UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

IMPACT OF EXPOSURE TO ESL ON SELF-PERCEIVED LANGUAGE ABILITY THROUGH MOTIVATION AND MEMORY STRATEGY

TG NUR LIYANA
BINTI TENGKU MOHAMED FAUZI

Thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Applied Language Studies)

Academy of Language Studies

December 2022

ABSTRACT

The history of the English language in Malaysia began with the British era, and it has gone through different phases since the independence in 1957, which results in the diminution of English language exposure both inside and outside the classroom. The amount of exposure to English in school today is limited to a few hours a week, with little to no encouragement to apply the language outside the classroom. Despite the debate among research groups regarding implicit and explicit language exposure, the main focus is mutually positioned on providing a dynamic experience in language learning in order to influence language performance. Bandura (1972) in his Social Learning Theory (SLT) suggested that the relationship between stimulus and output is mediated by cognitive processes. In view of that, this study proposed motivation and memory strategy as the factors mediating relationship between exposure to ESL (stimulus) and learners' perceived language ability (output). Consequently, the study is first aimed at examining the direct impact of each type of exposure on language ability (self-perceived), followed by the investigation on the parallel and serial mediation influences of motivation and memory strategy on the relationship. This cross-sectional study involved 460 undergraduate students from public and private higher learning institutions. Proportionate stratified sampling method was carried out and four strata were identified; Strata I and II were male and female undergraduates in public institutions, Strata III and IV were male and female undergraduates in private institutions. Instrument used was a questionnaire, divided into four main sections including demographic items at the end of the questionnaire. Nine main hypotheses were developed to answer five research questions. Five of them are on direct relationships while the remaining four are on indirect relationships. Each category consists of a total of nine sub-hypotheses. Seven sub-hypotheses from direct relationship are supported and two remaining sub-hypotheses are not supported. On the other hand, two of nine sub-hypotheses on indirect relationship are not supported, leaving the remaining seven supported and from this figure, three of them are supported with full mediation while four are with partial mediation. The findings show that; 1) implicit exposure does not have direct influence on the perceived language ability, but only through the mediation of motivation and memory strategies, 2) it also appears that motivation does not mediate the relationship between any type of exposure and perceived language ability, but positive emotions created by the stimulus received motivate learners to embrace effective learning strategies, 3) the effect of mediators (motivation and memory strategies) is important as they determine the effectiveness of the exposure to ESL based on the learners' perceived language ability. Despite ranked as a secondary strategy, 'memory strategies' is found to significantly predict language ability as it ensures storing, processing, and retrieval of the target language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I'm grateful to Allah the Almighty for his endless blessings throughout this journey. I thank my supportive main supervisor, Dr Muhammad Saiful Bin Yusoff especially for introducing PLS-SEM. I am beyond thankful for the opportunity to learn from you. I thank my former main supervisor, Professor Dr Ahmad Mazli Bin Muhammad for his guidance right until his retirement. My co-supervisor, Associate Professor Dr Nor Fazlin Mohd Ramli, has given tremendous assistance from the beginning, and I am thankful for that.

My special gratitude to my dad, the late Haji Tengku Mohamed Fauzi Bin Tengku Zainal, and my mom, Hajah Rohani Binti Abdullah for their endless love and support for me from the moment I started this journey. Though Abah is not here to witness the ending, but I know very well how proud he would be. His contributions did not end the day he left us. He had continued to support me, both morally and financially, and words cannot express how much they mean to me. To Mama, I am eternally grateful for an amazing mother like you. May Allah keep both of you in His protection day and night, wherever you may be. May Allah grant you His highest Jannah.

To my loving, supportive and amazing husband, thank you! Words are never enough to appreciate all the things you do for me, Luqman, and Mama. You have made this much easier than it would be without you. And I thank Mom Janet and Daddy Russ for raising a loveable man like you. I am beyond lucky to have all these special people in my life. To my precious boy, Nik Luqman Ar-Rayyan, this one is for you. Mommy loves you and daddy to the moon and back!

My sisters and brothers have been amazing to me. They complete me when I feel incomplete. Just being around them is recharging to my drained mind. To my aunts and uncles, you deserve a shout out here. Thank you! On the day we lost our beloved father, you guys did much more than we can be thankful for.

Last but not least, my prayers go to my research buddies, colleagues and friends. I can't name you all but you know who you are. May God bless you all abundantly for being such an amazing person to others.

Thank you, Allah, for these amazing people in my life. Every single one of them deserve everything good in life in return of their kindness. I love you lillahi taala.

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1　Preamble

It commences by discussing the previous research done on the English language in Malaysia and then it proceeds to discuss the transition of the English language status since 1956. After 1956, English was considered a second language. In the research background, graduates' English communication performance is discussed, based on the assessments, concerns raised by researchers, the government as the policy maker, and the prospective employers. The problem statement is formulated based on said concerns, which result in the identification of issues pertaining to factors affecting Malaysian ESL learners' second language acquisition. Research objectives, research questions, the conceptual framework, and hypotheses are discussed following the problem statement. The chapter concludes with a definition of terms.

1.2　Study Background

It is well known that English is widely used and recognized as a second language in the former colonies of the United Kingdom or the United States such as Malaysia, India, Philippines, and Nigeria. In Malaysia, the history of the English language began with the British era, and it has gone through different phases since the independence in 1957. In the broadest strokes, the history can be divided into three phases. The first phase took place before and during the early days following of independence (before the name was changed to Malaysia) in 1956-1957. English was the medium of instruction in the Malaysian education system during the British Colonial era. When Malaysia was ruled by the British between the late eighteenth and mid-twentieth century, immigrants from China and India were brought in by the administration which then resulted in the creation of a "network of multi-ethnic, multilingual speech communities" (Platt & Weber, 1980). Consequently, there was growth in commerce, trade, and industry which led to the demand for non-Europeans with English education background (Lowenberg, 1986; Thirusanku & Md

1