



The Crucial Factors to Successfully Acquire a Target Language

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v10i6.4800>

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to identify and describe important factors for effectively acquiring a target language. The study utilizes a library research method, gathering information from various sources to address the research question. It emphasizes the combination of both implicit and explicit knowledge, where learners benefit from immersive language exposure as well as conscious learning in formal settings like classrooms or online platforms. The use of comprehensible input is highly valued in language acquisition and should be incorporated in everyday contexts and classroom instruction. It is important for the content to be interesting and relevant to learners, capturing their attention and providing practical application in their daily lives. Successful polyglots' experiences support the effectiveness of acquiring languages through understandable input. A positive attitude towards the language creates a favorable learning environment, increases motivation, and improves overall proficiency. Learners who genuinely show interest and enthusiasm for the target language are more likely to invest time and effort in learning activities, seek additional resources, and engage in meaningful interactions. This positive attitude enhances intrinsic motivation, enabling learners to persist through challenges. Regular listening and reading activities have numerous benefits for language development. Immersing oneself in authentic audio materials and written texts exposes learners to natural language patterns, vocabulary usage, and cultural aspects. Engaging with various types of audio content enhances listening comprehension, phonetic awareness, and overall fluency. Based on these theoretical concepts, learners are strongly advised to apply these aspects in order to acquire their target language effectively.

Keywords: *Crucial Factors; Language Acquisition; Successful; Target Language*

Introduction

Language is, undoubtedly, a useful tool for communication. It is usually used to maintain social and emotional bond between members of family and society (O'Grady and Archibald, 2015). It can also be employed as a means of transferring knowledge and culture (Brown and Yule, 1983). This tool enables a person to persuade someone else to do something as well. Language has been crucial part of human life.

Language can be learned and acquired (Krashen, 1981). People are able to learn a language by following an official language instruction given by a legal language institution. It may be conducted through speaking the language directly, memorizing words, or writing numerous grammar rules. People

might acquire language by living it as a daily speech instrument. It can be done by listening and reading a language content every day.

Language acquisition is unconscious process (Krashen, 1981). This occurs as what has been done by children. They have never learned language on purpose. They just listen from their parents and use their mother tongue every day. They naturally pick up the words and its meaning by communicating with their environment. When children speak, they are sometimes aware of the language forms they acquire.

Children and adults acquire language through different ways. Kids acquire language by interacting with their surroundings. It can be their families, teachers, and friends. They do not purposively learn the rule patterns of their first language. This acquisition process is subconscious. Meanwhile, adults are capable of acquiring language with official and unofficial linguistic situation (Krashen, 1981). They can obtain language exposure in language classroom with communicative practice, error correction, and structure recognition. Moreover, it is also necessary for them to immerse themselves with understandable content of the target language outside the classroom and make the language the prominent means of communication in their area. With this method, an adult can fluently speak his or her second language in just a few years.

This is supported by Julie, who is an adult and a native of British English. She is able to speak Egyptian Arabic as proficient as its native speaker. It is because the language has become a major tool of interaction at her home after living in Cairo for three years (Ortega, 2009). It proves that an adult is able to acquire language through immersion and natural meaningful communication.

Mastering a second language has been so important for people that it enables them to exchange their perspectives and cultural values to other. It is found that there are hundred thousands of people who become a polyglot—a person who can speak more than two languages. These people seem to find excitement in having the ability to follow conversation in multilingual setting.

This present study aims to identify and describe vital aspects by applying which language learners or acquirers can excellently acquire a target language.

Method

This study employs a library research method which George (2008) claims that it comprises recognizing and positioning sources that provide factual information or personal or expert perspectives on a research question. This method is selected in this study due to its supportive nature of efficiency, therefore this present study requires strong theoretical and empirical proof to support its arguments. By relying on established scholarly works and authoritative sources, the study seeks to strengthen its findings and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field. This methodological approach enables the researchers to explore various perspectives and analyze previous research findings in the literature. Additionally, by drawing on reputable sources, the study aims to ensure the reliability and validity of its conclusions. By employing the library research method, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and well-grounded analysis that contributes to the understanding and advancement of the subject matter.

Discussion

Combination between Tacit Knowledge and Explicit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge or implicit knowledge in language acquisition is perceived to be knowledge of a language which learners are unaware of and is used instinctively. They comprehend and perform the knowledge, but they are incapable of explaining it (Ellis and Roever, 2018).

Reber (1989) claims that this knowledge is gained separately from conscious learning process. Such knowledge, in terms of language acquisition, is usually obtained by receiving constant daily language exposure (i.e listening and reading). In other words, it comes from experience. Implicit knowledge stems from learners interaction with their environment in the target language.

Explicit knowledge is intentionally obtained through mindful progression (Ellis, 2009). As the opposite of the previous explanation, this type of knowledge is attained by learners through language instruction. They are presented with sentence patterns and error correction. Thus, explicit knowledge is conscious and learnable.

Combining these two knowledge may help acquirers in acquiring any languages. While in spare time they can have immediate experience with language exposure, they are also able to consciously learn the target language in classroom or other language instruction platform (e.g online learning application).

Comprehensible Input

Comprehensible Input (CI) is a language content that learner or acquirer can understand (Krashen, 1982). It can be either listening audio or reading text. The content also needs to be interesting and relevant to language acquirers. Interesting language content may attract acquirers' attention. Relevant input can directly be used by acquirers daily. He also claimed that the only true basis of second language acquisition is comprehensible input.

Patrick (2019) supported this notion as an important factor which he had applied to his Latin language classroom. He claimed that CI shows remarkable results in his class. CI offers opportunity to learners to have various contents of Latin.

Rodrigo (2003) conducted an experimental research on comprehensible input. He discovered that foreign language learners who were presented with comprehensible input in two experimental Reading group did better in communication than learners who were conventionally taught lexical items and sentence structures.

Sanz (2005:11) stated that there is total conformity between scientists that language input is fundamental for acquisition to happen. Language exposure is considered to be one outer aspect that needs to be made relevant for language acquirer.

Lightbown and Spada (2013) further confirmed that comprehensible input helped students making outstanding improvement in classroom without immediate learning process.

Based on the explanations above, it is sensible to claim that comprehensible input has huge role in language acquisition. It needs to be exposed to language acquirers in typical daily events. It has to be a primary content in the classroom as well.

Attitude towards the Target Language

Learners' attitude towards their target language is also one important variable in acquiring a language. A positive attitude towards the language creates a conducive learning environment, fosters motivation, and enhances overall students' proficiency (Oroujlou, N., & Vahedi, M., 2011). When learners possess a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for the target language, they are more likely to invest time and effort in learning activities, seek out additional resources, and engage in meaningful interactions. This positive attitude fuels intrinsic motivation, enabling learners to persist through challenges and setbacks. Moreover, a favorable attitude towards the language encourages learners to embrace cultural aspects associated with it, leading to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the language's nuances. Conversely, negative attitudes, such as fear, anxiety, or indifference, can hinder language acquisition progress. Therefore, it is imperative for language educators and stakeholders to cultivate and nurture positive attitudes towards the target language through engaging instructional methods, cultural exposure, and creating supportive learning environments. By acknowledging the significance of learners' attitudes and actively promoting a positive mindset, we can facilitate the language acquisition process and empower learners to achieve greater proficiency and fluency in their target language.

Anxiety is one barrier in language learning or acquisition process. It stands as a significant obstacle in the language learning or acquisition process (Vadivel, 2022), exerting detrimental effects on learners' progress and performance. When learners experience language-related anxiety, it can impede their ability to effectively communicate, comprehend, and retain new linguistic concepts. The fear of making mistakes, being judged, or facing embarrassment often hinders learners' willingness to take risks and engage in authentic language interactions. This anxiety-induced avoidance of participation deprives learners of valuable opportunities for practice and feedback, which are crucial for language development. Furthermore, anxiety can hinder cognitive processes, affecting attention, memory, and information processing, thereby hampering the acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, and language skills. It is therefore crucial for educators to address language anxiety through nurturing a supportive and non-judgmental learning environment, incorporating stress-reducing techniques, and providing ample opportunities for gradual exposure and practice. By actively recognizing and mitigating anxiety, language learners can cultivate confidence, enhance their language skills, and foster a positive and empowering language learning experience.

Learners or acquirers who possess positive attitude towards a target language will be more successful than those who have the negative one. A positive attitude serves as a powerful catalyst, fueling motivation, perseverance, and engagement in the language learning process. When learners approach their target language with enthusiasm and optimism, they embrace challenges as opportunities for growth and view mistakes as stepping stones towards improvement. This positive mindset enables them to overcome obstacles, seek out additional resources, and persist in their language learning journey. Moreover, a positive attitude fosters a sense of curiosity and openness, allowing learners to actively explore and appreciate the linguistic and cultural aspects of the language. As a result, they are more inclined to engage in authentic interactions, practice regularly, and immerse themselves in the language, thereby accelerating their language acquisition. In contrast, learners with a negative attitude tend to be more disengaged, demotivated, and hesitant to take risks, which ultimately hinders their progress. Therefore, nurturing and cultivating a positive attitude towards the target language is crucial for learners' success, as it creates a favorable learning environment that empowers them to achieve higher levels of proficiency, communicative competence, and overall language fluency.

Language as a Habit

Students or acquirers of language need various language exposure every day. Language exposure serves as a fundamental building block for acquiring vocabulary, grammar, and language skills. Through

regular exposure to authentic spoken and written language, learners gain familiarity with different language structures, idiomatic expressions, and nuances of communication. Varied language exposure allows learners to encounter a wide range of vocabulary, contexts, and registers, facilitating their ability to comprehend and produce language in diverse settings. Additionally, exposure to authentic language input enhances learners' listening and reading comprehension skills, as they become attuned to natural intonation, rhythm, and discourse patterns. Moreover, exposure to different forms of language, such as conversations, media, literature, and academic texts, provides learners with valuable opportunities to observe and practice language in meaningful contexts. This exposure nurtures their language intuition, cultural awareness, and communicative competence. Therefore, it is vital for educators and learners alike to create an environment that offers abundant language exposure, encompassing various sources like multimedia, real-life interactions, literature, and digital resources. By prioritizing consistent and diverse language exposure, students and language acquirers can develop a solid foundation and strengthen their overall language proficiency.

Learners or language acquirers must establish a habit of listening to and reading contents in their target language to improve their language proficiency. Engaging in regular listening and reading activities offers numerous benefits for language development. By immersing themselves in authentic audio materials and written texts, learners expose themselves to natural language patterns, vocabulary usage, and cultural nuances. Listening to a variety of audio content, such as podcasts, news broadcasts, or conversations, enhances learners' listening comprehension skills, phonetic awareness, and overall language fluency. Reading extensively in the target language exposes learners to diverse vocabulary, sentence structures, and writing styles, promoting their reading comprehension, grammar knowledge, and expanding their lexical repertoire. Additionally, consistent listening and reading practice contribute to improving language intuition, as learners develop a sense of language rhythm, idiomatic expressions, and contextual usage. These habits also foster critical thinking, analytical skills, and cultural understanding. By making listening to and reading content in their target language a daily habit, learners actively engage with the language, reinforcing their language skills, and accelerating their language acquisition journey.

The more students or language acquirers spend time with the target language, the more rapid their acquisition process becomes. Language acquisition is a cumulative and iterative process that thrives on exposure and practice. When learners consistently engage with the target language through various activities like speaking, listening, reading, and writing, they create a rich linguistic environment that facilitates rapid progress. Spending more time with the language enables learners to internalize its patterns, structures, and vocabulary more deeply. It allows them to become familiar with the nuances of pronunciation, intonation, and cultural context. Moreover, extended exposure to the target language enhances learners' language intuition, as they develop an intuitive understanding of grammar rules, idiomatic expressions, and appropriate language use. Regular practice also builds confidence, fluency, and automaticity in the language. Furthermore, increased exposure to authentic materials, conversations, and interactions exposes learners to a wide range of linguistic contexts, registers, and styles, broadening their communicative competence. Therefore, the more time students or language acquirers invest in interacting with the target language, the faster they will acquire it, as they actively engage with the language, internalize its patterns, and accelerate their linguistic development.

Conclusion

This present study is aimed to identify and describe vital aspects to excellently acquire a target language. This study utilizes a library research method which comprises recognizing and aligning sources that provide factual information or personal or expert perspectives on a research question. By combining both tacit and explicit knowledge, learners can benefit from the immersive experience of language exposure while also consciously learning the target language in formal settings like classrooms or online platforms. This integrated approach offers a comprehensive approach to language acquisition.

Comprehensible Input. It is clear that comprehensible input holds immense value in language acquisition and should be integrated into both everyday contexts and classroom instruction. This content should be both interesting and relevant to the learners, as it captures their attention and provides practical application in their daily lives. Observations of successful polyglots support the notion that acquiring languages through understandable input is effective.

Positive Attitude towards the target language. A positive attitude towards the language creates a conducive learning environment, fosters motivation, and enhances overall students' proficiency. When learners possess a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for the target language, they are more likely to invest time and effort in learning activities, seek out additional resources, and engage in meaningful interactions. This positive attitude fuels intrinsic motivation, enabling learners to persist through challenges and setbacks.

Establish a habit. Engaging in regular listening and reading activities offers numerous benefits for language development. By immersing themselves in authentic audio materials and written texts, learners expose themselves to natural language patterns, vocabulary usage, and cultural nuances. Listening to a variety of audio content, such as podcasts, news broadcasts, or conversations, enhances learners' listening comprehension skills, phonetic awareness, and overall language fluency.

Based on these theoretical concepts, learners or language acquirers are strongly recommended to apply all the aspects mentioned above, so they can acquire their target language effectively.

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