

Examining the Relationship of Demographic Variables, Media Exposure,  
and Motivation on Second Language Acquisition

Fort Hays State University

Heidi Hines, Ed.S.

Jennifer Bonds-Raacke, Ph.D.

1

## Abstract

Many students in higher education settings struggle with learning a new language. A pilot study funded by Fort Hays State University implemented various English software programs at one of their Chinese partnership universities. The current study did not assess the result of the programs used in the pilot study, but rather explored variables such as motivation and learning strategies that were related to English acquisition. There were 76 participants (34 men and 39 women) from Sias International University sampled in this study. The mean age for participants was 20.77 (SD=1.07). Students enrolled in five sections of ENG 101 from fall 2013 and another five sections of ENG 102 from spring 2014 participated in the study. As part of the study, participants completed a battery of surveys including: an ESL placement test, a demographic survey, the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991), the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1998), and a media consumption questionnaire (modified from Kohut, Doherty, Dimock, & Keeter, 2012). Although the correlations were found to be insignificant, this information can be beneficial for future research. Future research may use this information to take a more in-depth look at one or more of those variables and their relationship with second language acquisition or other areas of learning.

*Keywords.* second language acquisition, motivation, media exposure

## Examining the Relationship of Demographic Variables, Media Exposure, and Motivation on Second Language Acquisition

In the Fall of 2000, Fort Hays State University (FHSU) began offering courses in mainland China to 40 students and today there are over 3,000 Chinese students benefiting from FHSU courses in various Chinese partnerships. One of FHSU's partnership universities is Sias International University in Xinzheng China. Sias International University is the first full-time undergraduate university approved by the Degree Committee of the State Council in China to grant both Chinese and American bachelor's degrees. The School of Foreign Language at Sias is an undergraduate degree program of the university. The aim of the school is to develop well-rounded students with morals, discipline, and social skills. It also strives to cultivate multi-skilled talents with a strong understanding of the English language and knowledge of international business and skills. Thus, learning English is important to the success of the student inside the classroom and for future job opportunities (Fort Hays State University, 2013; see also [www.fhsu.edu](http://www.fhsu.edu)). One challenge to the existing partnership with Sias is related to student performance. Specifically, some students could increase fluency to speak, read, and write in English. FHSU implemented a pilot program in which various English software programs, such as Rosetta Stone, and Memrise were added to English Composition courses to address English fluency.

Although this is an important issue, the purpose of the current study was not to measure the effectiveness of the software programs on acquisition of English as a second language. Rather, the current researcher seized this opportunity to study other variables of interest related to the topic. Specifically, this study examined the influence of demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure on second language acquisition.

Thus, this introduction will review literature related to these areas, as well as the following areas in language acquisition: verbal fluency, grammar, and reading.

### **Demographic Variables: Age, Heredity, and Other Factors**

Researchers have proposed that a sensitive (critical) period exists for language acquisition. A sensitive period means that there is an ideal time during development to learn a language and obtain native-like fluency. If an individual is not exposed to a language during this limited window of time, the resulting skills will be less than desirable (Mayberry & Lock, 2003). Although research varies slightly on the exact age at which the critical period ends, it is clear that early language learning is beneficial. For example, it has been suggested that the sensitive period for first language acquisition (L1) is below age five (Newport, 1991; Senghas & Coppola, 2001). Similarly, the sensitive period for second language acquisition (L2) is ages 6-12 years old or before puberty to reach the same fluency as L1 (Meisel, 1995). McNealy, Mazziotta, and Dapretto (2011) studied 156 participants, ranging from age five to adulthood, using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fmRI) while listening to three novel streams of continuous speech. Only the 5-to 10-year-old children displayed significant signal increases for the stream with low statistical regularities, suggesting an age-related decrease in sensitivity to more subtle statistical cues.

Research in the area of language impairment also provides evidence that early language learning is beneficial. Bishop, Berry, and Hardiman (2012) considered whether rate of learning of novel phonological sequences was impaired when the same items were presented repeatedly. Results showed that regardless of family specific language impairment (SLI) status, adult participants showed a decrease in score from the last trial of their first session to the first trial of the second session. Children maintained their level of performance regardless of whether or not

they had SLI. The results indicated that children show a better retention over a delay for new phonological sequences than adults, regardless of overall level of language ability.

In addition to age, research has examined how genes/heredity are involved with language learning. Many researchers have found that genes / heredity are involved with learning a language; although the specific amount of variance explained varies from study to study. For example, Oliver et al. (2004) reported from a study of 7-year-old twins in the United Kingdom that genes accounted for around two-thirds of the variability in learning. Wainwright, Wright, Luciano, Geffen, and Martin (2005) found heritability accounted for 73% of learning, whereas the environment only accounted for 11%. Heredity plays an important role in learning a second language as well. For example, Vinkhuyzen, Van Der Sluis, Posthuma, and Boomsma (2009) conducted a twin study of second language learning where participants rated their abilities to speak one or more foreign languages in relation to the general population. Results indicated heredity explained an estimated 71% of the variance. Dale, Harlaar, and Plomin (2012) conducted a twin analyses that revealed that 42% of the variance of L2 was due to genetic variance and 33% was due to shared environmental factors within a family. Thus even though the exact number varies, these studies indicate the importance biology plays in language acquisition.

Finally, researchers have identified other factors that are related to second language acquisition. Ehrman and Oxford (1989) looked at the difference in language learning strategies based on gender, career choice, cognitive style, and aspects of personality. Women were found to use more learning strategies than men and professional trainers used more strategies than other groups. Contextual factors such as learners' self-beliefs and social support may influence the kinds of strategies used by learners. The learning environment was assessed to see if it meets the

student's needs and manages emotional responses to individualized language learning.

Introversion, intuition, and perception were characteristic of language-learning professionals (Brown, 2009). Findings suggest that the contextual factors such as learners' self-beliefs and social support influence the kinds of strategies that learners employ.

Sociolinguistic variables and variation of feedback supplied to the learner have been shown to affect language learning. Sociolinguistic variation is the study of the way language varies any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language on society. Howard (2012) looked at the effect of sociolinguistic variation in second language learning. The study specifically looked at French inter-language to explore different issues such as the individual variation in the use of sociolinguistic variables, the relationship between different sociolinguistic variables within the individual learner's social area, and the long-term impact on naturalistic exposure on the instructed learner's sociolinguistic development. Their findings showed that when learners used different sociolinguistic variable types, the use of a specific variable was related to another. The variation of less and more explicit feedback was also found to impact second language acquisition. Another study asked participants to complete input-based, task-essential practice with interpreting roles in Latin sentences and then received feedback (Stafford, Bowden, & Sanz, 2012). Groups varied in whether they received less or more explicit feedback in practice. Results suggested that practice and less explicit feedback was sufficient to help improvement and ability to interpret Latin case morphology, but more explicit feedback was necessary to promote improvement in production. These findings mirror earlier work by Krashen (1982, 1985) who stated that explicit instruction can only affect the learning rather than the acquisition of the target language.

## **Motivation**

Research has found motivation is a factor in learning a second language, and there are contributing factors related to motivation for language learning. For example, a study assessing Singaporean university students learning Japanese and French found significant results between motivation, self-related proficiency, and language studied, with motivation significantly interacting with language studied (Wharton, 2000). Kormos, Kiddle, and Csizér (2011) found language-learning motivation consists of goal systems, attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and future self-guides. Kormos and Csizér (2008) compared the motivation for learning English as a foreign language in three different populations (i.e., secondary school pupils, university students, and adult language learners) and found the secondary school population showed an interest in English-language cultural products that affected their motivation. Self-efficacy may also be related to motivation. Erler and Macaro (2011) found an important link between young, beginner learners' inability to decode French, their sense of self-efficacy with decoding-related tasks, and their desire to continue learning the language beyond their educational classes. They believed that other pressures outside of learning the language weakened the student's motivation in language learning. This decrease in motivation was due to the immense time and effort it took students to learn decoding of new languages.

Research has also found that in certain situations extrinsic motivation is related to intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy is related to intrinsic motivation. Specifically, Wang (2008) explored the relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and second language English achievement. A factor analysis of the results revealed a multidimensional construct for motivation of knowledge, motivation for challenge, internal fulfillment regulation, and external utility regulation. Results indicated that autonomous extrinsic motivation correlated positively

with intrinsic motivation and achievement, while controlled extrinsic motivation correlated negatively with them. This means that when extrinsic motivation is related to the individual's needs and independence, it is closely related to intrinsic motivation. However, extrinsic motivation that comes from a controlled source isn't related to intrinsic motivation. Additionally, Wang, Peng, Huang, Hou, and Wang (2008) researched the relationships between motivation, learning strategies, self-efficacy, attribution, and learning. They found self-efficacy and internal attribution have indirect positive predictable effects on learning results. These results indicate there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy based intrinsic motivation and learning.

## **Media**

The literature review thus far has examined many factors that may impact language learning. The next factor to be discussed is the impact of media exposure on second language acquisition. Research has documented the positive impact that media can have on increasing rates of reading and excitement to read. Harris (2009) looked at the relationship of using television to encourage reading. According to a survey completed by librarians, 82% of children asked for books featured on the television show *Reading Rainbow* (Fisch, 2002; Wood & Duke, 1997). Similar results were found with adults. Toni Morrison had her novel *Song of Solomon* selected as the second offering of the Oprah Book Club and within months a million copies were sold (Gray, 1998). Furthermore, when Oprah announced that her book club would be discontinuing, Toni sold over 500,000 additional copies of her novel (Sachs, 2002). These studies show that media can increase book sales which could, in turn, influence reading. Media's influence on reading may also lead to media influencing language learning.

Research has consistently found that exposure to media is related to acculturation and language skills in immigrants. For example, Lee and Tse (1994) looked at how immigrant's

change their media consumption when they moved across cultural boundaries and whether media exposure relates to immigrants' acquiring of the social norms. Results showed that media exposure related significantly to immigrants' acculturation of the new social norms. More recently, Mucherah (2008) found that exposure to native media (i.e., media native to the new country) was a reported factor at enhancing the use of the native language for immigrants. Brenneman, Morris, and Israelian (2007) found a link between media exposure, reading, and language. Specifically, they found a positive correlation between a child's English language preference for media and better reading skills in English.

### **Purpose and Hypotheses**

**Demographic variables and English acquisition.** The purpose of the current study was to examine the influence of demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure on second language acquisition. Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses regarding factors impacting second language acquisition were formed. First, it was predicted that demographic variables would be related to English as a Second Language (ESL) placement test scores. For example, those *participants who indicated they had previously studied abroad or desired to study abroad in the United States (US) would show higher scores on the ESL placement test than those individuals who reported no interest in study abroad.* Increased ESL placement test scores for those participants who had previously studied in the US were predicted as performance on both comprehension and production tasks for immersed learners is greater than non-immersed learners in second language proficiency (Linck, Kroll, & Sunderman, 2009). *A positive correlation between frequency with which English was spoken in the home and ESL placement scores* was also expected. This hypothesis was formed

because previous research found that individuals become more sensitive to phonological details in a second language with increased second language experiences (Troflovich, 2008).

**Motivation, language learning strategies, and media.** Additionally, it was hypothesized that ESL placement test scores would be related to scores on the motivation scales, the language learning strategy scales, and media consumption. To begin, it was predicted that motivation would impact ESL placement test scores. Specifically, *a positive correlation was predicted between scores on the intrinsic subscale and scores on the ESL placement test.* Such findings would support previous research indicating that intrinsically motivated students outperform extrinsically motivated students in the classroom (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). It was also predicted that participants' strategies for learning English would impact ESL placement test scores, as previous research has shown that learning strategies were important in foreign language acquisition (Deniz, 2010). *A positive correlation was predicted between participants' scores on the ESL placement test and their score on each subscale of the language learning strategy scale; remembering effectively, mental processes, missing knowledge, organizing learning, managing emotions, and learn with others.* Finally, *how often participants consumed various forms of media in English was predicted to increase English fluency.* Participants who consumed more media in English were exposed to English more frequently and one might assume they had an interest in the American culture, which may have increased their desire to learn English and consequently increased ESL placement test scores. This finding would be consistent with Ferle and Lee (2005) who found English broadcast media is a good way to connect to people across various cultural groups.

## Method

### Participants

There were 76 participants (34 men and 39 women) from Sias International University sampled in this study. The mean age for participants was 20.77 (SD=1.07). When asked their university major, 41% identified as Bachelor of Arts in Global Business English, 22% as Bachelor of Science in Information Networking and Telecommunications, 19% as Bachelor of Business Administration, and 17% as Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership. Additionally, most participants (70%) indicated they spoke two languages fluently, while 27% of participants indicated they spoke one language fluently. A very small percentage of participants (.01%) indicated they spoke more than two languages fluently. The majority of the participants (94%) were considered “planned” students (those students on a certain degree plan based on previous academic performance).

### Materials and Procedure

There were five sections of ENG 101 from fall 2013 and another five sections of ENG 102 from spring 2014 that participated in the study. As part of the study, participants completed a battery of surveys including: an ESL placement test (developed by FHSU ESL Office), a demographic survey (self-constructed), the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991), the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1998), and a media consumption questionnaire (modified from Kohut, Doherty, Dimock, & Keeter, 2012). All surveys were administered in Chinese. The surveys were written in English and then translated to Chinese by the FHSU ESL Office; this form is considered forward translation. An additional measure to ensure appropriate translation was also taken. Specifically, the surveys were translated again from Chinese back to English by a FHSU faculty member originating from China. This is known as back translation, a

Examining the Relationship of Demographic Variables, Media Exposure,  
and Motivation on Second Language Acquisition  
*Heidi Hines and Jennifer Bonds-Raacke*

process which can reveal errors in meaning or nuances in synonyms selected from the initial translation.

There was an FHSU English instructor on site in China for all ENG 101 and 102 courses. As part of the coursework, the English instructor administered an ESL placement test. The ESL placement test was developed by FHSU ESL Office under the instruction of the Director of ESL and was designed to measure vocabulary/ reading and grammar/ syntax abilities in English. The ESL placement test is routinely given to international students and scores from the post-test at the end of the spring semester were used for the current study. The vocabulary portion was divided into two parts; part one was composed of a sentence with four choices for what the missing word may be. Part two was based on reading comprehension which contained a paragraph that the participant read and then answered multiple choice questions pertaining to the reading. An example of a vocabulary question is, “Together they took a train from Paris \_\_\_\_\_ Marseills.” The participant was given four multiple choices “of, at, by, and to.” An example of one of the reading comprehension questions is, “What helped his imagination grow?” and the participant was given four multiple choices “reading, lying in bed, making predictions, or writing books.”

The demographic survey was self-constructed and intended to assess 20 different demographics of the students such as age, gender, desire to travel abroad, and academic major. The questions were developed from demographic factors identified in the literature that have the potential to impact English language learning. Six of the questions utilized 7-point likert scales for the response format, whereas the other questions used a multiple-choice format.

The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was designed to measure motivation strategies that students have for learning (Pintrich et al., 1991). The MSLQ has two

subscales measuring motivation and learning strategies. The motivation subscale includes the following dimensions: intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self-efficacy for learning and performance, affective component, and test anxiety. An example of the motivation subscale question would be, “I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned for this class.” The learning strategies subscale measures these additional dimensions: rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, metacognitive self-regulation, time and study environment, effort regulation, peer learning, and help seeking. An example of learning strategies would be, “I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things.” Participants respond to all statements on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 “not at all true” to 7 “very true.” Huang (2008) investigated the scale’s reliability and its correlation with foreign language learning achievement. The results showed that foreign language learning was similar to other subjects in the school environment, and the MSLQ has the ability to be applied to foreign language learning studies. Thus, the scales psychometric properties were appropriate for this study.

The Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was developed by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1998). The scale measures memory, cognitive, compensating, metacognitive, managing emotions, and social strategies of learning. The scale is based on 50 questions using 5-point likert scales ranging from “never true” to “always true.” The memory subscale measures how learners use memory to link new items to something already known. The cognitive subscale measures to what degree individuals use reconstructing or the process by which associations between new and already known information is strengthened. The compensating subscale measures to what degree learners use the context of the situation while listening and reading to compensate for a knowledge gap. The metacognitive scale measures to what degree learners

organize and evaluate their own learning. Managing emotions measures the degree learners identify their own feelings in learning circumstances. Social emotional measures how much the learner works with others to better understand culture and language they are learning. An example of a question from the SILL would be, “I remember a new second language word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.” Demirel (1990) found the psychometric properties of the scale to be good.

The media consumption survey was designed to assess how much media participants consumed in English as compared to their native language. The survey was based off of Kohut et al. (2012) but was modified by the experimenter to fit the characteristics for this study. Participants read a statement about various forms of media and were asked to rate how frequently they consumed each form in English and their native language. There are a total of 19 questions using a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 “not frequently” to 7 “very frequently.” An example of one of these questions is, “How frequently do you watch the news or news program on TV?” The final question asked participants to rate overall how much media they consumed in English based on the same 7-point likert scale as the rest of the questions.

14

## **Results**

### **Controlling for influence of FHSU Pilot Project**

As a reminder, the purpose of this study was not to measure the effectiveness of the software programs on acquisition of English as a second language (the FHSU pilot project). Thus, no hypotheses were formed related to the software programs and performance on the ESL placement test. However, it is important to control for any influence the software programs might have had on the current hypotheses. As a result, an ANOVA was conducted to see if performance on the ESL placement test varied by software programs.

One-way ANOVA results indicated use of the software programs did impact performance on the ESL placement test,  $F(2, 74) = 4.50, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .11, \text{power} = .75$ . Specifically, the post-hoc tests revealed that the control group ( $M = 26.92, SD = 4.58$ ) scored significantly lower than the two experimental conditions; Tell Me More/Rosetta Stone ( $M = 31.09, SD = 5.22$ ) and ESL Wow/Memrise ( $M = 32.13, SD = 4.86$ ). To prevent this significant difference from impacting the interpretation of results for the current hypotheses, each analysis discussed below was divided by condition. In the first analysis, only scores from the control condition were used and in the second analysis, scores from the combined experimental conditions were used.

### **Outcome of Demographic Variables and Learning English**

#### **Study abroad.**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess if scores on the ESL placement test would be impacted by previous study abroad opportunities. For the experimental groups, there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who indicated they had studied abroad ( $M = 32.99, SD = 7.08$ ) and participants who indicated they had not studied abroad ( $M = 31.41, SD = 4.91$ ),  $F(1, 58) = 1.77, p > .05, \eta_p^2 = .98, \text{power} = 1.00$ . For the control group, all participants indicated they had not previously studied abroad and thus additional analyses were not warranted.

Next, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess if scores on the ESL placement test would be impacted by a desire to study abroad in the future. For the experimental groups, there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who desired to study abroad ( $M=31.70, SD= 5.56$ ), did not desire to study abroad ( $M = 33.43, SD = 3.25$ ), or might be interested in studying abroad ( $M = 30.77, SD = 4.56$ ),  $F(2, 57) = 0.69, p > .05$ . A similar result was found with the control group as there was no significant difference in scores

on the ESL placement test between participants who desired to study abroad ( $M = 25.00$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ), did not desire to study abroad ( $M = 26.01$ ,  $SD = 6.08$ ), or might be interested in studying abroad ( $M = 28.00$ ,  $SD = 4.84$ ),  $F(2, 8) = 0.35$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .98$ , power = 1.00.

**Exposure and interest.** Other demographics were predicted to influence scores on the ESL placement test. A Pearson correlation was first performed to assess the relationship between the frequency with which English was spoken in the home and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between frequency with which English was spoken in the home and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(59) = .12$ ,  $p > .05$  (one-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = -.19$ ,  $p > .05$  (one-tailed).

Next, a Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between an individual's interest in learning English and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between an individual's interest in learning English and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(58) = .13$ ,  $p > .05$  (one-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = -.34$ ,  $p > .05$  (one-tailed).

Finally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess if scores on the ESL placement test would be impacted by the belief that learning English was beneficial. For the experimental groups, there was no significant difference in scores on the ESL placement test between participants who indicated that learning English is beneficial ( $M = 31.75$ ,  $SD = 5.03$ ) and participants who indicated that learning English was not beneficial ( $M = 25.01$ ,  $SD = .00$ ),  $F(1, 58) = 1.77$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .98$ , power = 1.00. For the control group, all participants indicated that learning English would be beneficial and thus additional analyses were not warranted.

### **Outcome of Motivation and Learning English**

A Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between intrinsic motivation and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between intrinsic motivation and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(65) = -.13, p > .05$  (two-tailed). The correlation was also not statistically significant for the control,  $r(10) = .14, p > .05$  (two-tailed). A Pearson correlation was also performed to assess the relationship between extrinsic motivation and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between extrinsic motivation and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(63) = -.02, p > .05$  (two-tailed). Similarly for the control groups, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(10) = .32, p > .05$  (two-tailed).

### **Outcome of Strategies for Learning English**

It was also predicted that participants' strategies for learning English would impact scores on the ESL placement test. To test this hypothesis, a Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between each subscale of the SILL and scores on the ESL placement test. There were no significant relationships between subscales of the SILL and scores on ESL placement tests.

### **Outcome of Media and Learning English**

A Pearson correlation was performed to assess the relationship between the frequency media was consumed in English and scores on the ESL placement test. For the experimental groups, the correlation between English media consumption and scores on the ESL placement test was not statistically significant,  $r(64) = -.05, p > .05$  (one-tailed). Similarly for the control group, the correlation was also not statistically significant,  $r(9) = .05, p > .05$  (one-tailed).

## **Discussion**

### **Demographic Variables and Learning English**

The purpose of the current study was to examine the influence of demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure on second language acquisition. First, it was predicted that demographic variables would be related to ESL placement test scores. For example, those participants who indicated they had previously studied abroad or desired to study abroad in the United States (US) would show higher scores on the ESL placement test than those individuals who reported no interest in study abroad. A positive correlation between frequency with which English was spoken in the home and ESL placement scores was also expected. However, ESL placement test scores were not significantly related to frequency with which English was spoken in the home or study abroad. Muñoz and Llanes (2014) investigated the outcome of participants of two different age groups (child vs. adults) learning English in two different contexts (at home vs. study abroad). It was found that child participants abroad experienced the greatest improvement and also spent more time speaking with native speakers than adult participants abroad. The results of this study may suggest that participants of a younger age may utilize the second language while in a study abroad experience which then enables them to acquire more of that language compared to adults experiencing study abroad. These findings relate to the current study's findings by suggesting that the adult participants in the current study may have not utilized English while experiencing a study abroad compared to the way a child may utilize a second language as demonstrated in Muñoz and Llanes (2014).

### **Motivation and Learning English**

It was predicted that motivation would impact ESL placement test scores. Results indicated that there was not a positive correlation between scores on the intrinsic subscale and scores on the ESL placement test. Although this correlation was predicted based on findings

from previous research, there is research support for the non-significant findings from the current study. Previous research indicated that ELL student's self-efficacy positively and significantly associated with reading comprehension, while intrinsic motivation was not (Proctor, Daley, Louick, Leider, & Gardner, 2014). Based on these results, it may have been beneficial to also assess self-efficacy in relation to second language acquisition. Assessing self-efficacy may have provided different results than the current study's look at intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

### **Strategies for Learning English**

It was also predicted that participant's strategies for learning English would impact ESL placement test scores. However, results did not find a positive correlation between participants' scores on the SILL and the ESL placement test. These findings were supported by Areepattamannil (2014) who found that self-reported use of elaboration strategies were not significantly associated with reading literacy among adolescents from India.

### **Media and Learning English**

Finally, how often participants consumed various forms of media in English was predicted to increase English fluency. However, participants may have been limited in the media available to consume in English due to government restrictions on internet use (Xu, 2014).

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Limitations associated with this study include that the researcher did not design the study and was not on sight to monitor the implementation of the study and data collection process. The ESL placement test was constructed by FHSU. The researcher had agreed with the test constructors to not assess the validity and reliability of the ESL placement test.

Cultural differences between Chinese students and English expectations may have also effected English acquisition. Gu and Schweisfurth (2006) looked at the effect of culture in

Chinese learners. They looked at the challenges Chinese learners face in adapting to the British higher education teaching and learning culture. They found a change in the learners, affected by a range of interrelated personal, cultural, social, psychological and contextual factors. Research on the links between the Chinese cultural context and Chinese learning styles has provided an important basis for understanding the interface between Chinese learners and Western modes of education. There may also be difference in U.S. and Chinese cultural beliefs about learning. Li (2003) examined U.S. and Chinese conceptions of learning with learning-related terms collected from U.S. and Chinese students. The sets of cultural beliefs contained such different notions about learning that there was little overlap. English terms included elaborated conceptions of mental processes, internal learning characteristics, social contexts, and externally existing bodies of knowledge. Chinese terms included personal attitudes, purposes, and action plans for learning. Chinese concepts also emphasized achievement standards of breadth and depth of knowledge, the unity of knowledge and morality, and contributions to society.

### **Implications**

The study helped researchers to understand variables that may or may not be related to second language acquisition. This knowledge is important for students and for educators. Students can use this knowledge to help them assess strategies that they may want to use for second language acquisition. It may also help them understand the influence of how their personal demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure may or may not impact their learning a second language. As a learner it is important to understand how you personally learn and what has or hasn't worked for learners in previous research. Second language learners can judge themselves based off of these results how best they may learn a second language and what strategies they may want to use. This information is also

helpful to second language educators. Second language educators need to know how best to teach their second language learners so knowing variables such as the impact of second language learning on demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure may help them in educating their students. Educators have the difficult job of teaching to a variety of students with a variety of learning techniques, any help from previous research on the techniques used to learn specific information such as a second language can be advantages for them.

### **Conclusions**

Overall the study did broaden our knowledge on second language acquisition at the college level. Much research has been done in younger ages for second language learning but not as much research has been assessed for second language learning in college students. There is also little research addressing second language learning on demographic variables, motivation, strategies for learning language, and media exposure at the college level. This research is beneficial in looking at these different variables for this age group. This information may also be advantageous in the education of second language learning and to future research.

## References

- Areepattamannil, S. (2014). Are learning strategies linked to academic performance among adolescents in two states in India? A tobit regression analysis. *Journal of General Psychology, 141*(4), 408-424. doi:10.1080/00221309.2014.957637
- Bishop, D. M., Barry, J. G., & Hardiman, M. J. (2012). Delayed retention of new word-forms is better in children than adults regardless of language ability: A factorial two-way study. *Plos ONE, 7*(5), doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0037326
- Brenneman, M. H., Morris, R. D., & Israelian, M. (2007). Language preference and its relationship with reading skills in English and Spanish. *Psychology in the Schools, 44*(2), 171-181. doi:10.1002/pits.20214
- Brown, J. (2009). Self-regulatory strategies and agency in self-instructed language learning: A situated view. *Modern Language Journal, 93*, 570-583. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2009.00965.x
- Dale, P. S., Harlaar, N., & Plomin, R. (2012). Nature and nurture in school-based second language achievement. *Language Learning, 62*, 28-48. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00705.x
- Deniz, S. (2010). Student teachers' evaluation of the motivational strategies used in foreign language teaching. *Social Behavior and Personality, 38*(9), 1269-1286. doi:10.2224/sbp.2010.38.9.1269
- Demirel, M. (1990). The validity and reliability study of Turkish version of strategy inventory for language learners. *World Applied Sciences Journal, 7*(6), 708-714. Retrieved from [http://idosi.org/wasj/wasj7\(6\)/3.pdf](http://idosi.org/wasj/wasj7(6)/3.pdf)

- Erler, L., & Macaro, E. (2011). Decoding ability in French as a foreign language and language learning motivation. *Modern Language Journal*, 95(4), 496-518. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01238.x
- Ferle, C., & Lee, W. (2005). Can English language media connect with ethnic audiences? Ethnic minorities' media use and representation perceptions. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 45(1), 140-153. doi:10.1017/S002184990505004X
- Fisch, S. M. (2002). Vast wasteland or vast opportunity: Effects of educational television on children's academic knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In J. Bryant & D. Zilmann (Eds.), *Media effects* (pp. 397-426). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Fort Hays State University. (2013). *Office of strategic partnerships*. Retrieved from <http://www.fhsu.edu/osp/>
- Gray, P. (1998). Paradise found. *Time*, 63-68.
- Gu, Q., & Schweisfurth, M. (2006). Who adapts? Beyond cultural models of 'the' Chinese learner. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 19(1), 74-89. doi:10.1080/07908310608668755
- Harris, R. J. (2009). *A cognitive psychology of mass communication*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hayenga, A. O., & Corpus, J. (2010). Profiles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: A person-centered approach to motivation and achievement in middle school. *Motivation and Emotion*, 34(4), 371-383. doi:10.1007/s11031-010-9181-x
- Howard, M. (2012). The advanced learner's sociolinguistic profile: On issues of individual differences, second language exposure conditions, and type of sociolinguistic variable. *Modern Language Journal*, 96, 20-33. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2012.01293.x

- Huang, S. (2008). Assessing motivation and learning strategies using The Motivated Strategies For Learning Questionnaire in a foreign language learning context. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal*, 36, 529-534.
- Kohut, A., Doherty, C., Dimock, M., & Keeter, S. (2012). In changing news landscape, even television is vulnerable. *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press Biennial Media Consumption Survey Final Topline*. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2012/09/27/in-changing-news-landscape-even-television-is-vulnerable/>
- Kormos, J., & Csizér, K. (2008). Age-related differences in the motivation of learning English as a foreign language: Attitudes, selves, and motivated learning behavior. *Language Learning*, 58, 327-355. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2008.00443.x
- Kormos, J., Kiddle, T., & Csizér, K. (2011). Systems of goals, attitudes, and self-related beliefs in second-language-learning motivation. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(5), 495-516. doi:10.1093/applin/amr019
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. New York, NY: Pergamon Institute of English.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: issues and implications*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Lee, W., & Tse, D. K. (1994). Changing media consumption in a new home: Acculturation patterns among Hong Kong immigrants to Canada. *Journal of Advertising*, 23(1), 57-70.
- Li, J. (2003). U.S and Chinese cultural beliefs about learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(2), 258-267. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.95.2.258
- Linck, J. A., Kroll, J. F., & Sunderman, G. (2009). Losing access to the native language while immersed in a second language: Evidence for the role of inhibition in second-language

- learning. *Psychological Science*, 20(12), 1507-1515. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02480.x
- Mayberry, R., & Lock, E. (2003). Age constraints on first versus second language acquisition: Evidence for linguistic plasticity and epigenesis. *Brain and Language*, 87, 369–384.
- McNealy, K., Mazziotta, J. C., & Dapretto, M. (2011). Age and experience shape developmental changes in the neural basis of language-related learning. *Developmental Science*, 14(6), 1261-1282. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7687.2011.01075.x
- Meisel, J. (1995). Parameters in acquisition. In P. Fletcher & B. MacWhinney (Eds.), *The handbook of child language* (pp. 10–35). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Mucherah, W. (2008). Immigrants' perceptions of their native language: Challenges to actual use and maintenance. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 7, 188-205. doi:10.1080/15348450802237806
- Muñoz, C., & Llanes, À. (2014). Study abroad and changes in degree of foreign accent in children and adults. *Modern Language Journal*, 98(1), 432-449. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2014.12059.x
- Newport, E. (1991). Contrasting conceptions of the critical period for language. In S. Carey & R. Gelman (Eds.), *The epigenesis of mind: Essays on biology and cognition* (pp.111-130). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Oliver, B., Harlaar, N., Hayiou, T., Marianna, E., Kovas, Y., & Walker, S. O. (2004). A twin study of teacher-reported mathematics performance and low performance in 7-year-olds. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96, 504–517.
- Oxford, R. L., & Burry-Stock, J. A. (1998). Strategy inventory for language learning (SILL). Version for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English. Retrieved from

<http://www.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.Bilash/best%20of%20bilash/SILL%20survey.pdf>

Pintrich, P. R., Smith, D. A., Garcia, T., & McKeachie W. J. (1991). *A manual for the use of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*. National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.

Proctor, C. P., Daley, S., Louick, R., Leider, C. M., & Gardner, G. L. (2014). How motivation and engagement predict reading comprehension among native English-speaking and English-learning middle school students with disabilities in a remedial reading curriculum. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 36, 76-83.

doi:10.1016/j.lindif.2014.10.014

Sachs, A. (2002, April 15). Oprah turns the page. *Time*, p. 63.

Senghas, A., & Coppola, M. (2001). Children creating language: How Nicaraguan Sign Language acquired a spatial grammar. *Psychological Science*, 12, 323–328.

Stafford, C. A., Bowden, H., & Sanz, C. (2012). Optimizing language instruction: Matters of explicitness, practice, and cue learning. *Language Learning*, 62, 741-768.

doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00648.x

Vinkhuyzen, A. A. E., Van Der Sluis, S., Posthuma, D., & Boomsma, D. I. (2009). The heritability of aptitude and exceptional talent across different domains in adolescents and young adults. *Behavior Genetics*, 39, 380–392.

Wainwright, M. A., Wright, M., Luciano, M., Geffen, G., & Martin, N. (2005).

Multivariate genetic analysis of academic skills of the Queensland Core Skills Test and IQ highlight the importance of genetics. *Twin Research and Human Genetics*, 8, 602–608.

Wang, F. (2008). Motivation and English achievement: An exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of a new measure for Chinese students of English learning. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 10(3), 633-646.

Wang, Y., Peng, H., Huang, R., Hou, Y., & Wang, J. (2008). Characteristics of distance learners: Research on relationships of learning motivation, learning strategy, self-efficacy, attribution and learning results. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open and Distance Learning*, 23(1), 17-28. doi:10.1080/02680510701815277

Wharton, G (2000). Language learning strategy use of bilingual foreign language learners in Singapore. *Language Learning*, 50, 203-243. doi:10.1111/0023-83333.00117

Wood, J.M., & Duke, N. K. (1997). Inside Reading Rainbow: A spectrum of strategies for promoting literacy. *Language Arts*, 74, 95-106.

Xu, B. (2014). Council on foreign relations. *Media censorship in China*. Retrieved from <http://www.file:///C:/Downloads/Media+Censorship+in+China.pdf>

TABLES

**Table 1**

*English Proficiency exam (number and valid %)*

Exam	#	Valid%
Taken Exam	39	40.2
Didn't Take Exam	58	59.8
Passed Exam	45	73.8
Didn't Pass Exam	16	26.2

TABLES

**Table 2**

*Study Abroad (number and valid %)*

Study Abroad	#	Valid%
Study abroad in the foreign language program in which they are enrolled (yes)	3	3.1
Study abroad in the foreign language program in which they are enrolled (no)	93	96.9
Short-term program (2-8 weeks)	9	8.2
Long-term program (more than 8 weeks)	5	4.5
Desire to study abroad (yes)	55	56.7
Desire to study abroad (no)	12	12.4
Desire to study abroad (maybe)	30	30.9