Mainstream second language acquisition (SLA) theories describe and explain stability and variability of language ability adopting an exclusionary "either/or" perspective to L2 learner and learning context. Attempts to make a reconciliation between two camps of this broad-brush compartmentalization which Firth & Wagner (1997) has termed as "cognitive SLA" and "sociocultural/ sociointeractional SLA", crudely speaking, has been of little avail. This paper sets out to sketch a preliminary relational-dialectical framework for second language development from dynamic systems vantage point and argues that in current multifarious (mis)interpretations-bereft of its ontological and epistemological axioms and relegated to metaphorical embellishment to some experimental researches-dynamic systems perspective cannot transcend neo-Cartesian dichotomies which have been plaguing SLA research for more than three decades now. To rectify this lacuna, first, theoretical and methodological principles of complex dynamic systems as an emerging quintessential future supertheory in second language development are touched upon. Then, drawing upon Pepper’s (1942) root metaphor theory, the contention that dynamic systems approach – a dialectical synthesis of organicism and contextualism—is theoretically qualified to offer a unifying scaffold which could embrace dynamic complexity of L2 development process, is illustrated. The paper concludes with some interpretive implications for second language development research from dynamic systems standpoint.

References


Keywords: Supertheory, Dynamic Systems Theory, L2 Development.