Factors of Second Language Acquisition: A Focus on Intelligences and Motivation

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Abstract

This research investigated supporting factors of foreign language acquisition that focus on intelligence and motivation factors. This study investigated the students' intelligence and motivation in mastering a foreign language in this case English at SMA Negeri 1 Besitang, especially in the twelfth grade in the academic year 2024/2025. Researchers apply a qualitative descriptive method to explore how the two factors influenced the student's ability to master English in their learning process. The researcher collected data through shared questionnaires, observation, and documentation. The data were obtained from one class observation from twelfth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Besitang. The researcher uses the data analysis technique from Miles and Huberman which has three stages: (1) data reduction (2) data display (3) drawing conclusion and verification. For the validity of the data, the researcher used the triangulation methodologist. The result of the study shows that intelligence and motivation have a big effect on the ability of the student to master foreign language acquisition. By understanding the interplay between intelligence and motivation, language teachers and learners can create more effective and engaging language learning experiences. By tailoring instruction to individual learning styles and fostering a positive learning environment, it is possible to optimize language acquisition outcomes.

Keywords: intelligence and motivation factor, foreign language acquisition, students' ability

1. INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is very important for students especially at senior high school level. Mastering English skills has been the most important thing as it is related to their core competencies(Agustin et al., 2021). Foreign language in this case English is useful and may even be crucial in our modern society, with English taking central positions in education and employment as well as interactions and communication in the 21st century. Foreign language acquisition is a complex process influenced by various factors, both internal and external. This statement is related to the article written by (Susanto et al., 2024), it is states that guiding language learners to acquire a certain level of target language skill is always due to the process influenced by many variables and known as gradual, nonlinear, dynamic, complex, and social. According to Khatoon et al., (2024), This wisdom also emphasizes learners' age, abilities, learning style, intelligence, and motivation toward the language learning enhancement of their accomplishment. It is widely agreed that there are some

factors can influenced the foreign language acquisition. This study present the most interesting topic that focus on discussing about the intelegency and the motivation factor of foreign language acquisition. The purpose of this study is to investigate the supporting factors that contribute to successful foreign language acquisition. Specifically, it will explore the relationship between various intelligences and individual motivation levels in influencing learners' proficiency in a foreign language.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part, researcher gather some theories related to the the factors that sopport the foreign language acquisition in this case intelegece and motivation factor. The theories are used to support this research.

2.1 Intelegence

Multiple Intelligence Theory, proposed by Howard Gardner, posits that intelligence is multifaceted, encompassing various cognitive abilities. This theory suggests that individuals possess different strengths and weaknesses in these intelligences, which can significantly influence their language learning experiences. There are nomerous dimension of intelegence, including linguistic intelegence, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpesonal, and naturalistic intelegence (unimatrix.com 2023)

Linguistic Intelligence is directly related to language learning, as it involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to use language effectively, and the capacity to learn new languages. Individuals with strong linguistic intelligence often excel in vocabulary acquisition, grammar, and pronunciation (Genesee, 1976). According to Khatoon et al., (2024), that different IQ means can predict learning success when it comes to the acquisition of a second language. However subsequent research has indicated that intelligence measures might be more closely related to some components of second language acquisition than other parts. In the same development, Lightbown and Spada have also pointed out that some learners perform very poorly in their academics but are remarkable in second language acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). This raises questions about the connection between intelligence and the acquisition of language, pointing out to the fact that learners' potential cannot be determined by ordinary indices of intelligence.

2.2 Motivation

Motivation is a crucial factor in language learning. It drives learners to persist in their studies, overcome challenges, and seek out opportunities for language practice. There are two type of motivation factors. The first one is intrinsic motivation, stemming from personal interest and enjoyment, which is particularly powerful in sustaining language learning efforts. According to (Khatoon et al., 2024), the learners' communicative needs, and the specific target language community perceptions that the learners may have, the learners with intrinsic motivation are usually preferred as such motivation comes from the desire to learn that language. Extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards or pressures, can also play a role. According to (Skehan 1991), Materials/teaching embraces those influences on the motivation of students that are the consequence of the instructional context. One can speculate here about influences such as the attractiveness of teaching materials, amount of variety in classroom work, and the nature of classroom organization. According to (Gilakjani et al., 2012), pressure from the outside can have a deep dramatic effect on motivation, and result in a negative attitude toward learning. Other factors that have been found to influence motivation include, social relations within the system and power relations between language/s: these may enhance or withdraw learners' interest and commitment toward learning

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research used the Mixed Methods Approach, this approach will combine both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative approach is used to assess the relationship between linguistic intelligence and language proficiency and to examine the correlation between motivation and language learning outcomes.

A qualitative approach is used to explore the learners' perspectives on how their different intelligences influence their language learning experiences and how their motivation levels impact their learning strategies and overall engagement.

3.2 Participants

The subjects of the research are twelfth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Besitang in Social Class.

3.3   Instruments

Quantitative:
1. **Intelligence Tests:** Tests to assess specific cognitive abilities relevant to language learning.
2. **Motivation Scales:** Standardized questionnaires to measure different types of motivation.

Qualitative:
1. **Semi-structured Interviews:** In-depth interviews with a subset of participants to explore their experiences, perspectives, and strategies in greater detail.
2. **Focus Group Discussions:** Group discussions to gather insights from a broader range of participants on specific themes related to intelligence and motivation.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative:
1. Descriptive statistics, it means, standard deviations to summarize data.
2. Correlation analysis to examine relationships between variables.
3. Regression analysis to predict language proficiency based on intelligence and motivation scores.

Qualitative:
1. **Thematic analysis:** Identify, analyze, and interpret recurring themes and patterns in interview transcripts, focus group discussions, and learning journals.
2. **Content analysis:** Analyze the content of learning journals to identify common themes and patterns in students' learning experiences.

4. RESULTS

The social class consists of 35 students who have answered the intelligence test, questionnaire, and interview that had been given before. The results of the intelligence test are shown in the table of intelligence. The results of the motivation test are shown in the table of motivation. There 15 students answered very often to get the motivation, 10 students answered often, 6 students answered seldom and 4 students answered very seldom. The data shows the frequency of how often students engage in the motivation that supports foreign language acquisition. Here's a table summarizing the data:

Table 1. Table of intelligence

Score's Interval	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
A (90-100)	15	42,86%
B (80-89)	10	28,57%
C (70-79)	8	22,86%
D (60-69)	2	5,71%
E (under 60)	0	0
Total	35	100%

Table 2. Table of Motivation

Frequency	Count	Percentage
Very Often	15	42.86%
Often	10	28.57%
Seldom	6	17.14%
Very Seldom	4	11.43%
total	35	100%

5. DISCUSSION

The first table shows a high proportion of scores is a significant proportion of students (42.86%) achieved scores in the A range (90-100), indicating a relatively high level of academic performance. Moderate distribution of scores appears to be somewhat skewed towards higher scores, with a gradual decrease in the proportion of students in lower score ranges. While the provided data suggests that a significant number of students may possess strong linguistic intelligence, further research is needed to establish a clear link between specific intelligence factors and foreign language acquisition in this particular context.

The second table shows a significant portion of the class (42.86%) engages in behaviors that support foreign language acquisition very often. This is a positive finding, as it suggests that many students are motivated and actively engaged in learning.

However, it is also important to consider the students who reported engaging in these behaviors seldom (17.14%) or very seldom (11.43%). These students may need additional support or motivation to succeed in foreign language learning.

The next test is the students were asked to introduce themselves in front of the class that focusing on the information about: name, hobby, ambition and the plan for the future. And the result is the students who have high motivation and intelegence in English can explain about themselves fluently. And the students who have low motivation and intelegence to study English couldn't introduce and talk about themselves in front of the class fluently.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the result and data present above we can conclude that intelligence and motivation have big effect to influence the ability of the student in mastering foreign language acquisition.

By understanding the interplay between intelligences and motivation, language teachers and learners can create more effective and engaging language learning experiences. By tailoring instruction to individual learning styles and fostering a positive learning environment, it is possible to optimize language acquisition outcomes.

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