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# DETERMINING THE STAGES AND FACTORS IN RELATION TO THE SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS 

Ynna Marie C. Halili<br>University of the Philippines Diliman, Manila, Philippines<br>ynnamariehalili@gmail.com


#### Abstract

The research was conducted to determine the stages of second language development that correlates on the age of the subjects. Also, to identify other internal and external factors that affects the second language acquisition in Kindergarten. The Descriptive-Qualitative Method was used in this study. Gathering of data are done through execution of researcher-made tasks, observations, interviews, and document reviews. The subjects are asked to complete the researcher-made tasks and interview individually. The outcome of this study is that the acquisition of the second language may progress at faster or slower rates depending on the presence of internal and external factors and students who were provided with enough exposure can beat those who don't have the opportunity for interaction. For future researches, provide an intervention that is applicable to the current K-12 Curriculum which can offer exposure and access to the second language. Additionally, assessment and evaluation of the researcher-made tasks were recommended for authenticity.


## Keywords

Second Language Acquisition, SLA in Kindergarten, Researcher-Made Tasks

## 1. Introduction

Second Language Acquisition refers to the study of how students learn a second language additionally to their first language. Second Language can be in a formal way in which the students learnt language through schooling where the MTB-MLE is being implemented. In early grades, the Mother Tongue is focused on only one language that is most beneficial to the whole class. Language can also be learned in an informal way such as when the students pick up the language naturally within the community. Students nowadays, can play, watch, and sing from a technology. Most the students' hobbies exposed them to another language.

People coming from the Middle-class often use Tagalog as a way of communication to get through the day. It all starts form their home, to their school, and to their surroundings. A lot of people can understand English because they read newspaper, they watch movies, they listen to songs, and they see words and phrases that they use to their everyday life. Adults tend to use English words and a phrase unconsciously because in every time they touch or use something, it has a combination of Tagalog and English - like for example, the apps in gadgets, the menus on some restaurants, the name of the building or roads. English is a huge part of survival and communication in Metro Manila. But in some irony, a lot of adults cannot talk or speak in English. In addition, young learners mimic how adults speak in their surroundings. Young learners can state simple words and phrases like colors, shapes, common objects, courtesy expressions because it is on their knowledge level. Still, they cannot express themselves completely and freely using English because they don't have the acquisition of it.

Language is use for survival and communication. It is a system in which sounds and words are grouped together to express thoughts and ideas. Language should be understood by the community to organize systematic ways of communicating.

## 2. Background of the Case

It is very evident nowadays that a lot of people can understand a certain language but has difficulty in using it. Speaking a certain language and just understanding a language is very different to each other. Why? Because to be able to speak a certain language, you need to have words that are
familiar to you, you know how to put it all together, and you say each word clearly. To just understand English, your brain $t$ must do the segmentation and categorization of meanings to the words and phrases heard.

We all know that each language is different from the another. Different languages have its own way of delivery, words, and formation. Here in Metro Manila, the two most common used languages are Tagalog and English. Tagalog and English are different and offers a very large range of explanation.

## 3. Statement of the Problem

This study discussed the predictable stages on how students acquire the second language of three Kindergarten students in the Philippines.
Specifically, the following questions will be answered:

- In what stage of second language acquisition do the students belong?
- What are the factors that affect the acquisition of the second language?


## 4. Literature Review

### 4.1 Bloom's Taxonomy

In Education, the outcomes expected from students are knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Knowledge is all about the mental skills and focuses on cognitive domain of learning. The psychomotor or manual skills are developing psychomotor ability. Attitudes are the growth in emotional and affective areas. These outcomes are from the research of Benjamin Bloom which is known as the Bloom's Taxonomy. Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, \& Krathwohl, 1956), provides a structure for categorizing the level of abstraction of questions. The most important outcomes to ponder especially in second language education are the cognitive and affective domains. Starting from the simplest up to the most complex.

A lot of people think that students on the initial stages can only and should only think on the low-level inquiry. It was found out by The Ramirez study of bilingual educational programs (Ramirez, 1992) that teachers have a habit of asking low-level questions. Teachers should not limit the ability to think abstractly that may lead to high-level of thinking. Teachers know that the process happens in stages and it go both ways.


Figure 1

### 4.2 The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach "is for beginners and is designed to help them become intermediates." It has the expectation that students will be able to function adequately in the target situation. They will understand the speaker of the target language (perhaps with requests for clarification), and will be able to convey (in a non-insulting manner) their requests and ideas. They need not know every word in a semantic domain, nor is it necessary that the syntax and vocabulary be flawless-but their production does need to be understood. They should be able to make the meaning clear but not necessarily be accurate in all details of grammar. (Krashen and Terrell 1983: 71).

A guide from the Natural Approach states that Comprehension precedes production. If the Communicative Ability is based on acquired knowledge, then it follows that students must first learn to comprehend. Most of the Natural Approach techniques in early grades are oriented to giving students comprehensible input without requiring oral production in the target language.

The progression can be categorized for students learning a second language in five predictable levels (Krashen and Terell, 1983). The predictable stages are the expected characteristics of the students in accordance to their age.

The first stage is called Preproduction in which the students can answer questions and responds to statements just by pointing. The next stage is Early Production in which the student can answer in a word or two. It can also be answerable by yes or no. Speech emergence ask the students to answer questions with why and how. In the Intermediate Fluency is where the questions can be tricky and ask the students to have an inquiry. The last stage called Advanced Fluency can ask the
students to think creatively by retelling a story or giving another question since the comprehension is in the high-level.

| Stage | Characteristics | Approximate Time Frame |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Preproduction | The student <br> - Has minimal comprehension <br> - Does not verbalize <br> - Nods "Yes" and "No" <br> - Draws and points | 0-6 months |
| Early <br> Production | The student <br> - Has limited comprehension <br> - Produces one- or two-word responses <br> - Participates using key words and familiar phrases <br> - Uses present-tense verbs | 6 months-1 year |
| Speech <br> Emergence | The student <br> - Has good comprehension <br> - Can produce simple sentences <br> - Makes grammar and pronunciation errors <br> - Frequently misunderstands jokes | 1-3 years |
| Intermediate <br> Fluency | The student <br> - Has excellent comprehension <br> - Makes few grammatical errors | 3-5 years |
| Advanced Fluency | The student has a near-native level of speech. | 5-7 years |

Source: Adaptod from Krushen asd Te mell (1983).

Figure 2: Predictable Stages in Second Language Acquisition

### 4.2 Receptive and Expressive Language

Language can be divided into two: Receptive and Expressive. Receptive Language is the understanding of language "input." This includes the understanding of both words and gestures. Receptive language goes beyond just vocabulary skills, but also the ability to interpret a question as a question, the understanding of concepts, or accurately interpreting complex grammatical forms (Olson, 2012).

Another form of language is Expressive. According to Olson, it is simply the "Output" of language. How one can express his or her wants and needs. This includes not only on words, but also the grammar rules that dictate how words are combined into phrases, sentences and paragraphs as well as the use of gestures and facial expressions. Expressive is the ability to formulate thoughts that
are expressed using the appropriate word or combination of words. Language models are key in fostering the development of communication skills.

Receptive and Expressive Language are on opposite sides. Receptive is the ability to understand while Expressive is the ability to communicate. Listening and reading skills fall on the receptive language and speaking and writing are on the expressive side.

According to (Kristina Robertson, 2015), First-language acquisition is a universal process regardless of home language. Babies listen to the sounds around them, begin to imitate them, and eventually start producing words. Second-language acquisition assumes knowledge in a first language and encompasses the process an individual goes through as he or she learns the elements of a new language, such as vocabulary, phonological components, grammatical structures, and writing systems.

Major claims on Krashen's Monitor Model are related to the case of the subjects. It was stated that the Internal representation develops in predictable stages towards the full language system and expressive language depends on the mastered receptive language because language output is only an outcome of the learning process and not the cause of learning. (Trawinski, 2005)

### 4.3 Factors Affecting the Second Language Acquisition

There will always be problems that will sprout throughout the development of language. In this case study, it will state some difficulties affecting in the acquisition of second language and each factor that somehow hinder the acquisition.

Some students learn a new language more quickly and easily than others. This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second language or taught those who are using their second language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by their sheer determination, hard work and persistence. However, there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors can be broadly categorized as internal and external. It is their complex interplay that determines the speed and facility with which the new language is learned. (Shoebottom, 2016)

The following are the factors affecting language acquisition that may have an effect to Kindergarten students:

### 4.4 Summary of Internal and External Factors

Table 1

| Internal Factors | External Factors |
| :---: | :---: |
| Age. Second language acquisition is influenced by the age of the learner. Children, who already have solid literacy skills in their own language, seem to be in the best position to acquire a new language efficiently. <br> Personality. Introverted or anxious learners usually make slower progress, particularly in the development of oral skills. Outgoing students will not worry about the inevitability of making mistakes. They will take risks, and thus will give themselves much more practice. <br> Motivation. students who enjoy language learning and take pride in their progress will do better than those who don't. <br> Cognition. students with greater cognitive abilities (intelligence) will make the faster progress. Some linguists believe that there is a specific, innate language learning ability that is stronger in some students than in others. <br> Native Language. Students who are learning a second language which is from the same language family as their first language have, in general, a much easier task than those who aren't. | Curriculum. it is important that the totality of the educational experience is appropriate for the students' needs. <br> Instruction. Some language teachers are better than others at providing appropriate and effective learning experiences for the students in their classrooms. These students will make faster progress. <br> Motivation. Students who are given continuing, appropriate encouragement to learn by their teachers and parents will generally fare better than those who aren't. <br> Status. There is some evidence that students in situations where their own culture has a lower status than that of the culture in which they are learning the language make slower progress. <br> Access to Native Speakers. Second-language learners who have no extensive access to native speakers are likely to make slower progress, particularly in the oral/aural aspects of language acquisition. <br> (Shoebottom, 2016) |

Each of the subjects in this study have 2 or more common factors that affects their secondlanguage acquisition. Some interruption is due to Language Transfer which refers to students who are applying their knowledge from language to another. If a student hasn't mastered the native language, there will be a negative transfer which can result to fossilization.

## 5. Methodology

The Research Design utilized in this paper is Descriptive-Qualitative Method. It is used to identify and provide evidence to support the fact that there are variables existed.

Data gathering are detailed description of specific situations gained using observations, interviews, and document reviews which can recognize patters among the subjects.

### 5.1 Subjects/Participants

The subjects for this study were 3 kindergarten students aged 5 who were enrolled at Aurora A. Quezon Elementary School, a public school in the city of Manila. The three subjects were all in the same class composed of 25 students in the morning session.

The subjects were selected based on the exposure of the English Language (Target Language) in their home. The K-12 Curriculum Kindergarten is the introduction of Mother Tongue - Based Multilingual Education. MTB-MLE refers to "first-language-first" education that is, schooling which begins in the mother tongue and transitions to additional languages.

### 5.1.1 Subject \#1

The subject's language used to communicate is Tagalog and English. Her ability to listen and to speak is somehow proficient due to practices in talking and explaining using both languages. The subject's exposure to the English Language is through movies and TV shows that allows her to understand and mimic phrases and sentences. People around Subject \#1 talks to her in English.

The subject can answer a question in both Filipino and English. The subject's language used to communicate is Tagalog and English. Her ability to listen and to speak is somehow proficient due to practices in talking and explaining using both languages. The subject's exposure to the English Language is through movies and TV shows that allows her to understand and mimic phrases and sentences. The subject can answer a question in both Filipino and English.

### 5.1.2 Subject \#2

The subject's language used to communicate is Tagalog. Her ability to listen and to speak is somehow proficient due to practices in talking and explaining using Tagalog. The subject's exposure to the English Language through movies and TV shows allow her to understand and mimic phrases and sentences. The subject can imitate some English words and songs. The language spoken at home and in school is Tagalog. In school, the subject has a classmate who speaks in English in which she can talk and interact during work period and free play. The subject's acquaintance to the English Language is somehow prominent because she spends most of the time watching English movies,

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singing English songs, and playing English games in tablets/computers. With this, she can understand and follow directions but cannot practice speaking.

### 5.1.3 Subject \#3

The subject can say what he needs through using simple Tagalog words and phrases. The subject spent his 3 years in Mindanao before transferring here in Manila. He speaks and understands a little bit of Bisaya but speaks profoundly Tagalog. Tagalog is the language he uses at home and school to communicate but have some difficulty in speaking because of a speech disorder (bulol). In school, English language is not yet formally introduced in Kindergarten level in a public school except when listening to songs and rhymes. The subject does not fully understand the said language but he knows some English words. The subject is exposed only in English if he is watching English shows or singing English songs in television or tablets.

### 5.2 Materials and Procedures

The researcher made and prepared a series of tasks to assess and measure the subjects' Receptive and Expressive Language. Each subject took each task individually.

The tasks 1 and 2 were developed to level the subjects on the Stages of SLA. Receptive language includes the understanding of both words and gestures. It goes beyond the vocabulary skills, but also the ability to interpret, understand the concept or to have grammatical forms.

### 5.2.1 Task 1

The Picture-choice Task asked the subjects to point to a certain picture by said by the researcher. The pictures are red crayon, a tree, a house, a key, and a pig.

The researcher said the following statements:

- Where is the key?
- Where is the house?
- Where is red?
- Where is the tree?
- Where is the pig?


### 5.2.2 Task 2

The Direction Task is for a much high-level of Receptive Language in English. The subjects are tasked to follow directions from the teachers.

Directions:

- Sit down. Stand up.
- Turn around, slowly.
- Touch the blue stick on the table.
- Count these papers.
- Jump five times.

The tasks 3, 4 and 5 were developed to level the subjects on the Stages of SLA. Expressive is the ability to formulate thoughts that are expressed using the appropriate word or combination of words.

### 5.2.3 Task 3

Listening and Thinking Task (Level A) is the task the subjects had undergone in which the subjects have listened to a short story and answered the questions followed (choices are provided).

Questions:

- Where do you think, it happened? Bathroom or Bedroom.
- What is the first animal on my bed?
- What was the second animal?
- What was the last animal?
- How many animals were on my bed?


### 5.2.4 Task 4

Listening and Thinking Task (Level B) is the task the subjects had undergone in which the subjects have listened to a short story and answered the Wh questions that followed (choices are provided).

Questions:

- What animal is Tom?
- What does he love to do?
- Where do Tom hops?
- What do Tom eat?
- Where do you think Tom lives?


### 5.2.5 Task 5

Listening and Thinking Task (Level C) is the task the subjects had undergone in which the subjects have listened to a short story and answered the Why and How questions that followed (choices are provided).

Questions:

- Who made a little hut?
- Why can't they play in the hut?
- How did they the deer go away?


## 6. Presentation of Data and Analysis

This part discusses the data analysis and findings from five tasks done for five days that are completed by three kindergarten students. The purpose of this part was to present the gathered data and correlate it to identify the level on the stages of language, to differentiate the receptive and expressive language, and to know the difficulties and factors affecting second language acquisition.

### 6.1 Presentation of Gathered Data

Each subject completed each task individually.

### 6.1.1 The Task 1

Which is the Picture-Choice Task was done inside the classroom on October 6, 2016.
Table 2: Picture-Choice Task

| Subject | Researcher's Observation |
| :--- | :--- |
| $\# 1$ | Can identify the picture being said instantly. |
| $\# 2$ | Able to point the to the picture. |
| $\# 3$ | Enumerates the pictures in Filipino before we start. (susi, <br> bahay, baboy, puno, color red). <br> It takes time before pointing the correct picture. |

### 6.1.2 The Task 2

Which is the Direction Task was done inside the classroom on October 10, 2016.
Table 3: Direction Task

| Subject | Researcher's Observation |
| :--- | :--- |
| $\# 1$ | Following directions was easy. |
| $\# 2$ | Able to follow the directions with a little help of gesture <br> done. |
| $\# 3$ | Directions 1 and 5 are followed instantly. Needs translation <br> on directions 2, 3, and 4. |

### 6.1.3 The Task 3

Which is the Listening and Thinking Task (Level A) was done inside the classroom on October 20, 2016.

Table 4: Listening and Thinking Task

| Subject | Gathered Data | Researcher's Observation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \#1 | 1. In the bedroom. <br> 2. Pig <br> 3. Dog <br> 4. Cat <br> 5. 3 animals on the bed. | Answered the question in English and sometimes in a complete sentence. |
| \#2 | 1. Bedroom <br> 2. Pig <br> 3. Aso <br> 4. Pusa. <br> 5. Three | Understands the question but answered in Filipino. |
| \#3 | 1. Huh? Sa kama. <br> 2. Baboy <br> 3. Yung aso <br> 4. Pusa <br> 5. tatlo | Didn't understand the question and needs an interpretation. |

### 6.1.4 The Task 4

The Task 4 which is the Listening and Thinking Task (Level B) was done inside the classroom on November 8, 2016.

Table 5: Listening and Thinking Task

| Subject | Gathered Data | Researcher's Observation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \#1 | 1. Frog. <br> 2. Fly and eating bees <br> 3. In his house. <br> 4. He's eating bees. <br> 5. I don't know. | Understand the short story and could answer most of the items. |
| \#2 | 1. Frog. <br> 2. - <br> 3. - <br> 4. Lamok at dengue <br> 5. Sa bahay. | Understands most of the question but answered in Filipino. |
| \#3 | 1. Palaka. <br> 2. Talon. <br> 3. Talon at kain. <br> 4. - <br> 5. Di ko alam. | Need to translate use gestures to make him understand. |

### 6.1.5 The Task 5

The Task 5 which is the Listening and Thinking Task (Level C) was done inside the classroom on November 21, 2016.

Table 6: Listening and Thinking Task

| Subject | Gathered Data | Researcher's Observation |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \#1 | 1. It's Pete. <br> 2. Because there is a something. <br> 3. They shout. | Knows how to answer 'why' questions. |
| \#2 | 1. Pete. <br> 2. May hayop sa loob. <br> 3. Sumigaw. | Knows the distinction between the two languages. <br> Needs action to understand. |
| \#3 | $\begin{array}{ll} \hline 1 . & - \\ \text { 2. } & - \\ \text { 3. } & \\ \hline \end{array}$ | Needs the questions to be translated to Filipino. |

### 6.2 Analysis Of Gathered Data

The participants were given with the five tasks to put them on the appropriate standing of their second language.

Subject 1 is in the Intermediate Fluency Stage in which the subjects are capable of excellent comprehension and can answer questions with minimal grammatical errors. It is evident based from the Stages of SLA that 3 -to-5-year-olds are on the said stage. This puts Subject 1 to be on the appropriate stage of SLA. Subject 2 can comprehend directions and stories being said and read. Subject 2 can produce English words but still makes grammar errors. Subject 2 is in the stage of Speech Emergence which should be on the stage for one to three years old. Subject 3 has minimal comprehension and does not verbalize concrete answer but Subject 3 can nods yes or no and points to a certain object. Subject 3 is on Preproduction Stage.

All new learners of English progress through the same stages to acquire language. However, the length of time each subject spends at a stage may vary greatly. Most new learners do not speak because newcomers go through a stage during which they do not produce language but it doesn't mean they are not learning (Haynes, 2005). English language learners should be developing thinking skills as they acquire English. L2 learners should be asked critical thinking questions from all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and to develop or enhance Receptive Language. Through enhancing Receptive Language, thoughts can be finalized and can be share through Expressive Language. Some of the tasks on the taxonomy are difficult for L2 Learners because they lack the language and vocabulary to work in English.

Bloom's Taxonomy has six levels. The subjects overcome Level 1 which is the Knowledge in which the level of questioning asks for a response that can be answerable by yes or no. Pictures and drawings also helped the subjects to answer. It is also evident that Subject 1 and 2 shows that the Comprehension from Level 2 are understood the facts and interpreted. Level 3 to Level 5 are not yet achieved due to difficulty.

However, the three subjects aged 5 years old are not on the levels that corresponds to their age. The subject should be on the Intermediate or Advanced Fluency. The reason is that One of the major contributors to accelerated second language learning is the strength of first language skills. Language researchers such as Jim Cummins, Catherine Snow, Lily Wong Filmore and Stephen Krashen have studied this topic in a variety of ways for many years. The consensus is that it takes between five to seven years for an individual to achieve advanced fluency. This generally applies to individuals who have strong first language and literacy skills. If an individual has not fully developed first language and literacy skills, it may take between seven to ten years to reach advanced fluency. It is very important to note that every student comes with his or her own unique language and education background, and this will have an impact on their English learning process. (Kristina Robertson, 2015).

Receptive and Expressive Language of the subjects are affected by a variety of Internal factors including age, personality, cognition, and use of the native language. External factors are also evident throughout the study which includes Curriculum, Instruction, Status and Access on the target language.

Factors are determined in each subject through the background and selection of the subjects. Observations and Interviews are done to gather the data.

Here are the factors that are evident in which affect Receptive and Expressive Language:

Table 7

## INTERNAL

| Age | Not all children aged 5 may understand and comprehend a second language quickly and easily than others. |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Personality | *no data was | *no data | *no data |
| Motivation | Students who enjoy language learning and take pride in their progress will do better than those who don't. |  |  |
| Cognition | Knows when to use Filipino and English. | Able to differentiate two languages and uses which language preferred. | Able to differentiate two languages. |
| First Language | Uses both English and Filipino in communication. | Have a balanced usage of the $1^{\text {st }}$ and $2^{\text {nd }}$ language. | No usage of $2^{\text {nc }}$ language at home. No interaction is present. |
| EXTERNAL |  |  |  |
| Curriculum | The K-12 Curriculum Kindergarten is the introduction of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education. The target language is limited. |  |  |
| Motivation | Family gives <br> importance on <br> language learning.  | Enjoys talking to interlocutor in English. | Passive support from the family. |
| Status | Family affects language acquisition by providing the necessities. <br> The subjects have different family background. |  |  |
| Access Language | Has an oral interaction, and able to play games in English? | Can understand and execute games through gadgets. | Can execute games through gadgets. |

Learning a second language uses everything that ever got. It includes all factors stated above. According to Bloom, receiving, responding, valuing, organization and self-characterization through one's value system have also a greater impact on learning process and hence internal motivation have greater effect on learning the second language. Factors like age, personality, intrinsic motivation, cognition, and experience in the first language affects the acquisition of the second language. The
subjects' context plays a vital role on learning process. Readiness of the learner for learning is essential to make significant progress on learning a second language.

## 7. Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

### 7.1 Summary Of Findings

This study was conducted to determine if age stated in the stages in second language acquisition is relevant to the age of the subjects. The Descriptive-Qualitative Method of Research. The tasks were served as the instrument for collecting data and the three subjects did the tasks individually.

From the gathered, analyzed, and interpreted data, the researcher came up with the following findings presented in accordance with the research questions formulated.

- The three subjects are on the different stages of language acquisition even though their chronological age is the same. Subject 1 is in the stage of Intermediate Fluency because Subject 1 has a comprehension on the second language and can answer the questions asked. Subject 1 is in the expected stage of 5-year-old child. Subject 2 is in the stage of Speech Emergence which is for 1 to 3 years. Subject 2 is in this stage because of the ability to comprehend but has a difficulty in expressing. The Preproduction Stage is where the Subject 3 was classified due to minimal comprehension and cannot verbalize concrete answer.
- Curriculum and Instruction are the major factors that affect the second language acquisition, because inside the classroom, there is no concrete exposure of the target language. Along with the other factors which consists of cognition, exposure and access on the target language.


## 8. Conclusion

The following were the conclusions drawn based on the findings of the study:

- That any second language learner who is provided with enough exposure to the target language can outperform those who don't have the opportunity to practice the target language. Access to the target language is very evident to Subject 1 while Subject 2 and Subject 3 has an average and low or no access in interaction to the target language.
- Second Language learners may progress at faster or slower rates are based on a variety of factors including exposure, curriculum and instruction.


### 8.1 Recommendation

Based on the conclusions cited in here, the following are hereby recommended:

- It is suggested that in a longitudinal perspective, researcher could continue checking if the subjects reach the proposed age from the Stages of the second language acquisition.
- The researcher may provide an intervention that is applicable to the current curriculum which can offer exposure and access to the second language.
- Factors that are mentioned in this study could be studied in detail to determine the supporting aspects in the second language acquisition.


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