

and output has also remained an untouched area in this regard.

The ideas behind the Natural Order Hypothesis are also criticized by some scholars. Widdowson (1990) believes that the existing empirical evidence shows that there is an accuracy order in the performance of the learners and not in their acquisition of the second language. He adds:

We may wish to assume that an accuracy order is the same as an inquisitional order, but such an assumption is not warranted by the evidence, it is based on the speculation that language learners will reveal what they know, that their performance will be a reflection of their competence. (p. 17)

Conclusion

Many do not agree with the natural approach. However, most will agree that the work of Terrell and Krashen have challenged us to evaluate what we are doing in the classroom and, most importantly, evaluate why we are doing it.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to create interactive, communicative activities and employ meaningful strategies to help the students acquire and apply the information they learn. Special consideration should also be given to learner variables. Learning how your students perceive the world around them will help to develop effective teaching strategies and meaningful activities (Mirhassani, 2003).

Therefore, teachers should try to use effective and useful techniques of this approach and combine them with other techniques in order to have better classes. Some of the useful strategies of this approach include: needs analysis, high interest and low anxiety of classroom procedures, meaningful materials, meaningful communication, etc.

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- A wide range of useful vocabulary for personal communication must be included.
- Any focus on grammatical structures should be resisted (Bowen et al, 1985 & Krashen and Terrell, 1983).

Discussion

The Natural Approach has some disadvantages. Among the disadvantages of this approach are:

- It is not based on a profound learning theory.
- It may not be easily applicable in advanced classes.
- It is difficult to apply in heterogeneous classes.
- Listening may be emphasized at the expense of speaking, neglecting hypothesis testing and other functions of learners' speech.
- The emphasis on communication can be justified in any instructional approach and not only this one.
- Krashen believes that language learning doesn't necessitate production which is not acceptable these days.
- It is not clear whether the crucial factor in this approach is: simplicity or comprehensibility.

A number of criticisms have also been presented on the theoretical and practical aspects of the Natural Approach.

As far as first hypothesis is concerned, it has been said that acquisition and learning are two distinct processes: one resulted from communication and the other from instruction. Widdowson (1990) states:

The sharp dualism that is proposed whereby acquisition and learning are two quite distinct processes, would seem to force the conclusion

that if you think carefully, choose your words, take your time before making your conversational contribution you cannot communicate, or at any rate not very effectively, because you are interfering with the natural function of the acquired system. And since acquisition depends on communication, your deliberate delivery will impede your progress in learning the language as well. (p. 21)

Another point to be mentioned is the appropriacy of Monitor Model. Even native speakers of a language constantly think about what they are going to say next. They model and modify the message they are communicating. In situations when there is an imbalance of power (social, economic, scientific ...) between the two participants, the less powerful party perpetually seeks structures which can compensate for his shortcomings. Morrison and Low (1983) mention that monitoring is a crucial feature of combinative interaction. However, to Krashen, it does not seem to play any positive part in communication whatsoever.

With regard to comprehensible input, the Natural Approach believes that comprehensible input is the initiator of learning/acquisition. On the other hand, it is believed that acquisition is triggered by communicative activity and not only through comprehensible input (Widdowson, 1990). Moreover, what is comprehensible to language learners is in itself controversial. The learners' interest, with its determining role, has been ignored here.

Another neglected area in the Natural Approach is the learners' *INTAKE*. What type and how much of the input is transformed to be the learners' *INTAKE*. The relationship between input, intake,

classroom situations. The basic tenets expressed by the Natural Approach are: comprehension prior to production, lower affective filter, and communicative goals.

Characteristics of Natural Approach

The characteristics of natural approach depend on the following factors:

A. Classroom Practice

- Errors are not directly corrected, except in written assignments.
- The method is believed to be good for beginners to become intermediates.
- The skills to be achieved are classified into:
 - (1) Basic personal communication skills: Oral (e.g., listening to public announcements) and written (e.g., reading and writing personal letters).
 - (2) Academic learning skills: Oral (e.g., listening to giving a lecture) and written (e.g., taking notes in class to writing a paper).
- The purpose of a language course will vary according to the needs of the students and their particular interests (Needs analysis) (Krashen, 1985).

B. Learners

- To minimize students' stress, they are not required to say anything before they feel ready.
- Learners are processors of comprehensible input who are to lose themselves in activities involving meaningful communication.
- Learners' role change according to their stage of linguistic development. Their roles are classified into three stages:
 - (1) The pre-production stage in which students

participate in the language activity without having to respond in the target language.

- (2) The early-production stage in which students produce language in a controlled limited manner.
- (3) The speech-emergent stage in which students involve themselves in free communication.

- Students should learn how to tolerate a certain amount of language flow that is not completely comprehensible, because they are simply believed to need to get the gist of what they hear (Terrell, 1982).

C. Teachers

- The teacher is the main source of comprehensible input in the target language.
- The teacher is responsible for creating an interesting and friendly atmosphere of low affective filter.
- The teacher should choose the best of what others have experimented with, and adapt those insights to his own situation.
- The teacher should choose and organize a rich mix of classroom activities, involving a variety of group size, content and context (Krashen and Terrell, 1983).

D. Materials

- Materials should be as meaningful as possible.
- Materials should promote comprehension and communication.
- The needs and interests of students should be considered in materials.
- Materials must supply the extralinguistic context in order to facilitate learning.
- Materials should create a low affective filter by building up an interesting, friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

structures or morphemes are acquired before others in a first language, and the same order can be found in foreign language learning. It does not mean that all learners learn language in the same order and at the same time. Errors are signs of naturalistic developmental processes and during learning similar developmental errors may occur in learners no matter what their mother tongue is.

According to Krashen (1985) individual differences might be due to:

- Learners' first language, frequency of some forms in the input and different learning strategies.
- Existence of several streams of development taking place at the same time.

D. The Input Hypothesis

"Human acquires [or learns] language in only one way-by understanding messages, or by receiving '*comprehensible input*' ... We move+ from i , our current level, to $i + 1$, the next level along the natural order, by understanding input containing $i + 1$ " (Krashen, 1985, p. 2).

This hypothesis simply states that learners learn language by understanding input that is a little beyond their current level of competence. Input refers to the language to which learners are exposed. As a result, listening and reading comprehension are of primary importance in language programs, and the ability to speak and write will emerge in time. Input Hypothesis involves four main issues.

First, it relates mainly to acquisition, and somehow to learning. Second, input which is slightly beyond the learners' current level of understanding will result in learning/acquisition. Third, the ability to speak fluently can not be taught directly; rather, it emerges independently in time, after the learner has built up linguistic

competence by understanding the input. Fourth, if there is proper amount and type of comprehensible input, learning/acquisition will automatically appear. Care taker speech, foreigner talk, and teacher talk are instances of comprehensible input. Therefore, if input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. Speaking is a result of learning/acquisition and not its cause. It emerges on its own as a result of being exposed to comprehensible input. Formal instruction in a foreign language is helpful only because it is a source of comprehensible input. According to the theory, acquisition is not affected by negative data or specific structural teaching. Thus, correction is not suggested. Large fresh doses of comprehensible input will do it (Krashen, 1985).

E. Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen (1985) theorizes that in unfavorable circumstances, individuals develop negative attitudes that result in an affective filter, or mental block, that prevents them from using the input to internalize the language. If the filter is down, the input reaches the LAD; if the filter is up, the input is blocked. Highly motivated learners who have positive self-concepts are more successful. Research in second language acquisition has identified three kinds of affective or attitudinal variables: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.

It is mentioned that learners with a low affective filter seek and receive more input, interact with confidence, and are more receptive to the input they receive.

The proponents of Natural Approach claim that it is one of the communicative approaches of second language learning. It is highly flexible with regard to teaching techniques, and effective in

elaborated the theoretical rationale for the Natural Approach. Their approach should first be viewed through its theoretical foundations.

Communication is the primary function of language. Therefore, the focus of teaching is believed to be on teaching communicative abilities. In Natural Approach, not much attention is paid to the theory of language. Krashen and Terrel emphasized the primacy of meaning. They believed that acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language. They also emphasized the significance of vocabulary both in the construction and interpretation of messages. Although lexical items are grammatically structured, they felt that grammatical structures do not require explicit analysis or attention (by the teacher, the student or the teaching materials). To them, language is a vehicle of communicating meanings and messages. In fact, language is considered to be a combination of items, structures, and messages.

In Natural Approach, there are some hypotheses which were put forward by Krashen. A short description of the hypotheses is as follows:

A. Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

According to Krashen (1985), there are two distinctive ways of developing competence in a second or foreign language. Acquiring a language is "picking it up", i.e., developing ability in a language by using it in natural situations. It is a sub-conscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring their L1. Acquisition results from meaningful communication.

Learning, by contrast, refers to a process in which conscious rules about a language are developed. It results in explicit knowledge about the forms of language, and appears as a consequence of instruction (Terrell 1977).

Moreover, learning does not turn into acquisition. There is no interface between the two processes, and adults acquire language using the same LAD that children utilize.

B. Monitor Hypothesis

Learning has only one function, and that is as a monitor or editor. Monitor Model Hypothesis was put forward on the basis of Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis in order to show the distinction between the two. It is believed that the acquired linguistic system helps the language users to initiate utterances in a second or foreign language. Conscious learning can function only as a monitor or editor that checks and repairs the output. In other word, learned knowledge is only used to correct the communication. The proponents of the Monitor Model believe that knowing the rule can not serve as a system to generate utterances in the language. It can serve only to screen beforehand what the speaker plans to say. Thus, learners utilize monitor to increase their competence and not their performance.

For a language learner to be able to monitor the language there must be three conditions: (1) sufficient amount of time, (2) focus on the form, and (3) knowledge of the rule. Monitor users are divided into three groups of over, optimal, and under users. Over-usage of monitoring system impedes communication. Optimal users activate the monitoring system only when they can. This monitoring system does not interfere with communication. Under users do not use this system in correcting their language use frequently (Brown, 2000).

C. Natural Order Hypothesis

This hypothesis claims that acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. Research supports the idea that certain

messages that can be understood. It is also based on a number of theories and hypotheses.

Of course, this approach has some advantages and disadvantages, which should be taken into account by language teachers. In fact it is the responsibility of the teachers to create interactive, communicative activities and employ meaningful strategies to help the students acquire and apply the information they learn. Special consideration should also be given to learner variables.

Key Words: *natural method, input, hypothesis, approach, affective filter, learner, materials.*

Introduction

An approach to language teaching that constantly recurs through the centuries is the attempt to achieve a language learning situation, which resembles as closely as possible the way the children learn their first language. The experience of little children seems to us so effortless, so enjoyable, and so successful in contrast to most classroom learning that the possibility of reproducing it with adolescents or adults acquire irresistible fascination (Mirhassani, 2003).

The history of naturalistic attitude towards language teaching can be classified into two different eras. The first refers to the 19th century "Natural Method", sometimes called "Direct Method", which rejected the use of books and taught learners to rely on their ears, thus "picking up" the language as an immigrant might do when acquiring the language informally in a new country. However, this method was strongly criticized for its highly demanding prerequisites, and also its dissatisfying results. Later, numerous studies were done to investigate the effect of formal language learning on the development of a second language. The outcome of such studies proved that instruction plays a significant role in language proficiency.

The second era occurred as a consequence of

rejecting Audio-Lingual method of foreign language teaching. Towards the end of 60s, an interest in naturalistic approaches to language teaching was intensified among scholars and methodologists. As mentioned by Richards and Rogers (1990), this was an attempt to develop a language teaching proposal that incorporated the naturalistic principles that researchers had identified in studies of second language acquisition. Language teachers of this period found themselves in a quandary. On the one hand, they were willing to state that the processes involved in learning L1 and FL were the same. On the other hand, obvious reasons, empirical research, as well as biological factors revealed that many differences existed between the processes involved in learning L1 and FL. In this regard, overwhelming arguments were provided to reject the exact equivalence of L1 and FL (Prator, 1969; Cook, 1969).

The Modern Natural Approach

The new Natural Approach was developed by Krashen and Terrel (1983). Terrel, a teacher of Spanish in California, was first inspired through a set of his own experiences in language teaching situations. He outlined a proposal for a new philosophy of teaching. Krashen, an applied linguist at the University of Southern California,

The Natural Approach

چکیده

«رویکرد طبیعی»، در سال ۱۹۷۷ توسط ترل و کرشن معرفی شد. این رویکرد تأثیر زیادی بر آموزش زبان در آمریکا و سرتاسر جهان گذاشت.

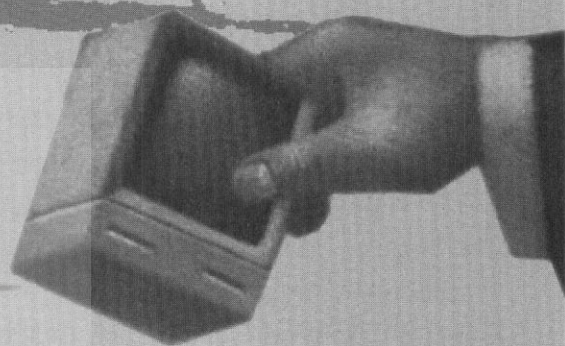
رویکرد طبیعی، تکنیک‌ها و تمرین‌هایی را معرفی می‌کند که از منابع مختلفی گرفته شده‌اند. تمرکز این رویکرد بر استفاده از تکنیک‌های متفاوت برای ایجاد توانایی صحبت کردن در زبان آموزان است و زبان را شامل مجموعه‌ای از پیغام‌های قابل فهم می‌داند که زبان آموزان باید آن‌ها را درک کنند. البته این رویکرد برخی نکات مثبت و منفی نیز دارد که مدرسان زبان باید به آن‌ها توجه داشته باشند. در واقع، این مسؤلیت مدرسان زبان است که تکنیک‌ها و تمرین‌های مفید و معنی‌دار را استخراج کنند تا از این طریق، به دانش آموزان در فرایند یادگیری زبان کمک نمایند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: روش طبیعی، درون‌داد، فرضیه، رویکرد، کنترل عاطفی، یادگیرنده، مطالب.

Abstract

The Natural Approach was developed by Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen, starting in 1977. It came to have a wide influence in language teaching in the United States and around the world.

The Natural Approach adopts techniques and activities from different sources but uses them to provide comprehensible input. The Communicative view of language is the view behind this Approach. Particular emphasis is laid on language as a set of



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