



"Repercussions of Psychological Factors in Language Learning"

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ABSTRACT

Language plays a vital role in communicating thoughts, opinions, expressions, emotions and information in any environment especially between humans. Communication between humans and non-humans differ significantly. Lot of research has been executed to determine the repercussions of psychological factors such as fear of mistake, feeling of shyness, less self motivation along with their cognitive levels in language learning and the research reveals that cognitive psychology occupies a center stage in language learning. Hence an attempt is made to investigate the psychological factors and their influence in language learning in the classroom environment.

INTRODUCTION

In the learning of foreign languages, different approaches and schools of linguistics have been established. These approaches to learning a second or foreign language play a key role in enhancing the communication skills of the learner in acquiring expertise in non-native languages. Some of these approaches are Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Comparative linguistics, Contrastive linguistics, Psycholinguistics etc., Psycholinguistics deals with the study of how individuals comprehend, produce, and acquire language. Thomas Scovel in his book on *Psycholinguistics* defined psycholinguistics as:

use of language and speech as a window to the nature and structure of the human mind is called Psycholinguistics(4).

The study of psycholinguistics is a branch cognitive science. Psycholinguistics stresses the knowledge of language and the cognitive processes involved in ordinary language use. Psycholinguists are also interested in the social rules involved in

language use and the brain mechanisms associated with language. Psychology is the science of behaviour and mind and includes the study of conscious and unconscious phenomena as well as feeling and thought. Cognitive psychology studies the mental processes underlying mental activity. Perception, attention, reasoning, thinking, memorizing, learning, and emotion are the major areas of research.

Psychology and Language Learning

Psychology of language learning is the study of interrelation between the linguistic factors and psychological aspects. John Field explains that:

language user as an individual rather than a representative
of a society-but an individual whose linguistic performance is determined by
the strengths and imitation of the mental apparatus which we all share
(Psycholinguistics: A Resource book for Students, 2).

Two major subfields of psycholinguistics investigate first language acquisition as the process by which infants acquire language. In addition, it is much more difficult for adults to acquire second languages than it is for infants to learn their first language. So, sensitive periods may exist during which language can be learnt readily. A great deal of research in psycholinguistics focuses on how this ability develops and diminishes over time. It also seems to be the case that the more languages one knows, the easier it is to learn more.

Psychological Factors and their impact on Language Learning

Communication is important for humans in their lives and language is required as a medium to communicate with others for their well-being or survival. For communication, humans use a particular language in day-to-day life and an effective communication is based on psychological factors and their grooming up right from their childhood apart from the environmental factors. Communication creates both positive and negative impact on the psychological well-being of humans. In the learning ambience, the learner listens to the concept and tries to apply it in practical situations and it happens by thinking.

Learning techniques are in general applicable to learn not only a language but also to learn other aspects and the same techniques can be applied to learn any language effectively.

According to Kachru and Smith:

“In the era of globalization and rapid diffusion of knowledge, all the nations are aware of the need to prepare their citizens to perform in ways that would ensure their prosperity and eminence in the world. In order to be competitive, they have to be able to function well in multinational industrial enterprises, international trade, diplomacy, and scientific technological areas of expertise. They have to be innovative and contribute to the knowledge-based on the world. In order to achieve these goals, they need to be able to utilize the most widely used medium, English”.
(Psychological Factor Affecting English Speaking Performance for the English Learners in Indonesia, 159).

Many psychological factors play a key role and determines the students' academic performance and improvements in schools and higher educational institutions in learning English as a foreign language. Research studies show that various psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes, feeling of shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, lack of motivation, personal interest, self-concept, attitude,

understanding, thinking, focus of control, creativity are influencing the language learning significantly apart from social, economic and environmental factors.

Fear of Making Mistakes: Diffidence among the learners is the most common factor. This tendency increases if a learner is compelled to perform an activity as fellow learners make comments or laugh and further learner become nervous. During the learning process, a learner has to undergo a rigorous cycle of learning process, commits mistakes in general and this situation in a group makes them to demotivated and the learner does not try or attempt to focus on the learning. At this point, the teacher should motivate the learners to perform/learn and create a congenial atmosphere to overcome fear of mistake.

Feeling of Shyness-Shyness is merely connected to emotions of a person and every person undergoes certain stage of emotions every day. Shyness pulls back the person to initiate any activity and is the source of problem among learners to learn, practice and use the concept. Shyness can be found among learners by their nature and personality type and further due to certain phobias. Learners feel shy because they think that they do not know the concept and it makes them to lose the confidence and cannot present/speak or even they will not try to perform as it is their perception in gauging their ability. Teacher should create open and friendly environment and let the learners commit the mistakes and all such mistakes should be corrected in open classroom and motivate the learners to get rid of shyness.

Anxiety- Anxiety is a feeling of nervousness, curiosity and nervousness associated with learning activity and research shows that it influences the learning activity. Anxiety creates the situation for the learner to become apprehensive. The teacher should understand the situation and feeling of learners in the classroom and instill in the students motivation and confidence. Moreover, the teacher should know the strengths and weaknesses of the learners and present the concept in such a way that the learners become interested to quickly learn and adopt his/her own strategy of learning.

Lack of Self Confidence- Lack of confidence usually occurs when there is a communication gap in class room conversation, deviations in their attention levels, understanding levels and prerequisite knowledge about the concepts. Teacher should adopt certain pedagogical approaches to motivate the learners in learning effectively and make them to practice. In particular, language learning can be effective when the learners get the maximum exposure to language. This can be attained through practice session, make learners to present on any topic before the audience in a proctored approach.

Lack of Motivation- Motivation is the important consideration in language learning process and it is known as inner energy of a person. Learner gets motivated to speak/present/oral presentation when he/she is prepared thoroughly. Some situations like monotonous teaching, uninspired teaching, lack of relevant materials, non-familiarity of objectives and goals of programme, boredom pushes the learner to get demotivated. Teachers should be able to inspire the learners about the concepts and uses by implementing some teaching aids to motivate the learners and encourage the

learners continuously to improve their performance.

Creativity- Creativity in the study of psycholinguistics witnessed lot of research and investigation is carried out to tap the full potential of the learners. As of now, creativity is known as the tendency to generate an idea, plan and organize, analyze the situation, search for better possible alternatives to communicate, solve problems, entertain self and others. Creativity of a person can prosper in a free and motivating environment without any constraints. Learners may have certain creativity in learning language and they do grasp the things fast and becomes better day by day and excel in every situation. At the same time, creativity among people leads to one particular area to achieve/invent/do things differently and become expert in chosen area of interest.

Attitude-Attitude of learner which covers all the personality traits, intelligence, self-knowledge, motivation and locus of control of a person and it is the major attribute to identify a person's behaviour. Attitude comprises of two components-positive attitude and negative attitude. Persons with positive attitude will have strong positive beliefs and good behaviour and values their outcomes and attributes positively. In contrary, persons with negative attitude will be with strong negative beliefs and behaviour and values negatively. Attitude represents learners' inclination and interest towards learning a language. Positive attitude persons are self-motivated, self-driven and pay interest to learn anything. Moreover, many socio-economic and environment factors contribute to define or decide the attitude of a person.

Conclusion

Language learning is based on the cognitive levels of the human being and affected from the factors of socio-economic, environment and psychological. Further, learner should have a positive attitude in learning the language and at the same time, teacher should create a friendly and open environment to motivate the learners to learn positively. Learners should be encouraged by the teachers to be passionate in learning a language like English and make them come out of superfluous inhibitions and premeditated thoughts about learning a foreign language.

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