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INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN L2 USERS AND L2 LEARNERS

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Abstract

Language learning is believed to have been central to personal and professional growth. However, there is much progress made in education, the gap between L2 users and L2 learners is still challenging language instructors. In order to identify the differences which causes some trouble, and to suggest a few relevant solutions we decided to conduct an experiment on students who are a senior doctor as well as a schoolboy. As regards the results, we found out several peculiarities of each person in terms of their abilities, attitude and the like relying on observations.

Key words: career, motivation, education, aptitude, attitude, vocabulary, grammar, age difference.

Kalit so‘zlar: karyera, motivatsiya, ta’lim, qobiliyat, so‘z boyligi, gramatika, yoshdagi farq

Ключевые слова: карьера, мотивация, образование, способности, отношение, словарный запас, грамматика, разница в возрасте.

Introduction

It has been widely believed that second language learners and users of target language come across particular difficulties in the achievement of some significant levels, in addition, teachers have always found it complex to deliver the command of language to all equally. Our research proposes a new approach to these problems. In order to overcome the issues, it is vital to identify the peculiarities of second language learners and users. For this reason, we decided to observe L2 learners and speakers and tried to find out what differences are present in their language learning process.

What we are meaning to state in my Case study might attract the interest of both L2 learners and teachers; due to the fact that we will prove how successfully a target language can be acquired if we are aware of differences in L2 learners and users. It is important to keep in mind what kind of differences are described in the research and what we should do with particular individuals.

Literature review

It is apparent that there is nothing or no one which is totally similar to each other in terms of any aspect of them. So that we believe, there have always been differences in view of people’s knowledge and capabilities. “Human minds reliably differ from one another, and how a mind functions differently in different situations”, according to Feldman Barrett (2006). Taking L2 learners into consideration, they could not be in common with motivations, which depend on learners’ attitudes towards the language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) proposed two types of distinct language learning motivation which are instrumental and integrative. Each individual can be motivated in accordance with their needs. Another distinction in second language learners

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can be closely correlated with gender. Gascoigne (2002) noted that in classroom interactions schoolboys generally have more dominance as compared to girls.

Language learners are supposed to have diverse aptitudes, for instance, some rely on their memory, some mainly focus on grammar and the others rely on both while they are using or acquiring the second language, states Cook, V. (2008). The variance in the ages of language learners is also believed to have an influence on the capacity of second language acquisition. As for Lenneberg (1967), the hypothesis shows that the young have a special innate propensity for learning a language. There have been numerous studies done regarding this subject; for example, Cook (2008) gave his analyses of some studies on language learners` differences in his book, Second language learning, and teaching. Peters (1973) states that students usually have different interests and motivations such as long term and short term. According to Lenneberg (1967), language learners may be memory-based learners or analytic learners. Moreover, there are other crucial studies to apply: Skehan (1989) Individual Differences in Second-language Learning; Gardner (1985) Social Psychology and Second Language Learning; Dornyei’s (2001) Teaching and Researching Motivation and (2005) The Psychology of the Language Learner.

Learner’s Profile

For conducting this case study, we had to work with two language learners who learnt English with the help of our lessons. One is a 13-year-old schoolboy; the other is a 45-year-old doctor. They both are from Uzbekistan, the schoolboy named Abdulaziz used to speak only Uzbek, but now he is also able to communicate with people from English speaking countries. The other is quite older, he is capable of speaking two foreign languages, namely, Russian, English. When they started to learn English one and a half years ago, the basics of the language seemed so easy that they thought it was very achievable to be expert at English in no time. On the grounds that we explained basic command of that language clearly and simply, additionally, after one or two lessons we made some uncomplicated tests together with exercises, and would hand them to the learners to check their comprehension. As a result, they feel comfortable and do the tasks so effortlessly. Dr. Davron was in favor of being taught accurate grammar rules and medical vocabulary, owing to the fact that he was eager to use his command in his profession as soon as possible, whereas Abdulaziz used to prefer a lesson with funny videos and games. Especially, working in a group appealed to Abdulaziz, however, there were not any other students except two of them attending in our classes. What had much effect on our students’ language acquisition was the method, Direct Method, we used after they reached some level. We discussed and talked only in English without using first language resulting in increasing their fluency of the target language.

Research Design

In this section, we decided to gain data about the differences in the second language learners and users. They are in different ages and professions; their purpose in acquiring English is unlike too.

Firstly, we interviewed them regarding their attitude towards the second language that they have been learning. Every question was designed for clarifying the variance in their thoughts, and feelings about English.

Secondly, we asked them to complete a questionnaire table. There was one statement in each box, and five responds which were strongly agree, slightly agree, neutral, slightly disagree

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as well as strongly disagree. Then participants had to choose one optional answer for each statement.

Ultimately, we gave them a list of words, some of which are spoken English vocabulary some of which are general or academic words. Then they are asked to choose any five words and make up sentences using that vocabulary. We wanted to know their taste in words, what grammar structures they could use, whether they knew those words or not.

Data collection

The data collection started from interview results for the subject as the first part of the research. It became clear that the two learners are quite different in terms of their motivation, purpose, and thoughts about the second language. For the first question, Abdulaziz stated that because he is going to enter the university, for getting accepted to the philology faculty it is important to know English well. Moreover, he wants to pass English exams at school successfully”. However, Dr. Davron was learning English for being promoted in his job. For the second question, Mr. Davron confessed that after getting older, it becomes hard to acquire the second language, since Abdulaziz is a schoolboy, young and energetic, he has no hindrance in learning a foreign language. Their motivation is not the same either. They knew that English might bring many benefits in terms of career and education. When they are asked which aspects of English they like, answers were distinct again. Dr. Davron chose reading and speaking, while Abdulaziz expressed his desire for listening and grammar. There are some reasons for that situation. For example, Dr. Davron is fond of reading articles and journals and making speeches very much, especially, if topics are related to medicine. On the other hand, Abdulaziz finds reading any scientific work, namely, reading passages, so boring that he chose listening and grammar. He needs to do many grammar exercises to be good at state exams so grammar is his taste, naturally. When it comes to listening, in this kind of task he can listen to people in different conditions, consequently, listening seems more interesting to him. Coming to the last question, Dr. Davron would like to have a serious lesson to be conducted as at his age people do not like any games or funny activities, whereas Abdulaziz is young, and wants more activities that raise participants` moods.

The script is given in Appendix I to prove the learner’s profile.

The second observation involved two learners, and they were handed a questionnaire table with five alternative answers starting from strongly agree to strongly disagree. By this observation, we detected so many differences between them, for instance, Dr. Davron marked the first statement as strongly agree, because he faces many problems unless he does not know English. English helps him also to enhance his knowledge and experience in medicine, due to the fact that a wide range of medical books have been written in the English language. Abdulaziz marked the same question as slightly agree.

In appendix II, we can see their responses to the statements ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. From that questionnaire, we can find that the two participants have dissimilar aptitudes and attitudes towards the second language acquisition. we knew that there are some significant things that influence the learners` aptitudes and their desires about the language. The effects can be exemplified by the learners` ambitions, goals, and expectations. If we can transform the influences on aptitudes and attitudes of L2 learners or users, we can expect our desiring results from them.

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The third observation revealed the learners` style in the usage of grammar and vocabulary.

From appendix three, you can see the results. Accordingly, Davron did not use any informal and spoken words while Abdulaziz opted for only English words and phrases that are informal totally. It shows that when using English Davron is accustomed to making up sentences with the help of general and academic words, taking his grammar structure into account, passive voice comes natural to him. On the other hand, the next participant prefers active voice and spoken vocabulary, basically.

From this part of our research, you can be aware of that some L2 users do not think spoken English is not reliable enough to use. Instead, common or academic English vocabulary is more appropriate. Some may think differently too.

Conclusion

Now that we have looked at the entire data meticulously, one can infer that there are several apparent differences in L2 learners and users. The first distinction is seen in their motivation. Why one`s motivation differs from others? Because there are some significant influences on it such as attitudes, beliefs, goals, environmental support, personal attributes. The participants of my research have different purposes in learning English, in consequence, motivation differs. In that case, we found that every teacher should conduct their lesson taking motivation into account. From my observations, the other dissimilarities are also important to focus on, to illustrate, observing the differences in L2 learners` and users` attitudes and aptitude, age together with gender can improve one`s language acquiring capability.

Honestly, we believe that if teachers detect their students` abilities, motivation, or attitudes towards the command of English, and have an attempt to enhance or transform by using some methods such as connecting the subject to the learners` interests, professions, or the data that the learners already know, they can achieve the highest results.

Further implications

In our viewpoint, the topic we highlighted in this Case study is so broad that many discoveries can be done in the future. For instance, considering the variance of L2 learners in terms of age factor, new styles of books or instructions may be created for each particular aged language learner. Now it is obvious that L2 is taught according to the levels of the students, this method might be modified if more research is done on this topic.

In addition, today it is clear that when you have the desire to be able to speak English, you are required to know grammar rules and at least 3000 words in English, and the most important thing is to communicate in the target language a lot. We believe that if one learner has an aptitude for merely listening or reading not grammar or speaking skill, linguists will find out a method which helps that kind of learner to acquire the whole command of English by reading or listening only.

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