

چکیده

هدف این مقاله نشان دادن اهمیت مهم ترین ویژگی های عاطفی است که در فرایند یادگیری به طور عام، و در فرایند یادگیری زبان به طور خاص مؤثرند. تمامی گروه های مرتبط با فرایند یادگیری اعم از برنامه ریزان، والدین، معلمان، و دانش آموزان بر این باورند که ویژگی های عاطفی در فرایند یادگیری زبان مؤثر هستند. در این راستا، این ویژگی ها مورد توجه خاص روانشناسان، جامعه شناسان، و معلمان قرار گرفته اند. با این وجود، اهمیت این ویژگی ها هنوز آن چنان که باید مورد توجه قرار نگرفته است. به این منظور، مهمترین و اساسی ترین ویژگی های عاطفی شامل انگیزه، نگرش، اضطراب، برونگرایی / درونگرایی، عزت نفس، خطرپذیری، اعتماد به نفس، خویشتن داری، و کمرویی در ذیل توضیح داده می شوند و دلایل اهمیت هر کدام از آن ها برای معلمان ذکر می گردد. به علاوه، در این مقاله درباره وظیفه سنگین معلمان در تشخیص مشکلات مربوط به هر یک از این ویژگی ها و انواع کمک هایی که می توان به دانش آموزان مشکل دار ارائه نمود مطالبی ارائه شده است. بعضی از راه های کمک به این گونه دانش آموزان عبارتند از برگزاری جلسات مشاوره با حضور دانش آموزان و اولیا آن ها، ایجاد محیطی دوستانه در کلاس درس، استفاده از انواع مختلف فعالیت ها و گروه بندی های کلاسی، و اغماض بعضی از اشتباهات زبانی دانش آموزان.

کلیدواژه ها: ویژگی های عاطفی، انگیزه، نگرش، اضطراب، برونگرایی / درونگرایی، عزت نفس، خطرپذیری، اعتماد به نفس، خویشتن داری،

کمرویی

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss some of the most crucial affective characteristics which are believed to be influential in teaching, learning, testing, and the whole educational systems. All the involved parties, including educators, programmers, curriculum developers, parents, teachers, and learners, believe that affective characteristics are influential in learning, in general, and in language learning, in particular. That is why these characteristics have attracted great attention in recent years from psychologists, sociologists,

The Role of Affective Characteristics in Language Learning

S. Mahmood Mirtabatabaei

Ph. D. in TEFL

Iran University of Science and Technology

Email: mtatatabaie@iust.ca.ir

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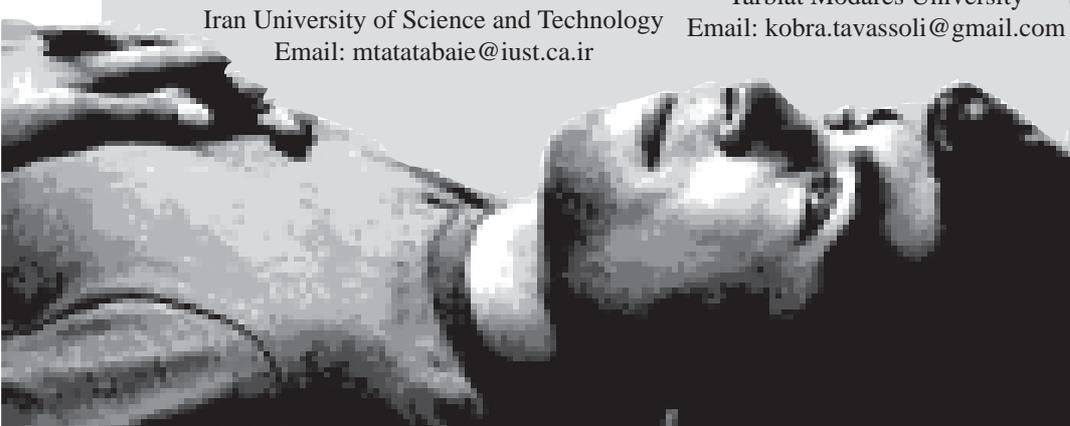
Kobra Tavassoli

Tarbiat Modares University

Email: kobra.tavassoli@gmail.com

پژوهشگاه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی

زبان بیخ علوم انسانی



terms of its steps and procedures so that it can be applied to different sized groups. Reading comprehension strategies can be successfully modeled in front of the whole class, rather than in small groups. Besides, considering the benefits of the method and the great changes it can make in developing learners' autonomy, it seems worthy of trying in the crowded classes too.

To conclude, the literature shows that RT is a useful tool for fostering autonomy in learners through providing them with effective strategies to handle learning tasks on their own. Thus, if Iranian teachers want to produce active, autonomous, motivated, and independent learners, reciprocal teaching can help.

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زیرنویس

1. Autonomy
2. Reciprocal
3. Modeling
4. Dialogue
5. Appropriating

the beginning sessions of their classes to introducing learning strategies. In fact, most of them go directly to the course book and start teaching. They may do this because they are worried about the limited time of their classes; however, they ignore the fact that by making their students equipped with a strong tool to work independently, they will not only save time, but also they will definitely achieve golden results. Accordingly, the significance of explicit instruction of strategies should be assigned a particular position in the course planning.

4. In addition to teachers' attitudes, the beliefs of Iranian high school students who are used to teacher-centered instruction should be investigated and modified too. We have to help them accept the changes so they may gain the predicted benefits of being at the centre of the learning process. High school students may want to know the rationale behind the changes like doing group work in their classes. Some may even question its value; thus, RT methodology should be introduced step by step, otherwise they would definitely resist the changes. Besides, for RT to be successful, frequent student feedback is necessary.

5. Since what Iranian teachers do in their classes or make their Learners do is usually influenced by the policies of higher authorities in the system reconsidering the goals they have defined for high school level seems necessary. Those who have the actual experience of teaching at high school level may have experienced failure in using group work, negotiation, strategy instruction, and other learner-centered activities because the students' main concern is to prepare themselves for the national university entrance exam, which still seems to be far from the purposes of learner-centered programmes. Thus, whenever a teacher tries to devote even a small portion of the class to such activities, the students show immediate resistance. They prefer to just memorize the vocabulary and

grammatical rules they think will help them to pass such a decisive exam.

6. Increasing the amount of time devoted to ESL courses at high schools (one or two sessions per week) by the ministry of education seems absolutely necessary. Many teachers are reluctant to apply methodologies like RT in their teaching, and prefer to use the limited time of their classes just to meet the requirements of the term and move students closer and closer to their common aim, i.e. passing the university entrance exam. This is another limitation which the authorities have to do something about.

7. A reevaluation of the current system of education in Iran seems crucial to shift the current aim of education into a higher and more valuable goal: producing a critical citizen who will be able to use his knowledge to solve his problems, to be able to negotiate with other members of society, to be independent and autonomous, and to use his reading comprehension skills to achieve his purposes throughout his life.

8. Since one of the requirements of the model is competency in decoding (Hewitt, 1995), the deficiencies of both the teachers and students in this area should be compensated. Here again the role that educational authorities can play in defining the national goals manifested both in the school programs and in the teacher education programs becomes clear.

9. The experience shows that whenever the high school teachers are asked why they just stick to the traditional methods of foreign language teaching, they refer to the size of the classes as the main reason. That is, they think the crowded classes leave no place for them to apply the learner-centered activities like group work. Although it is true that applying RT in large classes is really a hard task, putting it aside altogether and even not giving it a try does not seem to be justifiable. As mentioned earlier in this article, RT is flexible in

Besides, RT methodology as a two-way street in which the active participation by students is allowed can be effectively used to increase students, talking time in the class, which leads to the improvement of students' communicative competence (Vela Izquierdo (2004).

Furthermore, RT is considered to be an excellent approach to provide the context for specific strategy instruction and for transforming the learner into a strategic reader (Grabe, 2002). As Altan and Trombly (2001) mention, using these strategies is a feature of learning-centered environment, which is communicative and authentic and trains learners to work in small groups or pairs and to negotiate meaning in a broad context. In a learner-centered class students become autonomous. That is, as Hewitt (1995) asserts, the readers' gradual independence from the teacher in RT methodology encourages autonomy in the reading class.

Cotterall (2000) refers to the importance of incorporating principles of learner autonomy as a notion of which many language teachers are convinced. It should be seen as an essential goal of all learning in all contexts since it is obvious that no students can have their teacher to accompany them throughout life. The autonomous learner as a self-activated meaning-maker and an agent in his own learning process is not one to whom things just happen. Learning is viewed as the result of his own self-initiated interaction with the world.

Practical Considerations in Iranian High schools

Introducing RT strategy as a learner-centered activity with the aim of fostering autonomy among Iranian high school learners would definitely face many problems since it requires a number of modifications to be made to the existing language program in the country. In order to make the effective implementation of this strategy possible

in this context and to remove the possible obstacles, some practical issues should be taken into consideration. In the the remaining part of the paper, some prerequisites to implement RT appropriately and fruitfully for ESL Iranian learners at high school level are discussed.

1. The first and the most primary requirement is to make a change in the attitudes of teachers regarding how an English class should be conducted. English language program in Iran, as in some other parts of the world, is challenging due to the traditional methodology in which the learning environment is mostly teacher -centered so that teachers are considered as authorities. Creating a learner-centered classroom in this context seems impossible without creating a positive attitude and a strong motivation in teachers to implement such a learning strategy.

To achieve this purpose, it is suggested that the notion of learner-centered environment is incorporated in teacher education programs. Since this program is based on the assumption that the students will eventually teach in the way they are taught, changing beliefs and attitudes towards language learning and teaching through training them in a learner-centered way during their preparatory years seems to be helpful.

2. Just having motivation or positive attitudes to make a change do not suffice; Teachers should be trained and made familiar with the procedures of RT. There may be many teachers who are not completely familiar with the learning strategies because they themselves have never used them. They should be made familiar with the existing strategy inventories including Oxford (1990) so that they might apply them to identify their student's learning styles and strategies.

3. As far as Iranian high school students are concerned, no or little attention is paid to the importance of explicit instruction of learning strategies. There are no or few teachers who devote

teacher begins to transfer control of the process to the students by having them take the role of instructor or dialogue leader. As these new leaders begin to perform the dialogical questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting process in groups or pairs, the instructor assumes the role of a coach, guide, and facilitator. It is at this stage that one student asks a question and others answer or comment on it; one student summarizes while the others provide elaborations and simplification; one student identifies difficult aspects of the passage and others clarify them, and finally one student predicts what comes next and others provide alternative hypotheses.

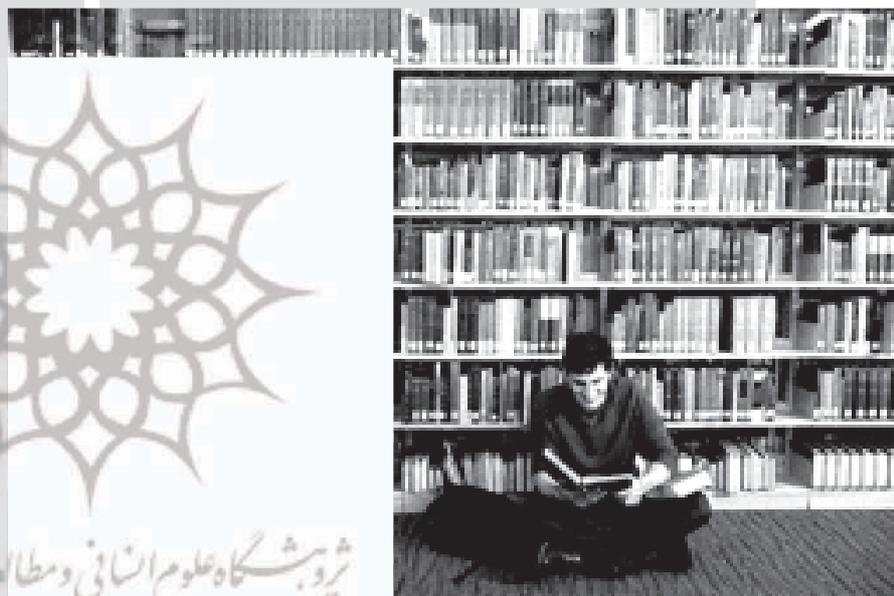
Emphasizing the flexibility and transferability of RT, Doolittle, et al (2006) report, different instructors may use RT in different ways in their classes. They may add to the four strategies, or they may not use one or two of the comprehension skills introduced by Palinscar and Brown (1986).

Theoretical Foundations of RT

Social constructivism provides a philosophical foundation for the use of reciprocal teaching. This theory emphasizes "the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners, and tasks, and provides a view of learning as arising from interactions with others" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.43.).

As Doolittle, et al (2006) note, RT focuses on the 'social genesis of knowlesge' which is based on three main assumptions: (1) knowledge and meaning are actively and socially created; (2) socially-created knowledge and meaning show social negotiation and consensus; (3) social adaptation, discourse, and goal achievement are the purposes for which knowledge and meaning are created.

Besides social constructivism as the philosophical foundation of RT, cognitive psychology provides a theoretical foundation for it. Cognitive approaches put great emphasis on the significance of what the learner brings to any learning situation. They see the learner as an active meaning-maker and problem solver (Williams and Burden, 1997). The central role given to the learner in cognitive psychology is clearly evident in RT. In other words, this methodology is quite successful in moving the class toward a learning-



centered direction.

Benefits of RT

The main benefit of this reading strategy, if implemented effectively, is that learners will make substantial gains in the comprehension and understanding of texts, even the complex ones, in content areas (Hewitt, 1995). This leads them to a greater knowledge of the topic, to higher comprehension skills, and consequently, to more positive attitudes, self-confidence, and motivation to read.

strategy can be effectively applied to other areas of study and wherever learners are vulnerable to comprehension failure (Hewitt, 1995).

RT is based on modeling and guided practice in which the teacher first provides the students with a model of reading comprehension strategies and then gradually withdraws from the process to cede the responsibility for the strategies to the students. Doolittle et al (2006) summarize RT methodology in three basic stages or processes:

- (1) The explicit instruction of specific comprehension strategies (modeling stage).
- (2) The dialogue between the teacher and students in which the instructor clarifies why, when, and where to use these strategies (dialogue stage).
- (3) The appropriating of the teacher role by the students, i. e. students become self-regulated in the use of these strategies (appropriation stage).

The Procedures of RT

RT model is introduced as a strategy to enhance learners' comprehension of the text while making them involved in a verbal exchange of ideas. In other words, students 'reciprocate' their skills, experiences, and understanding as they follow the model (Hewitt, 1995). Palinscar and Brown (1984), in their original work, selected four reading comprehension strategies to activate and monitor reading comprehension:

1. Summarizing: It involves identifying the important information and ideas of the text. It may be based on a single part of the text or the whole passage.
2. Questioning: It is the process of identification of central information and using them to generate questions which are then applied as self-tests for the reader.
3. Clarifying: It involves the clarification of difficult, unfamiliar, and unclear structures, vocabulary, references, or concept within the

text. It motivates learners to re-read, use the contextual cues, or some external sources such as a dictionary to remediate confusion.

4. Predicting: It involves creating hypotheses about what will occur next through combining reader's prior knowledge with the new knowledge from the text. It provides the motivation to continue reading the text in order to confirm or disconfirm self-generated hypotheses.

The Modeling Stage

The process begins with the instructor modeling the steps of reciprocal teaching. He explains, in small groups, the general nature of the reading comprehension strategies, the reasons they are used, and when they should be applied. Then, the teacher and students, usually in small groups, read a part of the text silently. After reading, the teacher models the strategies and skills introduced earlier. While modeling appropriate reading comprehension strategies, the teacher summarizes the section of the text that was read.

The Dialogu Stage

To achieve the aims of RT, introducing and modeling strategies are not enough by themselves. Dialogue is an essential part, in which the discussions, questions and answers, and feedback occur. The students are encouraged to ask questions about both the text and strategies during the dialogue process. This leads to the clarification of unclear and difficult aspects of the text. In fact, the dialogue is used to foster both reading comprehension and strategic awareness.

The Appropriating Stage

The three processes of reading, dialoguing, and clarifying is repeated through the whole text until the students are familiar with the sequence of activities and the skills involved. At this stage, the

EGP (English for General Purposes) just as a unit to pass. In other words, their main concern appears to be just getting a passing score. Such an attitude would definitely hinder the teachers' attempts to develop the required skills in the students at this level. But high school students may be easier to motivate, more ready to acquire the comprehension skills taught, and less resistant to new changes.

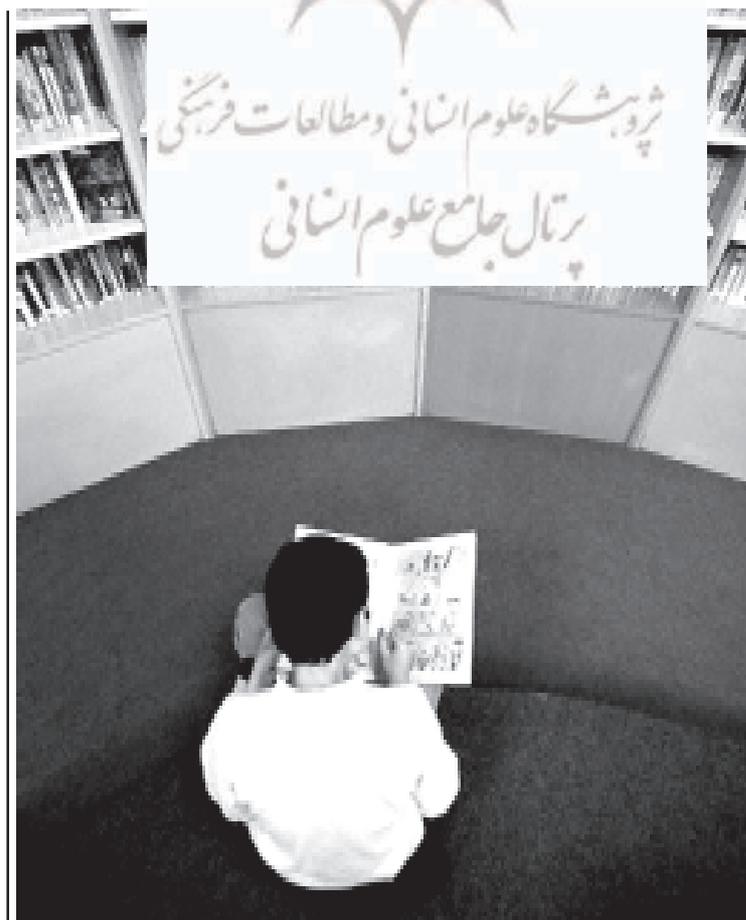
With these preliminary considerations in mind, the first question arising is 'how to change this lamentable situation'. One widely recommended solution is the explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies at high school level. The positive effect of raising awareness of learning strategies has been documented in the literature for example, Hodge et al (1992, cited in Doolittle et al, 2006) by Kern (1989), O' Malley & Chamot (1990), and Oxford (1990). who showed that ineffective readers rarely use any strategies to compensate for their skill deficiencies.

Assuming that conscious application of reading comprehension strategies is effective in enhancing the skill, the second question arising is 'which of

these strategies are more helpful in producing an effective reader'. Palinscar and Brown (1984) suggest *Reciprocal Teaching* (RT) as one solution to the problem. The present article attempts to define the theoretical foundations, main features, benefits, and procedures of RT. Then, the possibility of implementing RT strategy in Iranian high schools and the required conditions to apply this strategy fruitfully are discussed in order to provide English teachers with a useful tool for developing their students' comprehension strategies.

What is RT?

As a strategy for establishing an active and rather expanded dialogue between teacher and students and among the students themselves, RT is gaining significance in educational settings (Cook, 1989 & 2001; Vela Izquierdo, 2004). The original study of Palinscar and Brown (1984), as the pioneer RT researchers, involved seventh grade English speakers recognized as poor readers with the purpose of reinforcing comprehension in L1 and ESL reading classes; however, the



نتیجه‌ی کارشان را به شکل خلاصه و شفاهی یا کتبی، به معلم ارائه می‌دهند. در این مقاله، ابتدا پایه‌های تئوریک این روش، ویژگی‌های اصلی آن و فایده‌های استفاده از آن معرفی شده و سپس محدودیت‌ها و شرایط لازم برای کاربرد عملی و مؤثر آن در دبیرستان‌های ایران مورد بررسی قرار گرفته است. موارد مطرح شده می‌توانند، دبیران دبیرستان را با این روش مفید در آموزش راهبردهای خواندن آشنا کنند تا با کاربرد آن در کلاس، برای مستقل کردن دانش‌آموزان در امر یادگیری گام بردارند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: روش تدریس دوسویه، یادگیری مستقل، کلاس دانش‌آموز-محور، ساخت‌گرایی اجتماعی، روان‌شناسی شناختی، استراتژی‌های خواندن

Abstract

Autonomy should be seen as the essential goal of all learning in all contexts since it is obvious that no students can have their teachers to accompany them throughout life. If autonomy involves students' capacity to use their learning independently of teachers, Reciprocal Teaching (RT) methodology is its obvious manifestation in that it enhances learners' comprehension of the text while making them involved in a verbal exchange of ideas. In other words, students reciprocate their skills, experiences, and understanding as they follow the model. This methodology is quite successful in moving the class toward a learning-centered direction. The paper attempts to define the theoretical foundations, main features, benefits, and procedures of RT. Then, the possibility of implementing RT strategy in Iranian high schools and the required conditions to apply this strategy fruitfully in this context are discussed in order to provide high school English teachers with a useful tool for developing their students' comprehension strategies.

Key Words: reciprocal teaching, autonomy, learner-centered class, social constructivism, cognitive psychology, reading comprehension strategies.

Introduction

The comprehension of different and difficult English texts is one of the greatest challenges in the higher education programs of all countries including Iran. University students all around the world are assigned the reading of various texts and articles related to their fields of study. Yet, what is common among these students is a lack of good reading skills. In fact, as Royse (2001, cited in Doolittle et al, 2006) states, many students have never learned good reading skills even though they may know how to read.

This problem of poor reading comprehension skills may cause serious problems for learners since reading comprehension is the essential and

central component of higher education success. Besides, this is a kind of skill which the students would continue to need after their graduation. In other words, it is a skill needed for the whole lifetime.

Thus, it seems necessary for EFL teachers to work systematically on improving learners' reading comprehension skills.

Considering the system of education in Iran, it is suggested that the problem should receive due attention even before the students enter the university, i. e. when they are at high school level. The reason for this assertion is the fact that many ESP students look at English courses especially