PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

02

General Theories of Foreign Language Learning and Acquisition. The Concept of Interlanguage. The Treatment of Error

Teorías generales sobre el aprendizaje y la adquisición de una lengua extranjera. El concepto de interlengua. El tratamiento del error.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

Índice

1. INTRODUCTION

2. GENERAL THEORIES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ACQUISITION

- 2.1. Learning and acquisition
- 2.2. Behaviourism and contrastive analysis
- 2.3. Innatism and Krashen's Monitor Model
- 2.4. Cognitive and interactionist approaches
- 2.5. The sociocultural perspective
- 2.6. Communicative competence

3. FROM CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS TO INTERLANGUAGE

4. THE CONCEPT OF INTERLANGUAGE

- 4.1. Definition and characteristics
- 4.2. The five central processes
- 4.3. Fossilisation

5. THE TREATMENT OF ERROR

- 5.1. Errors and mistakes
- 5.2. Error analysis
- 5.3. Classification and sources of errors
- 5.4. Corrective feedback

6. PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS

7. CONCLUSION

Fuentes

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1967 the British applied linguist Stephen Pit Corder wrote that a learner's errors show "how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn". The sentence changed the way teachers look at a mistake. What had been a sin to be punished became a window onto the mind of the learner, and that idea sits at the heart of this topic: a foreign language is not simply poured into the student, it is built by the student, and the errors along the way are the visible traces of that construction.

This topic has three parts, and I will deal with them in order. First, I will examine the general theories of foreign language learning and acquisition: the distinction between the two terms, behaviourism, innatism and Krashen's Monitor Model, the cognitive and interactionist approaches, the sociocultural perspective and the notion of communicative competence. Secondly, I will study the concept of interlanguage, from its precedents to Selinker's proposal, its processes and fossilisation. Thirdly, I will analyse the treatment of error: the difference between errors and mistakes, error analysis, the classification of errors and the techniques of corrective feedback. Finally, I will consider the pedagogical and didactic implications for Secondary Education and Bachillerato, and I will close with a conclusion that returns to Corder's idea.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted. I have used Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada's How Languages are Learned, fifth edition, published by Oxford University Press in 2021; Rosamond Mitchell, Florence Myles and Emma Marsden's Second Language Learning Theories, fourth edition, published by Routledge in 2019; Rod Ellis's The Study of Second Language Acquisition, second edition, published by Oxford University Press in 2008; and Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers's Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, third edition, published by Cambridge University Press in 2014. I have also consulted the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of 2001 and its Companion Volume of 2020, and, for the curricular framework, the LOMLOE, Organic Law 3/2020 of 29 December, and the royal decrees and Extremaduran decrees that I will cite in section 6.