

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Factors Affecting Second Language Learners in Pakistan

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Abstract:

Present study aims at investigating the role of various internal and external factors effecting dynamically process of language learning in the context of Pakistani ESL (English as a second language) learners. Data is collected from male and female students of Allama Iqbal Open University and University of Punjab. After analyzing the responses of students, results are presented in the forms of graphs that show that age, memory, motivation, positive attitudes, aptitude, anxiety, sensitivity towards rejection, tolerance of ambiguity, learning approach, brain mal-functioning, gender, learning context, L1 skills, bilingual teacher and comprehensible input are the factors that contribute, whether negatively or positively, to the process of ESL learning.

Key words: second language learners, extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors, Pakistan, English as a second language

Introduction:

The world has become now a global village. Now a days there

are a large number of sources and reasons for communication among people of different countries and areas of the world. That's why people are learning different languages as their second or foreign languages due to some need or interest. When someone learns any language as his or her second or foreign language, he or she has to face a lot of problems and impenetrability. There are many factors which affect second or foreign language learning, some of them have direct relationship with second language learning process while others have indirect relationship with it. Some of them have been observed having sturdy effect/s on second language learning while numerous others have minor effect/s. These factors are of two types as far as their nature is concerned.

1: Internal/individual factors:

- Age
- Aptitude
- Motivation and Attitude
- Personality
- Cognitive Style
- Hemisphere specialization
- Learning Strategies

2: External factors:

- Learning and Teaching Contexts
- Input and interaction

According to Sonya Van Schaijik (2012), the main factors which affect second language learning are first language proficiency, motivation, home support, family background, social class, gender and learners' attitude. Chan, Hoi-yan, Holly (2011) assert that Age is an important factor in second language learning. Their studies show that children are sharper at second language learning as compared to adults. In the views of Oxford and Shearin, (1994: as cited in Chan, Hoi-yan, Holly, 2011) it is the motivation level of the learners which determines

their involvement in the language learning class. F.Ü.Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi (2001) illustrates that motivation is not only an important factor on the part of learners rather motivation of the language teacher is equally important in language learning class because it affects learners' performance great deal. Positive attitudes of the learners, peers, school, neighbourhood, and society have also been observed exerting very significant and positive impact upon second language learning (Aída Walqui, West Ed, San Francisco, California, 2000).

Studies carried out by Burstall's, Spolsky's, Gardner's and Lambert's found that female learners have more motivation level and positive attitudes towards second language learning, which results in better understanding of the language, as compared to male learners (Madrid, D. 1995).

Tharp & Gallimore (1988) assume that language learning success does not depend solely on class room activities or input rather social interaction with the particular community and culture of the second language is also exceedingly significant. Adger, Kalyanpur, Peterson, & Bridger, (1995) deem collaborative classroom work a vital part of effective L2 learning process.

Research Objective:

Research objective of the present study is to examine the internal and external factors which affect English as second language learning in the context of Pakistani.

Hypothesis:

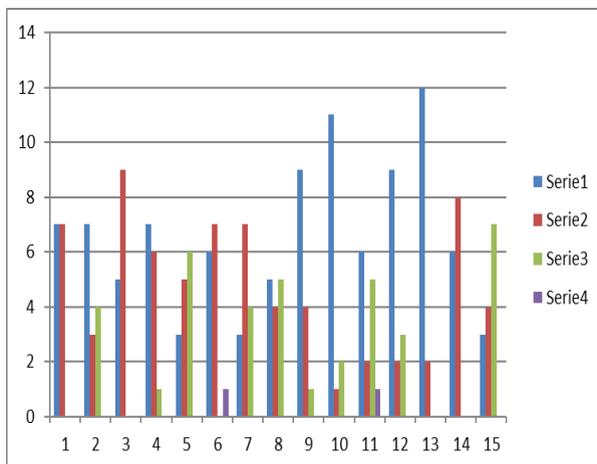
1. There are many internal and external factors especially age, motivation, input etc which have great impact on second language learning.
2. The effects of above mentioned factors differ in male and female learners.

Collection of Data:

Present study is quantitative in nature. Questionnaire was constructed in order to investigate effects of factors which effect English language learning in Pakistan. Questionnaire consists of a set of 15 fixed questions. Questionnaires were filled by students doing diploma in TEFL and Masters in TEFL in Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad and Punjab University, Lahore. The collected data is shown below in the form of graphs; graph No. 1 shows the responses of male students, while graph No. 2 is exhibits responses of female English learners.

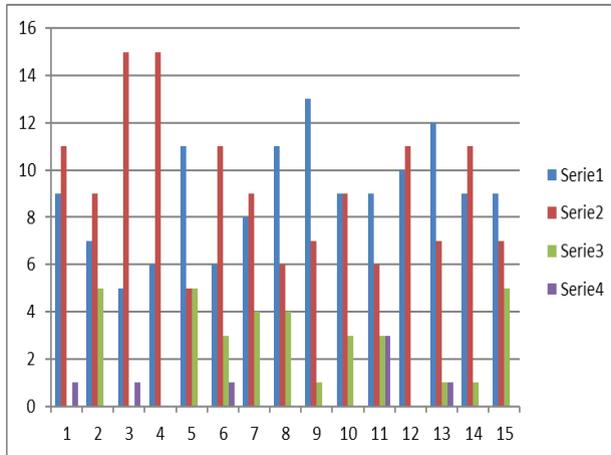
Analysis of Data:

Statistical analysis was executed after collecting the data. The result of statistical analysis is given below in the form of graphs. Graph no 1 is showing the result of male students' data and graph no 2 is showing the result of female students' data.



Graph no 1

Female students:



Graph no 2

The results of statistical analysis of data are given below one by one according to factors mentioned in the questionnaire:-

Female students strongly agreed that age is one of the factors effecting second language learning as compared to male students. Both male and female students considered that memory plays vital role in second language learning. Female students think that motivation affects greatly second language learning. Equal number of male students agreed and disagreed upon the effect of positive attitudes on second language learning success while there was no female student who disagreed but most of the female students strongly agreed upon the effect of positive attitudes of the language learners. The analysis of data showed that most of the male students think that second language learning success is a matter of intelligence instead of aptitude while most of the female students think that second language learning is a matter of aptitude instead of intelligence. Most of the female students strongly agreed that anxiety decreases the rate of second language learning while less male students were strongly agree

with this view point. More female students agreed that risk-taking learners are good in L2 communication, as compared to male students.

Equal number of male students agreed and disagreed that those learners who have tolerance of ambiguity are sharp at L2 learning while most of the female students also agreed regarding this factor, only few female students disagreed with this statement. Equal number of male and female students disagreed that the instructional method must be matched with individual's learning approach. But more female students agreed with this statement as compared to male students. Male students considered effects of brain malfunctioning on L2 learning more than female students. The analysis of data also showed that female students think that L2 learning success is different in male and female learners while most of the male students disagreed with this gender difference in L2 learning success. All female students agreed that natural or informal contexts accelerate L2 learning as compared to educational or formal contexts. No female students disagreed with this statement, while some male students disagreed with this statement while few males also showed their agreement with this statement. Equal number of male and female students agreed that L1 literacy skills and bilingual teacher facilitates success in L2 learning. Certain female students disagreed with this statement while no male student disagreed with this statement. Most of the female students agreed that comprehensible input is necessary for L2 required output. Only few female students disagreed with it while no male student disagreed with this statement. More female students agreed with this statement as compare to male students. Most of the female students agreed and strongly agreed that learners do learn what they are taught in L2 class while most of the male students disagreed with this statement.

Above mentioned detailed data interpretation indicates that according to female learners of English language, age,

memory, motivation, positive attitudes, aptitude, anxiety, sensitivity towards rejection, tolerance of ambiguity, learning approach, brain mal-functioning, gender, learning context, L1 skills, bilingual teacher and comprehensible input are all very important factors while male learners agree less with females regarding these factors and their effects on L2 learning success. Although difference in opinion of the respondents can be illustrious yet it is a noteworthy fact that Pakistani English language learners are affected by all above mentioned factors. Language teachers are required to take this fact into consideration especially while devising and designing teaching activities for ESL learners. Besides above discussed factors, socio-political factors can also not be ignored that have great impact on teaching/learning environment in the context of a politically and socially fragmented country like Pakistan.

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