

## PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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**Abstract:** *Psychological factor is a factor that is mentally or spiritually concerned with the aspects in students' acquisition. At least, four of many factors, such as anxiety, attitude, aptitude, and motivation influence the students' process of language acquisition*

**Key words:** *language learning, learning style, factors, self-image, psychological factor.*

There are many factors that influence language learning, and while some of them are external (such as the learning environment or access to resources), others are internal. These internal factors are often psychological in nature and can have a significant impact on a learner's progress and success. In this article, we will explore some of these psychological factors and discuss how they can affect language acquisition. One of the most important psychological factors in language learning is self-respect. Learners who have a positive self-image and believe in their own abilities are more likely to take risks and be open to new experiences. On the other hand, those with low self-esteem may be hesitant to speak in front of others and may avoid situations where they might make mistakes. To help learners develop a sense of self-respect, it is important for teachers to provide a supportive and encouraging learning environment and to give students plenty of opportunities to succeed. Shyness is another psychological factor that can affect language learning. Shy learners may feel uncomfortable speaking in a group setting and may prefer to work alone. They may also be more sensitive to criticism and may become discouraged easily. To help shy learners overcome their fears, teachers can provide activities that allow for individual practice and gradually increase the level of interaction as the learners become more comfortable. It is also important for teachers to be patient and understanding and to provide positive feedback and encouragement. Risk taking is an important aspect of language learning, as it involves stepping out of one's comfort zone and trying new things. Learners who are willing to take risks are more likely to experiment with the language and to learn from their mistakes. They are also more likely to seek out opportunities for communication and to engage with native speakers. Teachers can encourage risk taking by creating a safe and supportive learning environment, where learners feel comfortable making mistakes and are not afraid of being judged. Excitement and enthusiasm are powerful motivators in language learning. When learners are interested in the language and culture, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn. They may also be more willing to put in the necessary time and effort to achieve their goals. To foster excitement and enthusiasm, teachers can incorporate authentic materials into their lessons, such as songs, videos, and literature. They can also encourage

learners to pursue their own interests and to explore topics that are meaningful to them. Finally, attitude is a key factor in language learning. Learners who have a positive attitude towards the language and the learning process are more likely to succeed. They are also more likely to persevere in the face of challenges and setbacks. On the other hand, learners with a negative attitude may become frustrated easily and may give up when things get difficult. To help learners develop a positive attitude, teachers can highlight the benefits of language learning and show how it can be relevant to their personal and professional lives. They can also provide regular feedback and praise, and celebrate the progress and achievements of their students. In conclusion, there are many psychological factors that can influence language learning. By understanding these factors and taking them into account, teachers can create a supportive and motivating learning environment that encourages learners to take risks, develop a positive attitude, and reach their full potential.

Teacher's focus during the teaching process is generally set towards the emotional state of the learners along with their success in the acquisition of the foreign language. As part of the process, the answer of the question why some students are more successful than others, appears to be due to many factors that directly affect the learning and acquisition of foreign languages. Hence, the authors will single out only the affective variables that are included in the Affective Filter Hypothesis, namely: anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence.

Anxiety is a psychological concept explored by a lot of researchers. Spielberger (1966) and McIntyre and Gardner (1994) implied that anxiety is subjective, consciously perceived feelings of tension, apprehension nervousness, and worry, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system. According to Scovel (as cited in Todorova & Koceva, 2015), anxiety is a condition of a person when he or she feels restlessness, frustration, self-doubt, anxiety or worry. In terms of foreign language learning it is called "language anxiety" which is actually a new area of research that deserves special attention. MacIntyre (1998) defined the language anxiety as "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (p. 27). Horwitz et al. (1986) define foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128).

Motivation and anxiety are two opposite sides of the same dimension as proposed by Gardner et al. (1992). Motivation is closely related to the desire and "urge" to achieve a goal, however, what is the effect of motivation for language learning and how it can be measured, is a rather delicate concept. Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguish between integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is based on an interest in the second language

and its culture and refers to the intention to become part of that culture. Instrumental motivation is based on a more practical need to communicate in the second language. In its purest form, this type of motivation is sometimes referred to as the "Carrot and Stick" type: the learner wants to learn the second language to gain something "now" from it (De Bot et al., 2005, p. 72). Even though that there are different types of motivation, yet it's impossible

to be singled out as separate types, due to the fact that when students learn foreign languages in the classroom, they might be integratively motivated, but at the same time instrumentally motivated for getting high grades. In addition to these so-called external types of motivation, a learner may also be intrinsically motivated. Many studies have shown that, whatever the nature of motivation is, there is a connection and a significant impact on the success in foreign language learning and acquisition. Therefore, motivation is an inevitable segment of the affective factors i.e. variables that affect second / foreign language acquisition and are generally responsible for individual variations and learning preferences of the learners.

Self-confidence is an affective factor that also influences foreign language learning. There is a significant correlation between self-confidence and both motivation and anxiety. The concept of self-confidence is conceptually related to that of language anxiety, except that it emphasizes a positive as opposed to a negative component. Clément (1980) proposed that self-confidence was an important determinant of the motivation to learn a L2, and that this self-confidence develops in multicultural contexts as a function of the frequency and quality of the contact with members of the L2 community.

Motivation, anxiety and self-confidence show strong correlation with language achievement. Low anxiety and high self-confidence increase student motivation to learn and to make it more likely that they will use the FL outside of the classroom setting. It is therefore not clear whether more successful learning is directly due to lower anxiety, or to a higher level of motivation and more social interaction (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 90). This paper assesses and determines the degree of anxiety, motivation and self-confidence, which may affect the students' achievement, i.e. their success in learning English and Spanish as foreign languages.

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