

Examining the Effects of Emotioncy-based Language Instruction on Non-Persian Language Learners' Level of Cultural Intelligence

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Abstract

Given their diverse cultural backgrounds, language learners should possess an appropriate level of cultural intelligence to learn Persian as a second language. In recent years, various students from different cultural backgrounds have joined the education system of Iran, most of whom are non-native Persian speakers with little previous exposure to the Persian language. In such a situation, owing to the lack of intercultural adaptation, individuals may experience culture shock. Culture shock is the type of experience that second language learners might face while learning a language in a different context. Therefore, learning the target culture in second language learning classes turns into a crucial concern. Cultural intelligence which is nowadays a buzzword refers to individuals' sensitivity and adaptability to cultural issues, contributing to more intercultural understanding.

Cultural intelligence, which manifests itself in intercultural communications, is a form of communicative competence that highlights effective interpersonal interactions in culture-bound situations. According to Earley and Ang (2003), cultural intelligence corresponds to the individuals' successful compatibility with the cultural environments which are different from those of their own. Students' cultural intelligence can help them understand the target language norms and values and have more effective communication with their teachers.

Owing to the importance of this new form of intelligence and its potential role in the enrichment of Persian teaching methods, the current study intends to introduce and thereafter implement the emotioncy-based language instruction (EBLI) model, constituting avolvement (null), exvolvement (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) and involvement (inner and arch).

Emotioncy, which is a blend of *emotion* and *frequency* of the exposure to different senses, was first introduced by Pishghadam, Tabatabeeyan, and Navari

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(2013, p. 149). The concept is based on developmental, individual differences, relationship-based (DIR) model that takes emotions as the basis of learning. According to the emotioncy model, the vocabularies of a given language have different emotional levels for different people, and the higher the level of emotioncy for a word is, the easier it is to be learned. Emotioncy consists of different types and kinds including avolvement (null), exvolvement (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic), and involment (inner and arch). In this categorization, null refers the person with no previous experience of a given item/concept. At the auditory level, the person is supposed to have heard some points about the given word. At the visual level, the person has not only heard about the concept but has seen it as well. The next level is the kinesthetic, at which the person touches the item in addition to involving the senses mentioned above. At the inner level, the person directly experiences the item and at the final level, namely arch, the person reaches the highest level of knowledge about the concept by conducting research on it. It should be also mentioned that emotioncy levels are hierarchical.

To evaluate the extent to which this model contributes to the build-up of the Persian language learners' cultural intelligence, the emotioncy and cultural intelligence scales were used to collect data from 60 non-Persian female students coming from 16 different nationalities. The participants were categorized into four groups and were instructed based on the varieties of the EBLI in a total of 22 sessions during 6 weeks. Four cultural issues addressing different dimensions of the Iranian culture were selected in a way to be unfamiliar to the participants. To check the level of familiarity, the participants were asked to take a scale containing 12 culture-related issues and concepts to guarantee that they had zero knowledge of them. To make the comparisons more logical, the researchers tried to teach all cultural issues and concepts to all groups of participants in a way that everybody could experience all types of emotioncy levels (null, auditory, visual, kinesthetic, inner, and arch).

The instructor's overall evaluation of the learners revealed that the EBLI could significantly boost the non-Persian language learners' level of cultural intelligence. It was further concluded that those language learners with higher levels of cultural intelligence see classes as a place where they can improve their linguistic competence, have better ideas and stronger relations, and communicate more effectively with their teachers and classmates. They, therefore, can openly express their feelings, easily accept others, and speed up their own language learning process. Consequently, The EBLI is suggested to be applied in Persian language teaching classes. In the end, it is our belief that this new perspective which places more emphasis on the interface of sense and emotion can open up new horizons for second language teachers to do more research into it, contributing to language learning processes.

Keywords: Persian learning, emotioncy, cultural intelligence, emotion, senses