

## Psychological Aspects of Learning a Foreign Language

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**Abstract:** *The factors influencing on the successful studying of a foreign language are viewed in the article. The author shows their correlation and influence on the process of studying of a foreign language. The methodical and psychological aspects of studying of a foreign language are examined in the article.*

**Keywords:** *foreign language, factor, motivation, capacities, barrier.*

In modern conditions, the issues of learning English are becoming more and more important. This language is international, acts as a leading means of intercultural and interlingual communication, serves as a means of constructing a global identity and is the most studied foreign language in the world. It is not surprising that in such conditions, English as a discipline is mandatory for studying both at school, at college and at the university.

Meanwhile, it has been repeatedly noted that many people study English, but only a few are really good at it. Despite the fact that the importance of good language training in modern conditions is recognized by everyone, a person with a non-linguistic education who speaks English well is not a very common occurrence in our country.

Nowadays, in linguodidactics, there is an active methodical search for effective ways of mastering the English language. Moreover, the concept of “effective way” incorporates the concept of “fast way”, since the accelerating pace of life in the 21st century does not allow a person to study English methodically for several years, counting on a possible result that may not be in the future. A modern person needs the result immediately, already on the go. The result on the go is understood, of course, not fluency, but at least to speak on everyday topics in the simplest situations of social interaction in English. The same didactic methods and techniques can be effective in one situation and ineffective in another.[1]

Considering all this, it seems that only a didactic understanding of the problem of learning English is not enough. It is necessary to pay more attention to the factors influencing this process, but lying outside of linguodidactics. Most important of them are psychological ones, which we will consider in this article, showing their relationship with purely methodological aspects.

Among the main psychological aspects of learning English, the most important are the following: motivation and interest in learning the language; language learning abilities; the ratio of language and speech in the study; the language barrier. Motivation is a major factor in language learning. As in any other activity, if a person does not want to do something or does it through force, he will not achieve a high result. The result in learning a language can only bring the motivation to achieve success. The

motivation to avoid failure can provide a one-time result. For example, a student is afraid of failing an exam with a demanding English teacher. He will pass the exam, quite possibly, not bad, but there will be no long-term effect from such local success. The fact is that a foreign language skill needs to be formed and developed gradually, and then maintained throughout life, obviously, this cannot be done through force. For people learning English, an important motivational factor is demand in the labor market. [2]

Indeed, in the context of the globalization of the economy, there is an increase in trade and business contacts between countries. This determines the dynamic development of international firms around the world, including in Russia. They actively develop their business, expand, open new divisions and representative offices, thus creating new jobs.

Work in such firms, as a rule, is more promising for a specialist, both from a financial and career point of view. At the same time, it imposes more requirements, among which, in addition to the basic qualifications, English language proficiency. English proficiency of employees is an important factor for the economic competitiveness of the company, that is, it is part of its intellectual capital. [3]

In this regard, when learning a language, there should initially be an attitude that English itself acts only as a means of receiving and transmitting this or that information. If a person is interested in the information (that is, materials in English) with which he works, he will also be interested in the process of learning English. Here the psychological component is closely intertwined with the most important methodological component, namely with the content of teaching English, which should be selected in accordance with the interests and age characteristics of students in order to maintain a high level of motivation. [4]

Despite the obviousness of the above arguments, many people, having started learning English well, still do not follow through. Why do they lose motivation? The fact is that, unlike, for example, mastering a computer system or learning to drive a car, you need to study English constantly and systematically, and many are not ready for this. Very often, some circumstances interfere with doing this and act as a convenient reason, an excuse for oneself. This requires certain volitional efforts, which were not taken into account. Another feature of English as a skill is that in everyday life, it does not seem necessary. Indeed, if all the information is in Russian, if you are in your native language environment and feel comfortable in it, then you need strong-willed efforts to create an artificial foreign language environment for yourself. On the other hand, many people have learned English without ever having visited the countries where it is state, while it cannot be said that they have some kind of superpowers.

Abilities are called the characteristics of a person of a psychological nature, which determine the success of obtaining knowledge, skills and abilities, but they themselves are not reduced to their presence. In the case of learning English, one should talk about linguistic knowledge and speech skills in four types of speech activity: speaking, listening, writing, reading. [8]

Psychology, denying the identity of abilities with knowledge, skills and habits, at the same time emphasizes their unity. In order for abilities to be revealed, activity is necessary, which in turn cannot be carried out without abilities. In the process of learning English, it may become clear whether a person has abilities.

English abilities, as well as other areas of human activity, are interconnected with interest and motivation. The better a person does something, the more interesting it becomes, as he learns more and more new things and can feel the practical benefits of the acquired skills. In the modern world, practical benefit is one of the main factors of motivation, motivation also grows due to the desire to achieve better and better results, when a person realizes that he achieves a lot with relatively little effort. [6]

On the other hand, if the motivation to learn English does not primarily come from the language itself, but is due to some other external factors, it can develop language abilities, primarily through regular and conscious practice.

Very often, teachers, in order to increase the motivation of students, say that there are no people who are incapable of English, because if a person speaks Russian, this means that everything is fine with the brain processes responsible for speech, and therefore, he can definitely also speak English.

In mastering English, abilities are an objective advantage, meanwhile, this advantage must be developed through constant practice, otherwise it is leveled. Constant practice is the key to success from a purely methodological point of view. Indeed, all the rules of English grammar can be stated in an hour. Several thousand words can also be learned in a fairly short time, if you specifically set such a task for yourself, however, it is important not only to study the language material once, but also never forget it, and this is the most difficult thing. Even experts in the field of English admit that they feel a little insecure if they don't practice for a couple of months, like an athlete who has lost his form. The principle "we only know what we remember" is better suited for knowledge of a foreign language than for any other area of human activity.

Very often, lack of ability serves as an excuse for a person who does not want to study English. The objectively low level of complexity of this language at the initial levels of its study allows us to assert that almost any person can master it to one degree or another, unlike, for example, much more complex oriental languages.

It should be noted that the search for the most effective methods and approaches in teaching English should be aimed precisely at people with average abilities. It is necessary to ensure that in the process of training these abilities are developed, since one of the goals of training is developmental. A person who is capable of a foreign language, as a rule, easily masters it using any method, another thing is that the poor quality of teaching (both the method and the work of the teacher himself) can kill interest in the language and reduce motivation to master it. [10]

It is also interesting to note that it very rarely happens that a person knows one foreign language perfectly and does not know any others at all, at least at an elementary level. The fact is that a good knowledge of any language allows you to see the connections between the languages of one group or one family, thus, the development of each next language becomes several times easier based on the existing language knowledge, as well as the experience of learning a foreign language and speech activity in a non-native language .

The problem of the relationship between language and speech in relation to the study of English can be formulated as follows: where to start and what to put at the forefront? All methods and approaches to teaching foreign languages can be divided into two large groups: from language to speech and from speech to language.

However, it is wrong to say that when learning from language to speech, a speech skill is not formed. It is formed passively, and this process occurs rather slowly. That is why, in order to master a language in this way and learn how to speak it well, you need to study it for a very long time, and the result will not be visible immediately, which is permissible only in cases where a person is interested in the language itself. As a rule, such people become professional linguists.

Learning from speech to language is called communicative. In it, the highest value is not the formal correctness of what was said, but its meaning, the communicative motivation of the student and the speech act itself, and not its linguistic content. With such learning, the language should not be an end in itself, but should act as a means of receiving and transmitting information. If the language is taught

precisely as a means of implementing speech, its communicative function, which is the main one, is much better visible. [12]

Communicative learning appeared in the 1970s-1980s, when a pronounced pragmatic orientation of scientific research manifested itself both in the general conceptual position of the methodology of both science and the technology of teaching foreign languages. Methodological approaches have acquired a pronounced communicative character. This led to a radical turn to natural communication in the process of language learning, the focus of this process on the formation of communicative competence, and later on the ability to communicate in the target language, carried out taking into account situational and personal factors that determine the specifics of foreign language speech behavior.

Thus, since the 1970s, the methodologists, who adhered to the positions of the communicative approach, followed the linguists, and sought to rely on the social and functional aspects of the use of language in specific situations of verbal communication.

In communicative teaching of English, the object of formation is not only specific knowledge, skills and abilities, but also communicative competence, which allows a person to effectively interact in situations of verbal communication in English. [9]

Linguistic competence implies that a person masters a certain baggage of formal language knowledge and the corresponding skills and abilities that are associated with different aspects of the language, that is, with grammar, phonetics and vocabulary. Moreover, the question is what kind of lexical units and grammatical structures do people of different ages, professions, etc. need. to ensure their productive social interaction in a non-native language was and still remains open in the methodology. The fact is that words and grammatical constructions are studied in order to transform them into a meaningful statement, that is, they have a clearly expressed speech orientation.

Indeed, if we teach communication in a non-native language, we should not be limited only by the possession of a linguistic code, a certain number of skills, as well as their development in specific situations of social interaction. It is necessary to include verbal communication in other types of activities, where it would serve as a means of their implementation and act as an opportunity not only to exchange some information with another person, but also to understand the interlocutor as a person, which will certainly lead to success in cooperation with him.

Thus, the emphasis of teaching today is not on language, but on speech, which, as we know, is always situational, and the situation, in turn, is determined by its time and place, the characteristics of interlocutors in communication, its purpose, etc.

Strategic and discursive competencies. These components of communicative competence closely intersect with questions of rhetoric. It is the latter that gives answers to questions about how to work on an oral presentation, what is the composition of speech, how to properly interact with the audience, etc. [13]

It is no secret that even when we speak our native language, and knowledge of words and their stylistic features does not present any difficulty for us, not always and not everyone succeeds in constructing a speech convincingly and logically and thus achieving the desired effect of utterance. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that in the classroom, both in a foreign language and in the native language, the oral statements of students often represent speech only in form, and not in essence.

Very often, communicative learning is perceived in a simplified way as a process when a person is simply spoken to in English and does not practice grammar, vocabulary, etc. at all. This notion is a misinterpretation of the communicative technique. It has a place to work on all aspects of the language, including grammar, however, this happens on the basis of real situations of speech

interaction that arise due to certain didactic forms, methods and techniques. Here psychology is very closely intertwined with didactics.

Today, communicative learning is often idealized and presented as super-efficient, especially as opposed to "boring" language-to-speech learning. Meanwhile, the communicative technique is not without drawbacks, the main of which is the possibility of its implementation only with a sufficiently large amount of language practice, that is, with frequent classes. Teaching according to this method, if there is only one lesson per week for one hour, is completely ineffective. In addition, the lack of analysis of the language as a system leaves the potential for the development of logical thinking in teaching it not fully used. [8]

Nevertheless, in modern conditions, when more and more of our citizens come into communication with native English speakers or with native speakers of other languages who speak it fluently, the importance of speech practice is not in doubt. Nothing can replace it to overcome the so-called language or communication barrier, that is, the psychological fear of speaking English.

In modern pedagogical practice, foreign language teachers often face a situation where a person who successfully learns a foreign language is lost, getting into a situation of social interaction in this language at home or in professional activities. At the same time, he can cope well with it if it is modeled by the teacher in the classroom. In real communication, the language barrier prevents him from realizing his linguistic knowledge, skills and abilities.

The opinions of teachers and linguistic psychologists agree on the following point: language barriers are what most often prevents an adult from successfully mastering a foreign language, and they can be both internal and external.

External barriers are objective, arising before a person, regardless of his desire. For example, when he cannot choose for himself a suitable teaching method that meets his goals, or find a suitable teacher. To overcome them, certain organizational efforts are needed. Internal barriers are subjective, they are more difficult to overcome, because they are generated within ourselves, and their roots can be very deep in your subconscious. [11]

Language psychology deals primarily with subjective, internal barriers. The very first and main barrier that must be overcome when starting to learn a foreign language is to overcome the initial fear of such a seemingly difficult task. As a rule, such barriers arise in people who begin to learn a foreign language as adults. An adult needs to make up his mind.

This fear may be associated, for example, with the possibility of failure and loss of faith in oneself. The main fear during a conversation in a foreign language for many Russians is still the fear of making a grammatical error. In this sense, it is still difficult for us psychologically to move away from the Soviet grammar and translation system, where the formal correctness, and not the communicative value of the phrase, was at the forefront. At the same time, we quite calmly make grammatical errors when speaking our native language, sometimes even deliberately distorting it for stylistic purposes, and this does not impair our communication in it at all.

In the era of telecommunication technologies, it becomes obvious that linguistic knowledge alone, which is nothing more than theoretical linguistic information, is not enough for effective communication. Having only them, and not having speech skills, we know the language in a "dead" form. This is the most common problem for people learning a foreign language using the traditional grammar-translation method. [6]

To solve this problem, it is necessary that teaching a foreign language in our country acquire a communicative character and be focused on real everyday communication, which involves the exchange of not only information through language, but also emotions. This is quite difficult to



implement in practice, since such communication implies looseness and focus on the process itself, on getting pleasure from it. Our students and teachers in educational institutions are driven into the framework of standards and programs, which, in fact, implies a focus on a certain result, which, moreover, is not always achieved.

In the process of learning a foreign language, didactic and pedagogical aspects are closely intertwined, if only because in this process, we teach or learn speech, communication and master the system of its implementation. Communication training cannot be effective if it is considered within the framework of a "dry" methodology. The psychological aspects of language teaching determine not only the goals and objectives of teaching, motivation, student interest, etc., but even, apparently, the very methods and approaches to learning, in view of which it is impossible to underestimate the importance of the psychological component in this educational process. A foreign language as an academic discipline is very specific. In itself, it is not a science, but all sciences and all areas of human knowledge are connected with it, since without language there can be no knowledge. That is why the influence of language learning on the personal, general intellectual and general cultural development of a person is great, which only once again emphasizes the important role of psychology in this process.

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