

Theory and Practice in Language Teaching

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Abstract— This research paper focuses on Theory and Practice in Language Teaching. The research paper shows the main theories that include Behaviourism, Innatism, and Interactionism. In some way, teachers will apply some of these theories into language classroom.



1 INTRODUCTION

Language teachers employ different techniques and theories ranging from a grammatical to a conversational approach. These practices are rooted on three basic theories on second language acquisition: Behaviorist, Innatist, and Interactionist (Peregoy and Boyle 56). There is not one standardized way of teaching language as each set of approach has its own merits. However, the overemphasis on achieving a near-native sounding competence is detrimental to the acquisition process.

2 Behaviorism

Behaviourists focus and emphasizes on the grammatical and more technical aspects of language learning. Often this approach is deeply rooted in the academe primarily due to most of the children who became language teachers have been subjected to the same technicalities. Grammar played a huge part in this approach as students are expected to learn the basics before learning how to read and write. However, the overemphasis on grammar ties down the student's capacity to learn on their own the different nuances in the language.

3 Innatists

The innatists, with the proponents of Krashen believed in a teaching process that "(1) focus on communication,

not grammatical form; (2) allow students a silent period, rather than forcing immediate speech production; and (3) create a low-anxiety environment" (Peregoy and Boyle 55). The innatists differed greatly from the behaviorists in that they shifted the focus from a grammatical and technical approach to a more communicative one. Despite this shift though, this approach was questioned due to more focus on the learner's comprehensible input, ignoring the importance of output like reading and writing.

4 Interactionists

The interactionists focused on the negotiation of meaning that happens in interactions between a native and non-native speaker (Peregoy and Boyle 55). This negotiation of meaning can be explained in the way native speakers paraphrase and make simpler their language in order for communication and meaning to happen. Ideally, interactionists believe that the ideal classroom is one composed of native and non-native speakers. This is one of the reasons as to why some institutions prefer and insist on the language teacher being a native speaker of the target language. However, native speakers are not always good language teachers due to the effortless acquisition that happens with the first language.

5 conclusion

Due to the notion that native teachers will always make for good language teachers, people have forgotten that second language acquisition is predominantly different from first language acquisition. For the same reason, Stewart (5) implores language teachers to experience learning a foreign language. Due to native speakers of English being predominantly monolingual, their style of teaching does not reflect their theoretical background. For example, Stewart's (4) experience learning Spanish enabled her to experience the same things her students have been going through. By learning the same barriers and hardships in connection to second language acquisition, the language teacher's way of teaching will incorporate more beneficial techniques for the student.

Most language teachers will employ the three basic theories of second language acquisition in their practice. Despite the different nuances between the grammatical and conversational approaches of language teaching, a standardized approach encompassing the whole has yet to be implored.

References

- [1] Peregoy, Suzanne and Owen F. Boyle. *Reading, Writing, and Learning in ESL: A Resource Book for K-12 Teachers*. 4th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. 2004. Print.
- [2] Stewart, Mary Amanda. "Walking in My Students' Shoes: An ESL Teacher Brings Theory to Life in Order to Transform Her Classroom." *Networks* 12.1: 2010. Web. 9 Apr. 2016.