

Impact of Socio-psychological factors in English Language Acquisition at Post-secondary Education

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The purpose of this work is to describe socio-psychological variables in English language acquisition. Stephens discovered that external variables such as instructor characteristics, class size, and college environment have no consistent relationship with the effectiveness of learning an English language. On the other hand, as one of the internal elements, student psychological states have the ability to impact English language learning. A psychological element is one that is concerned with the mental or spiritual components of students' language acquisition. At least four of numerous elements, including anxiety, attitude, aptitude, and motivation, impact students' language learning processes. Kando, D., on the other hand, recommends five ways for dealing with language anxiety, including preparatory plan, relaxation, positive thinking, peer, and labelled resignation, to deal with the socio-psychological issues of learning a English language. As a consequence, the five tactics presented by Kando are crucial as an alternate approach for optimising the results of English language acquisition.

Keywords: English Language Acquisition, Psychological Factors, Post-secondary education.

INTRODUCTION:

Language acquisition happens eventually in the learner's mind, where mental structures or processes process and arrange the language to which the learner is exposed. Looking at the phenomenon of teaching and learning in India, the difficulty that students usually confront is not only a language problem, but it is also concerned with non-linguistic concerns. Furthermore, numerous variables impact the success of learning, particularly learning English as a foreign language. According to Slameto (1987), such components may be divided into two categories: internal and external forces. Internal factors generally encompass the learners' internal features such as physics, psychology, and anxiety, but external factors may cover any component outside of the learners' point of view, such as surroundings, school, family, and so on.

Some recent research in English language acquisition points out the value of exposure to linguistic input in enhancing language acquisition. Because the learners are in the early phases, instructors are expected to utilise the target language and offer as much input as feasible. In reality, however, instructors have difficulties when attempting to employ the target language in the classroom process, especially when teaching novices with little language skills. The conundrum is that, on the one side, instructors are expected to utilise the target language, while learners still have insufficient language ability. As a result, instructors must change their language in order to be suitable for the level of skill of the student. What features does a teacher's language have when they are in such a quandary? The existence of the current research is due to the presence of that question.

Stephens discovered that extrinsic variables including as teacher characteristics, class size, and school environment have a consistent negative correlation with the effectiveness of foreign language acquisition. On the other hand, as an internal component, students' psychological state have the capacity to impact foreign or second language learning. According to Saha (1983), the most significant aspect influencing the study's outcome is the students' own characteristics. Samimy and Tabuse (1992) concur that emotional factors such as attitude and motivation influence students' language performance in class significantly. Oxford (in Shumim; 1997) adds that the learner's emotive side is

likely one of the most significant determinants of language acquisition success or failure. Anxiety, attitude, aptitude, and motivation are the primary emotional elements associated with second language or foreign language acquisition. The purpose of this study is to explain how psychological issues such as anxiety, attitude, aptitude, and motivation affect students' ability to learn English as a foreign language.

Psychological Factors Affecting Students in English language Acquisition

A psychological element is one that is concerned with the mental or spiritual components of pupils' acquisition. It includes at least four of several components, including anxiety, attitude, aptitude, and motivation, as shown by certain study results.

Anxiety :Language anxiety is characterised as a situation-specific personality characteristic comprised of two psychological components: emotional reactivity and self-defeating cognition. He also said that these components apparently interfere with language-learning behaviour and are more acute in persons who are predisposed to have high levels of language anxiety. According to David (1994), second or foreign language acquisition is a complicated endeavour that is prone to human anxiety, which is characterised by emotions of unease, dissatisfaction, self-doubt, and fear. Additionally, Shumin (1997) discovered that anxiousness impeded her pupils' ability to communicate in English in China. This occurred most often while they were speaking the target language in public, particularly in front of native speakers. Occasionally, considerable anxiety happens when English Foreign Language (EFL) students get tongue-tied or unable to find the appropriate words in predicted situations, which often results in despair and an overall sense of failure. Adults, unlike children, are concerned about how they are seen by others, according to Brown (1994). They are very careful about making mistakes in their statements, since making errors would constitute a public exhibition of ignorance, which would imply "losing face" in some cultures, such as those found in Indonesia, China, and other oriental nations. Adult learners' sensitivity to making errors has undoubtedly contributed to their incapacity to speak English without hesitation.

Certain personality traits influence how pupils respond to our vocal instructions and commands. For example, pupils with high anxiety levels (uptight individuals) do not react as effectively as those with lower anxiety levels to motivating instructions such as "it is critical that you perform well," and "this will count twice toward your grade," etc. The majority of people react favourably to praise rather than to punishment and condemnation. As a result, refrain from stating "why can't you learn this?" It's so straightforward. My other classes had no difficulty with it at all. Tomorrow, whether you know it or not, you must take the exam, "or else the pupils will get frustrated" (Smith; 1975).

Aptitude

Aptitude is described as a person's ability for learning (Higard, in Slameto; 1988). Additionally, Skehan (1989) asserts that "aptitude is consistently the strongest predictor of success in language acquisition." Aptitude has a significant role in foreign or second language acquisition. The study literature demonstrates that certain people possess an unusual "aptitude" for language acquisition. Carroll's research on American students majoring in French, German, Russian, and Spanish demonstrates that linguistic ability is highly related with success in foreign language study. Obler writes about a guy named CJ (initial name) who has such extraordinary abilities. CJ is a natural English speaker who grew up in an English-speaking family. His first genuine exposure to a second language was at the age of 15 when he began official French lessons. While in high school, CJ also studied German, Spanish, and Latin. He paid a short visit to Germany when he was twenty years old. CJ said that hearing German spoken for a little period of time was sufficient for him to reclaim the German he learnt in school. Later in his career, CJ worked in Morocco, where he claimed acquiring Moroccan Arabic both via official teaching and through casual immersion. He also spent time in Spain and Italy, where he seemed to have "acquired" both Spanish and Italian within weeks. While there are few learners like CJ, research indicates that human beings have a broad range of ability for second language acquisition.

Carroll and Pimsleur's work in *Developing Foreign Language Aptitude Tests* (Smith, 1975) established conclusively that there is a particular element or aptitude for foreign language acquisition. They identified four characteristics that contribute to a person's aptitude for foreign languages:

- a) Phonetic transcription. This is the capacity to distinguish between unfamiliar sounds and to encode them in such a way that they may be remembered later. This would seem to be a necessary ability for effective second language acquisition.
- b) Sensitivity to grammatical errors. This is the capacity to comprehend the role of words in sentences. It does not assess the ability to define or explain the function; rather, it assesses the capacity to determine whether or not words in distinct sentences execute the same function. It looks natural that the ability to do so aids in the acquisition of another language.

c) The capacity for inductive language acquisition. This is the capacity to infer, induce, or abduct linguistic rules or generalisations from a sample of the language. A student who has this capacity relies less on well-presented rules or generalisations from a teacher or instructional materials.

d) Memory and Instruction. This was originally defined in terms of association: the capacity to form and remember connections between words and phrases in one's native and second languages. Although it is unclear if this form of connection has a significant role in language acquisition, it is evident that memory for language elements is critical.

They assert that two of these variables, phonetic decoding and memory and learning, do not exhibit a strong correlation with IQ. Foreign language students may have a little advantage in one or two of the variables. Certainly, the disparity in ability amongst foreign-language learners is as vast as the disparity in shoe sizes. In other words, each foreign language student has a unique set of aptitudes. It differs from person to person.

Attitude:

Attitude is described as a way of behaving, feeling, or thinking that reflects one's temperament, opinion, or other defining characteristics (Webster, 1996). Attitudes are formed as a consequence of direct and indirect experiences, which are heavily impacted by individuals in one's surrounding environment: parents, teachers, and peers; attitudes toward one's self, the target language and the people who speak it (peers in particular), and the instructor (Ameto, 1988). Brown (1980) makes the assumption that if we have a favourable attitude about the language we learn, we will work diligently to master it.

According to several research, there is a correlation between attitude and second language learning. Gardner and Lambert (in Ameto:1988) discovered that the learner's ethnocentric inclinations and attitude toward the target language had a significant impact on his or her effectiveness in learning the new language. In 1949, Jones (in Oller, 1977) presented a ground-breaking research on attitudes toward second language acquisition, and a year later, he revealed favourable correlations between measures of attitude and achievement in Welsh-as-a-second-language. One of his conclusions was that the association between attitude and achievement tended to strengthen with time.

The student's attitude toward the language he or she is learning may differ. He may be ecstatic, cheerful, confident, and sufficient, or he may be bored, dissatisfied, furious, and insufficient. For instance, he may feel upset if he gets perplexed during a pattern exercise; bored if he repeats the same phrase many times; excited and delighted if he composes a dialogue with a fellow student. He may feel furious and inadequate after receiving the results of an exam he failed. These factors may impact whether a student engages actively in class or not; whether he completes his assigned work or not; and whether he continues his foreign language education or discontinues it.

As English instructors, we should be particularly concerned with the negative attitudes of our pupils, identifying the reasons and potential remedies. Smith (1975) divides some students' adverse attitudes about foreign language instruction into three categories: dumbbell attitude, irrelevant attitude, and bored attitude.

Dumbbell Attitude

What Smith refers to as the "Dumbbell attitude" is perhaps one of the most widespread negative aptitudes. The pupils encounter only failure. He views himself as a "dumbbell," which may be novel for him and most likely annoying. According to Pimsleur's research on underachievement in foreign language, approximately 20% of FL students fall into this group, meaning their grade in foreign language is one letter grade lower than their mark in other disciplines. Nobody's ego can withstand repeated defeat. Naturally, the learner will respond adversely to the source of his emotions of inadequacy and foolishness. He will have an aversion to foreign languages.

Irrelevant Attitudes

Another attitude is what Smith refers to as a "irregular attitude." Students with this mind-set may have engaged in foreign language classes for solely utilitarian reasons: to fulfil a requirement, to gain respect or reputation in the community or among friends, or to further their career prospects. Because he has little or no interest in language study, he may get irritated with the sluggish pace of language learning and believe that the few rewards he receives for his efforts fall short of his expectations. He makes no link between what occurs in foreign language class and the actual requirements of his life now or in the future.

The Disappointed Attitude

There is the indifferent, bored attitude, which makes it difficult for children with this attitude to bear the monotony that often settles in the classroom. When we ask a child what he learned at school today, he or she may

respond, "Oh, the same old thing" - despite the fact that it was almost certainly not the same old stuff. It was just presented in the same manner. Routine is convenient and often required for the busy educator who lacks the time or energy to innovate or be innovative.

Motivation

Motivation is a social psychological component that is usually used to explain differences in performance while learning a second language. This makes obvious sense. Individuals that are driven will naturally learn another language more quickly and to a higher degree. Additionally, multiple research have shown that motivation is a predictor of language-learning success (Gass, 1994). Gardner is the leading person in the subject of motivation in second language acquisition, having pioneered the topic with Lambert and then with colleagues at the University of Western Ontario. "Motivation consists of four components: a goal, effortful action, a desire to accomplish the objective, and a good attitude toward the activity" (Gardner, 1985). He distinguishes between integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is motivated by a desire to integrate into the target language (TL) community; instrumental motivation is motivated by the potential benefits associated with the acquisition (e.g. learning English in order to study mathematics in English-speaking university). Integrative motivation is defined as

It is predicted that intrinsic motivation is a more reliable predictor of second language performance than instrumental motivation.

Meanwhile, Nation (in Huerta, 1979) classifies motivation as main and secondary. Primary motivation occurs when the learner's interest originates inside him or her, rather than from an external source. All instructors should strive to elicit this sort of reaction from their students. If the instructor can instil in the students a want to learn and an interest in the topic, the subject becomes interesting. Secondary motivation is the belief that students must study in order to pass an exam, escape punishment, or satisfy their parents or professors.

It is critical to foster students' drive to gain proficiency in a foreign language. Finocchiaro (in O'Brien, 1977) offers the following advice to instructors on motivation:

- a) Fearlessness: For example, learners should not feel humiliated if they have not completed an assignment, if they make a production mistake, or if they are unable to respond swiftly.
- b) Understanding: For example, teachers must take into account the learners' socioeconomic, cultural, and emotional backgrounds in order to assist them in maintaining their self-esteem.
- b) Experiential learning: e.g. Learners must participate in a range of activities to satisfy their needs for thinking, learning, doing, and deciding.
- d) Love: e.g. the teacher often needs to act as a surrogate parent and be conscious of the learner's desire for love when he or she, correctly or incorrectly, feels rejected by family or classmates.
- e) Belonging: For example, learners should engage in all aspects of planning and decision-making throughout the learning process with the class "community."
- f) Accomplishment and Actualization: For example, learners should be assisted in perfecting today what they were only able to perform haltingly yesterday. They should constantly obtain feedback on their own objectives and ideas.
- g) Grouping and Individualization: For example, the teacher should be aware of the level of operation at which each student is capable at any given time, of his or her optimal method of learning, and of the time required to learn, and should plan classroom group and individual activities accordingly.
- h) Success: For example, learners should have several minor intermediate successes and achieve short term objectives, which will drive them to continue working toward individual, school, community, or national goals (depending on his or her age level and learning).

To motivate students effectively, a well-balanced blend of the teacher's art and talents is required. It is insufficient for the instructor to use psychological concepts to encourage students. Additionally, the instructor may motivate students by instilling a feeling of comfort in them as a consequence of proper language and methodological preparation (O'Brien, 1977).

As a whole, motivation in second language acquisition may be regarded of as the learner's incentive, need, or desire to acquire the second language. In terms of motivation, like with any sort of learning, desire to learn a language is obviously critical to one's success or failure in the endeavour. According to Dulay (1982), language learning is

influenced by three types of motivations: integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and social group identification.

Integrative motivation may be described as a desire to acquire competency in a foreign language in order to engage in the culture of the language's speakers. It demonstrates a genuine and personal interest in the people and culture of the other group (Gardner and Lambert, 1972:132). The issue that arises in this instance is that if the learner believes he is capable of communicating with the desired culture, he will often cease learning the language despite the fact that his acquisition is regarded poor and insufficient for the level of acquisition.

Gardner and Lambert go on to explain the distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation may be characterised as a desire to improve one's skill in a new language for utilitarian reasons, such as job placement. It highlights the pragmatic ideals and benefits associated with language acquisition agrees with Gardner and Lambert that attitude and motivation are connected to accomplishment in second language acquisition and that integrative motivation orientation, in particular, results in more effective learning than instrumental motivation orientation. Students

Those who learn a language as a means to an aim, those classified as having instrumental motivation, often accomplish less than students who have integrative drive.

The desire to gain competence in a language or language variation spoken by a social group with which the learner identifies may be described as the desire to achieve competency in that language or language variety. On the other hand, a learner's lack of identification with a particular group may result in a learner's unwillingness to adopt the language or dialect used by that group asserts that the social group identification incentive is comparable to the integrative drive, but goes beyond it in our understanding. A learner with an integrative motivation for learning a new language wishes to engage in the target language speakers' social or cultural life while maintaining their affiliation with their original language group.

Methods for Assisting Students in Coping

According to Kondo (2004:249), when individuals are presented with a circumstance that they believe will cause them anxiety, their natural reaction is to avoid the event, so avoiding the discomfort. However, in the majority of language learning situations, avoidance is not an option; students are expected to find a means to manage their fear. Three intervention options serve as a starting point for examining the many ways that students use to deal with their language anxiety. If individuals believe that their cognition (fear, preoccupations, and worries) is causing the anxiety, they may seek to repress or change language learning-related cognitive processes. Those who feel that the main focus should be emotional arousal (physiological response) may take attempts to relieve body reactions and stress. If students believe that anxiety occurs as a result of a lack of necessary abilities or that their fear is too severe to bear, they may not make sufficient effort to alleviate the anxiety.

Additionally, Kando, D. proposes five ways for dealing with linguistic anxiety: preparatory approach, relaxation, positive thought, peer, and labelled resignation. The first category, preparation, encompasses efforts to mitigate the coming danger via enhanced learning and study practises (e.g. studying hard, trying to obtain good summaries of lecture notes). The use of these tactics is predicted to boost students' subjective assessments of their subject matter competence, hence alleviating anxiety associated with language class.

Relaxation, on the other hand, refers to techniques aimed at alleviating somatic anxiety symptoms. Typical phrases are "I inhale deeply and attempt to relax down." Positive thinking, the third type, is defined by its palliative role of dampening the negative cognitive processes that underpin students' fear (e.g. imagining oneself giving a great performance, trying to enjoy the tension). These tactics are meant to redirect the nervous student's attention away from stressful stimuli and toward positive and pleasurable ones.

The fourth type, peer seeking, is defined by students' inclination to seek out other students who seem to be struggling with class comprehension and/or anxiety management. For worried adolescents, seeing that others are experiencing the same issue may serve as a form of emotional control via social comparison. Resignation is the last approach. This group is defined by students' unwillingness to engage in any activity that would help ease their language anxiety (e.g. giving up, sleeping in class). Students who describe instances of resignation seem to be diminishing the effect of worry by avoiding to confront the issue.

CONCLUSION:

The depiction of psychological aspects affecting students, such as anxiety, aptitude, attitude, and Motivation plays a role in success when it comes to learning English as a second language. These criteria are backed up by strong evidence, as seen by the aforementioned study results. Additionally, language learning is influenced by three types of motivations: integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and social group identification.

Five ways for dealing with linguistic anxiety are heavily considered: preparatory approach, relaxation, optimistic thinking, peer support, and labelled resignation. Preparation refers to attempts to mitigate the impending threat through improved learning and study strategies; relaxation entails strategies aimed at alleviating somatic anxiety symptoms; positive thinking is defined by its palliative function of suppressing the problematic cognitive processes that underpin students' anxiety; peer seeking is defined by students' willingness to seek out other students who appear to be having difficulty understanding the class and/or congregating; Finally, in order to optimise the results of second language learning, the five tactics outlined above are critical for foreign language instructors to consider as an alternate approach. Additionally, it is critical for second language instructors to pay close attention to the psychological issues affecting students throughout the language learning process.

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