Rough Draft

Lee Gerken

Bowling Green State University

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to map out the discourse of language acquisition theory and its compatibility with the classroom setting. The first section will attempt to summarize the procession of language acquistion theories within the field of linguistics in order to familarize the reader with the discourse and the path it has taken. In the second section we will do the same from the perspective of educators and the application of these theories; The third and fourth sections will focus on the compatibility between the language acquisiton theories presented and the classroom setting.

1. Introduction

How should language be taught?

How do we acquire language? That is the general focus of language acquisition theory.

2. Exposure Input Output

3. Chomsky and Exposure

The timeline of language acquistion discourse should begin by outlining the foundational work of American linguist and philsopher, Noam Chomsky. His observations on how we acquire language focus on children and their environment. This is his *univeral grammar hypothesis,* introduced in his review of B.F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*;[1] that all children have the faculty to aquire complex grammatical syntax solely through exposure to the language. So a child's native language (L1) for the most part is learned inherently through exposure. [2]

Refutation While this early framework created by Chomsky laid the foundation of language acquisition theory, his hypothesis*universal*grammar and his emphasis on the role of exposure has been refuted in much of the discourse[3]

---

[1] Noam Chomsky, "Review of B. F. Skinners Verbal Behavior," *Readings in the Psychology of Language,* Jakobovits & Miron (eds.) (1967.).

[2] Salwa Saeed Al-Harbi, "Language development and acquisiton in early childhood," *Journal of Education and Learning* (2019).

[3] Anne Fernald and Virginia A. Marchman, "Language learning in infancy" in *Handbook of Psycholinguistics,* Academic Press (2006).

4. Input and Krashen

American linguist and educational researcher, Steven D. Krashen, provided highly influencial work in the field of L2 teaching. Namely his essential to the narrative of language acquisition theory. [4]

5. Summary

Concerning language acquisition, the theories described so far suggest a narrative that has followed this path:

exposure -> comprehensible input -> intake -> output

This is not intended to imply that each theory replaced the previous one. More practically, this invites a pluralist approach to describe how we might acquire language. Deborah Dubiner outlines this narrative in her article, *Second language learning and teaching: From theory to a practical checklist* , which provides a comprehensive summary of the themes in the field of applied linguistics for target language learning (L2) [5]

---

[4] Steven Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (1982).

[5] Deborah Dubiner, "Second language learning and teaching: From theory to a practical checklist." *TESOL Journal* (2019).