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**PARALINGUISTIC FACTORS AFFECTING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Сontextual factors of variation in language acquisition include ethnic, national or international background (large culture) and any cohesive social grouping, however small (small culture) [1]. It also concerns a foreign language learning environment. According to Kramsh [8,p.6], culture refers to that which has been grown and groomed (from the Latin *colere* ”to cultivate”) and includes social, historical, and imaginative aspects.

 Culture plays a vital role in the formation of the individual’s personality and learning processes [10]. Saleh [11], using results from a university study of language learners, asserted that individualism/collectivism (I/C) and cultural tolerance of ambiguity (TOA) affect language learning, mediated by personality types. Individualistic cultures, such as the USA and Western Europe, emphasize loose social ties, autonomy, confrontation, right to privacy, and personal goals, while collectivist cultures (China and Japan) create strong cohesive in-groups with group norms, that value non-confrontation, collaboration, and strong hierarchies and rules.

Large culture and small culture frequently intersect. Students’ large-cultural beliefs influence and sometimes limit language achievement in small-cultural university classrooms. Culturally influenced teacher beliefs influence learner beliefs and language learning strategy use. Unspoken or misunderstood differences between teacher beliefs and learner beliefs in a specific classroom can cause difficulties and frustration [2]. Fortunately, culturally influenced beliefs of teachers and learners can be modified through in-depth discussion and other activities, and such alterations can change behavior in the language classroom.

Voices from the language classroom [1] reveal the importance of the classroom as a small culture. Other small cultures for language development might include informal or “street” learning and self-access centers. Learners from many countries described their language teachers in metaphoric ways, with categories of metaphors such as Teacher as Hanging Judge, Entertainer, Co-learner, Prophet, Babysitter and Absentee. Analysis according to intimacy and power themes produced three general teaching approaches (autocratic, democratic/participatory, and laisser-faire). Narratives showed rejection of the first and third approaches and pleasure with the second.

A foreign language (FL) environment is a location where the target language (EFL – as English example) is not the main vehicle of ordinary communication and where input in this language is consequently limited. In foreign language settings, the target language is often taught academically, as a subject to be memorized for tests, rather than as a communication tool, and therefore many foreign language learners have low motivation and poor performance [7].

Among individual student characteristics stylistic factors come first. The term *styles* refer to general approaches to learning or problem solving, as part of the larger issue of coping with everyday life. Brain hemisphericity, learning styles, and personality types are in this category.

 *Brain hemisphericity* (brain dominance)is the tendency of an individual to process information mainly through either the left hemisphere or the right hemisphere of the brain. Brain activity within and across the two hemispheres is complex, because a) one hemisphere can sometimes take over certain functions if the other hemisphere is damaged, and b) gender differences exist in overall brain lateralization (women are more bilateral) and in the corpus callosum, the connective hemisphere –linking brain tissue (which is thicker in women, allowing greater information transfer across hemispheres) [2].

 However, some universal generalizations are possible. Both hemispheres carry out the same tasks in different styles: sequential for the left hemisphere and parallel for the right one. Left-hemispheric dominant individuals are more analytic, verbal, linear, logical, and rational learners, whereas, right-hemispheric dominant individuals are more integrative, imagistic (through the visual, tactile, kinesthetic, and auditory senses), nonlinear, intuitive, and emotional learners. *Brain hemisphericity* greatly influences learning styles, academic achievement, and choice of academic major and career path.

*Learning styles,* such as sensory preferences and field independence (FI) versus field dependence (FD), are the general approaches students use to learn any subject, including another language [6].Learning style consists of distinctive behaviours, which serve as indicators of how a person learns from and interacts with his or her environments. Taking learning styles into consideration can increase language achievement [10].

*Sensory preferences* include visual, kinesthetic, and tactile, the last two of which are sometimes clusters into the hand-on style [5, p.12]. Visual students enjoy reading, video, computers, pictures, and written classroom instructions and dislike lectures that lack visual support*. Auditory* students enjoy purely oral directions, lectures, conversations, and debates. *Hands-on* learners like movement, tangible objects, collages and physical models.

The best known system of *personality types* is found in the Myers – Briggs Type Indicator, or MBTI [9, p.25], which contains four dimensions: extroverted/introverted, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving. The resulting matrix categorizes individuals into sixteen types. *Extroverts* gain energy from working with others, while *introverts* gain energy from working alone or with a trusted friend. *Sensing-oriented* individuals are realistic, practical, and fact-oriented, whereas intuitive individuals are imaginative, futuristic, and theory oriented. *Thinking-oriented* individuals concern themselves with impersonal analysis and logic, while *feeling-oriented* individuals are more emotional and overtly compassionate. *Judging-oriented* people like structure and rapid judgments, while *perceiving-oriented* individuals are spontaneous and dislike quick decisions.

Cognitive and affective factors include motivation, self-referential judgments, anxiety, and language learning strategies. Each of these is a clear source of variation in language acquisition. Clement, Dornyei, and Noels [3, p. 430] identified five EFL motivational orientations:

1. To make friends and travel.
2. To identify with a target language group.
3. To know various peoples, cultures and world events.
4. To advance academically or professionally.
5. To understand English-language media.

Students strongly supported all except the second factor; they were not particularly interested in integrating into Anglophone cultures. This model contains three levels. *The language level* reflects cultural-affective, intellectual, and pragmatic values, associated with a target language and has two subsystems: integrative and instrumental. *The learner level* concerns fairly stable personality traits of the learner. Such as linguistic self-confidence and need for achievement. *The learning situation level* reflects situation-specific motives and includes course-, teacher-, and group- specific components.

A model by Crookes and Schmidt [4, p.477] contains the following: (a) inters, (b) relevance, (c) expectancy of success, (d) outcomes, (e) decision to engage in learning, (f) persistence, and (g) high activity level. Tremblay and Gardner [13, p.516] developed a highly complex, empirically derived model of language learning motivation.

*Self-referential* judgments, such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, are judgments the learner makes about herself or himself. Attributions and locus of control are also important.

*Self-esteem* is a judgment of one’s own personal worth or value. *Global self-esteem* arises when the person is around the mental age of eight and is based on two factors: (a) self-perceptions of competence in broad areas, such as academics, sports, social interaction, or physical appearance, and (b) a personal assessment of the importance of these areas. *Situational self-esteem* relates to a specific setting, event, or activity type. A foreign language student can feel generally good about himself or herself (global self-esteem) but simultaneously experience low situational self-esteem in a negative language learning environment [10, p.24].

*Self-efficacy* refers to one’s judgments about one’s own ability to succeed on a task or long-term effort. Individuals who doubt their capabilities might slacken their efforts when facing serious difficulties, but those with strong self-efficacy make greater efforts to master challenges.

*Anxiety* can either be a state or a permanent trait of fear or apprehension. With *debilitating anxiety,* motivation suffers, poor performance occurs, and still greater anxiety is aroused, but *facilitating anxiety* stimulates the learner to try harder and perform better. Certain language activities, such as speaking in front of others or writing a paper, can generate anxiety about performance. Other anxiety causing variables are certain classroom structures, perceived irrelevance of the target language, and culture shock. Language anxiety can be reduced through relaxation, humour, discussion, support groups, and other means*.*

*Learning strategies* are steps or operations used by learners to learn more effectively, that is, to facilitate acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information. Learning strategies are linked to learning styles, personality, gender, and culture. O’Malley and Chamot [10] and Oxford [7] presented two detailed classifications of language learning strategies. The first classification contained two major sets of strategies, cognitive (e.g., planning, organizing), and a smaller third set, socio-affective (e.g., asking questions for clarification). Oxford’s classification included cognitive, meta-cognitive, memory-related, social, affective, and compensatory strategies.

Relationships between strategy use and language proficiency were first examined through the “good language learner” investigations, which resulted in general profiles of successful language learners and identified specific patterns of strategy use as success markers. In the 1990s, strategy use was linked to language proficiency in more than thirty studies around the world. [2;10], but the relationships were sometimes highly complex. Effects of learning strategy instruction on both proficiency and self0esteem are the focus of much research [10].

Many demographic factors affect language-learning. Two of these, gender and age, stand out as particularly important and are addressed here.

*Gender* makes a difference at all reference, hence female s are superior in verbal skills, while males superior in spatial skills, and these findings relate to brain functioning. In general, females are slightly more feeling oriented, while males are more thinking oriented [12]. Females enjoy cooperative and social learning, whiles males prefer individual, independent learning. Females use language learning strategies more frequently than males [7, 11].

*Age* is also significant. Singleton and Lengyel [12] attack the critical period hypothesis, which suggests that learning a language at an early age is sufficient or necessary to attain native-like proficiency and that there is an age beyond which learning another language is not fully possible. Although younger learners do have some advantages (fluency and distinction of pronunciation), older learners have other advantages (syntax and morphology). However, many adults and children can become proficient in the target language under the right conditions, perhaps by following different routes.

In conclusion it should be noted that that it’s necessary to know more about our diverse students: their cultures, motivations, styles, strategies, anxiety, and other factors. This information can enable educators to develop new instructional techniques, curricula, and lesson plans to accommodate these variations. Language instruction should begin with an understanding of the ways students learn, and language researches should continue to promote this understanding through well-designed studies.

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