



LANGUAGE LEARNER IDENTITY, MOTIVATION, AND INVESTMENT: A CASE STUDY OF TWO UZBEK STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article explores the language-learning experiences of two adult Uzbek women, Anvara and Rakhima, foregrounding identity, motivation, and investment within Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It shows how social background, gender, learning style, and personal circumstances shape their language learning process. Drawing on the frameworks of Darwin & Norton and Dörnyei, the paper analyses each learner's strengths and weaknesses and outlines implications for teaching practice.

Keywords: *second language acquisition; learner identity; intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation; language investment; Uzbek learners*

Introduction

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is deeply influenced by various social and individual factors, including identity, motivation, and investment. This paper presents a case study of two adult Uzbek learners to illustrate how these factors interact in the process of English language learning. The study is grounded in the frameworks proposed by Norton, Darwin, and Dörnyei, which highlight the significance of social context and learner agency in SLA.

Learners description focused on identity

Anvara is an adult who is twenty years old Uzbek woman and she is studying financial university. She started learning English at her early university years but she took a brief shortcut because of family reasons. She is an auditory learner that she memorise details by listening teacher's lectures or other listening resources. Currently, Anvara restarts the course but not in stopped part, she was in intermediate level in IELTS preparation group before she gave up, now she revises pre-intermediate level. She grew up in a medium state family background, particularly, her parents have realized the significant advantages of language learning. Her religion is Islam and she is hardworking and eager to learn language. She is always active in social life but presently she has no occupation as she is busy with bringing up her baby. However, Anvara finds that digital technology is so reliable aspect for learning language at home, for instance, she is attending online language courses as



it is considered that preference of distance learning is one of the most significant identities for learners (Norton&Toohey, 2011). As Anvara is female, she started to achieve steady language proficiency in her early school years as it is stated that girls are more considerate and active during the classes whereas boys tend to show bad behaviour in school(Norton &Toohey, 2011). She has not any learning disability, she is healthy students.

Rakhima, she is also twenty years old Uzbek girl who graduated university last year and nowadays she is working for one the foreign country as an office manager. She started learning English in last year because of job requirement. She is muslim and her religion and Uzbek culture impact to her language learning in particular whenever she gets into communication in English language, she feels herself non-native speakers, it is clear from her accent (Norton &Toohey,2011). However, Rakhima is a silent student during the classes, at times her such characteristics can not affect acquiring English language but she behaves herself since she is introvert student that means to escape expressing her insights among large audience. In addition, she is visual learner which is able to comprehend language and teacher's explanation within pictures and views. There is appeared a challenge to encoding and decoding the English language in Rakhima's learning process. Her gender is women, she is into medium class in society, these aspects are considered as an identity for her because according to Darvin and Norton (2021), gender, race, social status are also involved learners identity.

Anvara gets an intrinsic motivation because she studied an English specialized school until her younger age, thirteen. Nowadays, Anvara can manage to have sufficient time and money for learning English as she is an early age which can comprehend all things easily as well as she is much more responsible compare to other younger learners. As it is mentioned that the motivation is the starting and internal force which comes from learners exact identity (Darvin & Norton,2021), in Anvara's situation her punctuality and interest to learning English encourage her to continue the learning process. For example, she tries to manage to participate online lesson even her pregnancy period because of intrinsic motivation. As well as, the social background motivated her to engage in English language since she was graduated English specialized school, she knows the importance of English to her future career and she owns the reliable language background. To justify this statement, according to Darvin and Norton (2021), motivation can be the impact of individual's personal engagement by looking up and understanding social interactions. Additionally, Anvara gets an enjoyment and pleasure while experiencing English language, because she wants to attain the directed goal especially to getting 8.0 score in IELTS , enjoying the learning process is also considered a high-motivation to her as it is mentioned that intrinsic motivation relates to individual's language learning curiosity and satisfying their attempt for achieving their desired aim (Dornyei, 1998) . Considering Anvara's motivations, teacher should address the classes on time as well as instructor have to provide the English atmosphere in the classroom. Moreover, teacher has to organize



classes by giving a chance for learner to perform her communicative competence in particular speaking skills as she has previous knowledge which was taken from English school. As it is stated that self-confident learners can perform themselves competently while speaking in second language and they have low anxiety feeling during the performance (Clement et. al., 1997, as cited in Dornyei, 1998).

Investment in terms of language learning, it is related to the sociological history and the relation between learner's identity that impacted to acquiring language as well as investment can be time, place, knowledge or place in which utilized for learning the particular language (Darvin & Norton, 2021). In terms of investment, Anvara tried to spend more time to practicing English language as well as she considered the importance of financial aids for learning language during her early university years. That's why she could manage to purchase additional materials from internet sources apart from the course book which language center provided her. However after having a child, Anvara can not be able to divide time for language learning, she can not attend offline classes. According to Darvin and Norton (2021), investment is becoming different after passing time or after changing the place, thus in the Anvara's situation, her investment is changed over the time. Nowadays, Anvara has another choice for learning English that she is attending online classes however she manages to complete assignment due to deadlines and get comments from instructor. For online classes also she has paid and during the course she prefers to take notes in detail. As long as she has a spare time, Anvara spends it to practising English individually within utilizing learning application that relates to improving speaking skill. Anvara considers that this investment will support to increase her result. More specifically, it is mentioned that learners prefer to invest more power for learning L2 since they have the insight that this investment can be helpful to attain their goal and provide them with sufficient sources (Darvin & Norton, 2021). Through considering Anvara's investment for language learning, teacher should make a proper implication. For instance, instructor makes the extra online classes by taking into account the time which is convenient for learner too. As Darvin and Norton (2021) stated that learners' investment may modify because of place, time or other issues. As well as teacher can apply some beneficial apps to the course which is suitable for Anvara's since she has a significant insight about digital tools.

Anvara's weakness point is confusion in the place of predicator and fossilization in grammar rules, in particular, fossilization happens in countable or uncountable nouns, for instance money is countable noun in her L1 however in English it is uncountable noun. The reason for her confusion of predicator is that in Uzbek language the predicator always comes at the end of the sentences whereas in English the predicator is situated after subject. Whenever Anvara makes a speech or sentences she comes across misunderstanding in the usage of predicator as a result it is difficult for her. The reason for this weakness is that it is stated that in adulthood is observed the cognitive declines in various sphere, such as rule learning among adults is more confusing period as they may misunderstand or mix the rules with their L1 which is



settled in their brain (Munoz, 2019).

As for strength, Anvara has a wide range of vocabulary size for this reason she acquires morphology aspect easily, especially in word formation Anvara comprehend the topic of affix easily because of her an amount of vocabulary bank as well as another key feature for her that she is controlled the attention during the classes. In addition, Anvara has an aptitude to memorise main hints by linking the other thing such as whenever she learns a new word, she makes a sentence including the new words in order not to forget it, she repeats them time to time.

As for Rakhima, she has several extrinsic motivations. The first one is the requirement in her workplace, in particular the boss demand her to get any English language certificate but it should be equal to at least B2 level. Particularly, Rakhima is encouraged by attaining a higher social position, since it is clear that extrinsic motivation is appeared under the power of the desire of learner's inner motivation (Dornyei,1998), in Rakhima's position, she wants to be self-supported for this she needs a high-paid job and she is motivated by the salary as well as the reputation of the job. The next motivations are teacher's attitude towards her and selected course materials which are comprehensible for learners. Particularly, whenever Rakhima comes to the classes, she encouraged within completing activities and exercises in course book since it is suitable for her level as well as tasks are presented as authentic materials. Rakhima can understand that her English knowledge is becoming higher rather than past times, the results of completed tasks is motivated her to study hard. According to Dornyei (1998) , course related materials such as the syllabus, the teaching materials, methods or approaches are also considered the motivational tools for learners. Furthermore, Rakhima is always pleased feedbacks which the instructor provided as well as the feedbacks impact her to involve the comments due to reach the expected success in language learning. Teacher have a proper background of students' motivation that's why she provides learner supportive feedback as long as witnesses student's attempt to acquire language through engaging given tasks on course materials. According to Crookes and Schmidt (1991, as cited in Dornyei,1998), teacher's personality, teaching philosophy and the style of providing feedback are involved teacher's motivational concepts towards students. Involving Rakhima's motivation, teacher should utilize Krashen's input hypothesis (1985), in particular, Rakhima gets encouragement from describing visuals and completing activities for this reason teacher has to expand inputs in course materials which learner can get easily the details. Additionally, instructor supports the learner within providing elicitation while giving feedback to the mistakes in her assignments which are completed in the class and at home. Elicitation means that teacher correct learners mistakes by asking clear questions according to the topic through not damaging student's learning desire (Lyster&Ranta,1997), for this reason in Rakhima's situation elicitive feedback more beneficial rather than others.

Rakhima also spends enough investment in terms of money, time, particularly she conducts to practicing English at least 2 hours a day as well as she attend to the well-



known language center after her working time. Rakhima prefers offline classes and want to be in social communication, that's why she invest time and money to find reliable center. According to Darvin & Norton (2021), learners' investment for acquiring language can be their willing to participate L2 classes or social contexts. Additionally, as she has a lackness with writing and reading skills, she invests her power to improve it through writing a piece of text or letter as well as she reads at least one paragraph of article a day. For this she researches social media due to find proper and comprehensible article. The reason why to this investment is that according to Darvin and Norton (2021), learners solve the problem related to their identity in order to invest correct power to learning language. Teacher should address some implications while teaching language through considering the investments of learner. Particularly, as Rakhima's preference the offline classes, teacher involves the classroom environment and tries to create natural English sphere such as decorating the room with symbols of English speaking countries or outstanding sights since it is stated that learner's investment can aid teacher to design new frameworks or course materials which are helpful strategies for student acquiring language (Darvin & Norton, 2017). Addition to this, teacher can suggest the website of newspapers which are published comprehensible articles since Rakhima need a wide range of articles or stories due to improve reading skill.

The weak point for Rakhima is that she has a difficulty with pronouncing some words such as “ their, with, think or sink”. The main reason for this difficulty is that her speech organs have already grown up so that while pronouncing some words she can not fix the speech organs properly. In addition to this, Rakhima has low memory, particularly she can not remember rules or words for long time, she forgets main information easily if she does not take notes. Rakhima has challenges with utilizing the verb agreements in particular she confuses the usage of verbs in present simple for the third person. For instance, she makes a sentence as “she go, he do etc.”.

However, she has a strength in particular reliable competence in using complex structure because she acquired L1 syntax perfectly and she uses this knowledge in her L2 as well. Rakhima has a social skill and she utilizes it during the language acquisition within finding people who are in English atmosphere especially in language center she is always communicating learners whether she is acquaintance with them or not. Through doing that, Rakhima develop her speaking and listening skills proficiency. Additionally, Rakhima works patiently in every skills, whenever she has an error, she conducts her teacher or searches the answer to the question from online or authentic sources.

Conclusion

This case study underscores the diverse factors influencing language learners. While Anvara and Rakhima share cultural and linguistic backgrounds, their motivations and investments differ significantly. Teachers must recognize these differences and adopt personalized, flexible approaches that support learner identity, motivation, and goals.



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