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One of the main issues in the field of linguistics, psychology and education has been language acquisition. Throughout history, different theories have been put forward in an effort to describe how people learn their native and subsequent languages. The theories are more or less categorized into classical and modern theories, in which they provide varying theories on the mechanisms and process of language learning.

Behaviourist approach was one of the first and the most significant classical theories, identified mainly with B.F. Skinner. Given behaviourism, language acquisition is a habit formation process that takes place under the stimulus, response, and reinforcement. This perspective sees children as having learnt language through imitating the language they hear around them and being encouraged to use language correctly through positive feedback. The repetition and practice are significant to consolidating the language habits. Although behaviourism played an important role in explaining the kind of teaching in the early language models, it has been criticized as lacking in offering an explanation as to why language has a creative and rule-bound interaction²⁵.

After the shortcomings of behaviourism, the cognitive perspective came into existence which was inspired largely by the efforts of Noam Chomsky. According to Chomsky, the concept of language acquisition could not be interpreted by using only the tool of imitation/reinforcement. Instead, he suggested the notion of an intrinsic Language Acquisition Device (LAD) a mental device that helps human beings to acquire a language naturally. This theory postulates that children are born with a universal grammar which forms the basis of all languages. Such an outlook changed the position of factors to mental processes in the learning of languages as the mental structures played a major role.

One more significant classical school of thought is the nativist one that is more close to the thoughts of Chomsky. It implies that language aptitude is genetically determined and human beings have a predefined ability to acquire language. According to this theory, it is possible to explain how children obtain the complex grammatical systems, with very little input, sometimes known as the poverty of stimulus argument. According to critics of nativism however, it underestimates the role of social interaction and environmental aspects in the acquiring of language.

²⁵ Ellis, R. The Study of Second Language Acquisition. - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

As a theory that goes beyond pure cognitive descriptions, the social interactionist theory underscores how communication and social context affect language development. This style is directly linked to Lev Vygotsky who stressed that learning is prescribed by the interaction with more-learned people. To this theory, social interaction, scaffold, and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) contribute to language acquisition. Teachers and caregivers are essential in nurturing learners, and making their contributions count. This view highlights the significance of communication and teamwork as well as cultural background in acquiring a language²⁶.

The modern theories of language acquisition have further broadened the scope of the area by incorporating knowledge in various fields. The Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory, the work of one of the most powerful contemporary models, was created by Stephen Krashen. The Monitor Model by Krashen has a number of hypotheses, among them being the Input Hypothesis which argues that learners learn the language at their current stage of knowledge, $i + 1$, by being exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly higher than what they currently have ($i + 1$). He also stressed on affective factors including motivation, confidence, and anxiety. Krashen has been shown to believe that having a low affective filter will help one learn the language, and that having negative feelings will slow down language acquisition.

The interaction hypothesis, introduced by Michael Long, is another critical point of view of the modern world. According to this theory, language acquisition happens as a result of interaction and meaning negotiation. Whenever learners communicate and fail in certain aspects, they alter their language and get feedback which facilitates learning. Interaction gives chances of clarification, correction and deeper comprehension hence making it an important aspect of language development.

The output theory proposed by Merrill Swain is a complement to the input based theories by highlighting the significance of language production. This theory proposes that learners acquire language skills not just through input but output as well. Speaking and writing make learners realize what they do not know and perfect their linguistic skills. This point of view emphasizes the proactive nature of the learners in the acquisition process.

The theory presented by Stephen Krashen is one of the most influential in SLA. His Monitor Model has a number of related hypotheses that demonstrate how language is acquired. According to the Hypothesis of Input, people learn a language when they are exposed to input that is a little higher than their present stage of competence. This implies that one must acquire the input of relevant and context-bound language to be able to understand it. Moreover, Krashen makes a distinction between the process of acquisition (a subconscious process) and learning (a conscious process), contending that

²⁶ Flew, T. New Media: An Introduction. - Oxford University Press, 2014.

language competence is acquired most effectively (and not through explicit instruction) via the process of acquisition²⁷.

The other significant element of the theory Krashen provided is the Affective Filter Hypothesis that focuses on the significance of the emotional considerations in the language learning process. This hypothesis suggests that motivation, anxiety, or self-confidence can have a significant impact, which determines the effectiveness of language acquisition. A low level of anxiety or low motivation would present a psychological obstacle through which learners will not be able to process the input effectively. On the other hand, positive emotional state reduces the affective filter and enhances learning.

Though the theory by Krashen means a lot when it comes to having an input, other theorists have been able to magnify the role of interaction in SLA. Created by Michael Long, the Hypothesis of Interactions suggests that language acquisition is a process of meaningful communication and negotiation of meaning. Learners make changes when they have a conversation with someone and they meet communication challenges; seek clarification, and get feedback. This interactive process assists the learners in identifying the gaps in their knowledge and enhancing their language skills.

In addition to this viewpoint is Output Hypothesis that was proposed by Merrill Swain. Swain is of the argument that language development requires language-through speaking and writing-to produce it. Output is what makes the learners better process the language, test their hypotheses, and to be aware of their linguistic limitations. Output in this manner contributes to the enhancement of language competence, and is not simply the outcome of acquisition.

The other applicable theory is the sociocultural theory which was linked with Lev Vygotsky. This theory underlines the fact that language learning is a pure social phenomenon which takes place in the context of the interaction with other people. The principle of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) indicates how students can attain greater levels of proficiency with the help of a person with greater expertise, i. e. teacher or cohort. Guided support (scaffolding) is important in assisting learners to advance their language development.

The aptitude in languages also plays a major role in SLA. Others can just notice patterns, remember vocabulary and learn grammatical structures solely easier than others. Combined with good learning strategies, aptitude can increase the rate and efficiency of language learning. The contribution of learning environment is not to be ignored. The classroom settings are more structured and guided whereas informal setting, immersion in a community of speakers of a language, gives a real exposure and a chance to practice the language. Over the past few years, SLA has taken on significance

²⁷ Harmer, J. The Practice of English Language Teaching. - London: Longman, 2007.

in digital settings and e-learning platforms, which offer flexible and interactive learning opportunities.

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