

PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract:

This article explores the psychological challenges encountered in learning a foreign language, which adversely affect the educational process. It focuses on the heightened anxiety that students often experience during foreign language classes and offers an in-depth discussion of various approaches to defining the concept of anxiety. Additionally, the study evaluates the use of theatrical play as an effective tool for alleviating anxiety in speaking situations and as a method for addressing psychological barriers in foreign language acquisition. The significance of this research stems from the limited exploration of theatrical play as a pedagogical innovation in foreign language education.

Key words: anxiety, psychological challenges, barriers, theatrical play, foreign language.

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In today's world, effective communication in a foreign language has become increasingly important due to global integration processes. The adoption of innovative teaching methods and modern approaches to foreign language instruction plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's linguistic identity, fostering cultural enrichment through interactions with people from other nations, and expanding international relations for our country. The primary aim of foreign language education is to cultivate communicative competence and strengthen proficiency in the language being studied. Nevertheless, not all students manage to achieve effortless fluency in a foreign language. Despite having a solid grasp of vocabulary and grammar, many students encounter psychological barriers during real-life communication, which can hinder their learning progress.

Among these psychological barriers are issues such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and lack of self-confidence.

This article will explore anxiety as a key psychological hurdle that significantly impedes effective foreign language acquisition. Researchers such as V.M. Astapov, V.R. Kislovskaya, E.V. Novikova, and A.M. Prikhozhin have studied anxiety in psychology, while E. Horwitz has specifically addressed language anxiety.

In both domestic and international psychology, the terms "anxiety" and "worry" are differentiated. Sigmund Freud (1926) introduced the concept of worry, distinguishing between specific fear (Furcht) and more diffuse, deep-seated anxiety (Angst), which he viewed as an internal, often overwhelming feeling. Freud suggested that anxiety evokes a sense of helplessness and represents a state of tension, making it one of the most unpleasant emotions.

Various definitions of anxiety exist in psychological literature. A.M. Prikhozhin defines anxiety as "the experience of emotional discomfort linked to the anticipation of misfortune or impending danger." According to A.V. Petrovsky, anxiety is "an individual's predisposition to experience worry, characterized by a low threshold for triggering anxiety reactions; it is a key parameter in individual differences. Anxiety tends to increase in cases of neuropsychological disorders, severe somatic diseases, and in healthy individuals following psychological trauma, manifesting in various forms of personal distress." I.F. Arshav

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describes anxiety as an unstable emotional state marked by varying degrees of fear. E. Horwitz, specifically addressing language anxiety, describes it as "a unique amalgamation of self-perception, beliefs, emotions, and behavioral responses directly related to the foreign language learning process, shaped by the distinct nature of this endeavor."

Two forms of anxiety are commonly identified: situational anxiety, which arises from specific external circumstances, and trait anxiety, which is a stable personality characteristic. Trait anxiety manifests as chronic nervousness and emotional instability, while situational anxiety surfaces during particular events, such as exams or public speaking. In the context of language learning, anxiety often triggers emotional tension, particularly in situations where learners are required to use the foreign language.

The root causes of difficulties in mastering a foreign language and the emergence of language anxiety may include low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness, fear of negative evaluation, and insufficient motivation.

A staged play involves participants engaging in imagined yet realistic scenarios, serving as a dynamic learning tool where individuals develop internal representations of specific situations and then interact within the context of the roles they have adopted. Learning occurs through sensory-rich experiences as students immerse themselves fully in the scenes. Each player selects a role in a given situation, visualizing the setting, objects, and actions from their character's perspective. In this process, all senses are engaged—space, time, smells, objects, and actions are perceived through the lens of the role. These sensory inputs evoke particular memories, emotions, thoughts, and imaginative responses.

A key aspect of staged play, especially when interpreting artistic texts, lies in embodying the characters with authenticity. Effective role-playing requires sensitivity and the capacity to fully immerse in the character, stepping out of one's own reality to adopt the perspectives and experiences of others. Through role embodiment, participants recreate life stories, situations, and both external and internal dimensions of human behavior. This practice allows them to relive forgotten emotions and experiences buried in the subconscious. By adopting different roles, students explore diverse social positions, professions, statuses, and family dynamics, which broadens their understanding of life and fosters a deep comprehension of various life situations.

In our view, staged play represents a highly promising method for alleviating anxiety related to speaking, unlocking students' latent potential, and fostering personal self-expression during the process of learning a foreign language. This approach cultivates an interactive atmosphere and promotes emotionally engaging communication among students. Incorporating staged play into foreign language instruction empowers students to articulate their thoughts and emotions more freely, significantly reducing anxiety and emotional tension. It also aids in overcoming communicative barriers while boosting motivation for language learning. By employing this method, students not only experience positive emotions but also develop essential creative, communicative, and intercultural competencies. These competencies are crucial for shaping social communication skills and nurturing a well-rounded individual capable of meaningful interaction in a culturally diverse world.

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