

# Neurolinguistic Factors in English Language Learning: A Cognitive based Study

S. Sajna Beevi, R. Abilasha, M. Iankumaran

*Abstract---* Language is an important aspect of human for communication. It is the most effective way of communication and considered to be a remarkable achievement in human's life. English language plays an important role in the present society and as a window of the world. The demand of English Language has developed in all the countries and it has emerged as a good communication language. Speaking skill is an essential part of English language learning. When a new language is learned, learners usually face lack of confidence, anxiety, nervousness and apprehension. Psychological factors make a huge difference in learning to speak a language. This article 'Psychological Factors Affecting English Language Learning: A Neurolinguistic Perspectives' aims at emphasizing the importance of factors which affect the language learning. Psychological factor is one of the greatest obstacles and it dominates the learner's perception. Neurolinguistic factor deals with a study of human mind and relation between the languages. Neurolinguistic Programming is an approach to communication and personal development. It is also regarded as an excellent method for second language learning which supports learners to achieve perfection in their performance. It brings out the control of complicated feelings and thoughts by using mind techniques, like visualization. It helps to improve the mental status about the hesitation of learners. Psychological factors are caused by the feeling of making mistakes, lack of self-esteem and anxiety about a situation. The purpose of the study is to find out some possible solutions dealing with the causes and effects by Neurolinguistic Programming and help learners to overcome lack of confidence and anxiety over learning language.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Communication comes out with exchanging thoughts, feelings and emotions through interaction. Language stands as a platform for communication. It assists to exchange and explore ideas to one another. It is one of the most remarkable as well as constituent characteristics of man. It provides a space for revealing ideas about great varieties of concepts. There are so many varieties of language throughout the world.

Every language explores its tradition and culture and helps to unlock the knowledge of human through fine interaction. It is a universal thing and one of the greatest necessities of human life. It shapes social interactions and makes every human unique. Culture and society are closely related by the language and it links individuals and the outside world and thereby helping to sculpt out an individual from infancy. With the help of language, children come to know more about the world as it stands as a fundamental element of civilization. Man could not have developed but

for language. Language alone differentiates humans from the animals.

## II. ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

English is one of the most influential languages in the world. In different countries, it is spoken as the first language and in India it is considered the second language. It has different forms like British English, Canadian English, American English etc. These are all dialects which mean it differs in the way of speaking. In India, English is used not only for the purpose of communicating with the outside world but also used for inter-state and Intra-state communication. It stands as a conservationist among Indians who speak different languages. English is vital in the field of education, legal and finance.

English language is spread all over the world and it is the base for education. Owing to its popularity, English is used as a second language in India having a teaching pattern. Due to its development and progress, different teaching methods have been included to teach English effectively. English language teaching has many changes from time to time. It is taught for the development of language skills. In olden days, it was taught through black boards, audio tapes, etc. After the growth of technology, several applications are implemented to influence both the learners and the teachers.

## III. CHALLENGES IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

There are many reasons challenging English language teaching in India. The reasons are systemic faults ranging from vague syllabus, outdated methodologies to wrong assessment pattern. There are also practical challenges like large classroom size, lack of expert language educators, etc. Among all these reasons, the learners face psychological challenges for learning a new language. These, in particular, cause variances amongst individual language learners. The factors that impact individual learners are Motivation, Attitude, Aptitude, Age and Personality. Anxiety and poor motivation prevent the learners from learning and acquiring the language skills. Neurolinguistic Programming can help to resolve these challenges.

## IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECTING LANGUAGE LEARNING

Psychological aspects are the factors that formulate, inspire, and promote learning in different ways. Language skill is deeply controlled by mental process.

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**S. Sajna Beevi**, Assistant Professor of English, Noorul Islam College of Arts and Science, Kumaracoil, Tamilnadu.

**R. Abilasha**, Assistant Professor of English, Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil, Tamilnadu, India.  
(e-mail: abilasharajan@yahoo.com)

**M. Iankumaran**, Professor of English, Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education, Kumaracoil, Thuckalay, Tamilnadu, India.  
(e-mail: mikumaran@yahoo.com)



Psychological factors express both positive and negative effects. Some psychological factors are lack of confidence, self-esteem, anxiety, language stress, fear of making mistakes, etc. Anxiety that affects the learner's oral performance as well as their ability in expressing what they learn. When the learners are motivated to speak, their self-esteem is high and they are not anxious and their oral performance seems to be better. On the other hand, learners who are anxious, with lack of self-esteem and motivation face many difficulties in learning achievements. These factors perform a crucial part in learning and speaking the second language. It may be the greatest obstacle that affects the oral performance of learners. Learners have a feel of fear to open up their mouth because of all these factors and mostly they are silent. The affective domain is a crucial element in learning because it may be one of the causes of success or failure since feelings shape learners attitudes and change them.

## V. CAUSES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Language learning is a part of intellectual, emotional and physical development of learners and it takes place in a complicated ambience of the society. Mostly, learners are forced to adapt English language without having any proper backup. A learner cannot easily adapt fluency and accuracy which may be a reason to cause the psychological barricades among the language. Psychological factors play a prominent role in learner's progress in acquiring willingness and commitment to listening instruction. It is a common issue faced by most of the English language learners and they remain silent inside the classroom due to fear of committing mistakes. Such learners do not ascertain their mistakes as a natural part of learning but as a threat to their reputation and dignity.

### *Causes for Apprehension*

- Looking foolish in front of others
- Get negative evaluation from the teachers.
- Afraid to express their ideas
- Negative comments from their peer.
- Classroom atmosphere they experienced before.

### *Causes for Shyness*

- Learners who lack feel confidence about them may express shyness.
- Apprehension also makes the learners shy.
- Afraid of being laughed by peers.
- Fail to adapt the learning situation.

### *Causes for Anxiety*

- Low ability to communicate in English cause communication anxiety.
- The reason could be limited knowledge in language.
- Stressful situation.
- Anxiety comes out with the fear of being tested.
- Students prefer to be silent, due to fear.

### *Causes for Lack of Motivation*

- Lack of knowledge in instructional program.
- Uninspiring teaching and boring classrooms.
- Lack of pleasant atmosphere for healthy learning.

- Lack of bonding between teachers and learners.
- Monotonous teaching reduces the motivational level of a learner.

## VI. NEUROLINGUISTIC AND ITS PERSPECTIVES

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) technique is the best way for second language teaching. Psychological factors influence learning in a positive or negative way. It plays a prominent role in learning a language. Neurolinguistic study comes under these psychological aspects. It is the study of bond between the brain, language and behavior. It is proximately a new study of collaboration in relation to the functioning of mental process and language. The NLP helps to improve interpersonal communication and makes learning easier. It is mostly concerned with the thought process and effect of one's thinking on one's behavior and behavior of others.

The NLP teaches how to communicate internally and externally. The central theme of the NLP is sculpting excellent behavior. The Neurolinguistic Programming was originated in 1970, by Richard Bandler and John Grinder. Both of them came with the NLP approach as a mode of communication and personal development. It is used in the fields of education, marketing, management, counseling, medical, legal, sales and training. It is a system of psychology dealing with the self - development of human being and helps learners to overcome their fear, lack of confidence and anxiety over a new language.

## VII. BACKGROUND OF NLP AND ITS FOUNDING THEORIES

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) emerged as an individual development approach in 1970s and was initiated by Bandler and Grinder. Richard Bandler, was a scientist and Grinder, a linguist. They intended to analyze the mental processes and noticed that when an individual remind about a frightening or crucial moment in a genuine way, the moment being difficult and unfavorable for the individual become smoothen by the positive attitude of a person itself. Therefore, Bandler brings out that the way of thinking about situation or something else makes all the dissimilarities. This finding was named by Neurolinguistic Programming which acts as a base for individual's excellency and transformation of behaviors and beliefs. Later, they insisted to describe the connection between neurology and linguistics and how that bonding can be used to program an individual's mind, body and behavior.

According to the founders, Neurolinguistic Programming emerged on its belief and universal potential. The NLP insists to help people by guiding them to program their brain process. It offers variety of communication patterns to improve and change individuals by using self-hypnosis. Neurolinguistic Programming is purposefully designed to recognize how verbal and non-verbal communication affects the human brain.



It brings out that the NLP not only claims a better opportunity to communicate with others, but also teaches how to take control over the functions of human brain. It has been popular as a self-program in a psychological way.

### VIII. CHARACTERISTICS OF NEUROLINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING (NLP)

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) is a progress oriented approach. It indicates learning standards as a key for personal change and development. It is believed that people are naturally creative and are capable of a change. According to the capability of the people, it adapts a constructivist position and represents the world. The NLP has a strong attention on understanding the structure rather than the experience. It is deeply interested in construction of people's mind and also it implies that people design their experiences through cognitive process and self-determination.

The NLP depends upon the human character and behavior in connection with the interaction of the surroundings and individuals. Interactions show various characters of humans in biological and reflexive ways. These types of reactions are unavoidable and it is essential during interrogation. It helps to extract the real personality through genuine interaction.

### IX. STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES IN NLP

Neurolinguistic Programming offers skills, strategies and techniques to overcome the mental difficulties in life and it helps to develop the personal learning. It studies the connection between language and human brain. It finds a way from Psycholinguistics. This new form occurs due to the development of linguistics. Language area is mainly related to brain. Several techniques and approaches are implemented to the effectiveness of the NLP.

Neurolinguistic programming basically assists one to understand oneself. It also helps others to understand in a better way and promotes communication with others. The NLP is in essence a model more than a theory. It inspires people to realize the functioning of mind and prepares the mind according to particular target that needs to be reached. It includes many conceptual thoughts and techniques to attain this. They are Modelling, Mirroring, Meta model and Milton model are certain concepts, in the NLP. In addition to these concepts, there is a litany of techniques that encourage the NLP practices.

The Neurolinguistic Programming techniques are strongly active in modifying the experience of the world. It helps to alter the entire life. Important forms are anchoring and reframing. Anchoring technique takes place by recalling the memory. Swish technique helps to wipe out the negative stimulus and reframing technique tells about the fluctuating element of communication as an individual perception. There are some particular NLP techniques with the impact of reality. With the help of those techniques learners develop their inner learning processes.

#### *Visualization*

Visualization is one of the eminent Neurolinguistic Programs that helps to find drastic changes in behavior. It is a powerful technique to regulate anxiety and manage panic

attacks by calming the mind and body. Generally, visualization means the transformation that happens in conscious mind and intentionally activates the representational system. It brings out the best by using memories, fantasy or a combination of both.

#### *Building Rapport*

Rapport is one of the most important and accessible strategies in the NLP. It is necessary to build rapport for powerful communication. The NLP handles techniques such as mirroring facial, postures and body gestures. Teachers who utilize these techniques achieve a noticeable improvement in communication through this technique. It is important for the teachers to have good rapport with the student as that would develop a positive learning environment. This comfort the learning background of the students and effective communication takes place. A good rapport with the teacher moderates the anxiety of the learners and it helps in reducing a leading challenge in second language learning. Rapport can be concerned as the glue that encloses people together. The NLP analyzes rapport to be a skill that helps to enhance and develop by adapting a good communication and alter the use of language.

#### *Modelling*

The Neurolinguistic concept was first promoted by Bandler and Grinder by learning the language and the behavioral form of successful people. They promote the NLP practitioners to follow the example of language, strategies and behavioral pattern of victorious people to achieve success. They strongly believe that by keeping a person as a role-model, it would eventually help the practitioner to become brilliant. Modelling is an effective tool for the second language learners. It can act as a mirror or the model of a confident English speaker and learners become confident in themselves for learning or speaking. It is a pragmatic approach to attain developments in language skills. It helps to boost up the confidence and motivation level of learners.

#### *Meta-Model*

The meta-model is a collection of indicating questions or language form work out to challenge the limits to a speaker's pattern of the world that is generalization, deletion and distortion. The NLP meta-model is based on the verbal patterning and it is easily proposed to detect the beliefs and thinking restrictions of the indicators. The questions designed in the meta-model bring out clarity to the language pattern and hidden restrictive elements in learning. It also helps to elaborate the details of problems and its necessity.

#### *Anchoring*

Anchoring is an important NLP technique which helps to train the mind to shape out a situation into a positive frame of mind or emotion before assigning a conversation. It is the process related to an internal reaction with some external trigger and it acts immediately over the situations.





Human behavior and emotions are easily provoked by various situations. Hence, the technique of anchoring supports to recall the emotions in a positive or relaxing manner. These ‘anchors’ help the practitioners to change the mind to the mandatory state. Anchors are generally gestures, body movements or words. A language learner, who is hesitant, nervous or upset, can easily get into a relaxed or confident state of mind by using these anchors. It is a powerful and useful technique for second language learners.

#### Reframing

Reframing is one of the most effective NLP techniques. It means changing the meaning of a communication by changing the minds or adds different context or frame. The changing idea of the meaning depends on the user’s point of view. The replacement in meaning paves way to the change in the behavioral responses of the persons. It helps the learners by reframing their learning disabilities.

#### Swish Pattern

Swish pattern is a Neurolinguistic Programming technique which is positioned with visualization and that helps the practitioners to relate positive emotions with a negative situation. By using this pattern, the NLP practitioners can change emotions like anxiety, nervousness and fear into positive ones. It is practically performed to command the brain to change negative emotions in a positive way and it helps to direct the brain and behavior in the same path. Mostly, English language learners are nervous to speak because they are anxious about the language. This technique helps the learners from replacing their anxiety, fear with positive emotions like confidence and self-belief.

#### Future Pacing

Future pacing is a technique based on visualization. It is monitoring or imaging something to happen in the future. It helps to experience the future situation in a positive way through visualization. The visualized experience is aided as a model for the future situation. If it brings out the demanded effect, the theory will work. It also helps the practitioners to recognize any other areas that affects him and causes a negative situation. The mind accepts the visualization as the reality and it brings changes in situations.

#### State Management

State Management is an important Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) technique. State management means control the state or situation. This technique actively controls over the emotional and mental status of an individual. It stands as a fusion of the mind and physiology of the body which forms a complete Neurolinguistic state of consciousness. Through the state management, training achieves full potential to run the brain and enhance it for learning. They simply find the state of mind and access it with effective NLP approach.

#### Reflection Technique

The reflection method aims to copy the behavior of someone else’s personality, in a sensible and pleasant way, through sign and body movements, like attitude, facial appearance,

hand signals etc. The teachers always try to make eye contact with the students by lightly shaking their heads in order to express that they are conscious about the student’s clarification. The main thing inside the classroom is that the teachers have to consider the students point of view through which the student’s get positive energy to be attentive in class and try to make over them to attain a new personality.

An effective exercise helps to prompt the student to act as a mirror on their own learning process. For example, if a student is not interested in learning something, the teacher can suggest him and talk about the complications in learning and make the learners learn in an enjoyable way. Through this reflection technique, it is probable to take any type of learning that seems unpleasant to the student can be changed into a motivating and positive atmosphere.

## X. DATA ANALYSIS& RESULTS

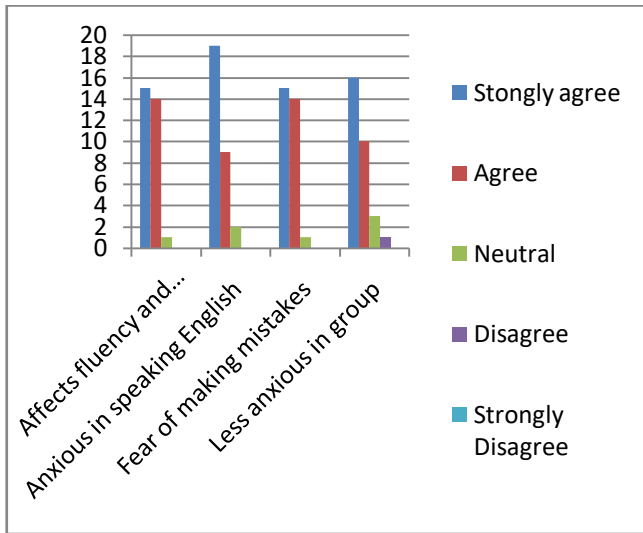
This paper is a simple and straight forward numerical analysis of the data collected. It reveals interesting and surprising results which are informative and suggestive of the attitudinal aspects of the students in learning the language. After the survey among the college students it is proved that psychological factors definitely affect language learners in various aspects. To get the learners response, a survey is conducted using a questionnaire as a tool to find the response of college students who are asked to complete the personal data. Totally sixty students of a college have beentaken for this analysis from two different departments.

The questionnaire is based on two criteria namely Anxiety and Motivation. For each criterion four questions are prescribed. The question was given to the student and the data is collected. The students are required to indicate the degree to which the statement is applied to them by ticking the boxes provided in the questionnaire as to whether they strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree.

**Table 3.1: Response regarding Anxiety in Language Learning among the First year Students of English Department**

| Sl . No | Anxiety                       | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
|---------|-------------------------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 1       | Affects fluency and Accuracy  | 15             | 14    | 1       | -        | -                 | 30    |
| 2       | Anxieties in speaking English | 19             | 9     | 2       | -        | -                 | 30    |
| 3       | Fear of making mistakes       | 15             | 14    | 1       | -        | -                 | 30    |
| 4       | Less anxious in group         | 16             | 10    | 3       | 1        | -                 | 30    |



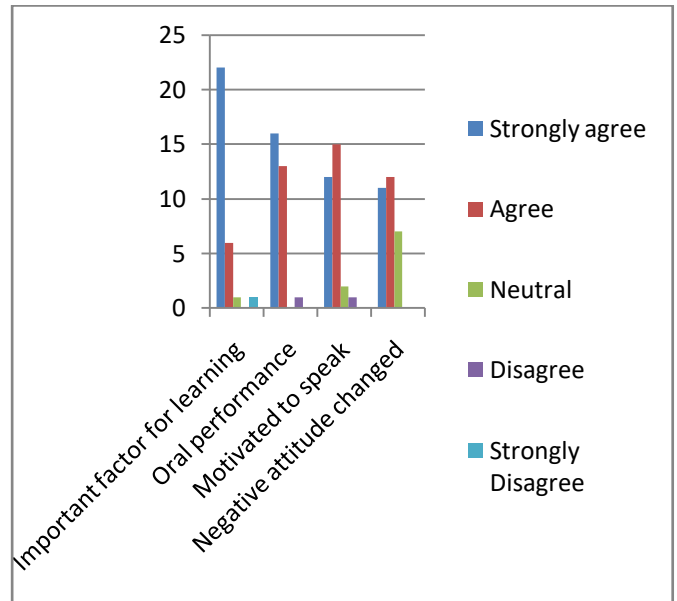


**Fig. 3.1: Response regarding Anxiety in Language Learning among the First year Students of English Department**

Anxiety influences the fluency and accuracy of a learner in second language learning. It is widespread among the second language learners; learners experience negative feelings of apprehension during exams, presentations, and public speeches make them more anxious and lose their concentration when performing tasks. The table 3.1 analyzes in depth the response of thirty first year students of English department towards anxiety. The first variable is intended to check out the student's attitude towards anxiety in second language learning. Out of thirty students, fifteen students strongly agree that anxiety affects the fluency and the accuracy of the learners and fourteen take the option agree, one student opts for neutral and none of the student is ready to opt either disagree and strongly disagree. The second variable is intended to check out if the students get anxious when they are asked to speak in English. Nineteen have opted for strongly agreed, nine opt for agree, two take the option neutral and no one is ready to opt either disagree or strongly disagree. The third variable is intended to check out the views of students about fear of making mistakes which lead them to be anxious before presentation. The highest numbers of fifteen students have opted for strongly agreement, whereas fourteen students stand along with the option agree, one student opts to be neutral and none of the students is ready to choose the option disagree or strongly disagree. The fourth variable is intended to check out students' view about being less anxious in the classroom when they are not only the persons answering a question. Sixteen students strongly agree, ten students agree, three opt to be neutral and one student opt for disagreement.

**Table 3.2: Response regarding Motivation in Language Learning among the First year Students of English Department**

| Sl.No | Motivation                    | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total |
|-------|-------------------------------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-------|
| 1     | Important factor for learning | 22             | 6     | 1       | -        | 1                 | 30    |
| 2     | Oral performance              | 16             | 13    | -       | 1        | -                 | 30    |
| 3     | Motivated to speak            | 12             | 15    | 2       | 1        | -                 | 30    |
| 4     | Negative attitude changed     | 11             | 12    | 7       | -        | -                 | 30    |



**Fig. 3.2: Response regarding Motivation in Language Learning among the First year Students of English Department**

Motivation plays a prominent role in second language learning. Learners, who are highly motivated, engage actively and pay more concentration on learning process and, moreover it seems to be easy for them to learn. The table 3.2 analyzes in depth the response of thirty, first year students of English department towards motivation. The first variable is intended to check out student's attitude towards motivation in second language learning. Out of thirty students, twenty two students strongly agree that motivation plays an important factor in language learning and six take the option agree, one student opts to be neutral, no one disagrees and one student strongly disagrees. The second variable is intended to check out if students' motivation helps them to increase their oral performance when they are asked to speak in English. Sixteen students strongly agree, thirteen agree, no one opts to be neutral and one takes option disagree and no one strongly disagrees. The third question is intended to check out student's view about motivation if it leads a learner to be less anxious before presentation and they speak better. The highest number of twelve students strongly agrees, whereas fifteen students agree, two students opt for neutral and one student disagrees and nobody strongly disagrees. The fourth variable is intended to check out views of students' about that learner's attitude towards learning which can be changed through motivation. Eleven students strongly agree, twelve students agree, seven opt to be neutral and no student opts to disagree or strongly disagree.

Positive mental status helps to improve learners in language learning. When the teachers know the learners psychological problems, they could contribute a suitable and delightful atmosphere by lowering anxiety, helping to develop self-esteem, and motivating them to learn. If the learners are psychologically motivated, they automatically will attain the self-confidence and find succeed in language learning.



## XI. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME THE PSYCHOLOGICAL OVERTONES BY USING NLP

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) is acknowledged as a psychological medium for drastic changes in behavior that helps to improve learners learning skill, especially their communication skills. Psychological factors negatively affect the language learner's speaking performance in English. The NLP assumes a positive intention behind every attitude and helps to revive memory, uphold personal strength, maintain effective learning strategies, reframe educational beliefs and promote self-esteem. It suggests solutions to overcome the classroom obstacles and contributes resources to focus attention on language learning. The NLP not only contributes to techniques, strategies and solutions to the psychological challenges in teaching and learning, motivating and engaging students but also enables teachers to develop the flexibility of response to create their own changes.

- Reframing is the technique that the teacher can handle by relating to personal experiences and makes it tangible for the learners.
- Reframing can also be used to constitute artificial circumstances to be used in the classroom contributing to the students with an enormous collection of learning opportunities without the need of material support.
- Anchoring techniques that make contact between what one sees, hears and feels apart from emotional states.
- For teaching English, auditory anchors are the most suitable during normal classroom interaction and it is advisable to keep teaching since students have a wider range of sensory stimuli to link the language.
- Teachers need to create a good rapport with students in a variety of situations such as the beginning of a course, a lesson, of specific activities. Students, who are in rapport with a teacher, are more motivated and are able to learn more easily.
- It is also important for teachers to re-establish rapport or repair it during times when response of the students is lacking, when the class is tired or getting bored.
- The NLP can support learners to catch up the optimum levels of anxiety-free states with the help of some relaxation techniques. At the time of challenging situation, learners are asked to take a deep breath to reduce the impact of their negative emotions on the human body.

## XII. CONCLUSION

Learners are connected to the ability of teachers as well as parents and their influence carry out the learner's academic success. Teachers must have the ability to understand the hindered factor of a particular student and motivate them to acquire their willingness in learning. Teachers should also be given training for how to control the student's emotions in a positive way and not to discourage them. Then only, they can provide friendly and favorable atmosphere in the classroom. They must know about the strategies and

activities to promote the speaking ability of a learner. Instead of teaching how to make a conversation in English, the teacher may interact with the students on day-to-day things and happenings in and around them. Then only, they can learn appropriate usage of language. When the students are talking, the teacher must listen and correct them in pronunciation and sentence formation. Teachers should teach the learner and they can assess the learners and make them engaged in active participation to build their confidence level in learning English language.

Positive parental engagement can bring momentous impact in student's achievement in language learning. Mostly, parents need their children to be fluent or have a vast knowledge in English language. Learners must have positive attitudes in approaching the second language learning, to its speakers and teachers. It brings out the flexibility in language learning because learners are confident in their abilities and they can progress in learning.

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