2024; Roehr-Brackin, 2024).

In addition, **collaborative learning** can be utilized to address proficiency differences among learners. Students may work in pairs or groups consisting of individuals with diverse language abilities. Through such interactions, learners can support one another in understanding and using the target language. Consequently, differences in proficiency are not viewed merely as obstacles but also as valuable learning resources that facilitate language acquisition through social interaction.

2. Limitations of Time, Instructional Media, and Teacher Competence

Limited instructional time represents another challenge in the effective implementation of SLA principles. Language learning requires sustained exposure to input, opportunities for interaction, language production, feedback, and continuous assessment. However, classroom instructional time is often restricted, requiring teachers to allocate time across multiple topics and competencies that must be achieved within a given curriculum (Michel et al., 2025). As a consequence, communicative activities and opportunities for authentic language use may receive less attention than intended.

Limitations in instructional media and learning resources may also affect the implementation of SLA-based instructional design. Not all educational institutions possess adequate audiovisual facilities, internet access, digital devices, or authentic instructional materials. Yet, a variety of media can play an important role in providing language input through diverse formats and contexts. Nevertheless, technological limitations do not necessarily prevent the implementation of SLA principles. Teachers can effectively utilize simple resources such as pictures, vocabulary cards, short texts, classroom objects, and face-to-face communicative activities to support language learning (Wiranata et al., 2024; Muthmainnah et al., 2023).

Another challenge relates to **teacher competence**. The implementation of SLA-informed instruction requires teachers to possess a sound understanding of language acquisition processes and the ability to translate theoretical principles into classroom practice. Teachers need to understand how to provide comprehensible input, design interaction-based activities, encourage language production, implement *scaffolding*, and deliver effective feedback. Without such understanding, SLA principles

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may be reduced to routine classroom activities that lack a clear connection to language acquisition objectives.

Therefore, optimizing SLA implementation requires **continuous professional development for teachers**. Professional training programs, workshops, learning communities, professional discussions, and the sharing of best practices can help teachers strengthen their ability to design and implement SLA-based instruction. Furthermore, educational institutions should support teachers by providing access to learning resources, establishing realistic instructional schedules, and creating opportunities for reflection on teaching practices. With such support, challenges related to time constraints, instructional media, and teacher competence can be managed more effectively.

3. Strategies for Optimizing SLA Intergration in Instructional Design

The optimization of SLA implementation in instructional design should begin with a thorough analysis of learners' needs and initial language proficiency. Such analysis serves as the foundation for determining the type of input, the complexity of instructional materials, the design of learning activities, and the forms of support required by learners. Learning objectives should also be formulated clearly by considering both linguistic knowledge and language skills. In this way, instructional design becomes focused not only on content coverage but also on learners' language development and communicative growth (Roehr-Brackin, 2024; Li, 2024).

Another important strategy is the integration of multiple SLA principles within a coherent instructional sequence. *Comprehensible input* can be provided through texts, dialogues, images, audio materials, or videos. This input should then be followed by interactive activities such as question-and-answer sessions, dialogues, discussions, or collaborative group work. Subsequently, learners should be given opportunities to produce language through speaking or writing tasks. The instructional sequence can be further enhanced through the incorporation of *noticing*, *scaffolding*, and feedback, thereby creating a comprehensive and integrated language-learning experience (Michel et al., 2025; Mardena & Herrington, 2024).

The use of **contextualized and authentic materials** is another strategy that can enhance the effectiveness of SLA integration. Learning materials should be closely related to situations that are familiar and meaningful to learners so that the language being studied serves a clear communicative purpose. For example, in Arabic language instruction, learning materials may be connected to classroom activities, family life, school experiences, local environments, or everyday routines. Relevant contexts help learners understand the functional use of language while simultaneously increasing their motivation to engage with the target language.

Another key strategy is the implementation of **formative assessment and continuous evaluation**. Rather than relying solely on summative assessment at the end of instruction, teachers should monitor learners' progress throughout the learning process. Observations, assignments, speaking performances, written tasks, and learners' responses can provide valuable information regarding areas where additional support is needed. Such information can then be used to revise instructional materials, learning activities, teaching methods, and forms of *scaffolding*. Consequently, instructional design becomes more flexible and responsive to learners' ongoing development.

4. Implications for Teachers, Instructional Material Developers, and Educational Institutions.

The integration of SLA theory carries important implications for **teachers** as the primary facilitators of language learning. Teachers need to recognize that successful language instruction depends not only on the amount of content delivered but also on the quality of language-learning experiences provided to learners. They should create learning environments that offer comprehensible input, meaningful interaction, opportunities for language production, and constructive feedback. In this context, teachers function as facilitators who support learners' language development through diverse communicative experiences (Michel et al., 2025; Ahnell, 2025).

For **instructional material developers**, SLA principles provide a foundation for designing materials that are not only informative but also supportive of language acquisition processes. Learning materials should provide input that matches learners' proficiency levels, reflect authentic language

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use, and include activities that encourage interaction and language production. In addition, instructional materials may incorporate graduated practice activities, language models, communicative tasks, and reflective exercises. Through such features, instructional materials become an integral component of instructional design that is oriented toward language acquisition rather than mere content transmission.

Meanwhile, **educational institutions** play a critical role in creating an ecosystem that supports the implementation of SLA principles. Such support may include the provision of instructional facilities, teacher professional development opportunities, relevant instructional materials, and institutional encouragement for pedagogical innovation. Educational institutions should also consider language-learning approaches when developing curricula and educational programs so that SLA principles are embedded not only within individual classroom practices but also within broader language education policies.

Ultimately, the successful integration of SLA requires collaboration among teachers, instructional material developers, and educational institutions. Teachers need access to supportive learning environments and high-quality instructional materials; material developers require a thorough understanding of classroom realities and learners' needs; and educational institutions depend on teachers and instructional resources grounded in sound pedagogical principles. The synergy among these stakeholders can foster instructional designs that are more adaptive, communicative, and learner-centered. Consequently, SLA theory moves beyond a purely conceptual framework and becomes a foundation for systematic, sustainable, and effective language-learning practices.

4. CONCLUSION

The integration of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory into instructional design represents a relevant and effective approach to enhancing the quality of language learning. SLA theory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how language is acquired through comprehensible input, interaction, language production (output), noticing, and social interaction supported by scaffolding. Instructional design, in turn, offers a systematic framework for implementing these principles through needs analysis, learning objectives, instructional materials, teaching methods, media selection, learning activities, and assessment procedures.

The incorporation of SLA principles into instructional design can generate numerous benefits for the language-learning process. The provision of comprehensible input, opportunities for interaction, language production activities, collaboration, scaffolding, and constructive feedback can enhance learner engagement, comprehension, language retention, and communicative competence. Moreover, this approach promotes a shift from teacher-centered instruction toward learner-centered learning, enabling learners to participate more actively in the construction and application of language knowledge. As a result, SLA-informed instructional design contributes to the creation of language-learning experiences that are more active, contextualized, meaningful, and communicatively oriented.

Despite these advantages, the integration of SLA into instructional practice continues to face several challenges, including differences in learners' proficiency levels, limitations in instructional time and learning resources, and varying levels of teacher competence in applying language acquisition principles. Therefore, effective implementation requires adaptive strategies such as comprehensive needs analysis, the gradual sequencing of instructional materials, the optimal use of available resources, continuous teacher professional development, collaborative learning practices, and ongoing assessment. Ultimately, successful integration depends on the collaboration among teachers, instructional material developers, and educational institutions. Such synergy ensures that SLA theory extends beyond a conceptual framework and becomes a foundation for instructional designs that are effective, sustainable, and responsive to learners' language development needs.

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