



# HOW TO CREATE A POSITIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING ATMOSPHERE IN TEYL: DIFFERENTIATED APPROACHES AND COGNITIVE CONCEPTS OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

**Atadjanova Surayyo Raimbaevna**

Senior lecturer,  
Foreign Philology Faculty,  
Urgench State University

**Yuldasheva Zaynab Kamilovna**

Teacher,  
Foreign Philology Faculty,  
Urgench State University

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## ANNOTATION

*It is not a secret that, teaching language to young learners greatly differs from teaching adults. That's why, many scholars studied the process and different explanations have been put forward for taking into account: for instance, the age, level, ability, and attitude, psychological and cognitive concepts of young learners. In this article, we shall focus on specific ways of creating a positive language learning atmosphere; develop their interests and motivation to language learning. It is necessary for language teachers to be aware about different approaches and cognitive concepts of young learners in teaching foreign language and cope with their problems.*

**KEY WORDS:** *cognitive concepts, competent, uncluttered, essential, intelligence, interpersonal, intrapersonal, spontaneous*

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## DISCUSSION

It is impossible to distinguish approaches to teaching young learners' without knowing about their characteristic features, what have been studied by scholars. According to Harmer "It is important, when discussing young learners, to take account of changes which take place within this varied and varying age span" (Harmer, "The Practice of English Language Teaching"). The basic changes that influence classroom methodology are as follows: young children are learning how to cope with school life, learning to become literate and continue to develop concepts. One of the most common beliefs about language learning and the age is that young children learn faster and more effectively than any other age group. However, this claim has been considerably disputed, because the general evidence is unclear. Various studies point to the fact that older learners and teenagers make more progress in language learning and are often more effective learners than the young ones, as they do not need language and they have got a short attention span. Here can also be mentioned that, children after inputting information may not develop the retention period, as they need more practice and memory games.

But another important thing is that, teachers should be true professionals and competent users of

the foreign language to provide young learners with quality input. Harmer comments that the teacher's pronunciation plays great role in teaching, as young learners naturally imitate it. Besides, it was mentioned that the physical world is dominant for young learners and they understand best through senses. That's why, it is important to activate senses of hearing, touch and vision into teaching. Halliwell mentions that teachers should use of gesture, intonation, demonstration, actions and facial expressions to convey the meaning parallel to what they are saying.

We know that most of young learners are visual learners, and demonstration is a key for successful teaching. For example, when teacher is organizing a board game, handouts or worksheet, they can be stuck on the board. Harmer makes some conclusions about what a classroom for young learners should look like. It should be bright and colorful, with enough room for different activities to be taking place. It should be taken into account that pupils would be working in groups in different parts of the room. Teacher can use different sitting arrangements for learners for each activity. Phillips agrees [3] that physical organization of the classroom is important. Ideal classroom would have an area of easily movable desks and chairs, an open space for action songs and



games, a quiet area for self-study or reading and a place where children's work can be displayed.

Other authors usually suggest that activities for eight to ten year olds should be changed every ten minutes or more, since their concentration span increases as they grow older. However, Scott points out that variety in the classroom should include not only the variety of activities, but also the variety of pace, organization and voice. It is also important to help children to feel secure and content in the classroom. "Security is not an attitude or ability, but it is essential if we want our pupils to get the maximum out of the language lessons".

It is fact that, young students at the beginner level are naturally curious about all new things. Their minds and memories are uncluttered; they have no fear of the unknown. If they wish to connect with their peers, they may still be able to use non-verbal means of communication. It means that, children are able to play together, never feeling any language barriers. Additionally, they can also retell, translate into their mother tongue what the other children are saying. It is also effective to use poems and songs are extremely useful, as well as fairy-tales, short plays, cartoons, any and all kinds of visual aids. Teacher may have them draw simple diagrams, repeating the same forms over and over again. Children can recite the same poem, listen to the same fairy-tale, sing the same song, and watch the same cartoon hundreds of time. They will enjoy drawing the same picture and laugh at the way grammar can be learned.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COGNITIVE CONCEPTS OF EFL LEARNING

We need to distinguish that teaching techniques and EFL methodological concepts are quite different from each other. It is impossible to discuss cognitive concepts of language acquisition without reference to Howard Gardner [2] and his noteworthy and influential study of multiple intelligences.

- *Linguistic intelligence* is revealed through specially designed grammar and vocabulary exercises based on pair work in dialogues. We can distinguish two stages of working with the language material: first, the teacher presents new materials when the books are closed and then students work on it with their books opened.
- *Visual intelligence* is developed when students do exercises with the help of different visual aids like work cards, work sheets, pictures or use flash-cards. They reconstruct dialogues and stories with the help of stickers and pictures.
- *Musical-rhythmical intelligence* is developed when children listen to music, sing the song and imitate intonation and rhythm. At the same time they may deal with different

language tasks. They may listen to the song and do listening, vocabulary and grammar tasks.

- *Logical-mathematical intelligence* is very interesting and effective, as it includes in itself problem solving activities and puzzles, counting, analyzing elements of the whole, doing "odd one out" tasks.
- *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence* comprises physical activities in itself which are preferable one for young learners. As they are full of energy, they enjoy language learning by moving, by participating in different role plays, games, making posters and doing projects.
- *Interpersonal intelligence* provides with such class modes as a pair work group work, games and team activities. They learn how to communicate and share their opinion with each other. As a result of it, they break psychological barriers like, shyness, confusion
- *Intrapersonal intelligence* is based on silent individual work and self-reflection. In order to develop this intelligence, teachers should organize more individual works. They are asked questions to what they give their own opinions and thoughts.

## DIFFERENTIATION METHOD

We can't deny the fact that teaching English to young learners is not an easy process. It has its own peculiarities based on psycho- physiology of their age which need to be taken into account while teaching them. Psychologists assert that preschoolers' perception, memory and attention and retention are involuntary [3]. Children cannot regulate their perception and analyze and retain information. Their attention is drawn by bright objects. Their concentration lasts as long as they are interested in the activity. Therefore, the essential methods of teaching EFL to young learners are based on 3 principles:

- 1) Role plays;
- 2) Communicative methods;
- 3) Total physical involvement.

Learning a foreign language is a pleasant moment in a child's life. He climbs the stairs to a new level of knowledge. In an effort to teach children the basics of English phonetics, grammar and enrich their vocabulary, a teacher overshadows the individual characteristics of a child, the reaction rate, mental health [3]. Because of this, children cannot move forward in learning knowledge as the basis for successful learning is not only the traditional age principle. It is fact that students might be very different in their learning, motivation, learning style, and in other respects. Sometimes, they do not know



about their learning styles. One needs to teach in a way that accommodates these differences, which is called *differentiation*. What is the main goal of this approach? That is to say, the main goal of a differentiation approach is not to provide the necessary minimum in the assimilation of knowledge and skills, but to ensure the greatest possible depth in mastering the material, proper development of abilities of each student. Thus, differentiation involves an implementation of developing learning [3].

According to the above mentioned differentiation, it is useful to divide most children into groups based on the basic channel of perception. This allows a greater training effect. Although, the bone of contention is based on the type of child's temperament, this type is considered to be impractical in a traditional lesson system. This division is more suitable for extra-curricular activities such as the preparation of the play or concert. Modern research shows [4] there are quite large differences in the behavior and training of boys and girls due to a number of factors – biological, physiological, neuropsychological, social, psychological and pedagogical. But, there are some common characteristics what all children might have. They are:

- Energetic and physically active
- Curious and receptive to new information
- Imaginative and playful
- Spontaneous and social to relate to others
- They have short attention span

Taking into account the characteristic, teachers need to explore the followings: characteristics of young learners, how children learn and how children learn the language. If teachers are aware about principles and methods of teaching young learners, they achieve success in teaching, planning and organizing a good classroom atmosphere. In turn, learners develop motivation for learning foreign language even they don't have aim for language learning.

Cameron suggests six recommendations which can be applied in TYLE:

1. Use fun and engaging activities
2. Engage students in a variety of interactions
3. Cater to different learning styles and intelligences
4. Make language learning meaningful and relevant
5. Introduce learners to different cultures
6. Use various teaching strategies that set up learners for success

These recommendations are really true to the teaching process of young learners. Teachers need to implement appropriate games and activities into the practice, and select materials matching meaningful language content, what can highlight different cultures, world knowledge and language practice. As

a result of it , teachers easily create a good classroom atmosphere.

### What is classroom atmosphere?

The classroom atmosphere is a reflection of students' opinions of their academic experience [3]. This includes students' perceptions of the rigor of the class, their interactions with their instructor and class peers, and their involvement in the class. Although each student will develop his or her individual sense of the classroom environment, there is also a community, or collective, sense among the students and the instructor, so the classroom climate is a general feeling shared by all in the class.

### CONCLUSION

Teachers need to be aware about different methods and approaches in teaching young learners, as they are different in inputting information, in mind, behavior, attitude to learning languages. Teachers should deeply recognize their own learners, their characteristics and learning styles. They should know about the key elements of creating language learning atmosphere what help learners to avoid psychological barriers. Learners should be motivated by a desire to succeed, to explore, to develop and to improve, not by a fear of failure. Young learners feel the need for a demonstration when they are learning any language skill. This is because they want to know how they can best do it, when and where it is appropriate to make use of their skill. In turn, child should master the language consciously, and master the language as a medium of communication. The language learning process should improve general educational skills (e.g., ability to work with the book) by expanding their scope in the process of mastering a foreign language.

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