

Obstacles and Suggestions for the Development of Language Education

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Abstract

Language is the only true language in the world, and children can acquire two or more languages at the same time if they are naturally exposed to them in the early stages of their life. Modern grammar is rooted in the idea that language is something inherent to humans and does not need further study. This has had a profound influence on all parts of Europe until the beginning of the last century, when the grammar of modern languages was not based on any clear linguistic theory. Contemporary language agreed to name those rules that are based on the Greek and Latin rules as traditional rules in contrast to modern linguistic theories and approaches.

1- Definition of Language:

Most of the living organisms, particularly animals, have means of communication and mutual understanding among themselves. In addition we often hear about the plants language or other animal from a species or another. We need to be careful in using the word "language" because modern scientific literature indicates that there only one true Language in the world which is the one used by humans. This language is vastly different than all other methods of communication used by other animals. It is the quality of the language that humans have been blessed with by Allah is what sets him apart from other systems of communication.

2- The Child and Language:

Though more recent studies have undoubtedly explained that human language is perhaps the single most complicated thing in this existence, different theories have arose in the last century in an effort to explore its complexities. Every child at any place, any time, and in any society is able to attain the language that is spoken by the surrounding society and in a relatively short period of time. Even a mentally handicapped child can attain the language of his society. In addition, he is able to acquire two or more languages at the same time if he is naturally exposed to them in the early stages of his life. This is called the bilingual phenomenon. The level of ease that a child acquires his mother tongue has researchers to think about the inevitability of this process and that it does not need much analysis, contemplation and study.

3- Roots of Modern Grammar

In contrast to the idea that language is something inherent to humans and does not need further pondering or analysis, a new idea emerged to draw the attention to the significance of conducting further studies on language .This idea is the extreme level of difficulty that foreign language students face in learning the language especially if the learning process takes place a country where its own whose people speak this language. It is a really interesting phenomenon due to the clear difference with which a child acquires the language of his people and society in contrast to a foreign language. However, such studies have taken a certain direction that has

been a mix of logic and philosophy and has often moved away from objectivity and scientific methodology which should be the way forward.

Nevertheless, these studies have had a profound influence on all parts of Europe until the beginning of the last century, when the grammar of modern languages was not based on any clear linguistic theory rather, these rules, which are attempts to describe the different systems of which the language is composed, followed the rules that were originally developed such as the Arabized Greek language, and then withdrew after that to another Arabized language such as the Latin language, and were applied to many modern languages that do not have complete syntax, as is the case in the two languages, Greek and Latin and what we see in classical Arabic as well. These languages were based on languages like Greek, then Latin languages. Therefore, those rules were not, in fact, drawn from those living modern languages, but rather they basically followed the model of a dead language such as the Latin language. Thus, it was an incorrect description of any of those languages, in addition to not being based on any scientific linguistic theory.

4- How did the Teachers Interact with Such Rules?

The aforementioned results the same as those that language teachers used to teach their children, or foreign language students depended on. In other words, there were no educational rules planned and systematized in a way suitable for teaching, so the teachers and authors of language learning materials were motivated, each according to his own ability and understanding of the learning process, by organizing these rules, at times by collecting some of them and presenting them to others, and at other times by grading them and setting the necessary exercises for training on them, etc. so that the educational process was random in most cases and differed according to the teacher, his diligence, and his own instructions. Thus, contemporary language agreed to name those rules that are based on the Greek and Latin rules, as traditional rules in contrast to the modern linguistic theories and approaches that appeared in the last century; it is this difference which will be explained later on in this paper.

5- Negatives of the Old Traditional Rules

Among the significant downsides of traditional grammar is its complete disregard of oral speech, even though the function of language is actual mutual communication and understanding between members of society. Even though there are significant differences between spoken languages and their written forms, yet the result was that many of the modern communicative functions of all languages on earth that are ever evolving have been neglected. Furthermore, this has resulted in neglecting the phonetic aspects of language that greatly affect the intended speakers, and this was due to the fact that none of those traditional rules deals with single sounds,, tones, waves, or intonation, in addition to other characteristics of sounds of a language that are reflected in the message that the speaker intends to deliver to the listener. Even though most attention was paid to the way of writing such as calligraphy, punctuation, etc. this does not mean that linguists did not pay attention to the sounds of a given language. In fact some linguists focused on the sound system ,yet their analysis of a language sounds was almost separate from grammar.!!

6- Did Traditional Grammar Provide A Comprehensive And Integrated Conception Of The Language It Describes?

Traditional grammar was not really able to provide a comprehensive conception of the language that it defines, but rather focused on certain facets of it, when they were not the most significant aspects, and gave us insufficient information to comprehensively understand the language in question. Furthermore, these grammars are often incomplete and even have contradictory rules which leave space for a large number of abnormalities which further indicate the weakness of said grammatical systems. This is on one hand. On the other hand, most of these rules were not a true description of the reality of the language which did not represent the way people actually used in their daily lives, particularly because they completely ignored the phonetic aspect and oral language aspects.

In conclusion, the traditional rules are normative, that is, they aim to impose on the student the correct forms derived from the language of writing, especially the language of literature, and thus they are not a realistic description of the actual language. Therefore, these rules are not learning rules that are suitable directly for use in the process of teaching the language, whether it is authentic or foreign. The responsibility for this process, as I believe, rests with the specialists in applied linguistics and language education, including applied scholars, preparers of educational materials, teachers, and others who plan the process or actually practice it.

7- A Comparison between Learning a Foreign Language and Acquiring a Mother Tongue

It is known that every child learns his mother tongue early in his life within a short period of time, so general learning theories and language learning theories in particular were put forth by scientists within the framework that aims to understand this learning process. Therefore, learning any other language besides ones mother tongue especially outside its native environment is a difficult task! Thus forth, the efforts of scholars and specialists were fixated on studying this phenomenon and trying to comprehend its nature, causes and the difference between learning the mother tongue and the acquired language because of the difficulties facing learning other languages or foreign languages. However, the differences and similarities between the two cases, in our view, are related to the circumstances in which the foreign language is learned, the age of the learner, the purpose of learning, and the outcomes of this learning.

8- Social and Psychological Influence of Learning the Mother Tongue

Learning the mother tongue is distinguished from learning a foreign language in that it takes place in natural conditions. The child learns this language at an early age as part of his cognitive, mental, social and psychological development, and as a means of dealing with his society and engaging, in it as one of its members. The inevitable result of this process is that this child eventually masters his Mother tongue language.

However, the matter is different with regard to learning a foreign language, as it is not an essential part of the process of his growth and maturity. Opinions differed about the influence of this on the student in learning a foreign language in terms of giving him flexibility in thinking and in some linguistic cognitive abilities. Others say that this situation is one of Factors affecting the learning of another language during and after learning the mother tongue.

9-Differences and Similarities between the Mother Tongue and a Foreign Language

It is known that learning a foreign language is usually done in schools or universities which are quite different from the process of learning the mother tongue that takes place naturally. As a result, the student does not receive the same amount of exposure to the language, its uses and functions. This factor, in turn, affects other factors such as the motivation to learn a foreign language and attachment to it, and from here the differences and similarities emerged between the mother tongue and the foreign language. And analysis, parsing, and so on are like the rest of other languages. As for the differences, they lie in the phonetic, morphological, grammatical, and semantic system, and they are very large differences, and here is the bottom line. That is, we must proceed from this point in new visions for learning and teaching foreign languages to our students, and we must take into account all means that deals with the overlap (interference) between languages because of this discrepancy between them, and all of this affects the learning of foreign languages, which the child does not suffer from in learning the mother tongue.

10-The Critical Stage in Language Acquisition

There is a so-called critical stage in language acquisition, that is, there is a specific stage of biological age in which language acquisition becomes easier and after that age acquisition becomes much more difficult. The study of this critical stage is related to studies that discuss the nature of the nervous system and the maturity of the brain.

These studies have shown that as the brain matures, some functions, such as thinking and analysis, are allocated to the left side of the brain, while functions related to the emotional and affective aspects are allocated to the right side of it. The linguist "Lenneberg" and other linguists say that the process of brain specialization is very slow...as it begins at about the age of two years of age and is somewhat completed at the age of puberty. The linguist Scovel added that this process applies to the acquisition of foreign language as well, as the flexibility of the brain before puberty is what enables the child to acquire the mother tongue, and later on it becomes difficult for We learn the foreign language mastering the linguistic system, especially the phonetic system, and this experience I went through personally, I learned French after puberty, and the phonetic tone of the mother tongue remained dominant over my French, while I do not find this sound effect of the mother tongue on my children, since they learned French from childhood.

11- Scientific Reasons for the Difficulty of Learning a Foreign Language after Puberty

The opinions of scientists differed about the certainty of this brain process. While, other scientists added another explanation to it, which they called "The coordination of the muscles of the parole," which means that due to the presence of hundreds of muscles that are used in speech (throat, larynx, mouth, lips, tongue, etc.) thus, these muscles need tremendous effort to control them so that the oral actuation can be achieved in the language. Therefore, the completion of this control of these muscles takes place at about the age of five, and this means that mastering speech of a foreign language after this age becomes difficult. Hence, most of our students who learn foreign languages in conditions different from the conditions in which they learned their mother tongue are considered to be weak language users, especially in tone

and voice. Therefore many of our students face difficulties in pronouncing some sounds that are not available in their native language.

On the other hand, many scientists have wondered about the role of the cerebral part dedicated to language in learning other linguistic aspects such as understanding, reading and writing foreign languages, and is it also affected by this side of the brain? While the evidence seems to suggest that a person continues to develop and improve his linguistic level in the foreign language, even in the aspect of speaking throughout his life. The secret of this improvement and development lies, according to the linguists' opinion, in the motivation, the goal behind learning the foreign language, and the outcomes of this learning, especially success that is achieved by the learner.

12- The Effect of motivation in Learning Foreign Languages

Perhaps motivation is one of the significant factors that linguists look at in explaining foreign language learning or its failure. Motivation in itself is emanating from within a person who wants to learn a foreign language, in addition to that there are other individual, social and educational factors that can increase or limit these motives, including intelligence, readiness, perseverance, and the goal of learning a foreign language. Additionally, there are other motives that are associated with the learner's goal of the foreign language, whether it is in order to improve the standard of living, scientific, cultural purposes, or work at the home of the foreign language, etc.

CONCLUSION

All the opinions, ideas, and trends that were referred to in this research, indicate that the methods of teaching and learning languages have come a long way, but without us achieving the method that can be the healing ointment for teaching the extremely complex behavior of teaching foreign languages. Here we are today, in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, after the educated people spent hundreds of years teaching and learning foreign languages, and the question is still the same! What are the best methods that we can follow in this field? Perhaps this question will remain as long as Allah wills. The reason for this is simple and clear. It is due to the huge differences between teachers and students. People do not always follow one behavior. Each person has his own way of thinking and a pattern of dealing with language. All those who are concerned with education in general, and regarding the development of curricula in particular, as we have noticed with most of the teachers who practice the process of education.

We stand today feeling better able to define the needs of our country and people than we did in the previous years, and we have new and used educational technologies that represent a certain good in finding new visions in learning and teaching languages, which can represent in their totality and their interrelationship with each other in an appropriate way that will open horizons for us New in the preparation of students who are proficient, albeit relatively, in the foreign language in which they specialize.

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