



Mentalism And Language Learning

المدرسة العقلانية وتعلم اللغة

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Mentalism and Language Learning

It is another theory in learning. Mentalists believe that man is born with innate capacity for acquiring language and we only need to start it. Chomsky was one of the main figures who presented his theory in 1957. He considered Linguistics part of psychology. He glorifies the role of mind. Chomsky's basic claim is that the grammars for human language are too complex and abstract to be learned on the basis of the type of experience to which children have access

Therefore, Chomsky argues that significant components of the grammar must be inborn. He thinks that what we call the mind can be best described in terms a set of abstract structure whose physical basis is as yet relatively unknown. This power enables him learning a language. Mind is just like a mirror that reflects the average of learning. Competence is in the mind of ideal speaker-hearer. Learning and anything acquired is related to mind. This process possessed by the individual and developed in him as part of his maturation (competence-performance). Competence is the system of knowledge of language which can be formed in the mind of a person and it can be used to produce and develop grammatical utterances,

Chomsky explained that the principles of behaviorism didn't explain what happens in language learning because we can learn with and without these principles. It is unknown, but we can check its results.

The Main Principles Of Mentalism

1-Language is universal concerning language acquisition and language use .

2-Foreign language learning emphasized on the internal factors which are unseen. They think that each person has an innate capacity for using and learning language.

3-Most of the principles of Behaviorism like reinforcement, rewards, repetition, etc are not important because we can learn with and without these principles and there is no role for the external facts like environment and social facts in language learning.

4-Even if we know a great deal about the speaker, we can not expect when he will speak or what he will speak

5-Mentalists think that the correct response or the incorrect one does not mean that learning is done.

6-They are related to the competence and to the cognitive psychology.

Weakness of Mentalism

1-There is no role for the external factors in language learning. In fact, there is a great deal of these factors in language learning.

2-They emphasized on the innate capacity of learners only and neglected the other factors .

.Behavior of each human being is influenced by his capacity .This behavior either acquired or learned and this is influenced by the inherited attitude for reaction (understanding) and production;therefore we find that our behavior is difficult even if one is related to one family and we may behave in different ways of the same situation ,so he is influenced with the biological ,cultural,social and individual facts .In schools ,teachers try to develop the motor and mental skills of learners and guide them for better performance in school and community as a whole.The ideal method in learning is to put into consideration the principles of Behaviorism and Mentalism in language learning.