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ŞƏBNƏM SEYİDZADƏ

Shabnam.Seyidzada@au.edu.az

BİLLURƏ AĞAMƏMMƏDOVA

Billura.Tahirzada @au.edu.az

Azərbaycan Universiteti, müəlim və dissertant

Ceyhun Hacıbəyli 71, Bakı, Azərbaycan

THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND INDIVIDUAL FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Açar sözlər: motivasiya, fərdi xüsusiyyətlər, dil sərəştəsi, öyrənmə strategiyaları, emosional vəziyyət, sosial mühit

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Ключевые слова: мотивация, индивидуальные особенности, языковая компетенция, стратегии обучения, эмоциональное состояние, социальная среда

Introduction

Research conducted in the field of language learning demonstrates that there are various methods and approaches to acquiring and mastering a language. Scholars such as De Marco and M. Uetter have classified language learning into three fundamental forms.

The first form is referred to as *natural language acquisition*. In this approach, language is learned unintentionally within a real communicative environment, as opposed to being taught through formal instruction. The focus here is not on grammatical knowledge, but rather on the development of communicative competence. This type of learning is particularly evident in the acquisition of a second language, where the individual perceives and internalizes the language not for academic purposes but as a means of fulfilling natural communicative needs. Consequently, even if learners lack in-depth knowledge of grammatical structures, they are often able to use the language effectively in practical contexts.

The second form is *intentional and purposeful language learning*, which typically takes place in formal educational institutions such as schools and universities. In this context, learning is more systematic and rule-based, focusing on grammatical structures and linguistic accuracy. The objective is to teach the correct and precise forms of the language rather than its natural use. Motivation in such settings often arises from external factors — exam results, grades, or institutional requirements — rather than intrinsic interest. As a result, learners may struggle to use

the language communicatively, since their learning is primarily theoretical rather than practical.

The third form represents a *synthesis of natural and intentional learning*. In contemporary foreign language education, this blended model manifests in the use of real-life situations, communicative activities, and interactive methodologies. In this case, learners are motivated both intrinsically — by the desire to speak fluently — and extrinsically — by competition, grades, or achievement goals. Through participation in discussions, projects, and communicative tasks, learners acquire the language in a way that is both natural and structured, thereby developing more stable and practical language skills.

Linguistic Knowledge and Key Factors Affecting Language Learning

Acquiring a language involves mastering its structural characteristics, lexical components, and practical usage skills. In other words, the language learner develops linguistic competence, encompassing both knowledge and habitual use of the language. The formation of linguistic competence is influenced by a range of internal and external factors, which can be broadly classified into three categories: the characteristics of the language itself, the social environment, and individual psychological factors.

1. Language Characteristics

Proficiency in a given language is directly dependent on the inherent system of that language and its grammatical transparency. According to A. Davies, languages that are easier to learn typically exhibit simple and natural grammatical structures, with rules that are consistent and clearly defined. Conversely, languages that are structurally unstable, dynamic, or feature numerous exceptions present greater challenges for acquiring competence.

The relationship between a learner's first language and the target language is also crucial. Shared features between the two languages facilitate positive transfer, whereby existing knowledge aids in acquiring new linguistic forms. In contrast, substantial differences can lead to negative transfer, slowing the learning process. P. Diadori further emphasizes that phonetic, lexical, and grammatical similarities between two languages facilitate acquisition. For instance, learners of grammatically similar languages primarily face challenges in expanding their vocabulary, as they already possess a conceptual system compatible with the new language.

Moreover, multilingual individuals tend to exhibit higher language learning aptitude, as their prior experience with multiple languages enhances cognitive flexibility and metalinguistic awareness.

2. Social Environment and Learning Context

The success of language acquisition is often closely linked to the social and physical environment in which learning occurs. Exposure to real communicative situations and opportunities to use the language in daily life accelerates and deepens

learning. The amount of time allocated to study, coupled with a structured schedule, also significantly influences outcomes. A well-organized timetable and disciplined adherence to it provide essential support to the learner.

3. Individual Psychological Characteristics and Motivation

Personal factors such as age, gender, personality, self-confidence, stress level, and motivation critically shape the learning process. One widely discussed factor is age. According to the traditional critical period hypothesis, children acquire a new language more easily than adults. Erik H. Lenneberg proposed that neurological capacities related to language learning in the left hemisphere of the brain remain highly active until a certain age, approximately up to 10 years. During this period, language acquisition occurs predominantly through natural, incidental processes. After reaching adulthood, neural plasticity decreases, making the acquisition of a new language system more challenging.

However, some scholars contest this perspective, suggesting that children's apparent linguistic advantage may primarily relate to faster pronunciation acquisition. They argue that the concept of a universal "critical period" does not exist; rather, each aspect of linguistic competence has its own critical period. For example, grammar may have a critical age of around 16, allowing adults to learn grammatical structures more systematically than children.

De Bot, Louvi, and Verspoor also note that even when late learners do not achieve full fluency, the difference is influenced not only by age but also by factors such as time allocation, social environment, personality traits, and the extent of language interaction. Motivation, as highlighted by D. Myron and S. Helena, is an internal psychological process that provides energy and direction for behavior. Learners with high motivation tend to engage more consistently and purposefully in the learning process. Motivation can be categorized as intrinsic (driven by personal interest and goals) or extrinsic (driven by external factors such as teachers, parents, or examinations). C. Chandler and J. Connell emphasize that intrinsic motivation is particularly crucial for sustained and effective language acquisition.

In addition to motivation, the choice of learning strategies plays a key role. C. Herbert notes that learners who identify and adhere to strategies that suit them achieve better results in shorter periods. Likewise, a supportive social environment enhances language acquisition; being surrounded by proficient speakers and engaging in communicative settings facilitates faster and more efficient skill development. Motivation, Emotional Factors, and Learning Outcomes in Language Acquisition. The role of motivation and individual characteristics in language learning has been a central focus in psycholinguistic and educational research for many years. Various studies indicate that differences in outcomes among learners under similar conditions are often explained by variations in motivation, emotional state, and goal orientation. Research demonstrates that learners with high motivation

invest greater effort in the learning process, utilize additional resources, and show increased persistence in the face of challenges. For these individuals, language is not merely an academic subject but a means of personal development and social interaction. Consequently, their learning strategies are more systematic, structured, and goal-oriented. Emotional state and self-confidence also play a pivotal role in the development of language skills. Learners with high self-confidence are more willing to take risks, make errors, and experiment with new expressions. According to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, and stress create an "emotional barrier" that impedes the brain's capacity to absorb new knowledge. Conversely, a relaxed and motivating learning environment enhances brain activity and facilitates more effective language retention. Experimental results indicate that learners actively engaged in the learning process—through discussions, dialogues, or group activities—develop language skills more rapidly than passive learners. This aligns with the interactive learning model, which posits that language acquisition occurs through social interaction, with language skills improving in context-specific ways.

The impact of motivation is also shaped by the nature of learners' internal goals. Learners driven by intrinsic motivation (e.g., interest in culture or personal communication) achieve more stable, long-term results. Those motivated extrinsically (e.g., exams, job requirements, or rewards) may attain short-term success, but their motivation tends to diminish more quickly.

Notably, motivation is critical not only at the initiation of learning but throughout its continuation. While motivation sparks initial interest in new knowledge, its maintenance over the mid and final stages of learning depends on self-regulation and habitual learning practices. Some experimental programs have successfully increased motivation through reward systems, encouraging feedback, and recognition of individual achievements, which, in turn, enhances both language skills and self-confidence. These findings confirm that motivation and emotional well-being are inseparable components of the language learning process. A positive emotional environment, supportive teachers, and recognition of individual effort directly influence the quality of learning outcomes.

Conclusion and Overall Evaluation

The reviewed research consistently demonstrates that language acquisition is a complex, multifaceted process, extending beyond the mere mastery of grammar and vocabulary. It affects psychological, social, and cognitive domains, providing learners with new ways of thinking, cultural exposure, and an expanded worldview.

Motivation, emotional state, and learning environment emerge as critical determinants of language proficiency. Highly motivated learners engage in sustained, goal-directed, and efficient study, perceiving the process as integral to personal

growth rather than merely an academic requirement. In this context, fostering intrinsic motivation should be a primary objective of modern language education.

Biological and psychological factors, such as age and individual characteristics, also influence language acquisition. While learning may slow with age, adults' analytical and organizational skills can compensate for slower natural acquisition. Accordingly, optimal learning strategies vary by age: play-based, visual, and immersive approaches suit children, whereas planned, analytical, and goal-oriented methods are more effective for adults. The social environment and interactive learning are also crucial. Participation in authentic communicative situations transforms language from theoretical knowledge into practical communication skills, resulting in more stable and durable competence. Teacher and peer support, interactive classroom environments, and constructive feedback further enhance this process. In summary, successful language acquisition relies on a balanced integration of three core elements: knowledge acquisition (content), learning motivation (emotional component), and environment (social component). When these components interact harmoniously, learners develop deeper, more sustainable, and practical skills. In today's globalized world, language learning is not merely a tool for communication but a key to cultural exchange and global integration. Educational institutions must, therefore, go beyond mere knowledge transmission, fostering intrinsic motivation, creativity, and self-expression in learners. Ultimately, the success of language acquisition depends on the synergistic interaction of motivation, emotional stability, social support, and personalized learning strategies, transforming language from a learned subject into a vehicle for personal and intellectual development.

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Motivasiya və Fərdi Xüsusiyyətlərin Dil Səriştəsinin Formalaşmasındakı Rolu

**Şəbnəm Seyidzadə
Ağaməmmədova Billurə**

XÜLASƏ

Bu məqalədə motivasiya və fərdi xüsusiyyətlərin dil səriştəsinin formalaşmasındakı rolu araşdırılmışdır. Dil öyrənmə prosesində təbii, məqsədli və qarışıq öyrənmə formaları, assimilyasiya və yerləşdirmə prinsipləri nəzərdən keçirilmiş, həmçinin dilin strukturu, sosial mühit və fərdi psixoloji amillərin dili mənimsəməyə təsiri təhlil edilmişdir. Nəticələr göstərir ki, motivasiya, emosional vəziyyət və öyrənmə strategiyaları dil bacarıqlarının inkişafında əsas rol oynayır.

The Role of Motivation and Individual Factors in the Development of Language Competence

**Shabnam Seyidzada
Billure Agamammadova**

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the role of motivation and individual characteristics in the development of language competence. The study examines three main forms of language learning: natural, deliberate, and combined approaches, as well as the principles of assimilation and accommodation. It also analyzes the influence of language structure, social environment, and individual psychological factors on language acquisition. The results indicate that motivation, emotional state, and learning strategies play a crucial role in enhancing language skills. Effective language learning is thus shaped not only by cognitive and grammatical knowledge but also by the interaction of internal motivation, emotional well-being, and social support.

Роль мотивации и индивидуальных особенностей в формировании языковой компетенции

**Шабнам Сейидзаде
Биллүра Агамаммедова**

РЕЗЮМЕ

В статье исследуется роль мотивации и индивидуальных особенностей в формировании языковой компетенции. Рассматриваются формы изучения языка: естественное, целенаправленное и смешанное, принципы ассимиляции и аккомодации, а также влияние структуры языка, социальной среды и психологических факторов на освоение языка. Результаты показывают, что мотивация, эмоциональное состояние и стратегии обучения играют ключевую роль в развитии языковых навыков.

Rəyçi: filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru, Firuzə Şakir qızı İsmayılova