

THEME: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES

Pirmatova Nasiba**Abdisattorova Sevinch**

Senior teacher of JSPU

Safarova Dildora

Jizzakh State Pedagogical University

Foreign Languages

Annotation: This article provides a comprehensive overview of language acquisition theories, including behaviorist, nativist, cognitive, and social interactionist perspectives. It discusses key figures such as Skinner, Chomsky, Piaget, and Vygotsky, highlighting their contributions to our understanding of how language is learned. The article also explores contemporary research, including connectionist and usage-based models, as well as bilingual acquisition and the critical period hypothesis. By integrating insights from multiple disciplines, the discussion emphasizes the complexity of language learning and its implications for cognitive science, linguistics, and education.

Key Words: Language acquisition, behaviorist theory, nativist theory, cognitive theory, social interactionist theory, Noam Chomsky, B.F. Skinner, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, bilingualism, critical period hypothesis, Universal Grammar, connectionism, usage-based theory, second-language acquisition, linguistic development.

Аннотация: В данной статье представлен всесторонний обзор теорий усвоения языка, включая бихевиористскую, нативистскую, когнитивную и

социокультурную перспективы. Рассматриваются ключевые фигуры, такие как Скиннер, Хомский, Пиаже и Выготский, и их вклад в понимание процесса изучения языка. Также обсуждаются современные исследования, включая коннекционистские и основанные на использовании модели, а также билингвальное усвоение языка и гипотезу критического периода. Интегрируя знания из различных дисциплин, статья подчеркивает сложность процесса усвоения языка и его значение для когнитивных наук, лингвистики и образования.

Ключевые слова: усвоение языка, бихевиористская теория, нативистская теория, когнитивная теория, социокультурная теория, Ноам Хомский, Б. Ф. Скиннер, Жан Пиаже, Лев Выготский, билингвизм, гипотеза критического периода, универсальная грамматика, коннекционизм, теория, основанная на использовании, изучение второго языка, лингвистическое развитие.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada tilni o'rganish nazariyalari, jumladan, xulqiy, nativistik, kognitiv va ijtimoiy o'zaro ta'sir nuqtai nazarlari kengaytirilgan holda ko'rib chiqilgan. Skaner, Xomskiy, Pyaje va Vygotskiy kabi asosiy shaxslarning tilni o'rganish jarayonini tushunishdagi hissalarini ta'kidlanadi. Shuningdek, zamonaviy tadqiqotlar, jumladan, bog'lanishchi va foydalanishga asoslangan modellari, shuningdek, ikki tilni o'rganish va tanqidiy davr gipotezasi muhokama qilinadi. Turli sohalardan olingan bilimlarni birlashtirib, maqola tilni o'rganishning murakkabligini va uning kognitiv fanlar, lingvistika va ta'lim sohalaridagi ahamiyatini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: tilni o'rganish, xulqiy nazariya, nativistik nazariya, kognitiv nazariya, ijtimoiy o'zaro ta'sir nazariyasi, Noam Xomskiy, B. F. Skaner, Jeyn Pyaje, Lev Vygotskiy, ikki tillilik, tanqidiy davr gipotezasi, universal grammatika, bog'lanishchilik, foydalanishga asoslangan nazariya, ikkinchi tilni o'rganish, lingvistik rivojlanish.

Language acquisition has been a subject of scholarly interest for centuries, as it plays a fundamental role in human communication and cognitive development. The study of how individuals acquire language has led to the formulation of various theories that attempt to explain this complex process. These theories fall into different categories, including behaviorist, nativist, cognitive, and social interactionist perspectives. Each of these approaches provides a unique insight into the mechanisms underlying language learning and development.

One of the earliest theories of language acquisition is the behaviorist perspective, which is largely associated with B.F. Skinner. According to this view, language learning is a process of habit formation that occurs through conditioning. Skinner proposed that children acquire language through imitation and reinforcement. When a child produces a sound or word correctly, they receive positive reinforcement in the form of approval or encouragement from caregivers. This reinforcement strengthens the association between the spoken word and its meaning, making the child more likely to repeat the behavior. However, critics argue that this theory does not adequately explain how children generate novel sentences that they have never heard before, highlighting its limitations in accounting for the creative aspect of language use.

In contrast to the behaviorist approach, the nativist theory, championed by Noam Chomsky, posits that humans are biologically predisposed to acquire language. Chomsky introduced the concept of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), an innate mechanism that enables children to learn the structure of any language to which they are exposed. This theory is supported by the observation that children acquire language rapidly and with minimal explicit instruction. Chomsky also proposed the theory of Universal Grammar, which suggests that all languages share common underlying principles. While the nativist perspective has been influential in explaining the rapid and structured nature of language acquisition, it has been critiqued for not sufficiently considering the role of environmental factors in language development.

Another significant perspective is the cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of cognitive development in language acquisition. This theory is closely associated with Jean Piaget, who argued that language learning is intertwined with general cognitive growth. According to Piaget, children acquire language as they develop their understanding of the world. For instance, before a child can use words to describe objects, they must first have a mental representation of those objects. This view suggests that language acquisition is a gradual process that occurs alongside cognitive milestones, such as the ability to categorize and abstract information. While this theory highlights the importance of cognitive abilities in language learning, it has been challenged by evidence showing that language development can sometimes outpace other cognitive functions.

The social interactionist theory, advocated by Lev Vygotsky, emphasizes the importance of social interaction in language development. This perspective suggests that language acquisition is facilitated through communicative exchanges with more knowledgeable individuals, such as parents, caregivers, and peers. Vygotsky introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which describes the difference between what a child can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with guidance. Through interactions within this zone, children acquire linguistic structures and meanings that would be difficult to learn in isolation. The social interactionist approach underscores the role of cultural and social contexts in shaping language development, making it a more comprehensive model compared to purely biological or cognitive theories.

Recent research in language acquisition has incorporated elements of multiple theories to provide a more holistic understanding of how individuals learn languages. Connectionist models, for example, use insights from cognitive science and artificial intelligence to explain how language learning emerges from neural networks in the brain. These models propose that language acquisition results from the gradual strengthening of connections between linguistic elements based on experience and

exposure. This perspective aligns with findings from neuroscience, which indicate that the brain's plasticity enables it to adapt to linguistic input in dynamic ways.

Another contemporary approach is the usage-based theory, which integrates elements of social interaction and cognitive development. This perspective, associated with scholars like Michael Tomasello, suggests that language learning is driven by usage patterns and the communicative functions of language. Rather than relying on innate grammatical structures, children learn language by recognizing patterns in speech and constructing meaning through repeated exposure and interaction. This view highlights the role of input frequency and context in shaping linguistic abilities, offering a more empirically grounded explanation of language acquisition.

Bilingual and multilingual language acquisition further complicates traditional theories. Research in this area has shown that children exposed to multiple languages from an early age can develop proficiency in all languages simultaneously, often exhibiting cognitive advantages such as enhanced problem-solving skills and greater metalinguistic awareness. Theories that focus on bilingual acquisition, such as the dual language system hypothesis, argue that multilingual learners develop separate linguistic systems for each language, while others suggest that languages interact dynamically within a unified cognitive framework. Understanding bilingualism challenges earlier monolingual-centric models of language acquisition and highlights the adaptability of the human brain in learning multiple linguistic systems.

Moreover, the critical period hypothesis, first proposed by Eric Lenneberg, suggests that there is an optimal window for language acquisition, typically during early childhood. This hypothesis posits that if language exposure does not occur within this critical period, achieving native-like proficiency becomes significantly more difficult. Studies on feral children and individuals who acquire a second language later in life provide some support for this theory, as they often struggle with mastering certain linguistic aspects, particularly phonology. However, research also indicates that

language learning is possible at any age, albeit with different cognitive mechanisms involved, leading to ongoing debates about the rigidity of the critical period.

CONCLUSION

In sum, language acquisition is a complex and multifaceted process that continues to be a focal point of linguistic and psychological research. The diversity of theoretical perspectives—behaviorist, nativist, cognitive, and social interactionist—demonstrates that no single explanation fully captures the intricacies of how humans acquire language. While behaviorist theories emphasize reinforcement and imitation, nativist theories highlight innate mechanisms that facilitate language learning. Cognitive perspectives explore the relationship between language and thought, whereas social interactionist theories stress the importance of communication and cultural context. Contemporary research increasingly integrates these viewpoints, drawing on insights from neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and bilingual studies to refine our understanding of language acquisition.

The dynamic nature of language learning, particularly in bilingual and multilingual contexts, further underscores the adaptability of the human brain. Studies on second-language acquisition and critical period effects continue to generate debate, pushing the boundaries of linguistic and cognitive research. As technological advancements and interdisciplinary approaches expand, scholars are better equipped to explore the neural, social, and cognitive mechanisms that contribute to language development. Ultimately, a comprehensive understanding of language acquisition not only enhances educational strategies but also deepens our appreciation of human cognition and communication, highlighting the intricate ways in which language shapes our world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. MIT Press.

2. Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal Behavior*. Copley Publishing Group.
3. Piaget, J. (1959). *The Language and Thought of the Child*. Routledge.
4. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.
5. Tomasello, M. (2003). *Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition*. Harvard University Press.
6. Lenneberg, E. H. (1967). *Biological Foundations of Language*. Wiley.
7. McNeill, D. (2012). *How Language Evolved: The Emergence of the Human Mind*. Cambridge University Press.
8. Tomasello, M. (2005). *The Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition*. In S. R. Fisher & A. M. Gallagher (Eds.), *Handbook of Language and Thought* (pp. 485-504). Oxford University Press.
9. Pinker, S. (1994). *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*. William Morrow & Company.
10. Bates, E., & MacWhinney, B. (1987). *Competition Models in Language Acquisition*. In B. MacWhinney (Ed.), *The Crosslinguistic Study of Sentence Processing* (pp. 101-140). Cambridge University Press.
11. Slobin, D. I. (1997). *The Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition: Theoretical and Methodological Issues*. Psychology Press.