

1 Factors affecting second language learning

2 Characteristics of the 'good language learner'

Activity on p. 50.

3 Research on learner characteristics

- Correlation between measures of characteristics and second language proficiency
- Difficulties
- Not possible to directly observe and measure qualities
- The characteristics are not independent.

4 Intelligence

- Measured by IQ tests
- It was found that while Intelligence was related to the development of second language reading, grammar, and vocabulary, it was unrelated to oral productive skills.
- Intelligence may be a strong factor when learning involves language analysis and rule learning.
- Intelligence may play less important role where instruction focuses more on communication and interaction.

5 Aptitude

- Learning quickly is the distinguishing feature of aptitude.
- Ability to identify and memorize new sounds
- Ability to understand the function of particular words in sentences
- Ability to figure out grammatical rules
- Memory for new words
- Successful language learners may not be strong in all of the components of aptitude.

6 Personality

- A number of personality characteristics have been proposed as likely to affect second language learning, it has not been easy to demonstrate their effects in empirical studies.
- Different studies measuring a similar personality trait produce different results.
- Extroversion
- Inhibition discourages risk-taking
- Personality variables may be a major factor only in the acquisition of conversational skills, not in the acquisition of literacy skills.

7 Motivation and attitudes

- Learner's communicative needs
- Attitudes towards the second language community
- Integrative motivation
- Instrumental motivation
- Social dynamic or power relationship between L1 and L2.

8 Motivation in the classroom setting

- The content is interesting and relevant.
- Learning goals are challenging yet manageable and clear.
- The atmosphere is supportive and non-threatening.
- Motivating students into the lesson
- Varying the activities, tasks and materials
- Using co-operative rather than competitive goals

9 Learner preferences

- Perceptually-based learning styles
- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinaesthetic
- Cognitive based learning style
- Field independent
- Field dependent
- Encourage students to use all means available to them as they work to learn another language

10 Learner beliefs

- Beliefs and opinions about how their instruction should be delivered.
- Help learners expand their repertoire of learning strategies and thus develop greater flexibility in their ways of approaching language learning

11 Age

- Critical Period Hypothesis
- There is a time in human development when the brain is predisposed for success in language learning.
- Language learning which occurs after the end of the critical period may not be based on the innate biological structures believed to contribute to first language acquisition or second language acquisition in early childhood.
- The critical period ends somewhere around puberty.

12 Studies on critical period hypothesis

- Mastery of the spoken language (p.61-63)
- Intuitions of grammaticality (p. 64)
- Catherine Snow and Marian Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) (p. 64-67)

13 At what age should second language instruction begin?

Achieving native-like mastery

Basic communicative ability