PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract

The psychological barriers severely hinder the learning and application of the Russian language. Therefore, this paper attempts to evaluate the current situation and identify the influencing factors of the psychological barriers of Russian language learners. The author carried out a questionnaire survey on Russian majors from five universities in Beijing, China. Based on the survey data, the existing psychological barriers of these subjects were summed up, and their influencing factors were studied by an ordered Logit model. The results show that the college students had a high degree of recognition for their Russian language learning; most of them maintained a good attitude towards the questions raised by teachers; a large portion of them copied from others in doing homework assigned by their teachers; their attitude toward Russian language learning should be further improved; a certain percentage of them were pessimistic about the future of Russian; their psychological barriers mainly depend on the degree of preference for Russian, difficulty in learning the language, family support, job opportunities, and future prospects. The research results shed light on how to promote the learning interest and mental health of Russian majors.

Key words: Russian Language Learning, Psychological Barriers, Influencing Factors, Logit Model.

INTRODUCTION

With continuous development of China's economy and frequent foreign exchanges, the demand for foreign language talents has also expanded. Russian was the fourth most spoken language in the world for both mother tongue and second language speakers (Alasuutari, & Järvi, 2012). At the same time, China and Russia and other Russian-speaking countries had maintained good bilateral relations for a long time (Lai, 2013). Therefore, promoting the learning and use of Russian by foreign language talents was conducive to the development of foreign affairs, foreign trade, and foreign exchanges (Thompson, 2017). Psychological barriers referred to abnormal psychological processes, abnormally characterized personality, or abnormal behavior caused by an individual's own psychological, physical or external factors (Toumpaniari, Loyens, Mavilidi et al., 2015), which further made the individual's behavior inconsistent with social behavior standards (Sloutsky, 2010). The psychological barrier of the audience in the Russian language learning process referred to the inadaptability of the people who learn Russian in the Russian language learning process, which affected their mental health (D'Mello & Graesser, 2012), and thus unhealthy mental problems such as resistance (Moody, 1988) and fear (Chen & Yang, 2014) were generated. In the long run, it was not conducive to the improvement of learners' Russian language performance and language application (Niu, Lu, & You, 2018).

Existing researches on Russian language learning had mostly focused on Russian language learning methods (Webb and Kagimoto, 2010), skills and methods of improving grades (Sugita McEown, Sawaki, & Harada, 2017), teaching methods, etc. (Erler & Macaro, 2011). There was less research on the analysis of Russian language
LEARNING STATUS OF STUDENTS MAJORING IN RUSSIAN

Research methods

Table 1. Personal characteristics of the interviewed college students

| Feature | Description          | Quantity |
|---------|----------------------|----------|
| Gender  | Male                 | 308      |
|         | Female               | 191      |
| Grade   | College freshman     | 172      |
|         | Sophomore            | 167      |
|         | Third year in university | 106    |
|         | Fourth grade university | 63      |

What do you think are the reasons for the difficulty in learning Russian

| Reason                                | Quantity |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Not interested                        | 201      |
| Too demanding on memory                | 192      |
| Insufficient capacity                 | 115      |

By consulting teachers of Russian language, students, psychologists, and management scientists, this study developed a questionnaire on the psychological barriers of audiences in the Russian language learning process. The objects of the questionnaire were undergraduates majoring in Russian in five universities in Beijing.

A total of 700 questionnaires were distributed and 649 questionnaires were returned in this survey, of which 508 were valid questionnaires, and the recovery rate was 78.27%. The personal characteristics of the interviewed college students were shown in Table 1.

Current situation of Russian language learning of the interviewed college students

Psychological barriers in Russian language learning are usually caused by individuals' aversion to Russian language learning, which gradually develops into psychological barrier. This study counted the self-assessment of Russian language learning by the interviewed college students, as shown in Figure 1. It can be seen that among the interviewed 508 college students, 79 said they were very suitable for Russian language learning, 122 said they were relatively suitable for Russian language learning, 192 said that they were generally suitable for Russian language learning, and 115 said they were relatively not suitable or very unsuitable for Russian language learning. On the whole, college students had a high degree of recognition for their own Russian language learning and considered themselves suitable for Russian language learning, but there were still a high proportion of college students who thought they were not suitable for Russian language learning and were not confident in Russian language learning performance.
ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF AUDIENCE PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Attitudes towards Russian language learning

Attitude is everything, and the learning attitude towards Russian can affect the learning psychology. Therefore, this paper started with the attitude toward the teacher's questions and the attitude toward the coursework. The attitude towards questions from teachers in class was shown in Figure 1. As can be seen from Figure 1, among the 570 interviewed college students, 175 actively cooperated with the teacher's questions, 108 actively consulted teachers after class, 207 pretended to listen carefully, and 18 said forget about it. From the statistical results, most college students had maintained a good attitude toward teachers’ questions, but some college students had no positive attitude and were accustomed to perfunctory.

The statistics of students’ attitudes toward coursework were shown in Figure 2. According to the survey results, 95 of the interviewed 508 college students said they would seriously complete the coursework, 187 said they would only do what they could do when they completed the coursework, 192 said they would copy classmates’ homework, and 34 said they would not complete the coursework. On the whole, the interviewed college students had a poor attitude towards the completion of the coursework. There were fewer college students who could seriously complete the coursework, and a considerable proportion of the interviewed college students chose to complete the homework assigned by the teacher through plagiarism, which fully reflected that the college students' attitude towards completion of the coursework was improper. To this end, we should strengthen education, set up a strict reward and punishment system, and actively urge college students to complete the coursework on time and with guaranteed quality.

Aspirations for Russian language learning

An individual’s ideals and beliefs can give a huge boost to behaviors. This study counted the personal ideals of the interviewed college students (see Figure 4) and their perceptions of the future of Russian language learning (see Figure 5). According to the statistics of the students' personal ideals, 76.97% of the 508 interviewed college students said they had lofty ideals and were willing to fight for them. 21.06%
said they had lofty ideals, but did not know how to achieve them, only 1.97% said that they had no ideals. On the whole, almost all of the interviewed college students had lofty ideals, and most said they were willing to fight for their ideals. It can be seen that most college students had firm ideals and beliefs, which was conducive to keep their pushing psychology and can stimulate their enthusiasm for learning.

Figure 4. Personal ideals of interviewed college students

| Have great ideals and will fight for them | No great ideal and don’t know how to achieve them |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 21.06%                                  | 1.97%                                           |

Figure 5. Perceptions of college students about the future of Russian language learning

As can be seen from Figure 5, among the 508 respondents, 60.83% thought that learning Russian had a good future, 28.54% thought that learning Russian had a fair future, and 10.63% thought that learning Russian had no future. On the whole, most of the college students interviewed had good expectations for the future of Russian language learning, but there were still a certain percentage of college students who were pessimistic about the future of Russian language learning. The possible reason was that the range of Russian-oriented work was narrow, and students were facing some employment pressure, so they had maintained a pessimistic attitude towards the future.

Types of interviewed college students’ psychological barriers in Russian language learning

Based on the actual situation of the survey and the statistical results of the questionnaire, this study summarized the types of psychological barriers in Russian language learning for college students, as shown in Figure 6. This study divided the psychological barriers of college students in learning Russian into ten types: (1) inferiority complex. In the process of Russian learning, due to weak foundations, differences in learning abilities, and talents, difference in academic performance existed among students. As a result, psychological barriers were formed in some students with poor academic performance; (2) Arrogance. Some students always thought that they had strong abilities and can do something, so they did not care about learning and formed a psychological barrier; (3) Self-harm. Some students encountered difficulties in Russian learning, and generated self-abandoning psychology, and harmed their own body and spirit, which was also an unhealthy psychology; (4) Learning-weariness, which means that some students had aversion to Russian language learning, and thus lost the initiative of learning; (5) Dependence psychology referred to the psychological barrier caused by over-reliance of some students on teachers to impart knowledge and thus lost the ability to learn independently; (6) Laziness, which was a kind of poor mental state, can make people mentally dissipated and stay at the status quo; (7) Aimlessness psychology. Students learnt Russian aimlessly and accepted the teacher’s knowledge aimlessly, without distinguishing the right from the wrong. Such a state of learning made students get half the result with twice the effort. (8) Impatient mentality. Due to the students’ eager in quick success and instant benefits, they did not lay a good foundation in learning Russian and reviewed and answered the questions in exercises aimlessly; (9) Thinking set, which meant that some students had been affected by existing knowledge and were unable to accept
new knowledge structure; (10) Focus on results, which was understood from the perspective of teachers and parents. Students took the test mechanically, without letting students to think initiatively.

**Figure 6. Types of psychological barriers to Russian language learning among college students**

| Types of mental disorders | Laziness | Blind mind | Impatience | Mindset | Focus on conclusions |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|------------|---------|---------------------|
| Inferiority               |          |            |            |         |                     |
| Pride                     |          |            |            |         |                     |
| Self-harm                 |          |            |            |         |                     |
| Weariness                 |          |            |            |         |                     |
| Dependence                |          |            |            |         |                     |

**ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS OF RUSSIAN LEARNERS**

**Logit model**

**Table 2. Variable selection results**

| Variable name | Variable meaning | Regression coefficients | Z statistic | Probability value |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Do you like to learn Russian | Yes=1; No=0 | -0.0329*** | -3.85 | 0.000 |
| How difficult is it to learn Russian? | Very difficult = 1; More difficult = 2; Average = 3; Relatively simple = 4; Very simple = 5 | 0.0697*** | 5.97 | 0.000 |
| Does your family support you to learn Russian? | Strongly disagree=1; More disagree=2; General =3; More agree=4; Strongly agree=5 | -0.0126*** | -2.34 | 0.000 |
| Do you want to work in the Russian language in the future? | Very conflict=1; Comparative conflict=2; General= 3; More hope=4; Very hope=5 | -0.6324*** | -5.19 | 0.000 |
| Do you think that learning Russian can have a good future? | Strongly disagree=1; More disagree=2; General =3; More agree=4; Strongly agree=5 | -0.0581*** | -4.32 | 0.000 |

Based on the quantification of the questionnaire data, this study used the Logit model to conduct a regression analysis on the influencing factors of psychological barriers in Russian majors. The variables of the Logit model were shown in Table 2.

**Regression results**

In this study, SPSS22 software was used to perform Logit regression analysis on selected variables. The regression results were shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Regression results**

| Variable name | Regression coefficients | Z statistic | Probability value |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Do you like to learn Russian | -0.0329*** | -3.85 | 0.000 |
| How difficult is it to learn Russian? | 0.0697*** | 5.97 | 0.000 |
| Does your family support you to learn Russian? | -0.0126*** | -2.34 | 0.000 |
| Do you want to work in the Russian language in the future? | -0.6324*** | -5.19 | 0.000 |
| Do you think that learning Russian can have a good future? | -0.0581*** | -4.32 | 0.000 |

From Table 3, five indicators, such as whether you like to learn Russian, how difficult it is to learn Russian, whether your family supports it, whether you want to engage in counterpart work, and whether you think you can have a good future in the future, were all significant at the level of 0.000. It was indicated that the five indicators can have a significant impact on the psychological emotions of Russian language learners. The possible reason was that the degree of love for Russian came from interest, the higher the interest, the lower the psychological barrier; the lower the difficulty of learning Russian, the less the barriers to learning, and the lower the psychological barrier; the support from family members can enhance Russian language learning Enthusiasm and confidence; full of expectations for future work, can enhance the learning enthusiasm of Russian language learners.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the data of 508 questionnaires, this
paper analyzed the psychological barriers of the audience during the Russian language learning process, and adopted the multiple regression Logit model to analyze the influencing factors of the psychological barriers of the Russian language learner. The following conclusions were obtained:

(1) On the whole, college students had a high degree of recognition for their own Russian language learning and considered themselves suitable for Russian language learning, but there were still a high proportion of college students who thought they were not suitable for Russian language learning and were not confident in Russian language learning performance. Students’ sense of recognition with Russian language learning should be further improved.

(2) Most college students maintained a good attitude towards teachers’ questions, but some college students were accustomed to perfunctory; a considerable proportion of college students chose to complete the homework assigned by the teacher through plagiarism; some students were not strong in self-management. The attitude toward Russian language learning needed further improvement. Most college students had firm ideals and beliefs, but a certain percentage of college students were pessimistic about the future of Russian language learning.

(3) This paper selected five factors such as the degree of preference of Russian, the difficulty of learning Russian, whether the family supports it, whether they want to engage in counterpart work, and whether they think they can have a good future in the future, as the factors affected psychological barriers of the Russian language learner and applied the Logit model to perform regression analysis and concluded that these five indicators had significant effects on the psychological barriers of Russian language learners.

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