COGNITIVE APPROACHES TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

G.G. Abdullayeva,
assistant-professor at English Linguistics department

S.T. Akhmadjonov,
student of Foreign Languages faculty

Abstract*. In this research the intent is to express the cognitive mechanisms that learners use in their language learning. modern methods of teaching languages raise the obvious and undeniable issue of the role of cognitive approaches in language learning. The subject matter of the study is increasingly being incorporated into the educational process.*

Keywords. *L2 acquisition, cognitive approaches, mentalism, rationalism, associative cognitivism.*

Аннотация. *В этом исследовании цель состоит в том, чтобы выразить когнитивные механизмы, которые учащиеся используют при изучении языка. Современные методы обучения языкам ставят очевидный и бесспорный вопрос о роли когнитивных подходов в изучении языка. Предмет исследования все больше внедряется в образовательный процесс.*

Ключевые слова. *Приобретение L2, когнитивные подходы, ментализм, рационализм, ассоциативный когнитивизм.*

It is essential to take into account all of the factors that influence proficiency in language learning when teaching EFL. The personality and cognition of the student are the most important factors in the language learning process. There are a variety of personality issues at play when it comes to the abilities of different students. The process of teaching a language should include learners' aptitude and the needs they have. The secrets to success in language learning and teaching are dealing with the psychological and cognitive factors of the students and designing activities and teaching methods accordingly. In fact, modern methods of teaching languages raise the obvious and undeniable issue of the role of cognitive approaches in language learning. The subject matter of the study is increasingly being incorporated into the educational process.

Cognitive approaches for learning a second language has increased the efficiency of distinguishing linguistic forms. This paper aims to elaborate cognitivism and its implications to the second language learning. Cognitive theory or approach views the learner as a thinking being and an active processor of information. Thus, learning is a process in which the learner actively tries to analyze circumstances where the application of the rule would be appropriate and to make sense of data. In other words, we learn by thinking about and trying to make sense of what we see, hear and feel. In order to get a clear picture of the cognitive theory in relation to second language learning, other related theories were also described briefly from the historical points of view. In general cognitivism can be grouped under the innate model which is also known as 'nativist'. 'mentalism' (thinking as rule-governed activity), 'rationalism'. The implications of cognitive theories can be revealed in the basic teaching techniques which cover activities such as problem-based solving activity, discovery learning, cognitive strategies, project-based learning, etc.

The main cognitive factors that have significant impacts on the ultimate L2 proficiency are intelligence, language aptitude, and language learning strategies. The chosen geographical area of research is the English Language Faculty of Ba Ria Vung Tau University, where long list of students is believed to urgently need help with their studies, and, at the same time, where the cognitive approach to linguistics has never been deeply explored. As a consequence, the study's foci range from the role of intellectual, aptitudinal, and strategic factors in English acquisition of this faculty's students, the links between cognitive effects and their difficulties in learning English, to the action that should be taken immediately to boost everyone's language performance

The research takes place in the educational context of English Language Faculty because this is the area where students are expected to have the greatest amount of exposure to the English language on campus, through both schoolwork in classes and homework in the form of group or independent projects. This exposure is always known as the decisive factor in reaching full comprehension of a language, and the more learners are able to be immersed in that language, the more likely it is that they shall become fluent within a very short time. The general output of the faculty, nevertheless, has not always been up to expectation over the past couple of years, leading to a lot of unanswered questions surrounding both the environment in BVU and these learners themselves. After spending almost 4 years as an English Language student in this university, I have realized a certain number of problems that may have inevitable impacts on many students' English proficiency. To specify, in the first two years of our undergraduate program, most of our time was spent on practicing the four basic skills to gain higher proficiency, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing, according to the format and content of the IELTS Test. At the same time, we were also provided with elementary linguistic knowledge in sub-areas like syntax, semantics, phonology, and phonetics. These first years were meant to equip students with a sufficient level of language proficiency, serving as a foundation step, to prepare students for the next two years when we officially moved to specialist knowledge with the use of English in either tourism, business, or pedagogy. Though this seemed to be a cleverly organized curriculum for language learning, what we got to learn was mere practice of group communication, essay production following the common IELTS structure, together with exercise completion based on academic passages and short audios. There was no emphasis on the matter of training our brain for analytical, critical, and logical thinking, or instructions on how to obtain intellectual capacity, how to take advantage of our language aptitude, how to figure out our preferred learning styles that could optimize our acquisitional ability, etc. An example of this can be seen in reading classes, where we were asked to read a passage and answer some questions to test our overall understanding, without digging deeper into the structural organization as well as the generation and expression of argumentative ideas so as to learn how the writer analyzed different aspects of the same issue. This, as I believe, would have helped students get a more profound look at any given topic in English and an ability to always generate thoughts, whether academically or casually, in this language without much translation into their native tongue. This was true even for our studies into the branches of linguistics. For instance, the module called semantics was concerned with logical aspects of meaning, and phonetics was abstract, grammatical characterization of systems of sounds or signs, which means they required a lot of brainwork for language-based cognition and perception. Yet, neither of these classes offered students much opportunity to examine the relation between cognition and language, nor taught us the way of utilizing our mental processes to acquire conceptual or connotative meanings, and the physical properties of speech sounds. Therefore, I am dedicated to figuring out whether these shortcomings are among the main reasons behind problems in learning the English language within

this particular area. In other words, I would like to clarify if the teaching environment has offered enough exposure, if the strategies used in each class effectively meet the needs of each student, and most importantly, if the lack of focus on cognitive factors in the curriculum and teaching styles are having negative effects on English outcomes.

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