

Factors Affecting Language Learning

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Questions

- How do differences among learners affect learning processes and teaching procedure?

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Background Knowledge

- All second language learners, regardless of age, have by definition already acquired at least one language. This prior knowledge may be an advantage in the sense that the learner has an idea of how languages work.
- On the other hand, knowledge of other languages can also lead learners to make incorrect guesses about how the second language works and this may cause errors.
- The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)
- Can you give some example?

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Personality

- Personality characteristics: self-esteem, dominance, talkativeness, responsiveness etc.
- Extroverted person is more well-suited to language learning than introverted person because he/she loves to take risk in producing language.
- It is found that it affects only the communicative competence.

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Aptitude

- “Aj. George has a flair for languages” = Some people do indeed have an aptitude for language learning.
- A multi-componential view of aptitude is composed of four components: auditory ability, grammatical sensitivity, inductive language learning ability and memory. (MLAT=Modern Language Aptitude Test)

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Intelligence

- IQ
- Intelligence may be more strongly related to reading, grammar and vocabulary (receptive skills) rather than listening comprehension or free oral productive skills.

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Learning styles and Learning strategies

- Cognitive style (learning style)
A global learner vs a analytic learner
= a characteristic and preferred way of approaching learning and processing information
Culture, family, educational experience had strong influence on learning styles.

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Learning strategies

- Techniques used by learners to deal with input, assimilate new language, store, retrieve, and practice using it.
- Different learning style may prefer different types of learning strategies.
Ex. vocabulary: pre-fix analysis and context clue.

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Affective Factors

- Motivation
- Confidence
- Goal setting
- Attitude to L2 and L2 culture
- Previous learning experience
- Relationship between teacher and peer
- Anxiety

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Motivation

Motivation is the desire to learn a language.

- Integrative motivation: communication potential and be accepted in public
- Instrumental motivation: to get a better job, get a good grade
- Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation
- How can teachers motivate our students?
Success (rewards) & Failure (penalties)

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Age

- Do children learn language faster?
- Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is the idea that there is a specific time period in which language learning best occurs.
- It is believed that after the onset of puberty the critical period has passed, it becomes impossible to learn language to a high degree of proficiency.

Do you believe in CPH?

- People of any age can be accomplished language learners, particularly self-motivated adult. In fact, learning style and learning strategies have a powerful impact on learning success.

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Summary

What are the implications for classroom teaching?

A sensitive teacher should take learner's individual personalities and learning styles into account, create a learning environment in which virtually all learners can be successful in learning a second language.

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