
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Contemporary Study: Acquisition of a New Language and its Impacts on a Learner's Lifestyle

Owais Gul

Islamia College University, Peshawar, Pakistan

Corresponding Author: Owais Gul, **E-mail:** owaisgul000@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT

This research paper deals with the influence of acquiring a new language on the learner's lifestyle. Keeping in view the Pakistani folks, this paper explores how the acquisition of a new language, particularly the English language, influences the people in shaping their future by making them communicative with people across the world. While talking about the acquisition of a new language in general, the paper explores the influence of learning the English language on the people of Pakistan in the context of their academic and financial careers, improvement of communication skills, enhancement of understanding, and endless opportunities to shape the future inside and outside the country.

| KEYWORDS

Language multilingualism, lifestyle and language learning

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Language is a medium of communication. It is the language that makes humans interact with each other. The level of understanding depends upon the way of using a language, its tone, and the choice of words. It is often seen that people with the same native language can communicate with each other effectively rather than those who acquire that same language as their second or a foreign one. There are numerous languages spoken around the world by people belonging to different regions and cultures. Language is the most important component of culture. According to a thinker, "Language and culture are intertwined, and one will affect the other. Language and culture have a kind of deep and symbolic relationship. Language symbolizes the whole culture because language represents the culture in the speaker's mind" (Kuo 5). It means that language plays a vital role in revitalizing the culture and traditions. People tend to speak their native language in their family and friends' circle, and they need to learn their official language when they must interact with people at jobs or must speak formally to someone. To serve that purpose, it is important to acquire the official language as a second language if it is not the national language. It is important to learn the native language as well as the official language to go ahead on the road to success. Pakistan is known as a culturally diversified country. In Pakistan, Urdu is spoken as a national language and is accompanied by many other languages spoken as local languages by people belonging to different cultures. Punjabi is the native language of the people belonging to Punjab; Sindhi is spoken by Sindhi people; Balochi is spoken in Baluchistan, and Pashto is the native language of Pashtuns. All of them can communicate in their native language when they are surrounded by the people of their own clan, but when they must communicate with one another, they need to learn their national language to interact effectively. Learning a national language is important for the communication between people belonging to different cultures but learning the official language is vital to make way for success.

2. Linguistic Review: Second language in the context of Pakistan :

English is the official language of Pakistan and one of the world's most spoken languages. Today, when the world has changed into a global village, people tend to interact with each other regardless of the borders and boundaries. Nowadays, it has become a common practice to do remote jobs across the world, and for that, it is essential to learn a language in which both parties can communicate and abridge the distance. For instance, if a professional from Pakistan is seeking a remote job and gets it in Turkey, but neither the employee nor the employer knows how to speak their native language, they will have to find a way out. The only way out of this is to communicate in a language that is spoken by the people of both countries. Here English language plays a vital role and becomes the medium of communication. Like Turkey, there are numerous countries in which English is spoken and understood as a second language. So, to get successful, it is important to acquire a language that is spoken and understood by people around the world. In Pakistan, the English language plays a significant role in producing a well-educated and versatile person. People with any native language must learn English to pass successfully through the different fields of life, i.e., academics, career, international relationships, and communicating in the U.N.

3. The process of acquisition of a second language :

As English is an official language of Pakistan, it is acquired as a second language by the folks of Pakistan. Acquiring a second language may not be as easy as it seems. A child naturally acquires his first language or his mother tongue, but the road to the acquisition of a second language is not that smooth. The first language plays a vital role in the learning of the new one. As it is stated in an international journal, "Mother tongue (L1) is the integral factor of second language acquisition. Most learners apply education from their native language to the second language, and this transfer can result in both positive and negative transfer" (*Advani and Shrivastav 159*). Hereby positive and negative transfer, he means that if the second language is learned by an individual in complete accordance with the mother tongue, the transfer is positive, but if the newly acquired language is not compatible with the mother tongue, the transfer goes negative. According to Rod Ellis, "SLA is "a complex process, involving many interrelated factors. It is the product of many factors pertaining to the learner on the one hand and the learning situation on the other" (1986, 4). Moreover, Victoria Fromkin et al. say that SLA is "the acquisition of another language or language after the first language acquisition that is underway or completed" (2002, 593).

3.1 Benefits of learning a foreign language :

Acquiring a second language, specifically, English, opens many ways for the learner, particularly in Pakistan. An individual starts learning it from the very beginning of his academic career. In almost all the schools across the nation, it has become compulsory for the teachers and the students to converse in English. Likewise, whatever subjects they are learning, their medium of instruction is English, so it becomes inevitable for the students to learn English. From the very beginning, an individual starts to acquire the English language, and it influences his personality in both positive and negative ways. According to a researcher, "Expression of positive or negative feelings toward a language may reflect the impression of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degrees of importance, social status, etc. (*Richards, 1985, p. 155*).

1. A study revealed that learners of a language had improved long-term memories. Dementia occurs mostly in an aging person. Interestingly, even aging persons who were acquiring a new language were protected from dementia due to their neurological and a variation in the gray part of the brain. (*Jian ping, 2015, p.29-45*)
2. A learner's overall lifestyle has a very strong impact on his/her health. It has been found that the symptoms of dementia were not found in second language learners, even among aged learners. Therefore, bilingualism has a very durable influence on shielding learner's life from having symptoms of dementia in old age. (*Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I., & Freedman, M. (2007)*)
3. The increase in salary was noted for employees who were bilingual and could speak and understand a language other than their mother tongue. Earlier data shows that customers show a very positive response toward tipping if they are served in their native language. (*Van Vaerenbergh, Y. and Holmqvist, J. (2013)*). This study explained how an understanding and acquisition of another language could help increase the income and salaries of employees in multiple service-based industries.
4. An individual who is acquiring a foreign language may face difficulty while understanding the concepts of the second language, he may have difficulty in adopting the accent, and most importantly, his social status counts a lot in the learning of the second language. Acquiring a language takes a lot of effort, along with strong finances and a proficient teaching faculty. An individual who is fortunate enough to have all of these becomes an open-minded learner who can do diversified tasks; he is open to learning and grasping all the new concepts and is welcoming to the changes and revolutions which come and go with the passage of time whereas an individual who lacks in any of aspect gets the negative influence of learning the second language. A child who acquires any other language than his native one is a child with an inborn quality of learning and adapting to any environment. A child who learns to adapt becomes an individual with a diversified personality, and he becomes beneficial for his nation as well. A factor that is very important to discuss so far as the acquisition of a second language is concerned is the presence of motivation. According to a

researcher, "Motivation is an ultimate factor in the process of acquiring a second language. Motivation has been called the neglected heart of language teaching. It is observed that all the learning activities are filtered through the students' motivation" (*Advani and Sharivastav 159*). Motivation plays a key role in the acquisition of the second language, and the source of motivation is mainly the teacher. If the teacher is motivated and enthusiastic enough to teach his/her pupils, then the outcome will be double enthusiasm for learning in the pupils. Other than motivation, there are other factors also that influence the acquisition of the language, e.g., age, aptitude, attitude, intelligence, and personality. It matters a lot if a person is willing to learn the language. His willingness is then interrelated with his intelligence and aptitude, which are most important so far as the learning process is concerned. According to a researcher, "the studies on intelligence show a strong relationship between intelligence and the acquisition of the foreign language but only as far as academic skills are concerned. Learners with high IQ achieve better results in language tests" (*Khasinah 261*). Other than intelligence, there is another important factor, i.e., age. Children tend to acquire the language more easily than adults. Children under the development age are quicker in picking and learning things than older children, so it is better to make them acquire the English language to get the best results. Also, it is better to make the children proficient in the English language since it is crucial for their career development ahead.

3.2 Language and its impact on a learner's career:

1. Proficient in the English language since it is crucial for their career development ahead.

Acquisition of English is very crucial so far as the building of a career is concerned. It has now become compulsory for the applicants to be fluent and proficient in English no matter for which position they are applying. Nowadays, every firm or company or even school has some relations built up internationally. They always need to communicate with their officials working in other countries. To make that communication effective, they need people who know not only the grammar and vocabulary but also the expressions so that the message can be conveyed effectively. For example, a person working in a multinational organization must be fluent in the English language so that he/she can interact with people around the globe and enhance the business of the company he/she works for. Not only companies and firms but the educational institutes also hire people after checking their proficiency in English. A person with good language skills is always welcome, and the person whose communication skills are weak is unable to make his/her way no matter which degree or diploma he/she has. In Pakistani universities, there are students who come from other countries to get their degrees, and they don't know either the national or the local languages of Pakistan, so it becomes indispensable for the teachers to be proficient in English to deliver an effective lecture and make them understand fully everything they are teaching. As the teachers become proficient in the use of the English language, they become an example for their students and encourage them to learn the English language. Moreover, when the students make their careers, the English language becomes one of the major skills that makes them get or not to get the job.

Other than educational institutions and multinational companies and firms, the freelancing industry has emerged as a new mode of earning. Freelance means self-employed, and the people who freelance work remotely from their homes. The world of freelancing is not confined to one or two states, but freelancers around communicate with each through the given platforms and take work according to their skills. In order to use their skills in an effective way, it is inevitable to communicate in a language that is comprehensible for both the parties, i.e., the client and the worker. For that, a language that is spoken largely across the world becomes the medium of communication, the English language. A freelancer from Pakistan wants to work for an American client; how are they supposed to communicate? Obviously, they must be fully aware of the use of the English language in order to make their deal effective. To ensure their success, they must be proficient in speaking and writing the English language.

4. Globalization of the language :

The English language has become a globally spoken language, and almost all the departments in several countries, including Pakistan, have adopted it as their official language. One of the prominent departments in the media. Media, whether it is electronic, print, or social, majorly deals in the English language, and all the media persons need to be well versed in it. Nowadays, print media such as journals, magazines, literary works of art, and daily news are read worldwide, mostly on the internet; When an article or a blog or any essay is searched on the internet, the language that is mostly used in English. Electronic media is now progressing by airing the news worldwide, and to do that, a language is needed that is understood by many people across the world. To make it possible, the acquisition of English as a second language is inevitable. Once a person is well versed in English, it remains not difficult for him to introduce himself worldwide as a representative of his country. Social media is the media of the new era. Social media is the eyes and ears of whatever is happening around in society. Social media speaks the language of every country and nation, but everyone should be at the same pace to be understood. To be on the same pace requires learning a language that is understood by people at large. The English language serves the purpose, and people with good communication skills have an influence on social media. Social media groups and pages bring people to a platform where people from different regions and cultures interact with each other. The diversity of cultures becomes a chance for people to learn about cultures other than their own. To achieve that goal, understanding the language is very important. According to a philosopher, Ferdinand De Saussure, language is made up of words and images, which he calls 'signifiers' and 'signified'. The 'signifier' is the word, and the 'signified' is

the object to which it refers. Saussure is of the view that these two things are inseparable and arbitrary. In the same way, when people see different cultures on social media gathered on a single platform, they learn. They learn but to talk about them; they need a language. Here the different cultures and the people belong to them; the 'signified' is completely inseparable from the language to be learned 'the signifier'. "Saussure saw language as a system of signs constructed by convention. Understanding meaning to be relational, being produced by the interaction between various signifiers and signified, he held that meaning cannot be understood in isolation" (Mambrol 1)

5. Conclusion

To explain and learn the culture of one another, a language needs to be learned by all the people, and the English language seems to be the language that represents most nations. Here, the learning of the language has a very positive influence on learners as it provides an opportunity for the learners to learn about different cultures. Knowing different cultures can make an individual more adaptable. Learning a new language opens new ways for the learner. It opens the way to travel across the world and experience what he has learned. An individual with a vast knowledge of cultures and traditions is a threat to society as compared to a person who is not ready to learn and embrace the changes occurring in the world. Learning a new language is vital because language speaks the mind, but a mind cannot be expressed without language.

This contemporary study has enlightened the truest form of benefits a learner can achieve through acquiring a new language, specifically English, in the context of Pakistan.

In short, this paper has explained the influence of a language ranging from the process of acquiring a new language to its impacts on the learner's lifestyle. This research is only limited to the learner's behavior toward learning a new language in Pakistan. And with the ambiguous changes — demographics, social class, people's behavior towards culture, business, employment, education, and life —the acquisition of a language requires more research to notice the updated influence of a language on a learner's lifestyle.

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ORCID iD <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8393-8990>

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