

SIGNIFICANCE OF MOTHER TONGUE ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: THE CASE OF ENGLISH LEARNING

Zoya Hanif^{*1}, Zainab Tahir², Dr. Khalid Ahmed³

^{*1,2}M. Phil Scholar Department of English Faculty of Languages and Literature University of Central Punjab, Pakistan; ³Associate Professor Department of English Faculty of Languages and Literature University of Central Punjab, Pakistan

^{*1}zoyahanif259@gmail.com; ²zainabtahir219@gmail.com; ³khalid.ahmed@ucp.edu.pk

Corresponding Author: *

Received: 04 February, 2024

Revised: 03 March, 2024

Accepted: 17 March, 2024

Published: 01 April, 2024

ABSTRACT

Studies have indicated that learning English as a second language requires a strong foundation in one's mother tongue. Learners are more likely to succeed in acquiring a second language as beginners if they have a solid foundation in their first tongue and they use it as a meta data to learn English. The present research will look into the significant impact of mother tongue proficiency to learn English Language. The results show that for bilingual learners, immersive learning is quite helpful, particularly in terms of language acquisition. It might be helpful for language learners to organize and understand new material by using their mother tongue as a resource. Additionally, when teaching a second language, the cultural aspects associated with mother tongue use can be effectively utilized. In order to overcome obstacles and advance bilingual education, parental involvement in maintaining the mother tongue as their children acquire English as a second language might be beneficial.

Keywords:

Mother tongue, Second language, Bilingual learners, Acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

Mother tongue is an integral component of his social, cultural, and personal identity. A child should be able to communicate in their mother tongue, which is their home language, before beginning school. The sense of identity we acquire from speaking our mother tongue is what keeps us in good social standing when it comes to speaking and acting. According to Salami (2002), society finds it distinctive and appealing to acknowledge the usage of mother tongue for linguistic expressions due to the diversity of social origins. The mother tongue is a vital tool for the advancement of human education's intellectual, physical, and moral facets. The mother tongue shapes and molds behaviors, attitudes, virtues, customs, and beliefs, among other things. Additionally, studies support the idea that bilingual and multilingual education are best served by having children study in their mother tongue (Shin, 2008). It has been observed that a number of interdependent elements have a role in children's ability to successfully retain their mother tongue while

learning other languages. The mother tongue is categorized as L1 in linguistic descriptions, while other languages, such as English, are categorized as L2.

It is impossible to overstate the value of learning the English language as a foundation for competence in other spheres of life. Knowledge is crucial for a nation's economic, educational, and national progress. The official language of business and administration is English. It is the primary scientific language. Above all, Salami (2002) had underlined how crucial it is to use English to enhance communication between the nation's numerous ethnic groupings.

Urdu is considered as the mother tongue in Pakistan. This is because the mother tongue is a language which is used commonly used in community as a mother tongue.

The choice of words and expression carry different aspects and meanings across culture and it happens where one language asking the direct question and it

considered intrinsic in other language. This normally the language that the child speaks at home with their families. Some children mostly grow up with mixed race parents household and those living in abroad. They get a chance to learn more about the language used by they reach the school. And that of their mother tongue most commonly spoke at home.

According to studies, a student must get six to eight years of instruction in a language in order to acquire the reading and speech skills needed for success in secondary school. Children whose mother tongue is not the medium of instruction need to have the following in order to preserve it: Ongoing formal instruction in their first language to improve reading and writing skills; Ongoing interaction with their family and community in their first language on increasingly complex topics that go beyond household matters; and exposure to supportive parental views toward the preservation of the mother language, both as a symbol of cultural identity and for specific functional goals (such as prosperity in the regional or international economy).

Literature review:

The role of the mother tongue in second language learning is multifaceted and widely researched topic. Several studies have publicized that a strong foundation in the mother tongue can aid the acquisition of a second language, particularly in terms of literacy skills. Parents can hold up their children's second language learning by engage in activities such as reading and telling stories in the mother tongue. Furthermore, the mother tongue is considered to be decisive for cognitive development, allowance as a foundation upon which a second language can be built. Research also suggests that allowing students to use their mother tongue in the second language classroom can have a positive impact on learning, as it enables them to check their understanding and express themselves more unsurprisingly.

However, the use of the mother tongue in second language learning is a topic of deliberate, as some argue that excessive dependence on the mother tongue may get in the way the development of the second language. Therefore, while the mother tongue can be a valuable resource in second language learning, its use in the classroom should be carefully considered and balanced.

The learners' pronunciation and intonation of the target language might also be influenced by their

mother tongue. For example, learners could find it challenging to produce sounds or intonation patterns that are not characteristic of their mother tongue. Communication problems and trouble understanding the target language may result from this.

The development of efficient language teaching techniques that take into consideration the learners' mother tongue is essential to overcoming these obstacles. This can involve incorporating the learners' mother tongue into the learning process and using information and resources that are appropriate for their language and culture.

Overall, the literature review on the responsibility of the mother tongue in second language learning highlights its significance in facilitating language acquisition, but also emphasizes the need for a unbiased approach to its use in educational settings.

Learning a second language is frequently hampered by incomplete first language proficiency. According to Cummins (2000), children's mother tongue growth is a reliable indicator of how well they would develop in a second language. Concepts and literacy abilities learned in the mother tongue can be transferred to the second language. Furthermore, research has shown a strong association between reading proficiency in one's mother tongue and reading success in a second language later on (Koda,2005). To put it briefly, encouraging the growth of one's mother tongue fosters the development of learning a second language. The majority of students transfer knowledge from their mother tongue or native language to their second language, and this transfer can have both positive and bad effects. When the meaning of the transferred objects aligns with the native speakers' perception of acceptability, positive transfer takes place. Errors originate from negative transfer, which happens when the reverse occurs. When the gap between two languages is large, negative transfer occurs on a larger scale. The rate at which a student picks up a foreign language is influenced by the similarities and differences in word meanings and word forms (Odlin T, 1989: 77). People feel more secure when they utilize their native language, which makes learning easy and comfortable for them.

When people work in groups, they will talk in their mother tongue, which supports social and cognitive functioning. They are able to connect and feel like they belong because of this. The Federal Ministry of Education, in collaboration with other educational

statutory agencies, recognized the value of mother tongue education and included it in the National Policy on Education, which was published in 1977 and revised in 1981. Section 3(xx) of the policy stated that "Government will ensure that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community."

As a result, the mother tongue is a component of a nation's culture; it transmits or conveys culture and is subject to attitudes and beliefs that are shaped by culture (Awoniyi, 1975). The successful outcomes of the Mother Tongue Medium experiment in universities and colleges provided empirical evidence of the significant benefits of mother tongue instruction for academic achievement in primary education (Bamgbose, 1984) and even for the successful acquisition of English as a second language. There exist additional elements that are contributing to the subpar performance of kids in English language schools. The other problems include inadequate teaching strategies, a dearth of textbooks, linguistic background, and a lack of opportunities for teachers' professional development. Overall, pupils' performance in the English language is low, and if the underlying causes are not addressed promptly, the quality of education will rapidly deteriorate.

Methodology:

There are various methodologies for learning a mother tongue, including the Direct Method, Grammar-Translation, Audio-Lingual, Structural Approach, Total Physical Response (TPR), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-based language learning, deductive approach, inductive approach, and ordinary Approach. The Direct Method focuses on pronunciation and grammar rules, while Grammar-Translation focuses on translation and oral ability. Audio-Lingual theory emphasizes acquiring habits through dialogues. The Structural Approach views language as a complex set of grammatical rules. The Natural Approach prioritizes understanding messages in the foreign language without focusing on error correction or conscious learning of grammar rules. The deductive method emphasizes grammar as the foundation for learning the language, while the inductive approach puts the learner first

Research questions:

- 1: Does mother tongue interfere second language learning?
- 2: Can mother tongue be used as valuable resource in English as second language learning?

Results and Discussions

The process of learning a second language is psychological. The learner naturally succeeds in picking up the first language. Because the pupils are uninterested in learning a new language, the learner may not succeed in acquiring it. The teacher can pique student's attention while emphasizing the value of learning a second language.

English is by far the most common language learned as a second language. In 2023 near 1.5 billion people learn English as a second language in worldwide. In recent searches near 231.3 million people speak Urdu in different countries. The most effective way to learn a language is naturally. The learner must exert more effort when learning a new language in order to overcome their learning handicap. They might be involved in the psychological process of acquisition when acquiring is prioritized over linguistic learning. Many people wish to make contributions to science but are unable to do so due to their limited English proficiency.

Funding organizations could assist by putting in terms encourage visiting researchers to hire locals, regardless of their level of English proficiency. Locals have a deeper understanding of the issue than a scientist who has never visited the region, and knowledge is important regardless of whether it is communicated in Urdu or English.

The curriculum emphasizes that while if mother tongue and foreign languages are taught as separate courses, they should work together to support a more general educational objective: the formation of global citizenship. Developing understanding of the nature of languages, language learning procedures, communication, and culture, as well as the capacity to engage in and communicate across cultural boundaries, are the combined contributions of all 1 language courses towards this aim.

We believe that the new curriculum highlights how pertinent our study topic is. Teachers of languages must cope with basic inquiries like: What is a language? What is proficiency in a language? What does it mean to develop linguistic competence? But these days, a rekindled interest in the partnership isn't limited to either the psycholinguistics issue or to

studies looking into the ways mother tongue affects learning a foreign language. The underlying presumption is that there is conscious or unconscious mutual impact. In addition to finding connections between the mother tongue and the foreign language, we will be forced to reevaluate our conceptions of language and how it is learned and developed if we choose to view the student's text as manifestations of the struggle to create meaning rather than just as a display of proficiency in grammar structures and vocabulary.

English as a second or foreign language is the use of English by speakers with different native languages. Instruction in languages for those who are learning The terms English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English as a foreign language (EFL), English as an additional language (EAL), and English as a second language (ESL) can all be used to refer to English.

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), teaching English as a second language (TESL), or teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) are terms used to describe the process of teaching ESL. In technical terms, teaching English to foreigners in a nation where English is not the official language is known as TEFL, teaching English to nativity actuality, though, the entire discipline tends to use each of these phrases more broadly. In the UK, TEFL is more popular than TESL or TESOL in the US. The English language is taught all over the world and has a huge influence and reach. In nations where English is not commonly spoken as a first language, there are two unique approaches to teaching English: courses for students wishing to relocate to nations where English is the primary language, English speakers is known as TESL, and TESOL encompasses both and other courses for students who desire to learn English for educational, recreational, professional, or international business goals but do not want to relocate. Over time, the disparities between these two approaches to English language instruction have widened, leading educators who specialize in each model to adopt distinct lingo, acquire distinct educational backgrounds, and establish distinct professional associations. Since students in one class may speak multiple native languages, teaching English as a second language to recent immigrants to English-speaking nations presents unique obstacles.

Mother tongue has a major influence on how well children acquire their language skills. From an early age, children acquire their mother tongue, which is vital to their overall development. A youngster who is proficient in their mother tongue gains cultural connections, improves cognitive development, and facilitates language acquisition in other languages.

Children who get instruction in their mother tongue are more likely to comprehend the content being presented by teachers, which encourages them to participate more actively in class activities and learn more. Furthermore, it has been discovered that teaching social studies to students in their mother tongue raises their exam scores. Additionally, teaching early literacy acquisition processes in the mother tongue promotes functioning.

A child's mother tongue can alter their pronunciation, fluency, and capacity to focus on stress, intonation, and pronunciation, all of which can have an impact on their acquisition of a second language. Because they do not conform to the cultural norms of the target language, the cultural characteristics associated with the mother tongue can occasionally make learning English as a second language difficult. Although the learner's L1 can be a useful tool for learning English, it can also cause problems because the student may unintentionally rely too much on their L1 when thinking and speaking in the target language.

The best resource that individuals have when learning a foreign language is their mother tongue, which offers a Language Acquisition Support System. It is impossible to dispute English's significance in the modern era. One of the best second languages in the world is English. The language of science, technology, industry, international politics, and diplomacy has become global. The expected number of individuals who speak English as their official language is 1.4 billion. More than 1500 million people who are not native speakers speak it. It is said that three out of every four English speakers are not native speakers. In Pakistan, elementary and high schools are required to offer English as a subject. It is regarded as a source of a distinguished and prosperous future. Mother tongue usage coexists with English usage. Their impact on English language acquisition is therefore irrefutable. It is noteworthy that the majority of the languages spoken in Pakistan, such as Urdu, Punjabi, and Saraiki, are members of the Indo-European language family. English belongs to the same family. Between

50 and 75 million "marginalized" children do not attend school worldwide. Youngsters who struggle in the early grades or who do not speak their native tongue as their primary language in school are more likely to drop out.

Studies have indicated that a child's mother tongue is the best language for learning and literacy in elementary school. Many educational systems around the world insist on the exclusive use of one or often multiple privileged languages, despite mounting evidence to the contrary and parental demand. This entails removing youngsters who speak different languages along with them. It is easy to see all that is at risk: parents choosing not to enroll their kids in school at all; kids struggling to participate in learning activities; teachers feeling overburdened by kids' lack of participation; early memories of school failure, and so on. Some kids do succeed, maybe with the aid of a language transition program that makes it easier for them to pick up the instruction language. However, there is a chance that youngsters won't develop into linguistically proficient members of their families and communities and won't be able to maintain a connection to their cultural background.

Future scope:

In diverse teaching and learning situations, questions regarding the most significant outcomes and the most effective ways to measure them need to be investigated. In light of its possible advantages and disadvantages, the future scope may include additional research into the most sensible and successful methods for integrating the mother tongue into English language instruction. It has been demonstrated that mother language instruction has a favorable impact on English instruction and learning, and it is seen as a promising avenue for a distinguished future.

Conclusion:

In applied linguistics, the importance of mother tongue in foreign language acquisition has long been a hot topic. The majority of L2 researchers today concur that L1 influences SLA in some way. Regarding the article system, some linguists contend that it is nearly hard for learners whose L1 does not include the article system to fully acquire it (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen 1982). According to previous researches, students who excel in their mother tongue are more likely to succeed in learning a second

language because it gives them a solid foundation for learning new languages and enhances their capacity to understand linguistic nuances, which is necessary for efficient communication. It has been demonstrated that the mother tongue has a good impact on English instruction and learning, and it is regarded as a source of a distinguished and bright future. In light of its possible advantages and disadvantages, the future scope may include additional research into the most sensible and successful methods for integrating the mother tongue into English language instruction. Essentially, learning English as a second language involves a dynamic and context-dependent use of one's mother tongue.

References:

- Abbas, I., Ahmed, K., Habib, M. A. (2022). Conversation Analysis: A Methodology for Diagnosing Autism. *Global Language Review*, VII(II), 1-12.
- jmal, M., Anwar, B., Ahmed, K., Hussain, A., Butt, B. (2021). Representation of Body in Postcolonial and Eco-critical context in Annie John by Jamaica Kincaid. *Psychology and Education*, 58(2), 3226-3230.
- Ahmed, K., Zahra, F. T., Amin, T., & Khan, N. A. (2023). Voices from the world: An analysis of discourse fragments from world leaders on Covid-19. *Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies*, 1(4), 783-820.
- Ali, I. & Ahmed, K. (2019). A Study of the ESL Students' Motivational Orientations: A Case of Public and Private Schools. *European online journal of natural and social sciences*, 8(1), 188-198.
- Amanat, A., Ahmed, K., Siddiq, S. (2022). A Gender Based Study of Teaching BS (English). *Harf-O-Sukhan*, 6(1), 304-312.
- Atkinson, D. (1987). The mother tongue in the classroom: A neglected resource? *English Language Teaching Journal*, 41 (4), 241-247.
- Ahmed, K., Ali, S., Khan, A. (2023). ESP Needs Analysis of Productive Skills: A Case Study of Engineering Students. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review (PLHR)*, 7(3), 800-812. [https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2023\(7-III\)69](https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2023(7-III)69)
- Butt, B., Ahmed, K., Ali, H. (2022). Operationalizing the Syntactic Complexity: A Corpus Based Evaluation of Online Newspaper Editorials. *Hayatian Journal of Linguistics and Literature*, 6(1), 69-86.
- Butt, B., Ahmed, K. Naila Naz. (2020). Power and Politeness: A Study of Female Faculty Interaction in College Result Meeting. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology*, 18(1), 970-983.

- Crystal, David (2008). A Dictionary of Linguistics and phonetics. 6 the ed. Malden: Blackwell.
- Dulay, H., Burt, M. and Krashen, S.D. (1982) Language Two. Newbury House, Rowley.
- Farooq, M., Ahmed, K. (2021). Introducing Self-Assessment for Evaluating Learners in Pakistan. *Global Social Sciences Review*, V(IV), 120-136.
- Habib, M., A Saeed, M., Asif, M., Ahmed, K. (2020). A study of Pronunciation variations among rural and urban learners of English. *Jahan-e-Tahqeeq*, 3(3), 47-57.
- Khaleel, B., Ahmed, K., Shah, S. S. A. (2023). Critical Discourse Analysis of Pakistani Inheritance Law and Justice System for Women. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review (PSSR)*, 7(3) 87-100. [https://doi.org/10.35484/psr.2023\(7-III\)08](https://doi.org/10.35484/psr.2023(7-III)08)
- Nawaz, M., Ahmed, K. (2021). A Genetic Feminist Study of Selected Works from Bapsi Sidhwa. *Harf-O-Sukhan*, 5(3), 510-519.
- Nisar, M., Ahmed, K., Asif, M. (2023). The influence of Cultural Differences on Persuasive Writing Styles in Pakistani and Chinese EFL Learners. *Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies*, 2(2), 205-226. <https://jals.miard.org/index.php/jals/article/view/19>
- Odlin, T. (1989). Language Transfer: Cross-Linguistic Influence in Language Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524537>
- Ranjha, I., M. Jahan, K. Ahmed, K. (2020). Stylistic Analysis of Surah Al-Nass. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 4(2), 1-11. [http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2020\(4-II\)1.1](http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2020(4-II)1.1)
- Ruba, A., Abdullah, F., Ahmed, K., Basharat, A. (2021). Online Learning Experience and Challenges of Undergraduate Students During COVID-19. *Journal of English Language, Literature and Education (JELLE)*, 3(1), 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.54692/jelle.2021.030164>
- Shaukat, R., Ahmed, K., Waseem, F. (2023). Visual and Emotional Approach in Social Media COVID-19 Cancer Posts. *International Journal of Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences*, 2(3), 401-412. <https://ijciss.org/index.php/ijciss/article/view/76>
- Taskeen, S., & Ahmed, K. (2023). Exploring the Relationship between Learning Styles and Writing Competence of Pakistani ESL Learners: Implications for Instruction and Assessment. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology*, 20(2), 1801-1814.
- Wasim, M., Ahmed, K., & Habib, M. A. (2023). Critical Discourse Analysis of Pakistani and Indian News on Pulwama Attack. *Annals of Human and Social Sciences*, 4(3), 96-110. [https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2023\(4-III\)10](https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2023(4-III)10)