



## PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** *Introducing the psychological perspectives of foreign language teaching in primary classes involves understanding how children learn languages cognitively, emotionally, and socially. It includes exploring theories such as Piaget's cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and Krashen's theory of second language acquisition to inform teaching strategies and create an immersive and supportive learning environment for young learners.*

**Keywords:** *Psychological perspectives, foreign language teaching, primary classes, language acquisition, cognitive development, motivation, anxiety, effective strategies, sociocultural factors, developmental stages.*

Foreign language education in primary schools has gained increasing attention in recent years due to its potential benefits for cognitive development, cultural awareness, and global competence. Effective foreign language teaching requires an understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying language acquisition and learning processes.

Attention span and engagement levels vary among primary school children, influenced by factors such as age, individual differences, and learning preferences. To maintain children's focus during language instruction, educators should incorporate multisensory and interactive teaching methods, such as songs, games, role-plays, and visual aids. By appealing to different learning modalities, educators can cater to diverse attentional styles and enhance children's motivation and interest in learning the foreign language.<sup>47</sup>

Emotions play a crucial role in language learning, shaping children's attitudes, motivation, and self-perceptions as language learners. Positive emotions such as curiosity, enthusiasm, and confidence facilitate language acquisition by creating a supportive and conducive learning environment. Conversely, negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and self-doubt can impede learning progress and hinder children's willingness to participate actively in language activities. Educators should foster a positive emotional climate by celebrating children's successes, providing constructive feedback, and addressing any anxieties or concerns they may have about language learning.

Language learning is inherently social, involving interaction with teachers, peers, and native speakers. Primary school children benefit from opportunities to communicate and

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<sup>47</sup> Pavlov, I.P. (1927). *Conditioned reflexes: An investigation of the physiological activity of the cerebral cortex*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.





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collaborate with others in meaningful language contexts, both inside and outside the classroom. Group activities, pair work, and collaborative projects promote language use and negotiation of meaning, fostering the development of interpersonal communication skills and cultural awareness. Educators should create inclusive and supportive learning communities where children feel comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves in the target language.

Teaching foreign languages to primary school children requires a holistic approach that considers their cognitive, emotional, and social development. By addressing these psychological aspects, educators can create engaging and effective language instruction programs that support children's language learning and foster a lifelong appreciation for linguistic diversity. Further research is needed to explore the specific instructional strategies and interventions that optimize language acquisition outcomes for this age group.

Behaviorism, rooted in the work of psychologists such as B.F. Skinner, emphasizes observable behaviors and the role of conditioning in learning. In the context of language teaching, behaviorist principles advocate for repetitive practice, reinforcement, and the use of stimuli to elicit desired responses. Techniques such as drills, pattern practice, and positive reinforcement are commonly employed to facilitate language learning in primary classrooms. Behaviorist approaches provide a structured framework for teaching language structures and vocabulary, although they may overlook the importance of meaningful communication and comprehension.<sup>48</sup>

Behaviorism plays a significant role in shaping language teaching methodologies in primary classrooms, emphasizing observable behaviors and the principles of conditioning in facilitating language acquisition. Drawing from the foundational work of B.F. Skinner, behaviorist approaches advocate for systematic, repetitive practice to reinforce language patterns and vocabulary. In the context of primary language education, behaviorist techniques such as language drills, pattern practice exercises, and reward systems are commonly utilized to instill linguistic structures and vocabulary in young learners. Through structured repetition and positive reinforcement, behaviorism aims to establish strong associations between linguistic stimuli and desired responses, facilitating the automatization of language skills. However, while behaviorism provides a structured framework for language instruction, it may neglect the importance of meaningful communication and comprehension, potentially limiting the development of communicative competence and language fluency among primary school students.

Despite these limitations, behaviorist principles continue to inform language teaching practices in primary education, offering educators a systematic approach to scaffold language learning experiences for young learners.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>49</sup> Skinner, B.F. (1953). *Science and human behavior*. New York: Free Press.







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Behaviorism in language teaching refers to an approach that emphasizes observable behaviors and the principles of conditioning in facilitating language acquisition. In the context of language teaching, behaviorist methodologies focus on systematic, repetitive practice to reinforce language patterns and vocabulary.

Common techniques include language drills, pattern practice exercises, and the use of positive reinforcement, such as rewards or praise, to motivate learners and reinforce correct language use. Behaviorist approaches aim to create strong associations between linguistic stimuli and desired responses, ultimately facilitating the automatization of language skills. While behaviorism provides a structured framework for language instruction, it may overlook the importance of meaningful communication and comprehension in language learning. Therefore, educators often supplement behaviorist techniques with communicative activities that promote authentic language use and interaction among students.<sup>50</sup>

One key principle of behaviorist language teaching is the use of repetitive practice to automatize language skills. By engaging in structured repetition of language forms and vocabulary, students develop fluency and accuracy in language use. For example, educators may incorporate daily language drills or exercises in which students practice conjugating verbs, forming sentences, or recalling vocabulary words. Through repeated exposure and practice, students strengthen their language skills and build confidence in their ability to communicate effectively.

Furthermore, behaviorist approaches emphasize the importance of positive reinforcement in language learning. According to behaviorist theory, rewarding desired behaviors increases the likelihood of their recurrence. In language teaching, educators may use various forms of reinforcement, such as praise, stickers, or tokens, to motivate students and reinforce correct language use.

For example, students who participate actively in language activities or demonstrate improvement in their language skills may receive praise or rewards as positive reinforcement. By associating language learning with positive experiences and rewards, educators can encourage students to engage actively in the language learning process.

Engaging with primary school students involves continuously adapting and innovating teaching methods to meet the diverse needs and interests of young learners. Beyond traditional approaches, educators can employ a range of strategies to create stimulating and interactive learning environments.

Incorporating props and manipulatives can transform abstract concepts into tangible experiences, fostering deeper understanding and engagement. Whether it's using counting blocks for math or animal figurines for science, hands-on materials enhance learning by providing students with concrete examples to explore and manipulate.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Watson, J.B. (1913). Psychology as the behaviorist views it. *Psychological Review*, 20(2), 158-177.

<sup>51</sup> Thorndike, E.L. (1913). *Educational psychology*. New York: Teachers College Press.





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Music and movement offer another avenue for engagement, tapping into students' natural inclination towards rhythm and expression. By incorporating songs, chants, and movement activities into lessons, educators can energize the classroom and enhance learning retention while catering to kinesthetic learners.

Encouraging peer collaboration and cooperative learning fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility among students. Group projects, collaborative problem-solving tasks, and peer teaching opportunities not only promote social skills but also deepen comprehension through discussion and shared perspectives.

Outdoor learning experiences provide a refreshing change of scenery and offer opportunities for exploration and discovery. Field trips, nature walks, and outdoor experiments allow students to connect with the world around them, sparking curiosity and reinforcing lesson concepts in a real-world context.

Cultivating a growth mindset and fostering resilience are essential components of student engagement. Emphasizing the value of effort, perseverance, and learning from mistakes encourages students to approach challenges with confidence and enthusiasm, fueling intrinsic motivation and a love of learning.

By embracing a holistic approach to engagement, educators can create vibrant and dynamic learning environments that inspire curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning in primary school students.

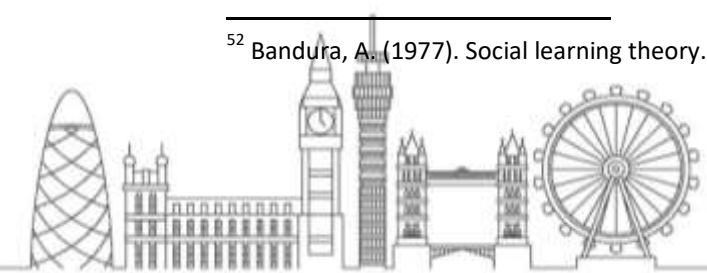
Moreover, behaviorist techniques provide a structured framework for language instruction that is especially suitable for young learners in primary education. The clear objectives, systematic practice, and immediate feedback inherent in behaviorist approaches help students develop a strong foundation in language skills. For example, language drills and repetitive exercises enable students to internalize language patterns and vocabulary, laying the groundwork for more advanced language learning tasks in the future.

However, while behaviorism provides a structured framework for language instruction, it may overlook the importance of meaningful communication and comprehension in language learning. Critics of behaviorist approaches argue that focusing solely on surface-level language forms and rote memorization may limit students' ability to use language creatively and interactively. Therefore, educators must balance behaviorist techniques with communicative activities that promote authentic language use and meaningful interaction among students.<sup>52</sup>

In summary, behaviorism offers valuable insights into language teaching methodologies in primary classrooms, emphasizing systematic practice, positive reinforcement, and structured instruction. By incorporating behaviorist techniques into language teaching practices, educators can provide young learners with a solid foundation in language skills and foster confidence and motivation in language learning. However, it is essential to supplement behaviorist approaches with communicative

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<sup>52</sup> Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.







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activities that promote meaningful communication and interaction to ensure a well-rounded language learning experience for primary school students.

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