The Second Section

المحتويات

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A. Language acquisition and learning

Behavioristic Theory

Behaviorism is more concerned with behavior than with thinking, feeling, or knowing. It focuses on the objective and observable components of behavior. All of The Behavioristic theories share some version of stimulus-response mechanisms for learning. Behaviorism originated with the work of John B. Watson, an American psychologist. Watson held the view that psychology should only concern itself with the study of behavior, and he was not concerned with the mind or with human consciousness. He considered it paramount that men could be studied objectively, like rats and apes. Watson's work was based on the experiments of Ivan Pavlov, and classical conditioning. Nowadays, behaviorism is associated with the name of B.F. Skinner, who made his reputation by testing Watson's theories in the laboratory. Skinner ultimately rejected Watson's almost exclusive emphasis on reflexes and conditioning. Skinner believed that people respond to their environment, but they also operate on the environment to produce certain consequences. Thus they partiipate in a feedback loop as an important part of a larger system.

Skinner developed the theory of "operant conditioning," the idea that we behave the way we do because this kind of behavior has had certain consequences in the past.

Presuppositions of behaviorism:

1. **Behaviorism is naturalistic**. This means that the material world is the ultimate reality, and everything can be explained in terms of natural laws. Man has no soul and no mind, only a brain that responds to external stimuli.

2. **A central tenet of behaviorism is that thoughts, feelings, intentions, and mental processes, do not determine what we do**. Behaviorism views behavior as the product of conditioning. Humans are biological machines and do not consciously act; rather they react to stimuli.

3. **Consistently, behaviorism teaches that we are not responsible for our actions**. If we are mere machines, without minds or souls, reacting to stimuli and operating on our environment to attain certain ends, then anything we do is inevitable.

4. **Behaviorism is manipulative**. It seeks not merely to understand human behavior, but to predict and control it. From his theories, Skinner developed the idea of "shaping." By controlling rewards and punishments, you can shape the behavior of another person.

Behavioral approaches to teaching generally involve the following:

1. Breaking down the skills and information to be learned into small units.

2. Checking student's work regularly and providing feedback as well as encouragement (reinforcement).

3. Teaching "out of context." Behaviorists generally believe that students can be taught best when the focus is directly on the content to be taught. Behavioral instruction often takes the material out of the context in which it will be used.

4. Direct or "teacher centered" instruction. Lectures, tutorials, drills, demonstrations, and other forms of teacher controlled teaching tend to dominate behavioral classrooms.

General Implications of Behavioral Theories

Behavioral teaching and learning tends to focus on skills that will be used later. You learn facts about American history, for example, because it is assumed that knowing those facts will make you a better citizen when you are an adult. You learn basic mathematics computational skills because you may need them when you get a job. Behavioral learning does not, however, generally ask you to actually put the skills or knowledge you learn into use in a "real" or "authentic" situation. That will come later when you graduate and get a job.

The behavioral emphasis on breaking down complex tasks, such as learning to read, into sub skills that are taught separately is very common in American schools today. In the elementary school classroom, for example, students may spend many lessons on phonics skills such as consonant clusters, vowel digraphs, and diphthongs. Other literacy skills such as appropriate uses of the comma may also be taught in separate lessons, often by whole class lectures followed by individual drill activities

Weakness of Behaviorism

- Many critics argue that behaviorism is a one-dimensional approach to understanding human behavior and that behavioral theories do not account for free will and internal influences such as moods, thoughts and feelings.

  Behaviorism does not account for other types of learning, especially learning that occurs without the use of reinforcement and punishment.

- People and animals are able to adapt their behavior when new information is introduced, even if a previous behavior pattern has been established through reinforcement

Strengths of Behaviorism

- Behaviorism is based upon observable behaviors, so it is easier to quantify and collect data and information when conducting research.

  Effective therapeutic techniques such as intensive behavioral intervention, behavior analysis, token economies and discrete trial training are all rooted in behaviorism. These approaches are often very useful in changing maladaptive or harmful behaviors in both children and adults.

  Theorists associated with Behaviourism:

  J.B Watson, E. L Thorndike ,and B.F Skinner

Cognitive Constructivism

Dissatisfaction with behaviorism's strict focus on observable behavior led educational psychologists such as Jean Piaget and William Perry to demand an approach to learning theory that paid more attention to what went on 'inside the learner's head." They developed **a cognitive approach** that *focused on mental processes rather than observable behavior.* Common to most cognitivist approaches is the idea that knowledge comprises symbolic mental representations, such as propositions and images, together with a

mechanism that operates on those representations. Knowledge is seen as something that is actively constructed by learners based on their existing cognitive structures. Therefore, it is relative to their stage of cognitive development; understanding the learner's existing intellectual framework is central to understanding the learning process.

Knowledge

Behaviorists maintain that knowledge is a passively absorbed behavioral repertoire. Cognitive constructivists reject that claim, arguing instead that knowledge is actively constructed by learners and that any account of knowledge makes essential references to cognitive structures. Knowledge comprises active systems of intentional mental representations derived from past learning experiences. Each learner interprets experiences and information in the light of their extant knowledge, their stage of cognitive development, their cultural background, their personal history, and so forth. Learners use these factors to organize their experience and to select and transform new information. Knowledge is therefore actively constructed by the learner rather than passively absorbed; it is essentially dependent on the standpoint from which the learner approaches it.

Learning

Because knowledge is actively constructed, learning is presented as a process of active discovery. The role of the instructor is not to drill knowledge into students through consistent repetition, or to goad them into learning through carefully employed rewards and punishments. Rather, the role of the teacher is to *facilitate discovery* by providing the necessary resources and by guiding learners as they attempt to assimilate new knowledge to old and to modify the old to accommodate the new. Teachers must thus take into account the knowledge that the learner currently possesses when deciding how to construct the curriculum and to present, sequence, and structure new material.

Motivation

Unlike behaviorist learning theory, where learners are thought to be motivated by extrinsic factors such as rewards and punishment, cognitive learning theory sees motivation as largely intrinsic. Because it involves significant restructuring of existing cognitive structures, successful learning requires a major personal investment on the part of the learner (Perry, 1999, 54). Learners must face up to the limitations of their existing knowledge and accept the need to modify or abandon existing beliefs. Without some kind of internal drive on the part of the learner to do so, external rewards and punishments such as grades are unlikely to be sufficient.

Instruction

Cognitivist teaching methods aim to assist students in assimilating new information to existing knowledge, and enabling them to make the appropriate modifications to their existing intellectual framework to accommodate that information. Thus, while cognitivists allow for the use of "skill and drill" exercises in the memorization of facts, formulae, and lists, they place greater importance on strategies that help students to actively assimilate and accommodate new material. For instance, asking students to explain new material in their own words can assist them in assimilating it by forcing them to re-express the new ideas in their existing vocabulary. Likewise, providing students with sets of questions to structure their reading makes it easier for them to relate it to previous material by highlighting certain

parts and to accommodate the new material by providing a clear organizational structure.

Because learning is largely self-motivated in the cognitivist framework, cognitivists such as A. L. Brown and J. D. Ferrara have also suggested methods which require students to monitor their own learning. For instance, the use of ungraded tests and study questions enables students to monitor their own understanding of the material. Other methods that have been suggested include the use of learning journals by students to monitor progress and highlight any recurring difficulties, and to analyze study habits

Summary of Learning Theories

Although there are many different approaches to learning, there are three basic types of learning theory: **behaviorist, cognitive constructivist**, and **social constructivist.**

	Behaviorism	**Cognitive Constructivism**	**Social Constructivism**
Knowledge	Repertoire of behavioral responses to environmental stimuli.	Knowledge systems of cognitive structures are actively constructed by learners based on existing structures.	Knowledge is socially constructed.
Learning	Passive absorption of predefined body of knowledge by learner. Promoted by repetition and positive reinforcement.	Active assimilation and accommodation of new information to existing cognitive structures. Discovery by learners.	Integration of students into knowledge community. Collaborative assimilation and accommodation of new information.
Motivation	Extrinsic, reward and punishment (positive and negative reinforcers).	Intrinsic. Learners set their own goals and motivate themselves to learn.	Intrinsic and extrinsic. Learning goals and motives are determined both by learners and extrinsic rewards provided by the knowledge community.
Instruction	Correct behavioral responses are transmitted by the teacher and absorbed by the students.	The teacher facilitates learning by providing an environment that promotes discovery and assimilation/accommodation.	Collaborative learning is facilitated and guided by the teacher. Group work.

B. The factors that influence the acquisition of a second language

What is Second Language Acquisition ?

Second language acquisition is concerned with the study of the way in which an individual becomes able to use one or more language different from his first language. This process can take place in a natural setting or through formal classroom instruction, and, although the degree of proficiency that can be attained is a controversial topic, it can start at childhood or during the adult age (Krashen, 1982).

Some students learn a new language more quickly and easily than others. This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second language or taught those who are using their second language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by virtue of their sheer determination, hard work and persistence. However there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors can be broadly categorized as **internal and external**.

Internal factors

Internal factors are those that the individual language learner brings with him or her to the particular learning situation.

- **Age:** Second language acquisition is influenced by the age of the learner. Children, who already have solid literacy skills in their own language, seem to be in the best position to acquire a new language efficiently. Motivated, older learners can be very successful too, but usually struggle to achieve native-speaker-equivalent pronunciation and intonation.

- **Personality:** Introverted or anxious learners usually make slower progress, particularly in the development of oral skills. They are less likely to take advantage of opportunities to speak, or to seek out such opportunities. More outgoing students will not worry about the inevitability of making mistakes. They will take risks, and thus will give themselves much more practice.

- **Motivation:** Intrinsic motivation has been found to correlate strongly with educational achievement. Clearly, students who enjoy language learning and take pride in their progress will do better than those who don't.
  Extrinsic motivation is also a significant factor. ESL students, for example, who need to learn English in order to take a place at an American university or to communicate with a new English boy/girlfriend are likely to make greater efforts and thus greater progress.

- **Experiences:** Learners who have acquired general knowledge and experience are in a stronger position to develop a new language than those who haven't. The student, for example, who has already lived in ٣ different countries and been exposed to various languages and cultures has a stronger base for learning a further language than the student who hasn't had such experiences.

- **Cognition:** In general, it seems that students with greater cognitive abilities will make the faster progress. Some linguists believe that there is a specific, innate language learning ability that is stronger in some students than in others.

- **Native language:** Students who are learning a second language which is from the same language family as their first language have, in general, a much easier task than those who aren't. So, for example, a Dutch child will learn English more quickly than a Japanese child.

- **Native language proficiency**

  The student's level of proficiency in the native language—including not only oral language and literacy, but also metalinguistic development, training in formal and academic features of language use, and knowledge of rhetorical patterns and variations in genre and style—affects acquisition of a second language. The more academically sophisticated the student's native language knowledge and abilities, the easier it will be for that student to learn a second language. This helps explain why foreign exchange students tend to be successful in American high school classes: They already have high school level proficiency in their native language.

External factors

External factors are those that characterize the particular language learning situation.

- **Curriculum:** For ESL students in particular it is important that the totality of their educational experience is appropriate for their needs. Language learning is less likely to place if students are fully submersed into the mainstream program without any extra assistance or, conversely, not allowed to be part of the mainstream until they have reached a certain level of language proficiency.

- **Instruction:** Clearly, some language teachers are better than others at providing appropriate and effective learning experiences for the students in their classrooms. These students will make faster progress.
  The same applies to mainstream teachers in second language situations. The science teacher, for example, who is aware that she too is responsible for the students› English language development, and makes certain accommodations, will contribute to their linguistic development.

- **Culture and status:** There is some evidence that students in situations where their own culture has a lower status than that of the culture in which they are learning the language make slower progress.

- **Motivation:** Students who are given continuing, appropriate encouragment to learn by their teachers and parents will generally fare better than those who aren›t. For example, students from families that place little importance on language learning are likely to progress less quickly.

- **Access to native speakers:** The opportunity to interact with native speakers both within and outside of the classroom is a significant advantage. Native speakers are linguistic models and can provide appropriate feedback. Clearly, second-language learners who have no extensive access to native speakers are likely to make slower progress, particularly in the oral/aural aspects of language acquisition.

C. Language Teaching Methodologies

Listed below are brief summaries of some of the more popular second language teaching methods of the last half century. For a more detailed analysis of the different methods.

The Direct Method

In this method the teaching is done entirely in the target language. The learner is not allowed to use his or her mother tongue. Grammar rules are avoided and there is emphasis on good pronunciation.

Grammar-translation

Learning is largely by translation to and from the target language. Grammar rules are to be memorized and long lists of vocabulary learned by heart. There is little or no emphasis placed on developing oral ability.

Audio-lingual

The theory behind this method is that learning a language means acquiring habits. There is much practice of dialogues of every situations. New language is first heard and extensively drilled before being seen in its written form.

The structural approach

This method sees language as a complex of grammatical rules which are to be learned one at a time in a set order. So for example the verb "to be" is introduced and practised before the present continuous tense which uses "to be" as an auxiliary.

Suggestopedia

The theory underlying this method is that a language can be acquired only when the learner is receptive and has no mental blocks. By various methods it is suggested to the student that the language is easy - and in this way the mental blocks to learning are removed.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

TPR works by having the learner respond to simple commands such as "Stand up", "Close your book", "Go to the window and open it." The method stresses the importance of aural comprehension.

Communicative language teaching (CLT)

The focus of this method is to enable the learner to communicate effectively and appropriately in the various situations she would be likely to find herself in. The content of CLT courses are functions such as inviting, suggesting, complaining or notions such as the expression of time, quantity, location.

The Silent Way

This is so called because the aim of the teacher is to say as little as possible in order that the learner can be in control of what he wants to say. No use is made of the mother tongue.

Community Language Learning

In this method attempts are made to build strong personal links between the teacher and student so that there are no blocks to learning. There is much talk in the mother tongue which is translated by the teacher for repetition by the student.

Immersion

This corresponds to a great extent to the situation we have at our school. ESL students are immersed in the English language for the whole of the school day and expected to learn math, science, humanities etc. through the medium of the target language, English.

Immigrant students who attend local schools find themselves in an immersion situation; for example refugee children from Bosnia attending German schools, or Puerto Ricans in American schools.

Task-based language learning

The focus of the teaching is on the completion of a task which in itself is interesting to the learners. Learners use the language they already have to complete the task and there is little correction of errors.

(This is the predominant method in middle school ESL teaching at Frankfurt International School. The tasks are subsumed in a major topic that is studied for a number of weeks. In the topic of ecology, for example, students are engaged in a number of tasks culminating in a poster presentation to the rest of the class. The tasks include reading, searching the internet, listening to taped material, selecting important vocabulary to teach other students etc).

The Natural Approach

This approach, propounded by Professor S. Krashen, stresses the similarities between learning the first and second languages. There is no correction of mistakes. Learning takes place by the students being exposed to language that is comprehensible or made comprehensible to them.

The Lexical Syllabus

This approach is based on a computer analysis of language which identifies the most common (and hence most useful) words in the language and their various uses. The syllabus teaches these words in broadly the order of their frequency, and great emphasis is placed on the use of authentic materials.

Use this table to make a brief summary of some of language teaching methods:

	Grammar-Translation	Direct Method	Audio-Lingual Method	Silent Way	Suggestopedia
1. Goals	Read literature in L2. Develop mind. Learn grammar, vocabulary, and culture.	Communication. Think in L2. Direct association in L2 without translation.	Communication. Automaticity by learning new habits.	Self-expression of Ss; independence from T.	Everyday Comm. Tap Ss mental powers by desuggesting barriers to learning.
2. Role of the teacher/ student	Traditional. T is the authority. Ss learn from the T.	T-centered. T directs.	T-centered. T provides model of L2 for imitation.	T as facilitator, resource, provides what Ss need.	S must trust and respect T as authority. Ss adopt childlike roles once they feel secure.
3. Teaching/ Learning Process?	Translation. Deductive study of grammar. Memorize vocabulary.	Associate L2 and meaning directly in real context. Use L2 only. Inductive grammar. Syllabus based on topics/ situations.	New grammar and vocabulary through dialogues. Drills. Inductive grammar. Learning is habit formation.	Ss guided to discover the structure of L2. Initial focus on accurate pronunciation.	Relaxing atmosphere, music, activate whole brain + peripheral learning. Reception then activation phase.
4. Nature of student/ teacher interaction	T to S.	Both initiate interaction. Some S/S interaction.	T-directed. S/S in drills.	T active, but mostly silent. S/S interaction encouraged.	T/S and S/S interaction from beginning.
5. How are students' feelings dealt with?	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	Positive feelings encouraged, also S/S co-operation.	Focus on confidence and sense of security via suggestions.
6. View of language/ culture?	Literary language over spoken language.	Spoken language over written.	Language as system of patterns/ units. Simple to complex.	Language expresses the spirit of a culture.	Communication as a 2-phase process: language + extra-linguistic factors.

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7. What language skills are emphasized?	Vocabulary/ grammar. Reading/ writing.	Vocabulary over grammar. Focus on communication.	Structure important. Listen-speak-read-write.	Pronunciation & intonation. Structure. Oral before written.	Vocabulary. Explicit but minimal grammar. Language use over linguistic form.
8. Role of the native language?	L1 in classroom. Two-way translation.	Not used.	L1 habits interfere with L2. Avoid L1.	Used to form sounds in L2 and for feedback. Otherwise not used.	L1 used in translation of dialogues. As course proceeds, L1 reduced.
9. How does evaluation occur?	Written translations. Apply grammar rules.	Use of language (interview).	Discrete point testing for accuracy.	Continuous observation. Ss develop their own criteria.	In-class performance.
10. Treatment of errors?	T supplies correct answer.	Self-correction.	Avoid errors by over-learning.	Self-correction; peer correction.	No overt correction Modelled correctly.
11. Associated with whom?	Moses	Francois Gouin, Charles Berlitz	Charles Fries	Caleb Gattegno	Georgi Lozanov

	Community Language Learning	**Total Physical Response**	**Natural Approach**	**Communicative Language Teaching**
1. Goals	Communication. Promote nondefensive learning.	Communication. Learning L1= learning L2.	Communicative competence. Facilitate acquisition by providing comprehensible input (i+1).	Communication in social context. Appropriacy. Functional competence.
2. Role of the teacher/ student?	Counselor/client. As S assumes more responsibility, becomes independent of T.	Director. T provides model of L2 for imitation. Later role reversal.	T as facilitator. Primary responsibility is with S.	Facilitator. Manager of learning activities. Promotes communication among Ss.

3. Teaching/ Learning Process	Security, aggression, attention, reflection, retention, discrimination. Ss initiate speech in L1, T supplies L2.	Comprehension before production. Modelling by T followed by performance.	Comprehension before production. Developing model approximates L2 (L1, . . . L2). Gradual emergence of speech. Task oriented.	Ss learn to communicate by negotiating meaning in real context. Activities include information gap, choice, feedback.
4. Nature of student/ teacher interaction?	Changes over time. Importance placed on cooperative relationship between T/S and S/S.	T speaks, Ss respond nonverbally. Later, Ss verbalize.	S-centered. Both initiate interaction. S/S interaction in pair and small group activities.	T arranges tasks for communication. S/S interaction.
5. How are students' feelings dealt with?	S viewed as whole person, no separation of intellect and feelings. T «understands» Ss.	Ss have fun in a nonstressful situation.	Affective factors over cognitive factors. Optimal learner has low affective filter.	Ss are motivated to learn thru usefulness of language functions.
6. View of language/ culture?	Language for developing critical thinking. Culture integrated with language.	Spoken over written.	Language as a tool for communication. Language function over linguistic form.	Language in social context, for communication.
7. What skills are emphasized?	Ss determine syllabus by what they what to say.	Grammar and vocabulary (initially via imperatives). Comprehension precedes production.	Vocabulary over grammar. Function over form. Comprehension–e early production–s speech emergence.	Function over form. Discourse and sociolinguistic competence + all 4 skills.
8. Role of L1?	Used in the beginning, less in later stages.	Not used.	L1 can be used in preproduction (comprehension) activities.	Generally not used.
9. How does evaluation occur?	Integrative tests. Self-evaluation.	By observation.	Communicative effectiveness. Fluency over accuracy. Task oriented.	Communicative tests. Fluency and accuracy.
10. Treatment of errors?	Nonthreatening. Correction by modelling.	Unobtrusive correction.	No error correction unless errors interfere with communication.	No error correction unless errors interfere with communication.
11. Associated with whom?	Charles Curran	James Asher	Tracy Terrell, Stephen Krashen	Various.

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