

Exploring the Role of Psychological Factors in Learning English as a Second Language: A Case Study of Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan

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Tanveer Hussain

Lecturer, Department of English, Govt. Graduate College for Boys, Block-17, Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan.

Dr. Sumaira Qanwal

Lecturer, Department of English Linguistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

Wajeeha Maryam

Lecturer, Department of English, Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakistan.

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to investigate how psychological aspects of learning English as a second language are involved. In this study, there were 211 participants. A questionnaire was used by the researcher as a research technique in this study. Descriptive analysis, frequency, percentage, valid percentage, and cumulative percentage were used to analyse the data. Based on the collected data, it has been noted that pupils are more motivated to acquire the English language. They desire to become well-versed in the English language, but they lack motivation because of several psychological issues (linguistic phobia, attitude, motivation, and anxiety). Their goal is to improve their English language skills. The majority of students push themselves to speak English well when they lose motivation or get anxious about making mistakes in their second language. According to this viewpoint, instructors play a crucial final role in helping students avoid these psychologically demotivating circumstances by showing them how these aspects might positively impact their learning outcomes.

Keywords: Anxiety, ESL, EFL, Fear, Motivation, Psychological Factors, Second Language

Introduction

Divergent opinions exist among academics and linguists over what constitutes a language. Language is a natural means of exchanging ideas, feelings, and wants with one another, claims Sapir (1921). According to Daylight (2017), language connects sounds and ideas. A message is created by these noises and ideas. A language, whether spoken or nonspoken, transmits ideas and pictures from one person to another. It is impossible to introduce oneself without a language. According to Hobsbawm (1996), a person's language defines their culture, nation,

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and state. The globe uses different languages for diverse purposes. Certain languages have a strong influence over other languages and are considered dominant. English is widely used around the world and is considered an international language. After acquiring their first language, learners go on to acquire a second language. There are a few key motivations behind language learning in other countries. According to a 2010 Government of Pakistan decree, foreign language instruction begins with the curriculum in Pakistani primary schools. Every culture and country aspires to advancement in all spheres of existence. To make every student the greatest asset, the Pakistani government adds to the curriculum everything that advances the nation and the country in the current era. In the modern world, English is a very significant language. English has become widely known and spoken worldwide, and students in Pakistan are attempting to learn it as the English language has advanced and become more valuable in today's world. English researchers have conducted a great deal of study. Each department's content is accessible in English. Not only is English taught, but other science and arts courses as well, such as arithmetic, physics, chemistry, and biology, are also taught in English (Fries, 1945). Schmitt, N., & Celce-Murcia, M. (2019) share a common method of second language learning. That is the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in which the teacher teaches English sentences with Urdu translation. While Berlitz (1852) suggests a Direct Method (DM) in which the teacher teaches the students in a direct way without translation. These two methods are being employed in second language teaching. English is serving as an official language in all over Pakistan. English language is being used in all offices like academies, social institutions, courts or even the military etc. English language is a medium that brought all countries and all peoples together on one ground.

Importance of English as a Foreign Language in Pakistan

Foreign languages have become remarkably important in society in the twenty-first century. Since 1900, the number of people who speak English has increased. According to Pennycook's (1994) preliminary estimate, there are between 700,000,000 and one billion English speakers worldwide. In a similar vein, Graddol (1997) explains that the number of people who speak local languages will rise as a result of English speakers communicating in second languages. In sociolinguistics circles, there has been a lot of controversy about the rise in the English language. According to Zikai (2019), the finest language for instruction in the sphere of education is English. Additionally, it displays how many courses are offered in English. English is a national emblem of pride, prosperity, and dignity in many nations. English is a component of social and economic instruments that connect poverty and structural dissimilarity. English-medium schools serve as a vehicle for the transfer of social and economic power in many nations. English-medium schools have significantly elevated their stature and achieved economic success on all fronts in these nations. It also gives one pride and dignity. The majority of the teachers' command of the English language is poor. They are unable to instruct students in English as a second language. While many other languages, like French, Chinese, and Italian, are also becoming more and more important, English is still the language that is used worldwide. English is the primary language used in a large number of global organisations (Jakobson, 1987). It has established itself as a key subject in Pakistan that is taught in schools up to graduation. The study is significant for the following reasons: First and foremost, English is now referred to as "Lingua Franca." Second, a great deal of

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advancements in the domains of science, technology, research, and medicine have been made possible by the use of the English language. Thirdly, it is the world's greatest instrument for job holders. Fourth, the English language makes world literature easily readable and printable.

Factors Influencing Language Learning

Several elements that impact language acquisition include the following:

1. The prior knowledge of the students
2. Internal workings
3. Outside surroundings.

The information for the language processing system makes up the internal mechanism. According to Ellis (1994), younger students are more productive than older ones since language rules do not scare their originality as much. Social aspects are a component of the external environment. The information that pupils learn is determined by these social influences. For example, the degree of exposure to different versions of the target language will be given to the student. Several internal and external variables exist, including the age at which learning occurs, behaviour, character enthusiasm, aptitude, learners' perceptions of intellect, and students' choices and methods. It is essential to learning a language. L2 researchers have carried out a great deal of study. Scholars who study L2 learning processes reach quite different conclusions. The application of L2 learning strategies by men and women is the same (Oxford, 1990). One crucial tool used by language learners is motivation. Motivators are used by language learners to achieve complete mastery of the target language. For instance, their hopes for a successful future may be the driving force behind their desire to learn a language. Ehrman (1989) discovered that the choice of work has a significant influence on the use of language learning strategies; they attribute this finding to underlying motivation. Studies have indicated that the usage of language learning strategies is influenced by age. At some ages, it is okay to use certain strategies while not others. Research on early learners and children at thirty years old provides a clear picture of this issue. According to Wong (1979), research on early infants revealed that cognitive and social skills were most important. Chesterfield (1985) found that children initially acquired receptive skills including memorization and repetition in a study of bilingual learners. Next, he developed strategies for establishing and preserving relationships and for instance, getting attention and requesting an explanation. Lastly, he developed techniques for checking for grammatical errors. Certain age groups of French and Japanese language learners in New Zealand are using the study of language learning methodologies. White (2020) finds that metacognitive self-management techniques are present in people as young as thirty. Similar to this, Palmer (1988) asserts that students' attitudes toward language acquisition influence what and how they learn. Views on the best ways to get complete mastery of language, as well as beliefs about oneself and strategy selection. Each of these techniques is crucial to the process of acquiring a language. An individual with a strong grasp of the English language is more inclined to experiment and use a variety of tactics than someone who thinks that anything goes. They are never going to understand the language. Highly competent learners use a greater diversity and quantity of language learning methods, according to the results of studies that examined the relationship between linguistic competency and language learning

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strategy use. O'Malley (1985), for instance, found that beginning ESL students employed more strategies than intermediate students.

Psychological Factors Influencing Foreign Language Learning

When learning a foreign language, psychological elements play a big part. In a similar vein, a student experiences both solitude and group membership. The two categories of psychological components are affective or emotional variables and cognitive features. The cognitive and affective components are not well distinguished from one another. Students' expressive reactions, such as pride, delight, or pleasure, are triggered by their linguistic proficiency. It is believed that teaching and learning English is a cognitive process (Bloom, 1956). Professors should work with students to help them increase their knowledge, and they should acknowledge each of these components. The moment at which people become conscious of their circumstances, communicate their feelings in response to them, and act appropriately is known as the affecting sphere of influence, according to Walker (2013) among these feelings are fear, desire, self-worth, empathy, and beliefs. The majority of a person's feelings are mostly determined by how they feel about themselves. The three facets of self-esteem are discussed by Schumann. Task: self-evaluation within specific tasks; Specific: self-evaluation within a range of life situations, including office job; Individual: self-evaluation within character or personality; Global: self-evaluation within one's total worth. Language proficiency is correlated with self-esteem. Teachers should encourage students to take pride in their abilities and successes because this will help them learn languages more effectively. Students are encouraged to acquire a second language by certain psychological factors.

1. Anxiety

Sidiropoulou (2004) claims that when studying a second language in the classroom, students have a shared sense of anxiety. Anxiety is a typical emotion shared by all students. A pupil experiences some anxiety when learning a second language and must practise it multiple times.

2. Motivation

A person's passion, goal, or desire drives students to behave in a particular way. Motivation is influenced by individual, sociocultural, and instructional factors. Lambert distinguishes between two types of motivations. Instrumental motivation is the first. This kind of motivation talks about how learning English is important for a certain goal, like landing a job. Integrative motivation is a different kind of motivation. A participant in integrative motivation integrates into the group's culture while learning a foreign language. Learning about and analysing integrative motivation is challenging. According to Sidiropoulou (2004), a student's motivation is a major factor in their learning.

3. Empathy

Empathy, according to Martos (2020), is the capacity to identify and experience another person's emotions. It involves establishing connections with other people. A message should be heard carefully by the audience. When learning English, he should focus entirely on comprehending the speaker's message and feelings.

3. Attitude

When studying a foreign language, like the English language, attitude is important.

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Sidiropoulou (2004), asserts that the teacher, other English-speaking individuals, the classroom environment, and the attitudes of the students all have an effect.

Research Context

This article's primary focus was on Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan students enrolled in the BS English programme. This study's main goal was to investigate how psychological variables affect second-language acquisition of English.

Research Objectives

The core objectives of the present study are given below:

- i) To know the perceptions of foreign language learners regarding the influence of psychological factors on them.
- ii) To investigate the situations in which the psychological factors influence L2 learning.
- iii) To analyse the impacts of psychological factors on L2 learners.

1.14. Research Questions

The research in hand is designed to the following research questions.

- i) What are the perceptions of foreign language learners regarding the influence of psychological factors on them?
- ii) What are the situations in which psychological factors influence on L2 learning?
- iii) What are the impacts of psychological factors on L2 learners?

Significance of the Study

The core purpose of this research was to highlight “the Role of Psychological Factors in Learning English as a Second Language.” It elaborates on language preferences and the degree of psychological factors among the BS students enrolled at Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, BS English.

Data Collection Tool and Research Participants

During the study process, the tool is utilised to gather data. It is sometimes referred to as a research tool, and examples include surveys, case studies, interviews, and observation. A researcher can collect, organise, analyse, and visualise data with the use of research tools. An important part of integrating research is the research instrument. A technique employed in research is called a research instrument. A questionnaire completed by students was employed by the researcher to gather data for this study. This research was carried out at Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, BS English. The majority of them were Urdu, Saraiki, and Punjabi speakers.

Data Analysis

Table # 1: I call to mind new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board or a street sign

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SD	31	14.7	14.7	14.7
D	5	2.4	2.4	17.1

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UD	14	6.6	6.6	23.7
A	93	44.1	44.1	67.8
SA	68	32.2	32.2	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 1 explains the responses of 211 respondents.14.7% (n=31) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the first research statement, 2.4% (n=5) were disagreed (D), 6.6% (n=14) remained undecided, 44.1% (n=93) were agreed (A) and 32.2% (n=68) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 2: I inspire myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistakes

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	3	1.4	1.4	1.4
D	33	15.6	15.6	17.1
UD	38	18.0	18.0	35.1
A	90	42.7	42.7	77.7
SA	47	22.3	22.3	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 2 elucidates the responses of 211 respondents.1.4% (n=3) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 2nd research statement, 15.6% (n=33) were disagreed (D), 18.0% (n=38) remained undecided, 42.7% (n=90) were agreed (A) and 22.3% (n=47) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 3: I associate the sounds, pictures or images of a new English word to help me remember the word

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	1	.5	.5	.5
D	3	1.4	1.4	1.9
UD	95	45.0	45.0	46.9
A	39	18.5	18.5	65.4
SA	73	34.6	34.6	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 3 clarifies the responses of 211 respondents .5% (n=1) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 3rd research statement, 1.4% (n=3) were disagreed (D), 45.0% (n=95) remained undecided, 18.5% (n=39) were agreed (A) and 34.6% (n=73) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 4: I first skim-read an English passage then go back and read carefully

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SD	1	.5	.5	.5

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D	33	15.6	15.6	16.1
UD	48	22.7	22.7	38.9
A	83	39.3	39.3	78.2
SA	46	21.8	21.8	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 4 enlightens the responses of 211 respondents .5% (n=1) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 4th research statement, 15.6% (n=33) were disagreed (D), 22.7% (n=48) remained undecided, 39.3% (n=83) were agreed (A) and 21.8% (n=46) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 5: I look for words in my language that are comparable to new words in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	5	2.4	2.4	2.4
D	33	15.6	15.6	18.0
UD	68	32.2	32.2	50.2
A	25	11.8	11.8	62.1
SA	80	37.9	37.9	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 5 describes the responses of 211 respondents. 2.4% (n=5) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 5th research statement, 15.6% (n=33) were disagreed (D), 32.2% (n=68) remained undecided, 11.8% (n=25) were agreed (A) and 37.9% (n=80) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 6: I frequently speak English whenever I am tense, nervous, angry and furious

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	33	15.6	15.6	15.6
D	10	4.7	4.7	20.4
UD	10	4.7	4.7	25.1
A	63	29.9	29.9	55.0
SA	95	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 6 clarifies the responses of 211 respondents. 15.6% (n=33) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 6th research statement, 4.7% (n=10) were disagreed (D), 4.7% (n=10) remained undecided, 29.9% (n=63) were agreed (A) and 45.0% (n=95) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 7: If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or repeat it

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SD	28	13.3	13.3	13.3

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D	30	14.2	14.2	27.5
UD	18	8.5	8.5	36.0
A	70	33.2	33.2	69.2
SA	65	30.8	30.8	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 7 elucidates the responses of 211 respondents.13.3% (n=28) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 7th research statement,14.2% (n=30) were disagreed (D), 8.5% (n=18) remained undecided, 33.2% (n=70) were agreed (A) and 30.8% (n=65) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 8: I use new English words in a sentence so that I can remember them

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	27	12.8	12.8	12.8
D	30	14.2	14.2	27.0
UD	44	20.9	20.9	47.9
A	45	21.3	21.3	69.2
SA	65	30.8	30.8	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 8 enlightens the responses of 211 respondents.12.8% (n=27) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 8th research statement,14.2% (n=30) were disagreed (D), 20.9% (n=44) remained undecided, 21.3% (n=45) were agreed (A) and 30.8% (n=65) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 9: I prefer using different English words in different situations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	2	.9	.9	.9
D	57	27.0	27.0	28.0
UD	12	5.7	5.7	33.6
A	73	34.6	34.6	68.2
SA	67	31.8	31.8	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 9 explicates the responses of 211 respondents .9% (n=2) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 9th research statement, 27.0% (n=57) were disagreed (D), 5.7% (n=12) remained undecided, 34.6% (n=73) were agreed (A) and 31.8% (n=67) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table #10: I find the meaning of an English word by allocating it into parts that I understand

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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SD	1	.5	.5	.5
D	33	15.6	15.6	16.1
UD	19	9.0	9.0	25.1
A	53	25.1	25.1	50.2
SA	105	49.8	49.8	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 10 describes the responses of 211 respondents .5% (n=1) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 10th research statement,15.6% (n=33) were disagreed (D), 9.0% (n=19) remained undecided, 25.1% (n=53) were agreed (A) and 49.8% (n=105) are strongly agree. were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 11: I create summaries of information that I hear or read in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	7	3.3	3.3	3.3
D	15	7.1	7.1	10.4
UD	23	10.9	10.9	21.3
A	73	34.6	34.6	55.9
SA	93	44.1	44.1	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 11 illuminates the responses of 211 respondents.3.3% (n=7) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 11th research statement,7.1% (n=15) were disagreed (D), 10.9% (n=23) remained undecided, 34.6% (n=73) were agreed (A) and 44.1% (n=93) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 12: I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	29	13.7	13.7	13.7
D	9	4.3	4.3	18.0
UD	21	10.0	10.0	28.0
A	104	49.3	49.3	77.3
SA	48	22.7	22.7	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 12 expounds the responses of 211 respondents.13.7% (n=29) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 12th research statement,4.3% (n=9) were disagreed (D), 1.0% (n=21) remained undecided, 49.3% (n=104) were agreed (A) and 22.7% (n=48) were strongly agreed (SA).

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Table # 13: If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
D	8	3.8	3.8	3.8
UD	47	22.3	22.3	26.1
Valid A	97	46.0	46.0	72.0
SA	59	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 13 explicates the responses of 211 respondents, 3.8% (n=8) were disagreed (D), 22.3% (n=47) remained undecided, 46.0% (n=97) were agreed (A) and 28.0% (n=59) were strongly agreed (SA).

Table # 14: I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	33	15.6	15.6	15.6
D	41	19.4	19.4	35.0
UD	15	7.1	7.1	42.1
Valid A	30	14.2	14.2	56.3
SA	92	43.6	43.6	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

Table: 14 enlightens the responses of 211 respondents.15.6% (n=33) were strongly disagreed (SD) with the 14th research statement,19.4% (n=41) were disagreed (D), 7.1% (n=15) remained undecided, 14.2% (n=30) were agreed (A) and 43.6% (n=92) were strongly agreed (SA).

Results and Findings of the Study

Q. No. 1: What are the perceptions of foreign language learners regarding the influence of psychological factors on them?

The views of foreign language learners about the impact of psychological variables on them are the subject of this research question. According to the results, the majority of students agreed or strongly agreed with the assertions made about the psychological aspects of language learning. The answers to research question #1 showed that psychological variables affect how foreign language learners see and believe things. The majority of pupils lack confidence. They are not proficient in English. They are more hesitant and bashful when they are around other individuals. They're scared of making a mistake. These psychological elements have an impact on how non-native English speakers acquire the language. Anger, fear, and anxiety are a few psychological variables that prevent students from learning. Educators and learners need to work on overcoming these psychological barriers that affect LLS. Lessard-Clouston (1997), asserts that LLS aids students in developing their communication skills. Learning strategies are wide terms that include any methods or

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procedures a learner of a second language uses to pick up the language.

Q. No. 2: What are the situations in which psychological factors influence on L2 learning?

This study question focuses on the circumstances in which psychological elements influence second language acquisition. The majority of students expressed agreement or strong agreement with the assertions, according to the participants' final results and conclusions. Psychological factors influence L2 learning processes in a variety of circumstances. Most students attempt to practise speaking English so that they can do it fluently. The majority of students attempt to employ different English words in various contexts. When a pupil is unfamiliar with a word, they typically attempt to use its synonym. They make an effort to correct their English errors. Students look for word meanings and proper pronunciations using several English dictionaries. Psychological factors can influence language learning processes in a variety of scenarios, but ESL students work to overcome these obstacles and circumstances to become fluent English speakers.

Q. No. 3: What are the impacts of psychological factors on L2 learners?

The influence of psychological factors on L2 learning processes is the subject of this research inquiry. The majority of students likewise agree or strongly agree with the assertions included in the students' questionnaire, according to the participants' final results and conclusions. The stronger influence of psychological elements on L2 learners was demonstrated by this study. The majority of ESL students listen intently when someone speaks in English. Their goal is to become fluent in the English language. The majority of students speak in English when they are agitated, nervous, or irritated. They look for various approaches to improving their English language skills. The main reason why students avoid using English terminology is their fear of making a mistake. A guy becomes flawless through practice. Students attempt to practise speaking English. To help them remember new words, the majority of pupils attempt to incorporate them into sentences. Numerous psychological factors influence the process of acquiring a language. According to Cohen (1998), language learners will function more effectively if they deliberately select techniques when acquiring, retrieving, applying, and storing knowledge.

Conclusion

The investigation of psychological aspects of learning English as a second language served as the foundation for this study. Psychological elements are crucial to the language acquisition process. The questionnaire was used to gather data for the study, as well as the final conclusions and outcomes. The data collected indicates that pupils are more motivated to study the English language. They desire to have a strong command of the English language, but they lack motivation because of a number of psychological issues (linguistic phobia, attitude, motivation, and anxiety). Their goal is to improve their English language skills. The majority of students push themselves to speak English well when they lose motivation or get anxious about making mistakes in their second language. According to this viewpoint, instructors have a crucial and final role in helping students avoid psychological elements that demotivate them by showing them how these factors might positively impact their learning

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outcomes.

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