
PERSONALITY TRAITS AND SUCCESS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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The article considers such personality traits as persistence, responsibility and sociability in the vein of the system-functional approach to the research of the personality and their impact on successful foreign language learning.

Key words: persistence, responsibility, sociability, personality traits, system-functional approach to studying personality traits, successful foreign language learning.

The success in learning a foreign language depends on a number of different factors, including the peculiarities of organizing the process of learning and the variety of teaching methods. But the latest research showed that the individual psychological traits of the students also play a great part in this process. Determining the degree and character of the relation between the successful language learning and the personality traits of the students enables us to reveal the individual parameters that have the strongest influence on the learning process and work out the actual techniques of optimizing it.

In our article we will consider such personality traits as persistence, responsibility and sociability. These traits belong to conative, regulatory and communicative spheres of personality accordingly, and they play a significant part in developing the student's ability to learn and acquire a foreign language.

In our research we were guided by the system-functional approach to the analysis of the personality traits and the individuality, developed by A.I. Krupnov [3]. Within the framework of this approach persistence is studied as a complete and systematic formation. The two blocks are singled out in its structure: the motivational-meaningful, including the attitudinal-target, motivational, cognitive and productive components in its structure, and the regulatory-dynamic, containing the emotional, dynamic, regulatory, reflective-evaluative components of persistence.

We studied persistence with the help of the paper-and-pencil test developed by A.I. Krupnov on the basis of the system-functional model of the personality traits analysis. The sample included 134 students of the preparatory department of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia ranging in age between 16—18 years, studying a foreign language (English, French, German, Spanish) within the framework of the program of training. According to the data on their progress in various aspects of a foreign language, the students taking part in the experiment were divided into two groups: more successful and less successful in studying a foreign language.

The received data have been subjected to the correlation and hierarchical analysis with the purpose of studying the psychological structure, and also disclosing the quantitative and qualitative features of the motivational-meaningful and regulatory-dynamic variables of persistence in the students with different levels in studying a foreign language.

The reliability of distinctions in the mean values of the variables of persistence of students was estimated with the use of Student's t-test.

In the motivational-meaningful attributes of persistence the significant distinctions are found only in the mean values of the objectivity variable of the productive component. In the data on the target, motivational and cognitive components no statistically significant distinctions have been revealed. The more successful students are characterized by a higher degree of manifestation of the subject-activity attributes of the productive component of persistence than the less successful students. Their persistence most often promotes their successful mastering of the studied subjects and a better foreign language acquisition.

The greatest distinctions are observed in the variables of the dynamic component of persistence. The received data testify that the persistence of more successful students is notable for a higher manifestation of erginess and lower manifestation of anergia. The students who are more successful in studying a foreign language are characterized by a constant aspiration to realize their ambition. As for the students who are less successful a considerably smaller rate of display of the attributes of erginess is observed in their persistent behaviour. The distinctions in the degree of the manifestation of anergia of persistence between the two groups of students are also statistically significant. The more successful students show less evidence of anergia in comparison with the less successful. The less successful students admit to having the habit to postpone the pre-planned work.

Speaking about the variables of the emotional component of persistence, in more successful students the mean values of the variable of the asthenic emotions are appreciably lower than in the less successful students who are overwhelmed by the negative emotions when they are to blame for failing to fulfill a task, the feeling of guilt and anxiety when they promised to do something, but failed and this distinction is statistically significant.

As to the variables of the reflective-evaluative component the distinctions there turned out to be statistically significant. The successful students are characterized by the presence of a considerably smaller amount of operational and personal difficulties than the less successful ones. The component of difficulties is much more pronounced in the less successful students.

To summarize we must say that in the motivational-meaningful block of persistence the similar features prevail in both groups of students and only in the attributes of the subjective sphere of the application of the persistent behavior there have been found statistically significant distinctions.

In the regulatory-dynamic block of persistence the statistically significant distinctions have been found in the variables of erginess, anergia, asthenic emotional experiences, and also in the variables of the operational and personal difficulties. No statistically significant distinctions have been found in the parameters of sthenic emotions, and also internal and external regulation. This fact proves the presence of the commonalities in the regulatory-dynamic attributes of persistence of the students with different levels of progress in foreign language learning, and it also reveals the presence of some specific features.

In her research of responsibility as a system-functional personality trait, Yu.V. Klyuyeva [2] found out that, this trait has a great impact on all kinds of activity, including learning. Responsibility is seen in her research as an important personality trait that determines the success of a person's activity, as a regulator of the knowledge of life, activities, purposes, and as an internal condition of the organization of a person's ability to live.

The empirical data collected by Yu.V. Klyuyeva showed that the students with higher manifestation of responsibility tend to show more productivity in learning a foreign language, while the students with lower manifestation of the said quality have some difficulty in learning a foreign language and, therefore, take more time to master it. The students with a high level of a foreign language acquisition have a better idea of responsibility as a personality trait, of its role and essential attributes. It helps the more successful students to develop this quality and get a better command of the language. In solving practical matters in various kinds of activities the responsible behaviour promotes gaining new information.

The study gives evidence that the knowledge about responsibility is mainly realized in the object-communicative sphere both in the students with high and low level of language acquisition. It testifies that for both groups of students the quality of their work is the most important aspect. The tendency to control one's own responsible behaviour is most vividly manifested in the students with a high level of mastering a foreign language. Probably, it is connected with the greater orderliness, responsibility and discipline of students with a high level, and also their aspiration to self-actualization in any field.

The researcher points out that the high level students show more activity, i.e. they have a wider range of ways of realization of responsible behaviour. In the students with a low level of a foreign language acquisition, all the above mentioned attributes have a low manifestation. The students with a high level realize the new knowledge both in the educational, and in the subject-personal sphere, with the socio-centric motives of the responsibility display dominating, while the egoistic motives dominate in the students with a low level of mastering the language.

In her research of the influence of sociability on the success in learning a foreign language G.V. Zarembo [1] comes to some conclusions that may seem surprising. According to her research the communicative behaviour of the successful and less successful learners of foreign languages has some notable peculiarities. While mastering a foreign language the less successful pupils show high communicative activity, accompanied by spontaneity, impulsiveness, emotionally coloured reaction and less self-control. Alongside with high communicative activity, caution in decision-making, high self-control and volitional self-regulation are inherent in more successful learners.

In her research G.V. Zarembo gives evidence that the psychological structure of sociability in the groups of successful and less successful learners of a foreign language has some similarities and distinctions. The similarities are manifested in the presence of the factor of difficulties in both groups, and the distinctions manifest themselves in different ways of achieving a high level of productivity of sociability. The presence of the factor of difficulties is determined by the significant weights of low energy, asthenic and external regulation variables in both groups. The high level of productivity of socia-

bility in the group of successful learners is reached due to the parameter of internal regulation, whereas in the group of less successful learners it is reached owing to the values of the variables of energy and sthenic emotions.

According to G.V. Zarembo's data the successful learners are characterized by a more well-defined psychological structure of sociability, while in the less successful learners it is more differentiated. The cross-correlations of the regulatory-dynamic and motivational-meaningful variables of sociability in the given groups of learners show the active interaction between the dynamic and productive components. In the group of less successful learners these interactions are less expressed. The motivational-meaningful variables are practically not subject to the influence of the sthenic emotions in more successful learners and are influenced by them in the group of less successful students. The variable of internal regulation of the regulatory-conative component in the successful students intensifies the aspiration to self-actualization of the personality, promotes optimal group adjustment, aspiration to reveal their abilities. In the less successful learners the variable of personal difficulties is in the inverse relationship with the components of the productivity. In more successful learners the similar cross-correlation turned out to be insignificant.

The detailed analysis of a statistical estimation of the distinctions in the variables of sociability and productivity conducted by G.V. Zarembo revealed the interrelation of the psychological features and the specificity of the structure of sociability with the success of the process of learning a foreign language. The low parameters of the variable of dialogical speech in the less successful students are determined by the high parameters of the variables of low energy, asthenicity, external regulation and personal difficulties. The low degree of manifestation of sociability, negative emotions, the pliability of the personality to external conditions and the presence of personal difficulties are reflected in the quality of dialogical speech of the learners, playing an important part in the formation of their communicative competence. The mean values of the variables of socially significant purposes, socio-centric motivation and internal regulation of the group of successful learners combined with the low parameters of the variables of low energy, asthenicity, external regulation and personal difficulties have not rendered any negative influence on the parameters of the variable dialogical speech.

Thus all the three researches state the positive influence of developing and forming the personality traits on the progress in the educational activity of studying a foreign language. The students with more persistence, responsibility and sociability turn out to be more successful in studying a foreign language, and the students who are experiencing difficulties in the realization of these qualities, achieve less in the same kind of activity. It is also possible to speak with confidence about the influence of developing such personality traits, as persistence, responsibility and sociability on the success in studying a foreign language.

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СВОЙСТВА ЛИЧНОСТИ И УСПЕШНОСТЬ В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА

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В рамках системно-функционального подхода к изучению свойств личности рассматриваются такие свойства личности, как настойчивость, ответственность и общительность, а также их связь с успешностью освоения иностранного языка.

Ключевые слова: настойчивость, ответственность, общительность, свойство личности, системно-функциональный подход, успешность в изучении иностранного языка.