

The Goals of Language Teaching

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Abstract— The research will be focusing on the goals of language teaching and learning. It discusses the external goals- which relates to the usage of the learnt language outside of the classroom context as well as the internal category, the goals are related to the individual's mental development. The research shows a survey study that conducted by ESL learners.

1 INTRODUCTION

Language teaching can be described as teaching people a foreign language so that they can understand and speak the language. The goals of ELT or language teaching are both far-reaching and highly individualized. This is because most of the answers on why a person would like to learn a second language come from the individuals involved. Although most of the reasons may be individualized, some of the reasons are universal. These include the idea that English language is one of the global languages spoken in a large number of countries worldwide. From a general perspective, people cite various reasons for learning this language that include but not limited to the future of one's career, travelling reasons especially in countries that speak English, to gain a better comprehension of the ways of life experienced in the countries where the language is spoken, and to be able to live in a country where the language is spoken. Expound on these reasons is of great importance.

The modern world has become very demanding requiring people to keep up with the ever-changing environment so as to be in a position to compete with others in the society and to earn a living by doing the same. This implies that individuals must learn to adapt and live in diverse environments, which brings in the issue of language learning as people must interact so as to be productive. While some may opt to learn a language for the purpose of advancing their careers and making it easier to live and work in foreign countries, others want to learn the basic structures involved in the language as well as how this structure can be manipulated. In some instances, individuals may acquire knowledge in second language, L2, and become as fluent as the first language (Pütz and Laura 142-144). Teaching a language also has economic reasons and benefits that include integrating minority groups to help in the development of a country and its agenda, creation of skilled workforce, to promote the growth of international trade, and to introduce moral values. The goals for learning a foreign language can be further divided into two

groups that include internal and external goals

2 Internal vs. External Goals

The external goals relate to the usage of the learnt language outside of the classroom context. This could be usage of the language while travelling around or when using the language in trains. It can also be seen when an individual attends lectures in another country or when surviving in a country as a refugee. These contexts represent the usage of a language to fulfill the external category. On the side of the internal category, the goals are related to the individual's mental development. After learning the second language, the individuals may begin thinking differently, start approaching language from a different perspective, and become better citizens because of the effects of learning a new language. This is because a new language can have diverse effects on the learners' minds (Nunan and David 48-52). While the L1 language may train the brain, the L2 can increase the individual's awareness. In most instances and for most individuals, external reasons dominate the language teaching methodology. Self-development is also a key reason of learning a second language.

In this perspective, a person may become a better individual in some ways after learning the foreign language, which is not only because they can interact well with the native citizens in the language spoken country but also because they can have a successful career in a foreign land. A person also becomes open to new ideas and opportunities that they may not have been open to without learning the foreign language. Therefore, a person becomes exposed to new ideas that may prove beneficial in improving their own lives. For the non-native teachers, they become accepted in the foreign society and in academic forums. When an individual learns a foreign language, they gain an understanding that they can share with others in the society

(Chaudron 4-11). This would be possible because learning the structure of a language gives a person an advantage point for teaching others. Therefore, a person becomes better after learning a foreign language since their understanding expands and deepens as learning continues.

On the same context of self-development, the teachers also acquire a better understanding of themselves through the act of teaching. This is because teaching requires an individual to step out of themselves in ways that they would not be required to when undertaking different tasks. Through this, a person is able to learn more about themselves both as an individual and as a teacher. Such a perspective can help an individual in establishing ways through which they would work better with others. Specifically, when one has understood themselves, they acquire a better understanding on how to interact with the learners according to age and how to teach effectively and efficiently (Brown 22-29). In addition, having the opportunity to understand oneself better implies having the chance to handle any stressful situations that may arise and be able to plan better. The teachers learn a lot when teaching. In fact, some teachers have stated that their jobs become more fulfilling through the lessons that they learn from their students. This takes place because the students bring life experiences from different backgrounds that may serve as good lessons to learn from. A trainer's perspective can also be broadened when they give the students an opportunity to voice their ideas without criticism. Therefore, this indicates that self-development can take various forms and the trainers can benefit as much as the trainees can. Such opportunities would not be possible without learning the foreign language and interacting in foreign environments. Besides that, there is the idea of cognitive ability.

Cognitive ability is also an internal goal. Here, through learning a new language, individuals acquire new perspectives of perception concerning their own societies. In addition, socialization is also dependent on cognitive development. This is because people learn to accept others if they are aware of the language that is spoken by the other parties, which is evident in the idea that people acquire knowledge on how to treat others. This is why foreign language learning should be introduced in the learning institutions as early as possible. The most important aspect with respect to learning as a way of acquiring cognitive ability is acquiring problem solving skills (Cook 44-47), which is the overall importance as compared to learning a second language for the mere need of linguistic activity. This is an important aspect because the modern competitive world is in need of such skills. The job sector is constantly looking for individuals with problem solving

skills due to the innovative nature that accompanies these skills. Foreign language learning or even teaching helps people in improving their own critical thinking skills as well as creativity and flexibility of mind. Such skills represent what is required in the modern job market. The students who learn a foreign language have an upper hand as compared to those who have not with respect to mathematical skill development. This is mainly because of the skill acquisition aspect of foreign language learning. I conducted a survey to determine how students in various countries that include Nigeria, China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia view the importance of a second language. (Pennebaker 224).

3 A survey study

The study did not require the participants to provide their names or gender but an option was provided to do the same. In total, the number of participants was 40. The diversity was important in the survey so as to acquire responses from different parts of the world, which would be important in determining whether different individuals view learning English as important or whether there would be a unanimous view on the same. Nevertheless, most of the participants were male.

4 Findings

The participants agreed unanimously that English is very important and some cited that it is obvious that one should learn it. They provided various reasons for their stand that included being a global language, employment reasons, communication purposes, business reasons, and for personal enjoyment. The participants unanimously agreed that they want to learn English for self-development. In addition, most reported that they decided to learn English so that they can learn new things and solve problems. However, some disagreed with this. The other aspect that there were differences in responses includes learning English for travel purposes. Of the 40 participants, two disagreed with learning English for travel purposes. In addition, one participant disagreed with using English for learning other people's cultures. All participants agreed with the rest of the questions that included whether they learn English thinking that they would acquire good jobs in the future and whether they learn it since it is a requirement for university study. Therefore, this research confirmed the research perspectives that included whether people in different countries in the world view learning a second language, specifically English, as important. Other people cited external reasons for learning English.

With respect to external goals, one of the most important aspects is promotion of peace as well as real-

ization of intercultural understanding in the world, which is known to facilitate the realization of world peace. When people can understand each other, bearing in mind that English is an international language, they get an opportunity to discuss issues that they may be facing to eliminate possibilities of conflicts within the society. Therefore learning or teaching a second language may be effective in facilitating negotiation capabilities as well as changes and avoidance of conflicts. This is because usage of the same language encourages reflection aimed at defining key concepts that include acceptance, and peace. The reflection facilitates understanding the sphere of interaction among different elements such as democracy and human rights in a systematic manner. Language also promotes the dissemination of strategies and content that promotes peace with regards to modern language teaching. This promotes conflict resolution techniques. Moreover, L2 language has relevance with regards to the context of religious observance. Specifically, the English language is already in use in major Holy Scriptures including the Bible and the Qur'an (Cummins 19-20). For greater understanding, the Holy Scriptures were translated to English so as to target a large number of people. For easier understanding and participating in the religious arena, a person must learn English. Although translations have also been done to various other languages, the English versions of the Bible and the Qur'an are preferred by most people because of originality. L2 language speakers can become as fluent as their L1.

5 Difficulties of learning a Second Language

Although it is not easy for L2 speakers to achieve the level of monolingual speakers, L2 speakers must attempt to get as close as possible to the native speakers so as to compete with them at their own level. Creating L2 speakers who are efficient is more accessible than attempting to imitate the native speakers. It is harder to create L2 speakers who are as efficient as native speakers are because they speak in a different way and there exists a continuous influence from the native language of the L2 speakers. Therefore, creating an original L2 speaker is accessible as compared to trying to imitate the native speakers (Llurda 49-53). One of the obstacles facing this form of learning is the belief on the side of the L2 speakers that L1 speakers are speaking true English. The psychological reasoning behind the failure of L2 speakers to specialize in L1 as native speakers is that the original language for the L2 speaker is kept in different compartment in the human mind from the second language. There are global reasons that are associated with L2 learning.

One of these main goals associated with language learning is providing the students with an opportunity to take advantage of globalization and what technology has to offer in the contemporary world. The increased impact of globalization in today's world has prompted individuals to work globally from a central point. For this to take place, learning foreign languages is not an option but a necessity. This is because conversing with individuals around the world requires multilingual capacity. Interacting with various cultures on the global level is also very important and advances the cultural capabilities of individuals (McKay 21-25). If an individual does not understand English, then they may be isolated from the rest of the world as English is the main language used when doing business. The more the number of non-native languages that a person learns, the better the position that he/she gets in interacting in the business world or on a cultural perspective. One of the other important ideas in learning a second language is the advancement of a career. For a person to continue their career, they are required to learn at least one foreign language such as English. This is especially dependent on the career path that a person intends to take. Moreover, another goal is to gain academic credit to help an individual in moving forward in school.

Language teaching goals are also related to second language acquisition. One of the most important goals in learning is to get the students involved with the learning and the discussions. This helps them to set individual goals for themselves and in increasing their own involvement through increase of the stakes established in the learning process. That aspect allows the students to reflect on their pre-established goals and reasons for interest in the second language; this may in turn increase their motivation. While the teaching goal may be an attempt to improve the future of the students, the students can contribute in acquisition, which would make it easier to understand. The acquisition-learning hypothesis maintains that acquisition does not require extended use of grammatical rules or tedious drills. This implies that acquisition of a second language requires different approaches than most people think. In essence, acquisition requires meaningful interaction with members of the target language. Researchers build on the idea of practice where an individual becomes an expert in a new language by ensuring that they interact with members of the target language extensively. This is also known as communicative performance (Canale and Swain 5-6). Here, the speakers are usually not concerned with the utterances but the messages that they are attempting to convey as well as un-

derstanding of the target language. It is proper to note that language acquisition is different from language learning. While language learning is consciously discovering the rules involved in a specified language, acquisition is a process that is developed through the use of language meaningfully. Language acquisition is the only way through which competence in a target language can be developed (Krashen 1-2). This involves a process that incorporates aural comprehension, production of early speech, and speech activities. Acquisition follows a procedure similar to that a child would take when learning their native tongue. Such process leads to the realization of efficiency in a native language.

6 conclusion

Language learning has various goals most of which are determined by the individual. Other reasons are universal. The overall teaching goals include self-development, cognitive abilities, and as a means of communicating with individuals from various backgrounds. In addition, language learning is affected by globalization where the contemporary world is looking for creative individuals. This is triggered by cognitive abilities as acquisition of second language triggers creativity.

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