

ROLE OF AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN ENGLISH ACQUISITION IN URBAN-RURAL SCHOOLS

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Abstract-Language is knowledge and a tool to communicate, to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings. It forges friendship, cultural ties and economic relationships both at national and international level. Knowledge is the key factor in the present world's competitiveness. Knowledge of language is a prerequisite for that. Language is what makes us human. Patterned language is something specific to humans, that is to say it is the basic capacity that distinguishes humans from all other living beings. Language therefore remains potentially a communicative medium capable of expressing ideas and concepts as well as moods, feelings and attitudes. Language is a certain kind of physical event. It comes out as a response to stimuli from our outer environment. Language and its articulation are also behavioral practices. Written languages use symbols to build words. The entire set of words is the language's vocabulary. The ways in which the words can be meaningfully combined is defined by syntax and grammar. The actual meaning of words and combinations of words is defined by the language semantics. There is of course no denying that the English one of the most important tools available to human beings. It is 'the' international language, a tool to communicate among various cultural groups, various companies, organisations, communities, and various countries. This is because the number of the people who use English as a means of communication exceeds far more than the number of the people who speak it as their mother tongue. In fact in the present technical and scientific advances, the need of a common language has been successfully met by the lingua franca i.e. English language. This is well known fact that those who have a good command of English have great advantage over the ones who do not.

1. ENGLISH IN INDIA AS SECOND LANGUAGE

English symbolizes in Indian minds, better education higher level of culture and superior intellect. The Indians and the Indian English language press uses many words derived from Indian language. Indian accent is sometimes difficult for non-Indians to understand. Actually English has co-existed in the Indian sub-continent alongside thousands of local languages. It has remained at the heart of the Indian society. According to recent surveys, approximately 4% of the Indian population use English. That figure might seem insignificant, but out of the total population it represents 35 million speakers. It means India is the largest English speaking community outside USA and the UK. As India celebrates its 67th year of independence from British rule, English continues to expand its empire. English is virtually the mother-tongue for many educated South Asians, but for the vast majority, it remains the second language. English spoken by such speakers is heavily influenced by speech patterns of their mother tongue

At present English is being taught in India as a compulsory language up to graduation. But despite having learnt this language over a decade, most of our students especially those pass out of colleges especially located in rural or semi urban areas show inhibition in speaking English. They pass Examinations, some of them with a high score but most of them lack effective oral and written communication skills. Majority cannot read or understand prescribed English books unless translated by teachers in the regional language. It is a matter of serious concern for the academia.

Students of the rural colleges face a number of problems. English is their second language. Learning a second language means acquiring a system of rules, but just as a very little is known about these rules, even less is known about how such rule systems are acquired. Students find themselves unable to express themselves in English. They have only a vague idea about sentence structure. They do not know proper pronunciation, spellings and grammatical rules. The sole objective of the teacher and the learner remain s to clear the examination. In the past, in rural areas, English was introduced to students in the fifth class. But now there is no dearth of English medium schools in such areas yet the standards of English are dropping at an alarming rate. If one compares a graduate of the present time with a graduate of the past, the result is disappointing. Students opt for the cramming method to get by in examination. Such an approach helps unscrupulous elements to flourish. They help the students in achieving their goals through cheap help books. The inter-disciplinary relation of teaching and learning process brings home the fact that the problems of the teachers can be solved if they concentrate on the causes of the problem of the students.

2. FACTORS INVOLVED IN LEARNING ENGLISH

The process of second language learning is quite a comprehensive concept to explain because there are a large number of variables which either directly or indirectly influence this whole process. Broadly speaking, these are of two types 1) internal factors and, 2) external factors. There is a further division and sub-divisions of these factors. The group which believes in the dominance of the internal factors is known as Rationalists. The rationalists believe that humans have an innate ability to learn language, on the other hand. The group which believes in the role of external factors is known as Empiricists. They believe in only those principles of language learning that can be observed.

For a long time, it was generally considered that the knowledge of the language, including voice, vocabulary, grammar and language skills is the key to success in foreign language teaching. But now, with the application of linguistics and the development of psycholinguistics, it has been acknowledged that non-linguistic knowledge like cultural differences, emotional factors, learning strategies and background of learners affect foreign language learning. Learning a second language is quite different from child language development as well as from the study of other academic disciplines. One reason may be that the study of a second language involves emotions and identity in a way other subjects do not. As Schumann(1998) suggested that emotions filters all learning and cognition, so the study of affective factors in second language learning is quite significant.

English has been variously viewed as 'a window to world', the language of the superior white race, the language of the elite, the language of status, the language of science and technology, the link language, the lingua franca etc. Keeping in mind the importance of the language, the state government of Punjab made English a compulsory subject in primary education in 1999. Realizing the global significance of English as a link language, the Punjab Chief Minister asked the British Council to set up an English Training Institute in the state to impart quality training to the Master English Trainers in June 2009.

The Punjab State government, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) Punjab and the British Council have been working on the Punjab English Enhancement Programme (PEEP) project Since April 2011.

Despite such efforts to raise the standard of English in Punjab, the status could be judged by a statement of the regional news paper The Tribune, that stated:

"Even three years after the subject was introduced in the primary schools, most students are unable to write their names in English.....most students at their best write the alphabet but were unable to identify any alphabet."(Judge: 2001).

3. AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN LEARNING ENGLISH

The main motivation for the present study came from the personal experience of English teaching and a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the current state of the English teaching and learning process with the conviction that even within the prevailing constraints, this research can suggest steps towards a positive change in English teaching and make it truly effective.

The subjects selected for the research are Tenth class pass outs because the final examination of the class is conducted through the Punjab school Education Board, so there is more uniformity in the evaluation of the examination. And their marks in English will be noted to compare with their respective scores in the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire.

The area selected for research is the rural-urban schools of Ferozepur district because the researcher has first hand experience of teaching in the area. It is believed that the understanding gained of various factors during teaching English will be an added advantage in conducting the study. So the statement of problem is stated as: role of affective factors in english acquisition in urban-rural schools.

Based on these objectives the following hypotheses were evaluated with the help of the interpretation of the data

- There exists no significant difference in the achievement in English language and affective factors of rural and urban boy students.
- There exists no significant difference in the achievement in English language and affective factors of rural and urban girl students.

4. COLLECTION OF DATA

The final data was obtained through affective factor inventory and the marks achieved in English exam of class 10th examination were noted to know about the academic achievement of the students in English. On an average, the students took thirty minutes to complete the questionnaires. After the data was collected, a quick review was done to check about incomplete questionnaires. The students were asked to complete the incomplete questionnaires which were then collected in a sealed envelope.

The quantitative data collected through the administration of various tools on selected samples was raw. It was tabulated, organized, analyzed, and interpreted for drawing conclusions and valid generalizations. The data was

studied from as many angles as possible to explore new facts. Good, Barr and Scates state “The process of interpretation mean and to attack data by making various statistical calculations.” To provide evidence reliability and validity of scales, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-ratio and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to total test score correlations and factor analysis have been conducted on data. In order to reach the research problem and sub problems, descriptive statistic, t-tests, simple and multiple linear regression analysis and variance analysis was performed is the significance of results

5. INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION OF DATA COLLECTED

Hypothesis 1. There exists no significant difference in the achievement in English language and affective factors of rural and urban boy students.

Table-5.1 The Mean Value of the Score of English Language of Boys in Urban and Rural

Group Statistics		Rural and Urban Boys							
	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Eng	Urban	75	124.68	22.580	2.607				
	Rural	75	99.29	17.667	2.040	.029	7.668	148	.000
Qst	Urban	75	120.08	14.841	1.714				
	Rural	75	115.85	12.505	1.444	.056	1.886	148	.061

The table-5.1 reveals that the mean value of the score of English language of boys in urban (75) and rural(75) are 124.68 and 99.29 respectively whereas standard deviation of urban and rural boys are 22.580 and 17.667 respectively. The table also reveals that the mean value of the score of Questionnaire of urban and rural boys are 120.08 and 115.85 respectively whereas standard deviation of urban and rural is 14.841 and 12.505 respectively. This data is presented in the graph given below

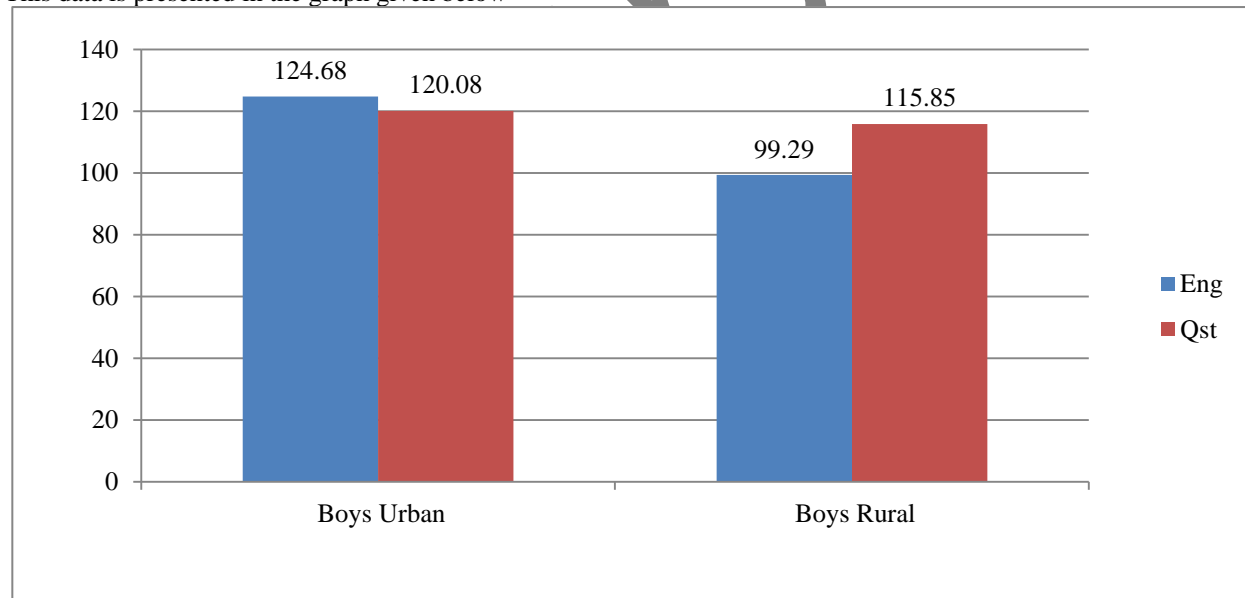


Fig. 5.1 Standard Deviation of Urban and Rural

Further the t-ratio calculated from the difference of mean score of English language of urban and rural boys are 7.668, which is greater than the table value .029 at 0.05 level of significance. Similarly the t-ratio calculated from the difference of mean score of AMBT of urban and rural is 1.886, which is also greater than the table value .056 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus it is concluded that there does not exist significant difference in the scores of AMBT of boys and girls. Hence, the hypotheses ‘there exist no significant gender differences in the Questionnaire of students’ is rejected. This indicates that both the affective variables influence the proficiency level in English language. The data is presented in the graph given below

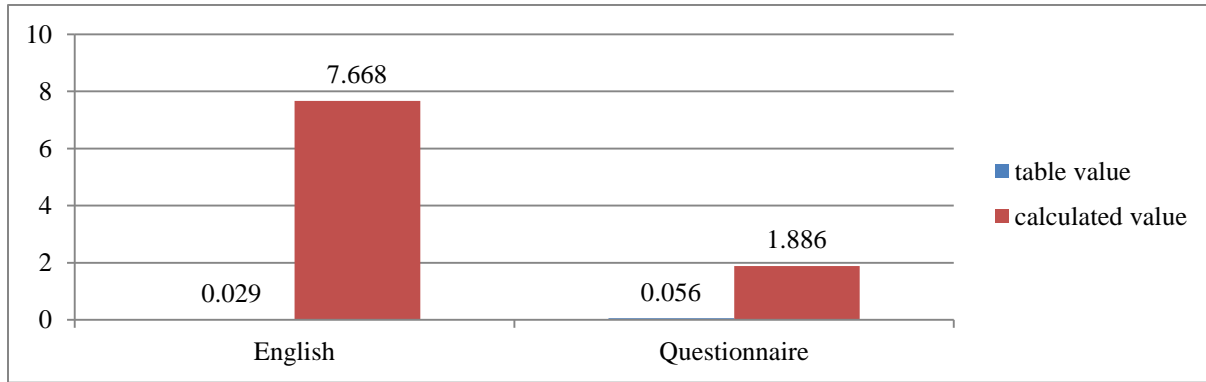


Fig. 5.2 The Affective Variables Influence the Proficiency Level in English Language

There exists no significant difference in the achievement in English language and affective factors of rural and urban girl students.

Table 5.2 The Mean Value of the Score of English Language of Girls in Urban and Rural

Group Statistics		Rural and Urban Girls							
	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Eng	Urban	75	137.56	24.028	2.775				
	Rural	75	102.39	19.468	2.248	.005	9.850	148	.000
Qst	Urban	75	135.41	14.964	1.728				
	Rural	75	122.91	13.168	1.520	.165	5.434	148	.000

The Table-5.2 reveals that the mean value of the score of English language of girls in urban (75) and rural (75) are 137.56 and 102.39 respectively whereas standard deviation of urban and rural girls are 24.028 and 19.468 respectively. The table also reveals that the mean value of the score of Questionnaire of urban and rural girls is 135.41 and 122.91 respectively whereas standard deviation of urban and rural girls is 14.964 and 113.168 respectively. The data is presented in the graph given below:

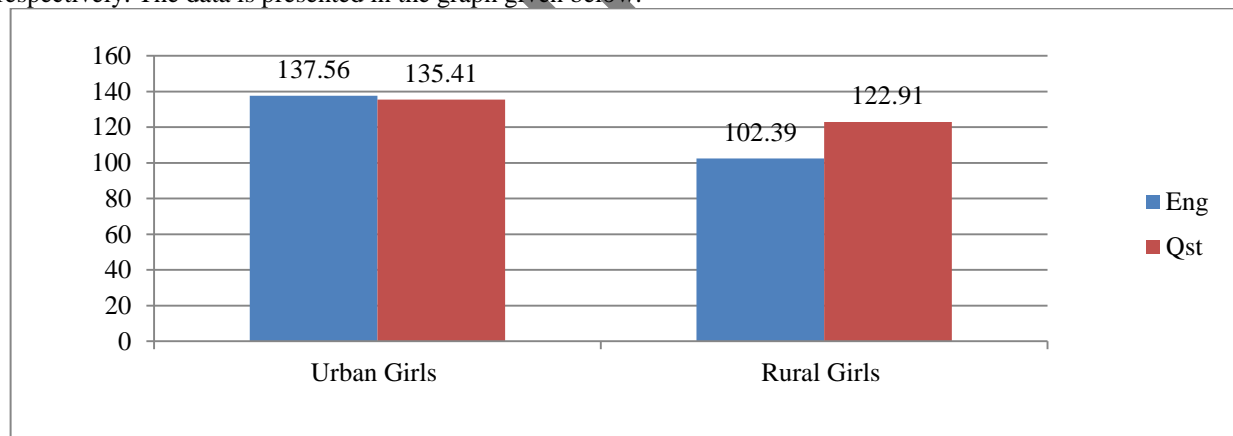


Fig. 5.3 Standard Deviation of Urban and Rural Girls

Further the t-ratio calculated from the difference of mean score of English language of urban and rural girls are 9.850, which is greater than the table value.005 at 0.05 level of significance. Similarly the t-ratio calculated from the difference of mean score of AMBT of urban and rural girls is 5.434, which is also greater than the table value .165 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus it is concluded that there does not exist significant difference in the scores of AMBT of girls in rural and urban area.Hence, the hypotheses 'there exist no significant gender differences in the Questionnaire of students' is rejected. This indicates that the affective factors show a positive correlation with the English language competency. The calculated and table value of t-ratio of urban and rural girls is shown in graph given below:

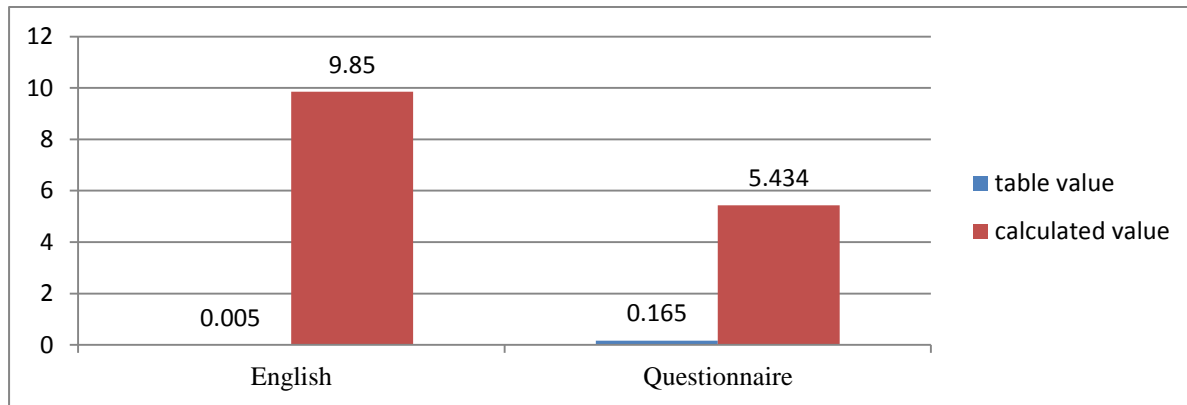


Fig. 5.4 The Calculated and Table Value of T-Ratio of Urban and Rural Girls

6. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Reducing the cognitive-centeredness of the previous language learning research, foreign and second language educators are currently beginning to recognize the importance of the cognitive and the affective domains in the language learning process. Consequently, there has been a greater understanding and appreciation of affective variables - as Hilgard (1963:267 cited in Arnold 1999) noted long ago - “purely cognitive theories of learning will be rejected unless a role is assigned to affectivity”. A book by Schumann, ‘The Neurobiology of Affect in Language’(1998) offers a summary of the author’s theory. According to Schumann, affect is seen as central to the understanding of L2 attainment and the author argues that second language acquisition is emotionally driven and emotion underlies most, if not all, cognition. In a similar vein, Damasio (2003) has articulated that even on the neurobiological level emotions are part of reason, and Oatley and Jenkins (1996:122) affirm that “emotions are not extras – they are the very centre of human life... [They] link what is important for us to the world of people things and happenings.”

CONCLUSION

It is generally believed that an average student with the right approach has an achievement level much higher than an intelligent student with the wrong approach in relation to language acquisition. It is therefore also necessary to stress the affective aspects of the language learners consciously so as to provide the students with the right approach to language acquisition. In the presence of negative emotions, such as anxiety, fear, stress, anger or depression, one’s optimal learning potential gets compromised. The most innovative techniques and the most attractive materials may be rendered inadequate, if not useless, by negative affective reactions involved in the language learning process (Jane Arnold 2009). Hence, when dealing with the affective side of language learners, attention is to be paid to overcoming problems created by negative emotions and fostering and encouraging facilitative emotions. The teaching schedule must progress slowly, keeping pace with the child’s psychological and mental development. An ideal teaching syllabus is one which is closely matched with the developmental timetable of the child. A child must be given what he can take and only as much as he can take (Koul: 1992). For providing this kind of ‘teaching schedule’ and ‘teaching syllabus’ the present research will be quite helpful.

The present study reveals that non-rural students are far better and adjusted emotionally and educationally to language learning situation (both 1st and 2nd) and have higher academic achievement than SC and ST boys. This difference was particularly seen in rural areas in comparison to urban areas (Sinha, 2009).

Emotions are important in the classroom in two major ways. First, emotions have an impact on learning. They influence the ability to process information and to accurately understand what learners encounter. For these reasons, it is important for teachers to create a positive, emotionally safe classroom environment to provide for the optimal learning of students. Second, learning how to manage feelings and relationships constitutes a kind of “emotional intelligence” that enables people to be successful. Emotional intelligence deals with understanding oneself and others. Specific behaviors and skills can be taught to help students develop emotional intelligence.

One’s emotional state has the potential to influence his thinking. For example, students learn and perform more successfully when they feel secure, happy, and excited about the subject matter (Oatly&Nundy, 1996). Although emotions have the potential to energize students’ thinking, emotional states also have the potential to interfere with learning. If students are overly excited or enthusiastic, they might work carelessly or quickly rather than working methodically or carefully. In addition, emotions such as anger, anxiety, and sadness have the potential to distract students’ learning efforts by interfering with their ability to attend to the tasks at hand. Emotions can interfere with

students' learning in several ways; including 1) limiting the capacity to balance emotional issues with schoolwork, 2) creating anxiety specifically about schoolwork, and 3) triggering emotional responses to classroom events.

A second way in which feelings can interfere with learning is when students are anxious about their schoolwork. Students who are depressed or anxious about learning often do not feel competent academically. They do not trust themselves and are likely to take more time double-checking their answers or questioning their work before turning it to their teachers. They may even start over each time they make a mistake, convinced that it undermines their entire effort. Because they may take more time on a task, these students give themselves and their teachers an inaccurate perception of the actual time it took for them to solve a problem or understand a concept.

When emotions interfere with competence belief, students might withdraw from classroom activities in order to avoid appearing incompetent in the classroom. Students who tend to internalize their emotions are often easy to overlook in the classroom. Teachers can help reduce their students' performance anxieties by providing multiple opportunities for feedback about their work, and by emphasizing that mistakes are okay and a part of learning. For these students, it is important that their entire grade should not be based on one big project and that feedback emphasize the things they are doing right, while also giving specific, focused advice on ways to improve. Moreover, they might benefit from knowing that the teacher really cares about them as a person and as a learner. Finally, students can become upset by classroom events like a failed test, a negative comment from the teacher or a peer etc, and react in a way that impedes further learning. These reactions may play out in different ways, depending on what the student attributes to the problem. For example, if two students fail a language test, one might blame herself for not studying enough, while the other might blame the teacher for supplying unfair questions. Both students might experience anger from the same source i.e. a bad grade. However, the students differ in their beliefs about their ability to improve the situation. Negative emotions interfere with learning when students become frustrated to the point of feeling helpless or incompetent. This tendency can be offset if students learn how to regulate or manage their emotions in the classroom. A student who is angry and only knows how to blame others is not going to succeed in or out of the classroom. The student needs to learn how to acknowledge and express his feelings, manage his anger, and come up with strategies for letting off steam.

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