3.1. Behaviorism Behaviorism is a psycholinguistic approach to language acquisition, dominating the language acquisition scene in the 50s and 60s of the 20* century, viewing it as any other type of learning, i.e. as the formation of habits (Bloomfield, 1933; Skinner, 1957). This view, in fact, has initiated from work on psychology which sees learning of any kind of behavior as being based on the notion Stimulus-Response-Reinforcement. In this view, human beings have been regarded as being exposed to numerous stimuli in their environment to which they respond. The responses they give to such stimuli will be reinforced if successful, that is if some desired outcome is obtained (Shormani, 2014). Thus, Li acquisition, from a behaviorist perspective, involves a process of "learning" a set of habits as humans respond to any stimuli in their environment by means of analogy. It is also based on the behaviorist "notion" that "practice makes perfect." In other words, it is believed by behaviorists that the more one "repeats" a piece of language "stimulus," it is likely that this piece of language will be mastered. Thus, according to behaviorism, when a child produces a linguistic expression, be it a word, phrase or senesce, and this expression is correct, it will get reinforced. What is emphasized in behaviorism is that learning takes place by conditioning which may take two forms, viz. classical and operant. The former is defined as a process which associates a natural and existing stimulus with a previous and neutral one. The latter however, makes use of reinforcement and punishment factors to create some kind of associations between any behavior and its consequences. The concept of reinforcement may take different forms like a "bravo," a laugh, a smile, and sometimes it might be a response to what a child utters by a parent, caretaker or anyone of those who are around him/her. For instance, when a child utters the word water! meaning he/she is thirsty! and gets a response to that utterance by having someone listen to such an utterance, and hence, bringing him/her "water, "he/she is reinforced. In other words, when a child utters the word water and gets a response and then reinforcement, he/she will intend to repeat such a process when needed in future-like situations and this takes the form of conditioning (Shormani, 2013b). However, there are so many facts behaviorism fails to account for. As far as L2 acquisition is concerned, behaviorism views it as different from that of L1, and hence, the former has been seen as involving replacing the old linguistic set of habits (specifically those in L1) with new ones (those of L2) and hence running into problems because L2 learners have already a set of well-established linguistic responses in their native language. Indeed, the behaviorists maintain that L2 acquisition consists of learners trying to mimic what they hear from those around, and hence, develop habits in the second language they are acquiring by routine practice. Thus, they are actually thought of as relating what they have in Ll to what they process in L2 which results in language transfer, including both positive and negative. Positive transfer is a result ofsimilarities between the Ll and the L2, because habits used in the L1 easily transfer to the L2. Negative transfer, however, is caused by differences between the Ll and the L2, and hence, resulting in errors the main cause of which is using habits of L1 in L2 especially those which do not exist in L2. What this means is that those old linguistic habits will intervene either facilitating or disfacilitating the acquisition process. In other words, when the L1 structures are the same like those of L2, acquisition will take place without any difficulty but if not, it will be the otherwise (ef. Lado, 1957, p. 58f). In addition, the behaviorist view has failed to account for the fact that there are certain points of difference between L1 and L2 but not disfacilitating learning and there

are certain similarities between both languages and yet not facilitating learning. Thus, consider the differences between English and French, the similarities between English and German, it is expected, according to behaviorism, that the English learner of French will commit an error in French while the same learner will not commit such an error in German. Now, the English learner of French as an SL will produce the French sentence*je suis douze intending to say 1 am twelve years old whose French equivalent is j'ai douze ans meaning I have twelve years. Now, consider the same learner who will produce the same sentence in German Ich bin zwolf Jaher alt meaning exactly I am twelve years old. Now, according to the behaviorist view of language acquisition, the German structure is much easier than that of French because German structure is like that of English while the French one is not, and hence, quicker to learn than the French one. Therefore, on the basis of the behaviorist view of L2 acquisition, the English structure has two functions: as facilitator as in the case of learning German and inhibitor as in the case of French. However, what the facts show is the otherwise. In other words, French learners of English never produce such structures as I have twelve years but rather produce I am twelve years old because what can account for the same reason behind the committing of such an error by an English learner learning French can account for the same phenomenon regarding the French learner learning English. In fact, behaviorism may succeed in accounting for committing an error in the example above by English learner learning French but fails to account for why such an error by a French learner learning English, which is much expected, is not committed. However, with the emergence of mentalism, a biological approach initiated by linguists like Chomsky and Lenneberg in the early sixties, behaviorism has been criticized and even refuted for being unable to account for the linguistic creativity of children in producing pieces of language they have never heard or come across (cf. Chomsky, 1959). Language is productive, creative, stimulus-free, species-specific, rule-governed and can never be said to be acquired by processing a large corpus of language, and hence, children acquiring their first language do not by any means learn and produce a large set of sentences (i.e. corpus). Rather, they create sentences they have never learned, heard and/or come across before. In addition, it is implausible to compare humans, highly intelligent creatures, in their learning of their language, a very complicated and abstracted system, to animals like "rats" learning to perform simple tasks in labs. Behaviorism also fails to account for the occurrence of such ungrammatical pieces of language as *Daddy goed and *Jane breaked in children's language. In fact, all these questionable issues, in addition to a considerable number of questions that remain unanswered, have led to seeking an alternative approach or framework in which we could find plausible answers to such questions.