



RESEARCH PAPER

The Role of Parental Income in English Language Learning Proficiency and Anxiety

¹Zohaib Zahid* ²Noor Ul Ain Ashfaq

1. Assistant Professor, Department of English, The Islamia University Bahawalpur sub campus Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab, Pakistan
2. M. Phil Linguistics, Department of English, Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author** zohaib.zahid@iub.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

Socioeconomic factors not only constraints to the economic status only but the other social factors play an equally important role in language learning. The factors are directly proportional to language learning anxiety as the SLL anxiety increased with the higher influence of the social factors. The role of parents' income is the most crucial factor in the process of learning English language as the learners spend most of their time with their parents since childhood. Numerous studies have been conducted on the positive role of the parents resulting in improving the performance of the learners. In this study, the prime focus is to investigate the impact of Parents' income on English Language learning proficiency of the students keeping in view the various dynamics of the society and the importance of the English language provided to the English language in the society. It is a quantitative research based study and the data is collected from various institutes in order to get reliable results. This research will open new horizons including the research on various areas of the Pakistan to understand the impact of the income of the parents on Language Learning proficiency of the learners, the understanding of the government to take sufficient steps to increase the income of the parents to enhance the learning capacity of the learners.

Keywords: Anxiety, English Proficiency, Parental Income, Second Language Learning, Social Factors

Introduction

The socioeconomic factors not only constraints to the economic status only but the other social factors play an equally important role in language learning. The factors are directly proportional to language learning anxiety as the SLL anxiety increased with the higher influence of the social factors.

The socioeconomic factors included in this study are Education, Income, Occupation, Place of Residence & Environment, Culture and ethnicity. These specific factors directly affect the performance of the English language learners. As mentioned above, economic status of the parents play a vital role in the efficiency of the learners in learning a second language but the other factors are equally important in the process of learning English language. English language learners are found anxious when the socioeconomic factors prevails the situation negatively. The tendency of the learners affected by these factors is observed variant in males and females. Gender differences are important in this study as it will make the findings transparent about the inclination of both the genders towards learning English language and the level of anxiety in learning.

The role of parents is the most crucial factor in the process of learning English language as the learners spend most of their time with their parents since childhood. Numerous studies have been conducted on the positive role of the parents resulting in improving the performance of the learners (Emerson, et al, 2012). He further investigated that the performance of the learners enhanced when a link was created between the students with that of teachers and parents. The parents assist their children in every

possible way to overcome their hurdles of life especially in education and language learning. If the parents fail to provide assistance to their children financially or morally, the children will not be in a position to achieve the targets of language learning resulting in enhanced language learning anxiety.

This study has primarily focused on the income of the parents and its impact on second language learning proficiency. The study will explore various aspects of parental income on the performance and learning capacity of the second language learners.

Literature Review

Economic Inequality

The social system of the world is based on the unequal distribution of economics and capital in all the developed and developing countries, present day and ancient times. This inequality of distribution is continuous and persistent throughout human history. The industrial and developed countries can hardly be escaped from this inequality. This theory of inequality was presented by the reproduction theorists including (Bowles and Gintis 1976, Bourdieu 1984, and Willis 1977)

The inequality in education is not a new phenomenon but it is persistent for more than a century. For example. A lot of disparities are observed in Japanese educational system and the phenomenon of inequalities is not a present day scenario but it exists for decades in the social structure of Japan before the time of war. These experimental and theoretical approaches were observed by Hashimoto (2003), Ishida (1993), Kariya (2001, 2009). The findings of these works are evident that the developed countries faced a long way of inequalities in educational approaches and these inequalities are generally based on the different forms of capital. There are various non-English speaking countries where the learners faced problems of inequality to approach ELT as suggested by the reproduction theorists. These problems of ELT are caused by the formal education systems adopted by these countries that results in inequality and disparity of English language learning. The social conditions of these countries also play an important role in creating these inequalities.

Community Cultural Wealth Model

Yosso (2005) represented a community cultural wealth model derived from the critical race theory that counters the discrepancies in model schooling and the communities of color in societies and it proposed that the parents who are from minority class hardly pay serious attention for the education of their children and they even don't support their children to get quality education. This attitude of the parents leads to the shortfalls in results of the students. The cultural assets of the community and the resources are combined together in association of time are included in Yosso's model. Self-improving capital, domestic, resistant, social, linguistic and directional assets and the tasks are included in the capital and assets of Yosso' model. Bourdieu's(1986) finds that the greater valued asset and capital of community is white and middle class but the Color communities are not highly valued in knowledge and capabilities (Yosso, 2005).

Parental Influence

There are four main parental factors that influence the motivation and academic achievement of the students. These four factors are explained by Eccles et al. (2002):

- i. Merits of parental, ancestral/familial and neighborhood
- ii. The beliefs and general behavior of the parents
- iii. The specifies beliefs of the parents about children
- iv. Specified behavior of the parents

Education of the parents, profession, family income, marital status, cultural traditions and number of children are all the factors included in parental, familial and neighborhood merits/characteristics. Locus of control, the styles of caring the children by the parents, beliefs of efficacy, and the beliefs of child-rearing are included in the general beliefs and behaviors of the parents. Almost all the parents have specified beliefs about the abilities of their children and their chances of success are merged under Parents' child specific beliefs. The time of the parents given to the children, strategies adopted to teach the children, guidance about their profession, and motivation to take part in different activities and so on are included in the specific behaviors of the children.

To analyze the learning environment provided by the parents' English support can be used as model that would work as indirect modelling to find the feasibility of the environment created by the parents. These four influential parental factors influence the academic achievement of the students and there exists a fifth factor too. The fifth factor 'Child and Sibling Characteristic' equally plays an important role to influence the academic achievement of the students. The sequence of birth in siblings, personality of all the siblings, gender and the previous performances greatly influence the achievement of the students and their motivation to different levels and degrees (Eccles et al. 2002).

Motivation and Learners Anxiety

'To move' is the meaning of the Latin word 'movere' and motivation is the derivational form of movere (Eccles and Wigfield 2002). The personal interest of an individual to perform an activity is called motivation as defined by Thompson (1995). Self-interest of an individual works as motivational force to indulge the individual in different activities/actions/behavior (Colman 2001, Reber and Reber 2001, Mwamwenda 1996). It is further elaborated by various reserachers that motivation in English learning reduces anxiety of the learners. It helps to sustain the attitude and behavior of the students as it puts energy among the individuals in various ways (Steyn and van Niekerk 2002, Wevers and Steyn 2002). The cognitive process of the learners is the central force of motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). It is not only the behavior that determines the motivation level of the individual but experience and situation of individual are essential variables to determine (Standage and Treasure 2002).

Bourdieu's Capital Theory

The accumulated capital by labor is described by Bourdieu (1984, 1986,1991) with four types that are convertible form one type to another. Highly paid jobs, property and money come under economical capital. Skills, knowledge and educational qualifications come under the cultural capital. There is possibility of conversion of cultural capital into symbolic and economic capital. School and family are the main factors that cause this conversion. Resultantly, the children with high cultural and economic capital get more access to English. Social capital is considered as group membership and social connections according to Bourdieu. Prestige and honor are the symbolic profits of social capital. Symbolic capital can be the combination of social, cultural and economic capital. Stroud (2002) describes that legal and legitimate language is considered as symbolic capital which is linked with the members of community having power and authority gained by language. It is also linked with official and formal activities. English has gained the status of legitimate language that is associated with the financially strong Asian countries. Complex social identity, multiple desires and symbolic resources are included in the investment of English learning (Peirce, 1995).

Hypothesis

The Income of the parents play a vital role in the lives of the people. This socio-economic factor is directly linked with the efficiency of the English language learners in

Pakistan as the performance of the students studying in developed areas and having all the basic facilities of life, are producing better results in learning English language. It is the need of the students to perform better in order to survive in the society with prestige and privilege and to secure better future. It is a general observation that better economic status of the parents provides better opportunities to the learners to gain better English language Proficiency. The role of parents' economic status cannot be ignored in English language learning and many of the researchers have studied the impact of socio economic status on English Language Learning but this study will comprehensively explain the effect of the parents' income that cause anxiety among English language learners.

The researcher has taken the factor of parents' income to study its impact on English language learning anxiety.

Keeping in view the above mentioned statement of the problem or hypothesis, the following are the research objectives of in this study:

Material and Methods

A questionnaire was developed comprising of quantitative research to collect data. The questionnaire consisted of ten closed ended questions. This study was aimed to collect data from ten different universities and colleges of Pakistan. For the convenience of the study, the researcher visited the ten major public sector universities and colleges located in South Punjab The students were randomly selected from the programs of BA (Hons) English and MA English to participate in the study. The data was collected during the peak season of semester studies so that maximum number of students can be engaged to participate in the study.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

Table 1
Questionnaire's Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.827	10

The reliability of the questionnaire was 0.827 which is highly suitable to conduct this research.

Results and Discussion

Ten various statements were addressed in the questionnaire to analyze the impact of parents' income on the learners of the English Language. The detailed frequency, percentage and cumulative percent are given in detail in all the tables.

Table 2
Preference of Financially Strong Families

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	3	.2	.2	.2
	Disagreed	20	1.1	1.1	1.3
	Undecided	3	.2	.2	1.5
	Agreed	438	25.0	25.0	26.5
	Strongly Agreed	1290	73.5	73.5	100.0
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In Table no. 02, high percentage of the students (73.5%) strongly agreed with the first statement of the questionnaire. 25% respondents agreed with the statements. 20% disagreed with the statement and a very low percentage of 2% each for undecided and strongly disagreed. It describes that the economically strong families prefer to send their children to elite schools for better learning of English language as compared to the families with low economic status.

Table 3
Quality of Education and Economic Position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	38	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagreed	156	8.9	8.9	11.1
	Undecided	137	7.8	7.8	18.9
	Agreed	730	41.6	41.6	60.5
	Strongly Agreed	693	39.5	39.5	100.0
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In table 3, 41.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement which is highest. 39.5% 'strongly agreed', 8.9% disagreed, 7.9% remained undecided and 2.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. The response of the students show that the financial position of a family plays a vital role in quality education of the students. The families with better financial position send their children to quality schools that provide Standard English language learning giving them an edge in communication in their college, university and professional life.

Table 4
Quality Education and Parents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	6	.3	.3	.3
	Disagreed	54	3.1	3.1	3.4
	Undecided	45	2.6	2.6	6.0
	Agreed	755	43.0	43.0	49.0
	Strongly Agreed	894	51.0	51.0	100.0
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In Table no. 04, 51%, the highest percentage of the respondents, 'strongly agreed' with the third statement of the questionnaire. 43% 'agreed' with the statement, 3.1% disagreed. 3% 'strongly disagreed' and 2.6% remained undecided. The respondents agreed with statement that their parents desire them to get quality and standard education. Generally, it is strongly believed that the parents pay special attention to provide better education to their children but exceptions are also present in the parents. The care and love of the parents for their children is always at high level

Table 5
Belong to Educated Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	32	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagreed	90	5.1	5.1	7.0
	Undecided	111	6.3	6.3	13.3
	Agreed	738	42.1	42.1	55.4

Strongly Agreed	783	44.6	44.6	100.0
Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In table no. 05, 44.6% of the respondents 'strongly agreed' with the statement making it the highest in percentage. 42.1% 'agreed' with the statement, 6.3% remained undecided, 5.1% disagreed and 1.8% 'strongly disagreed' with the statement. A vast majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that their families are educated but not having communicative skills of English language. In this way, the students hardly get a chance to improve their English communication skills at homes by speaking to their parents. The non-practicing environment of English at homes increases the anxiety level of the students in their process of English language learning. A lot of students fail to continue their studies due to the problems of income and uneducated parents

Table 6
Family Status in the Society

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	9	.5	.5	.5
	Disagreed	35	2.0	2.0	2.5
	Undecided	73	4.2	4.2	6.7
	Agreed	688	39.2	39.2	45.9
	Strongly Agreed	949	54.1	54.1	100.0
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In table no. 6, 54.1% of the respondents 'strongly agreed' with the statement and 39.2% 'agreed' with the statement. 4.2% remained undecided, 2% disagreed and 0.5% 'strongly disagreed' with the statement. The respondents agreed to a greater extent that their parents occupy a good social position in the society which privilege them with sense of honor and respect. This social status of the parents keep the children mentally relaxed. Moreover, the response of the students show that the children love to have their parents occupy a good social status in the society

Table 7
Respect of Educated Families in the Society

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	23	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagreed	180	10.3	10.3	11.6
	Undecided	200	11.4	11.4	23.0
	Agreed	768	43.8	43.8	66.8
	Strongly Agreed	583	33.2	33.2	100.0
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In table no. 07, 43.8% of the respondents 'agreed' with the statement and 33.2% 'strongly agreed'. 11.4% remained undecided, 10.3% 'disagreed' and 1.3% 'strongly disagreed' with the statement. All the respondents who have educated parents agreed with the statement. Generally, the people with better education achievements occupy a good status and honor in the society. The educated parents influence their children to have better opportunities to learn English language. The children with educated parents, hardly feel anxiety in learning English language.

Table 8
Value of Family with English Language Proficiency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	62	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Disagreed	128	7.3	7.3	10.8
	Undecided	166	9.5	9.5	20.3
	Agreed	658	37.5	37.5	57.8
	Strongly Agreed	740	42.2	42.2	100.0
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In Table no. 8, 42.2% respondents 'strongly agreed' and 37.5% 'agreed' with the statement. 9.5% remained undecided, 7.3% 'disagreed' and 3.5% 'strongly disagreed' with the statement. A major portion of the society labels one educated if fluent in English language. Most of the people do not understand English but they value it as elite and the language of educated in Pakistan. There is a very low percentage of the people who are fluent in English language. The children belonging to families with fluency in English language feel less amount of anxiety in language learning.

Table 9
Importance of English Language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	56	3.2	3.2	3.2
	Disagreed	189	10.8	10.8	14.0
	Undecided	194	11.1	11.1	25.0
	Agreed	674	38.4	38.4	63.5
	Strongly Agreed	641	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In table no. 09, 38.4% of the respondents 'agreed' and 36.5% 'strongly agreed' with the statement. 11.8% remained undecided, 10.8% 'disagreed' and 3.2% 'strongly disagreed' with the statement. A number of individuals endeavor to get command on English language skills to maintain a high status in the society. The response of the students show that English language learning is essential to maintain status in society and influence the children to perform better in English language learning. The students feel a high amount of anxiety when the parents are not having sufficient knowledge of English language to communicate.

Table 10
English and Status in Society

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	73	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Disagreed	264	15.1	15.1	19.2
	Undecided	288	16.4	16.4	35.6
	Agreed	724	41.3	41.3	76.9
	Strongly Agreed	405	23.1	23.1	100.0
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In table 10, 41.3% of the respondents 'agreed' and 23.1% 'strongly agreed' with the statement. 16.4% remained undecided, 15.1% disagreed and 4.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. There is a mix response about this statement as there are many poor students

who learn English Language to secure good jobs and survive at job places. Overall, a majority of respondents agreed with the statement as they endeavor to get and maintain high status in society and it is believed that the knowledge of English language is essential to maintain status in society.

Table 11
Learning English for Communication

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	31	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagreed	88	5.0	5.0	6.8
	Undecided	157	9.0	9.0	15.7
	Agreed	745	42.5	42.5	58.2
	Strongly Agreed	730	41.6	41.6	99.8
	Total	1754	100.0	100.0	

In table no. 11, 42.5% of the respondents 'agreed' and 41.6% 'strongly agreed' with the statement. 9% remained undecided, 5% disagreed and 1.8% strongly disagreed with the statement. The large percentage of the respondents agreed with the statement that they learn English language to communicate in it. This response of the students cause greater amount of anxiety among the learners as the teaching methodologies adopted in BS, BA and MA English focus to keep the students learn the literature and linguistics of English and there is hardly any concentration paid on the development of language skills. The lack of language skills keep the learners away from communication and their anxiety level kept on increasing.

Discussion

The quantitative data depicts that a majority of the learners are satisfied with the position of their parents in the society. Contented with the status of the parents is natural and religion is also a decisive factor for this positive attitude. On the other side, the position and status of the parents is required to make the children fluent in English. The higher income of the parents leads to better socioeconomic status of the family. SES plays an important role since the childhood of the learners because the economically sound families send their children to elite private schools. The children who join elite private schools, feel no hesitation in learning of English language due to the appropriate method of language teaching adopted in those schools. At university level, as the present study conducted, most of the students belong to middle class families because the study is conducted in public sector universities and the elite do not recommend their children to join public sector universities. The most of the students join public sector universities belong to middle and lower middle class families. The anxiety of the learners keep on increasing in learning English at university level as they get first proper chance to learn English since their childhood and they find it difficult to communicate in it. As the income of the parents increase, the language learning anxiety of the learners reduces.

Conclusion

The economic condition of the parents highly influence the English language learning of the parents. The study has also observed 'unlike other studies' that there are students who perform well although they belong to low SES families. The students take the low SES as challenge and determined to achieve the goals within the given circumstances. There exists a higher value of socioeconomic status and it has to be taken seriously in all the language achievements of the students. SES has strong effect on the motivation of the students. The role of SES turns to be critical when the students from low SES backgrounds have less tendency to positive beliefs about learning English as compared to the learners

with high SES who possess positive beliefs about learning English. There is least impact of SES observed on emotional arousal.

Recommendations

1. A national level campaign should be launched to spread awareness of the acute need of learning English language and its global acceptance. The people should be informed about its learning benefits and the focus of the campaign should be the parents and family heads. TV, radio and social media sites can be used to spread the message of the importance of English. People should be informed to learn the communication skills of English. This campaign would help all those who suffer from anxiety in learning English. The contents of the campaign should address the problems of English language learning and the methods to overcome these issues.
2. The income of all the parents should be increased by the government who get low salaries. The government can also offer need based scholarship for all the lower middle class deserving students. The scholarships would lessen the burden of the parents and the students would be in a position to fulfil all their requirements of learning English without putting financial burden on their parents. The policy of the government would be helpful for the students to avoid a significant level of anxiety caused by the low income of parents.
3. Seminars should be arranged to explain all the aspects of anxiety and its possible ways to impede the progress of learning English. A course should be introduced in the very beginning of every English course with the contents to avoid all those moves that cause anxiety in learning English.

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