Saeedeh Hosseinzadeh

Individual Differences in Second-Language Learning

age: how old were you when you first tried it to learn the language?

motivation: did you have a choice about learning this language ?

what it in classroom or in nature: how much of your learning experience of this language was in a foreign language classroom?

exposure: if you no longer use this language on a daily basis, can you estimate how many years it was spent learning or using it?

Living in the natural environment: the how much time have you spent leaving in a place where the language is spoken?

Interest: personal or emotional attachments to this language? For example, Dale had peers or family members we speak this language?

General questions: are you successfully student in other school subjects?

Do you think of yourself as a person who likes to socialize?

Intelligence

tradition view: math

- The intelligence has traditionally been used to refer to performance on certain kinds of tests.
- These tests often associated with success in school and building between intelligence and second-language learning has sometimes been reported.
  Educators have been influenced by **Howard Gardener's** proposal that individuals have **multiple intelligences** and that traditional IQ tests have assessed only a limited range of abilities.
  Among multiple intelligences Gardner includes abilities in the areas of music, interpersonal relations and athletics as well as the **verbal intelligence** that is most often associated with success in school. (The traditional view is under question)

Language learning aptitude (natural ability or skill)

- specific abilities thought to predict success in language learning have been studied under the title of language learning aptitude. One of the pioneers in this area John Carroll has characterized aptitude in terms of the **ability to learn quickly**. thus we may hypothesize that learner to with high aptitude may learn with greater ease and speed but… Learners may also be successful if they persevere.
- Over several decades the most widely used aptitude measurers having the **modern language aptitude test(MLAT)**and Pimsleur **language aptitude battery(PLAB).**
- Aptitude has several components for example the ability to identify and memorize new sounds, understood the functional of particular words in sentences, figure out grammatical rules from language samples.
- Working memory: working memory also called short-term memory refers to the active processing of information.
- Before we leave the topic of language learning aptitude, it is perhaps appropriate to look at extremes of the aptitude Continuum. Some people who academic performance is usually very good find themselves frustrated in their attempts to learn a foreign language.
- At the other end of the aptitude Continuum with individuals whose achievements seem to defy every prediction about what is possible in second language learning.
  Such exceptional learners suggested an aptitude for language learning is at least partly independent of cognitive, social, personality characteristics that are also associated with successful learning.

Learn styles

some researchers have investigated individual differences in terms of learning style, defined **as an individual's natural, habitual preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills**. For example, <u>auditory learners, kinesthetic learners.</u>

- Cognitive learning styles: **field independent** and **field dependent** according to whether they tried to separate details from the general background or to see things more holistically.
- There are many questions about how learning styles in direct with success in language learning

Personality

a number of personality characteristics have been proposed as likely to affect second-language learning**,** but it hasn't been easy to confirm in empirical studies.

1. For example, it is often argued that an **extroverted** person is well suited to language learning but research does not always support this conclusion.
2. Another aspects of personality that has been studied is **inhibition.** It has been suggested that inhibition discourages risk-taking, which is necessary for progress in language learning. This is often considered to be a particular problem for adolescents who are more self-conscious than younger learners.
3. **Learner Anxiety:** feelings of worry, nervousness, and stress that many students experience when learning a second language, has been extensive investigated.
    - For a long time to researchers found anxiety as a permanent feature of a learner's personality. In fact, the majority of language anxiety scales like the father language classroom anxiety scale, measure anxiety in this way.
4. Learners **willingness to communicate** (WTC) has also been related to anxiety. We have all experienced occasions when we tried to avoid communicating in second-language. WTC may change with the number of people present, the topic of conversation, the formality of the circumstances, and even whether we feel tired or energetic at the moment.

    Example: a Colleague in Canada who works in the area of second-language learning and speaks several languages recently confessed that he loaded the corner store in his neighborhood because the proprietor always spoke French to him.

Attitudes and motivation

Motivation is second-language learning is a complex phenomenon. It has been defined in terms of two factors: **learner's communicative needs** and their **attitudes toward the second language community.**

If the learners need to speak to second-language wide range of social situations are to fulfill the professional ambitions, they will receive the communicative value on the second language and are therefore likely to be motivated to acquire proficiency in it.

similarly, as learners have favorable attitudes toward the speakers are the language, there will desire more contact with them. "Gardner and Lambert coined the terms **instrumental motivation (***language learning for immediate or practical **goals***)** and **integrative motivation (**language learning for personal goals and cultural enrichment through contacting speakers of other language)

For a long time, integrative punctuation was considered to be the stronger predictor of successful learning. In some contexts, however is to mental motivation was found to be a better predictor. Therefore, types of motivation have been found to be related to success in second-language learning.

Zoltan Dorniyei 2001) developed a process oriented model of motivation that **consists of three phases**. The first place **choice motivation:** refers to the getting started and **setting goals,** the second phase**: executive motivation** is about carrying out the necessary tasks to maintain motivation, and the third phase **motivation retrospection**: refers to a state within appraisal of and the reaction to the performance.

*An **example*** of how one might cycle through these faces would be: the sex stories Lardner in Poland is excited about an upcoming 22 Spain and decides to take a Spanish course (choice motivation). After a few months of grammar lessons, he becomes frustrated with the course, stopped going to classes (executive motivation) and decides to drop the course. A week later a friend tells you about the great Spanish conversation course she is taking and his choice and motivation is activated to a gain. He decides to register in the conversation course and in just a few weeks he develops some basic Spanish conversational skills feeling of accomplishment. His satisfaction level is so positive (motivation retrospection) the act he decides to go in a more advanced Spanish course when he returns from his trip to Spain.

Motivation in the classroom

In a teacher's mind, motivated students are usually those who participate actively in class, express interest in the subject matter, and study a great deal. **Teachers also will have more influence on these behaviors and motivation** they represent than on students 'reasons for starting the second language or their attitudes toward the language and its speakers. Teachers can make a positive contribution to student's motivation to learn **if classroom are places that the students enjoy coming** to because they **content is interesting** and **relevant to their age and level of ability**, and **learning goals are challenging yet manageable and clear**, and the **atmosphere is supportive**. Teachers must also keep in mind that **cultural and aged differences** will determine the most appropriate ways for them to motivate students.

Example: it was the large-scale study with 27 teachers and over 1300 learners in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in Korea

motivational behaviors included within each

1. **Teacher discourse**: arousing curiosity or attention, prompting autonomy, stating the communicative purpose/utility of activity.

2. **Participation structure**: group work/pair work
3. **activity design**: individual competition, team competition, intellectual challenge, tangible task product
4. **encouraging positive retrospective self evaluation and activity design**: effective praise, elicitation of self/peer correction session, class applause

The researchers found positive correlations between the teachers of motivational practices, learn engagements behaviors and the learners' self-reports on the questionnaire. The researchers' acknowledged that correlation results do not dictate cause effect relationships. Nevertheless the findings are important because this is the first study to provide any **empirical** evidence concerning the concrete classroom specific impact on language teachers motivational strategies.

Identity and ethnic group affiliation

Social factors in the wider community can also affect motivation, attitudes and language learning success. One such factor is the social dynamic or **power relationship** between languages. For example, members of the minor **minority group** learning the language of the **majority group** may have different attitudes and motivation from those of majority group members learning a minority language. Even though it is impossible to predict the exact effects of such social factors on second-language learning, **the fact** that that **languages exist in social contexts cannot be overlooked** when we seek to understand the variables that affect success in learning. Children as well as adults are sensitive to social dynamics and power relationships.

Learner beliefs

Second-language learners are not always aware of their individual cognitive or perceptual learning styles, but virtually all learners, particularly old learners, have **strong beliefs** and opinions about **how their instruction should be** delivered. These beliefs are usually based on previews learning experiences that assumption (right or wrong) that a **particular type of instruction is the best** way for them to learn.

Individual differences and classroom

Zoltan Dornyei (2005) has reviewed the research on individual differences and proposes a number of ways for educators to help learners make the most of their individual abilities to learning preferences.

Learners instructional Friedman says, when I didn't looking for differences in their approach to learning on to their beliefs about how languages are learned, we influence the economy so strategies they use in July learn new material materials. **Teachers can help learners expand their repertoire of learning strategies and the develop greater flexibility in their ways of** approaching language learning.

Age and second-language learning

Is age important in language learning?
Critical Period Hypotheses is that there is a time in human development when the brain is predisposed for success in language learning.
Bugbears find evidence that there may be **multiple critical periods**, related to different aspects of language learning. For example, disability to the choir and pronunciation patterns of a new language and earlier ability to acquire your vocabulary.
That the difference between young and adult **learners** is in pronunciation not in vocabulary, grammar, ...

The critical period: more than just pronunciation?
Most studies of the relationship between age of acquisition and second-language development concluded that **older learners** typically have noticeable **foreign accent** in the spoken language. But what about other linguistic features? Is syntax (words order, overall sentence structure) as independent age of acquisition as phonological development? What about morphology?
Intuitions of grammaticality
Johnson and Elisa conducted a study of 4 to 6 Chinese and Korean speakers who had begun learn English at different ages. All worst events or faculty members at American University and old had been in the United States for at least three years.
They found that age of arrival in United States was a significant predictor of success on the tests. Let us begin the earliest achieved the highest scores on the judgment task.
The findings appear to confirm the **hypothesis** that **adult learners may learn language in a way that is different from that way young children learn.**

Rate of learning
some research suggests that *old learners may have an advantage in terms of the rate of learning. They appear to learn faster in the early stages of second-language development.*