

Examining the Impact of Socioeconomic Factors on English Language Proficiency: A Cross-Cultural Analysis

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Abstract

This cross-cultural analysis investigates the intricate relationship between socioeconomic factors and English language proficiency, seeking to unveil the nuanced impact these variables exert across diverse cultural contexts. This quantitative study examines the relationship between socioeconomic characteristics and intermediate students' English proficiency in Tehsil and District Lahore using a cross-cultural methodology. The population consists of 450 randomly selected individuals from Lahore city, all of whom are intermediate students. Ten questions on a Likert scale are used to measure three main aspects of language proficiency... Understanding how economic and social variables intersect with language proficiency can inform education policies, curriculum development, and social interventions aimed at fostering linguistic competence. Additionally, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of language as a

socio-cultural construct, shedding light on the complex interplay between economic forces and language acquisition. Ultimately, this cross-cultural analysis endeavors to provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of language proficiency, offering a foundation for targeted interventions that can enhance educational outcomes and promote linguistic equity across diverse global communities.

Keywords: Socioeconomic factors, Cross-cultural analysis, English language proficiency, Cultural contexts, Economics Status.

Introduction

English language competency is the capacity to use the four fundamental language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening to successfully and fluently communicate in the language. There is a wide spectrum of proficiency, from basic language skills to highly developed communication abilities. Fluency in English often comes from exposure to the language, formal education, and practical use. Proficiency is more than just vocabulary and grammar knowledge; it also involves the ability to comprehend and convey ideas in a style that is appropriate for the situation and sensitive to cultural differences. Being able to communicate in English is crucial for success in the workplace, academic endeavors, cross-cultural interchange, and worldwide communication in today's increasingly interconnected world. Language barriers are eliminated and effective cross-cultural communication is promoted when individuals are proficient in the English language, allowing them to engage with others in a range of social and professional settings (Ali, 2022). A person's socioeconomic background has a significant impact on their level of English language proficiency, illustrating the intricate relationship that exists between language ability and financial status. It is common for people from different socioeconomic backgrounds to have unequal access to educational materials, opportunities for exposure, and language learning. This study aims to explore the intricate connections between factors such as work, money, and education and English language proficiency. Understanding these processes is essential to addressing potential disparities and enhancing language education programs that consider the broader socioeconomic environment (Karademir & Gorgoz, 2019).

The Impact of Income on Language Learning Access

An individual's income level has a significant impact on their access to educational opportunities and language resources. Families with greater resources may be able to pay for immersion programs, private tutoring, and cross-cultural travel. Conversely,

those with lower incomes might find it difficult to use these services, which could affect how well they learn a language. A closer look at the relationship between money and English language ability reveals how disparities in wealth can increase language barriers, which in turn affects a person's ability to participate in a global society that is becoming more interconnected by the day (Flores & Rosa, 2019).

Academic Achievement and Linguistic Development

A person's level of education is directly correlated with their language proficiency. Academic courses expose highly educated individuals to English on a broader scale, and formal education provides a structured environment for language learning. The purpose of this study is to investigate how differences in educational attainment, specifically in terms of educational quality, affect language development. It will also look into the potential long-term effects of educational gaps on English language proficiency, particularly in places where access to educational resources is uneven (Peng & Kievit, 2020).

Occupation and Language Use in Professional Contexts

Occupational characteristics play a major impact in the practical application of English language competency, especially in professional contexts. Being able to communicate in English is usually a huge benefit in the global job market. High-skill occupations may demand advanced language skills in order to communicate effectively, and specific industries may have language criteria that must be fulfilled. Examining the relationship between occupation and proficiency in English can shed light on the ways in which language skills contribute to professional achievement as well as the ways in which variations in work opportunities may impact language learning (Rustamov & Mamaziyayev, 2022).

Cultural Consequences and Linguistic Diversity

Socioeconomic factors have a greater impact on English language proficiency than just a person's natural ability. Cultural contexts can influence linguistic landscapes, and socioeconomic disparities within a community can also have an impact on language use. By looking at these cultural quirks, this study hopes to advance knowledge of the intricate link between socioeconomic variables and English language competency. Subsequently, educational policies and practices that promote equitable language development across varied populations will be informed by this understanding (Dale-Olsen & Finseraas, 2020).

Significance of the Study

This study is highly significant because it seeks to elucidate the intricate relationship between socioeconomic variables and English language proficiency—from a cross-cultural standpoint. Understanding the ways in which economic factors impact language competency is essential to addressing educational disparities and advancing linguistic justice. The study's findings can inform targeted initiatives and legislative initiatives aimed at reducing language-related barriers for individuals from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. The cross-cultural study adds another level of complexity by shedding light on the ways in which sociocultural context affects language learning. The study contributes to the corpus of information on language learning and closes gaps in our understanding of these dynamics, which benefits legislators, educators, and stakeholders in language education.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the English Language Proficiency Levels of intermediate students belonging to different socioeconomic backgrounds.
2. To determine the elements influencing intermediate students from various socioeconomic backgrounds' English language competency.
3. To Provide Insights for Educational Measures to intermediate students belonging to different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Literature Review

The socioeconomic level of a student's family affects the development of monolingual, English-speaking children along diverse trajectories, according to research on language development. The specific effects of SES on the language development of bilingual children, however, are less well understood. Most studies on the connection between language proficiency and SES have focused on very young children and standardized testing. This trend makes it more difficult for doctors to apply research results to bilingual school-age children, for whom administering standardized tests is frequently unsuitable. This study uses a standard clinical approach, a narrative story retell task, to examine the linguistic disparities owing to SES in school-aged bilingual Spanish-English children. This is done to help clinicians accurately grasp the results of these assessments (Kim, 2023). Early language development is holistically influenced by a child's socioeconomic background on a number of dimensions, including lexical diversity, syntactic complexity, narrative and literacy development, and general processing ability. A child's early language development is greatly influenced by their socioeconomic background in a number of ways, such as lexical diversity, syntactic complexity, the development of narrative and literacy skills, and general processing abilities (Sussman, Draney, & Wilson, 2023). Numerous environmental factors, including prenatal care and cognitive stimulation, have been related to the incidence of

these SES-related linguistic variances. The literature has consistently shown that markers of low socioeconomic status (SES), such as mother education, income, or work status, predict academic and cognitive outcomes in both English language learners (ELLs) and native English speakers. Nonetheless, tendencies that have been noted have focused on the language development of newborns and seem to be easier in monolingual groups than in bilingual ones (Troesch, Weiner-Bühler, & Grob, 2023).

Academic achievement and language development are integral parts of a student's educational journey. The dynamic relationship between these two components has been the subject of extensive research in the field of education. This review of the literature examines the body of work that investigates the relationship between academic success and linguistic proficiency. Understanding the connection between academic achievement and linguistic competency is essential for researchers, teachers, and policymakers who want to enhance student outcomes (Tzenios, 2020). Research has indicated a strong correlation between language proficiency and academic success. Academic language proficiency," emphasizing the critical role language plays in cognitive development and academic success. Strong academic language proficiency improves a student's comprehension of complex concepts, clarity of communication, and ability to engage with academic content across a range of subject areas. Consequently, promoting language development becomes an essential strategy for increasing overall academic success (Tedick & Lyster, 2019). Socioeconomic factors have a major influence on language development and academic achievement. Research has indicated time and time again that students from low-income homes may find it challenging to succeed academically due to language barriers. A child's language development and eventual academic success are greatly influenced by their familial environment, particularly the quantity and caliber of language exposure. In order to develop targeted interventions that address language disparities and promote equitable educational opportunities, it is imperative to acknowledge these components (Alamer, 2021). There is growing interest in the relationship between bilingualism and academic success (Hendriarto, Mursidi, Kalbuana, Aini, & Aslan, 2021). Hendriarto et al. (2021) asserts that bilinguals often exhibit cognitive advantages such as enhanced flexibility and problem-solving skills. Research suggests that the cognitive benefits of bilingualism may positively affect academic achievement; nevertheless, more investigation is required to comprehend the underlying mechanisms of this relationship. Understanding how bilingualism affects language development and academic achievement can help inform educational practices that use linguistic variety as a valuable asset in the classroom. The study review highlights the significance of putting instructional strategies into practice that consider the intricate connections between language development and academic performance. Interventions aimed at improving language proficiency can benefit overall academic performance, particularly for kids who struggle with language. Moreover, the adoption of inclusive and culturally

aware teaching strategies that acknowledge students' diverse language backgrounds can foster a positive learning environment and encourage academic success. By integrating these understandings into educational policies and practices, teachers can help students achieve their academic potential more effectively (Ferreira, Martinsone, & Talić, 2020).

The complex network of linguistic variation and cultural consequences is what gives rise to cultures all across the world. In addition to illustrating the diversity of human expression, the coexistence of various languages within a cultural environment has a substantial impact on identity, communication, and social dynamics. This research review explores the intricate relationship between linguistic variety and cultural consequences, as well as the ways in which language influences cross-cultural communication dynamics, cultural preservation, and societal standards (Xie & Curle, 2022). Linguistic diversity serves as a custodian of cultural heritage by preserving unique practices, viewpoints, and historical accounts. Language acts as a repository of collective memory, passing down cultural nuances from one generation to the next. According to research, a community's languages reflect its values and worldview; as a result, a loss of linguistic diversity may cause cultural identity to fragment. To foster policies that safeguard linguistic diversity as an essential element of the world's cultural diversity and to foster an understanding of diverse backgrounds, it is imperative to recognize the inextricable connection between language and culture (Lou & Noels, 2019). Within a culture, language diversity often both reflects and influences social standards. Varied languages have varied linguistic patterns that reflect different social hierarchies and cultural perspectives. For instance, use honorifics or pronouns that are appropriate for a given language may convey culturally distinctive traits of hierarchy and respect. It is possible to gain insight into the complex ways that language both impacts and is influenced by cultural values by examining the interactions between linguistic variation and societal standards (Lou & Noels, 2019). In today's globalized culture, linguistic diversity is crucial to intercultural communication. Understanding and valuing diverse linguistic contexts is essential for effective cross-cultural communication. Research shows that people who speak more than one language have more cultural sensitivity and adaptability, which improves cross-cultural communication. Understanding the dynamics of language variance in international communication is crucial to fostering mutual understanding and collaboration in today's globalized society (Wnuk & Ito, 2021).

Government-enacted language policies have a significant impact on linguistic diversity and the ensuing cultural consequences in a given area. Policies that promote linguistic justice by recognizing and safeguarding minority languages help to create a more inclusive cultural environment. On the other hand, if linguistic diversity is disregarded in political choices, certain cultural groups could experience marginalization. Examining the ways in which language regulations impact culture provides insight into the power dynamics that shape local, national, and international linguistic

environments (Lomotey & Csajbok-Twerefou, 2021). While linguistic diversity offers numerous opportunities for cultural enrichment, it also carries certain concerns, such as the potential for linguistic prejudice and the decline of minority languages. In order to address these challenges, a deep understanding of the cultural implications associated with linguistic variability is required. This area of study sheds light on the difficulties in maintaining linguistic diversity and supports the advancement of cultural inclusivity, both of which contribute to the development of a more vibrant and harmonious global community (Commission, 2019).

Research Methodology

The researchers adapted quantitative research approach. The population of the study were all the intermediate students of Tehsil and District Lahore. The researchers randomly selected 450 students from Lahore city. A five (05) point Likert scale point questionnaire were developed which was comprised of 10 questions and three (03) factors. The creation of an extensive questionnaire was a critical step in the data collection procedure. This tool had fifteen well-crafted questions and used a five-point Likert scale. The purpose of the questionnaire was to evaluate a number of aspects of English language competency, including both expressive and receptive abilities. With the help of this methodological decision, the data may be analyzed in an organized and systematic manner, giving the researchers the ability to quantify and evaluate the English proficiency levels of intermediate students in the given geographic area. The complexity and depth of the research findings are enhanced by the utilization of a Likert scale, which guarantees a nuanced knowledge of the attitudes, views, and experiences of the participants.

Data Analysis

Social Class	Statements	No. of Participants	Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
High Income Class	Acquisition of a new language is more accessible to the learners with higher income levels.	Hi.inc= 150	A. 144 DA.06 N.0	A. 96% DA.4%	1.5854 1.4933	.55664 .50113
Average Income Class		Avg.inc= 150	A. 120 DA.30 N.0	A. 80% DA.20%	1.5467 1.5001	.57666 .40334
Low Income Class		Low.inc=149	A. 70 DA.75 N.05	A. 46.7% DA. 50% N. 3.3	1.5004 1.5233 1.4511	.51111 .53880 .47412
High Income Class	The range and caliber of language learning resources that are accessible to a person are influenced by their income.	Hi.inc= 150	A. 138 DA. 10 N. 02	A. 92% DA. 6.7% N.1.33	1.5651 1.5984 1.7367	.56323 .5172 .4337
Average Income Class		Avg.inc= 150	A. 123 DA. 27 N. 0	A. 82% DA. 18%	1.5877 1.5044	.56453 .46325
Low Income Class		Low.inc=150	A. 60 DA. 85 N. 05	A. 40% DA.56.7% N.3.3%	1.4933 1.5324 1.4538	.50785 .58745 .47645
High Income Class	Higher earners are more likely to have access to immersion language learning programs.	Hi.inc= 150	A. 136 DA. 14 N. 0	A. 90.6% DA.9.4%	1.6792 1.5841	.59636 .69623
Average Income Class		Avg.inc= 150	A. 124 DA. 26 N. 0	A. 82.7% DA.17.3%	1.5876 1.5003	.59775 .56434
Low Income Class		Low.inc=150	A. 146 DA. 04 N. 0	A. 97.3% DA. 3.7%	1.5643 1.5033	.54321 .44536

High Income Class	Accessing language programs or courses might be significantly hampered by limited financial means.	Hi.inc= 150	A. 141 DA. 09 N.0	A. 94% DA.06%	1.5792 1.4727	.5726 .5481
Average Income Class		Avg.inc= 150	A. 129 DA. 21 N.0	A.86% DA.14%	1.5674 1.4856	.56423 .45634
Low Income Class		Low.inc=149	A. 142 DA.08 N.0	A. 94.7% DA. 5.3%	1.5574 1.4833	.59777 .43654

Table No. 01. The Impact of Income on Language Learning Access

Table No. 01's quantitative data shows clear trends in participant perceptions according to socioeconomic strata. Compared to people with greater incomes, those in the average and low-income categories have a lower average agreement (1.5854) in language learning. Comparable patterns can be observed in the ways that immersion programs and publicly available language materials are impacted by poverty. The standard deviations' comparatively small ranges indicate that beliefs are the same for all income levels. The information is significant because it shows a direct relationship between increased income and improved language learning possibilities. It also sheds light on the socioeconomic factors impacting the language acquisition preferences of intermediate students in Tehsil and District Lahore.

Social Class	Statements	No. of Participants	Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
High Income Class	A high level of linguistic development contributes to better academic performance.	Hi.inc= 150	A. 130 DA.18 N.02	A. 86.6% DA. 12%	1.5651 1.5644 1.4806	.56323 .57442 .63948
Average Income Class		Avg.inc=150	A. 142 DA. 08 N.0	N.133 A. 94.6%	1.7435 1.4794	.38076 .56767
Low Income Class		Low.inc=150	A. 129 DA.17 N.04	DA. 5.33%	1.5347 1.5145 1.4645	.52345 .78643 .36546
				A. 86%		

				DA. 11.33% N. 2.7%		
High Income Class	Academic success positively correlates with enhanced linguistic skills.	Hi.inc= 150 Avg.inc= 150 Low.inc=150	A. 133 DA.17 N.0	A. 88.6% DA. 11.33%	1.5145 1.4864	.56402 .43253
Average Income Class			A. 140 DA. 10 N.0	A. 93.33%	1.5865 1.4532	.54322 .45114
Low Income Class			A. 122 DA.23 N.05	DA. 6.66%	1.5966 1.5232 1.4354	.51674 .49843 .41341
				A. 81.33% DA. 15.33% N. 3.33		

High Income Class	Academic challenges can hinder linguistic development in students.	Hi.inc= 150 Avg.inc= 150 Low.inc=150	A. 137 DA.13 N.0	A. 91.33% DA. 8.66%	1.5765 1.4234	.50652 .47181
Average Income Class			A. 142 DA. 08 N.0	A. 94.66% DA.	1.5899 1.4482	.55325 .41347
Low Income Class			A. 135 DA. 13 N.02	5.33% DA. 8.66% N. 1.33%	1.5945 1.4765	.53442 .46532

Table No. 2. Academic Achievement and Linguistic Development

The quantitative data of Table no.02 clarifies the differing viewpoints regarding the connection between language development and academic success held by those with wealthy, average, and poor incomes. All participants—regardless of economic level—agree that academic performance and having a high degree of linguistic development are positively connected; nevertheless, high earners showed the strongest association (mean 1.5651). The association between increased language skill and academic success exhibits similar trends. It's interesting to observe that people who earn more money appear to be less worried about the chance that language development could be hampered by scholastic issues. The data indicates a complex relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement, emphasizing the need for targeted teaching approaches that consider the impact of socioeconomic factors on the academic and linguistic development of intermediate students in Tehsil and District Lahore.

Social Class	Statements	No. of Participants	Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree	%	Mean	Standard Deviation	
High Income Class	Strong linguistic abilities increase a professional's chances of success.	Hi.inc= 150	A. 134 DA.16 N.0	A. 89.33% DA. 10.7%	1.5134 1.4122	.59065 .51543	
Average Income Class		Avg.inc=150	A. 131 DA. 10 N.0	A. 87.3% DA. 6.7%	1.5645 1.4199	.56331 .44212	
Low Income Class		Low.inc=150	A. 134 DA.12 N.04	A. 89.3% DA. 8% N. 2.7%	1.5433 1.4139 1.4023	.53256 .43236 .39643	
High Income Class		Clear and effective communication in multiple languages is a valuable asset in various professional fields.	Hi.inc= 150	A. 147 DA.3 N.0	A. 98% DA.2%	1.5866 1.4001	.55429 .40112
Average Income Class			Avg.inc=150	A. 145 DA. 05 N.0	A. 96.66% DA. 3.33%	1.5677 1.4122	.59056 .41004
Low Income Class			Low.inc=150	A. 141 DA.09 N.0	A. 94% DA. 6.0%	1.5644 1.4897	.54762 .42367

High Income Class	The ability to adapt language use to different professional contexts is a key skill for career success.	Hi.inc= 150	A. 143	A.	1.5875	.52870
Average Income Class		Avg.inc= 150	DA.07	95.3%	1.4125	.53452
Low Income Class		Low.inc=150	N.0	DA. 4.7%	1.5954	.53978
			A. 139	A.	1.4166	.50423
			DA. 11	92.6%		
			N.0	DA.		
			A. 135	7.4%	1.5896	.52554
			DA. 10		1.4112	.50001
			N.05	A. 90%		
				DA.		
				6.6%		
				N.		
				3.4%		

Table No. 3. Occupation and Language Use in Professional Contexts

The quantitative data of table no.03 provides insight into how different socioeconomic groups view the relationship between language ability and career success. The majority of participants—high earners most strongly agreed—think that having strong language abilities increases one's chances of excelling in their career (mean 1.5134). Moreover, individuals from all economic backgrounds concur that proficiently conversing in many languages is an advantageous trait in numerous professional fields. A somewhat higher percentage of high-income participants concurred that adapting one's language use for different professional contexts is crucial for career success. These findings suggest that multilingualism and adaptability are seen by persons from all socioeconomic groups as essential for success in a range of professional trajectories, and they also highlight the perceived importance of language competency in the workplace.

Conclusion

An in-depth analysis of the data in three distinct tables reveals intriguing patterns in the perceptions of language learning, academic achievement, and professional success among individuals in Tehsil and District Lahore with varying income levels. Table 01 illustrates the strong correlation between perceived accessibility to language learning and greater income levels, which sheds light on the socioeconomic factors influencing language acquisition preferences. Furthermore, the data presented in Table 02 demonstrate varying perspectives regarding the relationship between language learning, academic performance, and barriers, emphasising the need for customized teaching approaches. Table 03 presents the degree of agreement among earners regarding the importance of linguistic skills for success in the workplace. Overall, the findings show that socioeconomic characteristics and beliefs related to language interact in a complicated way, underscoring the necessity for inclusive educational policies that address linguistic inequities. These results strengthen our understanding of the role income plays in influencing attitudes towards language learning, academic achievement, and career success. They also support equal opportunities in language education and skill development for all students, regardless of their economic backgrounds.

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