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FACTORS INFLUENCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Foreign Language Acquisition, Early Childhood, Psychosocial Factors, & Preschool	Children’s language development in early childhood is faster and accurate. However, there are many risks involved for children’s language learning in early childhood. This study examined factors affecting foreign language learning at early childhood in the context of Pakistan. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews from ten Early Childhood Education teachers (ECE) from three schools in district Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where early childhood education curriculum has been implemented. The qualitative research design was used, and thematic inductive technique was used for data analysis. The results showed that motivation played a key role in the foreign language acquisition during early childhood. Age and parental attitude were also important factors for learning language in early childhood. Learning opportunity and self-esteem affected foreign language acquisition during early childhood. Early childhood trainers, parents, and teachers may keep these points in mind while working with children in learning a foreign language.
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INTRODUCTION

The early stages of children are critical for language acquisition. The research has indicated that children in the early years of life gain language skills faster (Bialystok, 2006; Mayberry, 2010). There should be developmentally appropriate curriculum, proper environment at the home and school (Gordon & Browne, 2016). The children in Pakistan face challenges in foreign language acquisition in the early childhood period. This issue is more critical in rural areas of the country where majority of the children come from lower socio-economic background. These children do not find enough opportunities for foreign language acquisition at home or school (Montrul, 2005; Paradis, 2011). At home children get lesser encouragement from the parents to practice language. At school children do not get supportive environment for foreign language practice. In the later stages of life such children lag behind in social development. They also have some

sort of the developmental delay academically or emotionally (Meisel, 2009). At primary level or middle level, researchers have explored the problems and issues of foreign language acquisition (Gathercole, Willis, Emslie, & Baddeley, 1992), however, there is dearth of deeper qualitative studies that investigate the views and experiences of teachers who teach pre-school children as early childhood teachers about the hurdles of foreign language acquisition among pre-school children.

Although, some researchers (Yang, Yang, & Lust, 2011; Ambridge & Lieven, 2011) have studied preschool children in the urban area where parents are mostly affluent and have facilities for pre-schooling of their children who get chances to learn English easily as foreign language. This situation is more alarming among pre-school children in rural areas where language learning facilities are negligible. Both these conditions may lead to language development problem and lowered career opportunities and low quality life in adulthood. These studies do not effectively provide a clear picture of the situation as its main focus is only urban areas. A significant gap exists in the language literature which could be bridged by exploring factors influencing foreign language acquisition of children at early childhood in the rural areas of Pakistan (Zada, 2014). This situation is more alarming among pre-school children in the rural areas where language learning facilities are negligible. Hence, to bridge this gap, this research aimed at exploring the major factors influencing foreign language acquisition in early childhood in context of Pakistan. This research study shall provide contemporary and unique contributions to better understanding of the issues related to the language education, curriculum development and preschool program directions.

Research Questions

1. What factors affecting foreign language learning at early childhood in Pakistani Context?
2. How the different leading factors affecting foreign language learning at early childhood?
3. What suggestions could be provided related to foreign language learning at early childhood?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The language development is a complicated process. It is developing abilities of individuals to communication with others. It consists of all kinds of the communication such as oral, written, through signs, facial expressions and so on. On other hand, speech is a spoken language which has more importance, being the most effective kind of communication. It is also widely used in daily life (Olulade, Greenwald, Chambers, Dromerick, Berl & Newport, 2020). The need of the language increases as children grow physically. Parents need to give attention to language and speech development of children during this time as growth has variations which also affect the process of the language development. These developments basically determine learning process (Reisinger, Shaffer, Pedapati, Dominick & Erickson, 2019). Therefore, there is a need to create a motivating and supportive learning environment at home and school for children to grow and learn language in the early childhood. Parents have to shoulder more responsibilities for care and guidance of childhood during this time. Consequently, this will help enhance the potentials of children. Chomsky stated that individuals are born with innate abilities to learn language. They learn in their own pace and ways. They have natural abilities to discriminate on the basis of phonology, syntax and semantics. The nativist argue that language acquisition is a complex phenomenon.

Different individuals learn language in different ways like imitation, impersonation and so on. These factors must be focused by parents and teachers during early childhood (Aslan, Ozkan,

Yücel, Sennaroglu, Bilginer & Sennaroglu, 2020). Behaviorists opine that environment play an important role in development of language learning abilities. Those children who receive passive environment are slow in early age language acquisition than those who receive stimulating and active environment. Under this theory, the process of language acquisition is determined by the span of training received from environment. Children learn language through imitation on the basis of response-stimulus principles (Zuccarini, Guarini, Iverson, Benassi, Savini, Alessandroni & Sansavini, 2018). Language development among children is faster at early stages. Children facing problems of language acquisition at early stage must be diagnosed and effectively treated. It may affect linguistic performance of children in their stages (Ward, 1999). Depriving children from interaction with others at early childhood is a risk factor for foreign language acquisition (Paradis, 2007). Lack of supportive environment at school and home for language practice affect language acquisition among majority of children in Pakistan (Khattak, 2016). This situation is more alarming among pre-school children in rural areas where language learning facilities are negligible.

Likewise, both these conditions may lead to language development problem and lowered career opportunities and low quality life in adulthood (Khan, 2018). The major part of burden is faced by parents of the lower socio-economic background (Hunzai, 2007). In Pakistan those children with better language skills have more chances of getting find better job (Khan, 2018). Many studies have identified guidance and supportive environment in early childhood for foreign language acquisition (McLaughlin, 2013; Oh, Au, & Jun, 2010; Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Aboud, 2007; Meisel, 2009). However, all these studies have merely highlighted possibilities of early childhood foreign language acquisition for preschool children. These studies did not mention what factors influence the foreign language acquisition in early childhood, in view of the some researchers (Paradis, 2011; Vihman, 1996), this stage is characterized with the many issues and risks for children related to foreign language acquisition. For example, a study discovered that pre-school children face access and resources constrains for foreign language learning in many parts of the third world due to poverty and lack of awareness among parents. Hunzai (2006) in the context of Pakistan showed that 23% pre-school children in the remote and disadvantaged communities did not have proper availability facilities for the acquisition of English as foreign language.

Paradis (2007) has identified that such children either do not have access to quality English medium schooling or they lack in motivation due to lack of supportive environment in locality. Alarmingly, over 19 percent of preschool children are deprived of foreign language acquisition facility in early childhood which adversely affects their academic performance in later stage of education as compared to those children who enjoyed this facility in preschool times (Hunzai, 2007). Ambridge and Lieven (2011) argued that problems of preschool language acquisition could be resolved by adopting supportive environment for language acquisition at home and in school. Parents may provide children in early childhood variety of ways for language acquisition such as exposing children to television program, children and phonological awareness practices. Wong (2005) found that Malay families communicate in non-standard language at home, but children find standard form of language related to English reading and writing English as foreign language at school. When these students were given spelling test at school through tape recorder, they wrote incorrect spellings of stated words since they hear non-standard form of language at home.

The results of study confirmed that home language influence language acquisition of children. [Maccoby \(1992\)](#) has discovered that parents are responsible for early language development of their children, since they continuously interact with them through their communication. The interaction lays the foundation for foreign language acquisition in later part of life. In Pakistan those children with better language skills have more chances of getting find better job ([Khan, 2018](#)). Many studies have identified guidance and supportive environment in early childhood for foreign language acquisition. Although a plethora of research ([Kuhl, 2004](#)) exists on foreign language acquisition, yet it is not clear that what factors actually influence preschool children language acquisition in places where English is learned as foreign language. In this connection, parents may provide children in the early childhood variety of ways for the language acquisition like exposing children to the television program, other children and phonological awareness practices. In this connection, this situation is grimmer in the rural and remote parts of Pakistan where children coming from the lower socio-economic background are deprived of this despite English being the official language of the country ([Hameed-ur-Rehman & Sadruddin; Zada, 2014](#)).

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

A qualitative phenomenological method was adopted in this study to determine factors influencing foreign language acquisition among children in an rural area of Pakistan. In phenomenological study, a particular case is studied in depth from perspectives of the respondents. In this study, transcendental phenomenological approach of [Moustakas \(1994\)](#) was used. In this connection, this approach is more logical and systematic in investigating contextual issues ([Polkinghorne, 1989](#)) and presents a coherent description of people experiences about particular phenomenon ([Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007](#)). In this connection, for this study, this approach was chosen to explore the perceptions, beliefs and experiences of participants about their lived experiences of participation in the implementation of ECE program in different phases in three community schools in district Chitral, wherein early childhood education (ECE) curriculum was effectively implemented.

Sampling

The researchers' recruited all ECE trained teachers from three schools where ECE curriculum is implemented. Teachers were recruited based on purposive sampling technique. The criterion for selection of the teachers was based on their specific training and teaching to ECE classes. Before interviews, consent of teachers was obtained. The interviews of teachers continued until the occurrence of saturation in the data and further interviews were discontinued ([Creswell & Clark, 2017](#)). Thus, a total of 10 teachers recorded their interviews. All the teachers interviewed had more than ten years of teaching experience in ECE teaching. Each of the interviews lasted for 40 to an hour in which probing questions were posed to the respondents for exploring the potential factors influencing language acquisition in early childhood. Interview guide consisted of 10 open ended questions and each of participant was asked same question but in the different order. The interview guide was developed based on the literature review related to key areas of ECE.

Pilot Testing

Before using the interview protocol, the draft interview questions were reviewed by four senior ECE teachers who were involved in teaching at early childhood in sampled schools but these respondents were not included in the formal interviews. Consequently, the main purpose of pilot testing was to ensure that the questions of the interviews reflected the true experiences of

the ECE teachers, teaching at the early childhood. No changes were suggested to the interview protocol.

Data Collection

For data collection, researchers developed a semi-structured interview protocol for exploring the perceptions, views and experiences of those teachers who were involved in ECE teaching in the targeted schools. During the interviews researchers tape-recorded the discussion and later transcribed verbatim the information shared by the respondents separately. Field notes were also taken during the interview as the supplementary to the tape recorded data. Thus, all the interviews were conducted in separate room provided inside the sampled schools. The room was convenient for all the respondents of study. After transcribing each of the interviews, the content of the transcribed interviews were shared with all the respondents again throughout the data collection and analysis process which informed the subsequent interviews and the analysis.

Before conducting the interviews, the consent of individual respondents was obtained formally through consent letters. Even permission was obtained from the management of the schools. All the respondents provided written and verbal consents for participating in the study, for recording the discussion and using the data (Creswell, 2014). The information obtained from the respondents was de-identified and each of participant was given an identification numbers. Before analysis, the transcripts were coded, recoded and categorized. For analysis of collected data, thematic analysis technique was used. Thus, sections for the transcripts were constantly compared, classified, grouped and refined for generating themes from the data. Hence, for the purpose of conceptualizing the relationships between the data, the items were compared in the each interview with the other interview transcripts for informing the development of analytic categories.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using Moustakas (1994), the method of analysis. This method provides systematic procedures to focus on the description of experiences of the participants. The basic aim was to reduce individual experiences of participants to telling descriptions of experiences. The interviews were recorded and later on the transformed into composite transcripts (Eisner, 2017). In the first coding phase the data were assessed to find out the embedded relationships and meanings out of data. Using this process, further codes were identified across respondents' interview transcripts. In the next phase different identified and separated codes were linked and developed categories relating to various dimensions of the phenomenon of ECE education and issues faced by children regarding foreign language acquisition in early childhood. In the final phase based on the identified categories various essential themes were explored (Creswell, 2014).

As a requirement of phenomenological investigation, during the process of data analysis, the importance of moving beyond mere descriptions of the categories identified was ensured and themes were generated that provided interpretation of issues being explored from perspectives of the respondents. All types of biases were not allowed to influence the process of interviews. The problem was explored purely from perspectives of participants and their responses were recorded without any change in nature of statements. Finally, the transcripts were cross-coded for verifying the consistency factor in coding of data. In this regard, all possible inconsistencies

in coding were discussed with respondents individually by sending them final statements from which themes were generated and finally came to consensus across all major themes identified. This repetitive checking of interpretations helped to make ensure that all the results of study reflect true experiences of the respondents and provide accurate interpretation of the collected data.

RESULTS OF STUDY

The respondents were experienced teachers of ECE group in schools at the time for interviews. The respondents interviewed were the teachers who had received training in ECE in designated schools. Above ninety percent of teachers were able to communicate in English language. In this connection, in the interviewed teachers, 20 percent had completed their English language certificates (TOFFL) from British Council Pakistan. Through the process of thematic analysis we identified different ten major topic areas related to the foreign language acquisition during early childhood in the schools. In this connection, in this paper we report on the major themes that emerged from these the data analysis. These themes were motivation, age factor, parental attitude, learning opportunity and self-esteem. Consequently, the results of study are presented below.

Motivation

Respondents [teachers] reported that supportive environment was essential in the classroom for students' motivation to practice foreign language. This could be done through normal daily communication in English which was not practiced. Many stated that they tried to encourage their students to speak in English and communicate with them on daily basis because in this way they [students] get encouragement to talk in the foreign language. However, some teachers expressed that parents in rural areas do not connect with their children in foreign language because of many reasons such as lack of knowledge of foreign language, cultural barriers and lack of motivation: I think it is important to talk to students in English language, hmm, but you know...I know in many places there is a lack of motivation at home in the rural areas due to parental poor socio-economic background that they cannot communicate with their children (Safia).

Few teachers believed that in the rural areas most of the parents were illiterate and could not communicate with their children in foreign language. This increased responsibility on teachers at schools as an alternative source. In this connection, children of those parents who provided their children with supportive environment at home were more communicative and confident in using the foreign language: I found, you see...there are few children in the ECE class who could easily share their ideas easily with teachers and peers, follow instruction easily because their parents also talked to them in foreign language at home (Iram). In this connection, few of the teachers opined that they experienced that if children were given verbal appreciation in the ECE classroom they get motivated and show confidence in sharing their views in the foreign language. In this linking, they observed that this practice did not exist in many schools. Thus, they favored idea that children should be appreciated to share their views effectively without interference:

I guess appreciation is a good technique to inspire smaller children to learn foreign language. At least parents and ECE teachers should practice this. Umm... yes you know I guess maybe we can help them to acquire foreign language skills (Arifa). Teachers expressed that they taught

diverse groups of children. In this connection, majority of them come from rural areas. Hence, they observed that most of the children remained calm and silent in the ECE class. Most of the teachers suggested that it was advisable to create a friendly environment where they could also actively participate. Few of the teachers believed that some children were smaller in age than the others. The main concerns of majority of the teachers were lack of supportive environment at home and school for children in the early childhood classes. Thus, some of them [teachers] believed: "ECE students actually could learn foreign language.....I strongly believe.. You know if they [children] are provided with the caring environment to grow socially and intellectually" (Rahila).

Age Factor

The views of teachers varied on the issue of age of children during early childhood. Although most of teachers believed that age was important factor in language acquisition. Many stated that children with smaller age below three cannot give attention to instructions during the class interactions. They [teachers] suggested that children from three to four years can take up ideas easily. Rashida stated, "I think smaller children cannot pick up ideas, you know they are so small they just cannot talk, umm, much help is needed to take care of such children." Teachers with this belief shared their views that in small age children may participate in physical activity but they do not take much interest in talking, in the foreign language. Some teachers expressed that children learn foreign language better in small age. Few of the teachers opined that they experienced that if children were given verbal appreciation in ECE classroom they get motivated and show confidence in sharing their views in the foreign language. The [teachers] further stated that most of the children come from the rural community where they cannot find supportive environment.

Rizwana highlighted, "I am aware of the situation, because I belong to this community, you see that many children in their early age cannot express their ideas due to lack of motivation and social support at home." The teachers further indicated that majority of the children in early childhood group below age 3 are less active in communication. They remain silent in the class. Very few of them participate in discussion. According to them this may be due to parental factor. Jamila stated that most of the children come from a poor socio-economic background where smaller children do not get the opportunity to speak English as foreign language. The parents cannot guide their pre-school children to speak in the foreign language. Rashida said, "I have experienced it that many children in early age cannot talk easily due to lack of social support in family and school." Teachers described that although they [parents] liked that their children to speak in English language but they cannot communicate with them in English because they did not understand it, they [parents] believe that smaller children are unable to talk to them in foreign language.

Parental Attitude

Teachers expressed that attitude of parents was important factor that influenced their language acquisition in the early age. Some teachers confirmed that parents in the local areas are more conservative. They [teachers] like their children to speak in mother tongue. Such parents would not motivate their children to practice foreign language such as English rather encourage them to speak in mother tongue. Arifa highlighted that "when parents do not encourage their children in early stage of their age to communicate in foreign language, [children] do not show interest in speaking that language. Such children, in later stages of life perform low in foreign language

acquisition". Few of teachers expressed that children in early age are dependent on parents for their needs. They [children] do whatever their parents ask them to do during early period of their lives.

Hence, those children show better communication skills in foreign language acquisition in the early stages who receive encouragement from their parents. Most of the teachers suggested that parents should encourage their children in early age to use foreign language word and practice with them. In this connection, however, three teachers stated that we cannot expect majority of the parents to motivate their children to learn foreign language because most of children come from low socio-economic families. In this connection, in such families, parents are illiterate and children of such parents do not find opportunity to practice foreign language and also show poor performance in foreign language learning. Safia stated, "I think parental choice is one of the major hurdles in the way of foreign language acquisition among early childhood children. I have seen that most of children in these schools come from low economic background who lack in resources".

Learning Opportunity

Teachers expressed that a sizable number of children did not find opportunities to learn foreign language in early stage for their lives due to number of issues such as parental socio-economic background, family environment, lack of motivation at school and so on. Few teachers believed that children were restricted from using foreign language at home due to low parental education. Teachers' own experiences were often related to their early childhood education decision-making on foreign language acquisition. Some teachers described their experiences about growing up as child and narrated challenges faced related to foreign language acquisition. Nabila stated, "You know, I strongly believe that children who receive wider opportunity, encouragement and support at home are more motivated to learn foreign language". Majority of teachers felt that they had learned from their past experiences and wanted that their students in early childhood class must get some opportunities for learning the English as the foreign language in their early childhood.

They [teachers] looked more optimistic and commented that during early childhood many children do not find opportunity to learn and practice foreign language. According to the few teachers, learning foreign language was challenge especially in the rural area where parents were mostly illiterate and could not provide language learning opportunities to their children. Thus, I have experienced in rural areas children speak only in their mother tongue as parents communicate with them. In this connection, hence, they [children] feel easy in communicating in their own mother tongue (Safia). Hence, learning opportunity played a key role in language acquisition of children in the early childhood in diverse phases. At this stage children learn language fast and their communication is accurate. The parents are responsible for the early childhood language development of their children. Few teachers opined that at early stage of their age, children can learn language fast and hence parents must provide wider learning opportunities for language learning to them [children] such as to play, to interact and share ideas with others in foreign language.

Self-Esteem

Teachers indicated that children in early childhood need support and guidance to learn foreign language. Those children who get support at this stage have the high self-esteem and they show

greater interest in language learning. Anisa argued, “that in early childhood children’s language skills are so sharp that they acquire abilities in many languages at a time. Majority of [teachers] suggested that parents and teachers should provide wider opportunities to children”. However, in view of some of the teachers, there was lack of supportive environment in the rural areas where parents did not provide support and guidance to their children in the early childhood. Hence, many children have low self-esteem and they do not take active part in foreign language learning. Rashida stated, well, I think....many children in rural areas have low confidence and low self-esteem... you know....emmm...which blocks them from participating in social pursuits. Such children show low performance in foreign language acquisition and feel dejected in communication”.

Teachers felt that children in early childhood needed support and encouragement from parental side. But many believed that among major challenges were lack of motivation, low self-esteem and low socio-economic background of children mostly coming from disadvantaged families in the rural areas. In this connection, I try to give my early childhood students more time to interact with other students so that they collect confidence and share their experiences... you see, I try, it is difficult but I do....I call them and talk to them in English as foreign language... may of the feel shy....but they like to communicate.... you know this how you improve speaking skills”. (Arifa). In this regard, some of the teachers described their experiences that it was really challenging to motivate students who are shy and bashful to communicate in another language at such as younger age, however, it was they considered it essential because, they [teachers] argued that children acquired language accuracy and fluency in early age then in later stages of life.

DISCUSSION

This study explored different factors influencing foreign language learning among children in early childhood. Based on data analysis, consistent themes emerged that impacted acquisition of language skills among early childhood students. It was found that most teachers believed that providing children learn language better in early childhood but following factors such as motivation, age parental attitude, learning and self-esteem influenced the children’s foreign language acquisition in early childhood. This study discovered that majority of teachers believed that children must be provided a supportive and encouraging environment both at home and schools during early childhood so that they are motivated towards learning foreign language. However, they [teachers] also perceived that children did not find encouraging environment at home and school during early childhood which hinders their foreign language learning. This study found that in rural areas parents have low socio-economic status and they do not provide an opportunity to children learning foreign language as compared in urban areas where children interact with different who speak another language. This helps children learning new language more accurately and comprehensively. This is consistent with findings of (Kuhl, 2004; Meisel, 2009) which also found that children learn foreign language acquisition fast in early childhood, however the different social factors affect such as the family, peers, background and parental education.

This is critical stage where students pick ideas easily and learn new language fast. It is essential that at this stage parents and teachers need to provide the children supportive environment to learn new language other than mother tongue. Language promoting strategies which highlight the importance of foreign language acquisition for children at early childhood are needed. This

study found that age was another major factor among children in foreign language acquisition. This study found that during the early age children learn language fast and the rate of foreign language acquisition is also faster. Previous research (Mashburn, Justice, Downer, & Pianta, 2009) has also indicated that there was a positive correlation between language acquisition and early age among children. In current study all teachers recognized that children learn foreign language faster. Also, they [teachers] suggested that teachers should provide more opportunities to children in early childhood so that they could learn foreign language. Highlighting negative moments of low parental socio-economic background on children foreign language acquisition, most of the teachers stated that such children cannot express themselves easily in the foreign language as their parents communicate with them most of time in mother tongue. In general, teachers identified age as major factor in foreign language acquisition process in early childhood. Previous studies (Genesee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004; Saville-Troike & Barto, 2016) have also provided evidences about age being the major key variable playing the key role in the language acquisition.

Parental attitude and age were found to be the third major factor influencing foreign language acquisition in the early childhood. This study found that lack of parental education and socio-economic status affected their children' foreign language acquisition in early childhood. Earlier research conducted by (Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1979) reported that parental background was closely correlated with children's foreign language acquisition. This study revealed that children in early childhood faced lack parental support for foreign language acquisition which affected their language acquisition skills. The parents need to support children in early childhood about foreign language learning and provide them with inspiring environment at home. Also, it was discovered that learning opportunity also played a role in foreign language acquisition of children in early childhood. This finding is consistent with previous research by (Tomasello & Farrar, 1986) which show that availability of learning opportunity had considerable amount of influenced upon foreign language acquisition in early childhood. Early childhood teachers need to create socially supportive environment at school so that children may find an opportunity to learn foreign language without any difficulty. This study further discovered that children who have strong self-esteem had better chances of learning language. Therefore, such children are interactive and more vocal as compared to those who not find such atmosphere wither at home or school.

A research by (Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978) showed that those children who have strong and positive self-esteem are more active and learn foreign language fast. Finally, the findings of this study were in line with the results of previous studies. The possible result for this could be children experience almost same social experiences at home and school in early childhood around world with very few exceptions. All teachers suggested that there should a supportive environment for children in early childhood both at school and home so that they could actively communicate in the languages other than the mother tongue. Teachers indicated that in early childhood children are in better position to learn new language faster than later stages of their lives due to physiological and social factors like high self-esteem, age and learning opportunity available to them. Previous research also support this that as children get older their rate of language acquisition decreases (Brasel & Quigley, 1977; Paradis, 2007). In-depth interviews although well suited for exploring the perceptions and beliefs of research participants relating to the complex and sometimes sensitive issues that allows the researchers to investigate a case when there is a need to explore an issue more deeply or more clarifications are required (Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2007). Consequently, but on the other hand, results of qualitative research

cannot be generalized to entire population. To minimize this, semi-structure interviews were utilized and the interviews were transcribed through cross coding and verifications to ensure consistency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of research study, we conclude that there is a need to provide children in early childhood a supportive environment both at home and school to enable them to acquire foreign language easily. Teachers may encourage children at school through motivating them by modeling through using the foreign language. We further conclude that parents should also encourage children at home to communicate the foreign language rather than mother tongue. Children with high self-esteem are more active and learn foreign language more easily than those children who have a low self-esteem. The social and academic atmosphere has a greater effect on foreign language acquisition in early childhood. Consequently, children who find wider opportunities for social interaction have better chances to learn new languages. Hence, there is a need to structure such experiences for children who could interact with one another and find access to social interactions at home and school. However, to be more effective, these strategies need to address the range of influences on foreign language acquisition of children in early childhood.

Recommendations

It is recommended that schools may keep strong bond with families, and they may be informed about role which they can play in education of their children, especially in language learning. Teachers are main stakeholders in enabling children to learn language, therefore they need to provide an enabling environment for their students to learn language. Moreover, trainers of ECE may focus on environment. They need to educate teachers and parents about language learning environment. Most of the parents leave the matter to teachers, and think that teachers are responsible for all the learning of their children, but in reality parents have to play a vital role. ECE is a growing area for research in Pakistan. ECE has been recently introduced in some schools. Teachers are not properly trained and schools do not have necessary environment. Study recommend that further research may be conducted on the status and issues of early childhood education in Pakistan. As this study was qualitative, there is need of quantitative, study that will have more generalizability. Study was conducted in a rural setting, there is need of studies in rural and urban areas, and findings may be compared for better understanding of situation.

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