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THE SIGNIFICANCE AND USE OF ASSOCIATION TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING TURKISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

In this study, it is stated that association technique is significant and has some benefits in teaching Turkish as a foreign language since by way of this technique the learners may develop communication skills which is one of the significant purposes in foreign language teaching. As the technique is derived from mental functions of brain, it is viewed as a beneficial way for improving especially written and oral language skills. It has been already known that language and brain are interconnected and language learners may remember lots of information through associations that emerge in their brains. In fact, by considering human minds way of working, many outputs can be obtained in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Moreover, the association technique is seen as a way to teach new words in foreign language teaching. The aim of the study is to demonstrate that foreign language learners can benefit from association technique by coding the knowledge and using the associations taking place in their minds. It is obvious that learners' language skills develop as they use associations. This study is composed through literature review. When today's significant teaching approaches that are constructivist and communicative are integrated with association technique in classroom, the teaching activities can be more effectual since the brain's coding system is used in this process. Hereby, by the way of this technique learners can associate the previous information with new ones and can improve language skills.

Keywords: Foreign Language, Teaching Turkish, Association Technique.

Introduction

The main aim of Turkish as a foreign language course is to prepare students for life and to give them four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Foreign language teaching is an activity aimed at gaining understanding and expression skills. The association technique has an important role in the development of these skills and communication skills. It is aimed that students make comments and inferences and find different word expressions. In addition, it is aimed to improve the ability of expression of the word schemas existing in the brain of the student in different ways by associating each other. "There is no perception and expression without associations" (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2013, 1).

Foreign students need to develop their language skills in order to communicate easily. It is also useful to use the association technique for the development of thinking and the ability to convey what they think. The brain and tongue are tightly connected. The storage and use of information cannot take place without language. "Neurons, our brain cells, can make millions of different connections with the information

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they learn with the help of snaps, which are nerve endings, and they can cause numerous associations in human mind" (2). Language creates thought. Each word has an associative center.

"Every human being incorporates the information he has learned, what he has experienced, what he has felt into his own scheme with his previous perceptions and encodes them with associations. When it is needed, he/ she calls back this information, emotions and so on from these schemes with various codes and associations. The ability to use association is a skill that saves the ways of using schemas in the human brain from uniformity, establishes millions of links between schemas, produces new ideas and emotions, and thus tells people what is not said and prints what is not written" (13). Associations establish relationships in the mind, which contributes to understanding and expression skills. Individuals may call their previous knowledge in the face of any event or phenomenon and establish associative links between them. Old information forms the basis for new information. One can express his thoughts properly through association.

Language and thought affect each other. As one's ability to use associations develops, so does his language skills. The human brain functions with associations. "The association technique can be used in the development of written and verbal skills as well as in vocabulary teaching and gaining awareness of synonymy. Each word gains value of emotion in addition to its meanings by means of their associations in our minds" (78).

In Turkish teaching as a foreign language classes education can be carried out by taking into consideration the structural features and coding style of the brain and incorporating association technique into the activities. In this way, it will make significant contributions for individuals to develop new creativity and vocabulary by associating and making sense of new knowledge and words with those previously learned.

1. Association

"Association is the transformation of the concept to design and the design into reflection as a result of the connections made between the behaviors, thoughts and concepts under the effect of the unity of place and time. In other words, the association is the transition interval between the concept and the word. There is a "concept" centered approach in the series of meanings and meanings attributed by the association to the word" (Uçar, 2013, 2673). Association refers to the fact that thoughts, words, images and emotions are connected to each other in a way to remind each other" (Cevizci, 2005, 230). The association is "to make mental link between two or more objects, events, concepts and so on" (Öztürk, 2004, 83).

Association is the ability of an individual to reach different ideas based on a word, concept, phenomenon or event. Every element with creativity is seen as the result of associative relations. "Similarity, contrast, proximity, frequency, time and space that are ways of developing thoughts has evolved from Aristotle to the present day under the name of association principles and has taken its place in the fields of philosophy, psychology, education and linguistics today" (Erden, 2011, 987).

Eflâtun is the first person to put forward the idea of association. To him, substances are not perceived separately from spaces. So, something is brought to the mind along with the things it is associated with. Similarly, Socrates has statements on the association of the whole to the piece. Since learning is a process that occurs in the brain, it cannot be separated from the association. The information is grouped as old and new and kept in mind accordingly. The association of this information is also based on the association. "The brain holds together elements that associate each other" (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2013, 96). Each indicator is a warning that depends on association. "To Saussure, indicators lead to the association of other indicators from four different directions: 1. the convergence of the elements from the same root 2. the convergence of the elements that are meaningfully close 3. the elements showing similarities in terms of form, 4. the connotation of the sound-like elements that are similar in terms of the sound image" (Aksan, 1999, 36). "With regard to the word Lale, we can easily think of sound-based associations such as Hale and Jale, and associations related to nature the such as flower-spring" (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2013, 97).

"Each word is surrounded by a network of associations. The act of writing is surrounded by three series of association:

- a) Monogamy: writing (yazı yazmak), summer (mevsim olarak yaz).
- b) Meaning associations: Writing (yasmak), pencil (kalem), paper (kağıt), reading (okumak), speaking (konuşmak).
- c) Associations of form and meaning of the same origin: Writing (yasmak), author (yazar), inscription (yazıt)" (64).



Each word has an association meaning and domain. "Associative meaning is the various designs of an indicator or a larger unit in the human mind. The "ox" sign is suggested to indicates cows, bulls, calves, horns, ruminating, double riding, yoke, endurance, strength, weight" (131). "The fields of association can change the form and meaning of a word permanently. For example, in Turkish, the words margarine and "sana" have evoked each other so strongly that most housewives today use "thee oil" instead of "margarine" (64).

In daily life, "Association is established in common ways such as following of events each other, similarities of situations to each other and information is stored in the mind in this way. The basic building block of mind is associations. This is why we come to mind when we say student, course comes to our mind, when we say series, TV comes to our mind. These words associate each other because in life these elements are in relationship and togetherness. The mind does not record the newly acquired information without reconciling it with other information because it must be related to some experience to record it" (Çolak Bostancı, 2008, 63). The meaning of association is based on culture and emotions. For example, the word home may refer to the word comfort.

According to the association technique of psychoanalysis, the person is given keywords that have no meaning connection between them. They are asked to respond to these words with the first words that come to mind. Psychoanalysts "Jung and his team divided the associations into fifteen logical clusters as a result of their association experiment:

1) Provisions in Natural Intimacy: There are "connections" between the keyword and the associations of the word. "Natural close proximity provisions to the key word was given like in association of the word "freedom" (özgürlük) with the word "will" (istek); the word "to go" (gitmek) with "to climb" (tırmanmak).

2) Lower Stages / Upper Stages: The association of the word "town" (kasaba) with "house" (ev); the word "blue" (mavi) with "color" (renk); the word "painting" (boyamak) with the word "art" (sanat) is classified as "lower stages" or "upper stages."

3) Block of Contrasts: The association of the word "white" (beyaz) with the word "black" (siyah); the word "round" (yuvarlak) with the word "square" (kare) constitutes "the block of contrasts."

4) Value Symbols or Emotional Predicates: Associations relationships such as "Winter (kış): extraordinary (olağanüstü)", "getting around (gezinmek): boring (sıkıcı)" fall into this group. Ones who particularly react to this group are women. (5)

5) Bare Predicates / Objective Predicates: The associations that define the keyword as in the examples of "water (su): green (yeşil)", "head (baş): round (yuvarlak)" are in the group of "bare predicates, objective predicates."

6) Activity Associations: Associations such as "knife (bıçak): cutting (kesmek)" and "rose (gül): opening (açmak)" are "activity associations."

7) Space, Time, Environment Specifications: Associations such as "hot (sıcak): summer (yaz)", "sleep (uyku): night (gece)", "dark (karanlık): repository (mahzen)" are included in this group.

8) Definition: Associations such as "chair (iskemle): equipment (gereç)", "hammer (çekiç): tool (araç)" are "definition." Such associations are more common in people who doubt whether they have the desired mind. They try to prove their mental qualities to the researcher. In some participants, this may also indicate a sense of inferiority.

9) Coexistence: Associations such as "table (masa): chair (iskemle)", "hand (el): foot (ayak)" are included in the "coexistence" group.

10) Identifications: Associations such as "going (gitmek): going on foot (yaya gitmek)" and "room (oda): part (bölüm)" are included in "identifications."

11) Convergent language associations: Associations like "horse (at): horses (atlar)", "free (özgür): freedom (özgürlük)" are considered in this group.

12) Combined sayings: Associations such as "purchasing (satın alma): purchasing power (satın alma gücü)" and "cover (örtü): tablecloth (masa örtüsü)" are "combined sayings."

13) Complementary word attachments: Associations such as "life (yaşam): vital (yaşamsal)", "beautiful (güzel): beauty (güzellik)", "immature (toy): immaturity (toyluk)" are included in the group of "complementary word attachments".



14) Vibrational associations: Associations such as “weaving (dokumak): reading (okumak)”, “digging (kazmak): romping (azmak) are “vibrational connotations.”

15) The fifteenth group is a group of silences and imperfect responses sometimes emerging (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2013, 6).

Memory, emotions and complex mental events can be explained by the laws of association. Associations are established through the fact that events are connected in time and space and there are rational traces between them. The idea cloud follows the idea rain; the idea teacher follows the idea school. Non-fixed words have a dynamic and associative structure in memory. Experience constructs each indicator in a context linked to the others. Without associative structure, it is impossible to form and remember words.

2. Association Technique

Aristotle made the first explanation of the associations on memory and learning. Aristotle bases the function of association on four basic principles: proximity principle, similarity principle, contrast principle and frequency principle, which are still valid today. The association is made possible by the combination of the five basic senses. “The taste of the dessert eaten in a place, the music that is playing at that moment, etc. makes it easier to bring back to the mind by associating the whole” (Cevizci, 2005, 528). According to Aristotle, the association of experience and reality is of importance in the association. In Aristotle's theory, we first perceive all information with our sense organs. According to Aristotle these perceptions “actualize the association through frequency, density, and neat sorting. After Aristotle, association laws such as “similarity”, “opposition”, “unity of place and time” and “contiguity” (to follow one another) have been introduced” (Çolak Bostancı, 2008, 62).

“Association is to establish a mental connection between two elements. The three basic rules in association are: proximity, similarity and opposition. Proximity refers to what an object reminds. For example, when the word “foot” is heard, the word “socks” comes to mind. Similarity is related to an object resemblance to another object. For example, metaphors are such similes. Contrast contains the exact opposite of that object or concept. For example, cold-hot etc. In the association technique, a word, concept or object is written about a subject and the word; concept groups it associates are examined” (Öztürk, 2004, 83).

The association technique is expressed as “bringing back a word by linking it with other words and thus increasing mental activity” (Çelik, 2004, 43). In the world and in our country, the association technique is used especially for purposes such as improving vocabulary or sensing synonyms and antonyms. Association is one of the learning techniques that can be used to increase productivity in teaching. “Learning can be examined under two headings: associative learning and cognitive learning. In associative learning, we can talk about two methods such as ‘classical conditioning’ and operant conditioning” (Cüceloğlu, 2005,167).

When some learning approaches and theories are examined, it is seen that association is an important element. “According to the behavioral approach, “proximity in time” forms the basis of the association relationship. This proximity must be reinforced by repeating. Likewise, according to Guthrie's contiguous conditioning theory, the power of association is very important in the repetition of behavior. According to the principle of this theory; stimulants find the highest association power when they meet this reaction for the first time” (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2013, 95). According to Thorndike, if two elements that are in the position of stimulants are linked to each other, the association occurs between them. To Hobbes, the way to associate in the mind is succession and the way to make associations strong is repetition. For example; if the event continues to exist in our memory after the end, there is reminiscence and experience has come back to the mind by making connections” (Cevizci, 2005, 529).

The association is divided into two as free association and controlled association. “Free association which is a reliable method for explaining the interconnection and connection forces of words, is five kinds according to the methods applied in itself:

1) Discrete association: Participants are given a target word and they are asked for a word associated with the target word. Participants often say the association word, which has a strong connection with the target word. Therefore, weak associations are lost.

2) Continuous association: Each participant is given several target words and is expected to give a common association. The purpose of this exercise is to determine how a common meaning is made.

3) Chaining (consecutive) association: A few words are given to the participant for certain periods of time and the response time is allowed for thinking. The participant tells the associations and the hierarchy steps between target words are determined, semantic links between words are evaluated.



4) Continuous connotation: The participant is given a target word and the participant tells the associations that come to his mind. The first of these associations is usually the strongest link with the target word. It is tried to determine how the associations are semantic approaches.

5) Discrete-series connotation: The participant is given a word and the first connotation that comes to his mind is told. This association given becomes the target word position and the association of this word is requested. This method is used to form his map association. In another method, "controlled association," also restrictions are made. The restrictions are drawn on the associations to be given to the target word. The participant is asked to say associations in a certain category" (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2013,130).

The association can be established between words through association technique, the association between words is a way of establishing a relationship between words and helps to learn and remember words. Similarly, producing concept network is also within the scope of association technique. "The specified subject is written in the middle of a blank sheet of paper. Then the student writes the words and phrases that come to mind through associations on this subject to different parts of the paper. Relationships between written words and phrases are established. Thus, it is aimed to reveal the information and thoughts in the mind of the student. With this study, students should be ensured that they do not interfere with their own creativity by acting extremely questioning and trust their intuition and creativity" (Öztürk, 2004, 37). Positive and negative associations are used when describing or explaining things. "Descriptive studies can be made by using positive and negative associations: (Such as, Word meaning: look, Positive association: ogle, Negative association: stare)" (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2013,142).

Every word has an area in mind. For example, the word family is included in the mind with other words such as mother, father and child. At the same time, the dreams, images and emotions of that word join this association. This is achieved through inter-word connections and semantic relationships. "Every element of communication is a code and when it decodes it, it actually decodes the meaning it perceives. The word "family (aile)" can also wake up the words "baby (bebek)" and "home (ev)" in the mind. Brain codes the words, concepts etc. along with various images, emotions and dreams" (Çolak Bostancı, 2009, 78).

"The word association system is like a spider web in which words are associated with other words in a mental network" (İstifçi, 2010, 361). In a teaching process based on an association, students can benefit from written and oral composition activities by giving synonyms and contrasting word games, exercises and double associations. With the help of these activities, students will not only recognize the words they encounter, but will also learn the semantic and silent source of these words, so productive progress in language proficiency will be achieved.

Teachers can use word association tests to invoke old concepts in the students' minds before and after the learning activity and the results can be compared to see students' learning changes. In addition, teachers can encourage students to compare their responses with those of other students. In this way, students recognize different perspectives and understand that learning is an individual process of understanding and meaning. Word association tests also help students to see the information in their minds individually or in groups. Teaching activities in the classroom should be designed to enable learners to establish and maintain new vocabulary and to increase the existing vocabulary. These activities can be accomplished using short reading activities, word prediction activity on a given topic, event prediction from a given phrase, elimination of different words and concept mapping activity.

3. Importance and Benefits of Association Technique

Rather than taking the same foreign concepts that come into our language, with the developing technology, "it will be more beneficial to create self-concepts based on the similarity principle of the association" (Erden, 2011, 992). The association technique is a technique that should be used both in the development of understanding and in the development of expression. It is very important because it reinforces the bonds of thought in the brain and forms the basis of new thinking. The connotation is essential in language-based products and what we perceive from language. "Since language is a living being and it draws its resources from the brain, we cannot separate it from the association. In this context, as one's ability to use associations develops, language skills will also improve" (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2013, 13).

The ability to associate is the process of reminding the subject of other phenomena, situations or events in the student's mind. Associations are related to prior learning. Therefore, it provides positive transfers. The subjects are not independent of each other; they are realized through meanings that will be converted into whole. Semantic associations are specific to the individual. They should be done at the beginning of the course. In the semantic association, the individual learns more effectively by coding the



concepts or events according to their contrasts and concurrency. In order to ensure efficiency in foreign language teaching, a association-based dictionary of semantics and metaphorical meanings can be prepared and presented in relation to the basic meaning of the words. Semantic and figurative meanings learned by associating with the basic meaning will be better understood. This provides individuals with a method to predict semantic and figurative meanings.

Language and brain are in constant interaction with each other. Each learned information creates a new schema for later learning. "The information in our brains is not stored independently of each other but stored in a way that associates each other. As the association link between our knowledge increases, the content of what we will write and say becomes rich" (19). The individual who knows how to use associations will also use his brain effectively. Through the associations, it will increase the ability of the individuals who create regular information storage and conceptual networks to say something new and see their perceptions from a different perspective. Individuals will need this ability throughout their lives and societies will need them throughout their civilization.

The association is the working principle of the mind. Supporting the material to be learned with preliminary knowledge and preliminary experiences and increasing the number of associations it creates in the mind has a positive effect on learning. Similarly, as it will form organizations in the mind, grouping the material to be learned according to conceptual similarity affects learning positively. The association also increases the learner's creative power. "The association which has an important role in the relationship between language and semantics has been found to play an active role in the development of language for years" (Erden, 2011, 987). Elements from the same root (love "sev", love "sevgi", beloved "sevgili", love "sevmek", cute "sevimli", cheesy "sevimsiz" etc.), items with meaningful proximity (gallery "galeri", fair "fuar", exhibition "serge", bazaar "kermes", etc.), items showing form parity (information "bilgi", eraser "silgi", satire "yergi", love "sevgi", tax "vergi" etc.) and the elements that have proximity of the sound image (table "masa", law "yasa", care "tasa", case "kasa" etc.) are expressed by association. "Associations do not only play an active role in the formation of indicators; but also, formation and diversification of meanings" (987).

There is a positive relationship between the power of association and the effectiveness of learning. "Making some metaphors in mind while learning something makes the subject more vivid. For this reason, in the teaching of the word, to emphasize what the word can evoke in the student's mind helps to understand the complex words with simple symbols" (Uçgun, 2006, 224).

There are five main factors that help memory remember any information it has learned:

a- Priority: Knowing the fact that the brain remembers the first and the last things learned better makes it easier for the teacher to give new information to the students. In this way, emphasis is given to new vocabulary teaching at the beginning and end of the course and studies are conducted to remember the previously learned words in the middle of the course.

b- Proximity: As we mentioned earlier, the information learned recently is easier to remember. For this reason, during each course it is necessary to repeat the words taught in the previous lesson.

c- Connection: The interrelated topics are more easily remembered than those that do not have any links between them. Therefore, the existence of some connections between the words to be taught and informing the students about these connections will make it easier for the students to remember the newly learned words by association.

d- Conspicuousness: Strange, unusual, conspicuous subjects are more easily remembered. Considering this feature of memory, a variety of techniques can be used in vocabulary teaching that students will have fun and will not forget easily. For example, educational games can be used in lessons for this purpose.

Areas of association in the brain have an important role in making learning meaningful and permanent. The more meaningful a material is, the easier it is to be learned. This situation, which can be expressed as associative significance, is explained by what a newly learned knowledge reminds in mind. Because each concept is recognized and remembered for its associated design or associations. Forming meaning is that new information coming to short-term memory establishes associations with pre-existing knowledge in long-term memory. What we call meaningful learning is also that the student assigns the newly arrived information into the long-term memory by associating it with the old information in the memory. "In the basis of this strategy is not that the student gets the information he / she encounters as it is, but he / she creates new meanings by comparing and integrating with the information that he / she has learned before and putting them into his / her mind" (Gündüz, 2015, 369-370). Establishing association



between words is a way of establishing a relationship between words and affects vocabulary learning and remembering" (Stacker, 2010, 360).

Every word in the language is like a code that encodes a concept, an event, an entity into the brain. The solution of this password also means the solution of meaning of that word. The word apple can wake up expressions such as red, fruit in the mind. Apart from its definitive meanings, the word apple has a place in the mind that encodes information, designs, dreams or memories about itself. Association is like a chain of different parts of life from words to beliefs. One ring of this chain allows the movement of other rings.

Conclusion

The associations between thoughts shape the basis of thinking. Creativity depends on the number and differentiation of associations in the mind. The association is one of the techniques that can be used to improve written and verbal communication skills. Native speakers have a significant associative vocabulary field. However, second language learners can forget more easily and produce variable associations. Their associations are related to sound scientific or stimulating words rather than semantics. The association technique can be used as an alternative way of determining vocabulary. If they have a basic vocabulary, learners can understand the different meanings of a particular word, the semantic value of the word.

Students who can associate words can develop vocabulary and choose appropriate words for a context. Concepts stored in the brain come to mind through association links and learning is easier when such links are established. In foreign language teaching, students encounter that language more in the classroom environment. Therefore, it may be difficult for them to establish associative links. However, by using associative word finding technique, it can be ensured that these learners choose words appropriate to a certain context.

Brainstorming also results in cognitive stimulation with different thoughts and this shows that associative memory is used. The performance in brainstorming is further enhanced by close thoughts or associations. Close word pairs provide more associations than distant associative words. Concepts are interrelated and one concept may easily enable to activate the concepts linked to it.

The association technique positively affects speaking, writing skills and increases creativity. Creative thinking is an important fact that requires the production of information. Individuals who can think creatively will make great contributions to both their country and humanity in the future. In creative thinking, the brain needs to benefit from the infinity of associations and, if necessary, it should establish connections between them. Every human being has the ability to associate, but individuals who can use these associations can achieve creative thinking. Foreign students should learn to use these associations especially in Turkish courses where their understanding and expression skills are developed. The association technique makes great contribution to students' writing style, their metaphor usage, forming plot, character-landscape etc. and to more issues like these ones.

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