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PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Psychological Aspects of Language Acquisition

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Abstract – In this paper we present about the stages of language acquisition, as elemental, consolidation, conscious expression, automaticity, and psychological aspects of second language acquisition.

Keywords: Learning, Language Acquisition.

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INTRODUCTION

Humans are endowed with two dissociable learning abilities: implicit and explicit learning. Language development is frequently characterized as a methodology where learning proceeds implicitly, that is, unexpectedly and in absence of awareness of what was learned. Kids procure their first language by engaging with their guardians' in common significant correspondence. The acquisition of first language grammar is implicit and is extracted from experience of usage rather than from explicit rules, they automatically acquire complex knowledge of the structure of their language. Yet paradoxically they cannot describe this learning. Adult attainment of second language accuracy usually requires additional resources of explicit learning under incidental conditions and then tested by means of various grammatical judgments and subjective measures of awareness. The outcome demonstrate that incidental exposure to second language syntax can result in unconscious knowledge, which suggests that at least some of the learning in this experiment was implicit. Thus implicit learning is attainment of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex incentive environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

One source of confirmation for the dissociation between explicit and implicit learning comes from studies of global amnesic patients who, as a result of spoil to configurations in the middle of their brain, show normal implicit learning yet total anterograde amnesia for explicit and episodic memories (i.e. they lose the ability to consciously summon up any events that occur after their brain damage - see Schacter, 1987 for review). The perennial subjective evidence for this comes from Claparède (1911) who reported that he once shook hands with a female Korsakoff patient while concealing a pin in his hand. This caused the patient some pain, and when he returned a few

minutes later and offered his hand again, she refused to shake it. Her evasion continued, even though she could give no clarification of why she was avoiding him. In this case implicit learning (behaviour which is changed as a result of a previous encounter) is preserved in the absence of any conscious, explicit recollection of the event.

By language learning motivation, I mean the motivation to learn (or acquire) a second language. This type of incentive is considered in the socio-educational model of second-language acquisition (Gardner, 1985), the social context model (Clement, 1980), the Self-determination model (Noels, & Clément, 1996), the Willingness to Communicate model (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998), and the extended motivational framework (Dörnyei, 1994) to name a few. It is a general form of inspiration applicable in any second language-learning context. Second language acquisition is a complex process which develops under a diverse set of conditions. People learn a second language for various reasons. They have different backgrounds and learn different languages under different circumstances. It is not a trait, as some individuals contend, but it is a general feature of the individual that applies to any opportunity to learn the language. It is relatively stable, because of its presumed antecedents, but it is amenable to change under certain conditions. The various models referred to above are, all agree that it is an attribute with important implications for the individual; they differ in terms of its antecedents, as well as in how it might be assessed.

STAGES IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:

There are at least four stages that can be identified, and they are comparable to those involved in the development of one's first language. Figure 1 presents a schematic representation of these stages.

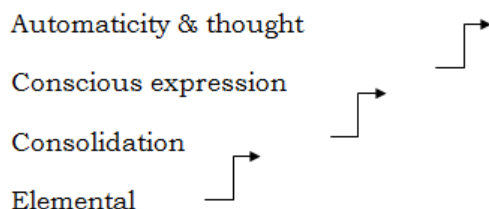


Figure 1: Stages in language acquisition [Source from: R.C. GARDNER]

The initial stage is Elemental. In this stage the entity is learning the basics of the language, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciations, etc. We see this in the development of one's first language when the tot learns new words, begins to put words together, mispronounces some words but corrects them later, etc. With the second language student, we see the same process when initial vocabulary is learned, corresponding with the first language are recognized, simple declarative sentences are memorized, etc.

The second stage is Consolidation, where the elements of the language are brought together and some degree of knowledge with the language is achieved. We see this stage in the young child learning the first language, when they begin to be familiar with that language as a system where some elements are correct and others incorrect and they develop rules for pluralization, sentence structure, and the understanding of idioms, etc. A similar prototype occurs for students learning a second language, when they find that some of the structures and elements can be like those in their native language while others can be very different, when they learn that some terminology are meaningful, others not, etc.

In the third stage, there is Conscious Expression, during which the individual can use the language but with a great deal of cognizant effort. The human being can communicate thoughts and ideas, but there is a lot of deliberation about what is being expressed. For the young first language learner, this phase can be predictable by the use of a lot of speech hesitations such as um, er, uh, where the individual is actively searching for the right words or form of appearance. For the learner of a second language, you can observe the same occurrence, and often get the feeling that the individual is in fact searching the first language for help in meaningful how to articulate the idea in the second language.

The fourth stage is recognized as Automaticity and Thought to designate that at the ultimate stage language and consideration merge and language becomes habitual in most contexts. This could well correspond to Lambert's cultural cluster. In this phase, language and self-become consistent. One no longer thinks about the language, but thinks in the language.

PSYCHO-PHYSIOLOGICAL FACTORS:

The all-purpose awareness is that children learn more simply a second language than adults. Before evaluating to what extent age limit affect results, let us have a peep on the conclusion of science concerning the way age operates in the acquisition of language. Brain maturation studies show that during the first years of life the procedure is very rapid. Maturation is achieved to 60% when the child starts speaking and then slows down increasingly. The most favorable period appears to be between 2 and 5. Throughout that period, there is an interaction of maturation and self-programmed learning [David Annoussamy].

CONCLUSION:

In this paper we found that explicit learning is a more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure. Knowledge attainment can thus take place implicitly (no conscious and automatic abstraction of the structural nature of the material arrived from experience of instances), explicitly through selective learning (the learner searching for information and building then testing hypotheses), or, because we can communicate using language, explicitly via given rules (assimilation following explicit instruction). There are no absolute barriers to second-language acquisition, it is an extremely important component in a very competitive global market.

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