

A Review Study of the Impact of Age, Gender, and Social Class on Second Language Learning

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Abstract. Social factors are one of the important factors that affect second language learning. It has been shown that age can affect language proficiency and learning strategies. The factors that affect second language learning include educational factors, social factors, learner personality factors, and motivation and interest. The study aims to examine the effects of age, gender, and social class on Second Language Learning and provide insights into how these factors can influence language learning outcomes and strategies. This article mainly studies the impact of social factors on second language learning. Among social factors, age, gender, and social class are important factors. This article will summarize empirical research in recent years to verify the impact of social factors on foreign language learners' learning. Understanding the impact of age, gender, and social class on second language learning can help educators and learners develop more effective language learning strategies and create inclusive learning environments.

Keywords: Second language Learning, Age, Gender, Social class.

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of the field of linguistics, the research on the influencing factors in the second language learning process is also deepening. Since the 1950s, the role of individual learner differences in second language acquisition has been widely concerned. For example, Skehan, Ellis, Gardner, etc. have conducted extensive and in-depth research on learning differences in second language acquisition, and have achieved remarkable results, and the individual differences of learners have also become one of the main research contents of second language acquisition research. Among the factors that affect second language learning, social factors, educational factors and learner personality factors are the factors that receive more attention. Social factors play a very important role in second language learning. Among social factors, they can be mainly divided into four aspects: age, gender, social class and ethnic identity.

2. Factors

2.1. Age

2.1.1. Impact of age on learning

According to Xu, L.'s article, the age at which people start learning has a greater impact on learning results. Starting to learn English in childhood, children's speaking ability is significantly stronger than that of adults [1]. Penfield suggested that children's ability to learn is biologically related to brain development, i.e., the golden period of the brain for language learning is a critical phase of language learning [2]. Children's brains are more flexible than adults, so children speak at a higher level when learning a language, and English learners who immigrated as children will not have the accent of a foreigner [3]. During the critical period of children's brain development, children will be better at learning different languages, and they can also subtly improve their speaking skills. If children receive sufficient learning stimulation at this stage, children will make great achievements in speaking and grammar. However, there are also studies that prove that because children's cognitive abilities are not strong enough and adults have stronger understanding abilities, there is still controversy over children's learning advantages [4]. Children are in the golden period of language development

between the ages of 6 and 7. If they are in the target language environment at this stage, it will have a positive impact on children's English learning.

2.1.2. Age and grammar production

However, in this regard, due to the large time span and no convincing tests, there have not been enough diachronic studies. Therefore, some scholars believe that adults can significantly improve their speaking ability after a period of specialized oral English learning.

In terms of teaching, due to the age difference between children and adults, different teaching methods should be adopted. Children are good at learning pronunciation and grammar. In the process of children learning spoken language and grammar, teachers should teach more sentences with complex grammar that are within the children's receptive range. Exposure to more complex sentences during the period when children have high receptive abilities can improve learning efficiency and improve children's learning ability. Teenagers are good at learning grammar and listening. In the process of learning for teenagers, more listening training can be carried out. Students can be taught grammar during listening exercises and give students more opportunities to be exposed to long and difficult sentences. In the adolescent learning stage, students should be encouraged to watch film and television works related to the target language at home. This can also promote the growth of listening skills in daily life and obtain a good language environment in the works. Adults are good at learning reading and writing. When adults learn English, they can learn English by reading a large number of original English works, understanding the meaning of sentences and analyzing the structure of sentences during reading. In after-school homework, more writing training can be arranged. Through daily reading and imitation of classic works, adults can get better learning results [5]. Therefore, different teaching methods should be adopted to allow English learners to achieve higher learning efficiency according to the learning differences between different ages.

In studies of adults and children learning English, learning English again at the adult stage will not affect the learning of English grammar, but it will have an impact on pronunciation [4]. It is possible that grammar and pronunciation can be achieved at a higher level when children begin learning English, but there is no research to prove this.

2.2. Gender and Second Language Learning

2.2.1. Role of gender in Learning

There are many differences between men and women in learning English. For example, their learning methods are different, and the brain locations activated during learning are also different. While men are better at using sensory methods in learning, women use a variety of different methods to learn English [6]. In current teaching, there are few teaching methods that use multiple methods, so women have better academic performance. Different learning methods, such as classroom discussions, can be added to future teaching activities.

The proficiency of the learning partner in the target language will also affect the learning efficiency. Cooperation between peers can effectively improve the learning efficiency. The more proficient the learning partner is in using the target language, the less difficulties the two people will have in learning the language [7]. Secondly, their educational level also has a great impact on language learning ability. In terms of use of learning outcomes, men use a richer vocabulary and use longer phrases in communication. Women, on the other hand, use fewer words and often use short sentences in their verbal expressions [8]. Although men and women have the same learning potential as human beings, when women learn, the language area of the brain is more easily activated, and the degree of brain activity is higher and it is easier to reach a higher level. As a result, women continue to surpass men in proficiency in speaking and writing. In terms of reading, writing and speaking, the higher the level of education, the greater the performance difference between men and women, with women performing better than men. However, there is no significant impact on hearing, and there is still a lack of empirical research to explain the reasons [9].

2.2.2. Impact of gender in learning

In the process of second language learning, the impact of gender on learning cannot be ignored. Gender differences between men and women will lead to differences in learning methods and learning purposes. For example, in some countries, girls' academic performance is much better than that of boys, so the admission requirements for boys' English-medium schools are lower than those for girls [10]. Instead of lowering boys' academic performance, the education department should focus on improving boys' academic performance by trying different teaching methods and using different teaching courseware to study how to improve boys' academic performance so that all students have the same level of academic performance. Learning result. In the process of learning foreign languages, parents and schools believe that girls are better at learning English, so the requirements and expectations for girls will be higher. Everyone has higher expectations for girls, but if the expected results are too difficult to achieve, excessive expectations will turn into pressure on girls, which will be counterproductive and affect girls' learning results. Both parents and schools should raise their awareness and avoid putting too much pressure on students.

Gender differences between men and women will lead to different learning strategies for men and women, and there are very few male teachers in English teaching positions. Therefore, the model of female teachers teaching female students will be more conducive to female students learning English and getting better results. In the future, it may be possible to arrange more male English teachers in schools, which will be more conducive to students learning English using different methods and may lead to better learning results.

2.3. Social Class and Second Language Acquisition

2.3.1. Role of social class in learning

Under the influence of social status, students with high social status are more likely to have correct pronunciation. There may be different reasons for differences in pronunciation. Parents with high social status will pay more attention to their children's pronunciation and provide more funds for their children to learn languages. Parents with low social status do not care about English proficiency and do not have enough funds for their children to learn English. Highly educated parents will motivate their children to learn the language, and they will not make grammatical errors, thus providing a good home English learning environment for their children. For parents with secondary education, they may make grammatical errors in daily communication, but it does not affect mutual understanding during communication [11].

Research on refugees in Germany shows that learning German is easier if people are familiar with a similar language before learning German [11]. In addition, national attitudes towards refugees will also affect refugees' language learning. If citizens harbor discriminatory and exclusionary sentiments against refugees, refugees may reduce or not invest in language learning. The mental health status of learners also has an impact on language learning. If the mental health status of learners is not ideal, learning efficiency and ability will be negatively affected, thereby reducing learning performance.

2.3.2. Impact of social class in learning

Different teaching methods should be used for second language learners of different social classes. For example, when teaching students with high socioeconomic status, because pronunciation errors rarely occur in students' home environments, teachers should focus on expanding students' learning horizons, teaching students expanded knowledge, and focusing on students' comprehensive development. When teaching middle-class students, it is necessary to pay attention to students' grammatical errors in daily speaking, and ask students to correct them in time. Parents should also be reminded to pay attention to grammatical problems in daily life to provide students with a better learning environment. When teaching students with lower socioeconomic status, it is necessary to lead more students to teach knowledge through dialogue and communication. This allows students to input and output English at the same time, better remember the content they have learned, and avoid having to worry about it in subsequent studies. Repeat what has already been taught.

For refugee groups, it is difficult to measure the impact of their refugee status on subsequent language acquisition because of the large differences in social class when they were in their home countries. And compared to people with low socioeconomic status, people with high socioeconomic status are more likely to flee to other countries. Therefore, among the influencing factors of refugees' second language acquisition, it is difficult to determine the effect of social class. For the time being, only after immigrating to the host country, the impact of the country's acceptance of refugees on the second language acquisition of refugees has been paid attention to.

3. Conclusion

In this article, the influence of age, gender and social status on second language learning is discussed. In the influence of age on second language learning, well, the younger the learner, the more correct grammar and pronunciation are learned, but older learners, because of their stronger understanding ability, will surpass children's learning results in later learning. For oral effects, older learners may not be as good at pronunciation as child learners, but may have higher achievement after a period of specific practice.

In terms of gender, women are better at learning reading and writing in English, but in terms of speaking, the difference between men and women is not very big. At the same time, the proficiency of language use among learning peers may affect the learning effect. If two people are proficient in using the language, their learning effect may be greatly improved.

In the influence of social class on language learning, students with higher social class may have better pronunciation. Parents with higher social classes are also more willing to invest in their children's language learning, thus widening the language proficiency gap between different classes. For refugees, if they have learned a language similar to the language of the host country, they can learn the language of the host country more quickly, but if they are discriminated against or treated unfairly in the host country, they may reduce or even cancel their investment in learning.

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