

A Probe into the “Natural Learning Method” of Children’s Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract : At present, the biggest problem with English education in my country is that the country, society, and families have invested a lot of time, energy, and money, but with little effect. Most students still have big problems in communicating proficiently in English. This article mainly uses some research findings, based on the natural laws of language learning, and mainly discusses the “naturally natural” subject learning methods of children’s English.

Keywords : Second Language Acquisition; Infant Learning Method; Natural Learning Method

The second language study in our country is mainly English, followed by Japanese. Learning a new language that is different from the mother tongue is not just about learning vocabulary and grammar, but also about cultivating good second language skills, that is, good listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, and understanding the thinking behind a new language. In today’s society, the importance of learning English is unquestionable. It is equivalent to having a voice in society. Without this stepping stone, many doors will be difficult to open.

Regarding language learning, there is a very important word, that is, the critical period of language learning (critical period). Before a person is twelve years old, it is the most important stage to learn a language well. After this critical period, language learning will get half the result with half the effort, because the language absorption area of the brain will be automatically closed after the age of twelve, and new languages will be difficult to receive. Therefore, it takes more time and energy for adults to learn English than children, with little effect. Therefore, it is very important to grasp the critical period for children to learn English. Next, the author will talk about the ideas and methods of children’s English acquisition based on the theory of natural language learning.

1. Help children establish a correct belief system in language learning

First of all, the most important element in language learning is mentality. No matter how sophisticated the learning equipment is and how rich the learning resources are, if the learner is not willing to learn, does not know the purpose of learning, and does not have the motivation to learn, it is difficult to learn a language or even anything else. In a class, the same teacher explained that some students learn slowly, some learn fast, and have strong acceptance. In fact, it has a lot to do with mentality. Then in the process of

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children's language learning, parents or teachers should help children establish correct values, guide them to think about their learning goals and motivations, and maintain a positive attitude of being positive, happy, open-minded, confident and not afraid of setbacks, which is the most important thing. Because the content that children pursue to learn, if they can make them feel happy and fulfilled, they will definitely work hard from the heart.

2. Introduction to the theory of “natural learning method”

Language education has always been a problem in education. Children are the most advantageous group in language learning. As long as they are at the right age and use appropriate original language materials, coupled with scientific methods that conform to the laws of nature, children will naturally master a language and achieve fluent expression and communication.

Lao Tzu's “Tao Law of Nature” tell people that nature can embody all the laws of life or the world, including the laws of language learning. Language learning must follow the natural laws of mastering language acquisition, that is, “the natural language learning method of Taoism”, that is, to follow the sequence of “listening, speaking, reading, and writing” to conform to the child's nature and the physical brain. The method of growth and development law is taught.

Lao Tzu also talked about “returning to the baby”. Children's second language acquisition can learn the “natural learning method” of the baby while following the “Tao Law of Nature”. Babies are known as geniuses in language learning. The fact is that almost all babies have an ability to master a strange language from time to time. Babies can continue to have a large number of vocabulary without memorizing words; they can communicate without learning grammar; they can't do problems, but can read easily. This is to follow the natural principle of inaction.

In the TED talk “Baby's Genius Language Ability”, the speaker, Patricia Kuhl, is a language scientist. She uses the graphs of scientists to study language learning to show the audience the critical period of language learning (critical period). According to the research conclusion of the chart, people are the golden age of language learning before the age of seven. At this stage, one can easily learn a language. The second critical period is when the learning area of the human brain begins to gradually close at the age of eight to twelve. After puberty, people's language ability begins to decline. Babies are called “citizens of the world” because they can master any language in the world through careful listening. Patricia Kuhl used research data in her speech to show that our mother tongue will shape our brains. She also pointed out a key point of language learning, that is, the importance of regular interactions (such as storytelling and playing games) in situations. At this time, the language area is more active and can stimulate it.

3. Context learning method and TPR (total physical response) teaching method

Let's first take a look at how babies learn a language in life. Babies listen a lot every day and soak in the language environment. In children's language learning, they can imitate the baby's language learning process, learn interactively in situations, and master the language of others by simulating the language of others. Language learning will go through a period of silence in the early stage, then to the initial period of language, and finally to a period of language explosion.

To carry out comprehensible input and use the contextual learning method, a more effective method is to use visual aided input. The original excellent English teaching programs or videos abroad are very ideal visual aids “understandable input system”. By watching these videos, children can truly blend into those contexts and feel that they are in it. At the same time, let the children imitate through these visual scenes, use their bodies to understand language, and automatically realize internalized language ability and establish language thinking. The actual teaching practice shows that letting the children imitate the task tone, manners and actions in the video and present them in the form of performance can quickly improves the children's English level.

Language is not knowledge, but a skill, it requires repeated practice to be mastered, just like practicing cycling. Therefore, the role of performance is to simulate a real situation and bring learners into a social environment, because the situation can stimulate the activity of the language area of the brain. Let them pass continuous training to achieve the goal of proficiently mastering basic language skills and being able to communicate naturally.

4. The three principles of natural English learning

The English natural learning method mentions three major principles, namely, the establishment of a standard phonetic system, a large number of understandable inputs and the use of super-logical image thinking for language learning.

English is a language system based on sound. Correct pronunciation is very important for learning English. In Western society, pure English is a sign of class. Some of the word creation in English comes from sound, which is the language of sound. Therefore, people in English-speaking countries pay more attention to listening and speaking, and more attention to sound. Our Chinese is a combination of word, sound, form and meaning. This explains why many foreigners often have typos in their writing. Many people have dyslexia, while Chinese people will be very tired to read the full text in capital letters. All show that English is a language system based on sound. According to the characteristics of English language, language learning begins with listening. Then it uses super-logical image thinking to make a large amount of understandable input and a small amount of output, just listening and imitating.

The basic principle of language learning is the principle of high input and low output of language information. Violating this principle, most language learning will get twice the result with half the effort. Krashen proposed that language mastery, whether in a native language or a foreign language, is naturally achieved in the real context of “comprehensible input”. The most important point in Krashen’s language theory is the large amount of “intelligible input” through immersion. For language learners, especially children, accumulating large amounts of English voice information is an inevitable part of learning English well. Learning English for the purpose of comprehension does not conform to the language learning mechanism of the brain. High input and low output, understandable, is the focus of learning. The biggest problem for second language learners in our country is the serious lack of input.

Furthermore, there are two ways of thinking in the brain: logical symbolic thinking and super-logical image thinking. The brain uses logical thinking for most scientific learning. It is the way in which human consciousness is constructed and can be expressed by symbols. This memory method is not suitable for processing large amounts of information and is easy to forget. The super-logical image thinking mode cannot be expressed by symbols, but it can process a large amount of sound and image information quickly and efficiently, and has an unforgettable memory effect. Infant language learning is this way of thinking, using super-logical image thinking to truly learn foreign languages.

5. Conclusion

Good methods can help get things right from the beginning. For children to learn a language, the best way is to use the “natural learning method”, concentrate on listening to the original materials throughout the day immersively listen to the original material, a lot of extensive listening, viewing, imitating and performing, the children will inevitably gain a lot in the end. Good learning results, and a good attitude will definitely help children go further.

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