

**CHALLENGES IN LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE:
VOICES FROM THE MALDIVES
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

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**CHALLENGES IN LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE: VOICES FROM THE
MALDIVES NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

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the degree of Master of Education**

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2013

DECLARATION

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I hereby declare that this Master's Project is the result of my own work, except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the results of a study exploring the challenges students encounter in learning a second language at Maldives National University. The study further sought to provide strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level. A qualitative research methodology was adopted in the collection and analysis of data. Therefore, the main source of data collection was interviews and it included five unstructured interviews with qualified and experienced English Language lecturers and five students who study English as a Second Language. In analyzing the data, framework analysis was employed to identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at Maldives National University. Hence, the findings revealed that factors such as belief, language transfer, motivation, intelligence, anxiety, willingness to communicate, age and personality influence second language learning. In addition, instructional strategies that were considered to be useful were highlighted by the participants. The interpretation of results was discussed in light of pedagogical approaches to language teaching that could be implemented by both educators and learners.

Keywords: Second Language, Challenges, Learning, Strategies, Proficiency

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LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

MNU **Maldives National University**

ZPD **Zone of Proximal Development**

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The systematic study of how people learn a second language has taken place in the 1960s (Long and Freeman, 1991). Those who work in the field of education are well aware of the fact that communication between people has expanded out of reach of their local speech communities, which encourages them to discover more about how second languages are learned. Previously much of the research emphasis was placed on language teaching assuming that if language teaching methods could be made more efficient, then learning would naturally be more effective. However, in recent history, many researchers' attention has shifted from the teaching process to the learning process. It was this shift in perspective which introduced a new research agenda and gave definition to the field that has come to be known as second language learning (Long and Freeman, 1991).

People learn a second language for a variety of reasons such as to fully participate in a society, to travel as a tourist, to pass an examination and so on. In spite of such infinite diversity there exists the universal fact that human beings of all ages, attitudes, levels of intelligence, socioeconomic background succeed in learning a second language. It is to understand how learners achieve this and why some fail to do

so which has motivated second language learning research since its inception twenty years ago (Seliger, as cited in Long and Freeman, 1991).

In a world that is increasingly interdependent, people cannot afford to remain monolingual. A community becomes successful depending on the ability of its people to function as members who speak a variety of languages. Today's economy is increasingly globalized, which makes it vital for people to learn a second language. The diversity of earth's cultures and the amazing array of people that make up the global community necessitate people to learn a second language. In addition, scientific studies reveal that learning a second language improves brain function and stimulates creativity (Importance of Learning a Second Language, 2013). Hence, many case studies were conducted in more recent years regarding second language learning which helps to identify some of the key issues in language learning (Ellis, 2012).

Today the students who study at university are required to learn a second language as it is compulsory for university graduation. In the process of learning a second language, there are many variables that determine the success of a language learner. Some language learners are successful due to their hard work, determination and persistence. However, there are other fundamental factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. Thus, it is vital to examine these crucial factors that effects learning the language. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in

language learners at Maldives National University (MNU) and to discover strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level.

1.2 Problem Statement

“Challenges in learning a second language: Voices from the Maldives National University.”

It is strongly believed that sufficient amount of comprehensible input is necessary for second language learning (Krashen, 1982, as cited in Lightbown, 2006). However, it is widely accepted that in spite of the provision of the facilities learners require to learn a language, they face many challenges especially at tertiary level. Even though some students can study a second language with ease, there are students who struggle to learn due to various reasons. Since languages differ on a number of dimensions, the differences between one’s native language and the second language of study can pose problems for students. Likewise, some of the students who enroll in various courses at MNU are weak in English Language and find it difficult to master the essential skills required to complete the module. Therefore, the study focuses on examining the challenges MNU students encounter in learning a second language and various approaches educators could employ to enhance second language learning.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at outlining, enhancing and expanding theories and concepts around the issue of challenges students at tertiary level encounter in learning a second language. Thus, it would highlight the factors that affect students in learning a second language. Findings from this study would have implications for the introduction of

effective strategies in teaching second language skills. Thus, the objectives of the study are:

1. to identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university.
2. to discover strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level.

1.4 Research Questions

The proposed study will attempt to answer the following questions in order to contribute to the comprehensive knowledge about second language learning.

1. What factors hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university?
2. What strategies could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study examines the problems adult learners encounter in learning a second language. It would challenge the current research paradigm on “second language learning” as it shifts the focus on learning, to a study of challenges defined as learning difficulties individuals might encounter. Second language learning acknowledges that there are individual differences in second language learning. Social factors that are related to second language learning affect the degree of success students can achieve in learning a second language. Similarly, there are a number of psychological dimensions of difference. Factors such as personality can influence the degree of anxiety learners’ experience and their readiness to take risks in learning and

using a second language. Moreover, learners' belief and aptitude play a major role in second language learning (Ellis, 2010).

Therefore, these factors contribute to the development of second language learning as most of the students who enroll in the courses offered at MNU are from the various atolls in Maldives. The level of school education provided for the students varies from one atoll to the other due to the constraints in the availability of resources. As a result the educational background of the students required to learn language skills differ which makes it difficult for most of the students to cope with the programs offered at the university.

Due to the lack of prior knowledge students do not have the confidence in learning a second language which impedes the level of motivation leading to a greater number of students with learning difficulties. The outlines of each module are designed in such a way that the students reach a certain level by completing the module. Since some of the students do not possess adequate competencies at the beginning, the lecturers who teach them are faced with a lot of problems as they have to complete the module during the semester which spans for about four months. Moreover, the lecturers spend most of the classes in teaching them the basic skills rather than completing the syllabus given in the outline. Thus, the students miss on the important aspects of the syllabus and thereby they find it difficult to master the essential skills required to complete the module. Similarly, it is highly impossible for students to learn a language or a set of skills to complete the syllabus successfully within a period of four months if they do not have the requisite background knowledge of the subject. As a result, in each batch a handful of students fail in the final exam.

Another problem that is encountered by the students is that some modules are considered as mandatory which means the students need to pass in English Language in order to register for certain other modules. This in turn take a longer time to complete the course as they have to repeat.

Today, the study of a second language is often a requirement for university graduation and is a recommendation for all students with different abilities. Yet, low proficiency learners may find the completion of second language requirement a herculean task. Thus, it is vital to explore and to examine the challenges students of MNU encounter in learning a second language in order to foster the development of second language proficiency.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The aim of this research is to examine the challenges adult learners encounter in learning a second language. In addition, the study would serve as an eye opener by providing relevant information and strategies that are beneficial for practitioners to enhance their teaching learning process. Therefore, the goal of this study is to understand the problems faced by adult learners in learning a second language in a formal instructed setting and provide ways by which the learning centers could address the issues that are related to second language learning.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

In this study certain terms are defined as they are important and would be used frequently. When definitions are provided for these terms the readers understand exactly what is meant by them and there would not be any misinterpretations as a result of different interpretations of the same term. The key terms include:

- 1.7.1 **Second Language** - The language that is learned subsequent to the mother tongue which is English Language.
- 1.7.2 **Learning:** - Development of conscious knowledge of a second language through formal study.
- 1.7.3 **Challenges** - Learning difficulties individuals might encounter.
- 1.7.4 **Learner Strategy** - Learner strategies are the actions that learners engage in, in order to learn a second language.
- 1.7.5 **Competence** – Knowledge of the second language a learner has internalized.
- 1.7.6 **Proficiency** – Learners ability to use the knowledge of second language in different tasks.

1.8 Chapter Summary

In the field of second language education inadequate attention has been paid to identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency and to discover the strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at tertiary level. Hence, this study seeks to address these issues. This project includes five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, which provides an outline of the research and its purpose. Chapter two reviews the literature relating to the subject of the study. It deals with literature in the fields of second language learning, factors that affect the development of second language proficiency and the strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development. Gaps in the literature will be identified in the chapter and research questions are connected to the literature being reviewed. Chapter three describes matters that reflect the methodology of the study, and specifies the design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection procedures and

framework for data analysis. Chapter four presents the analysis and results obtained from the interviews in the form of themes which would be presented in tabular form. Chapter five, the concluding chapter, comprises of two parts. The first part includes a brief summary of the problem and results. The second part discusses the findings based on the literature reviewed previously. In addition, directions for future research are made and limitations of the study are identified.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Studying a second language has continued to arouse interest since its beginning. It is important to learn a second language as it is central to teaching and learning most of the subjects. Teachers use language to help students to learn content while students use language to explore content and to express what they have learned. Even though, young children are able to learn a second language successfully without explicit instruction, adults need guided practice and explicit instruction to learn. Even then they cannot attain native-like ability in a second language (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007).

Therefore, the study focuses on identifying the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners and to discover strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development. This would assist the people who work in the field of education to recognize the problems which students face in learning a second language and the learners to learn the language more efficiently.

Hence, this chapter explores theories and studies on second language learning emphasizing more on the challenges which students encounter in learning a second language.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

It is possible to find a great deal of information on the different aspects of the process in second language learning. While studying the literature on second language learning one is likely to come across several arguments put forth by various researchers. Therefore, it is vital to gather sufficient theoretical information before presenting a critical view on the arguments. The current study would focus on three major second language learning theories known as Behaviorist Theory, Innatist Theory and Interactionist Theory.

Behaviourist theory has been chosen because it focuses on behavior that can be observed and manipulated which is related to second language learning. Moreover, the studies carried out by behaviourists tend to be very reliable as they use scientific methods to find solutions to many human problems that are related to teaching learning process. However, this theory emphasizes only what can be directly observed and without taking into consideration what is going on in the mind (Ellis, 2010).

Therefore, innatist theory has been included in this study, as the proponents of the study believe that human beings are capable of learning language at any age and human mind is equipped with a language acquisition device (LAD) which helps in second language learning (Ellis, 2010).

With regard to teaching methodology, both the theories focus more on reading, writing and listening paying less attention to communication skills which are important in second language learning. Thus, interactionist theory has been incorporated in the study as the advocates of the theory consider participation in socially mediated activities as essential in second language learning (Lantolf, 2006).

Hence, the above theories provide insights on aspects of second language learning and are very much complementary to each other catering to different types of learners. The study encompasses three theories as there is no comprehensive or complete theory that can guide the practices of second language teaching and learning. Therefore, it has been assumed that a combination of approaches would be more successful for effective teaching to take place.

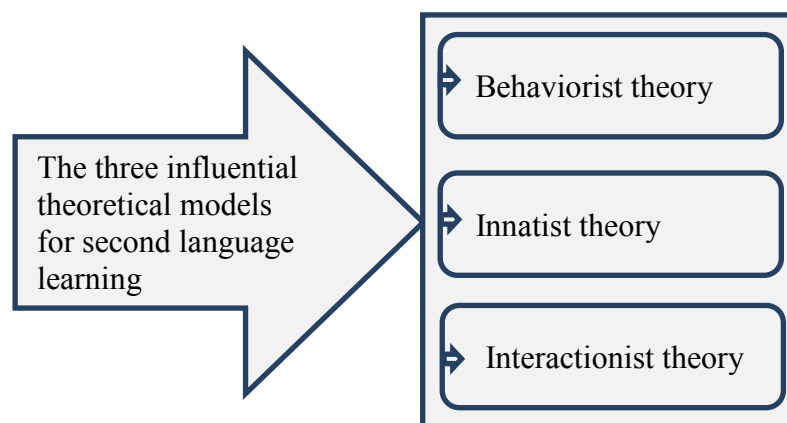


Figure 2.1 Second Language Learning Theories

2.1.1 Behaviorist Theory

Behaviorist learning theory is considered as a dominant psychological theory of the 1950s and 1960s. According to this theory, language learning involves habit formation. Habits are formed when learners respond to stimulus in the environment and their responses are reinforced so that they are remembered (Ellis, 2010). Behaviorists believe that languages are learned through repetition and reinforcement. This theory is useful for second language learners because behaviorists believe that second language learners will make mistakes while producing their target language due to the patterns learned previously while acquiring their mother tongue. Therefore,

audio-lingual method which is considered as the main teaching method based on these theories would help learners to learn the language, as it involves repetition drills which help learners to use the correct form of the language (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007).

Another reason why behaviorist theory is beneficial for second language learners is that repetition and pattern drills support teaching set phrases or new vocabulary and it assists students who are shy to use oral language through choral repetition or chants and speak along with a group instead of being singled out. However, even though this method allows adults to produce certain phrases that can be used in a specific context it does not help them to communicate freely in other contexts (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007). Moreover, this theory emphasizes only what can be directly observed and ignored what is going on in the mind.

Therefore, the inadequacies of behaviourist explanations of second language acquisition led the researchers to look for an alternative theoretical framework. As a result, in 1960s and 1970s theory of language acquisition known as Innatist Theory emerged.

2.1.2 Innatist Theory

According to this theory human beings are capable of learning languages at any age and human mind is equipped with a language acquisition device. Input is needed but only to trigger the operator of the language acquisition device (Ellis, 2010).

Universal Grammar

The theory of universal grammar makes two assumptions. They are human beings possess a special and highly specific capacity for language learning and capacity is

innate and biologically determined. The study of universal grammar and its role in second language acquisition was initiated by Chomsky (1957). It is about how knowledge is represented rather than how it is used in performance. Chomsky defined universal grammar as the system of principles, conditions and rules that are elements of all human languages (Ellis, 2008). According to Chomsky, universal grammar is the general human ability to learn and use the language. It is assumed to be innate in the learners mind. The proponents of the availability of universal grammar argue that if universal grammar is no longer available to adults, learners would not be able to work out abstract properties of the second language from the input received (Ellis, 2008).

Monitor Model

The most motivating as well as the most controversial theory which attempts to provide an overall account for second language acquisition is Krashen's Monitor Theory. It has a huge effect on second language teaching and learning since 1980s. The theory includes five main hypotheses (Bahrani, 2011).

First of all, the **acquisition-learning hypothesis** proposes that learning a second language is different from acquiring one. When learners acquire language they are not consciously aware of the grammatical rules of the language. They pick up language by hearing and using it without any explicit instruction. However, when they learn they require conscious study of the forms of language usually in a formal classroom environment (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007).

According to **monitor hypothesis**, formal learning monitors the learner's output to make sure it is correct whereas, acquired language produces fluent usage and intuitive judgments about the correctness of language forms (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007).

The **natural order hypothesis** states that the acquisition of grammatical structures happens in a predictable order. Some structures tend to be acquired early and some late. In addition, the order does not depend on simplicity of form (Krashen, 1981, as cited in Bahrani, 2011) and is not affected by teaching (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007).

According to the **input hypothesis** learners acquire the language only when they understand language which contains structure that is a little beyond their current level (Krashen, 1981, as cited in Bahrani, 2011). Some of the strategies teachers could use to make language input comprehensible are linguistic simplification, the use of realia, visuals, pictures and graphic organizers (Hancock & Ariza, 2003).

Finally, **affective filter hypothesis** embodies a number of affective factors such as motivation, self-confidence and anxiety which play a facilitative role in second language learning. The affective filter hypothesis states that when the affective filter is high that is when the learner feels anxious, self-conscious, or unmotivated less acquisition will occur as it forms a mental block that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. When the filter is down and the learner feels relaxed and motivated, more acquisition will occur. As a result the learner would be more successful in second language learning (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007).

Despite the popularity of Krashen's Monitor theory and the significant impact on foreign language teaching, it has been criticized by theorists and researchers. Likewise, most of the researchers criticized mainly on the grounds of its definitional adequacy (McLaughlin, 1987, as cited in Bahrani, 2011). In addition, Krashen's theory does not provide any empirical evidence regarding many claims such as $i+1$ (Bahrani, 2011).

It is also vital to note that second language acquisition has acknowledged the importance of social factors right from the beginning. Therefore, social cultural theory emerged and has made a great impact on the teaching learning process (Lantolf, 2006).

2.1.3 Interactionist Theory

Social cultural theory

The theory advocates second language acquisition and considers participation in socially mediated activities as essential. One of the fundamental concepts of sociocultural theory is that human mind is mediated (Lantolf, 2006). Humans do not act directly on the physical world without the intermediary of tools that are created by themselves under specific cultural and historical conditions. These tools help in solving problems that cannot be solved in the same way in their absence (Lantolf, 2006).

Internalization is crucial in sociocultural theory as well as in second language classrooms. Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Turuk, 2008) encourages pushing students into an abstract world in order to develop multiple skills that will enable them to deal with complex learning tasks. Students should be taught how to create, adjust their strategies and assimilate learning activities to their own personal world.

Nowadays the role of abstract thinking in students' intellectual development has been recognized by the educators and it has been assumed that literature needs to be introduced in second language classrooms as it enriches students' vocabularies and supports the development of their critical thinking. Moreover, it moves learners away from the traditional approach of teaching and learning and focuses language structure

into abstract thinking, so that students can appreciate language and develop self-motivated attitude to learning the language.

The theory also advocates that learning experiences should be meaningful and relevant to the individual. Moreover, it has a holistic view about the act of learning. The theory suggests that units should be taught as a whole rather than presenting skills and knowledge in isolation (Williams & Burden, 1997, as cited in Turuk, 2008).

In second language classrooms meaning construction is considered as crucial for learning to take place. In the same way, Seedhouse (2004, as cited in Turuk, 2008) echoed the importance of meaning construction and fluency in second language classrooms when he suggested that the best way to enhance second language students' level of proficiency is by the simultaneous dual focus on form and accuracy together with meaning and fluency.

It is vital for the educators to know how zone of proximal development (ZPD) could be applied in classrooms. Two important concepts that need to be considered are mediation which is central to sociocultural theory and the concept of scaffolding that was brought about by the cognitive psychologists. These two concepts are essential in second language contexts as they suggest that second language learners need coaching and explicit instruction to inculcate the necessary second language skills (Turuk, 2008).

Mediation is the part played by other significant people in the learners' lives and the people who assist in the learning process. Effective learning takes place through the social interaction between people with different learning skills and knowledge so that they could help the learner to move into the next stage. Language is a tool which acts as a mediator to help learners move into and through their ZPD which is considered as

significant in sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Turuk, 2008). The concept of ZPD is a challenge for second language learners as it stresses the need for teachers to understand the limits of their students and teach to the limits of their ZPD and not further (Shayer, 2002, as cited in Turuk, 2008).

According to Donato (1994, as cited in Turuk, 2008) scaffolding is an instructional structure whereby the teacher models the task and gradually shifts responsibility to the students. Collaborative work conducted in second language classrooms offer the same opportunity as scaffolded help as in expert-novice relationships in the everyday setting (Donato, 1994, as cited in Turuk, 2008).

Conceptual framework

The study of second language learning refers to the learning of a second language. A growing number of researchers are interested in studying the challenges students encounter in learning a second language. Likewise, the diagram below shows the factors that influence the development of second language proficiency.

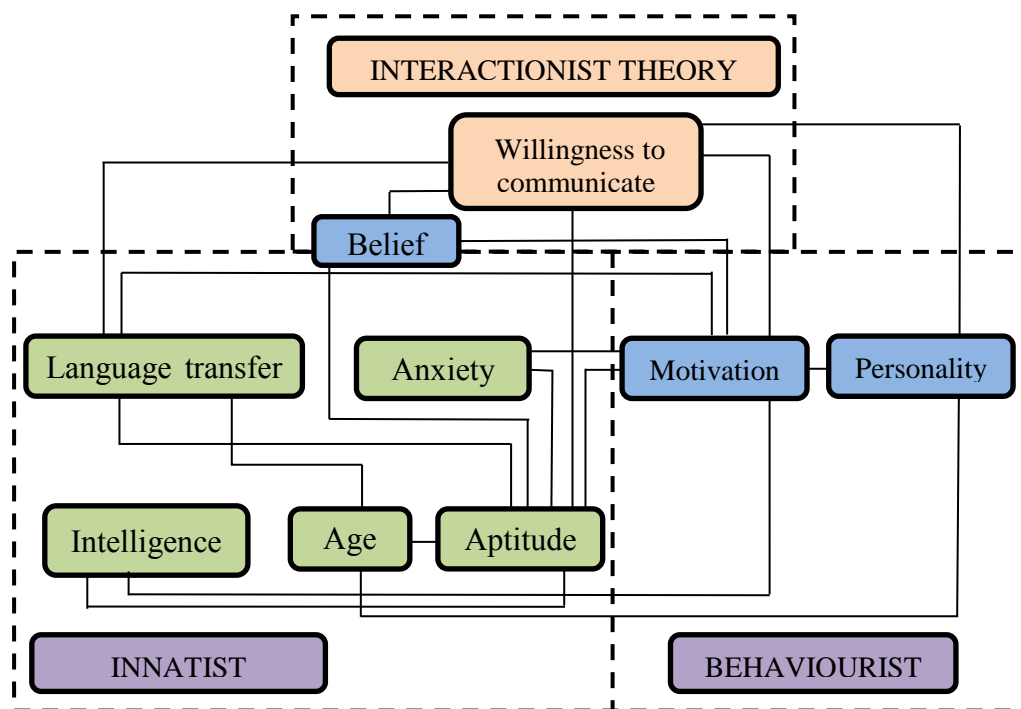


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2 Factors that Influence Second Language Learning

There are certain factors that influence the learning of a second language. Some of these factors include, personality and second language learning, motivation, effects of age on second language acquisition, language transfer, second language learning anxiety and its effect on achievement in the language, willingness to communicate, learners' beliefs, intelligence and learners' aptitude. These factors are discussed in detail under the subheadings below.

2.2.1 Personality and Second Language Learning

The relationship between personality and second language learning ability has received research interest in the last few decades. For second language learners to progress with their own learning styles, educators need to recognize and attend to their individual differences. A number of researches have been conducted in this area which proves that personality factors significantly influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language (Ghapanchi, Khajavy, & Asadpour, 2011; Gass and Selinkers, 1994, as cited in Zhang, 2008). According to Cook (1996, as cited in Zhang, 2008) some features of the learner's personality might encourage or inhibit second language learning by enhancing certain aspects of language learning while hindering others.

Extrovert and introvert are two characterizations of how one relates to the outside world. Extroverts are people who are more interested in what is happening around him than his own thoughts and emotions. On the other hand, introvert is a person who is more interested in his own thoughts and feelings than in things outside himself and is often shy and unwilling to speak or join in activities with others (Zhang, 2008).

For some people it is difficult to learn a second language due to certain social factors. Studies have shown that extroverts learn a second language better than introverts and they are willing to communicate even if they are not sure they will succeed (Zhang, 2008; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990, as cited in Sharp, 2008; Long and Freeman, 1991). Furthermore, Dewaele and Furnham (1999) reviewed 30 studies of personality and concluded that extroverts were more fluent than introverts in both first language and second language even though they were not accurate in their second language (Ellis, 2012). In contrast, introversion has the greatest chance of negatively affecting second language learning. Students who are afraid of embarrassing themselves by speaking incorrectly or not being able to speak at all may try to avoid speaking in public (Zhang, 2008; Ehrman and Oxford, 1990, as cited in Sharp, 2008; Long and Freeman, 1991).

Thus, if teachers correct mistakes and further embarrass shy students, it may isolate students even more. Instead teacher can repeat back the corrected statement which would help the students to understand without any humiliation (Zhang, 2008).

Since various studies have shown that extroverts learn a second language better than introverts it is vital for second language learners to develop personality. Some hereditary factors contribute to personality development but some environmental influences can help to shape personality. Therefore, teachers teaching methodology should be adapted to the individual differences in order to enhance second language learning (Shahila & Meenakshi, 2012; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Ellis, 2012).

However, Eysench & Cookson (1969, as cited in Sharp, 2008) found that introverts have an advantage in learning as they have better study habits. Furthermore, various studies reveal that introverted personality would be better suited to classroom learning

especially reading, grammar (Long & Freeman, 1991) and writing skills even though extroverts are more resistant to fossilization (Shahila & Meenakshi, 2012; Lightbown & Spada, 2006, Ellis, 2012; Kayaoglu, 2013).

Therefore, extroversion and introversion are major elements that come under personality factor, which hinder second language learning if sufficient corrective measures are not taken by educators to enhance learning.

2.2.2 Motivation

Ellis (2003) states that motivation involves the attitudes and affective states that affect the degree of effort that learners make to learn a second language. Previous studies have revealed that motivation is strongly related to second language proficiency (Asadpour, Khajavy & Gapanchi, 2011; Selinker & Gass, 2009; Finegan, 1999).

Second language motivational self-system is also considered as a significant predictor of the second language proficiency. Students who learn English for different reasons are different in their level of language proficiency. Students who learn English for intrinsic reasons and to have an ideal self-image are more proficient than those who learn English for various other reasons (Asadpour, Khajavy & Ghapanchi, 2011; Harmer, 2004). Learners with an instrumental reason for learning a second language can be successful even though integrative motivation is more effective (Ellis, 2012). However, Lightbown & Spada (2006) and Cook (2001) assert that there is no distinction between these two types of motivation and they both are related to success in second language learning.

In the same way the results of a study conducted by Pae (2008) reveals that intrinsic motivation is essential for second language learners as it is the most influential factor

that determines learners' self-confidence and motivation to learn the target language. Similarly, Ellis (2012) claims that intrinsic motivation contributes strongly to second language learning. Thus, teachers need to promote intrinsic motivation to learn a second language successfully. Moreover, teachers are recommended to organize learning activities that are intrinsically motivating and maintain a conducive learning environment to facilitate learners in their journey of second language learning. This indicates that a student-centered teaching methodology accompanied with interactive activities and communicative opportunities would promote intrinsic motivation in learning a second language (Pae, 2008; Cook, 2001; Harmer, 2004).

Since the study focuses on the factors that hinder second language development and the strategies that could be adopted to enhance learning, the effect of demotivation in second language learning cannot be underestimated. Some of the demotivating factors attributed by Jomairi (2011); Kikuchi and Sakai (2009) and Cook (2001) include learning contents and materials Simister (2004, as cited in Turuk, 2008) teachers' teaching styles and evaluation of students' performance, inadequate school facilities such as computers, laboratories and videos, lack of intrinsic motivation and self-confidence, low scores in examinations and students' attitude towards the subject.

Similarly, the study conducted by Matsumoto (2008) confirmed that the teacher is an important factor affecting second language learners' motivation (Harmer, 2004). Dornyei (1994) states that in order to motivate students' second language; teachers should be empathetic, congruent and accepting as they are the three basic teacher characteristics that enhance learning. Furthermore, teachers need to be facilitators and promote learner autonomy. Therefore, as educators it is important to consider the above factors in planning, organizing and conducting classroom events to develop second language proficiency in language learners. The studies also reveal that

sociocultural theory is related to second language learning as the factors mentioned above are discussed in the theory as well.

2.2.3 Effects of Age on Second Language Acquisition

Among the individual differences it is believed that age plays a key role in second language learning. It is thought that younger learners are more successful and researchers have found a relationship between age of acquisition and ultimate attainment in some aspects of the second language.

This is supported by the Critical Period Hypothesis. According to this hypothesis learners need to acquire language before puberty in order to reach native-like fluency (Nasrollahzadeh & Nejadansari, 2011; Cook, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Another experimental study provides evidence to support the critical period hypothesis. Coppieters (1987, as cited in Nasrollahzadeh & Nejadansari, 2011) tested 21 highly proficient speakers of French who had begun learning as adults, and compared their performance on a grammaticality judgment task with that of 20 native speakers. According to Coppieters even though the two groups could produce language like native speakers there is a difference in their grammatical competence.

However, Snow & Hohle (1978) and Zhiliang (2012) claim that there is no critical period in second language learning and language can be taught from any age upwards. Moreover, it has been argued that successful learning depends on the quality of teachers, the learning environment and personal effort.

Few studies on the effects of age on the process of second language acquisition show that age does not appear to affect the general development pattern. However, with regard to morphology and syntax the adolescents are better than children (Snow,

1978, as cited in Zhiliang, 2012). Experimental studies have also shown that adults outperform children in the short term even though where pronunciation is concerned adults do not always progress more rapidly than children (Selinker & Gass, 2009; Cook, 2001). In contrast, the study conducted by Neufeld's (1978, as cited in Nasrollahzadeh & Nejadansari, 2011) reveals that under the right conditions adult can achieve native ability in pronunciation which is the area considered to be the most difficult for adults to acquire.

Many learners, irrespective of their age do not achieve full native-speaker competence. They stop continuing to notice grammatical and lexical errors in their second language production and fail to achieve native like pronunciation (Ellis, 2008). Selinker (1972, as cited in Ellis, 2008) introduced the term fossilization to refer to this phenomenon. When fossilization occurs the learner stops learning before attaining the target language norms at all levels of linguistic structure and in all discourse domains. Learners fossilize in spite of the ability, opportunity and motivation to learn (Selinker & Lamendella, 1978, as cited in Ellis, 2008).

On the other hand, Tohidian & Tohidian (2009) and Cook (2001) state that at the initial stage adult learners are faster in learning even though they would be overtaken by children who receive enough exposure to second language. In addition, adults outperform younger learners in the early stages of second language development as they use their metalinguistic knowledge, memory strategies and problem solving skills to learn the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Chomsky suggests that the reason why children can master a very complicated language in such a few years is that they have a language acquisition device in their brains (Ellis, 2012).

Hence, it could be said that both children and adults have advantages and disadvantages in learning a second language and their way of learning is different as they have different needs, competencies and cognitive skills.

2.2.4 Language Transfer

Second language learning is different from first language acquisition, as second language learners bring complete knowledge of their first language grammar to the second language learning task. On the other hand, several researchers have drawn attention to the fact that transfer happens not only from first language to second language but also from second language to first language and could be considered as a challenge for adult second language learners. In the field of second language learning, the role of transfer is still controversial, even though all researchers assume that transfer plays an important role in second language learning (Daller & Sakel, 2012; Gass & Selinker, 2009; Ellis, 2012).

Differences between the target language and the first language results in learning difficulty and similarities in learning ease. Studies conducted on first language transfer reveals that transfer can take place as a result of both difference between and similarity with the target language (Daller & Sakel, 2012; Kleinmann, 1978, as cited in Ellis, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

The first language may influence learners' second language in different ways. If the features in the target language are so distant and different from their first language they may prefer to avoid or not to try them. Moreover, learners draw on their knowledge of other languages as they try to discover the complexities of the new language they are learning. Research also shows that if the two languages are closely related and if they share common characteristics then learners assume that a word or

sentence structure of the first language would have an English equivalent (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

A study conducted by Anton & Dicamilla (2012) reveals that first year students of Spanish used their first language to complete tasks that are assigned to them whereas, the fourth-year students used second language most of the time. Based on this finding, instructors are recommended to allow students use their first language in the language classroom and in fact, it should not be taken negatively (Daller, & Sakel, 2012; Cook, 2001).

A study conducted by Seng and Hashim (2006), reveals that students switch between the first language and second language as they read and verbalize their thoughts. This could be done both intentionally and unintentionally (Ellis, 2012) when they are faced with difficulties that hinder their comprehension.

Research also shows that early first language skills are strongly related to their second language learning several years later, and that first language skills is an important source of individual differences among second language learners. It also proves that students who have lower levels of first language skills will likely have lower levels of second language aptitude since first language literacy, and aptitude have been found to be strong predictors of second language proficiency. Therefore, second language educators should consider the role that first language plays in learning a second language (Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009; Asfaha, Beckman, Kuvers, & Kroon, 2009).

Therefore, teachers should be more tolerant with low level second language learners' reliance on their first language if their second language fails them for an effective thinking. On the other hand, for high level learners teachers should encourage to think

in second language as much as possible if the goal is to achieve native-like second language proficiency (Hui, 2010; Seng & Hashim, 2006).

In addition, Ellis (2008) states that over and above linguistic factors, a variety of individual learner factors have been found to influence transfer which include factors such as age, motivation, literacy and social class. Hence, it is the duty of the educators to consider the above factors in educating second language learners and plan lessons according to their needs.

2.2.5 Second Language Learning Anxiety and its Effect on Achievement in the Language

Previous research shows that there is a strong relationship between second language anxiety and second language achievement. It seems that the effects of anxiety can adversely affect a person's ability to acquire a second language. However, some studies found that, learners with higher levels of anxiety showed high achievement scores and everything about anxiety does not impede language learning (Horwitz, 2001). In fact a certain amount of anxiety helps the students to reach the target level and this type of anxiety is called facilitative anxiety which keeps the student alert (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Woodrow (2006) and Macintyre (1995) found that anxiety can affect oral communication for students speaking in English, while Elkhafaifi (2005) believes that high levels of second language learning anxiety tends to have higher levels of listening anxiety which affects student performance. Moreover, high anxiety students are unable to perform well on examination as they feel nervous and insecure while doing the exam (Chakrabarti, Anupama, Sengupta & Madhumala, 2012; Snyder,

2011; Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert, 1999; Pappamihiel, 2002; MacIntyre & Gardner, nd.).

In addition, second language learners who are anxious make errors continuously in their spelling or syntax as they freeze and forget at the time of test even though they have studied the language well. Due to anxiety learners lose their self-confidence and motivation for learning English as a result they become poor achievers (Chakrabarti, Anupama, Sengupta & Madhumala, 2012; Macintyre, 1995; Utar, Tohumoglu & Uckun, 2011). When learners are confronted with this situation, they use coping strategies such as avoidance from the learning experience which does not improve their language development (Pappamihiel, 2002). Some students also use strategies such as relaxation, preparation, peer seeking and positive thinking to reduce anxiety (Kao & Craigie, 2013).

A study conducted by Cheng & Schallert (1999) reveals that negative self-perception of language competence play an important role in second language writing anxiety. Moreover, language learner's varied experiences in learning the four language skills and history of success and failure (Horwitz, 2001) in performing each skill lead to differentiated attitudes, emotions and expectations about each of the language skills which causes anxiety in learning a second language.

Hence, educators need to reduce students' second language learning anxiety in order to help them perform better. This could be done by creating a learner-friendly classroom (Snyder, 2012; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Horwitz, 2001) and by making the learners understand that committing mistakes is not an offence, rather it helps the learner to use the correct form of the language to become successful learners. Positive

reinforcement is another strategy that could be used to reduce the anxiety level of the students (Elkhafaifi, 2005; Chakrabarti, Anupama, Sengupta & Madhumala, 2012).

At the same time group work which requires cooperation among students could be given to minimize anxiety and unhealthy competition could be avoided to make second language learning non-threatening. Moreover, mistakes need to be corrected through natural conversation to help students correct their own mistakes in an anxiety free environment. It is also clear from the study that a continuous process of evaluation is necessary instead of occasional tests which produce test anxiety (Madhumala, 2012; Chakrabarti, Anupama, Sengupta & Madhumala, 2012).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Woodrow (2006) reveals that a student may experience anxiety due to skills deficit or retrieval interference. A skill deficit anxious student would benefit from instruction in language learning strategies and scaffolding of skills whereas a retrieval interference anxious student would benefit from de-sensitization techniques.

In the same way, to reduce high levels of listening anxiety, instructors need to schedule more opportunities for listening practice and teach specific listening strategies to help students listen more effectively. Moreover, listening passages need to be selected according to the level of students and instructors should encourage students to share common feelings of nervousness and elicit creative ways to solve the problem (Elkhafaifi, 2005; & Horwitz, 2001).

2.2.6 Willingness to Communicate

In second language learning, willingness to communicate is the idea that language students who are willing to communicate in the second language. Following the

concept that the learners must talk in order to learn, there is a belief that learners who have a greater willingness to communicate in the second language will be more successful in learning the target language (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996, as cited in Amico, 2012; Ellis, 2012). Students investigating immersion programs reveal that competence and anxiety are strongly correlated with willingness to communicate (Amico, 2012).

MacIntyre (2007) asserts that extroverts show higher willingness to communicate than introverts when studying a second language in an unfamiliar situation. However, the pattern reverses when the study conditions are familiar.

In exploring the differences between the two learning contexts, a research conducted by Amino (2012) discovered that learners who study abroad demonstrated significantly higher levels of willingness to talk than learners who study at home as they get more exposure and opportunities to meet the target language which in turn reduces their anxiety level and become more competent (Shimizu, 2004).

Nonetheless, learners who had a higher level of willingness to communicate, frequency of communication was more as they communicate more in the classroom and outside of class, than learners with lower willingness to communicate. However, when fluency is concerned the study reveals that there is no indication that willingness to communication influences fluency (Amico, 2012).

A study conducted by Yashima, Nishide & Shimizu (2004) proves that self-confidence plays a crucial role for a person to be willing to communicate in a second language (Pashmforoosh, Daftarifard, & Alemi, 2011). Moreover, students who have a greater interest in international affairs, occupations and activities seem to be more

willing to communicate in the second language and voluntarily engage in communication more frequently as they have a high level of motivation.

The findings of the research conducted by Pashmforoosh, Daftarifard and Alemi (2011) reveal that lower proficient learners are unwilling to communicate inside the classroom and higher proficient learners communicate less outside the classroom. Therefore, language teachers should encourage students to communicate in the target language by providing communicative activities. The study also proves that willingness to communicate is related to various other factors as well.

2.2.7 Learners' Beliefs

Learners do vary considerably in their belief about language and language learning and their beliefs influence both the process and product of learning (Ellis, 2012). According to Nasrin (2011) people's belief could be inferred from the ways in which they act in the society rather than what they say about their belief.

People's belief also depends on their country, religion and language they speak. Moreover, learners belief guide them to learn the language and influences them to decide methodologies and approaches that are considered to be right for their second language learning. (Nasrin, 2011; Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

In line with this thought, studies conducted by Altan (2006) and Yaman (2011) proves that a language teacher's views about language related matters have a strong influence on the students' own beliefs. In the same way, knowledge of learners' beliefs about language learning leads to more effective instructional planning and implementation (Tsai & Huang, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Likewise, the findings of a study conducted by Polat (2009) reveal that mismatches in beliefs between teachers and learners can act as facilitating or debilitating forces in second language attainment. This study further suggests that matches in beliefs between teachers and students would lead to greater success in grammar learning and teaching as they both spent more time working on grammar. In addition, the study shows that students construct beliefs due to personal learning experiences, individual preferences, availability of grammar materials, and parental guidance (Polat, 2009).

In learning a second language students can have both positive and negative beliefs due to various reasons. A study conducted by Manfred (2012) confirms that positive beliefs facilitate second language learning. The results of the study show that out-of-class activities tended to possess positive beliefs regarding their English learning, in terms of their perceived value and nature of learning spoken English, as well as self-efficacy (Tsai & Huang, 2003) and expectation about learning English. Hence, teachers and curriculum planners should further foster the positive beliefs such as high level of motivation and implementation of activities which require student participation.

In the same way, teachers need to rectify the negative beliefs held by learners and provide support for learners to initiate activities related to productive skills which would facilitate second language learning (Manfred, 2012).

In spite of this, it is strongly believed that learning a second language at university, is a major challenge faced by learners especially if they do not possess a reasonable proficiency in English previously. Therefore, it is vital to identify the learners' belief towards language learning and cater according to their needs. A study held to explore the beliefs about English language learning among Chinese high school graduates

who are going to start their tertiary education in an English medium University shows that they prefer communicative teaching in their English class (Tsai & Huang, 2003). They also believe that the most ideal place to learn English is an English-speaking environment (Taverniers & Simon, 2011) and prefer a high degree of autonomy in their English learning. These findings are implicative for universities to conduct needs analysis and provide guidance for curriculum design and teaching methodology reforms (Chi-li, 2011).

Furthermore, studies were conducted to investigate differences in the beliefs that high-English-proficiency and low-English-proficiency learners held about English learning. The results revealed that high-proficiency learners tended to have more positive language learning beliefs than low-proficiency learners (Utar, Tohumoglu, & Uckun, 2011). It seems that high proficiency learners tended to perceive English learning as a relatively easy task (Ellis, 2012) and they believe they would learn to speak the language very well whereas, low proficiency learners thought that their limited language abilities would prevent them from speaking well ultimately (Tsai & Huang, 2003).

Thus, low proficiency learners tend to implement certain coping strategies to enhance second language learning. Likewise, according to some studies learners work hard to arrive at an error-free usage of English grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. In addition, participants of the study believe that practice needs to be given in these three areas even at tertiary education level for better achievement (Taverniers & Simon, 2011).

2.2.8 Intelligence

Intelligence involves the ability to think, solve problems, analyze situations and understand social values, customs and norms (Chowdhury, 2010). According to Janik (2004, as cited in Chowdhury, 2010) intelligence decrease after adolescence implying that it diminishes with age. Therefore, after adolescence it becomes difficult to learn a second language. On the other hand, Teepen (2005) regard intelligence as an innate genetically endowed and fixed individual ability which is constant throughout.

One argument among the researchers who explore the issue related to intelligence is that it is innate, testable and does not require language. However, intelligence tests are not language free. They require an understanding of the language of the test and the testing process (Gunderson & Siegel 2001).

Since IQ tests are conducted to measure intelligence in institutions which provide education, it is vital for the educators to understand the role it plays in learning a second language. Thereby, a research was conducted to find out the role intelligence plays in second language learning. The results of the test indicated that even though reading and language usage tests correlated with IQ level, listening comprehension and interpersonal communication skills did not correlate (Genesee, 1976; Teepen, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). This means that it has been strongly proven that intelligence is positively related to performance on academic aspects of second language learning although it is irrelevant to communicative second language tasks.

On the contrary, a study conducted by Chowdhury (2010) reveals that intelligence affects second language learning in terms of both structural and communicative means if the language is taught in a formal manner. The reason behind the effect of intelligence on the acquisition of English grammar is that while learning the

grammatical structures of a language, learners approach in an analytical way in which intelligence caters their understanding of the language. Similarly, intelligence affects the learners' progress of communicative skill because learners use the language in a way they develop sentences by keeping the structures in mind.

The study also shows significant differences among the IQ groups on various tests. In every case the above average students performed better than the below average students. This means a person who is more intelligent will learn a language more easily than a person who is less intelligent. In other words, intelligence positively affects in learning a second language (Genesee, 1976).

Conversely, the study postulates that the pattern of results according to IQ was similar for students in the immersion and French as a second language program. This proves that IQ level is not the most dominant variable for second language learning success (Genesee, 1976).

Even though IQ tests are abundantly used to measure intelligence, Gunderson & Siegel (2001) claim that it is inappropriate to use IQ tests with English as a Second Language students. This is because there is no way that an IQ test can reliably measure intelligence when the student's first language is different from the language of the test. In addition, according to Bonar (2005) IQ tests have been devised merely for predicting success in school and not the world at large. Therefore, it should not be thought to tap into many equally valuable abilities such as common sense, organizational skill or creativity.

In an attempt to find out the abilities that compose intelligence, it has been revealed that both verbal (Lynn & Wilson, 2006) and emotional intelligences are abilities that contribute to second language learning. Verbal intelligence is the knowledge of

words, synonyms, and antonyms which is considered to be important for language acquisition (Gardner, 1983, as cited in Pishghadam, 2009). Emotional intelligence is a mental ability which influences second language learning and academic achievement (Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Pishghadam & Ghonsooly, 2008, as cited in Pishghadam, 2009).

Moreover, according to Gardner (1993, as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2006) individuals have multiple intelligences which include abilities in the area of music, interpersonal relations, and athletics, as well as the verbal intelligence that is often associated with success in school.

The findings of the study conducted by Pishghadam (2009) suggest several implications for English language profession. Likewise, English teachers are expected to improve their own emotional competencies in order to help their learners. In addition, strategies could be used to increase emotional intelligence in the classroom such as discussions, watching emotional clips and so on.

2.2.9 Language Aptitude

Second language aptitude affects second language learning both directly and indirectly. It constitutes a special ability for learning a second language (Gass & Selinker, 2008) and can be assumed that a learner with high aptitude may learn with greater ease and speed. This implies that language aptitude plays a major role in learning a second language successfully both in, formal and informal settings (Ellis, 2008).

On the other hand, Kormos & Safar (2008) suggests that second language aptitude is a skill rather than an underlying ability which develops spontaneously during language

learning and it can be affected by experience. However, some studies reveal that it can also be improved through systemic training.

Language aptitude consists of four independent variables namely rote memory, phonetic coding, grammatical sensitivity and working memory (Winke, 2013). Studies conducted by Kormos & Safar (2008), and Erlam (2005) reveal that working memory capacity is a key underlying cognitive variable affecting both language aptitude and language learning success.

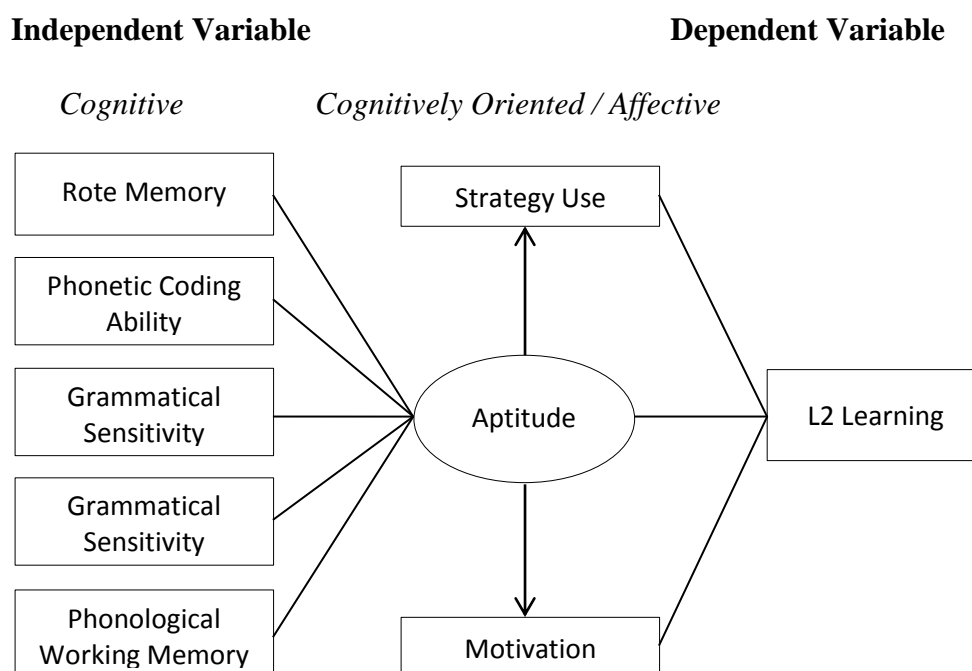


Figure 2.3 Components of language aptitude

Adapted from (Winke, 2013).

The components in the above diagram differentially impacts second language learning and it has been believed that second language learning problems are due to learners' strengths and weaknesses in the subcomponents of language aptitude (Winke, 2013).

The findings of the study conducted by Winke (2013) reveal that early first language skills are linked to later second language aptitude and both first language and second

language measures tap into the same language construct or component. As a result there are long term relationships between first language and second language skills. The study also proves that certain factors such as motivation and anxiety influences second language aptitude which means that students with low motivation and high anxiety have lower levels of first language skills and second language aptitude.

Research done on second language aptitude shows that low proficiency learners use various strategies in learning, while high proficiency learners use fewer strategies in learning and they have better memories and higher aptitude (Winke, 2013). Therefore, teachers need to makes students aware of the various strategies that could be used to minimize individual differences in learner aptitude.

Likewise, deductive instruction is necessary as it gives students opportunities to engage in language production and minimizes any effect that individual differences in learner aptitude may have with respect to instructional outcomes (Erlam, 2005).

2.3 Previous Studies

Much research has been conducted on the factors which influence second language learning. Even though the studies do not highlight on all the factors together, there has been ample research conducted to find out the relationship between second language learning and the factors that influence learning separately. Some studies focus on one or two factors together while others concentrate on one particular factor. From the information gathered it is very clear that there are certain areas in which the researchers are more interested in investigating in the field of second language learning. Likewise abundant studies emphasize on personality, motivation, age of acquisition, and anxiety while less attention has been given to areas such as intelligence, willingness to communicate and aptitude.

Most of the studies conducted to find out the relationship between personality and second language learning prove that personality factors significantly influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language. This is supported by the findings of Sharp (2008), Zhang (2008), Asadpour, Khajavy, and Ghapanchi (2011) where they concluded that the two most examined dimensions of personality that have an affective influence on language learning are extroversion and introversion and they both have strengths and weaknesses.

The most widely researched area in the field of second language learning is age. Various studies have been undertaken to explore the effects of age on second language learning. The studies in this review discussed four main effects of age on second language acquisition. Likewise, the most detailed study of the effects of age on the acquisition process is Harley's (1986, as cited in Nasrollahzadeh & Nejadansari, 2011) investigation of early and late immersion programmes. The study reveals similar patterns in acquiring grammatical features in the two groups even though process differences occur in second language pronunciations.

Studies that have been conducted to explore how students could be motivated to learn a second language have shown that teachers play a crucial role in motivating students. For instance, the study conducted by Williams and Burden (1997, as cited in Matsumoto, 2011) proves that second language learners' interactions with teachers, including learning experiences, feedback, rewards, praise, and punishments are seen as relevant factors which affect second language learners' motivation. This also shows the importance of behaviorist theory in second language learning as the proponents of the theory considers the above components as major tenets of the theory.

Second language learners encounter a variety of challenges in learning the language. Likewise, language transfer is another issue faced by learners and the effects of it have been amply documented in second language learning. A study conducted by Seng & Hashim (2006) proves that students switch between first language and second language as they read and verbalize their thoughts. Likewise, students tend to use their first language when they are unable to comprehend. Similarly, studies conducted by Sparks, Patton, Ganschow & Humbach (2009); DiCamilla, & Anton (2012) reveal that early first language skills are strongly related to their second language learning several years later and that first language skills is an important source of individual differences among second language learners.

Research shows that there is a strong relationship between second language anxiety and second language achievement. Studies conducted by Chakrabarti, Anupama, Sengupta & Madhumala (2012); Macintyre (1995); Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999) reveal that high anxiety students do not perform well on examination as they feel insecure and nervous which makes it difficult to use the language or take the test. Moreover, they continuously make errors in spelling or syntax as they freeze and forget at the time of test and it has also been observed that anxiety leads to the loss of self-confidence and motivation for learning. Therefore, anxiety levels of students need to be brought down in order to help learners perform better in their exams. Another study conducted by Alemi, Daftarifard & Pashnforoosh (2011) shows that second language learners who are anxious tend to communicate less as they are unable to communicate well.

An important goal of second language learning is to facilitate better communication and understanding between individuals who come from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, willingness to communicate is another factor that contributes to

second language learning. As highlighted by Yashima, Nishide & Shimizu (2004) self confidence in communication in a second language is crucial for a person to be willing to communicate in that language. Moreover, studies conducted by Amico (2012) and Shimizu (2004) prove that learners who study abroad are more willing to communicate than learners who study at home which indicate that learning context play a role in second language learning. The study also shows that competence and anxiety are strongly correlated with willingness to communicate. In the same way, MacIntyre (2007) suggests that extroverts show higher willingness to communicate than introverts when studying a second language in an unfamiliar situation. While going through the research conducted regarding willingness to communicate, it is quite evident that few studies were devoted to explore the relationship between willingness to communicate and second language learning.

Research shows that belief plays a major role in second language learning. For example, Huang & Tsai (2003) investigated the differences of the beliefs high English-proficiency and low English-proficiency learners hold in English learning. The study led to the conclusion that beliefs play an important role in second language learning and high proficiency learners hold relatively positive language learning beliefs than low proficiency learners.

Several researchers argue that there is a large connection between general intelligence and second language learning. In this regard, Chowdhury (2010) tested 20 tertiary level students learning English as a second language in terms of their intelligence, grammatical proficiency and communicative competence. The results of the study reveal that intelligence affects second language learning in terms of grammatical components of the language and communicative competence.

Another factor which is closely related to intelligence and which affects second language learning is aptitude. Winke (2013) examined the construct of aptitude in learning Chinese as a second language to an advanced level. The results of the study proves that rote memory contributed second language aptitude most and working memory the least.

2.4 Methodological Issues

A large number of studies have investigated the factors which influence second language learning. Likewise, some studies, such as Sharp (2008) aimed at examining the relationships which exist between personality and second language learning. However, the study only offers a very small sample which makes it difficult to find out the relationship. Hence, work needs to be done with larger samples to see if consistent patterns become evident. Moreover, there are vocational and educational biases in the samples. Therefore, it would not be advisable to make generalizations about the Chinese population. Hence, more comprehensive measures of personality and learners strategy are required so that precise statistical evidence can be found that will shed light on the belief held by educators of the importance of the issues in learning.

On the other hand, the current study involves ten participants that would help the researcher to delve more deeply into those individuals to generate a subjective understanding of how they perceive and interpret ideas related to second language learning. Moreover, there would not be any bias as the participants are selected from the same university and they are involved in second language teaching and learning.

Various studies have been conducted to examine the effects of age on second language acquisition. For instance Coppieters (1987) conducted an experimental study

to provide evidence to support the critical period hypothesis. However, the study did not include a group of learners who had started to learn a second language French as children, thus, it is impossible to assure that the result obtained reflect age as opposed to some other factors.

The participants of the present study involve adult learners who have started learning English after the critical period which makes it easier to generalize the study to the whole population.

The study conducted by Yaman (2012) regarding students' belief in language learning has been carried out with the students of only three Anatolian high schools in Mersin. If more students are included the results may be varied, and there can be more generalizable points. Furthermore, a similar study can be conducted on students in all high schools in Mersin and the results can be compared.

There has been ample research conducted to find out the relationship between motivation and second language proficiency. Likewise, the study conducted by Ghapanchi, Khajavy & Asadpour (2011) regarding motivation asked students to show their second language proficiency on a self-reported scale which may underestimate or overestimate their true ability. Instead, researcher could assess students' second language proficiency by using Standard English language tests like IELTS. Moreover, participants' age and sex were not controlled in the study even though boys and girls have different reasons for attending college.

Studies have been conducted to find out the relationship between second language fluency and willingness to communicate. Likewise, the results of the study conducted by D'Amino (2012) proved that students who study abroad are more fluent in communication and are willing to communicate in the target language. On the other

hand, learners who studied at home do not appear to be fluent in the language and significant increases were found for hesitations indicating a shift away from more fluent speech. This does not necessarily mean that the intensive study had a negative impact on fluency. Yet, since the study analyzed two minutes long samples it is necessary to look at larger segments of data before being able to make a more decisive conclusion.

Since anxiety plays a major role in second language learning, studies were conducted to find out how it affects students' achievements. Likewise, Elkhafaifi (2005) conducted a study to find out whether less commonly taught languages produce more anxiety than more commonly taught languages. However, since the study offers a very small sample it made it difficult to conclude that less commonly taught languages produce greater anxiety than more commonly taught languages. Moreover, the sample was distributed among several institutions with different instructors, grading scales, teaching methods and instructor experience. These variations render the results of the study less applicable.

Among the factors that hinder second language learning, intelligence is considered to affect learning of grammatical components of a second language and also communicative competence. The study conducted by Chowdhury (2010) deals with the issue of intelligence and tries to find out how strongly intelligence affects the acquisition of a second language. Unfortunately due to time constraint it was difficult to manage enough time to interview the participants individually. As a result the researcher was able to interview only ten participants and spent only five to six minutes for each interview which made it difficult to come up with a strong conclusion.

2.5 Conclusion

Over the years, various theories and approaches have emerged to study and analyze the process of second language learning. However, the three main areas of focus which provide theoretical paradigms in guiding the course of second language learning are Behaviourist Theory, Innatist Theory and Interactionist Theory. Hence, these three theories are employed in the present study to have a better understanding of the challenges students encounter in learning a second language and the strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language learning.

In a world where probably more people are bilingual, the learning and use of second languages are vital to the everyday lives of millions of people. A second language affects people's careers, futures, their lives and their identities. Therefore, helping people learn second languages more effectively is considered to be an important task today. In this regard educators need to be well aware of the individual differences among learners in order to fulfill their needs and to achieve the learning objectives.

As the present study focuses on tertiary students, it is important to highlight that they are faced with many challenges even though there are some positive factors which enable them to master the language skills successfully. In this sense, adult learners are notable for a number of special characteristics. Previous research reveals that adults are capable of engaging with abstract thought and they have a whole range of life experiences to draw on, which facilitates learning. In addition, they have expectations about the learning process which enable them to sustain the level of motivation.

However, adults are never entirely problem-free as they have a number of characteristics which make learning problematic. Likewise, their previous learning experiences incline them to one particular methodological style which makes them

uncomfortable with modern teaching methods. Moreover, if they have experienced failure or have come across instances where they have been criticized in their educational career they would become anxious and under-confident about learning the language. It has also been noted that many adult learners believe that their intellectual powers diminish with age and this negative thinking creates barriers which hinder them from reaching the target. Apart from this, their responsibilities and lack of time that need to be devoted for language development also prevent them from learning language skills.

Hence, teachers of adult second language learners need to take all of these factors into consideration. They need to be aware of the obstacles adult learners encounter in their learning process and assist them by organizing learning activities that foster the development of the language. It is also the responsibility of the educators to minimize the bad effects of past learning experiences of the students. Likewise, the fear of failure could be diminished by offering activities that are achievable, challenging and appropriate to the level of the students. Teachers need to encourage students to instill the various concepts of the target language by providing constructive feedback and positive reinforcement. In addition, listening to the concerns of the learners is unavoidable as it is necessary to modify the teaching styles according to the learning styles of the students.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, population and sampling, instruments used to collect data, and the procedures employed in data collection. It would also comprise of a framework for data analysis which would help to examine the challenges students encounter in learning a second language. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university. The study further sought to provide strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level.

3.1 Research Design

When conducting research it is vital to choose an approach that is appropriate to examine the topic of interest. It can be either qualitative or quantitative and it all depends on the type of information the researcher needs to gather. In general, quantitative research deals more about numbers whereas qualitative research requires descriptions of the phenomena under study. Distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is that the former is deductive and the latter is inductive (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2008).

The current study is a qualitative research which aimed to do an in-depth analysis of the challenges students encounter in learning a second language. A qualitative

research methodology was employed in the collection and analysis of data stemming from this study as it emphasizes more on the views of people which would help the practitioners to improve their effectiveness in teaching, which in turn would help students to achieve better second language competencies. Moreover, the researcher was able to get an insight of the experiences of real people in real settings.

Qualitative methods can be used to examine social contexts systematically as a whole (Hatch, 2002). Another reason for employing a qualitative approach was that it included the voices of the participants which provided a clear picture of the difficulties they came across in learning a second language.

According to Deirdred, Vanderstoep and Scott (2008) a qualitative perspective assumes that knowledge is constructed through communication and interaction and is within the perceptions and interpretations of the individual. In other words knowledge is constructed or created by people. Moreover, it assumes that the researcher should examine the larger context in which people and knowledge function which is called social construction of reality.

Hence, a qualitative design has been selected which concentrated on the meanings of experiences by exploring how people define and make sense of these experiences and hence facilitated to address the research questions. The goal was to understand the viewpoint of each and every participant.

3.2 Population and Sample

Population could be defined as the universe of people to which the study could be generalized, and a sample can be the people who participate in the study from the

population. Sampling is important because it is impossible to study all the members of a population (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2008).

The population of the study was the learners who study English as a Second Language at MNU and the lecturers who teach the subject. It comprised of 5 qualified and experienced English Language teachers from two different faculties and a department under MNU and 5 students who learn English as a Second language in one of the faculties. A non-random sampling technique was employed as the participants have been selected based on characteristics they possess and their availability to participate. Likewise, the faculties were selected based on convenience sampling as it did not attempt to generalize the findings to the whole population of second language learners in the Maldives.

According to Johnston and Vanderstoep (2008) convenience samples often involve people whom the researcher knows or people who live close to the research site. The advantage of convenience sampling is the ease with which the participants can be selected. Thus, the participants from the faculties which were in close proximity to where the researcher works have been selected for the study.

As the study aims to find out the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency and the strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language learning, both students and teachers were selected through purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling focuses on particular characteristics of a population that enable to answer the research question. Purposive sampling would be the best way to get the views of people who have special expertise and is considered as valid (Trochim, 2006).

Therefore, since the researcher required teachers who demonstrated experience and expertise in the area of second language learning, purposive sampling was employed as it was appropriate for this particular study. Moreover, learners were selected based on their academic performance which included high, average and low ability students who were studying English as a Second Language. They were selected from the faculty that the researcher works as it was easier to identify the different ability groups.

3.3 Instrumentation

One of the most popular and widely used qualitative research tools is interviewing. There are three types of interviews namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2008). In light of the literature reviewed, the data base of the current study included five unstructured interviews with qualified and experienced English Language teachers and five students who study English as a Second Language.

According to Johnston and Vanderstoep (2008) an unstructured interview allows the researcher to create impromptu questions while conducting the interview. It also requires preparation and clear outline of the objectives on the part of the researcher. Moreover, the interviewer must have the preparation and the apt skill to direct the interview in successful directions depending on the response of the participant.

Unstructured interviews in qualitative research involve asking open-ended questions in order to discover the participants' percepts on the topic of interest. It can help in generating data and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The main aim of unstructured interview is to expose the researcher to unexpected themes and to help develop a better understanding of the interviewees' social reality from the

interviewees' perspectives. Moreover, through unstructured interviews the researcher could access people's experiences, their inner perceptions, attitudes and feelings (Wildemuth & Zhang, n.d.).

Hence, interview with lecturers contained nine different open-ended questions and interview with learners contained ten open-ended questions which were based on the topic of the study. Each interview took approximately 20 – 30 minutes depending on the subjects being interviewed and each interview was electronically recorded, transcribed and member checked by the participants.

Member check is a technique used by researchers to help improve the credibility, validity, reliability and transferability of the information provided. In many member checks the interview transcriptions are given to members of the sample in order to check the authenticity of the work. Member checks are completed by sharing the information with the participants involved and confirming the accuracy and completeness of the work. Member checks also decrease the incident of incorrect data and the incorrect interpretation of data. (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2008).

Table 3.1 Distribution of the Samples

Faculty	Teachers			Students: (English performance based on the grade obtained in the first semester 2013)			Total
	No.	Experience	Qualification	High (HD, DN)	Average (CR, PP)	Low (FC, FF)	
1	2	9 yrs.	PhD.	1	1	3	7
		18 yrs.	MA				
2	2	9 yrs.	MA				2
		26 yrs.	BAELT				
3	1	17 yrs.	MA				1
Total	5			1	1	3	10

Key: HD - High Distinction
 DN - Distinction
 CR - Credit
 PP - Pass
 FC - Fail Condition
 FF - Fail
 PhD - Doctor of Philosophy
 MA - Master of Arts
 BAELT - Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Ethical issues are present in any kind of research and ethics is important as it prevents or reduces harm through the application of appropriate ethical principles. Thus, the protection of participants in the research study is imperative (Wynaden, Eisenhauer & Orb, 2001). Data collection began after obtaining approval to undertake the research from the Human Ethics Committee of Villa College. Formal contact with the Central Administration of MNU was made by sending a letter to the Vice Chancellor along with the information sheet about the present study. Finally informed consents were gained from both the teachers and the students who were involved in the study as interviewees.

The interview is undoubtedly the most common source of data in qualitative research. The person to person is the most prevalent even though group interviews and focus groups are conducted (Silverman, Nelson, & Thomas, 2011). Thus, the main source of data collection in the present study was interviews. The intention was to listen to the voice of participants in order to describe the phenomenon from the participants' points of views.

Before conducting an interview certain things need to be considered by the researcher. Likewise, respect for people is central in human research. It involves recognizing that human beings have value in themselves and therefore, should inform all interactions between them. This is especially important when audio or video recording an individual or a group of research participants. Moreover, each interview transcript should be verified by the relevant participant for the accuracy and completeness before analysis is completed. In addition, researchers need to ensure the privacy, confidentiality and safe storage of recordings (Interview Recording and Transcribing, 2007).

Hence, interviews were conducted in the work place of the participants and were scheduled at a time which was convenient for them. Initially interviews were piloted by administering mock interview to two teachers who were not involved in the study. This helped the researcher to understand the difficulties participants encountered in comprehending or interpreting what was being asked in each question. The advantage of piloting the interview was that the researcher got the chance to formulate the questions in a way that was more comprehensible for the participants prior to the actual interview.

Before conducting each interview, information would be provided to the participants regarding the study and consent would be obtained for audio recording the interviews. Participants would also be assured about their anonymity, to ensure that they would not be compromised in any way. Moreover, as personal interaction between researchers and participants is crucial in data gathering (Silverman, Nelson, & Thomas, 2011) a good rapport was established in order to maintain trust with the respondents throughout the process. A friendly atmosphere and a good relationship was built by keeping in mind the research focus and the role of researcher so that the participants could describe their true feelings, thoughts, intentions and experience without any hesitation. Details were also provided to the participants regarding the methodology of the study including the storage of data. After the interviews all transcriptions were stored in a computer filing system for easy retrieval and were password protected.

3.5 Framework for Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, framework analysis was employed as it is a qualitative method and is appropriate to research that has specific questions, limited time frame and a pre-designed sample. In the analysis stage the gathered data is sifted, charted and sorted according to the key issues and themes. This process involves five steps namely familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting and mapping and interpretation (Srivastava & Thompson, 2009).

Although the researcher was familiar with the data, all the transcriptions were carefully read before highlighting the important statements. The main reason was to get a sense of the whole. Familiarization refers to the process where the researcher becomes familiarized with the data collected and gains a general idea of the collected

data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, as cited in Srivastava & Thompson, 2009). After the identification of statements it was read once again to make sure all the significant statements were included and also the ones which were highlighted were significant. While doing this the thoughts which came to the mind was written in the margin. At this stage some changes were brought as there were few statements which were not recognized before. Identifying a thematic framework was the second stage where the researcher recognized emerging themes that can be used to filter and classify the data. Devising and refining a thematic framework involved making judgments about meaning, about the relevance and importance of issues and about implicit connections between ideas (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, as cited in Srivastava & Thompson, 2009).

Indexing was the third stage where portions of the data that corresponded to a particular theme were identified. In this stage numerical system was used for indexing references and was noted in the margin beside the text (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, as cited in Srivastava & Thompson, 2009). Likewise, after the completion of the task with all the interviews the topics were listed on a table. Afterwards all the similar topics were grouped together.

The fourth stage in the framework analysis was charting in which specific pieces of data that were indexed were arranged in charts of the themes. This means that the data was lifted from its original textual context and placed in charts that consisted of the headings and subheadings that were drawn during the thematic framework. Following topics were written in columns according to their significance. All the major topics were written in one column, unique topics in another column and the leftovers in a separate column. Later the topics were abbreviated and given codes. Once again the codes were revised to make sure all the necessary information was included. In

addition, when too many data segments got the same code, it was broken down to sub codes (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, as cited in Srivastava & Thompson, 2009).

The final stage was the mapping and interpretation which involved the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the chart. This analysis provided a schematic diagram that guided the researcher in the interpretation of the data set (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994, as cited in Srivastava & Thompson, 2009). Finally, by reading the assembled data in one place the researcher was able to generate a set of statements that reflected the findings and conclusions of the study.

Later, the statements were read repeatedly to create themes that related to the study's key area.

Data Analysis Process

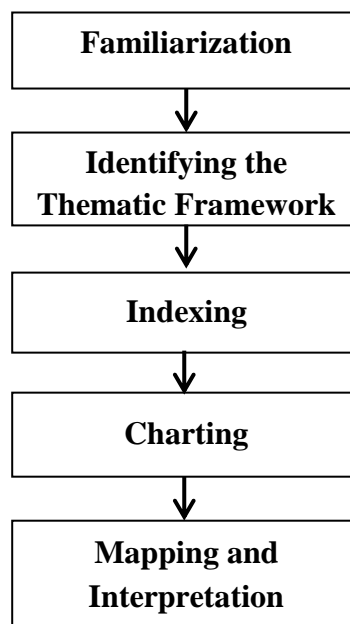


Figure 3.1 Data analysis process

3.6 Conclusion

The body of this chapter detailed what needs to be included under methodology in order to achieve the objectives of the present study. Thus, it explained the research design, population and sampling techniques, instrumentation, data collection procedures and the framework for data analysis.

Framework analysis was employed to analyze the data as it is an excellent tool and is based on the accounts of the participants. Moreover, it is systematic and comprehensive in nature as it allows a methodical treatment of the data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to recognize the challenges MNU students face in learning a second language. The review of related literature discussed in chapter two highlighted eight interrelated factors that influence second language learning which in turn enabled the researcher to formulate the following research questions to fulfil the purpose of the present study.

Research Questions

1. What factors hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university?
2. What strategies could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level?

In the previous chapter the methodology used to answer these research questions has been described including the method used for data analysis. In this regard it has been mentioned that framework analysis was employed in analyzing the data. This chapter presents the findings derived from the data using this method. Hence, eleven major themes were identified and categorized under four main headings known as cognitive factors, psychological factors social factors and contextual factors. These themes which are related to second language learning would be discussed in detail.

4.1 Research Question 1

What factors hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university?

4.2 Cognitive Factors

Under cognitive factors four major themes have been identified. These themes are related to factors such as belief, first language interference, motivation and intelligence.

4.2.1 Belief Can Affect Second Language Learning.

The participants have the same point of view regarding learners' beliefs towards the learning process and how it affects second language learning. Likewise, most of the participants have suggested that negative experiences causes negative beliefs and sometimes students' opinion of their own language proficiency tend to misjudge themselves which affects second language learning. These are illustrated with sample responses below.

Negative belief has got a great bearing on their interest and also outcome of their learning. (Lecturer E)

I think when they have very strong belief about their ability it can hinder the learning process. (Lecturer A)

On the other hand, according to the participants' second language learners' belief can contribute positively to the learning process as well. When learners think positively towards language learning and if they think that learning a second language is

important then they put more genuine effort which would definitely improve their language skills. Thus, some of the lecturers mentioned that:

If we [lecturers] have high expectations and if they [students] have positive thinking it has proven to be positive sign in their learning. (Lecturer C)

Students who believe that English Language is important they put a lot of effort to improve their English. (Lecturer D)

Similarly, learners have pinpointed that they believe negative beliefs have a negative impact on second language learning and positive beliefs have a complimentary effect towards second language learning. Therefore, it could be concluded that belief affects second language learning both positively and negatively. This is further elaborated by the following quote.

If our expectations are high and have a strong belief then that would contribute to learn the language effectively. Whereas, if we have negative attitudes or beliefs towards the language and feel that it is impossible to learn the language then we would not attempt to learn or give any attention to it which would definitely hinder the learning process. (Learner G)

4.2.2 Language Transfer

There is an indelible effect of the mother tongue on the learners while learning English as a second language. Likewise, differences between the target language and the first language results in learning difficulty and similarities in learning ease. The interviews demonstrated that majority of the participants believe that first language influences the second language negatively. It is because when using the target language students tend to think in Dhivehi and translate into English which creates a

lot of problems as the two languages are quite different. This is illustrated by the following responses given by some of the lecturers.

If mother tongue is different from the second language then the students find it really hard to learn a second language or to acquire second language if there are similarities between the first language and the second language between the mother tongue and second language the students would find it easier to learn a second language. (Lecturer D)

The negative transfer would be they [adults] tend to think in Dhivehi and translate into English and that creates a lot of issues because our languages are very different. (Lecturer B)

Moreover, when the question regarding influence of first language on learners of second language was put up, most of the learners stressed on the difficulties caused by the first language as it is deeply embedded in their brains. Likewise, one of the learners mentioned that:

When I try to say something in English I tend to use the same sentence structure that we use in Dhivehi..... I always think that English grammar and Dhivehi grammar would be the same. (Learner G)

However, it is important to note that one of the participants believes that first language does not influence second language learning and in fact another participant believes that it can have some positive effects because in the process of acquiring their first language they would have received some knowledge regarding how languages are learned. The following quotes illustrate this:

I don't think. (I don't think first language influence second language learning?)

(Learner F)

The mother tongue interference can be a positive thing can be a negative thing.

Positive thing in the sense that if they have background knowledge they know that in a sentence that there be a verb somewhere or a noun somewhere so they will try to bring that out. (Lecturer B)

4.2.3 Motivation is a Key Factor in Learning a Second Language

There are many factors that affect second language learning. Likewise, motivation is considered to be one of the most influential factors that contribute strongly to second language learning. In this sense, all the participants of the study believe that motivation plays a major role in second language learning and if students are not motivated to learn the language then they would not be able to learn effectively. This is further evidenced by the following excerpt.

Motivation is a key factor in making the whole journey in second language learning a success. (Lecturer C)

Since there are two types of motivation namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, all the lecturers have highlighted on the importance of these two. In the same way, even though the learners are not familiar with the above terminologies they have described the terms to make it clear that both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are necessary to learn a second language. The following quote illustrates this:

Motivation is an important factor we need to be intrinsically motivated we need to be extrinsically motivated to learn a second language. (Interview D)

4.2.4 Intelligence Affects Second Language Learning

Intelligence is considered to be one of the factors that influence second language learning when taught in a formal setting. In this regard most of the participants have emphasized the importance of intelligence in second language learning and they believe it would definitely contribute to the language learning process. This is illustrated with sample responses below.

When the students are intelligent the students would find it easier to understand and the concepts the rules of the language. (Lecturer D)

A student who is intelligent will be able to grasp the language quickly.

(Lecturer E)

Most of the learners took a stance to support the importance of intelligence and its contribution in learning the second language but there was one participant who believes that intelligence is not required to learn a second language. She claimed that:

Intelligence I don't think there is any relationship with language. (Lecturer A)

4.3 Psychological Factors

Themes have also been emerged that can be classified under psychological factors. Likewise, some of the factors that hinder second language learning which falls under this category include age, anxiety and willingness to communicate.

4.3.1 Anxiety Plays a Major Role in Second Language Learning

Previous research has proved that there is a strong relationship between second language anxiety and second language achievement. It seems that the effects of anxiety can badly affect a person's ability to acquire a second language. Likewise,

majority of the participants consider anxiety as one of the major factors that hinder second language learning. It was very common for lecturers to say that:

There is a lot of correlation because we know anxious students usually they don't perform very well. (Lecturer B)

There is a correlation between the students' second language anxiety levels and their achievement levels in the university... we ask them to contribute their ideas in group activities they are not able to actually do it appropriately or properly or effectively because of their anxiety and due to this anxiety they are not even motivated sometimes. (Lecturer D)

This shows that motivation is related to second language anxiety as well.

The relationship between anxiety and learning of second language is supported by all the participants. They believe the outcome of their anxiousness leads to making them feel uneasy with the use of English and they tend to lose confidence thinking that they might make errors and thereby often make mistakes while trying to be too cautious. According to the participants the fear among the learners is that their classmates might detect their errors in oral presentations and mock at them, but if this fear can be driven out then the learners will grasp the language more easily. Therefore, the introverts often tend to toil while learning a second language while extroverts flair better with much less efforts. This is further elaborated by the following responses of the learners.

Sometimes due to anxiety I must say that I feel bit uncomfortable. (Learner I)

I know very well that I am not competent enough to use the language and I will make mistakes. Therefore, my self confidence and self-esteem becomes quiet low

which hinders the development of the second language. Since my anxiety level is high I tend to make errors in speaking and writing because most of the time I will be very worried and confused in class. (Learner J)

When I feel anxious most of the time I don't know what the teacher says. Moreover, I am very much afraid that the teacher may ask a question which I may not be able to answer. (Lecturer G)

On the other hand, everything about anxiety does not impede language learning. In fact a certain amount of anxiety helps the students to reach the target level. Thus, both the lecturers and learners believe that anxiety has positive effects as well. This is demonstrated by the following comments given by the lecturers and the learners.

Anxiety has helped me to gain a higher score. (Learner I)

A little bit of anxiety I believe is good for them because unless they are anxious and they are not worried about the result or the assignments that they do they won't do it at a good standard. (Lecturer C)

There is a difference of opinion regarding the relation between anxiety and the learning of second language forwarded by a lecturer who prefers to believe that anxiety does not have a definite bearing with learning a language.

I don't personally believe that is a huge factor you know that it is necessarily specific to learning a language. (Lecturer A)

It is also notable that both anxiety and competence are strongly correlated with willingness to communicate. As it has been mentioned previously a number of participants have suggested that students avoid oral presentations and speaking in class using the target language because of anxiety and lack of competence. On the

other hand, if students are willing to communicate then the frequency of communication would be more both inside and outside the classroom which in turn would facilitate the learner to learn the target language more successfully.

4.3.2 Willingness to Communicate

Willingness to communicate is also related to personality traits as it depends on whether the learner is an extrovert or an introvert. Usually extroverts are more fluent and willing to communicate compared to introverts and it is a factor that contributes to second language learning.

According to the information provided by the participants communication is considered to be a major factor that affects second language learning. Learners believe that they are unable to communicate due to lack of confidence. This is elaborated by the following quote.

The main reason why I find it difficult to speak in English is due to lack of confidence. (Learner G)

Many of the participants also believe that they are reluctant to speak in front of the class due to the fact that their class mates may laugh or tease them if they make a mistake. The situation leads to developing of inhibition among the learners. In an attempt to express this one of the learners suggested that:

We thinks if we tell something in wrong way then other students will laugh or they will make joke. (Learner F)

In addition, due to lack of practice and exposure from the environment students are hesitant to speak in the target language as they feel that they are unable or are incompetent to do so correctly. Another learner mentioned that:

We are reluctant to speak because we do not get enough exposure from the environment. Moreover, most of the time people do not use the language so due to lack of practice we feel hesitant. (Learner J)

Some of the lecturers have an opinion that the learners of second language feel that communicating in an alien language is a challenge which creates undue stress and hinders the process. The following comment by a lecturer exemplifies this view:

Communication is an issue at tertiary level in the Maldives. (Lecturer B)

4.3.3 Age is a Factor that Contributes to Second Language Learning

Age is an individual difference that plays a key role in second language learning. It is widely believed that younger learners are more successful than adult learners. Likewise, majority of the participants believe that age is a major factor in second language learning.

I believe that age is a major factor which affects second language learning.

(Learner J)

Many of the participants have admitted that adults find it difficult to learn a second language because they have a lot of responsibilities and do not get enough time to learn. As they have mentioned almost all the learners who study at MNU have family responsibilities and they work in various organizations which prevent them to perform better. This is further elaborated by the following responses.

Since we have a lot of responsibilities we don't get enough time to spend for learning. (Learner G)

I think time is really important and then being an adult you have like lots of responsibilities and most of the time there will be doing jobs as well so they won't be able to give enough time for studying. (Learner I)

It is true that exposure to different situations is responsible in boosting the overall learning process of the second language because we do learn by visual stimulus much more than we do by imagining. Therefore, people who have been to various places and interacted with different people are more fluent in communicating. Similarly, some of the participants also have highlighted that they find it difficult to learn the target language because they do not get enough exposure from the environment they live.

Now I am finding it difficult because I grew up in an environment where people do not use English language. This means that I do not get the exposure that is required to learn a language. (Learner J)

One of the participants has also said that being an adult she finds it difficult to master the grammatical components of the subject and also to pronounce certain words. It has been widely accepted that pronunciation is one of the areas considered to be difficult for adult learners when compared to children especially if there are phonological differences between the two languages. The following quote will further explain their situation.

In this tertiary level our age is very high or we are very old and we face as I said before, it affects our grammar and some pronunciation we are not able to pronounce the way it should be. (Learner F)

In addition, adults find it difficult to learn a second language because most of them have not been introduced to the language before. This means they do not have a good foundation which is required to learn a second language at tertiary level. As such, one of the lecturers mentioned that:

Elders when they are introduced to this language later on later in their life they find it really difficult to learn. (Lecturer C)

On the other hand, being an adult there are certain positive factors as well. If adults are interested in learning the language then they will put a lot of effort to learn the language which makes it possible for them to reach the target. Moreover, in the process of acquiring their first language they would have learnt some of the skills required to learn a language which would definitely help them to learn a second language. Likewise, one of the lecturers commented that:

Adults they actually are interested in learning a language they will try and take what they learn in the classroom outside so they will try and deliberately watch English movies or listen to English news just so that they know they understand English. (Lecturer B)

This proves that even adults can learn a second language if they are motivated. Therefore, it could be said that both motivation and age are related in learning a second language.

Another important point raised by one of the participants regarding age is that adults are more self-conscious in making mistakes because if they make they feel shy and uncomfortable as indicated by the following comment.

One factor that may be impacting or affecting them to learn a language is they are shy or they are embarrassed they do not have that confidence to express in the classroom. (Lecturer D)

Moreover, adult learners may have come across bad experiences previously which may hinder their learning process. These horrific experiences might be difficult to overcome because they could always recall when similar situations arise. This is elaborated by the following response made by a lecturer.

Previous learning experiences (bad experiences) might have affected their level of proficiency. (Lecturer A)

At the same time they may be having fossilized errors that might stop them progressing further. When fossilization occurs they stop continuing to notice errors in their second language production and stops learning before they reach the target level. One of the lecturers commented that:

When students haven't reach a particular level of proficiency they might be having fossilized errors that might stop progressing further. (Lecturer A)

Observer comment: One of the participants have mentioned that she does not think that age is a factor in learning a second language. However, from the information provided it is quite evident that she believes younger is better since adults have a lot of responsibilities and they do not get enough time to study. Moreover, she has mentioned that adults tend to forget things easily as they have so much to remember and the brain development also retards after a certain age.

4.4 Social Factors

Social factors also influence second language learning. Likewise, some of the factors that are highlighted by the participants include personality traits, activities students enjoy most and least and improving the quality of teaching learning process.

4.4.1 Personality Traits Affect Second Language Learning

Personality factors significantly influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language. The interviews demonstrated that personality traits play a major role in second language learning.

Personality matters a lot to learn the language. (Learners H)

Some of the major elements that come under personality factor include extroverts and introverts. Majority of the participants believe that extroverts are people who are outgoing and they are good at communication skills as they are more willing to talk and are not afraid of making mistakes. Surprisingly, even though the learners do not know the appropriate terminologies they too have mentioned that students who are more willing to ask questions and clarify their doubts from their teachers are more capable in learning a second language. This is further elaborated by the following response.

Extroverts are generally more fluent they don't really care whether they make mistakes or not. (Lecturer A)

On the other hand, from the data collected it shows that a lot of participants believe that introverts are often shy and unwilling to speak or join in activities with others. One of the lecturers mentioned that:

Introvert is not wanting to will not want to do much speaking or not wanting to take part in group discussions. (Lecturer A)

Furthermore, the information gathered reveals that one of the significant features of both extroverts and introverts is that they both have strengths and weaknesses. Even though extroverts are more fluent, they are weak in some of the other areas such as writing skills. Though introverts lack fluency and oral communication, they are good at writing and are more accurate. Examples of responses that are related to this are shown below.

Extroverts are generally more fluent they don't really care whether they make mistakes or not whereas introverts they are more accurate but lacking in fluency so I think it is very much skilled based issue. (Lecturer A)

I have found that extroverts are good at learning language. But I found that introverts that also depend on the skills know as I told you mastering of all the four skills see introverts they are very good at writing. They are good at reading and comprehending. They are good at listening. But when it comes to speaking is a problem but extrovert sometimes they are very [good] at speaking but they might not be good at writing. (Lecturer E)

4.4.2 Activities Students Enjoy Most and Least

Group work is considered to be one of the most important class activities that provide opportunity to develop students' communicative ability. Majority of the learners have suggested that they prefer group activities because they can learn more by discussing with each other. Moreover, they believe that if groups have students with different

ability then it would definitely contribute to the learning process as they could help each other. This is further evidenced by the two following excerpts.

I prefer to have group work ... I prefer group work by discussing we learn more and it remains for long. (Learner F)

Group activities are also very helpful for me specially if the group is small and if it includes students with different abilities so that students can help each other.
(Learner G)

From the information gathered it is quite obvious that most of the students do not like individual work as it is boring and they feel taxed and they can be easily pinned for their incompetency which is not liked by any individual. This is illustrated by the following response.

Individual work sometimes it will bored. I think the most of the time I feel bored when the teacher gives like big comprehension to read and if the comprehension is not interest I really feel bored and sometimes grammar also because if you don't know the grammar if we are not able to do then we feel bored. (Learner F)

The above statement shows that students need to be motivated to learn a language and especially if they do not have the background knowledge of the target language, then they would not be interested to learn. In addition, most of the time students do not like comprehension and grammar exercises especially if they have not been introduced to the language before or a good foundation is not being laid previously.

From the information gathered it is evident that one of the participants has mentioned that she prefers when the teacher clarifies the areas that she find difficult and teaches according to her learning styles.

I like when teachers ask me the areas that I find difficult and teach according to my learning styles. (Learner G)

This proves that learning styles play a major role in the teaching learning process. At the same time it is vital to note that in a class there are many students and therefore, it is impossible for the lecturer to focus on one particular student. According to one of the participants students are capable of adjusting themselves to various learning styles even though some styles are more prominent. So it is their belief that they could only learn if they stick to one particular style. One of the lectures commented that:

I don't think it could be very common to have one particular style ... I think there is a lot of research that has published on how the beliefs affect. (Lecturer A)

As such, very often students' belief of their own language proficiency and the learning style tend to misjudge them and it affects their performance.

While focusing on the topic, activities students enjoy most and least it is important to highlight that there were mixed feelings about their preferences. Likewise, one of the participants has said that she does not like listening exercises because of the way they pronounce.

Listening comprehensions I find it really difficult because the pronunciation.

(Learner I)

This may be partly because they are not very familiar with the various accents and also as MNU does not have a language laboratory learners have to do listening exercises with all the background noises which they may find it really difficult. The importance of having a language laboratory has also been stressed by some of the participants which would be highlighted later.

Although, majority of the participants prefer group activities there is one participant who is more comfortable with individual work. Most of the time introverts prefer to do individual work rather than group work as they are more concerned about their own thoughts and feelings. This is further elaborated by the following quote.

I am actually studying with students who are actually in different levels so in that case for me it's a kind of difficult to working groups so most of the time I actually prefer lecture lecturers giving. I prefer individuals more than groups.

(Learner I)

Conversely, it is vital to note that some students prefer groups that have students with different abilities as they feel it would be helpful because members of the group can help each other.

When considering the activities that are conducted in class it is vital to note that there are students who are more willing to do exercises based on writings rather than speaking. On the other hand, some students enjoy speaking activities more than writing. This difference may be due to their personality and research shows that introverts are better in writings and extroverts are more capable of speaking. Examples of responses that focus on activities students like most and least are given below.

I like writing a lot especially narratives. (Learner I)

I enjoy speaking in English. (Learner H)

4.4.3 Improving the Quality of Teaching Learning Process

(Even though this theme comes under social factors, it would be discussed under the second research question that focuses mainly on the strategies that could be adopted to learn a second language).

4.5 Contextual Factors

Contextual factors influence the efficiency of instruction and therefore, can affect the teaching learning process. Likewise, availability of resources could be a factor that directly manipulates with the teaching conducted in the language classroom.

4.5.1 Language Teaching Resources

Participants believe that certain types of resources are required to teach English at MNU. Likewise, majority of the participants have mentioned that a language laboratory needs to be established if listening has to be conducted properly.

We need something like that a language laboratory where you can do listening activities easily. (Lecturer B)

We should have language labs. (Lecturer E)

Interestingly, one of the participant's views was very different compared to the rest regarding the matter. According to her the only resource that is needed is a good teacher. She believes that whatever resource available could be put to good use only if there is a good teacher who knows how to make use of the materials that are available.

The only resource is a good teacher. Um.. that is the basics even if you have all the fancy gadgets and everything unless you have a good teacher it is not going to be as good. (Interview A)

However, some of the participants have suggested that more current books need to be kept in the library for the use of both the lecturers and the students.

When we talk about Maldives we have a problem of resources. Actually we do not have right books. (Lecturer E)

Nevertheless, the rest of the participants believe that there are enough good books in the library and IT resources that are required to teach the subject.

At the university we have IT resources, we have library full of books so I would say that we have very good resources to teach English as a second language.

(Lecturer D)

There is an important issue raised by one of the participants regarding the subject outlines. According to her the subject outlines need to be revised as there are certain outlines which have been prepared ten years back.

I think there are a lot of subject outlines we need to revise because there are subject outlines that had been as it is for ten years. (Lecturer B)

Hence, it would be more appropriate if arrangements could be made to revise the outlines periodically in order to meet the needs of the students.

4.6 Research Question 2

What strategies could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level?

In any advanced society universities are the most vital social institution that provides tertiary education. For this reason, improving the quality of teaching learning process, need to be the principal focus of the institution. When asked from the participants regarding the strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language learning, various responses were made by different participants.

Likewise, many of the participants believe that a conducive learning environment is necessary to learn a second language as it helps to motivate students. One of the lectures commented that:

The students need to feel that they belong to where they are in so that is an important feeling that the students have if they are to learn a language. Especially a language in a comfortable environment. (Lecturer D)

Another approach raised by the participants is to employ communicative method of teaching which focuses more on student centered learning. The main aim is to help students master the various skills of the language in a learner friendly environment. Further, the participants believe that authentic materials that are related to students' real life situations would enhance learning. This is further evidenced by the two following responses.

Carry out lesson in a very students cantered manner. Provide the students with more opportunities to speak, to communicate and to interact. (Lecture D)

Use authentic material and try and relate the lessons to their real life.

(Lecturer B)

Participants have also highlighted the importance of encouraging students by giving positive reinforcement. In addition, providing constructive feedback was thought to be equally important to maintain a good rapport with students. This is elaborated by the following quotes.

Reinforce students or encourage the students so that they know the teacher appreciates and accepts their work. (Lecturer D)

When teachers provide feedback to the students it has to be constructive feedback.

(Lecturer D)

One of the participants expressed that it is vital to screen students by giving a diagnostic test to identify the areas that they need more help. This would assist the lecturers to focus more on the needs of the students while planning and organizing the lessons. One of the lectures commented that:

Initial stage we have to screen them using diagnostic test to identify the problematic areas. (Lecturer E)

According to another participant a strategy lecturers could use to develop the habit of learners using the target language is allowing them to use their mother tongue at the beginning of the semester and gradually encouraging them to use the second language as they become more confident. This would enable the learners to use the target language when they become more comfortable in using them. The following quote illustrates this:

At the beginning of the semester you could actually um.. accept Dhivehi Language but as they go on improving remind them that they need to use English Language.

(Lecturer B)

An important aspect that has to be adhered to carefully while selecting the content is the relevance of its theme to the appropriate age and level of the learner. This will prove to be beneficial because the learner will be engrossed and surely more participative due to the relevance. In addition, more challenging tasks can be delegated which in turn will prove to be beneficial for reaching the ultimate goal. Likewise, one of the participants has mentioned that the content provided is appropriate to the age and level of the students in order to make it challenging.

The content that we give them are up to their standard and a little bit higher than that then they tend to be motivated and it should be age appropriate.

(Lecturer C)

From the information gathered it is quite evident that other than the lecturers, even the learners use certain strategies to learn the target language successfully. Likewise, some of the tactics learners use to reduce levels of anxiety include avoidance, taking deep breaths, counting one to ten or taking a break.

To reduce levels of anxiety, students do things like take a break, count one to ten or take deep breaths because as an observer I can see that happening but once they do that I think it is again psychological. (Lecturer B)

While doing group work the anxious students tend to do all the paper work and let someone who is willing, to present the work because they are hesitant to face the audience. Therefore, it is quite obvious that avoidance is one of the strategies learners

use to overcome or to reduce the anxiety level. This is indicated by the following comments made by the lecturers.

If it is a group work they would rather do the donkey work and get the presentation done by someone else they do that and usually you do find someone willing to present. (Lecturer B)

A strategy that they [students] adopt to reduce levels of anxiety that I have found is avoidance. (Lecturer D)

Certain strategies lecturers use to minimize the level of anxiety among the learners include providing learning tasks that are familiar to them and making sure that students do not postpone their work as it has been assumed that when they try to complete their work at the last minute they tend to become anxious. This is illustrated by the following responses made by a lecturer.

To avoid that what we do is we chose a learning that is the tasks that are familiar.
(Lecturer C)

Finally, it is believed that some of the students who get enrolled in the various courses conducted at MNU do not possess the required language proficiency to follow the course successfully. Therefore, according to some participants MNU needs to have a center which provides continuous language support for students so that they would get extra help other than what is being taught in class. The following comment by a lecturer exemplifies this view.

There has to be a continuous support system whether it is that they have a subject that will address English Language or as it practice in any other universities to

have any language center where they can go to you know get help with writing assignments or things like that I think that it would be very useful. (Lecturer A)

4.7 Summary

This chapter focuses on the analysis and findings of the current study. Hence, it emphasizes on the factors that influence second language learning and the strategies that could be adopted to enhance learning. Likewise, figure 4.1 clearly shows the various themes that have been identified through data analysis and how it has been categorized.

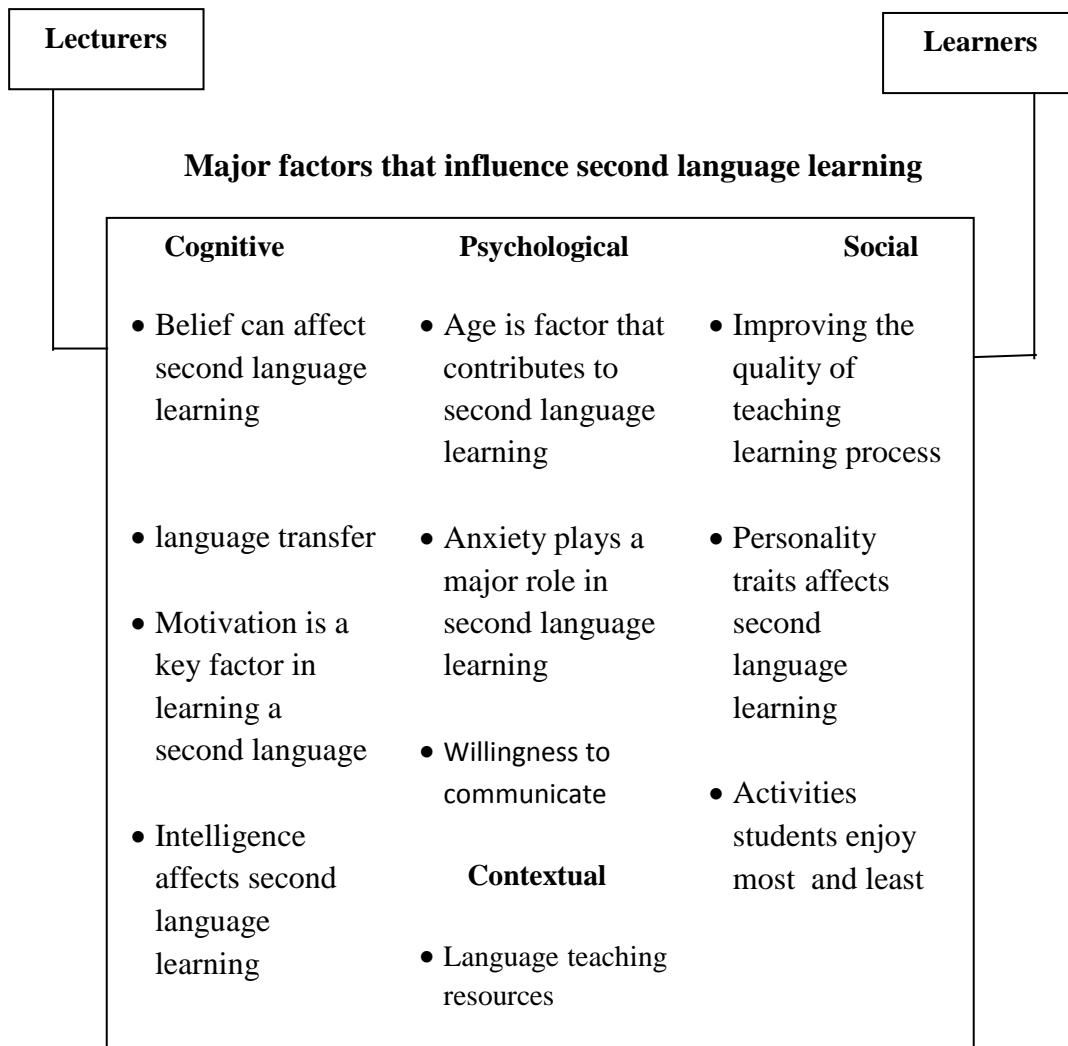


Figure: 4.1 Factors that influence second language learning

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of the current research, followed by a comprehensive discussion of the outcomes. The results presented in this section will focus mainly on the lecturers and learners view regarding the challenges students encounter in learning a second language. At the same time, it would also highlight on the experiences of the participants in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the second language teaching learning process undertaken at MNU. The interpretation of the findings are provided in light of the previous research and the theories that underpin second language learning which are described in chapter two. Furthermore, various implications of the study are listed followed by the limitations of the study. Lastly, the chapter concludes with directions for future research.

5.1 Summary of Main Findings

Each and every human being possesses personal characteristics that differ in degree which is known as individual differences. This is an area considered to be important in second language acquisition research. Though it is a widely researched phenomenon, the factors that hinder the development of second language learning are still considered to be an unexplored area in the Maldivian context. Hence, this chapter

aims to present the findings in relation to the above mentioned area which focuses on the challenges MNU students encounter in learning a second language and the strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language learning.

The results of the study reveal that there were altogether eleven themes which were then categorized under four main factors namely cognitive factors, psychological factors, social factors and contextual factors.

Themes under cognitive factors include:

- Belief can affect second language learning.
- Language transfer.
- Motivation is a key factor in learning a second language.
- Intelligence affects second language learning.

Themes under psychological factors include:

- Anxiety plays a major role in second language learning.
- Willingness to communicate.
- Age is a factor that contributes to second language learning.

Themes under social factors include:

- Personality traits affects second language learning
- Activities students enjoy most and least
- Improving the quality of teaching learning process

Theme under contextual factors includes:

- Language teaching resources

The findings of the study proved that there are certain factors that the participants believe are important for second language learning. It is notable that there are slight differences between the lecturers and learners in interpreting the significance of certain factors that affect or contribute to second language learning. Likewise, for the lecturers the factors that create a huge impact on the whole learning process include learners' belief, first language influence, and motivation whereas, other than belief learners consider factors such as anxiety, age and personality to be equally important for second language learning. It is also important to highlight that in response to the question on the learners' beliefs about language learning it shows that all the participants replied in the affirmative. They believe that belief can affect second language learning both positively and negatively. However, it is noteworthy that there are mixed feelings among the lecturers and learners.

The second most important factors for learners that hinder second language development comprise of motivation and first language influence. However, in the case of lecturers they believe that intelligence, anxiety, age and personality affects next.

When asked from the lecturers about the strategies that could be used to enhance second language learning, an overwhelming majority of lecturers replied that providing a conducive learning environment is the most beneficial. Other than that they also have mentioned that continuous language support is necessary to improve the level of proficiency.

To minimize the challenges students encounter in learning a second language, it is thought to be vital to raise questions for the learners to get their views regarding the activities they enjoy most and least in the language classroom. Likewise, questions

were posted on the learners and the data revealed that the majority of the learners enjoy group activities most as they can learn more through group discussions and very few participants prefer individual work as they find it difficult when there are students with different abilities in the same group.

It is also important to note that any institution that provides education, needs to be equipped with proper facilities and resources that are required to teach the subject. Likewise, most of the participants stressed that it is extremely important to establish a language laboratory to conduct listening activities and some of the participants recommended that more recent books are required to teach the subject. However, an equal number of participants have suggested that there are enough books and IT resources that are required to teach English as a second language.

5.2 Discussion

As apparent from the previous chapter, several factors seem to be responsible for second language learning. The analyzed data reveals that the factors that hinder second language development fall under four main categories namely cognitive, psychological, social and contextual.

Cognitive factors

Belief can affect second language learning

Learners can have both positive and negative beliefs in learning a second language due to various reasons. Some of them include personal learning experiences, individual preferences, availability of grammar materials and parental guidance (Polat, 2009).

As noted earlier, all the participants suggested that belief can affect second language learning both positively and negatively. According to the participants, negative belief has got a great bearing on the students' interest and also outcome of their learning. For instance, students may think it is difficult to master English within a short period of time and they may feel that their peers have mastered the skill because they were very good at English right from the beginning. Therefore, they get a negative feeling thinking that it is impossible to study a second language at tertiary level and if they have a very strong belief as such about their ability it can hinder the learning process. Likewise, there are students who believe that they are not good in English. Hence, students' opinion of their own language proficiency tends to misjudge them. On the other hand, if students think positively then they can change their attitude towards the subject by removing the obstacles that block their way to reach the target. For example, a number of students believe learning a second language is important for their future and academic performance. Thus, they put a lot of effort to improve their English because they are quite certain that in today's world they cannot survive without learning English and that motivates them to learn the subject. Similar results are presented in a study conducted by Manfred (2012) confirming that positive beliefs facilitate second language learning and teachers and curriculum planners should further foster the positive beliefs such as high level of motivation and implementation of activities which require student participation. Moreover, teachers need to rectify the negative beliefs held by learners and provide support for learners to initiate activities related to productive skills which would facilitate second language learning.

One of the participants has mentioned that students have negative beliefs because they are weak in English language. Similarly, studies have been conducted to investigate differences in the beliefs that high English-proficiency and low English-proficiency

learners held about English learning. The results indicated that high-proficiency learners tended to have more positive language learning beliefs than low-proficiency learners (Huang & Tsai, 2003).

Belief is also related to two major second language learning theories discussed in this paper known as innatist theory and interactionist theory. According to innatist theory human beings are capable of learning languages at any age as they are equipped with a language acquisition device (Ellis, 2010). Therefore, if learners believe that they have the ability to learn and use the language then they would succeed. In addition, according to interactionist theory, participation in socially mediated activities are essential and people learn through interaction (Lantolf, 2006). Therefore, if learners live in a society where people hold positive attitudes towards learning then they would also have positive beliefs towards the whole learning process which in turn help them to learn the language more effectively.

Another participant has also mentioned that if students believe a certain strategy will be useful to learn English Language then they will practice that particular strategy while studying. Usefulness of strategy use is also mentioned by Nasrin (2012) and Lightbown & Spada (2006) who state that beliefs which are shaped by means of learner's experience guide them in their perception of language learning and influence the methodologies and approaches they assume to be right for their second language learning. Thus, it is vital to identify the learner's belief towards language learning and cater according to their needs.

Language transfer

Learning a second language is different from first language acquisition as learners bring complete knowledge of their first language grammar to the second language

learning task. Studies conducted on first language transfer reveal that transfer can take place as a result of both difference between and similarity with the target language. Differences between the target language and the first language results in learning difficulty and similarities in learning ease (Daller & Sakel, 2012; Kleinmann, 1978, as cited in Ellis, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Similarly, the majority of the participants believe that when considering the Maldivian context, Dhivehi is very different from English Language as they are from two different families. Therefore, a lot of differences are to be found in these two languages which make it difficult for learners to learn the target language.

The findings of the present study reveal that the majority of the participants strongly believe that first language influences second language learning negatively. In line with this thought, they also have suggested that learners have problems in terms of syntax, morphology and phonology because they continuously make errors in their writings. Moreover, when writing in English they tend to use the structure that is found in their mother tongue, even though the two languages are quite different and they end up in committing serious mistakes. This might be the results of the second language learners attempt in translating the first language structures in the use of second language. This finding is supported by Daller & Sakel (2012); Gass & Selinker (2009) and Ellis (2012) who claim that learners tend to use the grammatical structures of their first language while completing second language tasks. This is also related to one of the major second language learning theories mentioned in chapter two of this study known as behaviourist theory. The proponents of the theory believe that second language learners will make mistakes in learning the language due to the patterns learned earlier in acquiring their mother tongue. Therefore, audio-lingual method which is considered to be the main teaching method of the theory could be

employed in teaching as it involves a lot of repetition which would help learners to use the correct form of the language (Carr, Sexton & Lagunoff, 2007). Even though the importance of audio-lingual method is emphasized by the behaviourists it is not advisable to rely on one particular method as it has both strengths and weaknesses. Hence, a combination of various methods would help learners to learn the language better.

On the other hand, very few participants believe that the knowledge gained in the process of first language acquisition can have a positive impact on second language learning. This finding confirms with Lightbown and Spada (2006) who concluded that learners draw on their knowledge of other languages as they try to discover the complexities of the new language they are learning. Therefore, it could be assumed that even though learners' first language influences their second language negatively, in certain situations it could contribute to their second language learning as well.

Motivation is a key factor in second language learning

Motivation is an internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. It is widely accepted that motivation is essential to success for most fields of learning. Without motivation, it is impossible to reach the target as learners fail to make the necessary effort (Harmer, 2004).

In response to the question on the role motivation plays in second language learning, an overwhelming majority of the participants replied saying that motivation plays a major role in second language learning. A few participants acknowledged that intrinsic motivation is necessary to learn a second language while only one participant admits that extrinsic motivation is important and few of them believe that learners should be both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to learn a second language.

This is supported by Ellis (2012) who asserts that learners with an instrumental reason for learning a second language can be successful even though integrative motivation is more effective. In addition, a study conducted by Pae (2008) reveals that intrinsic motivation is essential for second language motivation as it influences learners' self-confidence and motivation to learn a second language. However, Lightbown & Spada (2006) and Cook (2001) state that there is no distinction between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation and they both are related to success in second language learning.

When asked from the lecturers regarding the methods they adopt to motivate their students, some of them declared that a conducive learning environment is established. Apart from adopting a communicative approach in the teaching learning process, an equal number of participants commonly mentioned that they make sure the content provided is appropriate to the age and level of students. Moreover, one of the participants said that authentic materials that are related to real life situations are employed and another participant has mentioned that constructive feedback is provided. These techniques highlighted by the participants are supported by Ellis (2012) who claims that teachers need to maintain a conducive learning environment in order to meet the needs of the students. At the same time student centered teaching methodology accompanied with interactive activities and communicative opportunities are recommended in the second language classroom (Pae, 2008; Cook 2001; Harmer, 2004).

The above findings reveal its association with interactionist theory discussed in chapter two of this paper. According to the theory social interaction is important as human beings learn by interacting with one another (Lantolf, 2006). Moreover, as mentioned by the above participants the theory also supports that learning experiences

should be meaningful and relevant to the learner so that the learners would be motivated to learn (Williams & Burden, 1997, as cited in Turuk, 2008).

Hence, it could be interpreted that both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation is necessary to learn a second language. In addition, apart from adopting a communicative approach to teaching, the content provided should be relevant to the age and level of students.

Intelligence affects second language learning

Intelligence involves the ability to think, solve problems, analyze situations and understand social values, customs and norms (Chowdhury, 2010). Majority of the participants believe that intelligence contributes to the language learning process. Previous research has strongly proven that intelligence is positively related to performance on academic aspects of second language learning although it is irrelevant to communicative second language tasks (Genesee, 1976; Teepen, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

One of the participants also have suggested that intelligence affects both positively and negatively. According to lecturer B sometimes when students are intelligent the tasks provided in class are not challenging for them so they become bored due to lack of interest. In line with this thought, Genesee (1976) asserts that a person who is intelligent will learn a language more easily than a person who is less intelligent. In other words, it could be concluded that intelligence positively affects in learning a second language.

Surprisingly one of the participants has pointed out that intelligence is not related to second language learning specifically. However, a study conducted by Chowdhury

(2010) reveals that intelligence affects second language learning in terms of both structural and communicative means if the language is taught in a formal manner. The reason behind the effect of intelligence on the acquisition of English grammar is that while learning the grammatical structures of a language, learners approach in an analytical way in which intelligence caters to their understanding of the language.

Regardless of the number of studies conducted based on intelligence it can still be considered as one of the most controversial issue in second language learning. Different people define intelligence in different ways. As such, some of them are quite certain that intelligence play a role in second language learning while others believe that students with various intellectual abilities are able to learn a second language. For instance, according to Gardner (1993, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006) individuals have multiple intelligences and everyone can be intelligent in some way. It is also important to note that even though IQ test is the most common method used to test intelligence, that alone cannot measure the level of intelligence as there are other important aspects of mental ability that are related to second language learning.

The results also shows its relevance to innatist theory as the proponents of the theory believe that human beings are capable of learning languages at any age and human mind is equipped with a language acquisition device which helps in second language learning (Ellis, 2012). Therefore, individuals have the capacity to learn a second language even though they are not intelligent. Furthermore, the proponents of the theory argue that if universal grammar is no longer available to adults then they would not be able to work out abstract properties of second language from the input received (Ellis, 2008).

Hence, it could be concluded that everyone can learn a second language and intelligence does not play a major role specifically to learn a second language even though the learners' hard work and effort may contribute to the degree of learning.

Psychological factors

Anxiety plays a major role in second language learning

There is clear evidence to show that anxiety is an important factor in second language learning. However, anxiety is not a necessary condition of successful second language learning but it contributes in different degrees in different learners (Ellis, 2008). Current research shows that majority of the respondents declared that anxiety affects second language learning. They believe that there is a correlation between the students' second language anxiety levels and their achievement levels in the university.

Likewise, some of the participants have stated that there are students who are nervous when they are given the opportunity to present something or to contribute their ideas in group activities because of anxiety. This finding is supported by Woodrow (2006) and Macintyre (1995) who found that anxiety can affect oral communication for students speaking in English. The data also reveals that learners become anxious because they are not competent enough to use the language. This has been further proven by a study conducted by Woodrow (2006). According to the study, a student may experience anxiety due to the lack of sufficient skills and these students would benefit from instruction in language learning strategies and scaffolding of skills. According to sociocultural theory the concept of scaffolding is necessary to inculcate second language skills (Turuk, 2008).

Most lecturers have also agreed that due to anxiety students lose confidence, feel uncomfortable, and make errors. This finding is supported by Chakrabarti, Anupama, Sengupta & Madhumala (2012); Macintyre (1995) and Utar, Tohumoglu, & Uckun (2011) who concluded that second language learners who are anxious make continuous errors in spelling or syntax as they freeze and forget at the time of test even though they have studied the language well. When students are anxious they lose their self-confidence and motivation for learning English as a result they are mostly poor achievers.

Second language learning anxiety is also related to Krashen's Monitor Theory which is discussed in the present study. According to this theory when the learner feels anxious less acquisition will occur as it forms a mental block that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007).

Participants have also mentioned that some of the strategies learners use to reduce the level of anxiety include avoidance, taking deep breaths, counting one to ten or taking a break. Likewise, Pappamihel (2002) states that when learners are confronted with this situation, they use coping strategies such as avoidance from the learning experience which does not improve their language development. Some students also use strategies such as relaxation, preparation, peer seeking and positive thinking to reduce anxiety (Kao & Craigie, 2013). From the information gathered it is quite evident that other than learners lecturers also use some strategies to help students reduce their anxiety. Likewise, they provide learning tasks that are familiar for the students and encourage them to complete tasks on time.

Having emphasized on the negative aspects of anxiety, some of the participants believe that certain amount of anxiety helps the students to reach the target level. This finding is in line with that of Horwitz (2001) who found that learners with higher levels of anxiety showed high achievement scores and everything about anxiety does not impede language learning. In addition, according to Lightbown & Spada (2006) a certain amount of anxiety helps the students to reach the target level and this type of anxiety is called facilitative anxiety which keeps the student alert.

Hence, it could be interpreted that most of the participants found anxiety as a huge barrier in second language learning as they are not competent in the target language and lacks sufficient language skills to achieve their target levels.

Willingness to communicate

Work on willingness to communicate is in its infancy as there is not much research done on this area. However, it is related to language teaching and constitutes link between several other factors such as learner attitudes, and motivation (Ellis, 2008). In the same way, the data reveals that extroverts are more willing to communicate than introverts as they are more interested in what is happening around them. Following the concept that the learners must talk in order to learn, there is a belief that learners who have a greater willingness to communicate in the second language will be more successful in learning the target language (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996, as cited in Amico, 2012; Ellis, 2012). This also proves the importance of interactionist theory in second language learning as the advocators of the theory believe that effective learning would only take place if there is social interaction between people with different learning skills and knowledge as they could help the learner to improve the language (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Turuk, 2008).

The data gathered shows that learners are unable to communicate due to lack of confidence as they do not get enough practice and exposure from the environment. Hence, they are reluctant to speak in front of the class thinking that their class mates may laugh or tease them if they make a mistake. In line with this thought, Amino (2012) discovered that learners who study abroad demonstrated significantly higher levels of willingness to talk than learners who study at home as they get more exposure and opportunities to meet the target language which in turn reduces their anxiety level and become more competent (Shimizu, 2004). In the same way, a study conducted by Pashmforoosh, Daftarifard, & Alemi (2011) reveal that lower proficient learners indicated to have lower willingness to communicate inside the classroom and higher proficient learners showed to be less communicative outside the classroom.

Therefore, the above findings reveal that willingness to communicate is related to factors such as confidence, personality and exposure to the target language. Even though the participants have not mentioned there can be other factors such as anxiety and motivation that prevent learners from using the language. Therefore, with the assumption that learners who are more exposed to the target language are less anxious in learning a second language the educators could take the responsibility of finding out the problems faced by learners in communicating and help them overcome their difficulties in order for them to use the language effectively.

Age is a factor that contributes to second language learning

An individual difference that is believed to play an important role in second language learning is age (Ellis, 2008). The information received from the interviews reveal that majority of the participants believe that age plays a key role in second language learning. This finding is supported by Ellis (2008) who undoubtedly believed that

children are better at learning a second language than adults. Likewise, some of the participants strongly believe that younger learners are more successful in learning a second language than adults.

Being an adult there are factors that contribute or hinders second language learning. In other words there are both positive and negative factors. When considering the negative factors participants have highlighted that adults find it difficult to learn a second language because they have a lot of responsibilities and therefore, do not get enough time that could be devoted for language learning. This in fact is considered to be a new finding that has been identified in the present research. At the same time, repeatedly the participants have stressed on the importance of introducing to the target language at an early age. However, they have mentioned that they have been quite unfortunate in getting the exposure that is required to learn a language from the environment they have been living when they were young. In the same way, Harmer (2004) claims that adults have so many barriers in learning, that they only rarely have any success.

Participants have also highlighted that they find it difficult to master the grammatical components of the subject and also to pronounce certain words. According to Ellis, (2008) many learners, irrespective of their age do not achieve full native-speaker competence. They stop continuing to notice grammatical and lexical errors in their second language production and fail to achieve native like pronunciation. This is also supported by the study conducted by Coppieters (1987, as cited in Nasrollahzadeh & Nejadansari, 2011) who found that even though adult second language learners can produce language, their grammatical competence differ from that of native speakers. Where pronunciation is concerned similar results have been observed by some

experimental studies conducted by Selinker & Gas (2009) & Cook (2001) who conclude that adults do not progress more in pronunciation compared to children.

On the contrary, a study conducted by Neufeld's (1978, as cited in Nasrollahzadeh & Nejadansari, 2011) reveals that under the right conditions adults can learn a second language and they can achieve native like pronunciation even though it is considered to be the most difficult area to learn. Previous studies also reveal that at the initial stage adults learn a second language faster even though they would be overtaken by children who receive enough exposure from the environment (Tohidian & Tohidian, 2009 & Cook, 2001).

Another problem learners' face in learning a second language is that adults are more self-conscious in making mistakes which prevent them from using the language. As such, while speaking and writing if they are unable to use grammatically correct sentences then they feel shy and uncomfortable. In addition, participants have emphasized on previous learning experiences that hinders them from reaching a particular level of proficiency. Moreover, they believe that they may be having fossilized errors that might have stopped them from progressing further. Likewise, according to Selinker & Lamendella (1978, as cited in Ellis, 2008) when fossilization occurs learners stop learning before reaching the target level and they fossilize in spite of the ability, opportunity and motivation to learn.

Certain positive factors have also been pinpointed by the participants. Among them they have mentioned that in spite of the difficulties they face, adults are motivated and more willing to learn the language which helps them to put more effort in the learning process. This validates the previous studies conducted by Snow & Hohle (1967) and Zhiliang (2012) who found that successful learning depends on the quality of

teachers, the learning environment and personal effort. At the same time in acquiring their first language they would have learnt the basic skills required to learn a language which would definitely help them to learn a second language. In the same way, Lightbown & Spada (2006) states that adults outperform younger learners in the early stages of second language development as they use their metalinguistic knowledge, memory strategies and problem solving skills to learn the language.

Since most of the participants selected are from the islands it could be assumed that the level of exposure to second language and the opportunities they got to learn the target language was limited. Hence, this might be the reason why these students are not competent enough to use the language. The fact that students at MNU could not devote time for their studies as they are working and also looking after the family further hinders them from achieving their target language skills.

Personality traits affect second language learning

Personality factors considerably influence second language learning. According to Cook (1996, as cited in Zhang, 2008) some features of the learner's personality might encourage or inhibit second language learning by enhancing certain aspects of language learning while hindering others.

Similarly, majority of the respondents confirmed that personality factors significantly influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language.

Moreover, the information gathered also shows that majority of the participants acknowledged that major elements that come under personality factor include extroversion and introversion. This is supported by Zhang (2008) who states that extrovert and introvert are two characterizations of how one relates to the outside

world. Extroverts are people who are more interested in what is happening around him than his own thoughts and emotions. On the other hand, introvert is a person who is more interested in his own thoughts and feelings than in things outside himself and is often shy and unwilling to speak or join in activities with others. Likewise, some of the participants believe that introverts are shy and they do not take part in group discussions and oral presentations.

Personality is also related to sociocultural theory which is discussed in this paper. Extroverts are more fluent in speaking because they are interested in interacting with people which gives them the opportunity to practice communication skills. According to the theory people learn when they interact with people who have various skills, knowledge and abilities (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Turuk, 2008).

One of the participants has also suggested that extroverts are weak in writing skills even though they are more fluent in speaking. On the other hand, introverts are good at writing skills even though they are weak in oral communication. This finding is supported by Dewaele and Furnham (1999) who states that extroverts are more fluent than introverts in both first language and second language even though they are not accurate in their second language. In contrast, introversion has the greatest chance of negatively affecting second language learning. Students who are afraid of embarrassing themselves by speaking incorrectly or not being able to speak at all may try to avoid speaking in public (Zhang, 2008; Ehrman and Oxford, 1990, as cited in Sharp, 2008; Long and Freeman, 1991).

On the other hand, Eysench & Cookson (1969, as cited in Sharp, 2008) found that introverts are better in learning a second language as they have better study habits. In

line with this thought, Long and Freeman (1991) asserts that introverts are good at reading, grammar and writing skills.

Thus, it could be said that extroverts and introverts have varied language skills and they both have strengths and weaknesses.

Activities students enjoy most and least

Group work increases the amount of talking for individual students and it encourages cooperation and negotiation among learners. It also allows learners to make their own decisions in the group without being told by the teacher (Harmer, 2004). In addition, group work minimizes anxiety and unhealthy competition to make second language learning non-threatening (Madhumala, 2012; Chakrabarti, Anupama, Sengupta & Madhumala, 2012). Similarly, a number of participants believe that learners enjoy group activities because they can learn more by discussing with each other. This again shows how sociocultural theory is related to the present study as the theory emphasizes on collaborative work conducted in second language classrooms. Collaborative work provides the same opportunity as scaffolded help which is a concept that is central to sociocultural theory. Scaffolding is essential because the proponents of the theory suggest that second language learners need coaching to inculcate the required second language skills (Turuk, 2008).

Individualized learning also has both advantages and disadvantages. It allows teachers to respond to individual student differences such as learning styles and preferences. Individualized learning can be less stressful for students and it can develop learner autonomy and promote skills of self-reliance (Harmer, 2004). Hence, the data reveals that one of the participants prefer individual work.

However, individualized learning does not help a class to develop a sense of belonging. In addition, it does not encourage cooperation in which students may be able to help and motivate each other (Harmer, 2004). Thus, most of the participants do not like individual work.

The data gathered also shows that learners prefer teachers to teach according to their learning styles. Similarly, Lightbown and Spada (2006) claim that there are different types of learning styles and if there is a mismatch between the learning style and the teaching style of the students then they will not learn.

Moreover, some students like writing exercises while others like speaking exercises. Research shows that these differences can be due to personality as extroverts may like speaking exercises while introverts may prefer writing exercises as they are more accurate (Ellis, 2012). The information provided by the participants also reveals that some students do not like comprehension and grammar exercises. Moreover, there are students who do not like listening exercises as they find it difficult to understand because of the way they pronounce.

In relation to the above mentioned theory and related literature it could be concluded that the type of language learning activities does have a relationship with successful achievement of the target language skills. This success is also believed to be linked with the personality traits of the second language learners.

Hence, in a language classroom teachers need to conduct a variety of activities to cater students with different learning styles. As such, both group work and individual work should be included and importance should be given to communicative method of teaching to engage students in the learning task and to motivate them.

Improving the quality of teaching learning process

Improving teaching and making the whole learning process more effective is the key to raising standards. Therefore, to improve the quality of teaching learning process, it is important to maintain a conducive learning environment in order to meet the needs of the students. A student-centered teaching methodology accompanied with interactive activities and communicative opportunities are required to motivate students in the second language classroom (Pae, 2008; Cook 2001; Harmer, 2004). Similarly, majority of the participants believe that providing a conducive learning environment is essential to improve the quality of teaching learning process. According to the lecturers a conducive learning environment means a learner friendly environment that provides communicative and enjoyable activities that are related to the target language.

Some of the participants have also stressed on the importance of providing constructive feedback and positive reinforcement to enhance second language learning. These findings are consistent with the results of Williams and Burden (1997, as cited in Matsumoto, 2011) who have similarly found that second language learners' interactions with teachers, including learning experiences, feedback, rewards, praise, and punishments are seen as relevant factors which affect second language learning. The above findings reveal their association with one of the theories that guided the present study known as behaviourist theory. The proponents of the theory believe that behavior can be modified through the use of reinforcements and punishments. Reinforcements encourage a person to repeat the behavior whereas punishments discourage the behavior. Moreover, the importance of providing constructive feedback is also highlighted by the behaviorists (Ellis, 2010).

Research also shows that to encourage students to learn a second language it is important for the educators to allow students use their mother tongue in class at the beginning. Instructors should not fear the occurrence of a student's first language in the language classroom and in fact, it should be taken as a positive factor rather than a negative factor. Moreover, first language use in second language learning has communicative, cognitive, and real pedagogical value (Daller & Sakel, 2012; Cook, 2001). Likewise, one of the participants has mentioned that teachers need to allow learners use mother tongue at the beginning and gradually encourage them to use the target language when they become more confident.

In addition, it is important for educators to identify the weak areas of the students and provide continuous language support for them in order to improve their level of proficiency.

Language teaching resources

The findings of the study reveals that language teaching resources are essential for effective second language learning. It is vital to choose and make effective use of teaching learning resources including text books and various other types of teaching aids to support students' learning. Effective use of resources will assist students to comprehend what they have learned. When asked from the lecturers regarding the resources they require to teach English, most of them said that a language laboratory needs to be established in order to conduct listening activities. Moreover, one of the lecturers has suggested that it is important to have a language center that provides continuous language support. Even though some of the participants have said that there are enough good books and IT resources in the university, few of them have suggested that more current books are required to enhance the teaching learning

process. Furthermore, one of the participants have mentioned that subject outlines need to be revised more frequently as there are outlines that have been prepared ten years back. Hence, these changes need to be brought to motivate students to learn since the effect of demotivation in second language learning cannot be underestimated. Likewise, some of the demotivating factors attributed by Jomairi (2011); Kikuchi and Sakai (2009) and Cook (2001) include learning contents and materials (Simister, 2004, as cited in Turuk, 2008), teachers' teaching styles and evaluation of students' performance, inadequate school facilities such as computers, laboratories and videos, lack of intrinsic motivation and self-confidence, low scores in examinations and students' attitude towards the subject.

Another participant has also stated that a good teacher is the only resource that is required to teach the subject. Similarly, the study conducted by Matsumoto (2008) confirmed that the teacher is an important factor affecting second language learners' motivation (Harmer, 2004). Dornyei (1994) states that in order to motivate students' second language; teachers should be empathetic, congruent and accepting as they are the three basic teacher characteristics that enhance learning. Furthermore, teachers need to be facilitators and promote learner autonomy. Therefore, as educators it is important to consider the above factors in planning, organizing and conducting classroom events to develop second language proficiency in language learners.

This also shows how Krashen's Monitor Theory is related to the present study. According to the theory learning will occur when learners are relaxed and motivated to learn (Carr, Sexton, & Lagunoff, 2007). Therefore, in order to motivate students various language teaching resources could be used.

Hence, it could be assumed that resources such as language laboratory, current reference sources, revised editions of subject outlines and other such resources are necessary to improve the quality of teaching learning process.

5.3 Implications

The task of the educators who work in the university is tremendously complex as they have to cater to students who possess various individual differences. It is also the responsibility of the educators to satisfy the needs of each and every student by organizing activities to produce better results for each of them yet addressing the teaching to the group as a whole.

The findings of the present research prove that certain factors adversely affect learners in learning a second language. Likewise, motivation and belief are considered as major factors that affect second language learning. In this regard, it is the duty of the educators and curriculum planners to inculcate positive belief among the learners towards the target language. It is undoubtedly believed that learning a second language at university is a major challenge encountered by learners especially if they do not possess a reasonable proficiency in English previously. Thus, it is vital to identify learners' belief about language learning which would help educators to plan and implement instructional activities more effectively. At the same time, educators need to rectify the negative beliefs held by learners and provide support that is required to foster language development.

As mentioned above, motivation is the other factor that affects second language learning and it is found to be closely related to learners' belief. Unless learners think positively towards the language then they would not be motivated to learn. Even though, both extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation are necessary for language

learning, intrinsic motivation is the most influential as it affects learners self-confidence and motivation to learn a second language. Therefore, educators are recommended to maintain a conducive learning environment and organize activities that would promote intrinsic motivation in order to produce successful second language learners. Moreover, they are recommended to devise activities that are intrinsically motivating and maintain a conducive learning environment. Furthermore, communicative teaching methodology could be employed where the focus is more on to student centered learning. It is important to note that, there are certain demotivating factors that may hinder the learning process. These include, learning contents and materials, teachers' teaching styles and evaluation of students' performance and inadequate facilities or resources that are required to teach the subject. Therefore, educators need to be well aware of the fact that the content provided is appropriate to the age and is according to the level of the students. Moreover, to motivate students it is important to make use of the various facilities that are available to teach the subject and there should not be any mismatches between the learning style and the teaching style of the students. Apart from that constructive feedback should be provided and positive reinforcement should be given to build confidence and positive attitude towards learning.

Another, important factor that affects second language learners' motivation is the teacher. There are certain characteristics a teacher needs to possess in order to teach second language learners. Likewise, the teacher needs to be a person who is empathetic, congruent and accepting.

As highlighted by the lecturers and many of the learners first language influence is another problem students face while studying English as a second language. This is mainly due to the fact that second language learners bring complete knowledge of

their first language grammar to the second language learning task. Moreover, research shows that students who have lower levels of first language skills are likely to have lower levels of second language aptitude. Therefore, instructors should be more tolerant when these learners rely on their first language when they fail to use second language effectively. However, when learners become more confident in using the second language, instructors could gradually encourage them to use the target language.

Even though, learners have not mentioned about intelligence as a factor that affects second language learning, lecturers believe that intelligence is positively related to performance on academic aspects of second language learning. According to the participants a person who is more intelligent will learn a language more easily than a person who is less intelligent. Since intelligence is considered to be a controversial issue among the researchers it would have been better if the participants were asked how they perceive intelligence in order to get a better understanding of their views regarding the role intelligence plays in second language learning. The data gathered also shows that some of the participants believe that learners who are intelligent require less time to complete tasks when compared to those who are not intelligent. However, it is difficult to decide it is because of intelligence learners take less time to complete tasks as there are other factors that facilitate their learning. Hence, educators need to think about the different ability groups and design tasks according to their level in order to make it more challenging.

Previous research shows there is a strong relationship between second language anxiety and second language achievement. In the current study many participants indicated that anxiety affects second language learning both positively and negatively. Likewise, even though few people agree that certain amount of anxiety helps the

students reach the target level most of the people believe anxiety can adversely affect a person's ability to acquire a second language. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the educator to reduce second language learning anxiety by creating a learner-friendly environment and making the learners understand that committing mistakes is not an offence. Moreover, positive reinforcement could be provided to reduce communication apprehension of the students.

At the same time to minimize anxiety and unhealthy competition group work could be given which would make second language learning non-threatening. Moreover, educators need to correct the mistakes made by the students through natural conversation to help them correct their own mistakes in an anxiety free environment. In addition, to help students fare well in exams continuous process of evaluation is necessary instead of occasional tests which produce test anxiety. For students who have high levels of listening anxiety, instructors could provide more opportunities to practice listening and teach various strategies they could use to improve their listening skills. Listening passages need to be selected according to the level of the students and they could be given the chance to share common feelings of nervousness and elicit creative ways to solve the problem. It is important to highlight that those students who are anxious due to lack of skills could be benefited from instruction in language learning strategies and scaffolding of skills.

Furthermore, many of the participants have suggested that an individual difference that is believed to play a key role in second language learning is age. Adults have to come across various obstacles in learning a second language. In line with this concept a new research finding has been observed from the present study that is related to adult second language learners. Likewise, it was found that most of the learners were quite certain that they find it difficult to study a second language at university because

they have challenges outside the classroom, such as work problems and family responsibilities which come in the way as a result they cannot put in the requisite amount of effort and time to get better in the learning of the second language. However, in such situations, adult learners can have clearly defined goals and work through challenges and persevere until they reach their goals. If possible it is important to avoid procrastinating assignments and studying during university. At the same time university also could provide assistance to learners. Likewise, classes could be scheduled in collaboration with learners in order to make it more comfortable and convenient for both parties. Leniency could be given where ever possible as long as it does not affect the teaching learning process.

As apparent from the previous chapter, a large number of participants have declared that personality factors significantly influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language. Thus, it is the responsibility of the educators to recognize and attend to their individual differences that might encourage or inhibit second language learning. Even though, extroverts are more willing to communicate introverts are often shy and unwilling to speak. Therefore, teachers should not humiliate students while correcting their mistakes. Instead they should repeat back the corrected statement which would help the students to understand without any further embarrassment.

A somewhat different picture emerges when considering the relationship between second language learning and willingness to communicate. The results of the present study show that learners do not believe that people who have a greater willingness to communicate in the second language will be more successful in learning the target language. Nevertheless, some of the lecturers believe that willingness to communicate is a factor that affects second language learning. Even though there is a difference in

the belief between the lecturers and the learners, they both believe that learners have lower willingness to communicate as they are not competent enough to use the language and their self-confidence is low. This finding supports the existing literature on willingness to communicate. Hence, language teachers are required to give them more exposure and opportunities to meet the target language which in turn reduces their anxiety level and become more competent.

Other than the strategies that have been mentioned above, to improve the quality of teaching learning process, educators could identify the weak areas of the students and provide continuous language support for them. In addition, a language laboratory could be established in order to conduct listening activities in a noise free environment. This in turn would motivate students to improve their listening skill and educators to organize and conduct sessions more effectively. The present research also proves that the library should be equipped with more recent books that could be used in the teaching learning process. Moreover, the outlines of the subject need to be revised every five years in order to meet the needs of the students. This would also help educators to design effective instructional methods for students at different proficiency levels with a focus on highlighting and reducing factors that hinder the development of second language learning.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

As with any research, the present study also has some limitations that are unavoidable due to various reasons.

As such, one of the limitations of the study is that the findings would be limited to MNU as it is the place where the study has been conducted, even though there are other institutions that provide tertiary education in Maldives.

A further limitation of the study is that the interviews are supposed to be conducted within a short period of time as majority of the participants have planned to leave for holidays. Moreover, as it was towards the end of the semester, the learners have been quite busy with their assignments therefore, due to time constraints they found quite difficult to spare time for the interviews. Apart from that, lack of time to complete the project is a major issue faced by the researcher, as the due date for the submission of the project has been preponed.

Furthermore, the study was based solely on the interview method to collect data which might have affected in providing accurate results and greater understanding. Even though interview technique is employed extensively in research studies and is considered as an effective method, the use of a different methodology in addition to interview would have produced better results. However, to establish validity the transcripts were given back to the participants for the purpose of member checking.

Another limitation for the study is that, the interview consists of too many questions which were found to be difficult to handle in the process of analyzing the data. Hence, as many themes emerged from the data the researcher had to categorize the themes under various headings to make it easier for the interpretation of results.

A final limitation of this study also appeared in its methodology. Since the learners who took part in this research were taught by the researcher previously, at first they were a bit reluctant in providing the information required. However, to avoid this good rapport was established to maintain trust with them. Moreover, they were informed that the result of the study will be used only in academic research and it will not influence their studies at the faculty. Even then it would have been better if

learners were selected from different faculties in order to get a better view of the phenomena under study.

5.5 Directions for Future Research

Even though second language learning is a widely researched area, the concept of individual learner differences is still an area that needs further research in the Maldivian context. Several directions for future research evolve from this first study of “Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives National University”. Hence, the study needs to be repeated to confirm the current findings and reveal whether different methods of data collection produce similar results.

Although, the results of the present study shed light on the challenges students encounter in learning a second language, including data from students of different faculties could provide useful insights regarding the factors that hinder second language learning at MNU. Moreover, further research could be conducted to find out the relationship between the brain and second language acquisition.

It has been assumed that second language learners do not get to be like native speakers in all respects. However, there are certain respects in which the two types of competence are similar. Therefore, it is high time to compare the first language and second language features in order to examine the evidence available. This would yield much more detailed accounts of where to expect difficulty in second language development.

In any language, studying the grammatical features is known to be the most difficult for learners. In this regard, while learning a second language most of the learners find it difficult to study the various grammatical components of the language. Hence,

further research could be conducted to find out what triggers grammatical development, which in turn would help educators to know what to include in and how to structure classroom input.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to The Maldives National University

Aminath Nasheeda,
Villa College,
Male',
Maldives.
8th October 2013.

Vice Chancellor,
Maldives National University,
Male',
Maldives.

Dear Dr. Hassan Hameed,

**Subject: Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives
National University**

As a student of Master of Education programme from Villa College, Male', I am undertaking a research in the area of **Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives National University**, and this is my final year assessment. My research supervisor is Dr. Dheeba Moosa, Director of Centre for English Language Support of Villa College.

The research will identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university. The study further intends to discover strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level.

The study will take place in two faculties and a department under Maldives National University. In this respect I have chosen -----, ----- and ----- as they fit the criteria for selection of the participant faculty and department. For your information, consent will be obtained in writing from both the lecturers and students prior to conducting the research. Since I am required to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the participating faculties and department, I respectfully request the university to maintain the same.

As part of the requirements for ethics review by the Ethics Committee of Villa College, I am required to submit evidence of authorization to conduct the research in the places identified. Hence, I request a no-objection letter from the Maldives National University to carry out the research in -----, ----- and -----.

Please feel free to contact me or the research supervisor for further queries.

Researcher: Aminath Nasheeda,
Villa College,
Male',
Maldives.
7757141
nashy69@hotmail.com

Research Supervisor: Dr. Dheebea Moosa
Director,
Centre for English Language Support
Villa College.
Male', Maldives.
7952019
dheebea.moosa@villacollege.edu.mv

Thanking You,
Sincerely,

Aminath Nasheeda

APPENDIX B

Information Sheet

Aminath Nasheeda,

Villa College,

Male’,

Maldives.

8th October 2013.

-----,

-----,

Male’,

Maldives.

Dear Mr. / Ms

Subject: Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives

National University

Information Sheet

Introduction

As a student of Master of Education programme from Villa College, Male’, I am undertaking a research in the area of **Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives National University**, and this is my final year assessment.

My research supervisor is Dr. Dheeba Moosa, Director of Centre for English Language Support of Villa College.

As the study aims to find out the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency and the strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language learning, both students and lecturers would be selected through purposive sampling. 5 lecturers, who demonstrate experience and expertise in the area of second language learning, would be selected and 5 learners would be selected based on their academic performance in the English First Semester Exam. Among the learners high, average and low ability students would be included and they would be chosen from the faculty that the researcher works as it would be easier to identify the different ability groups. The study would take place in 2 different faculties and a department under Maldives National University and they would be selected based on convenience sampling.

Participant Recruitment

Selection of the faculties and the department is based on the following criteria;

- The faculties and the department are under Maldives National University
- English is taught as a Second Language
- Faculties and departments that include a large number of student population
- Faculties and the department are in close proximity to where the researcher works as it would be convenient to conduct the research.

Second language learning has continued to arouse interest since its beginnings. There has been ample research conducted to find out the relationship between second language learning and the factors that influence learning. However, most of the studies focus on one or two factors while others concentrate on one particular factor. Therefore, recognizing the challenges students encounter in learning a second language at tertiary level is an issue yet to be explored. Hence, ten participants have been invited to identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university and to discover the strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level.

Procedure

A qualitative research methodology would be employed in the collection and analysis of data stemming from this study as it emphasizes more on the views of people which would help the practitioners to improve their effectiveness in teaching, which in turn would help students to achieve better second language competencies.

Thus, the main source of data collection in the present study is interviews. The intention is to listen to the voice of participants in order to describe the phenomenon from the participants' points of views. In analysing the data, framework analysis is employed as it a qualitative method and is appropriate to the present study.

Selection of participants for the study

Faculty	Lecturers			Students: (English performance based on the grade obtained)			Total
	No.	Experience	Qualification	High (HD, DN)	Average (CR, PP)	Low (FC, FF)	
1	2	9 yrs.	PhD.	1	1	3	7
		18 yrs.	MA				
2	2	9 yrs.	MA				2
		26 yrs.	BAELT				
3	1	17 yrs.	MA				1
Total	5			1	1	3	10

Key: HD - High Distinction
 DN - Distinction
 CR - Credit
 PP - Pass
 FC - Fail Condition
 FF - Fail
 PhD - Doctor of Philosophy
 MA - Master of Arts
 BAELT - Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching

Access and Storage of Data

After the interviews the data would be analyzed by the researcher and all documents would be securely stored in a safe place in the researcher's home. The recordings and all transcriptions would be stored in a computer filing system for easy retrieval and would be password protected. Access to it will be restricted to the researcher and the research supervisor. Data will be stored for five years before being disposed of by shredding or through electronic deletion.

Feedback to Participants

Information resulting from the project would be communicated to individual participants by offering a summary of research results. It would be assured that the anonymity, confidentiality and accuracy would be maintained throughout the research process.

Participant Involvement

The data base of the current study would include five unstructured interviews with qualified and experienced English Language lecturers and five students who study English as a Second Language. Since the researcher requires lecturers who demonstrate experience and expertise in the area of second language learning, purposive sampling would be employed. Learners would be selected based on their academic performance which includes high, average and low ability students who are studying English as a Second Language. They would be selected from the faculty that the researcher works as it would be easier to identify the different ability groups. Informed consents would be gained from both the lecturers and the students who are involved in the study as interviewees.

Interviews would be conducted in the work place of the participants and would be scheduled at a time which is convenient for them. Interviews would contain nine different open ended questions for lecturers and ten open ended questions for learners that are based on the topic of the study. Each interview would take approximately 20 – 30 minutes depending on the subjects being interviewed and would be electronically recorded, transcribed and member checked by the participants.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

It is assured that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, the faculties and the department would be protected throughout the research process. To ensure anonymity both the participants, the faculties and the department would be given code names. Even though the researcher cannot assure complete anonymity, all possible measures would be taken to ensure that this is attained.

Rights of the Participants

Please be informed that the participants have the right to decide not to take part in the study, or drop out at any time. If they decide to participate they have the right to

- enquire about the study at any time;
- receive a copy of the consent form;
- to be told who will have access to information collected and how confidentiality would be protected;
- to be told about the benefits of being in the study;
- get access to a summary of research results once it is completed and
- decline from the study at any time without any penalty.

Project Contacts

Researcher: Aminath Nasheeda,
Villa College,
Male',
Maldives.
7757141
nashy69@hotmail.com

Research Supervisor: Dr. Dheebea Moosa
Director,
Centre for English Language Support
Villa College.
Male', Maldives.
7952019
dheebea.moosa@villacollege.edu.mv

Thanking You,
Sincerely,

Aminath Nasheeda

APPENDIX C

Letter to the Dean of the Faculty

Aminath Nasheeda,
Villa College,
Male',
Maldives.

8th September 2013.

Dean,

.....,
Maldives National University,
Male',
Maldives.

Dear Mr. / Ms.,

Subject: Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives

National University

As a student of Master of Education programme from Villa College, Male', I am undertaking a research in the area of **Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives National University**, and this is my final year assessment. My research supervisor is Dr. Dheeba Moosa, Director of Centre for English Language Support of Villa College.

The research will identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university. The study further intends to discover strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level.

The study will take place in two faculties and one department under Maldives National University. In this respect I have chosen among these as the faculty fit the criteria for selection of the participant faculty. For your information, consent will be obtained in writing from the lecturers prior to conducting the research.

In addition, I am required to submit evidence of the consent of the faculty as part of the requirements for ethics review by the Ethics Committee of Villa College. Hence, I request the consent form attached with this letter to be filled. An information sheet providing details of the research would also be enclosed with this letter for your information.

Please feel free to contact me or the research supervisor for further queries.

Researcher: Aminath Nasheeda,
Villa College,
Male',
Maldives.
7757141
nashy69@hotmail.com

Research Supervisor: Dr. Dheeba Moosa
Director,
Centre for English Language Support
Villa College.
Male', Maldives.
7952019
dheeba.moosa@villacollege.edu.mv

Thanking You.

Sincerely,

Aminath Nasheeda

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM: PARTICIPATING FACULTY

**Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives
National University**

<p>PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM: PARTICIPATING FACULTY</p>

This consent form will be held for a period of (5) years

I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet and letter dated 8th October 2013 explaining the above research project. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to conduct the research in under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature (Dean):

Full Name: Mr. / Ms.

Date:

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent: Lecturer

Subject: Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives National University

Informed Consent: Lecturer

This consent form will be held for a period of (5) years

Dear lecturer,

As a student of Master of Education programme from Villa College, Male', I am undertaking a research in the area of **Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives National University**, and this is my final year assessment. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university. The study further intends to discover strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level.

The data base of the study would include five unstructured interviews with qualified and experienced English Language lecturers and five students who study English as a Second Language. It is expected that the results of this study would provide useful strategies that could be adopted by language lecturers to enhance second language development at university.

The result of this study will be used only in academic research. Hence, they will not influence the teaching learning process conducted at the faculty. I would also like to assure the confidentiality and anonymity of the identity of both the lecturer and the faculty in which the research is being conducted.

Thank You.

Researcher: Aminath Nasheeda

Research Supervisor: Dr. Dheebea Moosa

I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet and letter dated 8th October 2013 explaining the above research project. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

As a lecturer, I agree to participate in this study under the conditions mentioned above.

Name of the lecturer:

Signature of the lecturer:

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent: Student

Subject: Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives National University

Informed Consent: Student

This consent form will be held for a period of (5) years

Dear student,

As a student of Master of Education programme from Villa College, Male', I am undertaking a research in the area of **Challenges in Learning a Second Language: Voices from the Maldives National University**, and this is my final year assessment.

I am very grateful that you could participate in the present study. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that hinder the development of second language proficiency in language learners at university. The study further intends to discover strategies that could be adopted to enhance second language development at this level.

The data base of the study would include five unstructured interviews with qualified and experienced English Language lecturers and five students who study English as a Second Language. It is expected that the results of this study would help to develop second language proficiency in language learners at university.

The result of this study will be used only in academic research. Hence, they will not influence your studies at the faculty. I would also like to assure the confidentiality and anonymity of your identity.

Thank You.

Researcher: Aminath Nasheeda

Research Supervisor: Dr. Dheeba Moosa.

I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet and letter dated 8th October 2013 explaining the above research project. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

As a student, I agree to participate in this study under the conditions mentioned above.

Name of the student:

Signature of the student:

APPENDIX H

Interview Questions for Lecturers

- 1) What are the challenges students with moderate to severe second language learning difficulties face?
- 2) What strategies could be adopted to enhance second language development at university?
- 3) It has been assumed that successful learners develop insightful beliefs about language learning processes and unsuccessful learners develop negative beliefs about language learning. To what extent do second language learners' beliefs affect or contribute to their language learning?
- 4) What effect does mother tongue have on learners' in learning English as a second language?
- 5) Is there a correlation between the students' second language anxiety levels and their achievement levels in the university? If so what are the strategies learners adopt to reduce levels of anxiety?
- 6) What role does motivation plays in second language learning and what methods do you adopt to motivate your students?
- 7) Do personality traits and intelligence influence the students in learning the language? If yes, how?
- 8) What effect does age and gender have on learners' in learning a second language and which age would be ideal in your opinion for second language learning?

9) Which kind of resources do you require to teach English as second language?

Do you have the necessary resources?

APPENDIX I

Interview Questions for Learners

- 1) In your experience, as an English learner which characteristics seem to you most likely to be associated with success in second language learning?
- 2) What are the factors that hindered you in the development of second language proficiency at university and why?
- 3) What kind of activities do you enjoy most and least in the language classroom and why?
- 4) Though the students learn the basic language structures to communicate, they are hesitant to do so. What do you think are the reasons?
- 5) How can negative belief have an effect on learning the language? What is your view?
- 6) How has anxiety affected you in learning the language?
- 7) What motivates you to learn English as a second language?
- 8) Do personality factors influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language? If so how?
- 9) Do you think age is a barrier in learning language? If yes why?
- 10) Does your first language influence second language learning? If so how?

9. مودل ترمبوتن ترناژمودل ارژنر هه ترمبوتن ترناژ سوهه ارژنر؟ ارژنر وارج سرد ارژنر يارو؟

10. مودل ترمبوتن ترناژمودل ارژنر هه ترمبوتن ترناژ سوهه ارژنر؟ ارژنر وارج سرد ارژنر يارو؟

APPENDIX K

Member Checked Interview Transcript

AN INTERVIEW WITH A LECTURER (A)

QUESTION 1

INTERVIEWER: What are the challenges students with moderate to severe second language learning difficulties face?

INTERVIEWEE: The its very much individual ah it's an individual case definitely because of the different individual differences that we have different factors that affect ah .. language proficiency. Um. I think it could be that ~~there~~ their previous learning experiences or when they started learning various things that might have affected their level of proficiency um. that would may be challenge them um. the bad experiences that they have may challenge them um..at this stage. um.. also if they haven't reached a particular level of proficiency they might be having fossilized errors and things like that that might stop them progressing further things like that I think.

QUESTION 2

INTERVIEWER: What strategies could be adopted to enhance second language development at university?

INTERVIEWEE: I think in that case there has to be continuous support uh language support for students. Here particularly in the case of MNU I think even though there are like for example the psychology course. The medium of instruction is English but English is not actually part of their curriculum. So there are students who find it very difficult to cope because of the language not because of the content. Uh I have students who will come and meet me individually because they know I would speak with them in Divehi in the class I was speaking in English. So they want to when they want to clarify something they always make an appointment to come and speak me because it makes it they are more comfortable speaking in Dhivehi and I think it has to be um.. there has to be a continuous support system whether it is that they have a subject that will address particularly address English Language or as it practice in any other universities to have any language centre where they can go

Commented [A1]: I am not sure if I am making sense here. I meant to say I don't speak with students in Dhivehi in class, but they will meet me individually outside class time if they want to clarify something because I think they prefer to speak in Dhivehi, which I do once I am outside class hours.

Commented [A2]: As in an EAP course

to you know get help with writing assignments or things like that I think that would be very useful.

QUESTION 3

INTERVIEWER: It has been assumed that successful learners develop insightful beliefs about language learning processes and unsuccessful learners develop negative beliefs about language learning. To what extent do second language learners' beliefs affect or contribute to their language learning?

INTERVIEWEE: I think it makes a big difference because um.. I mean the beliefs are not individuals which makes it unique so if they believe that a certain strategy will be useful for them and that is the strategy they will practice so that they will use so I think um.. there are some students who. Um.. to give an example, yesterday I had a student who came in claimed that she can only learn by listening. That her learning style is auditory so she can't learn by reading. So it is possible to did I know of any material that provided information in audio form. So she believes that that is the only way that she can learn so she is like you know so however much I read it's not going to help me. I don't think it's possible I mean everybody has a little bit of both has some strategies are more prominent but um .. strategies that are more prominent um.. but I don't think it could be very common to have one particular style yeah. So I think there is lot of research that has published on how the beliefs affect uh.. their not only the style that they employ but the strategies that they use and their belief in themselves whether they are actually capable of doing this There are some students who believe that um.. no my island I went to school and learnt in Dhivehi medium and I'm not good in English so I can't do this so um.. that kind of belief as well. So I think if they understanding of themselves their um.. opinion of their own language proficiency they tend to misjudge themselves sometimes. So things like that also affect how well they do.

So you mean these students will not be able to learn the language ?

Not so much learn the language. I think when they have very strong beliefs about their ability it can hinder the learning process um.. whereas if they are able to if you know on the part of lecturers particularly. If they are able to show that they can do better if they are given the chance to challenge that belief and show that is actually not true. Uh..particularly in the case of you know when students have misperceptions about their own proficiency that can happen. And on the hand if they have positive beliefs.... I think they are yeah I think they are it's even-human nature isn't it?

QUESTION 4

INTERVIEWER: What effect does mother tongue have on learners' in learning English as a second language?

INTERVIEWEE: I think um.. the it depends on the um.. relationship between the mother tongue and the second language um.. for example if it is from the same family may be then it would be less complications um.. so to some extent um.. there are um research to show first language does um influence second language because of the language transference um.. but to some but to a large extent I think it is very dependent on how um.. how much language is actually used in the society how much they are influenced by the mother tongue and the second language so for example in our context there is a lot of English being used um.. in the society whether even if it not for normal day to day oral communication there is lot of material in English visibly in English um.. things like that um... it also depends on I think peoples attitude towards mother tongue whether they feel that um.. their mother tongue is worth promoting worth improving on um., in the case of um.. the young generation now in Maldives I think there is a tendency to believe that Dhivehi is not worth of anything so its more important to focus on English so I think there is the effect of language transfer that actually affects the um.. second language development. But it also partly to do with attitude and the availability of the other language in the society as well.

Commented [A3]: ?? transfer? interference?

QUESTION 5

INTERVIEWER: Is there a correlation between the students' second language anxiety levels and their achievement levels in the university? If so what are the strategies learners adopt to reduce levels of anxiety?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't personally believe that is a huge factor um..you know that it is necessarily specific to learning a language, I think in general um.. obviously there is a link between anxiety and learning but I don't know if it is necessarily specific to a second language or how it is necessarily specific to a second language I know there is research done on that but I don't necessarily believe that is something specific to a second language.

QUESTION 6

INTERVIEWER: What role does motivation plays in second language learning and what methods do you adopt to motivate your students?

INTERVIEWEE: I think yes, motivation has a huge role to play because unless you are actually interested in an wanting to learn um.. the amount of learning that take place is not going to be as much as if you are actually had a lot of intrinsic motivation um.. so it also depends on how much they are actually um.. the kind of motivation that they have right I mean if they are genuinely interested in wanting to learn the language or are they wanting to learn the language because they need discrete pass the exam I think there is a difference there um.. if they are interested in wanting to learn the language if they see that the language is useful beyond the purposes of the actual course that they are doing I think there will be big difference in the effort that they out in the performance that they show in the course itself. Um.. as for strategies that I use I think I do a lot of encouraging in the sense not necessarily in terms of language but more in terms of how I deal with students that it with if there is anything that they don't understand I am always open to you know to come and ask my door is open they can get in touch with me or if they want they can email me that I am accessible to them

Commented [A4]: ?

so that I want them to feel that you know that they can approach me that they don't need to be worried even if they don't understand something also encouraging them in the sense that there is no such thing as a stupid question you know it's a fear that a lot of students have so I think in general sense making sure that there is a conducive learning environment and encouraging them to do their best rather than competing against each other to achieve their own personal best, compete against oneself um.. that sort of things I think would be probably ways I could encourage.

QUESTION 7

INTERVIEWER: Do personality traits and intelligence influence the students in learning the language? If yes, how?

INTERVIEWEE: Personality I think in terms, I think it depends on the kind skills you give importance to when it comes to personality um.. because say for example an introvert um.. is not wanting to will not want to do much speaking or not wanting to take part in group discussions things like that. But they might be very good at it but they will not be wanting to engage in such activities in the classroom so I think it affects the kind of engagement that students you see from students in the classroom um.. as well as the ability to use particular skills. Particularly thinking of the introvert extrovert distinction whether the kind of skills that I think research shows is that extroverts are generally more fluent um.. they don't really care whether they make mistakes or not whereas introverts they are more accurate but lacking in fluency so I think it is very much skilled based issue I think.

And what about intelligence?

Intelligence I don't think there is any relationship with language. I think there is a relationship with learning in general but not specific to second language.

QUESTION 8

INTERVIEWER: What effect does age and gender have on learners' in learning a second language and which age would be ideal in your opinion for second language learning?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't think gender has anything to do with language learning. Um.. may be the personality differences that come with gender affect but I don't think gender itself that it affects. Um.. with regard to age uh.. I think um.. the earlier is the better. But um.. because it is a second language I think it both the family as well as if the school involved they have to bear in mind that this the second language it's not the first language. So there has to be distinction and I think it needs to be clear for the students or for the children um.. how they learn if both languages are used together there is a lot of code mixing that's how the child is going to grow up um.. using the language as we see here know. Um.. Dhivehi and English used together lot of code mixing going on so there is no distinction between when to use English when to use Dhivehi so even though for proficiency it is important and for pronunciation things like that it is important to start as early as possible I think it needs to be clear the boundary needs to be clear so that the child is able to develop the first language which is essential for not only the development of the second language but for general cognitive development as well.

QUESTION 9

INTERVIEWER: Which kind of resources do you require to teach English as second language? Do you have the necessary resources?

INTERVIEWEE: Um.. to be very honest I think the only resource is a good teacher. Um.. that is the basics even if you have all the fancy gadgets and everything unless you have a good teacher it is not going to be as good. So a good teacher should be able to utilize whatever um.. resources the students come with so for example um.. if it is written material that you lack that can be sourced from just the site from the newspapers or

what so ever or it can be um.. I think used um.. it can be whatever resources available can be put to good use if there is a good teacher who understands how to use any kind of language material available and how to make use of the learners. Because the learners however young or however um.. whatever level of proficiency they aim. Their aim would be able to contribute to providing resources for example, getting students to write something and that could be the basics of discussion. That could be the basics of looking at language errors and correcting the errors and it could be the something that could form basis of looking at grammar and vocabulary or something for them to do uh.. both to use all the skills so for me yes the essential source you need is a good teacher.

APPENDIX L

Identifying a thematic framework

AN INTERVIEW WITH A LECTURER (D)

QUESTION 1

INTERVIEWER: What are the challenges students with moderate to severe second language learning difficulties face?

INTERVIEWEE: I believe that children with moderate to severe second language learning difficulties would face communication problems. That is one major difficulty that they would face ah.. we are training teachers here so when they go to for example to the practicums they are unable to communicate effectively with the students they are unable to express or deliver the lesson effectively um.. in a classroom and hence it affects actually the practicum result. So that is one major challenge they would face and the other challenge is um.. communication problem error is seen in the classroom while we are teaching. They are unable to express or voice out what they feel what they want their needs even in the classroom. So um.. that is it. Then the other challenge the students face is they are unable to actually do their assignments because um.. they are unable to write effectively ah.. academic assignments that is one major challenge that they face and um.. hence that again impacts or affects their results. So that is one major challenge that they face and the other thing is that they feel that they are unable to express in writing or even in speaking form their confidence level goes down which affects their self-esteem and also ah.. the motivation is a factor that um.. plays a role in the students' academic life when they do not perform well sometimes they are not motivated. But there are students who put an effort even if they do not perform well later they put a lot of effort and then because they have the motivation they put a lot of effort to improve their performance. That is one group of students. There is another group of students actually when they do not perform well they are not even motivated to put an effort. And the students who actually do not perform well they do not even have the confidence to face the teacher to face the students when they go to for example schools um.. their confidence level goes down so those are

- Communication problems
- In class students are unable to express themselves
- Unable to write effectively
- Learners do not have enough confidence
- low self-esteem
- lack of motivation.

the factors I feel the factors that affect or the factors that could be said the challenges the students face.

QUESTION 2

INTERVIEWER: What strategies could be adopted to enhance second language development at university?

INTERVIEWEE: I feel that students second language development can be enhanced by lecturers at the university by giving students more opportunities actually

um.. and to ah..carry out lessons in a very student centred manner. Give the students provide the students with more opportunities to speak, to communicate, to interact are some of the strategies lecturers could adopt in the classroom. And provide students with um.. activities that would motivate them ah.. also need to be there level. If the activities are lower than there level or higher than there level students would not be motivated to get involved in those activities and also while they are doing the activities it is important for the lecturers or teachers to reinforce the students or to encourage the students so that they know the teacher appreciates and accepts their work. Always the students need to feel that they belong to where they are in so that is an important feeling that the students have if they are to learn a language. Especially a language in a comfortable environment. So that is important and also when teachers provide feedback to the students it has to be constructive feedback and um.. the feedback should um.. highlight the areas where the student not only in areas where the students have gone wrong but the areas where the student has done something right and also at the same time where the student has gone wrong and um.. feedback also should be provided not in a way that would humiliate students not in front of all the students. There are positive ways of actually expressing what the lecturer needs to express to the students in order to bring him or get him on the right track. So provide good feedback um..where the students would not feel humiliated and also when students accept there are some students in our classes who at the beginning of the semester for example who tend to speak in Dhivehi or to switch to mother tongue because it is they are

Student centered learning

Provide opportunities to speak or to interact

Provide motivating activities

Activities should be according to the level of the students

Teachers should reinforce students and encourage them

Students need to have sense of belonging

Conducive learning environment needs to be provided

Provide constructive feedback

Allow students to use mother tongue at the beginning of the semester

Gradually advise students to use the target language

comfortable with their mother tongue but do not humiliate the students in front of the class. Do not show that you don't accept it but show the students at the beginning that you accept even if they use ah..Dhivehi language or mother tongue in the class but also always remind the students that they need to improve their English so by the end of the semester you should ah..show them that um..English is the language that you actually want them to communicate in the class but at the beginning of the semester you could actually um.. accept Dhivehi Language but as they go on improving remind them that they need to use English Language. So those are some of the strategies I believe that the teachers could employ in the classroom to enhance the language development of students in the class.

QUESTION 3

INTERVIEWER: It has been assumed that successful learners develop insightful beliefs about language learning processes and unsuccessful learners develop negative beliefs about language learning. To what extent do second language learners' beliefs affect or contribute to their language learning?

INTERVIEWEE: Yah..I have actually come across a number of students who um..believe that learning a second language is important for their future is important for academic achievement or for academic performance. They put effort they do a lot of hard work actually to improve their English Language because they believe that in the end the outcome is going to be um..fruitful only if they improve their English. Because we are a second language um..we are learning English as a second language and without English Language we cannot do anything in today's world. So these students who believe that English Language is important they put a lot of effort to improve their English and um..the students actually.. there are some students on the other hand who believe that English is important but still they are not so confident in the language or they are not um..they do not have that proficiency in English Language so um..so students who are not even competent enough actually try to put effort into learning

A number of students believe learning a second language is important for their future and academic achievement.

Learners put a lot of effort to improve their English because they believe the outcome would be fruitful.

Learners believe without learning English they cannot do anything in today's world.

Students who are not competent enough in English Language put a lot of effort to learn.

We cannot say students who are weak in English Language have negative belief about the language.

Students who have positive beliefs towards language learning are motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically.

Students may have negative beliefs because they are weak in the language.

language because they know that um..without getting adequate proficiency in the language they cannot actually um..be successful in the future. Even if they are um..do not if they do not have that competency or proficiency they try to put effort into improving themselves and

um..we cannot say that the students who are weak actually in our classrooms are students who have negative belief about the language. It is not that may be um..I have not come across a number for students who actually have negative beliefs about learning a language because we are

in a community where everybody um..believes strongly learning English Language in very very important to our future so we all have a you know

positive beliefs about language in the sense that we cannot achieve anything without learning a language. So um..those who have for example those students who are very positive about leaning a language

learning a second language and they want to actually achieve good results in language they are even motivated they even have very positive beliefs about learning a language they are motivated intrinsically and

even extrinsically to learn the language and um.. those students who do not do well um,..they are not doing well because they do not have

positive beliefs about language may be because they are weak in language but still they also put effort into learning a language but that

factor also there may be there could be few students that actually I believe that there could be few students even our classes who might have

negative beliefs about learning a language but they do not show that in the classroom they do put effort into learning the language even they get

involved with activities that um..we give them to do in the class.

QUESTION 4

INTERVIEWER: What effect does mother tongue have on learners' in learning English as a second language?

INTERVIEWEE: I strongly believe that um.. if mother tongue is different from the second language then the students find it really hard to learn a second language or to acquire second language if there are similarities between the first language and the second language between the mother tongue and when mother tongue is different from second language then students find it hard to learn.

When the two languages are similar it is easier to learn.

The grammatical structure of the two languages differ and mother tongue influences second language.

While writing students think in their mother tongue.

second language the students would find it easier to learn a second language. But in our case English Language and Dhivehi Language are not similar languages the structure um.. the grammatical structure of both the languages differ so what happens is our students in the classes do not find it easier to learn the language um..sometimes mother tongue actually influences the second language quite a lot um.. in our case because students um..that we see in their writing for example they think in their own mother tongue and then they try to write what is in their mind um..in English and we see you know the sentence structure or there are grammatical errors in their sentences due to that their thinking is in Dhivehi mother tongue and their writing is in English. So we see how it actually influences mother tongue influences their writing um..grammatical structure is clear evidence that students are being the mother tongue is influencing their second language.

QUESTION 5

INTERVIEWER: Is there a correlation between the students' second language anxiety levels and their achievement levels in the university? If so what are the strategies learners adopt to reduce levels of anxiety?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes there is a correlation between the students second language anxiety levels and their achievement levels in the university. Ah.. there are students who ah.. who are nervous when we give them opportunities to present for example something. Because of that nervousness they are not able to do actually the presentation well or when we give them to write something in the class for example we ask them to contribute their ideas in group activities they are not able to actually do it appropriately or properly or effectively because of their anxiety and due to this anxiety they are not even motivated sometimes. Their self-confidence goes down they are not so confident even in the classroom and this in the end effects their results their performance in the class so there is a I would say a correlation between the students anxiety level and their achievement in second language and um.. a strategy that they adopt to reduce levels of anxiety that I have found is avoidance. They try to avoid from ah.. they

There is correlation between students anxiety levels and their achievement levels.

When students are given opportunities to present something they become nervous.

Anxious students do not contribute their ideas in group activities.

They are unable to participate effectively properly or appropriately due to anxiety.

→ Their self confidence goes down and it affects their performance.

Avoidance is a strategy anxious students use to reduce their anxiety level.

try to avoid ah.. situations which would actually get them to perform something in the second language. They try to actually pass on the when they get an opportunity to do something to present for example in the group they try to pass that opportunity to a friend because they do not want to actually do that because they are anxious they have that anxiety so avoidance is one strategy I would say they use to reduce their level of anxiety.

QUESTION 6

INTERVIEWER: What role does motivation plays in second language learning and what methods do you adopt to motivate your students?

INTERVIEWEE: Motivation is a very important factor in learning a second language if we are not motivated then um.. we would not achieve the results that we would want to achieve in learning a second language so motivation is an important factor we need to be intrinsically motivated we need to be extrinsically motivated to learn a second language and in order to motivate the students um.. in my class I try to give them um.. lot of try to provide them with a lot of opportunities actually um.. to in my language classroom in terms of motivating them I try to give them a lot of opportunities to motivate students in my class to give them activities that are at their level and if I find that the students are not so motivated by a certain type of activity then I try to change from plan A to plan B. I try to modify the activities in such a way that it would motivate the students it is very important for the teacher to actually provide the students with activities that are at their level to motivate the students. If the teacher gives them activities that are not challenging enough the students would not be motivated or active if the teacher provides them with activities that are too low not at their level then also students would not be motivated. So that the teacher should be able to identify the level of students in your class and should be able to give activities that are at their level to motivate the students. Also giving them good feedback is a way to motivate the students and show them that the teacher appreciates their work is also one way of motivating the students providing them

Motivation is a very important factor in learning a second language.

Students should be motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically.

To motivate students activities should be provided according to their level and it should be challenging.

Constructive feedback should be provided and show the student that the teacher appreciates their work.

Encourage students to put more effort to do their work.
 Comfortable environment needs to be provided.
 Teacher should be approachable and pleasant.

good feedback and encouraging the students to put more efforts to do their work is also a form of encouragement and the teacher always should make sure that students are in a comfortable environment they could express their needs and their wants in the classroom at time and the teacher should also be approachable and pleasant with the students so that they will also be motivated to learn a second language in the teachers classrooms. So those are things that I try to do in my language classroom.

QUESTION 7

INTERVIEWER: Do personality traits and intelligence influence the students in learning the language? If yes, how?

Personality traits and intelligence play an important role in L2 learning.
 Intelligent students find it easier to understand the concepts and rules of the language so it is easier to learn.
 With a limited time they are able to do a number of tasks.
 Students who are quiet in nature do not have the confidence to open up in a bigger audience.

INTERVIEWEE: I would say that the learners personality traits and intelligence play an important role in learning a second language um.. intelligence students actually learn a language easily and um..when you are intelligent it is um..easier actually we will find it or when the students are intelligent the students would find it easier to understand and the concepts the rules of the language. So they would find it undoubtedly they would find it easier to learn a language. So and ah.. they actually with a limited time they are able to do a number of tasks that unintelligent students would not be able to. So that is one advantage for the intelligent students and when talking about personality traits I would say the students who are quiet in nature they do not have the confidence actually to open up themselves in an audience in a bigger audience but that does not mean they are not intelligent. They also could be intelligent but they do not have the confidence to face a number of people. But on the other hand, they might actually be more self-regulated than the intelligent student actually or the out-going student so ah.. the student who is quiet in nature in the classroom who is unable to communicate because he or she is shy or because he or she lacks confidence might ah.. also actually perform equally better um.. in for example tests or in other forms of assessments.

They will be more self regulated than extroverts and perform better in assessments.

QUESTION 8

INTERVIEWER: What effect does age and gender have on learners' in learning a second language and which age would be ideal in your opinion for second language learning?

INTERVIEWEE: I would say the younger you are the easier it is for you to learn a language. Now when you expose a young kid to let's say four or five languages they would actually learn it very very easily and they would actually acquire native like proficiency in that language but um.. I have experienced students I have seen aged students in my class find it really difficult to learn a language when compared to the younger students. Younger students I would say they are much much faster in learning and they actually tend to remember what they learn for a long time. But aged learners um..they tend to forget easily and they do not even learn faster. They need a lot of repetition in order to remember something. So that is one thing that um.. I have noticed um.. in the students that I teach and the other thing is um.. younger learners small children when they learn a language they have they do not have so many things in their mind to worry about they do not have a lot of responsibilities. But when they come to so, so that is also one factor that actually makes it easier for them to actually learn a language to be involved and they do a lot of reading and that is also one thing that could actually improve um..them to acquire or that could actually improve um..to that could actually make them to learn a language or to acquire a language. But on the other hand when the students grow older they have a number of responsibilities they a lot of worries so those could be factors actually which could affect them to learn a language and the other thing is um..I feel that when from birth until fourteen years that is the most ideal period to learn a language. Because at that period you will learn a language much faster but when you grow older when you are um..when you pass that that is the critical period to learn the language but when you pass that period you try to actually um..you do not learn a language as fast as a kid who is in that

Young children find easier to learn a second language
They acquire native like proficiency
Adults find it difficult to learn a language
Adults do not learn faster and they tend to forget easily unlike children
Adult learners have a lot of worries and responsibilities which affect them to learn a language
Ideal period to learn a language is from birth to until fourteen years after the critical period cannot learn as fast as a kid.

Older learners
are shy.

They are embarrassed
so they do not
have the confidence
to express in the
classroom

Adult learners think
think if they make a mistake other would laugh

age would learn and also um..older learners they are um..one factor that may be is impacting or affecting them to learn a language is they are shy or they are embarrassed they do not have that confidence to express in the classroom. That is also one thing that could hinder their learning um. And um.. they feel shy to express themselves because they feel that they are pronouncing a word in a wrong way so others would laugh at them they are embarrassed to express themselves so these are the kinds of things that actually influence their learning a second language.

QUESTION 9

INTERVIEWER: Which kind of resources do you require to teach English as second language? Do you have the necessary resources?

INTERVIEWEE: I would say that we have the necessary resources to teach a second language here. At the university we have IT resources, we have um..library full of books so I would say that we have very good resources to teach English as a second language to our students at the university.

There are enough
resources at
university to teach
language

There are IT
resources and and
library full of books

APPENDIX M

Indexing

Themes	Number
Belief can affect second language learning	1
language transfer	2
Motivation is a key factor in learning a second language	3
Intelligence affects second language learning	4
Age is factor that contributes to second language learning	5
Anxiety plays a major role in second language learning	6
Willingness to communicate	7
Language teaching resources	8
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Activities students enjoy most and least	11

Charting (Interviews)

Theme	Interview A	Interview B	Interview C	Interview D	Interview E
Motivation is a key factor in learning a second language	“I do a lot of encouraging in the sense not necessarily in terms of language but more in terms of how I deal with students”	“Motivation is very important if lessons are boring students don’t like to study at any age”	“motivation is a key factor in making the whole journey in second language learning a success”	“motivation is an important factor we need to be intrinsically motivated we need to be extrinsically motivated to learn a second language”	“Motivation actually plays a major role especially in second language learning”