

МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ
ДВНЗ «УЖГОРОДСЬКИЙ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ»
КАФЕДРА АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ

ПСИХОЛОГІЯ НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ
Курс лекцій

Ужгород 2024

УДК 81'243(076): 37.015.3

М 57

Мигалина З. І. Психологія навчання іноземної мови: курс лекцій для студентів 3 курсу заочної форми навчання спеціальності «014 Середня освіта (Мова та література (англійська))» факультету іноземної філології ДВНЗ «УжНУ» (англійською мовою). – Ужгород, - 2024. – 33с. Укладач:

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Курс лекцій з дисципліни «Психологія навчання іноземної мови» призначений для студентів 3 курсу заочної форми навчання спеціальності «014 Середня освіта (Мова та література (англійська))» факультету іноземної філології Ужгородського національного університету та студентів інших закладів вищої освіти, які цікавляться запропонованою тематикою.

Розробка містить матеріали, що розкривають роль психологічних чинників у вивченні іноземної мови, а саме: вікові особливості учнів, роль мотивації, афективні фактори, а також окреслюють психологічний портрет вчителя іноземної мови.

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Рекомендовано до друку
Кафедрою англійської філології ДВНЗ «УжНУ»
Протокол № 8 від 04 квітня 2024 року

Lecture 1

Learner differences.

Age.

Learning styles.

Educational and cultural background.

Whatever their reasons for learning (or the circumstances in which it takes place), it is sometimes tempting to see all students as being more or less the same. Yet there are marked differences, not only in terms of their age and level, but also in terms of different individual abilities, knowledge and preferences.

Age

Learners are often described as children, young learners, adolescents, young adults or adults. Within education, the term *children* is generally used for learners between the ages of about 2 to about 14. Students are generally described as young learners between the ages of about 5 to 9, and very young learners are usually between 2 and 5. At what ages it is safe to call students adolescents is often uncertain, since the onset of adolescence is bound up with physical and emotional changes rather than chronological age. However, this term tends to refer to students from the ages of about 12 to 17, whereas young adults are generally thought to be between 16 and 20. We will look at three ages: children, adolescents and adults. However, we need to remember that there is a large degree of individual variation in the ways in which different children develop. The descriptions that follow, therefore, must be seen as generalisations only.

We know that children don't just focus on what is being taught, but also learn all sorts of other things at the same time, taking information from whatever is going on around them. We know that seeing, hearing and touching are just as important for understanding as the teacher's explanation. We are conscious, too, that the abstraction of, say, grammar rules, will be less effective the younger the students are. But we also know that children respond well to individual attention from the teacher and are usually pleased to receive teacher approval. Children usually respond well to

activities that focus on their lives and experiences. But a child's attention span - their willingness to stay rooted in one activity - is often fairly short.

A crucial characteristic of young children is their ability to become competent speakers of a new language with remarkable facility, provided they get enough exposure to it. They forget languages, it seems, with equal ease. This language-acquiring ability is steadily compromised as they head towards adolescence.

Adolescents

One of the greatest differences between adolescents and young children is that these older children have developed a greater capacity for abstract thought as they have grown up. In other words, their intellects are kicking in, and they can talk about more abstract ideas, teasing out concepts in a way that younger children find difficult. Many adolescents readily understand and accept the need for learning of a more intellectual type. At their best, adolescent students have a great capacity for learning, enormous potential for creative thought and a passionate commitment to things which interest them. Adolescence is bound up with a search for identity and a need for self-esteem. This is often the result of the students' position within their peer group rather than being the consequence of teacher approval.

Adults

Older learners often (but not always) have a wider range of life experiences to draw on, both as individuals and as learners, than younger students do. They are often more disciplined than adolescents and apply themselves to the task of learning even when it seems fairly boring. They often have a clear understanding of why they are learning things, and can sustain their motivation by perceiving (and holding on to) long-term learning goals. On the other hand, adult learners come with a lot of previous learning experience which may hamper their progress. Students who have had negative learning experiences in the past may be nervous of new learning. Students used to failure may be consciously or subconsciously prepared for more failure. Older students who have got out of the habit of study may find classrooms daunting places. They may also have strong views about teaching methods from their past, which the teacher will have to take into account.

Because students at different ages have different characteristics, the way we teach them will differ too. With younger children we may offer a greater variety of games, songs and puzzles than we would do with older students. We may want to ensure that there are more frequent changes of activity. With a group of adolescents we will try to keep in mind the importance of a student's place within his or her peer group and take special care when correcting or assigning roles within an activity, etc. Our choice of topics will reflect their emerging interests. One of the recurring nightmares for teachers of adolescents, in particular, is that we might lose control of the class. We worry about lessons that slip away from us, and which we can't manage because the students don't like the subject, each other, the teacher or the school - or sometimes just because they feel like misbehaving, or because issues in their life outside the classroom are affecting their behaviour and outlook on life. Yet teenagers are not the only students who sometimes exhibit problem behaviour (that is behaviour which causes a problem for the teacher, the student him- or herself, and, perhaps, the others in the classroom). Younger children can, of course, cause difficulties for the teacher and class, too. Adults can also be disruptive and exhausting. They may not do it in the same way as younger learners, but teachers of adults can experience a range of behaviours such as students who resist the teacher's attempts to focus their attention on the topic of the lesson and spend the lesson talking to their neighbours, or who disagree vocally with much of what the teacher or their classmates are saying. They may arrive late for class or fail to do any homework.

Learner differences.

All students respond to various stimuli (such as pictures, sounds, music, movement, etc), but for most of them (and us) some things stimulate them into learning more than other things do. The *Neuro-Linguistic Programming model* (often called NLP) takes account of this by showing how some students are especially influenced by *visual* stimuli and are therefore likely to remember things better if they see them. Some students, on the other hand, are especially affected by *auditory* input and, as a result, respond very well to things they hear. *Kinaesthetic* activity is especially effective for other learners, who seem to learn best when they are involved

in some kind of physical activity, such as moving around, or rearranging things with their hands. The point is that although we all respond to all of these stimuli, for most of us, one or other of them (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic) is more powerful than the others in enabling us to learn and remember what we have learnt.

Another way of looking at student variation is offered by the concept of *Multiple Intelligences*, first articulated by Howard Gardner. In his formulation (and that of people who have followed and expanded his theories), we all have a number of different intelligences (mathematical, musical, interpersonal, spatial, emotional, etc). However, while one person's mathematical intelligence might be highly developed, their interpersonal intelligence (the ability to interact with and relate to other people) might be less advanced, whereas another person might have good spatial awareness and musical intelligence, but might be weak mathematically. Thus it is inappropriate to describe someone as being 'intelligent' or 'unintelligent', because while we may not have much of a knack for, say, music, that does not mean our abilities are similarly limited in other areas. What these two theories tell us (from their different standpoints) is that in any one classroom we have a number of different individuals with different learning styles and preferences. Experienced teachers know this and try to ensure that different learning styles are catered for as often as possible. In effect, this means offering a wide range of different activity types in our lessons in order to cater for individual differences and needs.

Educational and cultural background

We have already discussed how students at different ages present different characteristics in the classroom. Another aspect of individual variation lies in the students' cultural (and educational) background. Some children come from homes where education is highly valued, and where parental help is readily available. Other children, however, may come from less supportive backgrounds where no such backup is on offer. Older students - especially adults - may come from a variety of backgrounds and, as a result, have very different expectations of what teaching and learning involves. Where students have different cultural backgrounds from the teacher or from each other, they may feel differently from their classmates about

topics in the curriculum. They may have different responses to classroom practices from the ones the teacher expected or the ones which the writers of the coursebook they are using had anticipated. In some educational cultures, for example, students are expected to be articulate and question (or even challenge) their teachers, whereas in others, the students' quietness and modesty are more highly prized. Some educational cultures find learning by rote (memorising facts and figures) more attractive than learning by doing (where students are involved in project work and experimentation in order to arrive at knowledge). And it is worth remembering that even where students all live in the same town or area, it is often the case that they come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. In many English-speaking countries such as Britain, the US, Australia, etc, multilingual classes (classes where students come from different countries and therefore have different mother tongues) are the norm, especially in private language schools. As a result, students are likely to represent a range of educational and cultural backgrounds. As teachers, we need to be sensitive to these different backgrounds. We need to be able to explain what we are doing and why; we need to use material, offer topics and employ teaching techniques which, even when engaging and challenging, will not offend anyone in the group. Where possible, we need to be able to offer different material, topics and teaching techniques (at different times) to suit the different individual expectations and tastes.

Lecture 2.

The importance of student motivation.

Responsibility for learning.

A variety of factors can create a desire to learn. Perhaps the learners love the subject they have chosen, or maybe they are simply interested in seeing what it is like. Perhaps, as with young children, they just happen to be curious about everything, including learning. Some students have a practical reason for their study: they want to learn an instrument so they can play in an orchestra, learn English so they can watch American TV or understand manuals written in English, study T'ai Chi so that they can become fitter and more relaxed, or go to cookery classes so that they can prepare better meals. This desire to achieve some goal is the bedrock of motivation and, if it is strong enough, it provokes a decision to act. For an adult this may involve enrolling in an English class. For a teenager it may be choosing one subject over another for special study. This kind of motivation - which comes from outside the classroom and may be influenced by a number of external factors such as the attitude of society, family and peers to the subject in question - is often referred to as *extrinsic motivation*, the motivation that students bring into the classroom from outside. *Intrinsic motivation*, on the other hand, is the kind of motivation that is generated by what happens inside the classroom; this could be the teacher's methods, the activities that students take part in, or their perception of their success or failure. While it may be relatively easy to be extrinsically motivated (that is to have a desire to do something), sustaining that motivation can be more problematic. As students we can become bored, or we may find the subject more difficult than we thought it was going to be. One of the teacher's main aims should be to help students to sustain their motivation. We can do this in a number of ways. The activities we ask students to take part in will, if they involve the students or excite their curiosity - and provoke their participation - help them to stay interested in the subject. We need, as well, to select an appropriate level of challenge so that things are neither too difficult nor too easy. We need to display appropriate teacher qualities so that students can have confidence in our abilities and professionalism. We need to consider the issue of

affect - that is, how the students feel about the learning process. Students need to feel that the teacher really cares about them; if students feel supported and valued, they are far more likely to be motivated to learn. One way of helping students to sustain their motivation is to give them, as far as is feasible, some agency (a term borrowed from the social sciences) which means that students should take some responsibility for themselves, and that they should (like the agent of a passive sentence) be the 'doers' in class. This means that they will have some decision-making power, perhaps, over the choice of which activity to do next, or how they want to be corrected, for example. If students feel they have some influence over what is happening, rather than always being told exactly what to do, they are often more motivated to take part in the lesson. But however much we do to foster and sustain student motivation, we can only, in the end, encourage by word and deed, offering our support and guidance. Real motivation comes from within each individual, from the students themselves.

Responsibility for learning

If giving students agency is seen as a key component in sustaining motivation, then such agency is not just about giving students more decision-making power. It is also about encouraging them to take more responsibility for their own learning. We need to tell them that unless they are prepared to take some of the strain, their learning is likely to be less successful than if they themselves become active learners (rather than passive recipients of teaching). This message may be difficult for some students from certain educational backgrounds and cultures who have been led to believe that it is the teacher's job to provide learning. In such cases, teachers will not be successful if they merely try to impose a pattern of learner autonomy. Instead of imposing autonomy, therefore, we need to gradually extend the students' role in learning. At first we will expect them, for example, to make their own dialogues after they have listened to a model on an audio track. Such standard practice (getting students to try out new language) is one small way of encouraging student involvement in learning. We might go on to try to get individual students to investigate a grammar issue or solve a reading puzzle on their own, rather than

having things explained to them by the teacher. We might get them to look for the meanings of words and how they are used in their dictionaries (see below) rather than telling them what the words mean. As students get used to working things out for themselves and/or doing work at home, so they can gradually start to become more autonomous. Getting students to do various kinds of homework, such as written exercises, compositions or further study is one of the best ways to encourage student autonomy. What is important is that teachers should choose the right kind of task for the students. It should be within their grasp, and not take up too much of their time - or occupy too little of it by being trivial. Even more importantly than this, teachers should follow up homework when they say they are going to, imposing the same deadlines upon themselves as they do on their students. Other ways of promoting student self-reliance include having them read for pleasure in their own time and find their own resources for language practice (in books or on the Internet, for example). Apart from homework, teachers will help students to become autonomous if they encourage them to use monolingual learners' dictionaries (dictionaries written only in English, but which are designed especially for learners) and then help them to understand how and when to use them. At earlier stages of learning, good bilingual dictionaries serve the same function and allow the students a large measure of independence from the teacher. We will help students to be responsible for their learning if we show them where (either in books, in self-access centres or online) they can continue studying outside the classroom. For example, we can point them in the direction of suitable websites (if they have computer access), or recommend good CD or DVD resources. If students are lucky, their institution will have a self-access centre with a range of resources comprising books, newspapers, magazines, worksheets, listening material, videos and DVDs, and computers with access to the Internet. Students can decide if and when to visit such centres and what they want to do there. Self-access centres should help students to make appropriate choices by having good cataloguing systems and ensuring that people are on hand to help students find their way around. However, the object of a self-access centre is that students should themselves take responsibility for what they do and make their own

decisions about what is most appropriate for them. Of course, many schools do not have self-access centres, and even where they do, many students do not make full use of them. This is because not all students, as we have said, are equally capable of being (or wanting to be) autonomous learners. Despite this fact, we should do our best to encourage them to have agency without forcing it upon them.

Lecture 3

The psychological portrait of a good teacher.

Most people can look back at their own schooldays and identify teachers they thought were good. But generally they find it quite hard to say why certain teachers struck them as special. Perhaps it was because of their personality. Possibly it was because they had interesting things to say. Maybe the reason was that they looked as if they loved their job, or perhaps their interest in their students' progress was compelling. Sometimes, it seems, it was just because the teacher was a fascinating person! One of the reasons that it is difficult to give general descriptions of good teachers is that different teachers are often successful in different ways. Some teachers are more extroverted or introverted than others, for example, and different teachers have different strengths and weaknesses. A lot will depend, too, on how students view individual teachers and here again, not all students will share the same opinions. It is often said that 'good teachers are born, not made' and it does seem that some people have a natural affinity for the job. But there are also others, perhaps, who do not have what appears to be a natural gift but who are still effective and popular teachers. Such teachers learn their craft through a mixture of personality, intelligence, knowledge and experience (and how they reflect on it). And even some of the teachers who are apparently 'born teachers' weren't like that at the beginning at all, but grew into the role as they learnt their craft. Teaching is not an easy job, but it is a necessary one, and can be very rewarding when we see our students' progress and know that we have helped to make it happen. It is true that some lessons and students can be difficult and stressful at times, but it is also worth remembering that at its best teaching can also be extremely enjoyable. In this chapter we will look at what is necessary for effective teaching and how that can help to provoke success - so that for both students and teachers learning English can be rewarding and enjoyable.

Who teachers are in class

When we walk into a lesson, students get an idea of who we are as a result of what we look like (how we dress, how we present ourselves) and the way we behave and react to what is going on. They take note, either consciously or subconsciously,

of whether we are always the same or whether we can be flexible, depending on what is happening at a particular point in the lesson. As we have said, teachers, like any other group of human beings, have individual differences. However, one of the things, perhaps, that differentiates us from some other professions, is that we become different people, in a way, when we are in front of a class from the people we are in other situations, such as at home or at a party. Everyone switches roles like this in their daily lives to some extent, but for teachers, who we are (or appear to be) when we are at work is especially important.

Personality

Discussing teacher personality is difficult for two reasons: in the first place there is no ideal teacher personality. Students want not only to see a professional who has come to teach them, but also “to glimpse the person” as well. Effective teacher personality is a blend between who we really are, and who we are as teachers. In other words, teaching is much more than just ‘being ourselves’, however much some students want to see the real person. We have to be able to present a professional face to the students which they find both interesting and effective. When we walk into the classroom, we want them to see someone who looks like a teacher whatever else they look like. This does not mean conforming to some kind of teacher stereotype, but rather finding, each in our own way, a personality that we adopt when we cross the threshold. We need to ask ourselves what kind of personality we want our students to encounter, and the decisions we take before and during lessons should help to demonstrate that personality. This is not to suggest that we are in any way dishonest about who we are - teaching is not acting, after all - but we do need to think carefully about how we appear.

Adaptability

What often marks one teacher out from another is how they react to different events in the classroom as the lesson proceeds. This is important, because however well we have prepared, the chances are that things will not go exactly to plan. Unexpected events happen in lessons and part of a teacher’s skill is to decide what the response should be when they do. Good teachers are able to absorb the

unexpected and to use it to their and the students' advantage. This is especially important when the learning outcomes we had planned for look as if they may not succeed because of what is happening. We have to be flexible enough to work with this and change our destination accordingly (if this has to be done) or find some other way to get there. Or perhaps we have to take a decision to continue what we are doing despite the interruption to the way we imagined things were going to proceed. In other words, teachers need to be able to 'think on their feet' and act quickly and decisively at various points in the lesson. When students see that they can do this, their confidence in their teachers is greatly enhanced.

Teacher roles

Part of a good teacher's art is the ability to adopt a number of different roles in the class, depending on what the students are doing. If, for example, the teacher always acts as a controller, standing at the front of the class, dictating everything that happens and being the focus of attention, there will be little chance for students to take much responsibility for their own learning, in other words, for them to have agency. Being a controller may work for grammar explanations and other information presentation, for instance, but it is less effective for activities where students are working together cooperatively on a project, for example. In such situations we may need to be prompters, encouraging students, pushing them to achieve more, feeding in a bit of information or language to help them proceed. At other times, we may need to act as feedback providers (helping students to evaluate their performance) or as assessors (telling students how well they have done or giving them grades, etc). We also need to be able to function as a resource (for language information, etc) when students need to consult us and, at times, as a language tutor (that is, an advisor who responds to what the student is doing and advises them on what to do next). The way we act when we are controlling a class is very different from the listening and advising behaviour we will exhibit when we are tutoring students or responding to a presentation or a piece of writing (something that is different, again, from the way we assess a piece of work). Part of our teacher personality, therefore, is our ability to perform all these roles at different times, but with the same care and ease whichever

role we are involved with. This flexibility will help us to facilitate the many different stages and facets of learning.

Rapport

A significant feature in the intrinsic motivation of students will depend on their perception of what the teacher thinks of them, and how they are treated. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that what many people look for when they observe other people's lessons, is evidence of good rapport between the teacher and the class. Rapport means, in essence, the relationship that the students have with the teacher, and vice versa. In the best lessons we will always see a positive, enjoyable and respectful relationship. Rapport is established in part when students become aware of our professionalism, but it also occurs as a result of the way we listen to and treat the students in our classrooms.

Recognising students

In the first place, students want teachers to know their names rather than, say, just pointing at them. But this is extremely difficult for teachers who see eight or nine groups a week. How can they remember all their students? Teachers have developed a number of strategies to help them remember students' names. One method is to ask the students (at least in the first week or two) to put name cards on the desk in front of them or stick name badges on to their sweaters or jackets. We can also draw up a seating plan and ask students always to sit in the same place until we have learnt their names. However, this means we can't move students around when we want to, and students - especially younger students - sometimes take pleasure in sitting in the wrong place just to confuse us. Many teachers use the register to make notes about individual students and others keep separate notes about the individuals in their classes. There is no easy way of remembering students' names, yet it is extremely important that we do so if good rapport is to be established with individuals. We need, therefore, to find ways of doing this that suit us best. But 'knowing our names' is also about knowing about students. At any age, they will be pleased when they realise that their teacher has remembered things about them, and has some understanding of who they are. Once again, this is extremely difficult in large classes,

especially when we have a number of different groups, but part of a teacher's skill is to persuade students that we recognise them, and who and what they are.

Listening to students

Students respond very well to teachers who listen to them. Another respondent in my research said that 'It's important that you can talk to the teacher when you have problems and you don't get along with the subject'. Although there are many calls on a teacher's time, nevertheless we need to make ourselves as available as we can to listen to individual students. But we need to listen properly to students in lessons too. And we need to show that we are interested in what they have to say. Of course, no one can force us to be genuinely interested in absolutely everything and everyone, but it is part of a teacher's professional personality that we should be able to convince students that we are listening to what they say with every sign of attention. As far as possible we also need to listen to the students' comments on how they are getting on, and which activities and techniques they respond well or badly to. If we just go on teaching the same thing day after day without being aware of our students' reactions, it will become more and more difficult to maintain the rapport that is so important for successful classes.

Respecting students

One student I interviewed had absolutely no doubt about the key quality of good teachers. 'They should be able to correct people without offending them', he said with feeling. Correcting students is always a delicate event. If we are too critical, we risk demotivating them, yet if we are constantly praising them, we risk turning them into 'praise junkies', who begin to need approval all the time. The problem we face, however, is that while some students are happy to be corrected robustly, others need more support and positive reinforcement. In speaking activities, some students want to be corrected the moment they make any mistake, whereas others would like to be corrected later. In other words, just as students have different learning styles and intelligences, so, too, they have different preferences when it comes to being corrected. But whichever method of correction we choose, and whoever we are working with, students need to know that we are treating them with respect, and not

using mockery or sarcasm - or expressing despair at their efforts! Respect is vital, too, when we deal with any kind of problem behaviour. We could, of course, respond to indiscipline or awkwardness by being biting in our criticism of the student who has done something we do not approve of. Yet this will be counterproductive. It is the behaviour we want to criticise, not the character of the student in question. Teachers who respect students do their best to see them in a positive light. They are not negative about their learners or in the way they deal with them in class. They do not react with anger or ridicule when students do unplanned things, but instead use a respectful professionalism to solve the problem.

Being even-handed

Most teachers have some students that they like more than others. For example, we all tend to react well to those who take part, are cheerful and cooperative, take responsibility for their own learning, and do what we ask of them without complaint. Sometimes we are less enthusiastic about those who are less forthcoming, and who find learner autonomy, for example, more of a challenge. Yet, as one of the students in my research said, ‘a good teacher should try to draw out the quiet ones and control the more talkative ones’, and one of her colleagues echoed this by saying that ‘a good teacher is ... someone who asks the people who don’t always put their hands up’. Students will generally respect teachers who show impartiality and who do their best to reach all the students in a group rather than just concentrating on the ones who ‘always put their hands up’. The reasons that some students are not forthcoming may be many and varied, ranging from shyness to their cultural or family backgrounds. Sometimes students are reluctant to take part overtly because of other stronger characters in the group. And these quiet students will only be negatively affected when they see far more attention being paid to their more robust classmates. At the same time, giving some students more attention than others may make those students more difficult to deal with later since they will come to expect special treatment, and may take our interest as a licence to become overdominant in the classroom. Moreover, it is not just teenage students who can suffer from being the ‘teacher’s

pet'. Treating all students equally not only helps to establish and maintain rapport, but is also a mark of professionalism.

Lecture 4.

Acquisition and learning.

Affective factors in language learning.

Children and language

Almost all children acquire a language, apparently without effort. In many parts of the world, children grow up speaking two or more languages. And if young children move to a new country and go to school there, they seem to 'pick up' the new language with incredible ease. Language acquisition seems to be almost guaranteed for children up to about the age of six. They seem to be able to learn languages with incredible facility. They are also capable of forgetting a language just as easily. It is almost as if they can put on and take off different languages like items of clothing! However, this ease of acquisition becomes gradually less noticeable as children move towards puberty, and after that, language acquisition is much more difficult. Acquisition here describes the way in which people 'get' language with no real conscious effort - in other words, without thinking about grammar or vocabulary, or worrying about which bits of language go where. When children start vocalising their mother tongue at around the age of two, we do not expect them to study it; we expect to just watch it emerge, first at the level of one-word utterances, then two-word utterances, until the phrases and sentences they use become gradually more complex as they grow older. In order for acquisition to take place, certain conditions need to be met. In the first place, the children need to hear a lot of language. Such exposure is absolutely vital. Secondly, it is clear that the nature of the language they hear matters, too. When parents talk to their children, they simplify what they say, both consciously and unconsciously. They don't use complex sentences, or technical vocabulary; they use language which fits the situation, rough-tuning what they say to match the child's age and situation. Parents' language is marked by other features, too. They often exaggerate the intonation they use so that their voices sound higher and more enthusiastic than they would if they were talking to friend, colleague or partner. During childhood we get an enormous amount of such language exposure. Furthermore, most of the language we hear - especially from our parents - is given to

us in typical social and emotional interactions so that as we hear language, we also hear the ways in which that language is used. Finally, children have a strong motivational urge to communicate in order to be fed and understood. Together with their parents (and later other adults) they make language together. And then they try it out and use it. This 'trying out' is shown by the way children repeat words and phrases, talk to themselves and generally play with language. But in the end it is their desire to communicate needs, wants and feelings that seems to matter most. And throughout childhood and beyond, most people have a great many opportunities and inducements to use the language they have been acquiring. It sounds, then, as if three features need to be present in order for children to acquire a language: exposure to it, motivation to communicate with it and opportunities to use it.

Acquisition and learning

If, as we have said, children acquire language subconsciously, what does this tell us about how students should get a second language? Can we (indeed, should we) attempt to replicate the child's experience in the language classroom? Some theorists, notably the American applied linguist Stephen Krashen in the 1980s, have suggested that we can make a distinction between acquisition and learning. Whereas the former is subconscious and anxiety free, learning is a conscious process where separate items from the language are studied and practised in turn. Krashen, among others, suggested that teachers should concentrate on acquisition rather than learning and that the role of the language teacher should be to provide the right kind of language exposure, namely comprehensible input (that is, language that the students understand more or less, even if it is a bit above their own level of production). Provided that students experience such language in an anxiety-free atmosphere, the argument goes, they will acquire it just as children do, and, more importantly, when they want to say something, they will be able to retrieve the language they need from their acquired-language store. Language which has been learnt, on the other hand, is not available for use in the same way, according to this argument, because the learner has to think much more consciously about what they want to say. The principal function of learnt language is to monitor what is coming from our acquired store to

check that it is OK. As a result, learnt language tends to ‘get in the way’ of acquired-language production and may inhibit spontaneous communication. This apparently convoluted discussion becomes relevant when we consider what we should do with students in class. If we believe that acquisition is superior to learning, we will spend all our time providing comprehensible input. What we will not do is to ask the students to focus on how the language works. Yet there are problems with this approach. In the first place, the ability to acquire language easily tends to deteriorate with age. Secondly, teenagers and adults have perfectly good reasoning powers and may want to think consciously about how language works. To suggest that they should not think about language if they want to (that is, learn it consciously), would seem absurd. And we should remember that for many language learners, one of the biggest differences between them and children acquiring their first language is the amount of exposure they get (in terms of hours), and the situation in which this language is used. Learners in foreign language classrooms are in a very different situation from that of children of loving parents.

Describing learning and teaching

Perhaps, mere exposure to comprehensible input is not enough, therefore, for older children and adults. Perhaps, as some claim, they should have their attention drawn to aspects of language so that they can notice these aspects; as a result they will recognise them when they come across them again, and this recognition will be the first stage in their ‘knowing’ of the language which, once known in this way, will be available for them to use. We can go further and say that a rich classroom environment would not only expose students to language (of course), but also give them opportunities to activate their language knowledge. Furthermore, we should offer them chances to study language and the way it works too, since for some learners this will be the key to their success, and for all others (apart from young children) it will be an added bonus to the other activities which we take into the classroom. In other words, both acquisition and learning have their part to play in language getting for students after childhood.

S. Krashen's stages of SLA

Stephen Krashen divides the process of second-language acquisition into five stages: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency.

The first stage, *preproduction*, is also known as the *silent period*. Learners at this stage have a receptive vocabulary of up to 500 words, but they do not yet speak their second language. Not all learners go through a silent period. Some learners start speaking straight away, although their output may consist of imitation rather than creative language use. Others may be required to speak from the start as part of a language course. For learners that do go through a silent period, it may last around three to six months.

The second of Krashen's stages of acquisition is *early production*, during which learners can speak in short phrases of one or two words. They can also memorize chunks of language, although they may make mistakes when using them. Learners typically have both an active and receptive vocabulary of around 1000 words. This stage normally lasts for around six months.

The third stage is *speech emergence*. Learners' vocabularies increase to around 3000 words during this stage, and they can communicate using simple questions and phrases. They may often make grammatical errors.

The fourth stage is *intermediate fluency*. At this stage, learners have a vocabulary of around 6000 words and can use more complicated sentence structures. They are also able to share their thoughts and opinions. Learners may make frequent errors with more complicated sentence structures.

The final stage is *advanced fluency*, which is typically reached somewhere between five and ten years of learning the language. Learners at this stage can function at a level close to native speakers.

S. Krashen's hypotheses of SLA

THE NATURAL ORDER HYPOTHESIS

One of the most exciting discoveries in language acquisition research in recent years has been the finding that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a

predictable order. Acquirers of a given language tend to acquire certain grammatical structures early, and others later. The agreement among individual acquirers is not always 100%, but there are clear, statistically significant, similarities.

English is perhaps the most studied language as far as the natural order hypothesis is concerned, and of all structures of English, morphology is the most studied. Children acquiring English as a first language tended to acquire certain grammatical morphemes, earlier than others. For example, the progressive marker *ing* (as in "He is playing baseball".) and the plural marker */s/* ("two dogs") were among the first morphemes acquired, while the third person singular marker */s/* (as in "He lives in New York") and the possessive */s/* ("John's hat") were typically acquired much later, coming anywhere from six months to one year later.

Krashen, however, points out that the implication of the natural order hypothesis is not that a language program syllabus should be based on the order found in the studies. In fact, he rejects grammatical sequencing when the goal is language acquisition.

THE COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT HYPOTHESIS

The **Input** hypothesis is Krashen's attempt to explain how the learner acquires a second language – how second language acquisition takes place.

Essentially, comprehensible input is language input that can be understood by listeners, even if they can't understand all the words or structures in it. When the input is comprehensible, you understand the gist of what's being said.

According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when he/she receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to '**Comprehensible Input**' that belongs to level 'i + 1'. Since not all of the learners can be at the same level of linguistic competence at the same time, Krashen suggests that *natural communicative input* is the key to designing a syllabus, ensuring in this way that each learner will receive some 'i + 1' input that is appropriate for his/her current stage of linguistic competence.

The Input Hypothesis is very consistent with what is known about "caretaker speech", the modifications that parents and others make when talking to young children. The most interesting and perhaps the most important characteristic of caretaker speech for us is that it is not a deliberate attempt to teach language. Caretaker speech is modified in order to aid comprehension. Caretakers talk "simpler" in an effort to make themselves understood by the child. A second characteristic of interest to us here is the finding that caretaker speech, while it is syntactically simpler than adult-adult speech, is "roughly-tuned" to the child's current level of linguistic competence, not "finely-tuned". In other words, caretaker speech is not precisely adjusted to the level of each child, but tends to get more complex as the child progresses.

A third characteristic of caretaker speech that concerns us is known as the "here and now" principle. It is well established that caretakers talk mostly about what the child can perceive, what is in the immediate environment. Discourse with children is far more likely to deal with what is happening now in the room than what is not in the room and not current.

THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS

The **Monitor** hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and defines the influence of the latter on the former. The monitoring function is the practical result of the learned grammar. According to Krashen, the acquisition system is the utterance initiator, while the learning system performs the role of the 'monitor' or the 'editor'. The 'monitor' acts in a planning, editing and correcting function when three specific conditions are met:

- The second language learner has sufficient time at their disposal.
- They focus on form or think about correctness.
- They know the rule.

It appears that the role of conscious learning is somewhat limited in second language performance. According to Krashen, the role of the monitor is minor, being used only to correct deviations from "normal" speech and to give speech a more 'polished' appearance.

Krashen also suggests that there is individual variation among language learners with regard to 'monitor' use. He distinguishes those learners that use the 'monitor' all the time (over-users); those learners who have not learned or who prefer not to use their conscious knowledge (under-users); and those learners that use the 'monitor' appropriately (optimal users). An evaluation of the person's psychological profile can help to determine to what group they belong. Usually extroverts are under-users, while introverts and perfectionists are over-users. Lack of self-confidence is frequently related to the over-use of the "monitor".

THE AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS

The **Affective Filter** hypothesis embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, or a debilitating role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and personality traits. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, a low level of anxiety and extroversion are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, anxiety, introversion and inhibition can raise the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is 'up' it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place.

Lecture 5

Affective Factors in EFL teaching.

Teacher's strategies to reduce the affective filter.

Anxiety

Anxiety is associated with the feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, worry or fear that a person feels under certain circumstances.

It is generally believed that individuals with high levels of anxiety seem to be less successful in learning second languages than more relaxed individuals. Teachers and students feel strongly that anxiety is a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language.

S. Krashen believes that anxiety represents serious impediments to the development of second language fluency as well as to performance. Anxiety can affect the communication strategies students employ in language class.

Anxiety contributes to an affective filter, according to Krashen, which makes the individual unreceptive to language input; thus, the learner fails to "take in" the available target language messages and language acquisition does not progress.

Anxiety can be seen either as a ***trait***, being a relatively stable personality trait, or as a ***state*** (a temporary situation). State anxiety is experienced in relation to some particular event or act.

Language anxiety refers to the situational nature of state anxiety, i.e. it recurs in some kind of situation (e.g. learning a foreign language).

Three components of foreign language anxiety have been identified:

1. communication apprehension, arising from learners' inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas;
2. fear of negative social evaluation, arising from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others;
3. test anxiety, or apprehension over academic evaluation.

Psychologists distinguish between facilitating and debilitating anxiety. Depending on its type, foreign language anxiety can have both a negative effect and a positive effect on the language learning process.

Facilitative Anxiety (helpful anxiety)

Facilitative anxiety is associated with some concern over a task to be accomplished. Facilitating anxiety motivated the learner to 'fight' the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approach behaviour.

Debilitating anxiety (harmful anxiety)

Debilitating anxiety motivates the learner to flee the new learning task. As a result, learners exhibit avoidance behavior such as missing class and postponing homework. Anxious foreign language learners have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat, and have palpitations.

Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem refers to a personal evaluation and judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that individuals hold towards themselves. It relates to confidence in our ability to think and to cope with the challenges of life. Confidence in our right to be happy, the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert our needs and wants and to enjoy the fruits of our efforts.

Self-esteem is one of the traits relating to self-confidence. It is hypothesized that the self-confident or secure person will be more able to encourage intake and will also have a lower affective filter.

A person with high self-esteem is able to reach out beyond himself more freely, to be less inhibited, and because of his ego strength, to make the necessary mistakes involved in language learning with less threat to his ego.

Where does self-esteem comes from? People derive their sense of self-esteem from:

- the accumulation of experiences with themselves and with others and

- assessments of the external world around them.

Three general levels of self-esteem have been described in the literature to capture its multidimensionality:

1. *General, or Global Self-Esteem* is the general assessment that one makes of one's own worth over time and across a number of situations a general assessment one makes of his or her worth over time. It is relatively stable and is resistant to change in a mature adult.

2. *Situational or Specific Self-Esteem* refers to one's self-appraisals in particular life situations. The degree of specific self-esteem a person has may vary depending upon the situation or the trait in question.

3. *Task Self-Esteem* relates to particular tasks within specific situations. In second language acquisition, it may refer to one of the aspects of the learning process: speaking or writing, for instance.

There are many factors that contribute to learners' willingness to communicate, i.e. to predisposing one learner to seek and another learner to avoid second language communication. They noted that a high level of communicative ability does not necessarily correspond with a high willingness to communicate and that willingness is more related to task self-esteem than to an actual communicative ability.

So, we come across a chicken-or-egg question: does high self-esteem cause language success, or does language success cause high self-esteem?

Clearly, both are interacting factors.

It is difficult to say whether teachers should try to 'improve' global self-esteem or simply improve a learner's proficiency and let self-esteem take care of itself.

Inhibition

Inhibition is a feeling of embarrassment or worry that prevents you from saying or doing what you want.

All human beings, in their understanding of themselves, build sets of defences to protect the ego. Inhibition refers to the degree to which individuals allow their ego boundary to be open to a new set of knowledge and value systems.

The term “language ego” refers to a very personal, egoistic nature of second language acquisition. Meaningful language acquisition involves some degree of identity conflict as language learners take on a new identity with their newly acquired competence’.

Thin ego boundaries are believed to allow learners to be open and tolerant of ambiguity, and therefore more creative when learning a second language, and it is commonly believed that by lowering inhibition in the language classroom, we can promote freer communication and a willingness to learn from trial and error. Students with thick, perfectionist boundaries find language learning more difficult than those learners with thin boundaries who favour attitudes of openness and the tolerance of ambiguity.

The degree of inhibition a person displays depends on their age.

A child’s ego is dynamic and growing and flexible; so, a new language at this stage does not pose a substantial threat or inhibition to it. Adults, on the other hand, manifest a number of inhibitions in language classes where their attempts to speak in the foreign language are often fraught with embarrassment. As people grow, they become more aware of themselves and this self-identity, which in turn is bound to language ego and gives rise to the emergence of inhibitions as a defensive mechanism.

Inhibited children react against many different types of unfamiliarity with avoidance, distress, or subdued emotion. The source of the unfamiliarity can be people, situations, objects, or events.

Many findings from inhibition studies have given rise to a number of steps that have been taken in practices to create techniques that reduce inhibition in the foreign language classroom.

Language teaching approaches in the last three decades have been characterized by the creation of contexts in which students are made to feel free to take risks and to orally try out hypotheses. What did this do?

It broke down some of the barriers that often make learners reluctant to try out their new language.

Anyone who has learned a foreign language is aware that second language learning actually needs the making of mistakes. We test out hypotheses about language by trial and many errors. Children learning their first language and adults learning a second can really make progress only by learning from their mistakes. If we never ventured to speak a sentence until we were absolutely certain of its total correctness, we would likely never communicate productively at all.

Why can mistakes be viewed as threats to one's ego!

Because they pose both internal and external threats:

- Internally: one's critical self and one's performing self can be in conflict: the learner performs something "wrong" and becomes critical of his or her own mistake.
- Externally: learners perceive others to be critical.

Risk-taking

In psychology risk-taking is referred to a tendency to engage in behaviours that can be harmful, dangerous, frightening, ... yet it provides the opportunity for positive outcomes to appear.

In language learning, risk-taking relates to being prepared to have a go at saying or writing something even if you are not exactly sure how to do it, without worrying that you might get wrong. It is associated with situations where students face challenging tasks, and the possibility of failure is very expected.

Risk-taking is a style that could have positive effects on language success. Learners have to be able to gamble a bit, to be willing to try out hunches about the language and take the risk of being wrong.

Some of the causes that might prevent students from being risk-takers are:

- In the classroom: a bad grade in the course, a fail on the exam, a reproach from the teacher, a smirk from a classmate, punishment or embarrassment imposed by oneself.
- Outside the classroom: fear of looking ridiculous, fear of the frustration coming from a listener's blank look, fear of the alienation of not being able

to communicate and thereby get close to other human beings and fear of losing their identity.

In order to resolve this problem, teachers need to establish a correct affective framework so that learners ‘feel comfortable’ as they take their first public steps in the strange world of a foreign language.

Therefore, if a language learner interacts with the teacher automatically, he/she can acquire a foreign language without any difficulty.

The key to risk-taking as a peak performance strategy is not simply in taking the risks. It is in learning from your ‘failures’. In this case, it is essential to accept the fiasco and internalize it as the learning experience. Afterward, language learners can master that language gradually.

However, we may be tempted to assume that high risk-takers have better results in second language learning; yet, such is not usually the case. A number of studies have found that successful language learners make willing and accurate guesses.

So, impulsivity is not always a good thing. Speaking aloud whatever comes to your mind is not always a good idea. The point here is that the overly high risk-takers, who enjoy dominating the classroom with wild gambles, may need to be ‘tamed’ a bit by the teacher.

Reducing Affective Filter: Teacher techniques and strategies

Attention to affective aspects can lead to more effective language learning. When dealing with the affective side of language learners, attention needs to be given both to how we can overcome problems created by negative emotions and to how we can create and use more positive, facilitative emotions.

In what follows teacher techniques and strategies that lower the affective filter in foreign language classroom are given.

- assess what kind of anxiety their language learners are facing
- develop engaging lessons suited to learners’ preferred styles
- don’t correct every word that came out of learner’s mouth
- challenge learners with a developmentally appropriate, multiple step task

- prepare lessons that make the learner feel successful
- handle learners' errors in a helpful, non-threatening and appropriate manner (e.g. by accurate modelling of the language)
- make learners feel that it is okay to experiment with the language
- make learners aware that making mistakes and learning from them is a positive and productive experience
- function as partners and mentors (positive roles) but not as testers and judges (negative roles)
- be careful about showing his/her attitude in his/her voice and with his/her body language
- don't laugh at learners' mistakes or place learners in awkward or high-risk environments
- institute a policy in the classroom that prohibits learners from making fun of their peers or laughing at errors made by other learners
- greet everyone with a smile
- avoid making students speak in front of the class
- always praise students
- create activities which have communicative learning as its main goal
- make sure the target language inputs are comprehensible for learners' level
- respect the silent period for language learners

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