

ESOL

in Higher Ed

PREPARING THE WAY

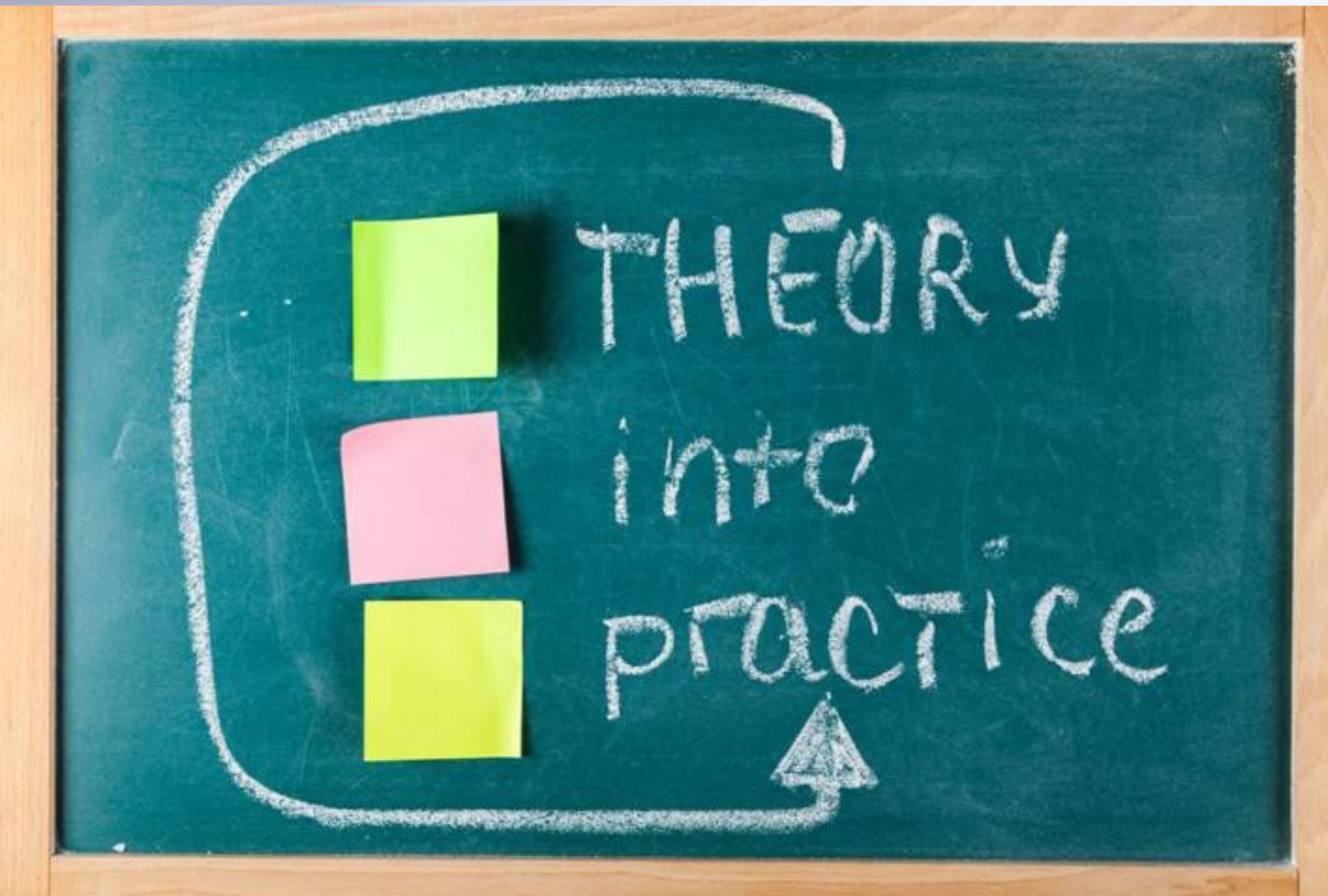
Teaching English Learners in
the P - 12 Classroom



5th
Edition

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Applying Theories of Second Language Learning

How do people learn languages?

Is there a difference between children and adults?



B.F. Skinner suggested that children learn language through listening to their caretakers' speech, repeating what they hear, and receiving positive reinforcement in order to continue speaking.



Charles Fries looked at second language learning as a matter of listening and repeating to form foreign language habits.

Fries and **Robert Lado** proposed comparing first and second languages by concentrating on their differences and selecting practice drills based on their findings.

The process of comparing languages is called **contrastive analysis**. Here, second language learning is dependent upon transfer from the first language.



Noam Chomsky pointed out that children do not just repeat what they hear but create novel utterances. **A child assimilates language by listening to it, accommodates what is heard in the LAD, and restructures it to formulate unique communication.**

Jean Piaget saw development as an internal process of *assimilation, accommodation, and restructuring*. He largely **ignored the role of the parent, teacher, or context** in the development that occurred through encounters between the child and his/her material surroundings.



In the 1980s, **Stephen Krashen** developed a theory that argued that learning a second language (L2) is a cumulative process involving the incorporation of new grammatical forms into a developing system. He developed a comprehensive theory of second language learning comprised of **five hypotheses**.

See Chapter 5 for a review of the 5 Hypotheses:

Acquisition/Learning

Natural Order

Input

Monitor

Affective Filter



Interactionists, such as Doughty and Long (2003), took a step beyond Krashen, as they agreed that meaningful, comprehensible input is necessary, but acquisition occurs during interaction. Their view entailed a “*between-heads*” approach. When learners interact with others, they negotiate meaning, and in the process of clarifying, simplifying, repeating, and using modifications in interactions, new forms are learned.





Vygotsky's studies of child learning acknowledged the **sociocultural milieu** of the learners.

For Vygotsky, learning was not only **an internal process**, but was also happening in the **interaction** of the child with others and with the environment.

In other words, from the earliest stages of development, children are enculturated through **mediation of language**, and **interaction within a culture** contributes to shaping higher mental processes.

	Piaget (1896–1980)	Vygotsky (1896–1934)
Learning:	Innate ability: child goes through a set of stages of cognitive development	Both internal and external: learning happens through interaction with others and the environment
Characteristics:	“In-the-mind” phenomenon; solo mind evolves (maturation)	Collaborative/social phenomenon scaffolded by adults and peers
Key concepts:	Assimilation, Accommodation, Restructuring	Mediation, Internalization, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Behaviorism	Innatism	SCT
<p>Charles Fries (1887–1967) was an American linguist who taught at the University of Michigan.</p> <p>With his wife, Agnes Carswell, he developed the university's EnglishLanguage Institute (1941), which pioneered methods and materialsfor teaching English to foreigners.</p> <p>Robert Lado (1915–1995) was one of Fries' students. He was a professor of English and Director of the language institutesat the University of Michigan and Georgetown University. He was one of the co-founders of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), a professional association with a mission of teaching English to speakers of other languages.</p>	<p>Stephen Krashen (1941–)is professor emeritus at the University of California. In the late1970s, he began promoting the “natural approach” to language teaching, which he detailed in a landmark text co-written with Tracy Terrell. His five hypothesesabout language learning have greatly influenced L2 learning theory ever since. He supports bilingual education.</p> <p>Michael Long (1945–) is professor of Second Language Acquisition and Director of the Schoolof Languages, Literatures,and Cultures at the University of Maryland. In his research, he documented the importance of interaction between learners and native speakers and among learners themselves.</p>	<p>James Lantolf (1947–), a pioneer in applying Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to second language acquisition, received his doctorate from Pennsylvania StateUniversity where he is currently professor of Spanish and Linguistics and Director of the Center for Language Acquisition. Lantolf has conducted extensive research on second language learning from the sociocultural perspective, and is also its major theoretician.</p>

Language is best learned in realistic communicative context in which ELs are invested in doing something that interests them and challenged to overcome language difficulties.



While there is an historical sequence to the emergence of theories, **no single theory accounts for all the aspects of learning a second language.**



Find a comic strip that makes use of a pun.

Explain the meaning to a classmate.

What might make the pun difficult for an EL?



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