



Parents' Income and Education as the Factors Affecting the Learning of English at the Intermediate Level

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Abstract- This study is mainly concerned with exploring the extent of involvement of the factors under study in English learning of the intermediate level students of government degree colleges in District Bannu. Many factors are involved in learning of English but only two social factors were selected for the study i.e. parents' income and parents' education. The manner of the research was explorative. Primary data was collected from the five degree colleges in District Bannu. Out of the 800 students one hundred students were randomly selected as sample following L.R. Gay's sample criteria. Through close-ended Likert agreement scale questionnaire, the primary data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted through tables, 3-D Columns and Exploded Pi-Charts. The researcher found that the factors of parents' income and education had the main role in the learning of English at the intermediate level. The scholar also found that parents' low income was at the top of the factors under study with respect to their extent of involvement in the English learning.

Key words: Bannu, English learning, factors, second language acquisition, parents, income

I. INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a complex phenomenon involving different factors, both cognitive and social. The social factors involved in English learning include curriculum, teaching instruction, culture and status, and access to native speakers. The complex interplay of these factors determines the performance of the English language learner. Though the above mentioned factors influence learning of English everywhere, in District Bannu, the factors of parents' education and income levels greatly affect English learning especially of the intermediate level learners. Bannu is a district in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The scholar has chosen the intermediate level for the present study because all the students study English as a compulsory subject at this level. Moreover, the students at this level are familiar with the basics of grammar, thus they understand the statements in the questionnaire. In addition, the scholar has personal experience of teaching at the intermediate level for two years, and it was during these years that the scholar felt the utmost need to conduct research on the various factors involved in the English learning process. The researcher has chosen colleges for males as it is difficult to collect the primary data from girls' colleges because of cultural impediments. Moreover, the teachers at the boys' colleges are easily accessible and more cooperative as regards data collection.

This study is an attempt to investigate the extent of involvement of the mentioned factors in the process of English learning of the intermediate level English learners of Government Degree Colleges for boys in District Bannu. There are five degree colleges for boys in Bannu District. These colleges are: Government Degree College Bannu, Government Degree College Domel, Government Degree College Ghoriwala Bannu, Government Degree College Sikandar Khel Bala Bannu, and Government Degree College Kakki Bannu.

To sum up, various social factors are involved in the process of English learning. Language learning depends upon the learner's age, personality and self-esteem. In addition, teaching methodology, friendly interaction between the teacher and the learners, and culture are the important social factors that make or break an English language class. Apart from the mentioned factors there are some other factors which are necessary to be taken into consideration with reference to District Bannu. District Bannu is a poverty-stricken area. It is observed that in most cases the students are not provided with English newspapers/magazines or other sorts of reading material such as novels and short stories. This may be because of financial constraints or because the parents do not know the different means of improving English. This research attempts to explore the above mentioned factors as to what extent they are

detrimental to the overall English learning performance of the intermediate level students in Bannu. Moreover, the present study will highlight the most affective and the least affective factors among the factors under study.

This study is important in that it highlights the various factors that are involved in learning of English of the intermediate level students in the government degree colleges for boys in District Bannu. Though such factors are many, yet here attention shall be focused only on the parents' income and education level. It is observed that most of the families are poor and that is why the students belonging to the lower stratum go to workshops in the evening. Resultantly, such students will be constrained for time and money to search for helping materials such as books, magazines, technological accessories etc.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been conducted much research by various linguists and experts on English. Here in this review of literature the researcher will briefly explain the concept of second language acquisition and then will discuss the various social factors influencing the process of language acquisition.

Shaffer and Lindley (1975) maintain that for learning a foreign language interaction with the native speakers of the target language is indispensable. But this is not possible for the learners who live far away from the native speakers. The only opportunity they can avail of is listening to native speakers' conversation on radio, TV, or internet. In this way they can improve their listening skills and they can also express themselves in spoken language. The idea of interaction with the native speakers is supported by Snow (1995) who says that children acquiring their first language derive excellent input from their surrounding. On the contrary, it often happens that the second language learners spend only a few hours daily using the second language.

Similarly, Brown (2000) says that learning a second language depends upon the learner's individual attention and time s/he gives to the language. Brown's assertion carries weight, but without motivation it is not possible for the learner to yield better results. In case the learner does not take delight in what s/he is learning, the learning process meets a setback. Moreover, Supyan Hussain et al (2001) quoting Oxford, that there are six factors that impact motivation in second language acquisition. These factors are: Learner's Attitudes; Learner's beliefs about self; Goals; Learner's Involvement; Environmental Support (support from peers and teachers); and learner's Personal Attributes.

The reader's background knowledge is another factor that enhances his/her comprehension of the text. Thus students play an interactive role in the process of reading. In this connection, Donna Moss (2003) quoting Paribakht & Wesche says that the language teacher can improve the learners' vocabulary through vocabulary building activities accompanied by reading. Donna Moss (ibid) further agrees with Burt, Peyton, and Adams that teachers should help learners use dictionary.

Yet another important factor is the age of the learner that affects his/her second language acquisition. D. David Michael Singleton and Lisa Ryan (2004) in their book *Language Acquisition: The Age Factor* examine the age factor in detail and consider it crucial in the SLA process. The age of the learner is important in that the more the learner grows up the more will be the involvement of attitudinal variables such as shyness, hesitation, and fear of being wrong. On the contrary, at young age the learners are not conscious of language learning. They do not take it for a necessity; they just take it for fun. As the learners grow in their age, they are surrounded by the various attitudinal variables; hence they pay more attention to themselves than to SLA. Their fluency is marred by the over-usage of the grammatical rules.

2.1 Parents' Education

Education level of parents influences children's performance in SLA. Well-educated parents lead their children in a better way than the uneducated ones. In this connection Valencia and Renald (1991) assert that educated parents transmit an academic environment to their children. This does not mean that

children of less educated or uneducated parents cannot achieve academic excellence. Exceptions are always there.

In addition, Ogunlade (1995) asserts that learners belonging to uneducated families perform less satisfactory than those belonging to educated families. But still it cannot be said with surety that educated parents will pay attention to their children's second language acquisition. Sometimes even the children of educated parents show discouraging performance. Granted the exceptions, most research is notable here that educated parents know how to rear their children. On the contrary, unlettered parents waste their children's potentials because they do not know the requirements necessary for providing their children with a good academic environment. In most of the cases the students whose parents are less educated or unlettered feel inferior to other students in the class which ultimately raises their anxiety and resultantly lowers their level of performance in English as a second language. It does not mean that parents' low education level is entirely responsible for the low performance level of English learners, though it matters greatly. Usually it is observed by this researcher that parents' education level is directly related to their income level. Well educated people run their business in a better way. Similarly most of the educated people work as officers and professors and earn more than the less-educated and unlettered. That is why the students belonging to such families are often seen more proficient in English than the students belonging to less-educated and poor families. Smart (1992) also supports this idea that the parents' high education level influences their children's academic performance, as educated parents regularly communicate with the teachers concerned about the performance of their children. Here again the question arises whether all educated parents bother about their children's performance. It happens so that the parents who are very busy with their work often consciously or unconsciously neglect the learning performance of their children. Waston (1985) and Hawkes (1995) support this idea. They believe that parents' high education level does not necessarily influence the academic performance of the learner, though Good.

2.2 Parents' Income Level

Parents' income level affects the learner's language learning. No matter how much the learner is motivated to learn a language s/he cannot achieve the desired proficiency without financial assistance, as in today's modern world of technological gadgets the learner's access to internet is a must. It does not necessarily mean that the learners having no access to internet etc will not learn English. But they can improve the learning process in a short span of time if they have access to e-library, and other helpful websites.

The influence of the income on the language learner performance is widely recognized. In this connection Terrel A.Young and Nancy L. Hadaway (2006) asserts that poor parents have also set objectives for their children but due to poverty it becomes difficult for them to materialize their aspirations. Such parents cannot afford the high fee of the advanced schools and institutes. Moreover they cannot afford the charges of language tuitions or language learning diplomas. It is clear that students studying in Atchison College, Beacon House School or any other Convent School will be more fluent in English than the students who study in government schools where the medium of instruction is Urdu.

Moreover, P.K.Harinath (2010) in his *Learning Disabilities in English* maintains that the number of children in the family and parents' income enhances the English learning difficulties of the student. This view is further supported by Gary Sykes and Barbara et al (2012) who assert that majority of the low-income students of English learning fail to perform well in the exams.

In Bannu the research done on English learning is very scant. Shafi Ullah Khan (2006) conducted research on the various factors involved in the process of English learning in Bannu. In his conclusions to his study he maintains that the untrained teacher, Grammar Translation Method, and overcrowded classrooms, are some of the factors that put hurdles in the way of learning English. The same study shows that the students take interest in learning English.

To sum up, various social and cognitive factors are involved in the process of learning of English as a second language. These factors show up in different ratios in different environments. The studies done so far show that there is no royal road to overcome all the impediments in the way of English learning, though the hurdles can be minimized by taking remedial measures according to the need of the language learning mechanism. This is, however, not possible without conducting research on the different

dimensions of English learning. Moreover, learning of a second language depends on the place where SLA takes place, thus various studies need to be conducted within the premises of the locality where SLA is programmed.

III. METHODOLOGY

This part of the research paper highlights the population and sampling procedures.

3.1 Population

Population for the study was the intermediate level students in government degree colleges for boys in District Bannu. There are five degree colleges for boys in Bannu District. These colleges are: Government Degree College Bannu, Government Degree College Domel, Government Degree College Ghoriwala Bannu, Government Degree College S.K. Bala Bannu, and Government Degree College Kakki Bannu. Bannu was selected for the purpose of being the home district of the researcher who got schooling here and has been teaching English at different levels. The well-off admit their children in colleges, such as cadet colleges, Fazel Haq College Mardan, Edwards College Peshawar, Islamia College Peshawar, to name a few. The poor either make their children quit education or send them to government colleges. Government colleges are either short of teachers or are scarce of sincere efforts for English learning on part of the administration and teachers. Second, most of the students belong to poor families in Bannu and their parents are either uneducated or have very little education.

3.2 Sampling

A hundred intermediate level students from five degree colleges in District Bannu were randomly selected as sample for the present study. Only Second-Year (Class – XII) students were considered for the study. The purpose for this was that these students have already spent a year in the college and have experienced the classroom environment.

In all the five government degree colleges 1000 students were enrolled. 10 percent students of the total population were randomly selected following L.R. Gay's (1987) criteria.

3.3 Research Instrument

As far as instruments for data collection are concerned, originally the scheme was to collect data through interviewing the respondents, but it was unworkable. The researcher managed an interview with five respondents, but failed to collect the desired information due to shyness and unserious attitude of the respondents. Thus, the primary data were collected through questionnaire which was the easiest and widely used way of collecting data (Koul, 1993). Next, the questionnaire was advantageous as it gave ample time to the respondents to attempt it. This attempting at leisure gave an edge to questionnaire over interview. Close-ended questionnaire was preferred over open-ended questionnaire. The respondents were given the opportunity to select from the list because they were not competent to answer on their own in a responsible way.

3.4 Data Collection

The questionnaires were distributed personally as well as with the help of friends among the hundred respondents randomly selected from the five degree colleges for male in District Bannu. These colleges were: Government Degree College Bannu, Government Degree College Domel, Government Degree College Ghoriwala Bannu, Government Degree College S.K. Bala Bannu, Government Degree College Kakki Bannu. The respondents were requested to tick the relevant boxes. Moreover, they were assured that the data provided by them would not be used for any purpose other than research.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

This section contains the detailed analysis of the primary data collected from the intermediate level students through questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into four facets, i.e. Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Parents' Income, and Parents' Education. Each facet consists in ten statements. Each statement is analyzed both in the form of a table and graph. Each table has five columns bearing *statement, scale, frequency, percentage, and SA+A%/D+SD%*. SA stands for strongly agree, A for agree, U for

undecided, *D* for disagree, and *SD* stands for strongly disagree. *Frequency* refers to the number of occurrence of the individual scale item. *Percentage* shows the percentage of each scale item. *SA+A%* indicates the combination of strongly agree and agree percentages. Similarly, *D+SD%* shows the combination of disagree and strongly disagree percentages. The *Undecided* are not included in the analysis. *Total* refers to the total number and percentage response of respondents in the *Frequency* and *Percentage* columns respectively. For each table the table number is given. The table number is followed by the table caption. After each graph the analysis is given. At the end of each facet a 3 – D Column is drawn for showing all ten statements *Agree* and *Disagree* percentages. Moreover, exploded Pi-charts are given for showing the average *agree* and *disagree* percentage of the respondents.

4.1 Parents' Income

Table 4.1.1 Large family

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
I have a small family.	SA	4	4	10
	A	6	6	
	U	18	18	D+SD%
	D	35	35	72
	SD	37	37	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.1.1 indicates that 72% of the total respondents disagreed and 10% agreed that they have small families.

Table 4.1.2 Father's Status

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father is an officer.	SA	5	5	14
	A	9	9	
	U	11	11	D+SD%
	D	35	35	75
	SD	40	40	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.1.2 mentions that 75% of the total respondents disagreed and 28% agreed that their fathers are officers.

Table 4.1.3 Father's Property

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father is a landlord.	SA	3	3	14
	A	11	11	
	U	12	12	D+SD%
	D	37	37	74
	SD	37	37	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.1,3 describes that 74% of the total respondents disagreed and 14% agreed that their fathers are landlords.

Table 4.1.4 Father's Business

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father runs a profitable business.	SA	2	2	15
	A	13	13	

	U	16	16	D+SD%
	D	36	36	69
	SD	33	33	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.1.4 indicates that 69% of the total respondents disagreed and 15% agreed that their fathers run a profitable business.

Table 4.1.5 Personal Computer

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
I have a personal computer at home.	SA	6	6	17
	A	11	11	
	U	12	12	D+SD%
	D	38	38	71
	SD	33	33	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.1.5 mentions that 71% of the total respondents disagreed and 17% agreed that they have personal computers at home.

Table 4.1.6 Internet facility

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
I have internet facility at home.	SA	8	8	16
	A	8	8	
	U	22	22	D+SD%
	D	32	32	62
	SD	30	30	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.1.6 indicates that 62% of the total respondents disagreed and 16% agreed that they have internet facility at home.

Table 4.1.7 Uninterrupted Power Supply

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
I have uninterrupted power supply at home.	SA	6	6	14
	A	8	8	
	U	13	13	D+SD%
	D	42	42	73
	SD	31	31	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.1.7 describes that 73% of the total respondents disagreed and 14% agreed that they have uninterrupted power supply at home.

Table 4.1.8 Internet for all the Family

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
All my siblings have access to internet.	SA	4	4	15
	A	11	11	
	U	12	12	D+SD%
	D	35	35	73
	SD	38	38	

Total		100	100	
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Table 4.1.8 indicates that 73% of the total respondents disagreed and 15% agreed that all their siblings have access to internet.

Table 4.1.9 Pocket Money

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
Apart from the usual expenses my parents give me pocket money for refreshments, etc.	SA	3	3	8
	A	5	5	
	U	14	14	D+SD%
	D	37	37	78
	SD	41	41	
Total		100	100	

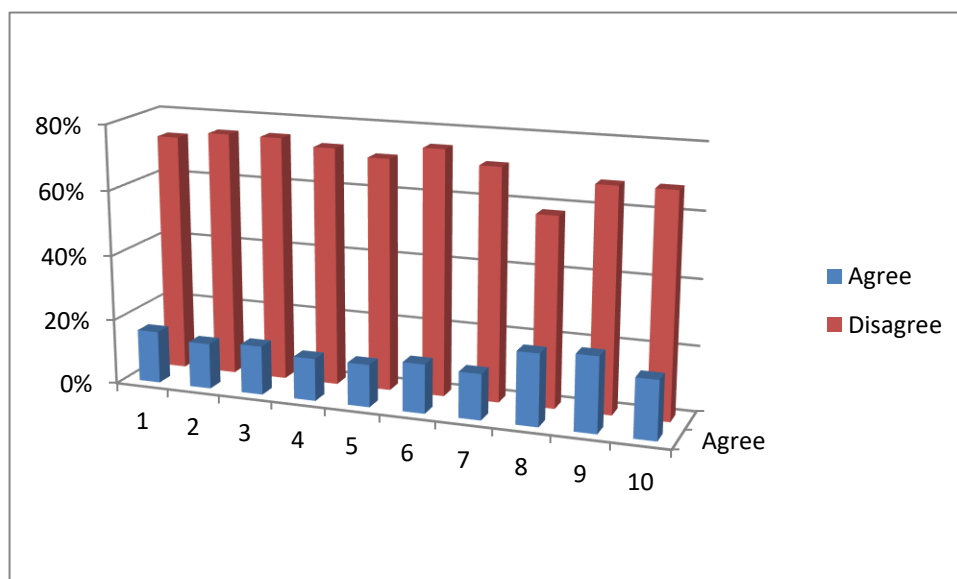
Table 4.1.9 mentions that 78% of the total respondents disagreed and 8% agreed that apart from the usual expenses their parents give them pocket money for refreshments, etc.

Table 4.1.10 Well-facilitated Living Room

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My living room is cool in summer and warm in winter.	SA	3	3	8
	A	5	5	
	U	15	15	D+SD%
	D	38	38	77
	SD	39	39	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.1.10 indicates that 77% of the total respondents disagreed and 8% agreed that their living rooms are cool in summer and warm in winter.

4.1.11 3D - Column



The 3D column shows all the ten statements with the respective *Agree* and *Disagree* percentages.

4.2 Parents' Education

Table 4.4.1 Father's understanding of English and Urdu

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father understands Urdu and English.	SA	7	7	16
	A	9	9	
	U	11	11	D+SD%
	D	32	32	73
	SD	41	41	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.1 describes that 73% of the total respondents disagreed and 16% agreed that their fathers understand Urdu and English.

Table 4.2.2 Mother's Knowledge of English and Urdu

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My mother understands Urdu and English.	SA	3	3	14
	A	11	11	
	U	11	11	D+SD%
	D	42	42	75
	SD	33	33	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.2 indicates that 75% of the total respondents disagreed and 14% agreed that their mothers understand Urdu and English.

Table 4.2.3: Parents' Help

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father/mother helps me learn English.	SA	6	6	15
	A	9	9	
	U	10	10	D+SD%
	D	33	33	75
	SD	42	42	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.3 mentions that 75% of the total respondents disagreed and 15% agreed that their fathers/mothers help them learn English.

Table 4.2.4 Homework Checking

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father/mother regularly checks my homework.	SA	2	2	13
	A	11	11	
	U	14	14	D+SD%
	D	32	32	73
	SD	41	41	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.4 describes that 73% of the total respondents disagreed and 13% agreed that their fathers/mothers regularly check their homework.

Table 4.2.5 Parents' Awareness of English

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My parents know the importance of English.	SA	2	2	13
	A	11	11	
	U	16	16	D+SD%
	D	33	33	71
	SD	38	38	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.5 indicates that 71% of the total respondents disagreed and 13% agreed that their parents know the importance of English.

Table 4.2.6 Helpful Material

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father provides me with helpful material to improve English.	SA	3	3	15
	A	12	12	
	U	10	10	D+SD%
	D	33	33	75
	SD	42	42	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.6 mentions that 75% of the total respondents disagreed and 15% agreed that their fathers provide them with helpful material to improve English.¹

Table 4.2.7 Father-Teacher Communication

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father often communicates with my class teacher about my performance.	SA	4	4	14
	A	10	10	
	U	15	15	D+SD%
	D	36	36	71
	SD	35	35	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.7 indicates that 71% of the total respondents disagreed and 14% agreed that their fathers often communicate with their class teachers about their performance.

Table 4.2.8 Father's Worries about the Class-work

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father asks me about the class work.	SA	9	9	22
	A	13	13	
	U	20	20	D+SD%
	D	30	30	58
	SD	28	28	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.8 describes that 58% of the total respondents disagreed and 22% agreed that their fathers ask them about their class work.

Table 4.2.9 Father's Advice

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My father advises me to write a	SA	10	10	23
	A	13	13	

paragraph daily.	U	9	9	D+SD%
	D	29	29	
	SD	39	39	
Total		100	100	

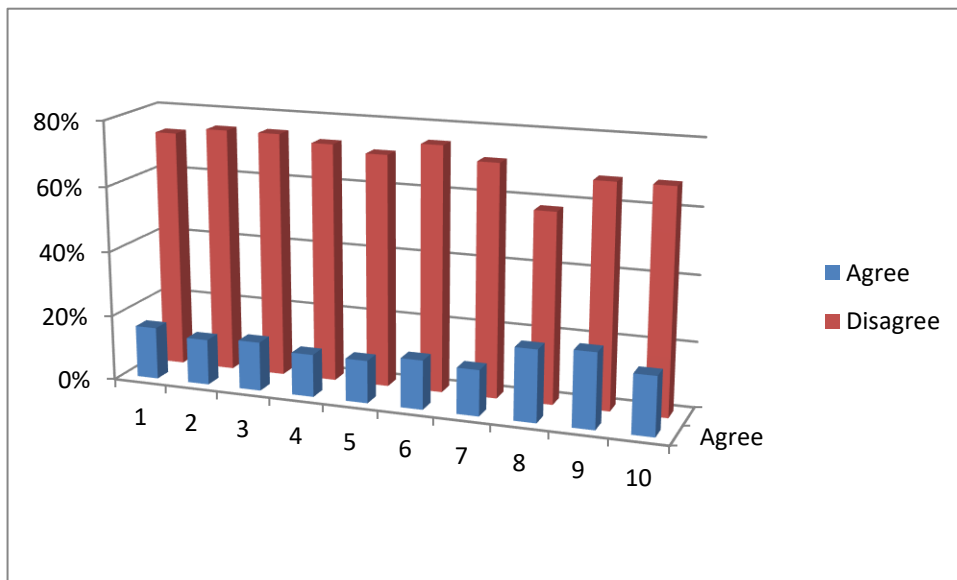
Table 4.2.9 mentions that 68% of the total respondents disagreed and 23% agreed that their fathers advise them to write a paragraph daily.

Table 4.2.10 Equal Opportunities

Statement	Scale	Frequency	Percentage	SA+A%
My parents provide equal opportunities to all my siblings.	SA	5	5	18
	A	13	13	
	U	14	14	D+SD%
	D	31	31	
	SD	37	37	
Total		100	100	

Table 4.2.10 indicates that 68% of the total respondents disagreed and 18% agreed that their parents provide equal opportunities to all their siblings.

4.2.11 3D - Column



The 3D column shows all the ten statements with the respective *Agree* and *Disagree* percentages.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analyzed data show that majority of the students belonged to poor families. All the statements were designed in such a way that agreement to them showed the level of the parents' income. But the students showed more disagreement than agreement which clearly indicates that they were less intrinsically motivated. With respect to parents' income the following conclusions are drawn on the basis of the findings.

Majority of the students have large families. In such situations it becomes difficult for the parents to give individual attention to each child and to provide the basic needs to the child. In addition, most of the respondents belong to poor families. Neither do they have personal computers at home, nor do they have an internet facility. Again, majority of the respondents do not have uninterrupted power supply at home. Moreover, majority of the respondents do not have well-furnished rooms at home which in turn puts hurdles in the learning process.

The analyzed data show that majority of the respondents'/students' parents were either uneducated or had very little education. The statements were designed in such a way that agreement to them showed the level of the parents' education. The students, however, showed more disagreement than agreement which clearly indicates that they were less intrinsically motivated. Following are the conclusions drawn on the basis of the findings with respect to parents' education.

Most of the parents do not understand English. They cannot speak with their children in English and therefore they cannot help their children in learning English. As majority of the parents have very little education, they cannot discuss or check their children's homework or class-work. Similarly, they cannot provide their children with useful material because they are ignorant of the necessary English learning material. Moreover, majority of the parents do not communicate with the class teacher about their children's performance in English.

As far as the average involvement of the factors understudy is concerned, the Parents' Income is the most detrimental of all the factors in the English learning process of the intermediate level students in government degree colleges for boys in District Bannu. The factor of extrinsic motivation falls in the least average disagree category which indicates that the extrinsic motivation is higher than intrinsic motivation. The factor of parents' education is next to parents' income that is involved in the English learning process. In summary, parents' low income and low education are more detrimental than the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the students in learning English at the intermediate level in District Bannu.

In order to overcome the problem, the government should introduce innovative family planning systems and awareness programs in order to convince the people in general to maintain small families. In this way the poor parents will also be able to provide their children the basic needs to enhance language skills. The government should facilitate the poor students by providing them with computers. It is the responsibility of the government to provide internet facility to the colleges. Moreover, the students should be allowed to use computer/internet. The government should provide financial assistance to the poor families so that they could run some small business. In this way the parents will be able to provide helpful material to their children for learning English. The government should improve the power supply system so that most of the time the students could use internet or listen to news, etc. Parents should cut down their expenses in order to provide their children with good education. Further research should be conducted on the relationship of rich parents and their children's performance of English. Research should also be conducted on the discrimination of the male and female children by the parents and its bad effects on the female children's English performance.

Similarly, parents should help their children in learning English. Moreover, they should ask their children about the routine classroom activities. The government should run awareness programs about the importance of English. In this way parents will encourage their children for learning English. Parents must keep in touch with the class teachers and enquire about their children's performance. Moreover, parents should not discriminate because this creates mistrust, pride and prejudice among siblings. Lastly, further research should be conducted on the relationship between highly educated parents and the English competency of their children.

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