



SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION



SCHOOLS OF
THOUGHT



Structuralism/
Behaviourism



Structural or descriptive school of linguistics



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Scientific principle of observation of human languages



Subject to investigation: only publicly observable responses



Language could be dismantled into small pieces or units and these units could be described scientifically, contrasted, and added up again to form the whole.



Rationalism &
Cognitive



Generative transformational school of linguistics: Noam Chomsky.



Human language cannot be scrutinized simply in terms of observable stimuli and responses or the volumes of raw data gathered by field linguists.



Interested not only in describing language but also in arriving at an explanatory level of adequacy in the study of language.



Important distinction between the observable aspects of language and the hidden levels of meaning and thought that give birth or generate observable linguistic performance.



Cognitive psychologists sought to discover underlying motivations and deeper structure of human behavior by using a rational approach (empirical study)



Constructivism



Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. They differ in the extent to which each emphasizes social context.



Piaget stressed the importance of individual cognitive development as a relatively solitary act. Biological timetables and stages of development; social interaction was claimed only to trigger development at the right moment in time



Vygotsky: social interaction was foundational in cognitive development and rejected the notion of predetermined stages.