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**Exploring Individual Differences Among Second Language Learners In
Esl Classrooms At Sbbu Sba: A Case Study Of Undergraduate Students**



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Abstract

This article is about the individual differences among ESL Learners at SBBU SBA. Knowing about the differences among learners has remained as topic of debate since last many decades. It has been discussed that students are the result of many remote areas and similarly at the same time they possess different cultural, moral, ethical, religious and other various kinds of backgrounds which have their own impact on the learner's personality. These all types of differences create individuality among the language learners. To know more about these individual differences this study is conducted within the premises of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shaheed Benazir Abad. Current paper is qualitative in nature to investigate about the individual differences in second language learning in ESL classrooms at SBBU SBA. The core issue behind this investigation is to know about the judgment of individual differences and their management for learning purpose. Moreover, it is to say that what strategies and styles are adopted for this aim.

Keywords: Individual Differences, ESL Learners, SBBU SBA

Introduction

Individual differences among second language learners at SBBU SBA

It is the Almighty who created human being with the variations. This variation can be in the terms of nature, habits, qualities, similarities, dissimilarities, knowledge, power, wisdom, wit, learning or intelligence. These things are commonly differ from one to another and this variation brings changes. Among these above mentioned variations language learning difference in individuals is also remarkable. The competence of language learning consists on several parameters which are handled by the nature or sized by the cultivated forces. It is a language that cannot be learnt equally by all the learners at the same situations, the reason behind their language learning difference is the multidimensional background, which consist of their lingual, cultural, motivational, traditional, age, sex, cognitive style, learning techniques, personality, religious, moral, ethical, educational, institutional, gender, societal and habitual differences among one another. These factors play vital role in their language learning process. It is quite vivid description that some nonnative learners quickly achieve native speaker's competence and their utterances of pronunciation is comparable to the native speakers, while on the other hand the same nonnative learners are quite lacked in terms knowledge as well as in the accent.

Objectives:

To know about the individual differences in second language learning at SBBUSBA

To investigate about the impact of individual differences in ESL classrooms at SBBU SBA

Research Questions

What type of individual differences are there among second language learners at SBBU SBA?

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How does individual differences impact on ESL learners in second language learning at SBBU SBA?

Literature Review

Individual differences in second language learning

Age

Age is the key factor of language acquisition. Is it true that children are successful language learners as compare to the adults? This question will earn many 'yes' comments. Saville-Troike (2006) has advised us about pre supposed ideas of language learners and said that one should highlight the term "success" (89). She is of the view that success as the starting or zero point ratio of learning others say about "success" that how close learners way of pronunciation is with the native speakers, others define about the approximation of grammatical competence to the native speakers. She furthers says that the evaluative principals must be in the mind while the judgment of different respected views of the scholars about success.

It is discussed that there is a certain age limit for children in the acquiring process of first language. These new learners have some years for learning a language in which ordinary language learning chances are findable. After that brain start its smoothness loose and to guess the new language learning stains. Individuals are changed in the criteria of their first languages so the results are astonishingly variable. Saville-Troike (2006).

Sex

Gender itself is discussed as an independent variable in language learning. Many studies have been conducted throughout the world and especially for Oxford 1993, Young and Oxford have seen it as having a greater impact in the field of language acquisition. Still it is researched by the scholars which is at early stages (Bacon & Finneman, 1992; Oxford, 1993; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995) Female participants of L2 learner are more positive and serious in language learning as compare to the opposite gender, female have more potentials and wider range of techniques which they use to accomplish their target of language learning (Oxford, Nyikos & Ehrman, 1988). Larsen Freeman and Long have discussed that female gender is quick respondent, excel powerful strategies in language acquisition and at least cross them at the early stages which is their positive point. Zhuanglin (1989) had a glance on the issue of male and female differences in the field of language acquisition. He discusses that both gender are unique in inborn qualities of language acquisition but after that female are fast learners to speak first language than the cross matched gender with its grip on speaking commands. Females are more active learners in all the fields of language learning except one which listening lexicon (Boyle, 1987).

Aptitude

Skehan, (1989) ability is associated with the L2 success which is considered as the super examined area of SLA. To conduct examiner test for the evaluation of second language learner test pattern like TOEFL/ IELTS are used to explore the qualities of students in the field of second language acquisitioned skills. Carroll (1963) with Sapon designed a new category MLAT modern language aptitude test for the predicted victory of language learner and has given four sort of skills to comprise aptitude. Many scholars suggest that aptitude itself is not much enough to judge the

skills of language learners because of its variation background factors which are varies from learner to learner, like personality, patterns or style and motivational force before considering them in to account. Skehan (1989) added that language learning aptitude" is not entirely different from other universal psychological talents which are represented by the intellectual test, but it is on the wider range of same thing". In addition, aptitude does not recognize or elaborate the motives or causes behind it but only can forecast about the success of language acquisition.

Motivation

I the study of second language acquisition motivation is considered as the basic pillar of success. Gardner (1985) says, Motivation + attempt = will power to achieve destiny + behavior are interconnected elements which support t learn language with ease. Saville Troike (2006) argues that the key factor behind the successful language learning process is the motivational power which is the second strengthen forecasted element in L2 learning. Moreover, it is said by the Saville Troike that motivation abundantly establish the altitude which learners spend at different phases in their second language learning growth parameters mostly a major definitive grade of expertise. Scholars have categorized the types of motivation like **Gardner and Lambert (1972)** says 1) **integrative**: it is findable in those who are wanted or seeker of second language learners so that they can assimilate and exist in the part of society/ culture their focus is to stand like that proper targeted group of people so that they may resemble to that particular community. 2) **Instrumental**: it can be originated in an individual who are seeking to learn second language with the motive of receiving benefit from the second language skill. Objectives like, to extend their business purpose advantages, professional enhancement, training achievement, educational betterment, academic goals, traditional and religious publicity etc. in this case of language earning individuals can be inspired.

Both types of motivations are influential on each other and play their significant role accordingly towards the successful destination .Saville-Troike (2006) says that there are infinite researches conducted on the motivation but the correspondence of motivation and second language learning achievements are presented as the sturdy one but still it is not decided that whether achievement takes to the motivation or the result is vice versa.

Learning Styles

Language learning patterns describes the mental, psychological, behavioral differences in second language learning. This method concern with ways of developing, managing, conceptualizing and memorizing information about second language learning.

Learning behaviors are generally directed by the universal directions which are totally given same patterns for second language learning/ acquisition Cornett (1983). Brown says that age, aptitude, motivation like factors this learning style some L2 learners are quick, sharp, and more successful than others because of the connection to the social interaction with good advanced learners and social learning context.

Personality

This world possesses a huge amount of various personalities in all shapes and colors. More than 150 years personality of human being studied as the core issue of human

psychology. Famous psychologists scholars like Frued, Skinner and Allprt have focused their studies on human personality and their tendencies. in SLA personality is remained as the subjects for well-known scholars like Krashen (1985), Skehan (1989) Gass and Selinker, (1994), in this regard on should agree with Ehrman (1996) he proposed that personality and SLA has an intimate relationship between one another because personality describes about one's choice what is comfortable for his/ her. Resultantly people choose that way in which what people will be feeling comfortable for given skills (p.101). In this regard second language learners will select strategies according to his her bent of personality. Personality characteristics affected on L2 learners.

Extroversion vs. introversion

Self worth

Complexity

Embarrassment

Above discussed differences are reviewed on the bases on individual differences. In addition, Altman(1980) proposes his past experiences about language learning , that gender of the learner, fluency in the native language and sensitive modality favor as well as societal setup favor to which he indicate social exercise of ideas in the given society, (whether in groups, individual, or community).

Learning strategies

Learning styles and learning strategies are mostly seen as co-relative and having a wider influence on each other. Styles are made for the manifestation of learning strategies to build up the confidence, behavior, and positive actions towards the motivational powers of second language learners. Until it is considered in the given context none of the strategy is good or bad because of its positive or negative impact on L2 acquiring process of students. Successful strategies are considered good under these conditions, (a) the strategy matches with L2 learners given target at the hand, (b) strategy is useful for the preference of particular students learning style to one grade to another and one degree to another (c) Students relates one strategy to another with efficient use of other strategies. These sort of strategies which fulfill all conditions of learners make learner autonomous, independent, motivated, fast learners, talented, confidence builder and strategies are more effective to learners making them more enjoyable, successful and predicted learner of the second language (Oxford, 1990.p.8) (Allwright, 1990;Little,1991).

In addition, Naiman et.al (1978) he gives some points about the learner differences in the context of second language learning. (1) Taking an active move to the given target of second language learning, (2) understanding and making use of straight temperament of language , (3) utilizing the language of communicational and interactional tool to generating ideas for the communication, (4) maintaining their personal efficient complications with language acquisition process and (5) looking after of their learning proficiency. Are these points behind the success of a successful learner is a question? Do we have the equal results after adopting same strategies for all the students? Learning is discussed as association between the society and individual. Learning is mentioned as a mechanism of acquiring surroundings. The students' previous knowledge and expertise play a crucial role in generalizing new knowledge about language learning. The base of language learning can be considered as the theoretical work of Piaget's. Acquiring has two phases, assimilation and

adaptation. Learning is an axel of developing information, the consequences which present itself as correspondence between society and one's own personal information. David Kolb (2006), presents two crucial points of language learning: insight and dispensation. These magnitudes are considered as two crisscross points where each point has two sides: insight (knowledge learning) ranges from concrete experiences to unreal or fake past doings which is known as the abstract or un visualized experience. The two points make a four quadrant ground for measuring individual's learning patterns

Individual differences and variables

Verbal ability and gender

Vernon (1961) categorized it in four main types of grounds for study, verbal logic, verbal smoothness, lexicon and secretarial capability. While other scholars like Maccoby (1966) introduces several other appraise and take out the secretarial capability. Maccoby (1966), is of the view that mostly girls are the well performers of verbal activities than the boys mostly throughout the school years they outclass them at a long distance. They are advanced utterances level and pronounce clearly with the correct articulation at the earlier level. Mostly they have short sentences to convey their messages to the audiences as compare to the boys they have long, interconnected and ambiguous sentences that is call their failure. They are quite quick in their speeches as compare to boys. Maccoby (1966), more suggests that at the pre-school days girls and boys mostly come up with almost same vocabulary but after that girls learn vocabulary quickly rather than the boys and boys needs more and more remedial readings for their understanding.

Methods and Procedures

The current study is related to qualitative in nature. To explore the individual differences in second language learning among ESL learners at SBBU SBA researcher has used simple random sampling to collect the data from the participants. The sampling size for data collection were the undergraduate students of the English department of SBBU SBA who are enrolled in 1st and 2nd year graduation degree program. Both male and female students having age between 19 to 21 years old participated actively. The data were collected through semi structured interviews from the participants. The interviews were recorded by the researcher and participants were informed about the ethical consideration protocols that their shared information will not be disclosed to any one as the matter of secrecy. The interview protocols were pilot tested to check the self and expert reliability and validity of the tool. In addition, 08 students were randomly selected 04 boys and 04 girls willingly participated.

Tool

Interviews play a vital role in the domain of qualitative research. It helps the researcher to gain knowledge about the behavior, capabilities, outlooks, and ideas of an individual (Saldana, Leavy & Beretvas, 2011). Semi-structured interviews are guided in that they use a predetermined set of questions and topics to which the interviewees are to reply. The interviewer may ask more questions, depending on the flow of the interview (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 123). A semi structured interviews were conducted with the participants. Their interviews were recorded by the researcher. All the participants were informed about the purpose of interview

recording and the sole interest of students helped the researcher to easily collect the data. Moreover, the interviews were conducted with the consent of participants by their proposed time and classroom setting.

Q.1	What Type of individual differences are their among ESL learners at SBBU SBA?
Q.2	How does individual differences impact on ESL learners in ESL classroom at SBBU SBA?
Q.3	What are the causes of Individual differences among ESL learners in ESL classroom?
Q.4	How far do you think that individual differences among ESL learners are changed?
Q.5	Do you think that individual differences should be there among ESL learners or not? If yes than elaborate with reason, if not than explain with reason

Findings

Data from semi structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed through content analysis. Both deductive and inductive approaches were used in the analysis.

Q.1: What Type of individual differences are their among ESL learners at SBBU SBA?

Answering the very first question 8 participants said that there are several types of individual differences among ESL learners at SBBU SBA. The first and very common difference which is considered as the most influential differences is related to their language. All the students are either multilingual or bilingual. Majority of the students does not share the same language. As it is seen that Pakistan and its provinces are multilingual Urdu is considered as the national language while every province has its own provincial language with many sub languages, the second difference is related to the gender both male and female genders are there. The third difference is related to their educational background, some of them are having private education and other have studied in government institutes. The fourth difference is related to their caste system have different castes and ethics. The fifth is personality differences are there. The sixth one is level of understanding and perceiving the lectures or teachings. The seventh is different motivational power.

Q.2: How does individual differences impact on ESL learners in ESL classroom at SBBU SBA?

Replying to the second question the 6 participants were of the view that individual differences among ESL learners have positive impacts in classroom learning. Multi-cultural, multi lingual and multi educational students enhance extra information learning besides curriculum based learning. Students learn many different things from each other. This intermingling of various students with different types of backgrounds increase learning in each walk of life related to educational, social, cultural, ethical and religious learnings. Resultantly, it has positive impacts on ESL learners. While

only two students were of the view that individual differences have negative impacts on ESL learners because they create hindrances in teaching and learning environment. So, there should be the uniqueness among ESL learners inside of the classroom on all the bases.

Q.3: What are the causes of Individual differences among ESL learners in ESL classroom?

Answering to the question, 07 participants replied that there are several causes for individual differences among ESL learners in ESL classroom at SBBU SBA. Including the age, race, religion, education, health, gender, ethnicity, Motivation, anxiety, understanding, maturity, wealth, caste system, locality, nationality and many other causes are there due to which individual differences have been observed among ESL Learner. While one participants replied that there are only few differences among ESL learners which differ them among each other.

Q.4: How far do you think that individual differences among ESL learners are changed?

The participants were of the view that individual differences among ESL Learners are at the greater level. Every learner has its own changes related to its all domains. For example, if someone belongs to the Sindhi community than definitely his language, behavior, attitude, nourishment, education, religion, sect, tribe, accent etc are exactly changes in comparison to the other community related person. Means these all the changes are highly enough to identify someone differently on all these bases. So individual differences among ESL learners are undeniable with high number of variations.

Q.5: Do you think that individual differences should be there among ESL learners or not? If yes than elaborate with reason, if not than explain with reason.

Replying to the last question the 6 participants opined that individual differences among ESL learner are not bad, these differences should be there because they have positive influence in learning. These differences are the identity of students, one should not remove his/her identity. Moreover, these differences make us rich to learn about our cultures, religions, custom, values and behaviors. On the other hand, two participants were of the view that these differences should not be there among ESL learners because they just create negative influences hindrances and hardships in teaching and learning environment. These differences just waste the time of learners. ESL learners are the students who are purely taught in English so due to the different lingual backgrounds they just consume time of a teacher to translate in different languages. There should be resemblance among all the ESL learners on all the bases.

Themes Of Data Analysis

Semi structured interview Questions	Main Theme	Sub Themes
What Type of individual differences are their among ESL learners at SBBU SBA?	Individual Differences ESL Learners SBBU SBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual differences like, Age, gender, education,

		<p>Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who are enrolled in English degree program • Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Shaheed Benazir Abad
Q.2: How does individual differences impact on ESL learners in ESL classroom at SBBU SBA?	Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive • Negative • Positive impacts are explored as stronger than the negative
Q.3: What are the causes of Individual differences among ESL learners in ESL classroom?	Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language • Gender • status • Private or public sector Education • Understanding
Q.4: How far do you think that individual differences among ESL learners are changed?	Greater level of changes	language, behavior, attitude, nourishment, education, religion, sect, tribe, accent etc are exactly changed ate greater level of variation
Q.5: Do you think that individual differences should be there among ESL learners or not? If yes than elaborate with reason, if not than explain with reason.	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes answer is highly supported by the participants with many reason • Very few participants disliked the existence of individual differences among ESL learners.

Hunt (1971) says that individual features are uttered about the generalization to form a model for in academic calendar. The instructor would be at a greater benefit if he /she the knowledge about cognitive styles of the students he/she is teaching and then a learning strategy can be employed to the students' mental approach of study in a specific acquiring situation which may have the positive results.

Conclusion

From the above study it is determined that individual differences are unique at everywhere in L2 learning classes. Students are change from one another, they have their own habits, languages and personalities which have their direct influence on their second language learning capabilities. It is mentioned earlier in this empirical study that human beings are created with various different abilities. There are several researches has been conducted by the scholars on ‘’ individual differences in second language learning which has their results in the favor of learners differences. But it should be sophisticated from the point of view about the individuality in learner’s differences.

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