



Factors affecting language learning

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Abstract

There are quite a number of factors responsible for effective language learning process not to mention the role of the teacher in affecting the learning operation. Certainly, there are many reasons for learning English language particularly. English language is widely held to be a lingua franca essential for communication in today's world. David Crystal in his excellent book "English as a Global Language" that being global as you hear it in TV and used by politicians from across the globe. Wherever you travel you see English signs and advertisements. A language becomes global when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country. In our digital world good knowledge of English has become essential to cope with the new technologies that are increasingly developing.

Keywords: learning operation, factors, reasons, global language, lingua franca

1. Introduction

Certainly it is a bit difficult to write an article encompassing all the factors which are responsible for good language learning. However, to facilitate the handling of the issue, we will examine the theme in question through two major components, namely internal and external factors for language learning. Internal factors are generally viewed as the factors or the elements that do exist inside of us and which we bring to the learning situation. On the other hand, external factors are those factors that affect our learning such as the culture of the target language and its environment.

Only recently a tremendous change has occurred in the field of English language teaching and learning. This momentous transfer is much apparent in the shift of emphasis from the teacher-centered learning to the learner and learning environment. At the present time, indeed, it has become an essential duty of the teachers to make their students less dependent on them and more self-directed (Ó Malley and Chamot, 1995). In fact, learner autonomy corresponds to contemporary ideas about the active association and interest of learners, importance of learner-centered approaches, as well as sovereignty of learners from teachers (Littlewood, 1996). Moreover, one of the main and important factors in an autonomous approach in language learning and teaching is the learner's active cognitive processes which are called learning strategies (LSs) (Littlewood, 1999).

In view of what has just been discussed, the objective behind compiling this article is to explore the factors or the relationship between the adopted learning strategies and the success of language learners. Learning strategies are reported to be potentially useful in affecting and amplifying the chance for learning were they to be fully applied and manipulated.

Consequently, teachers are required to be well-informed and acquainted enough with the tools of leaning and are able to direct or conduct their teaching towards the varying requirements of different classroom learners. This short article

seeks to to discover and inspect what it takes to have (establish and manage) an efficient and successful language classroom in terms of learners' motivation. Again, the study intends to look into the impact of motivation in the context of language learning.

2. Language learning strategies

Common knowledge tells us that to learn a skill, we should practice it over and over again. While repetition is vital, research says we will actually learn that skill more effectively if we mix our practice of it with other skills. This is known as interleaving. When information is presented to us, it is often accompanied by some kind of visual: An image, a chart or graph, or a graphic organizer. When students are studying, they should make it a habit to pay attention to those visuals and link them to the text by explaining what they mean in their own words. Then, students can create their own visuals of the concepts they are learning. This process reinforces the concepts in the brain through two different paths, making it easier to retrieve later.

In class, regularly turn students' attention to the visuals used in textbooks, on websites, and even in your own slideshow presentations. Have students describe the visuals to each other and make connections with what you're learning. Then have students create their own visuals of the content to further reinforce it. Remind students to include diagramming, sketching, and creating graphic organizers when they study at home.

3. Cognitive learning theories

Current cognitive theories of learning point to the important role students' thought processes play in learning. Students need to be mentally active processors of information if learning is to occur. In these formulations, several criteria must be met if learning is to occur. First, students must attend to information to be learned. Second, students must create an

understanding of the material by creating or identifying relationships amongst the to-be-learned ideas. Third, students need to relate new ideas to prior knowledge. Fourth, students need to understand that learning requires mental effort - good learners are strategic and poor learners are not, and that strategy use is the means by which learning occurs.

When students attend to information, try to see how new ideas relate to each other, or try to relate new information to prior knowledge they are engaged in strategy use. A strategy is a mental event carried out by the learner to achieve some desired goal (such as remembering some fact). For example, if the teacher announces there will be a test next Thursday, the student may repeat that fact over and over (rehearsal) until the student is confident he/she remembers it.

While much research has been conducted on problem-solving and learning strategies, many of those strategies are domain-specific and not generalizable across the curriculum. For example, considerable research has been devoted to remedial reading strategies (such as backtracking, vocabulary recognition, Inferencing) and mathematics problem-solving. However, the discussion in this paper will be focused upon a set of generalizable strategies that meet two criteria: they are well researched and have been demonstrated to enhance memory and they are generalizable across content domains and can be used in almost all areas of study. In most cases, these strategies have been demonstrated to enhance performance of students requiring remedial assistance (such as low ability or LID students) and have been used with students across a wide age range, from as young as eight years (grade three) to university undergraduates.

The remainder of this paper will be divided into two sections. The first section will describe each strategy (including imagery, elaborative interrogation, acronyms, keyword method, summarizing and concept mapping) by explaining what the strategy is for, why it is thought to enhance memory, the steps in executing the strategy, and an example of the strategy. The second section of the paper will describe how strategies can be incorporated into regular classroom activities.

4. Individual differences

It should be mentioned that in a language learning classroom there are varieties of learners in terms of the individual differences. Concerning this matter, Skehan (1989) tells apart some techniques and manners that good students exploit and bring into play. He goes over the main points of them as below:

1. Initially, good learners are engaged and drawn in their works, duties, and missions.
2. Good learners promote and expand the knowledge of language as structure and arrangement and make implications and conclusions.
3. Good students identify and see language as a way to make assumptions and communicate with other people.
4. Good students look safer and more comfortable about the knowledge that they are acquainted with as well as their outlook and thoughts towards a foreign language.

As a final point, they all the time evaluate and assess the scheme of the foreign language they are learning while

definite expressions appear into mind and the link and correlation between them. Nunan (1989) judges that in a classroom there are four varieties of learners: Concrete learners, Analytical learners, Communicative learners, and Authoritative-oriented learners. He believes that the Concrete learners are interested in games, pictures, films, video, tapes, talking in pairs. In addition, they like to carry out and perform English outside the class. The second type is Analytical learners. This type of learners, generally, likes to study. In other words, they like to study grammar, English books and also they like reading newspapers. Indeed, the way that they prefer to study is studying unaccompanied. Besides, they have a preference to discover their individual errors and mistakes and practice problems located and mentioned by the teacher. The Third type is Communicative learners. These types of students like to be taught and are eager to gain knowledge by observing and listening to native speakers of language. They are eager to talk to their friends in English and watch television in English. Normally and in general, they like to communicate with English in the places out of classroom. Indeed, they learn new words through listening, discussion and exchange. The fourth or the final type is Authoritative-oriented learners. These type of learners wish that the teacher make everything clear and explains about any detail. Additionally, they would like to have their personal textbooks, to write everything in notebook, to study grammar, learn by reading. Meanwhile, they prefer to learn new words by reading them. There are also two other kinds of learners as introverted and extroverted learners. Regarding this classification, Skehan (ibid) believes that extroverted students have a tendency to utilize and exploit more English outside the classroom and, therefore, progress and move ahead faster in their language learning. They like to communicate with other people. There are also some other types of learners as anxious language learners. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1992) believe that anxiety is one of the language learning elements. That is, if the language learner is a little anxious, he will learn better. Nevertheless, if the anxiety is a lot, it will obstruct and prevent learning procedure and progression.

5. Enhancing memory comprehension

Representational Imagery. One of the most common and useful methods of remembering information is to use mental imagery. It can be used for remembering facts (e.g., During winter, the snowshoe hare turns white in winter) and with extended prose (Such as a description of a mechanical device, a geographical location, or a scene in a novel). Developmentally, while older students seem to benefit from imagery, it has been shown that students as young as eight (grade three) can benefit from generating their own imagery. However, providing the illustration for younger children (K-2) will aid memory, as will the use of motor activity (play). Currently, I am investigating the possibility of teaching young primary students to generate their own images to enhance memory for sentences.

Imagery is thought to enhance memory for two reasons. The first explanation cites Paivio's dual coding theory. In dual coding theory, memory consists of two separate memory systems. One system is a verbal system used for representing and thinking with language. The second system is a non-

verbal system for representing and thinking with non-verbal information like images. When information is received (such as reading or hearing words) either or both systems may be activated. A word or sentence becomes stored in either a verbal or non-verbal representation, or both. If the information is encoded in both verbal and non-verbal form, the likelihood of memory for that information increases. By generating images of verbal information, including illustrations with text (pictures or mental images), or by elaborating upon illustrations with explanations, the likelihood is increased that both systems are activated, that information is encoded in verbal and non-verbal form, and that memory is enhanced.

In addition to dual coding theory, a second explanation for the effectiveness of imagery cites Wittrock's generative theory. In making a mental image of some information, the student must identify important ideas and relate those ideas. That is, the image contains both the concepts to be learned and the relationships between those concepts.

There are two steps in using mental imagery:

1. Read the information to be remembered.
2. Make a picture of that information in your head

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