COMMON PROBLEMS FACED BY FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract: Learning a foreign language as a second language presents unique challenges, particularly when the learning environment doesn't offer constant exposure to the target language. This lack of immersion can hinder progress, even for motivated learners. These difficulties can be viewed as obstacles, requiring effective strategies to overcome. This article identifies common problems faced by second language learners and explores possible solutions, drawing upon scholarly insights to address the causes of these issues.

Key words: misinformation, applicable, evaluate, autonomous learner

Introduction:

Learning a new language inevitably involves obstacles. While these challenges vary, several key issues are particularly prevalent. Language disorders, often referred to as speech disorders, can significantly impact an individual's ability to communicate effectively. As Whitaker (2009) points out, language problems can arise from various factors like hearing impairments, speech delays, and language development issues. One common disorder is speech impairment, which encompasses articulation and voice difficulties. These challenges can persist into adulthood, affecting individuals throughout their lives.

Second language learners encounter unique difficulties when acquiring a new language. For example, many individuals learning English face obstacles such as:

• Limited Learning Environments: The availability of proper English outside the classroom is crucial for language acquisition. Often, learners only use English during class supervision, and lack consistent exposure to proper pronunciation and grammar outside of these structured settings.

• Unqualified Teachers: One of the most significant and often overlooked issues is the presence of unqualified teachers. The difficulty in addressing this problem stems from the fact that many communities where English is being learned lack the resources to effectively evaluate teacher competence. Consequently, students may accept anything a teacher says as correct, even if it's inaccurate. This can lead to confusion and misinformation among learners as they receive conflicting information from

different teachers. One contributing factor is the difficulty teachers may encounter when translating from their native languages, leading to inconsistencies in pronunciation and vocabulary.

•Surplus Usage of Native Language: To effectively learn a new language, students must actively use it. Instructors must consistently demand that students communicate solely in English, even when interacting with each other. Lessons should be conducted using direct methods, maximizing student engagement and fostering fluency. If teachers are familiar with the students' native languages, it's beneficial to pretend they don't understand it, encouraging students to use English for requests and responses. This issue may stem from cultural norms and expectations within families and society.

•Strong Students Dominating the Lesson: Regardless of how students are grouped, disparities in knowledge and learning speed will inevitably arise. A significant challenge lies in pacing lessons to accommodate stronger learners without neglecting weaker ones. Weaker students should not be excluded from discussions and activities, but should also be the focus of attention during the lesson. They require more dedicated support and guidance than their peers.

•Learners Not Taking Their Studies Seriously: Some learners may not prioritize their English studies, despite a genuine desire to learn the language. This can be due to busy schedules, personal problems, or a misconception that conversational English is sufficient for academic success. Learners may not understand the importance of grammatical accuracy in writing and fail to practice pronunciation, writing, and vocabulary building outside of class. They may rely heavily on the teacher for every question, even those easily answered through dictionaries or personal notes. When corrected on mistakes, they may attribute them to their native language, hindering their willingness to learn.

•Over-Reliance on the Teacher: Part of successful learning involves developing independent problem-solving skills. Students who constantly seek the teacher's assistance for every minor obstacle will struggle to become autonomous learners. Encouraging students to attempt tasks independently and providing positive feedback can build confidence and promote self-reliance.

•Learning Materials: Effective learning materials are crucial for language acquisition. While textbooks are essential, they are insufficient alone. Audio materials are equally important, as they provide the necessary pronunciation guidance. Without hearing the correct pronunciation from a native speaker, students may misinterpret sound symbols in books and develop inaccurate pronunciations. Students often rely on movies for language exposure, but these sources frequently contain slang and dialects that are not universally applicable. Teachers should carefully select materials that are appropriate for the student's level and learning style.

•Interference of Native Language: The inherent structure of a learner's first language often interferes with their ability to acquire a second language. This influence can manifest in various ways, creating challenges for both the student and the teacher. The teacher's role is to build a new understanding of English grammar without disrupting the existing language structure. While qualified teachers, suitable materials, and exposure to native speakers can significantly help, learners will still face challenges.

•Steps for Improvement: For learners eager to master a foreign language, several steps can be taken to enhance their English skills. Students should use materials recommended by trusted English teachers, and prioritize listening to audio resources to develop accurate pronunciation.

Conclusion

Learning a foreign language as a second language is a complex process riddled with unique challenges. From unqualified teachers and limited learning environments to over-reliance on instructors and the interference of native language structures, these obstacles can significantly hinder progress. However, by recognizing these common problems, understanding their root causes, and implementing effective strategies, learners can navigate these difficulties and achieve success in their language acquisition journey. This includes cultivating independent learning skills, utilizing appropriate learning materials, seeking guidance from qualified teachers, and actively engaging in language practice. With determination, effort, and a positive learning mindset, students can overcome these obstacles and unlock the doors to fluency in a new language.

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