

# Theory of language essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

They are the basic items in language learning. These are usually described as: \* Phonological Units (Phonemes) \* Grammatical Units (Phrases, clauses, sentences...) \* Grammatical Operations (Adding, shifting, joining or transforming elements) \* Lexical Items (Function words and structure words)

In these elements, lexical items have very important position, because they can be generally understood to convey a single meaning, namely we understand meaning with their helps. There are some language learning methods based on this view of language.

These are: Audio-lingual Method, Grammar Translation Method and Silent Way. Functional View of Language In functional or communicative view of language, language is seen as vehicle for the statement of functional meaning. Also, in this view, the semantic and communicative dimensions of language are more important than grammatical characteristics. It is said that language is communication. There are some language learning approaches and methods based on this view of language. These are: Communicative Approach, The Natural Approach and Functional-notional Syllabuses.

Why Must Students Learn Language?

Language has many subsystems related to sounds, grammar and vocabulary, meaning and knowing the right way to say something on a particular occasion to accomplish a specific purpose. The speaker who knows all of these has acquired 'communicative competence'. (Lyon J. 1981)

According to Canale & Swain (1973), there are four types of communicative competence. \* Grammatical Competence: Learning about issues such as the impact of on Advanced Audio Coding (AAC) an individual's natural speech production and the relationship between spoken language and the language

of AAC systems. Discourse Competence: Considering issues related to technical operation of AAC systems, including motor development and control, cognitive factors like awareness and memory. \* Sociolinguistic Competence: Exploring factors such as the effect of developmental disabilities on social communication, challenges to developing social connections, and the ability to conduct conversations. \* Strategic Competence: Examining operational, linguistic, and social constraints faced by AAC users and learning about adaptive skills that allow users to make the most of what they can do.

I think sociolinguistic competence is more important, because in everyday life, we use language to interact with each other. The other competences are not enough on their own. For example, you can know all the rules of English; it does not mean you can communicate fluently with people. So, speaking and understanding each other is important. My Views about Language If I define the language, I can say that it is communication among people. Also, it is a system of communication that enables humans to cooperate.

Humans use language to express objects in their environment. We use language to talk about for example, our happiness, infelicity or complaint. In everyday life, we are exposed to language. It is essential for human being. We are born with the ability of speaking. It comes from our birth. Language is an important aspect in our day to day life, because it enables us to communicate in writing and editing standards. There are certain aspects that should be put into consideration in order to effectively and clearly communicate the intended message.

Usage vs. Use The key theme of teaching language is communication, where the target language is used in a way that should be natural to a competent speaker of the language, rather than in a way that is unnatural beyond the confines of the language classroom. Widdowson notes that the ability to produce syntactically correct sentences, while important, is not a sufficient condition to be able to communicate in a language. Consequently, he makes the important distinction between 'usage' and 'use'.

In terms of usage, Widdowson gives the example of a teacher-student dialogue: Teacher: What is on the table? Student: There is a book on the table. He points out the exercise is unnatural for several reasons. The students' response is too long. It would be natural to respond with 'A book'. In addition, if the book is clearly in view to everyone in the classroom, then it is an unnatural dialogue. Consequently, he categorizes such activities under 'usage'. In contrast, instances of use occur in situations that are natural to the classroom.

Also, depending on context, a grammatical structure may be used to focus either on usage or on use. Widdowson observes that 'This is a pen' is an instance of usage, because all the people in the classroom will know what a pen is, but 'This is a barometer' is an instance of use where a teacher is introducing a new piece of equipment to students. (Walter, page 93-4) I think use is more important, because it refers to real communication between teacher and students. It occurs naturally, so students can easily learn.

They are exposed to natural learning by this way. LANGUAGE SKILLS The purpose of language learning is to improve the speakers' four skills of

listening, speaking, reading and writing, with the base of large vocabulary and good grammar, but this is not the final purpose. The final purpose is to let speakers be able to use the language. For instance, why do people study English? If a man is only good at listening and speaking, can people say that he is good at English? No. If a woman is only good at reading and writing, can people say that she is good at the language? No.

In addition, most of the speakers do better in reading and writing than in listening and speaking. They can read and write, but they can hardly communicate. They can hardly express themselves with their own words. We are not able to change the examination system, but we can improve our learning method. So when speakers want to use a language well, do not forget to know all the abilities of the four skills. The four skills are: Listening, speaking reading and writing. Listening Skill Listening, one of the means of language communication is used most widely in people's daily lives.

In addition, teaching the learners a lot of listening activities is a good way of enlargement their vocabulary. On the other hand, it also helps the learners improve their listening comprehension. For instance, people know that the largest difference between mother language learning and foreign language learning is the environment. For a foreign language, we can meet it only in formal places and classes. Training and practicing the oral reading is not a day's work. Practice is important. Only through the practice can the learners improve their listening comprehension.

Speaking Skill Speaking is often connected with listening. For example, the two-way communication makes up for the defect in communicative ability in

the traditional learning. Two-way means the relationship of the communication between the teacher and the students at school. This relationship is connected with the communicative activities between two people. It can create a fresh environment for speaking language. The two-way communication can lengthen the dialogue limitlessly. This is its advantage.

At the same time, if the speakers want to give the correct response, he has to think hard, the sentence is not easily forgotten which is created by themselves through thinking, sometimes with the teacher's hint. Reading Skill Reading is an important way of gaining information in language learning and it is a basic skill for a language learner. There are a lot of reading exercises in an examination today. But all these readings must be done in limited time. So learners are asked to read them correctly and with a certain speed. For instance, someone reads word by word.

Someone reads with his finger pointing to the words or with his head shaking. Those are all bad habits. They should read phrase by phrase. Do not blink eyes so often and shake head. Just move the eyeball. That is enough. If they want to get more word information, there must be a proper distance between their eyes and the reading material. Writing Skill Writing is one way of providing variety in classroom procedures. It provides a learner with physical evidence of his achievements and he can measure his improvement. It helps to consolidate their grasp of vocabulary and structure, and complements the other language skills.

Sentence is the base of an article. So he should begin his writing with sentences. For example, translation, sentence pattern exchanging, and text shortening and rewriting. It helps to understand the text and write compositions. It can foster the learner's ability to summarize and to use the language freely. Generally these four skills cannot be separated. People often say " First listening and speaking, then reading and writing. " But this way of saying is fit for the beginning stage. Before they are going to have a new lesson, do reading and writing first.

So, training and practicing helps learners that raise their ability of language skills. THEORY OF LEARNING How can we define learning? It is a controversial issue. There are many ideas, theories, assumptions about learning. It has been debating for a long time. There is no certain idea about this subject. There are six different ideas. They are behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, nativism, humanism and social interactionism. Behaviorism Behaviorism is a worldview that assumes a learner is essentially passive, responding to environmental stimuli.

The learner starts off as a clean state and behavior is shaped through positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement. Both increase the probability that the antecedent behavior will happen again. (Behaviorism, n. d. para. 4) Behaviorism assumes that behavior is observable and can be correlated with other observable events. Thus, there are events that precede and follow behavior. Behaviorism's goal is to explain relationships between antecedent conditions (stimuli), behavior (responses) and consequences (reward, punishment, or neutral effect). Watson, Several types of learning exist. The most basic form is associative learning, i. e. making a new

association between events in the environment. There are two forms of associative learning. These are classical conditioning and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning is a reflexive or automatic type of learning in which a stimulus acquires the capacity to evoke a response that was originally evoked by another stimulus. Ivan Pavlov did an experiment with a dog for this classical conditioning. (Pavlov, 1903, para. 4) Second is operant conditioning. B.

F Skinner (1937) coined the term operant conditioning. It means roughly changing of behavior by the use of reinforcement which is given after desired response. Skinner identified three types of responses or operant that can follow behavior. These are neutral operant, reinforces and punisher. Skinner did experiment with pigeons and rats for operant conditioning. I support this theory, because behavioral approach is essential for students. There are repetitions, reinforcements, awards and punishments. Students can easily learn by repeating. It can be seen as traditional way, but it works.

If I give an example from my experience, I can say in my high school, these types of theories were applied. For example, I would memorize lots of words by repeating them and they stayed in my mind. Then our teacher prepared quiz for us and I took high notes when I memorized. So, it was an award for me, but when I didn't memorize, I would take bad notes. This was a punishment for me. Nativism The innatist theory states that learning is natural for human beings. Nativists believe that babies enter the world with a biological propensity, an inborn device to learn language.



Noam Chomsky is perhaps the best known and the most influential linguist of the second half of the twentieth century. He has made a number of strong claims about language. He suggests that language is an innate faculty, namely we are born with a set of rules about language in our heads which he refers to as the ' Universal Grammar'. The universal grammar is the basis upon which all human languages build. (Heron, n. d. para. 1) Chomsky furthered his theory by proposing the existence of the language acquisition device, a brain mechanism that is specialized in detecting and learning the rules of language.

The ' Language Acquisition Device' (LAD), is an inherited or innate part of the brain that is activated when language is heard. LAD aides the child in learning the language being heard with its store of operating principles for language or the universal aspects of language. I support this theory, because students acquire the language by exposing it. They interact with each other like real-life situations. As we understand from its name, it occurs naturally. I strongly agree these types of approaches because I believe exposure is necessary for learning a language. Cognitivism

Cognitivism is the psychology of learning which emphasizes human cognition or intelligence as a special endowment enabling man to form hypotheses and develop intellectually. It is also known as cognitive development.

Cognitivism focuses on the inner mental activities, opening the ' black box' of the human mind is valuable an necessary for understanding how people learn mental processes such as thinking, memory, knowing and problem-solving need to be explored. A response to behaviorism, people are not programmed animals that merely response to environmental stimuli.

Feldman, Cognitivism) Howard Gardner (1983, 1999) advanced a controversial theory of intelligence that blew apart our traditional thoughts about IQ. Initially, Gardner (1983) described seven different intelligences which, in his view, provided a much more comprehensive picture of intelligence. Since then, he has added one more intelligence (naturalist), and has even toyed with further possible forms of intelligence (spiritual, existential, moral). Beyond the traditional two forms of intelligence, eight multiple intelligences are typically listed in Gardner's work.

These are linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. (Brown, 1941, page 108) I don't strongly support this theory, but it can be beneficial for students who have different abilities. Each student has different type of intelligence. But, as a teacher, it is hard to apply this theory. In your class, there will be lots of students, maybe forty. Each will have different intelligence, so you must know all types of intelligence and apply them in the classroom.

But, if you know and can apply them, your students' intelligence level will develop and everyone can easily understand. Constructivism Constructivism is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. Concept, n. d. para. 1) Jean Piaget considers the most critical factor in a child's cognitive

development to be interaction with peers. Interaction lends opportunities for the child to have cognitive conflict, which results in arguing or debating with peers. These types of interaction require children to decenter or consider another person's point of view. Piaget observes that children are most challenged in their thinking when they are with peers, because they are on an equal footing and are freer to confront ideas than when interacting with adults. (McClellan, 1993) Jerome Bruner observes that the process of the world is not done in isolation but rather within a social context. The child is a social being and, through social life, acquires a framework for interpreting experiences. (Bruner ; amp; Haste, 1993) Bruner (1966) also notes that there is no unique sequence for all learners, and the optimum in any particular case will depend for children. (Anderson ; amp; Pavan, 1993) In my opinion, students will enjoy this approach of discovering learning, but do always actively construct meaning and building an appropriate knowledge structure.

And, also, one of the biggest disadvantages of constructivism is that the learner may be hampered by contextualizing learning in that, at least initially, they may not be able to form abstractions and transfer knowledge and skills in new situations. Humanism Humanism is a psychological approach that emphasizes the study of the whole person. Humanistic psychologists look at human behavior not only through the eyes of the observer, but through the eyes of the person doing the behaving. Humanistic psychologists believe that an individual's behavior is connected to their feelings and self concept.

Erik Erikson studied in humanism. He organized life into eight stages that extend from birth to death. These stages are: Trust vs. Mistrust, Autonomy

vs. Shame, Initiative vs. Guilt, Industry vs. Inferiority, Identity vs. Confusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation and Integrity vs. Despair.

Abraham Maslow (1968) also studied in humanism. He emphasized the importance of self-actualization, which is a process of growing and developing as a person in order to achieve individual potential. He developed the hierarchy of needs. There are five levels in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

These are; psychological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualizing needs. We can see the triangle below: Carl Rogers (1966) identified key elements of the humanistic approach to education.

Human beings have a natural potential for learning. Meaningful learning is what is learnt is perceived to be of personal relevance. Experiential learning involves active participation. I don't strongly support this theory, because the humanistic approach claims that each student has a best learning style and that a humanist teacher should employ the appropriate style for each student.

However, these learning styles and their evolutions tend to be much unorganized and unwieldy. Also, the capability of the teacher plays an important role. Finding teachers suitable for the humanist classroom is difficult. Social Interactionist Theory Social interactionist theory is an approach to language acquisition that stresses the environment and the context in which the language is being learned. It focuses on the pragmatics of language rather than grammar, which should come later. It is associated to two well-known psychologists: Lev Vygotsky and Reuven Feuerstein.

Johnson, n. d. para. 1) In Lev Vygotsky's theory, there are some key issues. For him, language is the means through which culture is transmitted,

thinking, develops and learning occurs. Mediation is a central concept. He also developed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It has been defined as 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978) He believed that when a student is at the ZPD for a particular task, providing the appropriate assistance will give the student enough of a boost to achieve the task. The ZPD has become synonymous in the literature with the term scaffolding. Reuven Feuerstein attached importance to dynamic assessment which a part of learning and it is the result of interaction between assistor and learner. He also attached importance to the role of mediator, emphasis on the social context in which learner takes place and advantages of collaborative work.

I agree this theory. Social interaction is important for learning. I think grammar should come after understanding the language. Students can learn easily by interacting with people in their environment. To apply this theory into classroom, both students and teachers have responsibilities. They work together in the classroom. Mediated by the teacher, students' understandings develop, so it is essential for students for learning language. My View of Learning Theory I support the Social Interactionist Theory.

I believe that the most important thing in learning is interaction between people and exposing the language. In my opinion, language should be learned with communication. It is more effective for developing the ability of interaction. Other kinds of things such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation should come later. For example, when you learn grammar and

vocabulary first, then you will have difficulty in interacting with people, because you try to use the most suitable words or structures while speaking. In contrast, you will not have difficulty in interacting when you learn how to communicate.

For applying social interaction in the class, both teachers and students have responsibilities. Teachers and students should be in relation. Social interaction also requires effort from both teacher and students. Let's imagine a class in which the social interactionist theory is applied. In this class, both teacher and students speak English for communication. They don't use Turkish. Students are active and the teacher is facilitator, advisor as well as communicator. Teachers in these types of classes are also mediator.

They guide students to learn language, so teachers develop the students' language ability. As I have mentioned before, it is about the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). I think this theory is necessary for learning not only in language but also in every area, so I selected this theory because it addresses my thoughts. TEACHER ROLES The instructional side of a teacher's role is likely to be goal-oriented, task-dependent, knowledge-based and underpinned by a set of attitudes and beliefs, not only about knowledge, but also the appropriate instructional strategies to imply in the classroom.

Furthermore, it is likely to influence the types of modes of evaluation most favored by teachers. Teachers in classroom should be facilitator, advisor as well as communicator. They should see the errors as natural outcome of the development. They also evaluate not only accuracy, but also fluency and correct the mistakes only if they distract communication. They don't use

translation. They should use English as a means of communication. They are authority in the class: choose the activities, conduct them, and serve as a resource for students.

Teacher should make an effort to students for their learning. Also teacher should be tolerant, flexible, creative, respectful, tolerant, calm, efficient and open to change. When students choose their own objectives and directions, formulate their own problems, discover their own resources, decide on, follow their own courses of action, experience, and live with the consequences, significant learning is maximized. Lastly, teacher should give teaching strategies besides instructions and allow students to ask questions during the lesson. LEARNER ROLES

A learner must seriously take into consideration that learning is a great commitment. Most of the times, it requires hard work in order for it to be successful procedure. Building up knowledge should be continuous; that is, the learners should consistently study so as not to have any gaps, for the reason that then they will have serious problems in their learning. Learning is like a chain. If the learners fail to study or miss a lesson without making up for it, then they automatically break the learning chain and their learning is disrupted.

For that reason, teachers are there to remind learners that both of them should stick to a schedule and that when a lesson is missed, it will surely be made up for. Learners should be active participant, listen to each other and ask questions when they don't understand. They should make an effort to understand. In the lesson, they should use English for communication. They

also should be assessed as part of daily learning through a range of activities including dialogue and interactions with peers and teachers, practical investigations, performances, oral presentations and discussions.

**OBJECTIVES** Now, I will talk about the Turkish Educational System. The aim of the Turkish Educational System is to nurture productive, happy individuals with broad views on world affairs who will unite in national consciousness and thinking to form an inseparable state, and will contribute to the prosperity of society through their skills. This is thought to be instrumental in making the Turkish nation a creative and distinguished member of the modern world. The Turkish National Educational System is composed of two main sections: Formal Education and Non-formal Education.

Formal education is the regular education of individuals in a certain age group and given in school. This includes; pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education and higher education institutions. Non-formal education covers education, training, guidance and application activities arranged outside the formal education system for those individuals who have never been within the formal system, who are currently at a certain stage of their education or have left their studies at any stage.

In accordance with this system's aim, I should teach English to the students in a curriculum which given to me. The goal will be to enable students to communicate in the target language. For this aim, I should teach grammar and vocabulary as well as speaking and writing. Apart from the curriculum I should also attach importance to students' interacting with each other, with their parents, social environment and like this. **MATERIALS** Materials used in



classroom should be chosen carefully. They should address each student's capability.

There may be every kind of students who have different abilities. For example, there may be visual, auditory, kinesthetic or verbal students. As a teacher, you should choose the materials as possible as addressing to all of the students. The materials also should attract the students' attention, so students easily focus on the lesson thanks to them. Real-life materials should be used for effective learning. There also should be games, role-plays, all pair and group work activities. SYLLABUS

A syllabus is a learning contract between teacher and the students. It sets the ground rules for all the classroom goals, objectives, activities, assessment tools, policies and exceptions. The syllabus should contain all the elements students will need to know at the very beginning of the class. How should a syllabus be? The choice of syllabus is very important and we need to be careful because there are several types of language teaching syllabus and these different types may be implemented in various teaching situations.

Two of them are commonly used. There are structural (formal) and functional (notional) syllabus. As a future teacher, I prefer to use functional syllabus in my lessons. Examples of functions involve; informing, agreeing, requesting, examples of notions involve size, age, color, time, comparison and so on. In my opinion, a syllabus should involve firstly listening and speaking, because while we are learning English, our basic aim is to use language to communicate with other people around us.

Grammar and vocabulary knowledge is important, too. But I am opposed to teach these skills by giving formal rules of them. Instead of this, I want to teach English by using it in classroom atmosphere. Pronunciation and vocabulary lessons should be given together because if we teach pronunciation of words after some time, students can't learn it correctly. If I want to give an example, we are in the university. When we hear the correct pronunciation of words, we can't correct them immediately.