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cotextual matter shaping environment make up the grammar of a language. Grammar is contextual matter shaping (Bateson 1979: 17) and context shaping is a skill we acquire over a lifetime.

#### Footnotes:

1- Names and references and used in this essay have been taken from English Teaching Forum, October 1992, Diane Ponterotto, at the University of L'Aquila L'Aquila, Italy (pages 16-19).

2- The abbreviations "L1 and L2" stands for language one (mother language or source language), and "language two" Clarget language , here we mean English one).

3- In the Islamic Republic of Iran, we witness the presence of university teachers, professors, and researchers at the international conferences, who seem very jogged and embarrassed when they can not understand the core of the asseys or argument in English or French.

4- Metalinguistics, a branch of science which comes along with the rules and grammar of a language, without putting a trace of generalization behind. For more information, you may refer to Aspects of Language, third edition, Dwight Bolinger Donald A. Sears, Harcurts Brace Jovanovich, 1981, 0-15-503872-9

5- In this stage, we can illustrate the situation by giving this example: In the past royal regyme (Palevi dynasty), the railway stations and roads were mostly made by the imigrants from Tabriz, Ardebil, Meragheh or other parts of Cacaasian areas who spoke

Turkish. The presence of Turkish citizens among the Persian speaking community, many Iranian people could learn Turkish, without learning Turkish grammar or going to school and university.

6- Cultural background is very important in teaching and learning a language, many people do not learn the English language because of its dangerous effect on ethics. For more information, you may refer to an essay written by Joan D. Heiman, under the title: "Western Culture in EFL language instruction", appeared on pages 4-7, TESOL Journal. Vol. 3. spring 1994.

7- The average age of the students was 30, from different cultures, region, city, and village of Semnan province, in the east of Tehran (between Tehran and Meshad).

8- One of the reasons of using "male pronoun" was that all my students were masculine. Although, in some part of this essay I advertently mentioned "he" because most of the "mature learners" are male in Iran.

9- The students learnt a lot of vocabulary, by looking up the meaning of the words in the dictionaries and cross- references.

10- As a matter of fact the class was "student centered" not teacher centered, although this method was against the rules of the educational system.

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cultured sophistication.

This is not being hypocritical; it is just turning into learner's need to be treated as a mature, educated, intelligent person.

### **A proposed strategy against the "mature learners":**

The main strategy which is devised and to some extent experimented with has proved successful for some teachers especially with Iranian scientists and experts in physics, chemistry, agriculture, de-desertification, poultry, water resources, geology, mines, cultivation, planting, soil testing, forestry, genetics, hydraulic engineering, instruments, mathematics, mechanics, medicine, metallurgy, nutrition, oceanology, psychology, psychiatry, surgery, surveying, telephone, telecommunication, building, construction materials, foundry, statistics, etc. is one that maybe called "structured story re-presentation" method. (7)

According to this method, each student was given an assignment within the interest and need of his career in a related field study and responsibility which he had to manage in his office. In a sense it captures the functional of narrative in the oral literature of ancient societites. A student, as a mature learner, may go to a library and find a related subject topic in English or Persian, and then he elaborates the techincal data, according to his own interest, and brings it to the class and reads it to other students who are all familiar within their related fields. (8)

After passing through different "narration" or "translation" or depicting the story and

essays, they are rather able to tell something within the line of their expertise, and draw the attention of the teacher and classmates. (9)

Each time, or in every session the students can be asked questions should be, and other students take notes of what ever they needed. Important issues should be discussed in the classroom in English, and every student has to learn the basic English in order to communicate with teacher and his classmates effectively. (10)

### **Conclusion:**

Behind this strategy is the recognition of the role of repetition, both in verbal interaction and language acquisition. This has been amply demonstrated by Tannen who argues for the view of discourse as "reality and relatively prepatterned, subject". Repetition is the resource by which speakers create a discourse, a relationship and a world (1987 a: 574). Tennen quotes the following statement by Becker, which is itself a justification of the proposal to think of language teaching and learning in terms of narrative techniques. According to Tannen (1987b), Becker proposes: "a kind of grammar based on a different perspective of language, one involving time and memory, or in terms of contextual relations, a set of prior texts that one accumulates throughout one's lifetime, from simple social exchnages to long semi-memorized recitations. One learns these texts in action, by repetitions and corrections, stating with the simple utterances of a baby. One learns to reshapes a prior text to a new environment make up the grammar of a language. Grammar is

the instructional materials, and give the learner a sense of actual communication, thereby increasing self-confidence.

Input should also be "abundant" and "varied". Krashen has noted that "the language profession has seriously underestimated the amount of input it takes to promote even moderate levels of language acquisition. It requires more than a few exercises and more than a brief paragraph of input for the acquirer to fully acquire a few structures. It takes hours of extensive reading for content and / or pleasure many, many conversations, and not a few exercises or just a handful of reading selections (1981: 105). In other words, the mature learner does not need only a few hours of conversation practice to resolve his or her communication problems; he needs a vast and mature repertoire, a repertoire that is encyclopedic (in the semiotic sense, i.e., which includes the vast, given knowledge of members of an educated society), assimilated through extensive exposure to L2 input, in order to be able to communicate about topics that imply a profound cultural background. <sup>(6)</sup>

### **Some efficient suggestions:**

As this point, it seems useful to suggest some general rules that I can be kept in mind when dealing with the mature learner.

1. Never make the learner aware of the fact that he communicates poorly.
2. Avoid frequently him or her.
3. Lower his defense mechanisms and make him feel good, self-confident, capable of

progressing.

4. Remember that he will often work through what Krashen calls the L1+Monitor mode.

this means that "performers simply utilize the surface structure of their first language and then employ the conscious grammar as a Monitor to make alteration to bring the L1 surface structure of the second language" (Krashen 1982: 210). Although it is a negative way to approach the L2, Krashen admits that by using this mode of communication adults at least engage in conversation.

This, in turn, invites input, which may then have a positive effect on acquisition. In other words, the adult, should not be discouraged when doing this, because it will make him feel that he is communicating, which should have a positive effect on his search for more input.

5. Work intensely on acquisition of lexis. With adults, teachers should not be afraid to use advanced vocabulary. We should remember that the general encyclopedic knowledge of the adult will assure recognition and therefore facilitate acquisition. Besides, use of advanced vocabulary will have direct positive effect on the learner's motivation, since it will help overcome feelings of childishness. This advanced lexis should be organized as far as possible in semantic fields. Adults have a well - formed network of semantic relations and can therefore access lexical associations rapidly.

6. As a last point, in moments of difficulty for the learner, the teacher should play psychological tricks and hide the bad smell and taste of the medicine behind a facade of

Lessons. The assumption behind their request is that they have already had enough grammar in school (which "never did them any good anyway), so they feel that it is time to acquire communicative competence, and a few hours of verbal interaction with a native speaker should do the trick. In other words, they want to talk, and fast, for time is running out. The demands on the mature learner, make him adverse to anything that seems like wasting time. (5)

## 2- What can be done?

**The no - no's reactions:** There are many classical pedagogical strategies to which the mature learner reacts negatively; such as:

- a) The mature learner is hostile towards anything that looks like the grammar exercises he or she used to do in school, which he or she considers to be the cause of his or her present incompetence.
- b) He or she likewise freezes at any suggestion of repetition, which is reminiscent of school days and reminds him or her of his L 2 infantility.
- c) Nor is any attempt at writing practice permitted. After all, it's speaking that is the hurdle, isn't it?
- d) Where corrective feedback is concerned, we are really on dangerous ground. A well - established professional cannot admit errors.
- e) He is also sensitive about any kind of reductive input (of the "baby talk" or foreigner talk "kind"), which

immediately recognizes and is ashamed to have in some way elicited.

- f) And last but not least, homework, Are you kidding? Not even in the form of recent self - access techniques.

## 3. What do you do with this kind of student?

An affective pedagogical program for the mature learner should be based on Krashen's suggestion (1981: 102) that it provides at least two things:

- 1- comprehensible input, presented under the conditions that encourage, and
- 2- a low or weak Affective Filter.

The first point, of course, indicates that the target input for adults should be chosen for its meaning potential. "for input to be useful for language acquisition, it has to be processed for its meaning" (Krashen 1981: 103). Therefore, it must be interesting to the learner - in our case, the intellectual or scientist- and relevant to his communicative needs. Moreover, it need not be grammatically sequenced - first of all, because of the various arguments against grammatical sequencing resulted from the research done by many scholars (cf. Krashen 1981), and, secondly because the mature learner will become impatient with a slow step - by - step presentation of grammatical points,. If, on the other hand, we accept the hypothesis that acquisition occurs when we "go for meaning," i.e., that structure is acquired as a result of the process of comprehending messages, then input must be "a bit beyond" the learner's sense of doing infantile things, convey more natural, spontaneous modality to

specialists believe that there are differences and that these differences have theoretical and practical consequences on L2 methodology.

A cognitive explanation has also been advanced for these differences, based on the formal-operations hypothesis of Piagetian origin. It asserts that the adult cognitive superiority determines an ability to work with the abstract nature of language (Taylor 1974). Moreover, the adult is able to exploit what Krashen calls "Conscious Learning, "knowledge about language (1977). These two aspects, the "formal operation" condition and the use of conscious learning strategies, suggest that the adult acquires a new language via a metalinguistic awareness, i.e., learning language by thinking about language.

#### **b) Education:**

Moreover, this superior cognitive ability, basically determined by biological factors, is reinforced in education. Titone (1984) has suggested that formal education accelerate the developmental process from spontaneous acquisition to metalinguistic awareness up to full metalinguistic consciousness.<sup>(4)</sup>

#### **c) The Affective Factor:**

If the preceding observation on the role of age and education are valid, we should expect an advantage on the part of adults, and the case of the mature learner should not exist. Here is where the role of affective factors such as motivation and self-confidence come into play. Cognitive causes only partially explain adult - child differences, which may stem, rather,

from the interference of a type of "affective filter" (Krashen 1982); see also Dulay et al. 1982). This affective filter, as Krashen claims, is strengthened during puberty (1982: 216). According to Smalley, "As puberty approaches and the individual is concerned with the consolidation of his personality, it apparently becomes more difficult for him to submit to the new norms which a second language requires" (quoted in Schumann 1975: 229-30). Adults find themselves in a "dependent state," note Curran (1961) and Schumann (1975), which causes them to raise their defense mechanisms (Guiora et al. 1972). Since the average adult is self - conscious about his communicative competence, he will tend to interact less (when compared, for example, to children or extroverted adults), and therefore obtain less input (Oller 1977; Gardner et al. 1976). Therefore, the language - learning difficulties after puberty may be related not to biological or cognitive conditions but to the social and psychological changes that individual undergoes at that age (Schumann 1975: 229). The interference of these affective variables is even stronger in the mature learner because of the heavy pressure on him (or her) to master highly advanced language skills.

#### **d) Related problems:**

Adults are also impatient to learn. Since they often need to use the language immediately, they sometimes have little patience to let time work in the language- acquisition process. Often, the teachers have been confronted with requests from adults for "CONVERSATION"

Therefore, for this type of learner the language teacher must tackle with a related phenomenon of an affective nature: a sense of inadequacy and incompetence which in a mature professional is extremely ego-threatening. This adverse affective situation may, in turn, have a negative effect on motivation and even block the cognitive processes involved in language acquisition.

Therefore in this essay, it is tried to present the techniques found most efficient with this type of learners, and make every possible effort to explain the linguistic, pedagogical, and psychological principles that may account for its efficacy.

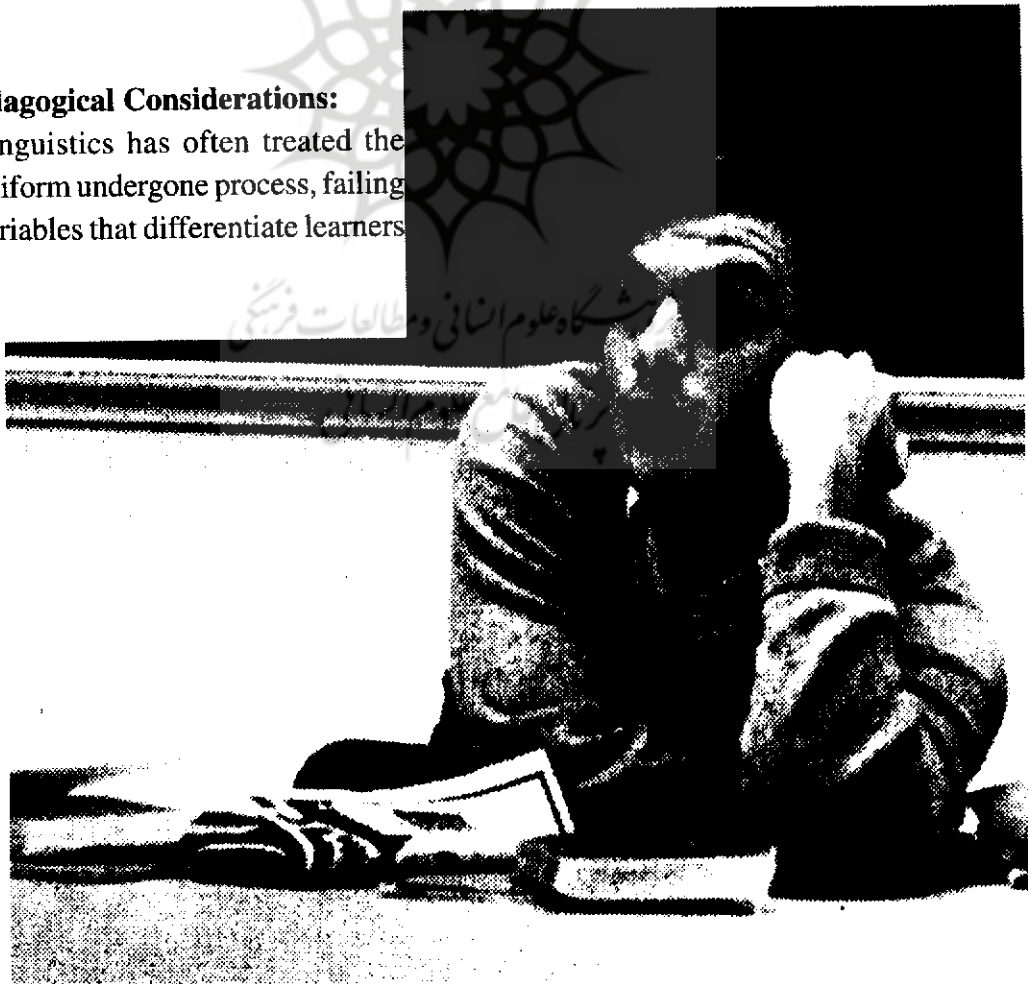
### 1- Psychopedagogical Considerations:

Applied linguistics has often treated the learner as a uniform undergone process, failing to consider variables that differentiate learners

and learning situations, such as the "age" and "sex" of the learner, "personal background and "objective and the "context" of the learning process. We should always remember the psycholinguistic principle that requires us to take these variables into consideration developing L 2, method and techniques (Slama - Cazacu 1969).

#### a) Age:

One of the most fundamental variables recently debated is "age". Although the cause of age-related differences in second-language learning is still under exploration, some



furthermore, to make a plea to the profession holders to think more about the mature learner (grown - up learner), especially now that the English language has become the vehicle of science and communication worldwide, requiring intellectuals to perfect their English language skills so that they can use the target language (second language, here we call it "English") as much as possible in the classroom.

The related words, phrases, sentences, and expressions within the line of the students' background would work a lot.

**key Words:** Learning needs, mature learner, the vehicle of science, language skills, the students' background.

The aim of this essay is to offer suggestions for a category of EFL students that may be termed the "grown - up's learners". The term "grown - up is used here in not only its biological but also its cognitive sense, as "intellectually equipped" In other words, we can call these students "mature learners" who come to school, college, university and other educational centers in order to obtain or acquire more knowledge about their "well - established professions". Postgraduate students who wish to pursue their education, are required to take TOEFL or IELTS tests or other entrance exams managed by Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, for the purpose of selecting qualified candidates, eligible for absorbing the government or personal budget during their stay in a foreign country.<sup>(1)</sup>

For example, an Iranian researcher in chemistry should not only know the language

of chemistry but should also be able to function linguistically in a multitude of social situations that may accompany the normal activity of a scientist:

Convention halls, dinner events or parties, tennis courts, etc. This socializing competence, however, is not the type of survival skill required of the professional, is something far more advanced. The professional in these situations must be able to speak to other "intellectuals", who speak a specific register of English -that of the "educated dignities and identities". Moreover, the mature or grown-up learner has often precisely, because, he is an intellectual, feels comfortable in the L 2 only if he can express the same quantity and quality of subject - matter content that he can in his L1.<sup>(2)</sup>

Therefore, language teachers who deal with this condition are confronted by a learner who wants to communicate about complex topics but lacks the linguistic means to do so. There is a huge discrepancy between the subject's cognitive level and his linguistic level. Moreover, the mature learner is immensely frustrated by this gap of discrepancies. One of these learners: once said "you see, for the intellectual the only means of communication is verbal. So, the image I project of myself depends, entirely, on how well I speak English, **I fell that I have a physical and mental handicap, that I cannot show my real personality, that people cannot judge me as what really am. Every time I go to an international congress, I enter in a kind of indentity crisis.**"<sup>(3)</sup>



# How to tackle with "grown - up" students?

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چکیده فارسی

در این مقاله سعی شده است، مشکلات و پیش فرض های دانش آموزان، دانشجویان و یا بزرگسالان در آموزش زبان انگلیسی از نظر علوم تربیتی، روان شناسی و زبان شناسی مورد نقد و بررسی قرار گیرد و عوامل بازدارنده در آموزش زبان انگلیسی، معرفی شوند. مسأله ای که برای بزرگسالان مهم است و ایجاد انگیزه می کند، وابستگی واژگان، اصطلاحات و عبارات تخصصی است. یعنی بزرگسالان با توجه به تجربه و تخصصی که دارند، از زبان انگلیسی بهره مند خواهند شد. بنابراین، همکاران عزیزی که به بزرگسالان زبان انگلیسی تدریس می کنند، باید در اولین فرصت، شوق و ذوق در رشته تحصیلی فراگیران را جویا شوند و متناسب با نیازهای تخصصی آنان، متن انگلیسی را با واژگان و اصطلاحات فارسی تدریس کنند. راقم این سطور بر حسب تجربه دریافته است که با این روش می توان در فراگیران علاقه ایجاد کرد و سطح عمومی زبان انگلیسی آنان را افزایش داد. بزرگسالان بیش از هر چیز به «مکالمه زبان» توجه دارند و از این راه می خواهند تا حد امکان به زبان مسلط شوند. بنابراین مدرس زبان باید ضرورتاً در کلاس به زبان انگلیسی تدریس کند.

واژه های کلیدی: نیازهای یادگیری، فراگیر بزرگسالان، مهارتهای زبانی، دانش زبانی

## Abstract:

*In this essay I have posed the problem of the "grown up students" and attempted to discuss the psychopedagogical specificity of his or her language - learning needs. I then explained a pedagogical strategy that I have experimented with as particularly useful for the*

*needs of this type learner. The strategy that is called "structured story representation".*

*It is a story - telling technique based on a kind of hidden, global repetition which preserves spontaneity while at the same time allowing for teacher guidance. I would like,*