

العوامل المعرفية والاجتماعية والتعليمية التي تؤثر على تعلم اللغة الثانية في جامعة دهوك، كلية التربية الأساس، قسم اللغة الانجليزية

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Cognitive, Social, and Instructional Factors Affecting Second Language Learning at the University of Duhok, College of Basic Education, Department Of English

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ملخص الدراسة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى اكتشاف العوامل المعرفية والاجتماعية والتعليمية التي تؤثر على اكتساب اللغة الثانية (SLA) بين المتعلمين الشباب الأكراد للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) استناداً إلى مزيج من مراجعة الأدبيات والبيانات التجريبية. يتناول البحث كيفية تأثير المتغيرات مثل سعة الذاكرة وسرعة المعالجة والتفكير التحليلي على الاحتفاظ باللغة وطلاقتها. يتم أيضاً دراسة الأبعاد الاجتماعية، بما في ذلك الانغماس والتعاون بين الأقران والتعرض الثقافي، لدورها في تعزيز ثقة المتعلمين' والكفاءة التواصلية. علاوة على ذلك، تقوم الدراسة بتقييم فعالية



الأساليب التعليمية— وتحديدًا تدريس اللغة التواصلية (CLT)، وتدريس اللغة القائم على المهام (TBLT)، والتعلم المدمج— في تسهيل اكتساب اللغة الثانية. تسلط النتائج الضوء على أن SLA هي عملية ديناميكية تتشكل من خلال تفاعل القدرات المعرفية الفردية، والمشاركة الاجتماعية، واستخدام استراتيجيات التدريس الفعالة. يستفيد المتعلمون أكثر عندما تتم معالجة هذه العناصر بشكل كلي داخل الفصل الدراسي. وتختتم الدراسة بتقديم وتلخيص بعض التوصيات العملية للمعلمين وصانعي السياسات والباحثين لتبني نهج أكثر تكاملاً لتعليم اللغة يعزز تحفيز المتعلم وطلافته وتطوير اللغة على المدى الطويل. وفي النهاية أشارت نتائج هذه الدراسة إلى عاملين رئيسيين يؤثران على التعلم وهما العوامل الداخلية والخارجية من حيث العمر والجنس والشخصية والموقف.

Abstract

This study explores the cognitive, social, and instructional factors that influence second language acquisition (SLA) among Kurdish young learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Drawing on a combination of literature review and empirical data, the research examines how variables such as memory capacity, processing speed, and analytical thinking impact language retention and fluency. Social dimensions, including immersion, peer collaboration, and cultural exposure, are also investigated for their role in boosting learners' confidence and communicative competence. Furthermore, the study evaluates the effectiveness of instructional methods—specifically Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Blended Learning—in facilitating second language acquisition. The findings highlight that SLA is a dynamic process shaped by the interaction of individual cognitive abilities, social engagement, and the use of effective teaching strategies. Learners benefit most when these elements are addressed holistically within the classroom. The study concludes by offering and summarizing some practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and researchers to adopt a more integrative approach to language instruction that enhances learner motivation, fluency, and long-term language development. At the end, the results of this article indicated two main factors that influence the learning which are internal and external factors from age, gender, personality and attitude.

CHAPTER I



Introduction

The process of learning a second language is influenced by a range of cognitive, social, and environmental factors. As global interconnectedness continues to grow, acquiring proficiency in additional languages has become increasingly valuable (Ellis, 2021, p. 45). However, learners progress at varying speeds and achieve different levels of fluency based on factors such as motivation, age, learning environment, and linguistic background (Lightbown & Spada, 2020, p. 78). This study explores the primary factors that impact second language learning and examines the challenges learners encounter, as well as the strategies that contribute to effective language acquisition.

1.1 Background of the Study

Research on second language acquisition spans multiple disciplines, including linguistics, psychology, and education. Various theoretical perspectives, such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985, p. 12), Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 34), and Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (Gardner, 2010, p. 56), emphasize the importance of comprehensible input, social interaction, and motivation in language learning. In educational settings, different teaching methodologies, including communicative language teaching and task-based learning, have been employed to enhance second language proficiency (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 89). Despite these developments, learners still face obstacles in achieving fluency, highlighting the need for further investigation into the key elements that contribute to successful language acquisition.

1.2 Problem Statement

The following challenges are anticipated when it comes to factors affecting second Language Learning:

- Lack of motivation by all the classroom students.
- The assessment of teachers' through instructional learning cannot be easy.
- Maintaining social and cognitive among all learners from different areas of Kurdistan can challenging.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research seeks to:

1. Identify key factors that influence second language acquisition.
2. Analyze the impact of cognitive, social, and environmental elements on language learning.
3. Assess the effectiveness of different teaching methodologies in second language instruction.

4. Propose strategies to improve language acquisition and instructional approaches.

1.4 Research Questions

The study will address the following questions:

- 1.What are the primary factors that influence second language learning?
- 2.How do cognitive, social, and environmental variables affect language acquisition?
- 3.What are the common challenges faced by second language learners?
- 4.Which teaching methodologies have proven most effective in facilitating second language learning?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Understanding the factors influencing second language learning holds valuable implications for educators, policymakers, and language learners. By identifying obstacles and effective strategies, this research aims to contribute to the enhancement of language teaching approaches and curriculum development (Gass & Selinker, 2020, p. 102). Additionally, it offers practical insights for learners to adopt personalized strategies that support their language learning journey. Furthermore, the findings of this study may aid policymakers in designing more inclusive and effective language education programs (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2019, p.87).

1.6 Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing SLA, it is not without its limitations. The study was limited to Kurdish young learners of EFL, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other populations. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from learners and teachers, which may be subject to biases. Future studies could involve a larger, more diverse sample and utilize more objective measures to validate the findings.

1.7 Aim of the Study

This study aims to explore the primary factors that impact second language learning and examines the challenges learners encounter, as well as the strategies that contribute to effective language acquisition.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section is designed to explore the different perspective of the work in hand by stating all the necessary information through theoretical framework, individual learner differences, motivation of learners, and the challenges faced by EFL learners in second language learning, and some previous studies about the topic in hand.



2.2 Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory argues that social interaction is fundamental in learning, with learners developing language skills through communication and guidance from more knowledgeable individuals (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 34). This theory underscores the importance of scaffolding, where teachers and peers provide structured support to help learners progress.

Studies indicate that learners who engage in collaborative dialogue and receive constructive feedback demonstrate greater linguistic competence over time (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 89).

Additionally, Gardner's Socio-Educational Model highlights the role of motivation and attitudes in language proficiency, distinguishing between integrative motivation desire to connect with the language community and instrumental motivation practical benefits such as career advancement (Gardner, 2010, p. 56). Research supports the claim that learners with strong integrative motivation tend to develop higher fluency and long-term retention compared to those motivated solely by external rewards.

2.3 Individual Learner Differences Personal attributes such as age, cognitive abilities, personality traits, and learning styles significantly impact second language learning.

Research suggests that younger learners tend to have an advantage in pronunciation due to brain plasticity, while older learners often excel in grammar and vocabulary because of their cognitive maturity and analytical skills (Bialystok, 2017, p. 45). Studies indicate that while children may develop native-like accents, adults leverage metalinguistic awareness to grasp complex structures faster (DeKeyser, 2020, p. 102). Additionally, factors such as working memory capacity, processing speed, and problem-solving skills play a role in how effectively learners acquire and use a second language (Ellis, 2021, p. 78). Individuals with stronger working memory can retain and manipulate linguistic information more efficiently, leading to better performance in language acquisition tasks. Personality traits, including extroversion and openness to experience, have also been associated with greater success in language learning, as they encourage social interaction and practice opportunities. Conversely, introverted learners may struggle with speaking proficiency but excel in reading and writing tasks due to their reflective learning tendencies.

2.4 Motivation and Second Language Learning

Motivation is widely regarded as a crucial element in second language learning. Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System outlines three components: the ideal L2 self-learner's aspirations, the ought-to L2 self-



external expectations and pressures, and the learning experience influences from the classroom environment and instructional methods (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 67).

2.5 Challenges in Second Language Learning

Despite advancements in language learning research, several challenges persist. Learners often struggle with challenges such as pronunciation, grammatical structures, and cultural differences, which can impede their progress which are also mention by (Bialystok, 2017, p. 76).

2.6 Previous Studies

This study will make use of three previous studies made earlier in the same field by different scholars.

Mohammed (2019) who is an assistant Teacher B at the University of Echahid Hamma Lakhdar, Algeria, made a study by a similar title (Cognitive Factors Influencing Second Language Learning). His study aimed at exploring the cognitivism and its implications on second language learning by making use of the three views of second language learning acquisition (innatist, behaviorist, and internationalist views of language). Based on their data, it was revealed to them that the cognitive theory or model opens a way or method which is called Mental or psycholinguistic process which enables learners to be thinker and active learners.

Sun (2019) wrote a research “An Analysis on the Factors Affecting Second Language Acquisition and Its Implications for Teaching and Learning”. According to her, due to globalization, many people and learners wanted to learn a second language. This papers assumes that SLA can be a complicated process which is influenced by many factors that effects each other’s with the expectation that it can bring implications to both students and teachers. According to her study, there are many factors that affect learning second language such as age, gender, motivation and so on.

Moreover, a study by Qiao (2024), revealed the factors positively influencing the learning of a second language which leads to better student self-interventions and helps teachers to be guided to select more appropriate resources for their learners. This paper tries to find out the relationship between learners individual characteristics and second language learning effects across 5 aspects of research dialect for different learners. It is assumed that this paper will be of value to teachers, learners and practitioners by offering them with practical implications.

Chapter Three



Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researchers of this article will discuss the methods used to design the paper and the methods used for collecting and analyzing the data with the number of participants who were part of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The design of this article is qualitative as it only depends on the perspective and subjectivity of the writer of this research. Three methods were used for collecting and analyzing the data and all of them are qualitative.

3.3 Participants

The participants of this study were from both male and female students and teachers. 125 participants participated in this research. 120 were from students and 5 were from teachers. The study took place at the University of Duhok, college of Basic Education, department of English. The students' participants were from 4th stage which upholds roughly 120 students from three groups. Out of this number only 10 were randomly chosen for interviews with 5 teachers as to be asked a question which is stated in the next part under the title (Data Collection Methods). All the other student were part of the observation tool.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

1.Interviews: Interviews allowed participants to elaborate on their challenges, strategies, and motivations in learning a second language. Interviews were audio- recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for recurring themes and patterns. The interviews provided qualitative insights into the subjective experience of SLA, including learners' personal struggles, successes, and perceptions of effective teaching methods.

Sample Interview Questions:

For learners: *What motivates you to learn a second language? What strategies do you use to overcome difficulties in learning?*

For educators: *What teaching methods do you find most effective in promoting language acquisition? How do you address the diverse needs of learners?*

2.Observations: Classroom observations were conducted in natural language learning settings to examine how learners interact with each other and the teacher. Observations were aimed at identifying interaction patterns, teacher strategies, and student engagement. The researcher used field notes to document observations regarding classroom dynamics, instructional methods, and the level of student participation in various activities. These observations helped to complement the data collected

from surveys and interviews by providing a real-time view of the language learning process.

3.Document Analysis: The study also analyzed instructional materials, including syllabi, lesson plans, and assessment tools, to understand the methodologies employed in the language programs. This analysis provided context for the observed teaching practices and helped identify whether the instructional methods aligned with the learners' experiences and outcomes.

3.5 Data Analysis

All the data which are gathered will be analyzed subjectively based on the beliefs and perspective the writers of this research. Since all the tools are qualitative therefore the writers will manly depend on their views for describing the data collected from both teachers and students.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Based on the methods of data collections and the perspective of the writers of this research, it is clear to them that there are two major Cognitive, Social, and Instructional factors with each having it is own sub factory of reasons. The two factors are as stated below:

1.Internal Factors: Such as (Age, gender, attitude, personality, and motivation factors).

2.External Factors: Such as (Political, economic, and technological factors).

4.2 Discussion

According to the interviews made, all teachers agreed on two things in order for second language learning acquisition to take place. All five teachers suggested that all student and any learner who want to learn a second language must carry the following:

- 1.Set up a specific goal.
- 2.Hold a positive attitude.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident from the data gathering techniques and the authors' point of view that there are two main components, each of which has a distinct sub factory of causes. The following are the two factors: (Internal aspects, including motivation, personality, attitude, age, and gender) and (External Factors: These include technological, political, and economic aspects). Moreover, based on the conducted interviews, all





teachers agreed on two requirements for the acquisition of a second language. Every student who want to learn a second language should have the following, according to all five teachers: (Establish a clear objective, and maintaining an optimistic outlook).

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