

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERACTION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Norqulova Gulkhayo Farhod qizi

Annotation: Interaction is widely recognized as a cornerstone of effective language learning, providing learners with opportunities to engage in authentic communication, practice language output, and refine their skills through social exchanges. Interaction-based language learning draws on key theories, including Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, and Swain's Output Hypothesis, each emphasizing the social and communicative aspects of language acquisition. Through interaction, learners encounter language in context-rich environments, where they can negotiate meaning, receive feedback, and collaboratively construct knowledge.

Keywords: *Interaction Hypothesis in Language Acquisition, Social Constructivism in Language Learning, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Language Acquisition, Communicative Competence Development, Meaning Negotiation in Language Learning, Conversational Scaffolding, Feedback in Language Interaction, Collaborative Language Learning.*

INTRODUCTION.

Interaction plays a central role in language learning, serving as the primary means through which learners acquire, practice, and refine their communicative skills. Interaction-based approaches are rooted in social constructivist theories, notably Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, which emphasizes that learners progress through social engagement and scaffolding provided by more knowledgeable interlocutors. Research consistently supports the view that language is best learned in communicative contexts where learners actively engage with others, negotiate meaning, and receive feedback.

Interaction in language learning is also foundational to the development of communicative competence, as highlighted in studies by Michael Long, who introduced the Interaction Hypothesis. This hypothesis asserts that through interaction, learners encounter opportunities to modify their output, clarify misunderstandings, and refine their language use. The process of meaning negotiation—where learners work to understand and be understood—supports language acquisition by prompting learners to use and adapt their linguistic knowledge in real-time. This interactional feedback, whether implicit or explicit, helps learners notice gaps in their knowledge, thus promoting language development.

Moreover, research into conversational analysis and discourse-based language learning demonstrates that interaction enriches learners' understanding of sociolinguistic and pragmatic nuances, such as turn-taking, politeness strategies, and idiomatic expressions. These cultural and social elements of language, crucial for effective communication, are difficult to learn through isolated study or rote memorization. Interaction encourages authentic language use, as seen in approaches like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Learning (TBL), where learners use language to accomplish meaningful tasks collaboratively, enhancing both linguistic accuracy and fluency.

In summary, interaction is not merely an activity within language learning but a critical driver of language acquisition. By fostering social engagement, interaction promotes both linguistic and cultural competence, preparing learners for real-life communication and intercultural understanding.

References

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