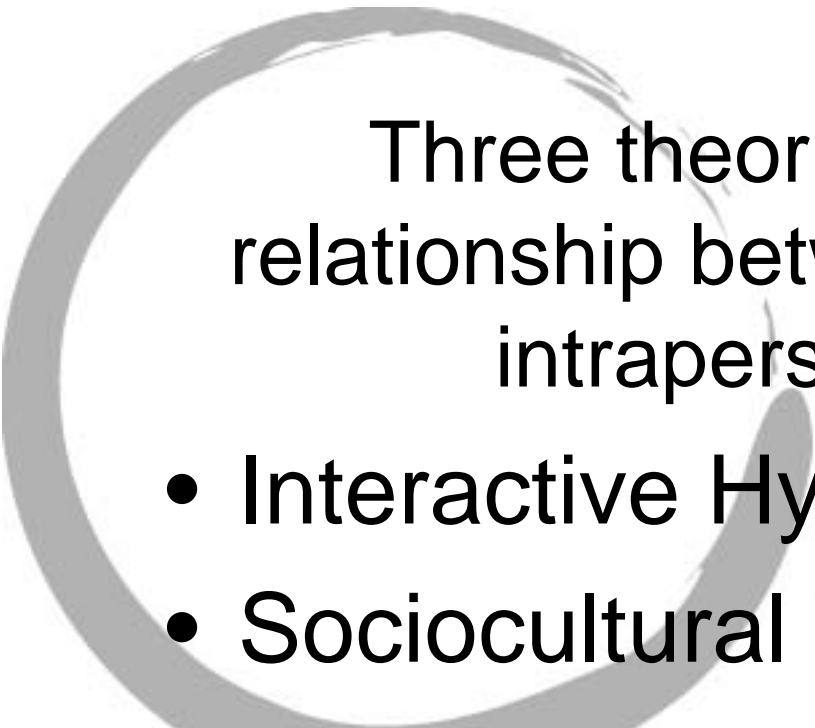





Theoretical Perspectives: Interaction and Language Learning

Rod Ellis





Three theories that address the relationship between interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction.

- Interactive Hypothesis
 - Sociocultural Theory
 - Depth of Processing Theory
- 

Interaction Hypothesis

- Repair communication breakdowns
- Learn L2 through the process of interacting
- Negotiation of meaning - conversational exchanges to prevent breakdowns
- Interactional modifications - changes to the structure of a conversation, instead of...
- Input modifications - foreigner talk, changes to the formal properties of utterances

IH: Conversational Exchanges - Negotiating communication problems

facilitates L2 learning

- Communication problems - stage 1 - trigger; stage 2 - resolution
- Resolution: indicator, response, optional reaction
- Modified input - adjusted to facilitate comprehension
- IH addresses incidental acquisition not intentional acquisition
- Uninterrupted communication or understanding also contributes to acquisition.

Krashen's IH

- Access to comprehensible input when affective filter is low.
- Three ways input is made comprehensible: interaction, simplified input, using context to help decode messages.
- Interaction viewed as optional but not necessary.

Research in IH: 3 Steps (Long)

1. Researchers need to show that conversational adjustments promote comprehension of input.
 2.that comprehensible input promotes acquisition.
 3.that they can deduce (from data) that conversational adjustments assists acquisition.
- It's necessary to distinguish between input processing for comprehension and input processing for language learning.

Challenges to Early Version of IH

- Input processing for comprehension does not necessarily lead to L2 learning (it *facilitates* L2 learning).
- Pre-modified input can serve as effectively as interactionally modified input (Krashen).
- Research unclear on whether interactionally modified input is better than pre-modified input in supporting acquisition.
- Learners can fake comprehension.
- Quality better than quantity in negotiations.

Later Version of IH

- Sought to account for how interactionally modified input contributes to acquisition.
- Learners are aware of linguistic forms in the input (interpersonal process).
- These linguistic forms are within “processing capacity” of learner (intrapersonal process).
- Learners need time and opportunity to attend to form while processing the meaning of the message.

Interaction Contributions

- Negative evidence - Recasting, or re-phrasing a learner's incorrect utterance.
- Permanent re-structuring, or incorporating correct forms may only take place after an incubation period.
- The learner must possess sufficient proficiency and be able to attend to the linguistic form in order to process the recast effectively (emphasis on individual differences).

Sociocultural Theory of SLA

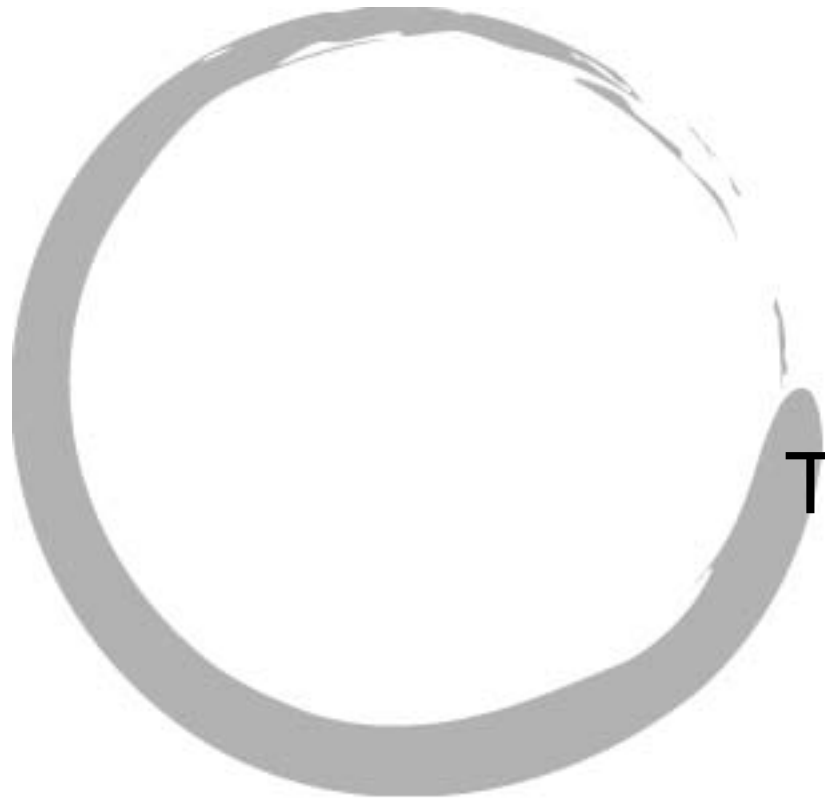
- L2 acquisition is a social phenomenon.
- Key construct - mediation - when mental functions evolve into higher order functions through social interaction.
- By identifying, learning, using culturally defined tools learners develop higher order functions. Ex. Talk - used as communication tool.

Social Cultural Theory in SLA

- Mediation leads to transformation that results in consciousness, or awareness of cognitive abilities and self-regulatory mechanisms of problem-solving.
- Mediation in the form of social interaction enables learners to transform skills in their ZPD: zone of proximal development.
- Interpersonal interaction example is scaffolding, the means by which a person assists another, lending the social, cognitive, and affective support.

Basic Differences: IH & SC

- IH focused only on social interactions; SC views interaction as both social and private.
- IH is narrowly focused on one type of interaction - negotiation of meaning; SC is concerned with interaction in general.
- IH focused on assisting learner according to data-driven needs; SC is focused on shaping & constructing learning through interaction as a social practice.



THE END

