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# **Role of Demographic Factors in Children's Language Acquisition at Middle Level: A South Asian Countries' Survey Study**

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#### ABSTRACT

Language is one of the most complex abilities, especially teaching in a formal learning environment and demography may help to comprehend social and economic issues and find viable answers. It engages in market research, labor market analysis, insurance forecasting, economic development, and social planning. People in South Asian countries work for private and public institutions at local, regional, national, and international levels. This research deals with the language learning of child acquisition and its influence on demographic elements, and the most crucial element in this discussion is the various implications on South Asia countries and the results of a research study conducted among private and government students (N=500) who are studying in different Muslim and non-Muslims schools of Lahore, Pakistan. This study investigates the effect of demographic factors on children's language acquisition at the middle level all over Asian countries. The researchers developed a questionnaire that contained 40 items, 37 are close-ended and 3 are open-ended. Quantitative and descriptive statistics with SPSS software are employed to investigate the effect of all demographic factors on the language learning process of children. The results indicate the pertinent findings against each major construct/theme such as age, gender, parents' (income, status, education, background, and occupation), social and economic context, rural and urban society, and cultural influence. It also shows that each factor has a deep influence on language acquisition among middle-level students, and Asian countries are affected a lot. This study investigates the short- and long-term effects of demographic variables on the language acquisition of South Asian children.

#### Key Words: Children's Language in South Asian Countries, Demographic Factors, Language Acquisition of Asian Children, Language Learning, Middle-level Students in Asian Countries

### Introduction

The Indus civilization, one of the oldest civilizations in the world, originated in South Asia, which is also one of the continents with the densest populations today. The importance of language in one's life cannot be overstated. The globalization of linguistic habits and the use of communication media go hand in hand. In the last 60 years, language acquisition in South Asia has advanced significantly. Communication between individuals is important because it not only allows us to understand one another, but also allows us to form relationships and convey our views, plans, and worries. Language acquisition and use is a remarkable talent that we, as humans, possess (Coat, 2004). Schmenk (2004) writes that learning a language is similar to learning a game, and that language acquisition is something that can be misunderstood, simplified, or even forgotten. Children, for example, must learn the rules of the language game, as well as how to speak words and combine them in ways that are acceptable to those around them. It must be kept two things in mind: first, children do not use language in the same way that adults do because children are not adults. Second, children will figure out how to speak the dialect(s) and language(s) that are used around them. Language acquisition is a long, lengthy process including many apparent 'errors' to grasp the child's language acquisition. Children typically begin by imitating their parents or other parental figures, but once they begin to mingle with other children (especially around the age of three), they begin to converse with peers their own age Ellis (1994). Children can't control how they talk: they will build up their intonations and they will get familiar with the dialects that think they need. On the off chance that children don't care for the nearby emphasis, they will either need to endure it or move to someplace with a highlight you like! Ellis (1994) said that if the child is happy with his/ her accent and they prefer their local language they will be happy. As indicated by Aslan (2009) like all of us, kids are people. What makes them unique from grown-ups, in general, is that children are raised in grown-up universes as per grown-up desires. Ehrman and Oxford (1990) stated that children figure out how to show their conduct on what goes on around them, be it clothing standards, non-verbal communication, social graces or language utilizes, generally, they learn about the world from their parents, and then through their friends in the family, neighborhood, or school. People in South Asian countries interact with children to educate them about our adult world, and they learn about the world from what we tell them. However, they also learn about language by how they utilize it to educate them about other topics. This denotes language learning occurs whenever language is used around children, according to Kimura (2006).

# Objectives

The objectives will be covered in this study are:

- 1. To identify the demographic elements specific to a language of South Asian children
- 2. To know about the effects of demographic factors on the language acquisition of South Asian children
- 3. To evaluate the relationship between the middle-class students' language with demographic factors of South Asian children

# **Research Questions**

- 1. What are the major demographic factors specific to the language of South Asian children?
- 2. What is the influence of the demographic factors of South Asian children on language acquisition?
- 3. Is there any significant relationship between the demographic factors and language acquisition of the students of the middle class of South Asian children?

# **Purpose of the Study**

The goal of the study is to look at how learners learned languages and to see if there was a link between demographic characteristics and language acquisition success of South Asian children. The other was to identify the various demographic characteristics of South Asian children that influenced the middle class and their effects on pupils' language acquisition learning. The research determined the role of demographic factors in language acquisition and it's influenced by the child's personality and mentality. It also identified certain beliefs as female compatibility in language learning and male dominance in mixed-gender classrooms of South Asian children. Teachers and researchers working on demographic characteristics and language acquisition will be able to comprehend the effects on language learning strategies and acquisition of South Asian children based on the findings of this study.

# **Statement of the Problem**

The effect of Demographic factors on Children's language acquisition at the middle level of South Asian children means knowing about the influence of demographic and societal factors on the language learning process. Language acquisition and learning is a very complex process for children so that's why

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the study helped to identify and evaluated all those effects and ways that had a direct influence on the language of South Asian children.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to know about the demographic factors which influence language acquisition among middle-class students of South Asia. Demographic factors are very important and these have a deep effect on child language acquisition. According to Horwitz (1987), studying learner beliefs about language learning is important not only because such beliefs may influence students' expectations for and commitment to language learning, but also because such beliefs may be more susceptible to change than cognitive style variables or affective variables like attitude and motivation. To conclude, the focus of the study was to explore, describe, and interpret the learners' beliefs about demographic factors' effect on language learning and explore the influence on language learning beliefs of South Asian children.

### **Literature Review**

The examination of linguistic and demographic issues continues with the term language acquisition of South Asian children. After that, Ehrlich (1997) and Sunderland (1997) gave a quick summary of demographic determinants and language learning (2000). The research studies that incorporate demographic aspects and achievement in the language and language learning strategies are cited after the language learning strategies are explained in depth (Gardner, Lambert & Smythe 1975, Oxford & Shearin 1994). Kids don't just duplicate similar to whatever they are presented to, for two reasons: firstly, they are growing genuinely and naturally. Similarly, to how it may take a long time to develop the fine engine abilities required for sewing on a button, it takes a long time to develop the ability to use discourse speech organs in similarly precise ways in South Asian children. Second, children's development. They have to discover approaches to understand their condition, so they can connect easily with it Trudgill (1974). They do this by dynamically adjusting the information they get to their own rising psychological and etymological capacities, and by screening out what is up until now unreasonably complex for them to comprehend (Peacock, 1999 & Horwitz, 1988).

Discourse and language are autonomous capacities, developing language doesn't reflect rising discourse in any direct manner or the other way around South Asian children. There's nothing fundamentally erroneous with somebody's language capacities on the off chance that they stammer, stutter, or slur their words together, yet these highlights of their discourse may require revising that they hinder comprehensibility past adolescence (Horwitz, 1987).

There's nothing fundamentally wrong with someone's speech and language if they can't say she sells seashells on the beach by the age of six, though their language capacity may necessitate checking that they don't understand what this sentence means in any language at the age Horwitz's pioneer considers (1985, 1987 and 1988). As per Butler, (1990) language acquisition requires significant investment because all adapting needs an ideal opportunity to process and make their experience can't be hurried. Numerous parental figures of South Asian children need to get 'results', and in twofold time, as indicated by grown-up desires, and afterward stress that 'nothing is happening. South Asian Children will develop techniques for realizing everything they uncover and applying it to learn about the world around them, including language. Children are far more inventive, adaptable, and imaginative than their parents, who are frequently organized to praise them for their verbal abilities (Graddol, 2006).

Block (2002) stated that there is nothing to stress over if the youngster doesn't seem like a grown-up. There might be motivation to stress if kids don't seem like themselves. A youngster's physical and intellectual advancement is best surveyed against the kid itself, with the goal that particular age ranges matter not exactly the child's advancement starting with one phase and then onto the next (Goldstein 1995, 2001 & Frye 1999). Even though sounds will be gained in a similar way across the languages various children may discover various sounds simpler or increasingly troublesome: every youngster will have their learning system (Lin et al, McMahill 1997, 2001). Some particular demographic factors are race, gender, salary level, riches, religion, language, ethnicity, calling or occupation, age, area, family foundation family unit status, condition or environmental factors, populace's social and monetary setting, training which impacts on the understudies' language at the center level of South Asian's children.

The demographers do work out positively past this wide definition and draw a broad picture from related disciplines: human science, financial matters, insights, history, political theory, human sciences, brain science, general wellbeing, and ecological sciences (Block 2002). Testing of subjects and topics from the 2006 European Population Conference delineates demography's expansiveness:

- Family Demographic change
- Migrant populations' integration processes
- Older ages' health inequalities at
- Welfare state and the Population
- · Child care and Parenting
- Abortion and Reproductive health
- Economy and the Ageing

- Demographic behavior and Religion
- Environment, development, and Population
- Special groups and Population projections of small areas
- Family formation and Value changes

Every person, young and old, employs one of two learning methods. To begin, based on physical capabilities, youngsters learn in phases (they ensure that they can stroll before they run). The other is that they sum up from experience (if they see a creepy-crawly that looks like a cockroach that they've ever seen they're probably going to figure it out as a cockroach), (Patterson & Goddard: 2000). The researcher came to the conclusion that as a youngster learns and acquires more language, each stage in the process becomes less and less evident to both adults and children of South Asian. Adult language learning acquisition is influenced by demographic factors, and it may appear to adult learners that they are progressing slowly at times. These strategies aid youngsters in clarifying their understanding of the complete language, from articulation to jargon, vocabulary, and sentence structure, as well as developing skills of South Asian children such as how to engage in a discussion.

# Methodology (Type of Study)

The quantitative approach to technique and data gathering was highly systematized and formulaic, our study was quantitative. The essential variables in quantitative research were how notions like "gender" and "income level" were characterized by experimenters so that statistical tests could be done on the differences between groups. Quantitative research is based on statistical tests that can be easily duplicated using software like SPSS. The concept of statistical significance guided the examination and interpretation of quantitative data. Because the experimenter presents potential explanations that best suit the results, qualitative data interpretation is by necessity much more subjective.

# Nature of the Study

The nature of the research has been descriptive. For this study, the descriptive method of research was used. Creswell (1994) stated, to define the descriptive type of research, that the descriptive method of research is to gather information on the present condition. The emphasis was on describing rather than judging or interpreting. Descriptive research aimed to verify formulated hypotheses that referred to the present situation to elucidate it. The descriptive approach was quick and practical in terms of the financial aspect. Besides, this method has allowed a flexible approach, which means that further investigation may be carried out when important new issues and questions arise during the duration of the study.

# **Research Design**

The survey methodology analyses the sampling of individual units from a population and the accompanying survey data collection procedures, such as questionnaire building and approaches to improve the volume and accuracy of survey replies, it was survey research that was designed.

# **Procedure of the Study (Population)**

The population for this study was made up of students from Iqbal Town's middle schools, both public and private.

# Sample

The population was randomly sampled within each category. It was convenient sampling because researchers categorized the demographic factors and then divided them into subsets. The sample size for the study was comprised of 5 government schools and 5 private schools in Iqbal Town. First, researchers identified 5, 5 government and private girls' and boys' schools by area. Then, to identify the obtained sample, the researchers employed convenient sampling, which consisted of 50 individuals from each school. A total of 500 kids from the specified schools were included in the final sample.

# **Research Instrument/ Tool**

In this study, a questionnaire was employed as an instrument.

# **Data Collection**

Questionnaires were used to gather information. The researcher utilized a fivepoint Likert scale for this.

# **Analysis of Data**

A questionnaire was created with five options: highly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The questionnaire's results were evaluated and given in the form of a table of Means and Standard Deviation, as well as the SPSS user.

The result shows that there is a significant effect of demographic factors on the language learning process of South Asian children generally. The result of the questionnaire reported that demographic factors are a generally straightforward influence on the language learning of South Asian children. The primary purpose of the research question was to explore the effect of demographic factors in terms of learners' opinions about the language learning process of South Asian children. To find out the opinions of learners about language learning a questionnaire consisted of 40 items which were divided into nine sections related to language and major nine demographic factors such as gender, education, parents' income, status, etc. The results are discussed here according to the sections of the questionnaire one by one.

# Gender (G) Effects on Language Acquisition

Because of the principal component analysis, the four items that were originally included under the theme of Gender (G) and this section involve the following set of questions.

- G1: Girls and boys differ in the language learning process.
- G2: Boys are more accurate and fluent in language rather than girls.
- G3: Girls are quicker to acquire language.
- G4: Boys are sharp and keen observers of language skills rather than girls.

These items were analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that gender (girls and boys) (G) affects language learning. It is not equally important for both there were significant differences found in their opinion about the importance of language learning. They always intended to learn the language. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. It is very difficult for boys to acquire language and it requires a lot of hard work and learning abilities. It is more complex than scientific knowledge. They generally believe that girls have a better understanding of the complexities of the language and they are more capable of learning the language than boys.

# Income (I) Level of Parents Effects on Acquiring Language

The four items that were included in this factor are also under the theme of the Income level of parents (I) and this section involves following a set of questions.

I 1: Parents' Income effect on the language learning process

I 2: Parents' income has a deep and negative influence on a child's mentality.

I 3: Rich people give more facilities to their children for the language acquisition process.

I 4: Income level enhances the skills and abilities of their children regarding language acquisition.

These items were analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that the income level of parents (I) deeply and strongly affect the language learning process. It is equally important for girls and boys that their parents should have a good enough salary for the language learning process. Then they will give proper facilities and resources to their children. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. The result shows that parents' income always has a deep and positive influence on children's mentality. It enhances the skills and abilities of children also. So the conclusion is that this demographic factor deeply influences acquiring any language.

# **Occupation (O) of Parents Effect on Language**

Here are also four items that were included under the theme of Occupation (O) of parents and this section involves following a set of questions.

O1: Parents' profession is helpful in the language learning process

O2: Parents' occupations provide a positive healthy atmosphere to acquire language.

O3: Job holder parents provide different and modern ways to acquire language O4: Low-income parents do not understand the need for language

These items were also analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that the occupation of parents (O) deeply and strongly affects the language learning process. It is important for parents that they should have a good enough salary that can provide every opportunity for their children in the language learning process. A better and good occupation will give proper facilities and resources to their children. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. The result can be shown clearly above mentioned graphs and tables that parents' occupation always has a deep and positive influence on children's mentality. It enhances the skills and abilities of children also. So the conclusion is that this demographic factor deeply influences acquiring any language.

# Parents' Education (E)

Here are also four items that were included under the theme of Education (E) of parents and this section involves the following set of questions.

E1: Education of parents plays a very important and significant role in language acquisition

E2: Uneducated parents fail to give proper basic skills of language learning to their children

E3: Educated parents develop proper skills of language structure, vocabulary, and its proper usage for their children

E4: Uneducated people use more wrong, abusive, and informal language which negatively affects on the children's language

These items were also analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that the Education of parents (E) deeply and strongly affects the language learning process. It is important for parents that they should have good and highly educated after that they can provide every opportunity for their children for the language learning process. Better and good education will give proper facilities and resources to their children. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. They can understand the need for the modern age and are also sensible. The result can be shown clearly in the mention graphs and tables that parents' education always has a deep and positive influence on children's mentality. It enhances the skills and abilities of children also. So the conclusion is that this demographic factor deeply influences acquiring any language.

### **Cultural Influence (Cl)**

Here are also four items that were included under the theme of Cultural Influence (Cl) and this section involves following a set of questions.

Cl 1: Native culture and national culture effects on language acquisition

Cl 2: Children learn language through their environment

Cl3: Race and ethnicity effects on language acquisition

Cl 4: Culture promotes skills for language acquisition

These items were also analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that the Culture (Cl) of any society has a deeply and strongly effect on the language learning process. It is important for children that if they belong to a good and healthy atmosphere they learn every step of the language learning process. A better and good environment will give a very positive and healthy sound mind to children. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. The result can be shown clearly in the mention graphs and tables that culture always has a deep and positive influence on children's mentality. It enhances the skills and abilities of children also. So the conclusion is that this demographic factor deeply influences acquiring any language.

### Family Background (B)

Here are also four items that were included under the theme of Family background (B) and this section involves following a set of questions.

B1: Family speak their mother language with children without focusing on language skills

B2: Family members help in developing the skills of language acquisition

B3: Mother has a very strong and deep influence on the child's development of language acquisition

B4: Family or parents' behavior effect on acquiring language

These statements were also analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that Family background (B) has a deep and strongly effect on the language learning process. It is important for children that if they belong to a good and healthy atmosphere they learn every step of the language learning process. A better and good environment will give a very positive and healthy sound mind to children. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. The result can be shown clearly in the mention graphs and tables that culture always has a deep and positive influence on children's mentality. It also enhances the skills and abilities of children. So the conclusion is that this demographic factor deeply influences acquiring any language.

### Social Status and Economic Context (S)

Here are also four items that were included under the theme of Social status and Economic context (S) and this section involves following a set of questions.

S1: Socioeconomic factors have a deep influence on language acquisition

S2: Class system effects on the learning language process

S3: Social class effects on speech, vocabulary, and pronunciation of the language

S4: Lower class does not acquire the language at a standard level

These statements were also analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that Social status and economic context have deeply and strongly effect on the language learning process. It is important for children that if they belong to a good and healthy atmosphere they learn every step of the language learning process. Better and good social status will give a very positive and healthy sound mind to children. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. The result can be shown clearly in the mention graphs and tables that social status and economic context always have a deep and positive influence on children's mentality. It enhances the skills and abilities of children also. So the conclusion is that this demographic factor deeply influences acquiring any language.

# Rural and Urban Effect (R)

Here are also five items that were included under the theme of Rural and Urban effect (R) and this section involves following a set of questions.

- R1: Villagers' are not aware of the acquisition of language
- R2: Modern and educated people promote the skills and abilities of language among their children
- R3: Rural people have a lack of interest in language acquisition skills
- R4: Urban people are more sharp and intelligent to learn the language
- R5: Rural and urban society effects on the language acquisition process

These statements were also analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that Rural and Urban (R) society effects deeply and strongly on the language learning process. It is important for children if they belong good and healthy society they learn every step of the language learning process. Better and good social status will give a very positive and healthy sound mind to children. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. The result can be shown clearly in the mention graphs and tables that villagers and modern people always have a deep and positive/ negative influence on children's mentality. Society enhances the skills and abilities of children also. So the conclusion is that this demographic factor deeply influences acquiring any language.

### Pre Schooling and Age Factor (A)

Here are also five items that were included under the theme of Pre schooling and age effect (A) and this section involves following a set of questions.

- A1: Children learn language differently from adults
- A2: Language acquisition depends on any specific age
- A3: Children learn language skills in schools
- A4: Early age is more effective for language acquisition

These statements were also analyzed through SPSS version 16.0 and the findings of the analysis show that these items claim that Age and pre-schooling (A) effects deeply and strongly on the language learning process. They believe that learning or acquiring a language is a complex process. The result can be shown clearly above mentioned graphs and tables that pre-schooling and age factor always has deep and positive/ negative influence on children's mentality. Age development increases the skills and abilities of children also. So the conclusion is that this demographic factor deeply influences acquiring any language.

# Conclusion

Overall, the demographic effect found in the current study differs from those reported by Siebert (2003) using a United State sample in terms of quantity and nature. Namely, Sibert found eight items with demographic differences, while this study only found nine items. The more optimistic conclusion is that language acquisition depends on demographic factors of South Asian children. The effect of a demographic factor on language can be explained in different ways. Firstly, it might be possible that other factors such as culture influence the nature of the student's responses to belief items because the subjects belong to both rural and urban areas and the culture differs in both areas of South Asian children. In rural areas, female students have limited access to advance technology and they do not have opportunities to come out and interact with society. They are usually less confident than boys and have limited opportunities to use their creativity. In rural areas and some urban areas, boys consider being the person who is ultimately actively involved in progressive activities, and girls are mostly confined to the home. The cultural background is also an important factor, which may influence learners' beliefs about learning the language of South Asian children. The study also shows the importance of demographic factors in language learning and usage or effects are both equally important for South Asian children. This research study investigated the beliefs of the learner about language learning and the demographic impact on these beliefs. The population of the study included five hundred students from the school at the middle level. In the hope of more reliable results, the researcher employed the principle of component analysis and form a questionnaire corresponding with Horwitz's (1987) themes. The researcher divided the questionnaire into nine sections (Gender, income level, occupation, education, cultural influence, family background, social status, rural and urban society, and pre-schooling/ age). The findings of the current study also indicate that overall all demographic factors seem to respond similarly in terms of their beliefs about language learning as regards the difficulty and the nature of the language learning of South Asian children. It's necessary to keep in mind that the demographic dividend does not always materialize as a result of demographic change. South Asian nations are at various stages of demographic change. Due to the demographic change, some nations can reap a sizable demographic dividend in language acquisition.

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