Ontological Concept for the Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

This review aims to discuss a new substantive theory generated from a Grounded research that we conducted in 2018 as a concept of 'getting real way' in the learning of the foreign languages in the 21st century and the forth. The preferent learning theory, as labelled then, covers three important concepts namely free-will-whim, individual and collective independence, and discursive. The three concepts are substantively based on the *sense of liking* within one's learning as the domain of affective; it is not based on the cognitive domain and the motivation. The implication is that the learning of foreign languages should be based on the sense of liking; both in the past and current liking, that enable foreign language learners to have their learning preference.

INTRODUCTION

Empirically, we cannot deny that the learning of foreign languages cannot be bound by certain method and strategy, and even though the scope of formal education cannot mediate maximally the attainment of mastery of foreign languages. In fact, people have been able to learn and master a foreign language by autodidact outside of formal education, specifically in the industry 4.0 in the 21st century even industry 5.0. Internet of Things (ToT) is one of the determinants of success in all fields of science with the required knowledge obtained from internet mediation, as well as in mastering foreign languages (see Emerick, 2019; Valmori & Costa, 2016; Assist, 2015; Liu & Zhang, 2012; Oroujlou, 2012; Holmes, Bishop, & Calman, 2017; Baker, Ugljanin, Faci, Sellami, Maamar, & Kajan, 2018; Fagerstrøm, Eriksson, & Sigurðsson, 2017). In fact, it seems, people have begun to have no interest in entering formal education (Valmori & Costa, 2016) because they assume that they can learn independently, specifically speaking skills where that skill is more in demand than reading or writing skills, and are a major consideration in initial recruitment, promotion, and retention decisions in some companies.' (Kordsmeier, Arn, & Rogers, 2000).

If we ask questions about what the purpose is of people learn foreign languages, then we can provide a variety of answers that are conceptually correct. However, the ontological question then arises whether those conceptual answers really can be achieved as a goal and real for our lives. The most prominent answer regarding the purpose of people learning foreign languages is so that they can have high communicative competence and academic prestige from the scientific side, integrative motivation and future self-images' (Burgh-Hirabe, 2019; Aliakbari & Amiri, 2018; Liu & Thompson, 2018) such as to know and understand 'intercultural issues and want to be like native speakers when speaking', and by that they 'participate in real life situations through the language of the original culture itself' (Moeller & Catalano, 2015; King & Ridley, 2019; Du & Jackson, 2018) dan 'literasi komunitas bahasa lain' (Prinsloo, 2018; Kliueva & Tsagari, 2018) in a social interaction. The learning of foreign languages has been a phenomenal issue since the days of ancient human civilization which later in the 16th century, Latin became the dominant foreign language that was studied by several countries. This condition, in particular, is increasingly apparent as a necessity in the

21st century today, especially in the face of the industrial revolution. In the 21st century, of course, the need for the mastery of foreign languages is one of the supporting factors in involving in the industry 4.0 and 5.0.

Furthermore, in mediating the need to master foreign languages, countries give confidence to education providers to include language learning, both as a second language and as a foreign language, into the education curriculum. Finally, foreign languages become one of the mandatory subjects in the academic process, in addition to being the needs of individuals with certain goals. However, the need for foreign language mastery, for now, is no longer more emphasized in the realm of formal education because these needs have become social and individual needs in general, especially with the mindset that 'the effects of human capital depend on language capital in cross-country situations' (Konara & Wei, 2018) which incidentally can be obtained even though it is not within the scope of formal education because 'they can decide for themselves to learn languages for free' (Chik & Ho, 2017). In line with this condition, more and more foreign language learning methods are emerging which are certainly born of grand theory of learning by considering the need for mastery of foreign languages without having to take formal education. As the need for foreign language mastery continues with its learning models, for now in Indonesia, foreign language learning in the realm of formal education seems to be a mere obligation for students, because out there, people finally think that 'communicative competence in foreign languages are needed for the purpose of speaking foreign languages in various types of organizations' (Polyakova, 2015) so they can take advantage of internet technology for self-learning. On the other hand, teachers are reluctant to use more innovative pedagogy if it is not supported by adequate native language (Edwards & Ngwaru, 2013). Students tend to no longer see the importance of mastering foreign languages for the development of their disciplines, but only so that they can graduate in a certain semester, especially coupled with 'failure of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course in answering certain professional needs to communicate in foreign language' (Lu, 2018).

Conditions like this are also very evident in Indonesia where the prestige of mastering foreign languages, such as English, begins to decline, no longer a scientific priority that needs to be echoed. Interest in mastering foreign languages is no longer an issue in social communities because internet and learning technology have provided various approaches, methods, and strategies that can be chosen by individual learners when they need to master foreign languages. Tin (2013) stated that it is not only the value of English that triggers one's interest, but also how its value can be presented and experienced. To be interesting to trigger, according to Tin, English must be presented or experienced in such a way as to create surprises and encourage understanding of the importance of English and one's interactions with English in the past. Coccia (1979) has said one of the causes that declined the foreign language interest was that the opportunities for learners to apply the skills learned in the study of a language are few, the practical usage of the language

studied is confined almost exclusively to the classroom. The question for this is, does the concept of learning in the formal education cannot match the current conditions? Of course, there are things that are subject to review so that the concept of foreign language learning within the scope of formal education can go hand in hand with the concept of learning in the scope of informal education. The ontological question, has the concept of learning foreign languages really been existing so that the principle of benefit can really be experienced? What are the benefits of learning a foreign language? What is the actual form of the need for foreign languages and how to achieve it? Is the need for a foreign language temporary or permanent or seasonal? The answers to these questions become structures that can, ontologically, establish the concept of learning foreign languages in a real and appropriate manner to the students' needs, both individually and collectively, in the scope of formal and informal education.

This review is ontologically focused on the real concept for the learning of foreign language in the 21st century and the forth. This review also focuses on how the needs meet the real concept of the learning and that is why we present an ideal concept for the learning of foreign language based on our research applying Grounded Theory in 2018.

REVIEW

The Need of Benefits of the Foreign Language Mastery

The principle of benefit from mastering foreign languages is certainly not just a goal-oriented need to understand different cultures and develop inter-cultural interaction experiences (Bobykina, 2015; Zhang, 2018; Niu, Lu, & You, 2018), integrating skills development such as higher-order thinking, problem-solving, self-directed learning, and communication (Jaleniauskien, 2016; Zheng, Liang, Li, & Tsai, 2018; Guo, Xu, & Liu, 2018), but it should be oriented to how to achieve mastery of the foreign language itself. These goals are not wrong but the real way to go towards those goals is more important. If Jaleniauskien proposed a consideration of a curriculum based on Problem Based Learning (PBL) as a path to these goals, it is also not wrong, but it only applies dominantly in the scope of formal and non-formal education. In other words, students need a real way, both formally, non-formally, and informally, to achieve these goals, get the benefits, and in accordance with the demands of the 21st century and beyond.

So, the principle of benefit of the need to master foreign languages actually lies in 'getting a real way' to achieve mastery of the foreign language, not in setting goals and is limited to considering the ideal curriculum even though the curriculum is one way. Setting goals only leads us to something that is still abstract but getting a real way to achieve those goals is something that exists. We do not need to ask how to get it because talking about ways, each individual has his own ways. Investment theory according to Cattell in Kvist & Gustafsson (2007) suggests that individual differences in gaining knowledge and skills are part of investment in fluid intelligence when studying situations that require a point of view in complex relationships. Expentancy-value

Theories proposed by Green in Palmer (2015) believe that students make decisions in their learning based on expectations of failure and success, and make a conclusion about the benefits of the learning content they experience. It needs to be understood that the purpose of people learning foreign languages is diverse, which of course suits their individual needs, both individually and collectively in the formal, non-formal, and informal spheres. This concept is actually said to be real for foreign language students in connection with the principle of benefits and the need for mastery of foreign languages. Therefore, the real form of a person's need for mastery of a foreign language is 'getting a real way' towards mastering the foreign language. The real way in which we are talking about will be discussed in sub-topic 3 about the 21st century foreign language learning concept. For the nature of the need to master a foreign language it can be said that it is not permanent and can even be seasonal, depending on the development of social dynamics. This will also be discussed in sub-topic three.

The Foreign Language Learning Concept

In general, so far, the concept of learning is dominated by the issue of cognition as a cognitive domain and motivation as an affective domain. Both of these learning concepts have indeed become the basis that has so far produced a variety of learning models, including foreign language learning. These two domains were demonstrated by Premack and Woodruff in 1978 through the Theory of Mind (ToM) and by Bloom through a Taxonomy which he initiated in 1948-1956. Although Cognitive-Behavioral Theory then developed by Beck and Ellis in the 1950s and 1960s which tried to juxtapose cognition and emotion, however, the proponents still prioritized cognition and affective motivation as the basis of learning. So, this general concept can be said that learning begins and is based on cognition (see Munková, Stranovská, & Ďuračková, 2012; Antoniou, Gunasekera, & Wong, 2013; Costa, Foucart, Arnon, Aparici, & Apesteguia, 2014; Gural & Shulgina, 2015; Baghaei & Ravand, 2015; Hayakawa, Costa, Foucart, & Keysar, 2016; AnikushinaTaratukhin, & von Stutterheim, 2018; etc.), and motivation (see Huang, Hsu, & Chen, 2015; Tuncel, Sadikoglu, & Memmedova, 2016; Harvey, 2017; Liao, Chen, Chen, & Chang, 2018; Calafato & Tang, 2018; Kazakova & Shastina, 2019; etc.).

Here, the sequence initiated by the proponents start consecutively from Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor, while ToM mentions one of them with the Conative domain. That is, they view cognitive as the first and foremost basis among other domains. There are two things that we want to convey in this review relating to these domains. First, can cognitive really be the main basis in learning foreign languages, if not, what should be the basis for foreign language learning? Second, what is the real form of the foundation that should be in learning foreign languages? The learning should not be seen as merely something that departs from someone's cognition. It must be understood that everything is nothing constant in this life, and therefore the learning process must also be so. We should be able to start our teaching and learning from preferences or the sense of liking without

being tied to the formalities of the sequence of learning stages and preferably based on the affective domain. Thus, we can be more varied in learning and teaching foreign languages. Therefore, in the learning process, educators should 'do different activities from which they can learn a lot and must always have the need to learn to do their jobs as educators' (Ping, Schellings, & Beijaard, 2018). Educators can also use a variety of development standards but more in modes that match the level of resistance' (Bourke, Ryan, & Ould, 2018) with the aim of 'encouraging and supporting the learning of their students in the classroom', especially language learning (Holdway & Hitchcock, 2018) so graduates 'students can become global workforce who are ready to employ in the future' (Minocha, Hristov, & Leahy-Harland, 2018).

On the other hand, we propose a somewhat different conceptual sequence and some additions. We start with the affective domain; not motivation but liking or preference which is also included in the affective domain. In other words, the domain that can be relied upon in learning foreign a language is the affective domain; liking. Why should the affective domain be the first? It is because that the affective domain is very important in 'its relationship with social action especially at the beginning of the learning process'. (Wood, Taylor, Atkins, & Johnston, 2018) where learning must be based on preferences, and the social realm provides a great opportunity for learning preferences. Furthermore, 'affective domains are closely related to student academic achievement' (Green & Batool, 2017). In addition, 'affective domains are seen as important for learning, building relationships, creating space for learning, creating a pedagogical environment, and mirroring'. (Kangas-Niemi, Manninen, & Mattsson, 2018), it has even been applied in the 'computerized realm to be used in education to learn difficult knowledge, skills, and attitudes for traditional education to overcome the 21st-century skills' (Argasiński & Węgrzyn, 2018). The question, is the realm of cognition not needed in one's learning process? Of course the answer is needed. Then, on the domain, should students depend on learning a foreign language? The answer is to rely on the affective domain because this domain must be understood as the center of the learning process, both individually and collectively. Then, is the affective domain the most important thing among the three? The answer is certainly not because the three domains are integrated variables as a large series of the entire learning process. However, it is better for the affective domain, in this case, preference or liking, to be the first basis in learning. The aim is to mediate both the other domains and psychomotor and interpersonal as well. Figure 1 below shows what we mean.

Ideal learning should start from the affective domain; *sense of liking*, because this domain does not only refer to attitude but also behaviour. Attitudes always involve the tendency of thoughts towards ideas, society, values, systems, and even institutions, while behaviour is more inclined to the expression of feelings, actions or non-actions, both verbally and non-verbally. The sense of liking existed previously as a past experience and is also a result of attitudes and behaviors observed in the present. Veksler & Eden (2017) say that liking is an antecedent of a communication and at
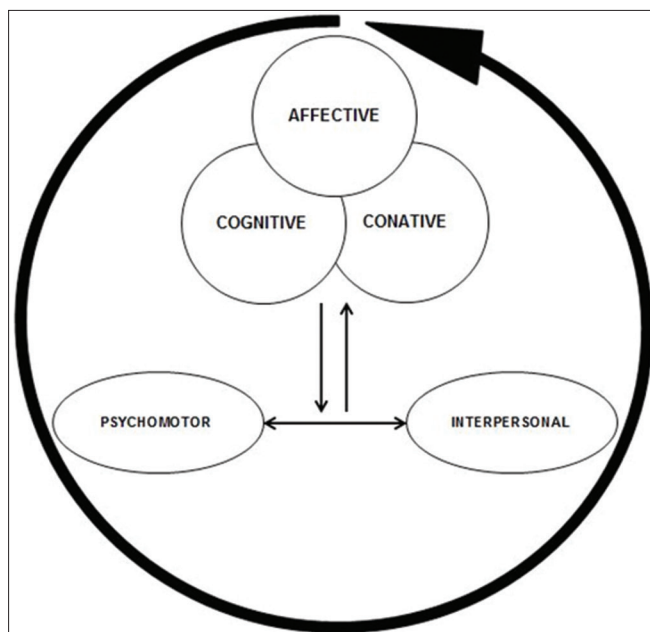
Figure 1. Taxonomy of learning cycles

the same time is a consequence of communication itself. The results of learning based on the affective domain, in this case the sense of liking or preference will make it easier for the students themselves to enter into the cognition process where attitudes and behaviour can be a pilot in moving the cognition process within someone. The goal is that learning can provide a high conative level to influence the mental and emotional state of others when students are in social communication. A high conative level is certainly an indicator and at the same time can produce the necessary (psychomotor) skills and adequate interpersonal skills. The last two domains, psychomotor and interpersonal skills, ultimately jointly support the three domains previously called; affective, cognitive, and conative, so that a learning pyramid cycle is formed which continuously occurs in a person's learning process.

All stakeholders who have a role in improving one's learning must understand this that liking or preference is the main basis for a person to spur or encourage himself to achieve his own learning objectives. To straighten out the motives or the right reasons in learning, positive motivation is needed, then to foster motivation to learn, so high interest is needed, and to foster high interest, we need sense of liking or preferences.

The 21ˢᵗ century foreign language learning concept

The urgent need for students in the 21ˢᵗ century to master a foreign language is to 'get a real way' towards mastering the foreign language. The learning of the 21ˢᵗ century is closely related to the industrial revolution 4.0 where learning systems are always associated with digitalization and automation so that the learning process can occur on a large scale without being restricted by space and time. Here, we propose a real path which is at once a concept of the foreign languages learning in the 21ˢᵗ century. However, we need to

understand that everyone has his own ways of learning by going through the 'easy to complex tasks gradually and the knowledge might change with the increase of learned experience' (Shi, Guo, Xing, Cai, & Yang, 2018). One's learning always shows the cultural values of a community or, in other words, the local cultural values have an influence on how a person or community performs the learning process as well as 'to form an understanding of how the learners experience learning and form an understanding of themselves' (Mitescu, 2014) and when the learners' socio-cultural skills developed by means of the modern Internet technologies, the learners' language ability is significantly improved (Zabrodina, Bogdanova, Bogdanova, Lilenko, & Richter, 2015; Ahmed & Myhill, 2016). Among one community with other communities, between one region and another, between one country and another, as well as between one region and another, it must have its own learning philosophy. Especially in the Southeast Asia region, students are more likely to be passive and nonverbal in the classroom (Park, 2000). This condition can be caused by cultural content which tends to depart from the principle of easternism; mental charateristics of mostly people in the eastern of Indonesia that tend to be shy or inclussive.

So, the real way we mean is the concept of '*preferent learning*' which departs from the principle of a *sense of liking*. This concept of learning actually does not depart from constructivism learning theory, both psychology constructivism and social constructivism, because the theory of *preferent learning* emphasizes learning processes that are, first, free-will-whim without involving constructive planning or design in the formal, non- formal, informal, and social and psychological fields. This concept is used as an initial understanding for foreign language students that include six understandings in two categories. Second, *preferent learning* is independent, both individually and collectively. Being independent in terms of preferences, irregular-based learning in terms of ways of learning, and informal conduct in doing self evaluation. Third, *preferent learning* is discursive, meaning that the way and what is learned has no relationship with each other; everything is related to preferences based on liking. The concept of *preferent learning* can be seen in the following explanation sections. Simply, a *preferent learning* is a theory that postulates free-will and free-whim in the learning so as the preference should be independent and discursive in nature.

Free-will

*   Understanding that you have rights of free-will in determining your own way of learning foreign language without any rule bond.
*   Understanding that your free-will in learning foreign language is beyond what you think and that is why you have potential within you to explore and develop.
*   Understanding that each human free-will in learning anything can be mediated by ourselves and our environment and must be appreciated.

Free-whim

*   Understanding that a free-whim lets you act and behave as you need in your own foreign language learning.

- Understanding that a free-whim makes you as a student and teacher at once, and that is why you can learn and manage your own foreign language learning.
- Understanding that a free-whim becomes indicator for your achievement in your foreign language learning.

The second, independent which is divided into three categories.

Individual or collective preference means that the main basic of your foreign language learning is a sense of *liking*, both individually or collectively. The principle is to grow *liking* up within you towards any subject you prefer to learn. You do not need to learn a subject that you do not like because everything has a time. That is, there are times when you will like the subject that you did not like initially in the past because you need it now to sustain your learning on the main subject.

Individual or collective irregular learning means that the way you learn foreign language is irregular or unpatterned or unpredictable. This refers to a free-will-whim concept. You do not need to be slaved on rules when you learn but it is more to *liking*. Whatever and whenever you learn, just do it to support your learning. It would be unpredictable, Situational and Curious – based, flowing, suddenly, irregular, unplanned, do not have a certain way.

Individual or collective informal evaluation refers to the way you know and keep your achievement. You may find your own way tou evaluate your achievement by preference and irregularly. There are some ways recommended such as self imagery, competitions, interactions, talk to self, watching, chatting, practical teaching, etc. These ways of evaluation do not only to know to what extend your achievement but also to keep your knowledge and skills in progress.

Discursive means that the way you learn foreign language do not intersect between one method and the other. The way you learn it today is not determined and influenced by the way you learned it in the past. Furthermore, the way you learn it today does not determine and affect the way you learn it for tomorrow. This principle refers also to the sense of liking, free-wiil-whim, and independence. The following Figure 2 shows the outline of the *preferent learning* theory.

Next, we need to understand the phrase *non-patterned* in the context of this theory which refers to five things that are conceptually the basis of how the learning process is ideal for foreign language students. The following five things are meant.

1) Learning at anytime and anywhere; natural,
2) As per his own desire or will or pleasure; more to self-choice (preference; preferred),
3) Unexpected; suddenly; come in; irregular; unplanned; flowing; do not have a certain way; informal (unpredictable),
4) Based on situations and curiosity (Situational and Curious - based),
5) Without regulatory pressure or not applying principle of discipline.

As previously discussed, sense of liking or preference, not cognition, should be the basis for one's learning. This is because the function of cognition, in learning, only becomes a mediator for the process of acquiring knowledge as well as
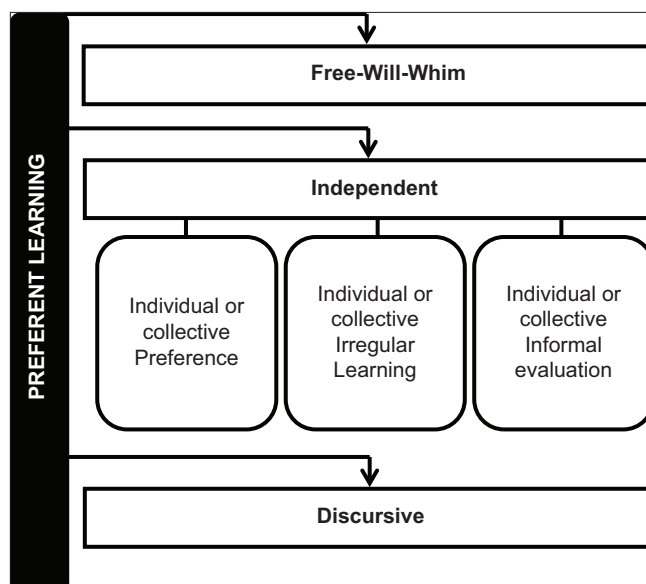

Figure 2. Outlining concept of the preferent learning

the coils of strategy (how to) based on the knowledge that someone has acquired. Motivation, in this case, becomes a psychological driving element based on the physiological needs of learning. Liking or preference becomes a natural statement about what someone wants to learn and at the same time becomes the most important basis in the learning process before having interest, being motivated, and starting the process of cognition. Figure 3 below shows a more detailed explanation of the *preferent learning* theory.

The concept of *preferent learning* does not only provide the widest opportunity for students about what they want to learn, but also allows the variety of knowledge is accessible and presented to students based on their own desires. With the principles of freedom, independence, and discursiveness in learning, the wealth of knowledge will appear more experienced by every student. This is what causes the nature of the need to master a foreign language can be said to be not permanent and can even be seasonal, which depends on the development of social dynamics. Social issues are dynamic and therefore learning must also be dynamic, meaning that learning needs always depend on the needs of social dynamics because 'it can influence the assessment of accountability of individuals in a community' (Forehand, Leigh, Farrell, & Spurlock, 2016), both the work community and the language community. Such dynamic conditions are analogous to the term Lemurs; mammals, whose behavior is studied to be identified with the principle of social dynamics in connection with behavioral innovations, knowledge gain, interaction networks, cultural transmission, and social personalities. (Kulahci, Ghazanfar, & Rubenstein, 2018a,b; Whiten, 2018).

The foreign language learning should be based on the sense of liking so as more practical and real for the learners. It is to say that when there is no a sense of liking within individual, it must be wasting of time in learning the of a foreign language as a target language. Tibboel, De Houwer, & Van Bockstaele (2015) explained that liking is an affective process that states a pleasure. They further explained that liking
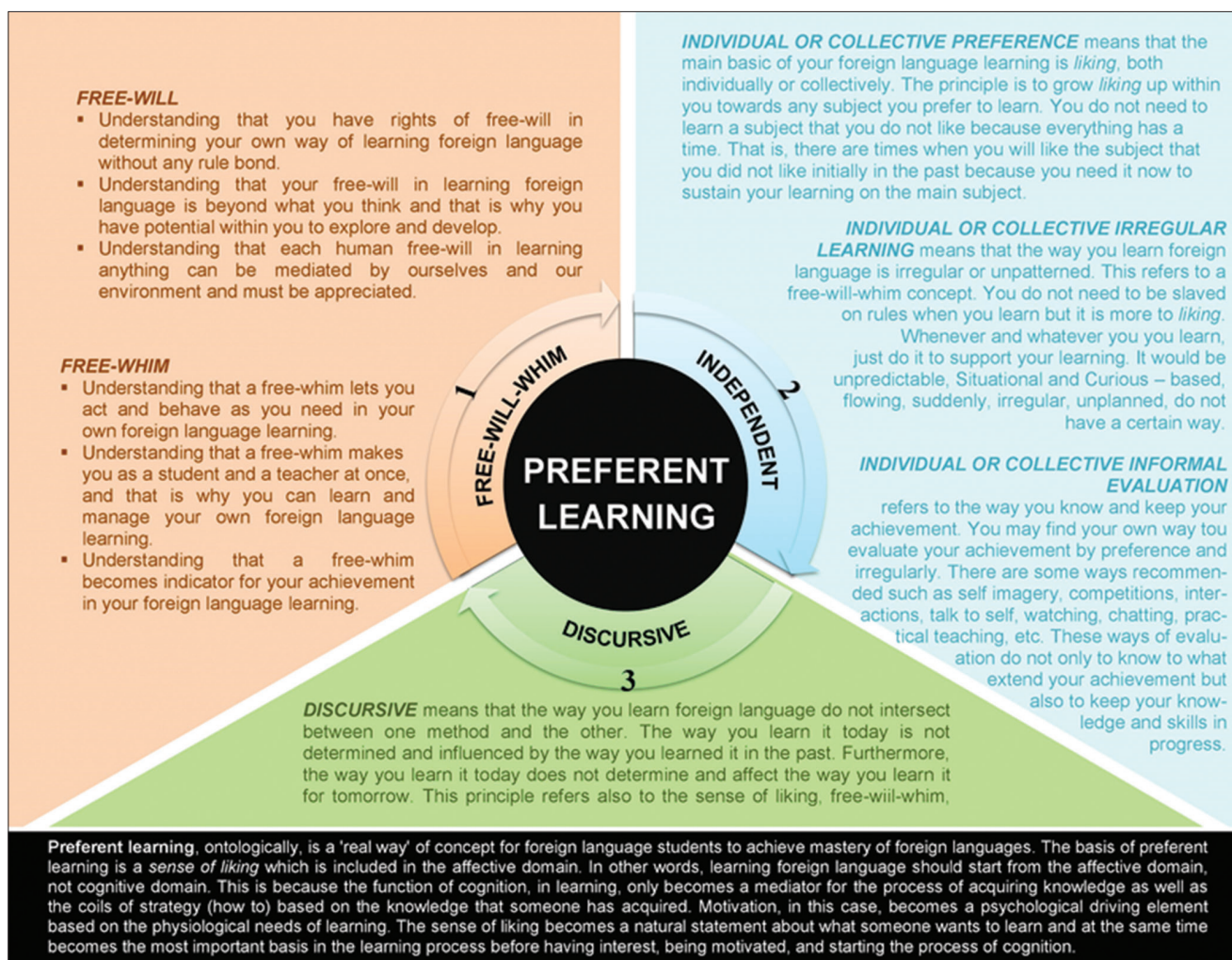
FREE-WILL
- Understanding that you have rights of free-will in determining your own way of learning foreign language without any rule bond.
- Understanding that your free-will in learning foreign language is beyond what you think and that is why you have potential within you to explore and develop.
- Understanding that each human free-will in learning anything can be mediated by ourselves and our environment and must be appreciated.

FREE-WHIM
- Understanding that a free-whim lets you act and behave as you need in your own foreign language learning.
- Understanding that a free-whim makes you as a student and a teacher at once, and that is why you can learn and manage your own foreign language learning.
- Understanding that a free-whim becomes indicator for your achievement in your foreign language learning.

INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE PREFERENCE means that the main basic of your foreign language learning is *liking*, both individually or collectively. The principle is to grow *liking* up within you towards any subject you prefer to learn. You do not need to learn a subject that you do not like because everything has a time. That is, there are times when you will like the subject that you did not like initially in the past because you need it now to sustain your learning on the main subject.

INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE IRREGULAR LEARNING means that the way you learn foreign language is irregular or unpatterned. This refers to a free-will-whim concept. You do not need to be slaved on rules when you learn but it is more to *liking*. Whenever and whatever you you learn, just do it to support your learning. It would be unpredictable, Situational and Curious – based, flowing, suddenly, irregular, unplanned, do not have a certain way.

INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE INFORMAL EVALUATION refers to the way you know and keep your achievement. You may find your own way tou evaluate your achievement by preference and irregularly. There are some ways recommended such as self imagery, competitions, interactions, talk to self, watching, chatting, practical teaching, etc. These ways of evaluation do not only to know to what extend your achievement but also to keep your knowledge and skills in progress.

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Preferent learning, ontologically, is a 'real way' of concept for foreign language students to achieve mastery of foreign languages. The basis of preferent learning is a *sense of liking* which is included in the affective domain. In other words, learning foreign language should start from the affective domain, not cognitive domain. This is because the function of cognition, in learning, only becomes a mediator for the process of acquiring knowledge as well as the coils of strategy (how to) based on the knowledge that someone has acquired. Motivation, in this case, becomes a psychological driving element based on the physiological needs of learning. The sense of liking becomes a natural statement about what someone wants to learn and at the same time becomes the most important basis in the learning process before having interest, being motivated, and starting the process of cognition.

Figure 3. Details explanation of the concept of preferent learning theory

is a hedonic experience after obtaining an outcome that "is only neurologically triggered when the the multiple hedonic hotspots simultaneously work" (Berridge & Kringelbach, 2008; Berridge & Robinson, 2003). Hedonism is an effort to pursue the pleasure. According to Feldman (2004), hedonism is a view about what makes a person's life good in itself for the person, not a view about happiness. Major (2015) said that hedonism is marked by pleasure-seeking, self-gratification and extravagance, no matter the cost and regardless of whose expense. When foreign language learning is a pleasure conduct then a preference is available. A sense of liking can provide a pleasure in learning foreign language and the learners may have discursive and independent foreign language learning.

CONCLUSION

Preferent learning, ontologically, is a concept of 'getting real way' for the foreign language students to achieve mastery of foreign languages. The basis of preferent learning is a liking which is included in the affective domain. In other words, learning should start from the affective domain, not cognitive adn motivation as well. Further researches are needed, specifically development design, to design a formal learning curriculum based on the preferent learning concept because

this concept prioritizes freedom of learning without being bound by academic or institutional regulations. It is hoped that the learning of foreign languages will be in line with the demands of the 21ˢᵗ century and the next centuries in which computerized systems have become the holders of control in providing information needed by humans in accordance with their own liking or preferences.

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