

Applied Linguistics & Language Learning Theories

A decorative wavy line in a light green color, positioned behind the main title text.

Contents

01

Introduction to
Applied Linguistics

02

Behaviorist Theory
(1940s-1950s)

03

Cognitive Theory
(1960s-1970s)

04

Sociocultural Theory
(1970s-1980s)

05

Universal Grammar
& Hypotheses

06

Interactionist
Approach (1980s-
1990s)

07

Connectionism &
Emergentism

08

Summary
Comparison Table

09

Conclusion &
Applications

10

Thank You

Introduction to Applied Linguistics



Definition: The study of language learning, teaching, and use in real-world contexts

- Bridges theory and practice in language education
- Informs language pedagogy and curriculum design
- **Key focus:** How people acquire and learn languages
- Addresses practical language-related problems in society

1940s-1950s

Behaviorist Theory



Key Figures

B.F. Skinner

Leonard Bloomfield

Core Principles

- Language learning through **habit formation**
- **Stimulus-response-reinforcement** mechanism
- Emphasis on **imitation and repetition**
- Foundation for the **audio-lingual method**

1960s–1970s

Cognitive Theory



Key Figures

Noam Chomsky

Jean Piaget

Core Principles

- Language as **mental process** rather than habit
- Innate **Language Acquisition Device (LAD)**
- **Rule formation** over habit formation
- **Active learner construction** of knowledge

1970s–1980s

Sociocultural Theory

Key Figure

Lev Vygotsky

Core Principles

- Language learning as **social process**
- **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**
- **Scaffolding and mediation** in learning
- **Cultural tools and interaction** shape language development

1980s

Krashen's Monitor Model

Key Figure: Stephen Krashen



Five Hypotheses:

- **Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis**

Two distinct systems: subconscious acquisition vs. conscious learning

- **Natural Order Hypothesis**

Grammatical structures acquired in predictable, natural sequence

- **Affective Filter Hypothesis**

Emotional factors (anxiety, motivation, confidence) affect language acquisition

- **Monitor Hypothesis**

Learned knowledge acts as editor/monitor for acquired language output

- **Input Hypothesis (i+1)**

Acquisition occurs through comprehensible input slightly beyond current level

Pedagogical Implication: Focus on meaningful communication and comprehensible input; minimize explicit grammar instruction; create low-anxiety learning environments

Universal Grammar & Input/Output Hypotheses



1960s–present

Universal Grammar

Noam Chomsky

- Principles and parameters approach
- Innate linguistic knowledge
- Language faculty specific to humans

1980s

Input Hypothesis

Stephen Krashen

- Comprehensible input ($i+1$)
- Natural acquisition vs. conscious learning
- Affective filter influences acquisition

1990s

Output Hypothesis

Merrill Swain

- Production aids acquisition
- Noticing gaps through output
- Testing hypotheses about language

1980s–1990s

Interactionist Approach

Key Figures

Michael Long

Susan Gass

Core Principles

- **Interaction facilitates acquisition**
- **Negotiation of meaning** in communication
- **Modified input and output** enhance learning
- **Conversational adjustments** support comprehension



1980s–present

Connectionism & Emergentism

Key Figures

Nick Ellis

Brian MacWhinney

Core Principles

- **Neural network models** of language processing
- **Pattern recognition and frequency** effects
- **Language emerges from usage**
- **Statistical learning mechanisms**

Summary Comparison Table

Theory Name	Era	Key Figure(s)	Core Mechanism	Pedagogical Implication
Behaviorist Theory	1940s-1950s	B.F. Skinner, Bloomfield	Habit formation through stimulus-response-reinforcement	Audio-lingual method, drills, repetition exercises
Cognitive Theory	1960s-1970s	Chomsky, Piaget	Mental processing, innate LAD, rule formation	Focus on understanding rules, problem-solving activities
Sociocultural Theory	1970s-1980s	Vygotsky	Social interaction, ZPD, scaffolding	Collaborative learning, peer interaction, guided support
Universal Grammar	1960s-present	Chomsky	Innate linguistic principles and parameters	Focus on exposure to language, parameter setting
Input Hypothesis	1980s	Krashen	Comprehensible input (i+1), natural acquisition	Provide rich input, minimize error correction, low anxiety
Output Hypothesis	1990s	Swain	Production aids acquisition, noticing gaps	Encourage speaking/writing, pushed output activities
Interactionist Approach	1980s-1990s	Long, Gass	Negotiation of meaning, modified interaction	Communicative tasks, information gap activities
Connectionism	1980s-present	Ellis, MacWhinney	Neural networks, pattern recognition, frequency	Extensive exposure, usage-based learning, frequency focus

Conclusion & Applications



- **Multiple theories inform modern language teaching** – No single theory provides complete explanation
- **Eclectic approach in contemporary pedagogy** – Combining insights from different frameworks
- **Importance of context and learner differences** – Individual variation and sociocultural factors matter
- **Future directions:** Technology integration, neurolinguistics, multilingualism research

Key Takeaway: Understanding diverse theoretical perspectives enables educators to design more effective, learner-centered language instruction that adapts to evolving educational contexts and technological advances.



Thank You

Questions?