

COMMUNICATIVE DISCOURSE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

The dynamics of the communicative discourse is a natural process that requires an application of a wide range of skills and strategies. In particular, linguistic discourse and the interaction process have a huge impact on promoting literacy and academic skills in all students especially English language learners. The anatomy of language development can help in understanding how linguistic behavior is developed and shaped later on in children's lives. At the same time, it can be an indicator of how language and literacy develop at different stages. This awareness about the process of language development can eventually help educators in providing necessary ingredients and creating conducive conditions for nurturing students' linguistic and academic skills in schools and beyond.

It is important that keep in mind that language acquisition is viewed within the context of language's natural ecological place of human interaction. Therefore, the ecology of language acquisition will be illustrated by casting light on key ingredients that conceptualize various 5 complex phenomena related to language development. A conceptual framework is presented based on the landmark and current theories that characterize the process and product of language acquisition. The implications of various approaches to language acquisition are enormous, so

drawing upon views and models can help in bridging the theoretical gaps and assist teachers in formulating a sound rationale that justifies their practices in learning/teaching situations. Similarly, diversity of opinions are expected given the nature of issues studied thus leaving a wide range of options for teachers to consider in their efforts to integrate a viable eclectic approach that can inform their instruction.

Accordingly, this paper provides an overview of basic approaches and perspectives on language acquisition as a frame of reference to account for how the process and product of language development are achieved. Although there is no consensus among these theories and

approaches, examining the basic tenets of each will help in providing language teachers and educators of the knowledge base needed to effectively work with students in second or foreign language classrooms. While substantiating some foundational principles from various theories or approaches that characterize the process of language development, the paper draws pedagogical implications from the existing models and approaches that can enhance the learning

and teaching outcomes in linguistically diverse settings. As pointed out earlier, studying how language is acquired has been a focal point of interest in various fields such psychology, linguistics and education in general. Much of the insight gained about how language is acquired has been contributed through observing and analyzing the linguistic behaviors of infants and young children. Observing children and what they do with language has cast some light on universal patterns that describe how all children regardless of their environment, their first language, their surroundings, acquire one or more languages. This can be an eye-opening experience in regard language acquisition and development. Nonetheless the impact of behaviorism has largely been waning given the rise of *cognitivist* and *innatist* views on learning. In fact, these perspectives have risen as a reaction to the behaviorist models and principles. In particular, the Chomkyian construct emphasizes the contrasting view that humans are innately endowed and pre-equipped with creative and intelligent linguistic abilities. For instance, the notion that humans are biologically pre-wired has resulted in a dramatic paradigm shift in the way language acquisition, learning, and ultimately language teaching, are viewed.

Another impact of these theoretical constructs that have attempted to conceptualize the learning process is the evolution of the theories on intelligence. The most prominent model has been suggested by Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, which explores the frames of the human mind along with the cognitive processes involved when children interact and make sense of the world around them. According to his recent account of the multiple intelligences, the great scientist Gardner identifies the following unique intrinsic abilities that characterize children's intelligent interactions:

Linguistic Intelligence – the innate ability to use language and translate that skill into effective language performance based on language traits and aspects;

Musical Intelligence – as a language in itself, musical ability involves learning through musical notes and rhythms;

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence – the ability to process deductively the abstractions of math and logical reasoning using numbers and symbols;

Spatial intelligence – the ability to visualize and perceive in a given physical space with graphic representations of concepts and stimuli around us;

Body and Kinesthetic Intelligence – the ability to use non-verbal behavior and psychomotor skills to express, construct, and interpret meanings;

Intrapersonal Intelligence – the ability to understand emotions and behaviors and act upon them in a given social and linguistic discourse;

Interpersonal Intelligence – the ability to use various linguistic and heuristic functions in a given socio-linguistic discourse;

Naturalistic Intelligence – the ability to process knowledge and appreciate things around us in as reflected in the natural world; and

Spiritualistic Intelligence – the ability engages in moral and ethical behavior based on intrinsic beliefs and creeds.

Undoubtedly, there are other avenues that transcend these identifiable forms of intelligence. This is true especially when we examine elements of diversity as they pertain to cultural, ethical, moral, linguistic, social, socio-economic, ethnic, and other variables. In other words, there are unique cultural and linguistic patterns that can be identified based on the intelligent ways members of a given group or culture interact with the world around them. All in all, communicative discourse is the most important branch of linguistics.

Reference

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