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Probing English Language Learning Challenges among University Students in Suburban Town Settings

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Abstract

Despite 12 years of English education, Kurdish university students, particularly those living in suburban towns, face persistent challenges in learning a foreign language, hindering their academic aspirations. This study focuses on students who live in Chamchamal and its surrounding areas and identifies key obstacles such as systemic school issues, the previous educational environment, and demotivational factors, whether from their parents or the community. This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews with students and teachers to assess English language challenges and the impact of educational environments in Chamchamal. Data collected from 30 students reveal that shyness significantly hinders language acquisition, teacher behavior affects learning outcomes, and a lack of student enthusiasm impedes progress. The study challenges claims about the impact of power dynamics and library access, offering valuable insights into the challenges faced by suburban town students in learning English. It also proposes solutions to enhance English language learning and aims to raise awareness among students' families about the issues affecting their children's acquisition of English as a foreign language. This study aims to explore the linguistic challenges faced by university students in Chamchamal, Kurdistan Region-Iraq, and offer targeted recommendations to improve their English language proficiency.



About the Journal

Zanco Journal of Humanity Sciences (ZJHS) is an international, multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed, double-blind and open-access journal that enhances research in all fields of basic and applied sciences through the publication of high-quality articles that describe significant and novel works; and advance knowledge in a diversity of scientific fields. <https://zancojournal.su.edu.krd/index.php/JAHS/about>

1. Introduction

This research addresses the observable linguistic challenges encountered by university students who despite dedicating numerous years to English language studies, grapple with a persistent inability to comprehend the language. Predominantly, the struggle arises from earlier pedagogical approaches that imparted English within the framework of their native tongue, resulting in substantial impediments to grammar and pronunciation mastery. This linguistic deficiency is perceived as a formidable obstacle hindering the realization of academic and professional aspirations. Notably, the researcher contends that a transformative shift in English language instruction is imperative, necessitating educators to provide students with nuanced insights into both the cultural nuances and substantive content of the language. Thus, this study endeavours to offer comprehensive recommendations and remedies tailored to ameliorate the identified issues and propel students towards linguistic proficiency.

The study was conducted at Charo University in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, focusing on students from Chamchamal and other suburban towns. These students, who attended both gender-mixed and gender-segregated classes in high school, were the subject of extensive fieldwork at the university. The overarching objective is to study the proficiency of students who have dedicated more than a decade to the study of the English language, thereby allowing for an in-depth examination of the multifaceted issues encompassing students, teachers, pedagogical methodologies, and systemic factors. By exploring the intricacies of the learning environment, the researcher discerned a pervasive hostility, advocating for mixed classrooms where students exhibited more favourable outcomes. Addressing barriers to language acquisition encompassed institutional facets such as curriculum design and instructional strategies, highlighting motivational deficiencies, particularly in the realms of familial, peer, and pedagogical support. Moreover, this study underscores the nuanced impact of psychological factors, including shyness and age, on students' language development.

In essence, this research paper centres on elucidating the formidable challenges faced by university students in Kurdistan, particularly in the Chamchamal and nearby suburban areas, as they grapple with English as a foreign language. Systemic issues within the educational framework contribute significantly to the prevailing struggles, impeding students from achieving a proficient command of the English language. As divergent perspectives emerge among researchers, the collective focus remains on discerning tailored solutions to empower university students who live in suburban areas to overcome English language obstacles.

The study attempts to answer these research questions: first, how does the previous educational environment, especially in suburban, influence the acquisition of English language skills among university students? Second, to what degree do previous educational systems and technological interventions contribute to the advancement of English language proficiency among university students? Additionally, the third question, which intrinsic and extrinsic demotivating factors notably affect the academic performance and language learning of university students in suburban areas?

1. Literature Review

2.1 Educational Setting

The school environment is pivotal in shaping students' lives and academic performance. Baweja (2021) defines the educational setting, encompassing physical, social, and academic elements, as crucial for student development. Factors like seating arrangements, lighting, and noise significantly impact students' engagement and motivation (Hendrix, 2019). Notably, well-lit spaces positively influence academic performance (Boelcke, 2020). Suburban noise pollution poses challenges, impacting auditory acuity and cognitive functions (Buchari and Matondang, 2017). Also, high school classrooms' colour aids attention and memory transfer (Dzulkifli and Mustafar, 2013, cited

in Bo Chang, 2018). Effective communication, a fundamental skill, faces barriers within the classroom (Aparajeya, 2016), influenced by diverse teacher-student dynamics (Bayani, 2016).

In English language learning, students encounter challenges such as fear of mistakes and linguistic disparities (Ali Khan, 2015). Lewis (2020) highlights the prioritization of grades over English learning in many schools, exacerbated by Kurdish language use in explanations (Iglesias, 2022). A disconnect between educational priorities and English language demands emphasizes the need for targeted interventions. The congenial learning environment's growing importance is noted, impacting students' personalities and language acquisition (Cueto, 2022; Wark, 2022). Additionally, discrimination, particularly gender-based, creates hostile environments with potential legal consequences (Valeria, 2017; Cueto, 2022). Likewise, gender-segregated classrooms negatively affect language acquisition, emphasizing the importance of inclusive co-education (Jersey, 2018); it will affect the capability of the student even in the upper levels and at university.

Moreover, for students from suburban areas, gender distribution dynamics in previous academic settings influence communication skills and integration into mixed-gender university environments (Sanchez, 2017). Same-gender school environments offer comfort and empowerment, facilitating active class participation (Natalie, 2019). These findings underscore the multifaceted impact of the school environment on students' academic and language-learning experiences even at university.

2.2 Learning System

The conventional understanding of the "Learning System" relates to public education (Borgen, 2013). Borgen (2013) further highlights the need for inclusive, adaptable public education that addresses diverse student needs and emphasises teacher roles in promoting engagement, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. Despite a 12-year English curriculum, from Primary school to the last year of high school, students face challenges in constructing accurate sentences, attributing struggles to hindrances in language learning pedagogy (Thakur, 2019). Learning facilities significantly influence educational experiences for both students and teachers (Andrews, 2019). Rhiannon Wardle emphasizes the paramount role of the educational learning system; it seizes opportunities for personal and professional growth (Wardle, 2021). A robust curriculum is essential for achieving educational goals, but inadequate high school teacher training and outdated curricula hinder student interest and progress (Saleem, 2019; Hanks, 2022). Timetable designs and the limited duration of English language study, coupled with parallel instruction in Kurdish, impede English language development (Hanks, 2022). School facilities, including buildings, electricity, and libraries, are pivotal for enhanced learning outcomes, but deficiencies impact students' English language capacity (Bedford, 2021); as this affects the language capacity of the student even at university.

Electricity shortage at schools further exacerbates the situation, diminishing teaching resources and classroom supplies, restricting educators from accessing online activities and resources, and impeding the delivery of quality education to students which causes the suburban town students to face problems in learning language (Tomaszewski, 2013). Libraries, deemed essential for comprehensive learning, are notably ignored in many schools in suburban areas due to space constraints and prohibitive costs associated with acquiring new books, particularly those focusing on the English language. This dearth of library resources disproportionately affects public school pupils from low-income households, limiting their knowledge of course textbooks and hindering their intellectual expansion and English language capacity. Due to the above reasons, they face problems and difficulty with their English language when they join university classes (Yorio, 2021).

Moreover, the often-overlooked aspect of chairs and tables plays a pivotal role in the learning process, as students forced to stand or sit on broken chairs face considerable difficulties during their earlier education stages education in secondary and high school classes. The inadequacy of

classrooms further compounds the challenges, with mobile classrooms intended as a solution succumbing to the elements and exacerbating the crisis in educational infrastructure (Motseo, 2015). In summary, deficiencies in school facilities, including inadequate physical infrastructure and essential resources, greatly affect students' learning experiences as they transition to university. This highlights the urgent need for comprehensive improvements in educational infrastructure to enhance language capabilities before students begin university classes.

Indeed, there is a big gap between the pedagogy of high schools in suburban town areas and universities. Pedagogy, as a teaching strategy, encompasses the theoretical and practical aspects of educators' instructional methods, shaping the way subjects are elucidated based on their knowledge and technique styles (Shrike, 2021). Establishing meaningful classroom relationships is essential for students to consolidate prior knowledge, and an effective pedagogical approach facilitates the enhancement of their abilities and attitudes. A robust pedagogy not only ensures a comprehensive understanding of the material but also empowers students to articulate their acquired knowledge beyond the confines of the classroom. In the context of teaching the English language, it has been observed that many high school teachers predominantly employ the grammar-translation method, a technique rooted in explicating the grammatical norms and vocabulary of the target language through translation exercises; moreover, this affected their language capability and could not prepare them well for the university modules (Sana, 2021).

However, this method, characterized by its teacher-centred approach and limited oral work, hinders the development of student's language proficiency and communicative skills. The emphasis on grammar rules in schools fails to cultivate the ability to think in the target language, impeding effective communication and accurate pronunciation (Gupta, 2018). Contrastingly, a viable solution lies in the adoption of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which encourages students to actively communicate in the target language for both daily and instructional tasks. Unlike the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), CLT prioritizes language use and interaction, offering a superior approach to language learning (Natsir, 2014). In summary, the choice between the grammar-translation method and communicative language teaching significantly impacts students' language acquisition and proficiency, emphasizing the imperative of selecting pedagogical strategies conducive to effective language learning.

2.3 Demotivational Factors

This study aims to identify deterrents to effective learning, with a focus on factors influencing students' academic success (Ahmad, 2021). Teachers and students collectively play a pivotal role in shaping motivation, highlighting their impact on educational engagement (Ahmad, 2021). Parental influence, sometimes unwittingly demotivating, also plays a role in hindering academic enthusiasm (Wong, 2021). Dörnyei (2005) stresses the significance of motivation in achieving long-term goals, emphasizing its critical role in language learning and acquisition, presenting challenges for those lacking in motivation and learning capacity.

In examining variables affecting English proficiency, key factors include time management struggles, insufficient parental attention, and a lack of a supportive learning environment (Kurnianingsi et al., 2019). Parental influence emerges as the most potent determinant, emphasizing the crucial role of the family environment (Kurnianingsi et al., 2019). Friendships, while crucial for overall well-being, can also be detrimental, especially if characterized by negativity and stress-inducing interactions (WebMD Editorial Contributors, 2022). Furthermore, a lack of proper knowledge about curriculum design and ineffective teaching methods in schools hinder language learning, discouraging students and perpetuating disinterest even when those students join university classes (Xander, 2016; Tang and Hu, 2022).

Teachers significantly impact motivation, achievement, and well-being, with negative attitudes correlating with psychiatric diseases among students (Marroquin, 2018; Tang and Hu, 2022). Effective teachers possess traits such as material knowledge, decision-making, and effective communication skills (Gundogdu and Silman, 2007; Uluga et al., 2011). Moreover, a lack of responsiveness to student suggestions and impatience hinders effective language learning (Skyeng, 2020).

The family's role in shaping language proficiency is paramount, with parental attitudes and socioeconomic status influencing children's language acquisition (Asgari, 2010 cited in Zhou, 2020). In addition, internal factors like age, motivation, shyness, and psychological disposition impact language learning success (Sun, 2019). Younger students exhibit swift language acquisition, while motivation and overcoming shyness are crucial for effective learning (Pertiwi, 2015; Ary, 2018).

Shyness, often intertwined with low self-esteem, inhibits language abilities, particularly in group settings (Ary, 2018; Heitz, 2019). Fear of using ill-formed sentences, vocabulary, or pronunciation, as well as the fear of failure, further hinder effective language acquisition, with gender differences playing a role (Rivera and Hernández, 2014). Furthermore, shyness and fear of failure contribute to students' hesitation in verbal expression, emphasizing the complex barriers hindering language learning (Vemuri, Ram, and Kota, 2013 cited in Rivera and Hernández, 2014; Marhamah, 2016).

2. Methodology

3.1 Methods of Data Collection

The research methodology outlines the structured approach taken to achieve the study's objectives. It includes the selection of appropriate research designs and data collection methods. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to gather comprehensive data, including questionnaires and interviews, which were carefully designed to align with the research objectives.

3.1.1 Data Collection Tools

The study used two primary data collection tools: questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire provided quantitative data, while interviews were used to gather qualitative insights from participants.

3.1.2 Settings

The data collection took place at Charmo University, located in the Chamchamal district, focusing on students from the English Department. The students who participated in the study were from different academic semesters, residing in Chamchamal and surrounding suburban areas.

3.1.3 Participants and Population

The participants consisted of 30 students from Charmo University, ensuring gender balance across three different semesters (4, 6, and 8). These students were selected to represent those living in suburban areas, specifically Chamchamal and nearby towns.

3.1.4 Tools of the Pilot Study, Reliability, and Validity

A pilot study was conducted with 10 students to test the reliability and clarity of the questionnaire and interview questions. The pilot study revealed ambiguities, which were addressed by revising the questions before the final data collection. The researcher ensured that both tools were valid, with questions logically structured and aligned with the research goals. This process ensured the reliability and validity of the data collected. To ensure the reliability and validity of both the questionnaire and interview questions/statements, the researcher submitted all items for review to faculty members from the English Department at Charmo University, specializing in Language and

Linguistics. The questions and statements were initially designed by the researcher and were later validated by a panel of experts from the department.

3.2 Principles for the Data Collection

This study explores key research principles that make writing a paper easier. It deals with four main aspects: validity, reliability, authenticity, and practicality (Brown, 2003). Validity, which expresses the accuracy of measurement, is ensured through careful survey and interview design. The survey, which was distributed to 30 carefully selected university students living in suburbs and Chamchamal, ensures validity by adjusting to real values. Face validity is evident by replicating regular responses from participants, and each part receives equal attention, improving validity. According to Leblond (2018); Bedford (2021); and Cambos (2023), interviews determine the idea of validity in a research paper by constantly questioning participants with open-ended questions. Furthermore, they talked about the reliability of a research paper as it means trustworthiness and unbiased results, are preserved in both the survey and the interview. Reliability is enhanced by the clearness of the survey, equal participants, and lack of personal data. Interviews ensure reliability through unbiased questioning and appropriate situations. Authenticity in research is about honesty and value; this research stands out as completely original, deals with unexplored subjects, and avoids plagiarism. The logical order and significance of the questions emphasize authenticity and engage students' perspectives. Finally, the practicality of the study lies in its purpose, collecting data to identify the causes of students' English language difficulties, avoiding ordinary hypotheses. (Leblond, 2018; Bedford, 2021; and Cambos, 2023)

3. Data Analysis

4.1 Systematic Analysis of the Participants

This section collects data about the challenges of learning English and uses data from students living in Chamchamal and the suburbs who have obstacles in learning English. Thirty participants took part in this study with questionnaires and interviews, 15 of whom were 18-22 year old men and 15 women. Divided into demographic, background, details, and opinion-based statements, the survey provided inclusive perception, while the interviews asked the same students six questions. Fifteen men and 15 women participated in the gender-balanced study, of which three boys and three girls were among the interviewees. All participants were university students who offered different perspectives on the challenges of learning English at the university level.

4.2 Questionnaire Data Analysis

Regarding the effect of the former classroom setting on English language learning, the first statement highlights challenges such as crowded classrooms and noise obstructing the learning progression. Students' responses reflected diverse views, with (%10) strongly disagreed, (%30) disagreed, (%47) agreed, and (%13) strongly agreed. In contrast, the second statement investigates students' hesitation to speak in English due to fear of judgment. Responses revealed that (%24) strongly disagreed, (%17) disagreed, (%13) agreed, and (%43) strongly agreed. The third statement explores the potential benefits of mixed-gender classrooms for overcoming shyness in using English regardless of the place they come from. Responses indicated (%17) strongly disagreed, (%13) disagreed, (%13) agreed, and (%57) strongly agreed.

Conversely, statement four examines students' comfort in a same-gender and same-ethnic from the same area learning environment, with responses showing (%33) strongly disagreed, (%23) disagreed, (%23) agreed, and (%20) strongly agreed. In addressing language proficiency through multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank assessments in their high school period, the fifth statement indicates potential drawbacks at the university level. Students' responses were (%13) strongly disagreed, (%24) disagreed, (%10) agreed, and (%50) strongly agreed. The sixth statement delves into the emphasis on grammar in their high school classes hindering critical thinking in the target language, with responses indicating (%26) strongly disagreed, (%17) disagreed, (%10) agreed, and

(%53) strongly agreed. The seventh statement explores the impact of inadequate resources like electricity, smart boards, data show, technology utilities, and school libraries on English language learning in their high schools, with responses as (%40) strongly disagreed, (%23) disagreed, (%23) agreed, and (%13) strongly agreed.

Motivation takes centre stage in the eighth statement, revealing that without intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from families and surroundings, learning English becomes challenging, as shown by (%13) strongly disagreed, (%7) disagreed, (%20) agreed, and (%60) strongly agreed. The ninth statement underscores the influence of students’ surroundings, such as those at schools and home, families, environment, neighbours, relatives, and friends, on demotivation for learning English in the suburban areas, with responses of (%17) strongly disagreed, (%23) disagreed, (%30) agreed, and (%30) strongly agreed. The impact of their high school teacher’s behaviour and attitude is explored in the tenth statement, revealing that (%13) strongly disagreed, (%7) disagreed, (%23) agreed, and (%57) strongly agreed. The eleventh statement focuses on parents’ educational backgrounds affecting students’ English language learning, with responses showing (%33) strongly disagreed, (%10) disagreed, (%33) agreed, and (%23) strongly agreed. The twelfth statement addresses selfish high school classmates who did not share their knowledge with other students and believed that they were superior to others hindering knowledge-sharing and affecting other students’ English level, resulting in (%30) strongly disagreed, (%13) disagreed, (%17) agreed, and (%40) strongly agreed.

Age-related factors in language acquisition are discussed in the thirteenth statement, with responses indicating (%23) strongly disagreed, (%23) disagreed, (%30) agreed, and (%23) strongly agreed. Shyness and its impact on motivation to speak English are explored in the fourteenth statement, revealing that (%3) strongly disagreed, (%3) disagreed, (%24) agreed, and (%67) strongly agreed. The final statement addresses students viewing mistakes as potential embarrassments especially if they are from suburban areas, with responses indicating (%43) strongly disagreed, (%17) disagreed, (%13) agreed, and (%24) strongly agreed. This table (Table 1) illustrates all the statements, numerical data, and the major summaries:

Table 1: The illustration of all the statements, numerical data, and the major summaries

| Statement | Response Breakdown | Summary |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Effect of crowded classrooms and noise on learning progression | Strongly Disagreed (%10), Disagreed (%30), Agreed (%47), Strongly Agreed (%13) | Noise and overcrowded classrooms are significant barriers for many students. |
| 2. Hesitation to speak English due to fear of judgment | Strongly Disagreed (%24), Disagreed (%17), Agreed (%13), Strongly Agreed (%43) | Many students are reluctant to speak English because of fear of judgment. |
| 3. Potential benefits of mixed-gender classrooms for overcoming shyness | Strongly Disagreed (%17), Disagreed (%13), Agreed (%13), Strongly Agreed (%57) | Mixed-gender classrooms are seen as helpful by a majority for overcoming shyness. |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 4. Comfort in same-gender and same-ethnic learning environments | Strongly Disagreed (%33), Disagreed (%23), Agreed (%23), Strongly Agreed (%20) | Same-gender and same-ethnic environments are less preferred for comfort. |
| 5. Impact of high school multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank assessments at university level | Strongly Disagreed (%13), Disagreed (%24), Agreed (%10), Strongly Agreed (%50) | Multiple-choice assessments at the high school level hinder university-level learning. |
| 6. Emphasis on grammar hindering critical thinking in the target language | Strongly Disagreed (%26), Disagreed (%17), Agreed (%10), Strongly Agreed (%53) | Heavy grammar focus in high school hinders critical thinking in English. |
| 7. Inadequate resources (electricity, smart boards, etc.) affecting English learning | Strongly Disagreed (%40), Disagreed (%23), Agreed (%23), Strongly Agreed (%13) | Lack of resources like electricity and technology impedes learning. |
| 8. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation needed for effective English learning | Strongly Disagreed (%13), Disagreed (%7), Agreed (%20), Strongly Agreed (%60) | Motivation from family and surroundings is crucial for English learning. |
| 9. Influence of surroundings (home, school, neighbours, etc.) on demotivation in suburban areas | Strongly Disagreed (%17), Disagreed (%23), Agreed (%30), Strongly Agreed (%30) | Suburban environments contribute significantly to student demotivation. |
| 10. Teacher behaviour and attitude's impact on English learning | Strongly Disagreed (%13), Disagreed (%7), Agreed (%23), Strongly Agreed (%57) | Teacher attitude is a key factor in motivating students to learn English. |
| 11. Impact of parents' educational backgrounds on English learning | Strongly Disagreed (%33), Disagreed (%10), Agreed (%33), Strongly Agreed (%23) | Parents' educational background plays a role in students' English learning. |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 12. Impact of selfish classmates on knowledge-sharing and English learning | Strongly Disagreed (%30), Disagreed (%13), Agreed (%17), Strongly Agreed (%40) | Selfish classmates hinder knowledge-sharing and negatively affect learning. |
| 13. Age-related factors in language acquisition | Strongly Disagreed (%23), Disagreed (%23), Agreed (%30), Strongly Agreed (%23) | Age has a mixed effect on language acquisition; some students find it challenging. |
| 14. Shyness and its effect on motivation to speak English | Strongly Disagreed (%3), Disagreed (%3), Agreed (%24), Strongly Agreed (%67) | Shyness is a significant barrier to speaking English for most students. |
| 15. Mistakes seen as potential embarrassments, especially in suburban areas | Strongly Disagreed (%43), Disagreed (%17), Agreed (%13), Strongly Agreed (%24) | Fear of embarrassment due to mistakes is particularly strong in suburban students. |

4.3 Interview Data Analysis

The researcher conducted six interviews with students, engaging students in discussions about the challenges faced by university students who live in suburban town areas in learning the English language. The interview involved six students who answered the questionnaire too from the same department. The discussions encompassed internal and environmental factors influencing students' English proficiency among those students who joined the university from suburban town areas. The questions addressed in the interviews were diverse, and the ensuing conversations shed light on critical aspects.

Concerning the barrier of shyness in speaking English, the interviews discovered that students are afraid of being mocked by their peers when they trying to have a conversation in English. Shyness is worsened by fear of confusion and teacher attitudes that emphasize the central role of teachers in improving student embarrassments. The interviewees added that students in suburban areas may have difficulties communicating in English due to limited exposure to the language outside of an academic environment, fewer resources for language learning, and possible cultural factors that affect language learning.

When examining the influence of classmates on language learning, the students emphasized the importance of smart and clever friends. Moreover, the participants emphasized the positive influence of a good partner/friend who not only helps in learning but also likes English. In addition, students need motivation to learn English, which can come from supportive teachers, engaging learning materials, personal goals, or an awareness of the importance of English outside their current environment, such as in and around their places of living.

Working on the suggested methods of learning English, the interviewees explained learning as communication rather than grammar through strict and direct methods. Although both components are considered important, effective communication is considered more important for language

acquisition. In addition, effective pedagogy and teaching methodologies can improve language learning by including shared activities, real contexts, different assessments, and supportive techniques adapted to students' needs and abilities.

When examining the reasons why students struggle to communicate in English, students shared different reasons, emphasizing the need for English in an academic place. The language barrier in classrooms with a permissible background adds to the challenges of learning English. They also said that shyness can be a barrier to speaking English in class due to cultural norms or individual personality behaviours. The level of shyness can vary among students from different areas, including students from suburban areas like Chamchamal.

Learning about the motivational need to learn English, they highlighted different methods influenced by teachers and parental participation. Although external motivation is useful, the eventual desire to learn a language comes from the student's internal desire. Students added that classmates can influence language learning by interacting with peers, whether they are from the same region or city. Exposure to different language backgrounds and communication styles can enrich learning experiences and expand language capability.

Discussing the role of pedagogy in language learning, students emphasized the importance of grammatical skills and comprehension rather than self-directed learning from textbooks solely. Simplified explanations and the incorporation of new vocabulary were identified as effective pedagogical approaches to enhance their language acquisition. In studying English, they prioritize communication over grammar, as practical language use fosters fluency and confidence. However, a balanced approach integrating both aspects is essential for comprehensive language proficiency and effective communication skills.

4. Data Discussion and Research Questions' Answers

5.1 First Research Question's Answer

This sub-section is for the answer to the first research question as the question in the statement form is "The preceding suburban town educational environments' influences on university students' English language skill acquisition". The hindrance of learning the English language in crowded classrooms and noisy environments emerged as a significant challenge, with (%47) agreeing and (%13) strongly agreeing, according to respondent assessments. Buchari and Matondang (2017) corroborated these findings, emphasizing the adverse effects of classroom noise on students' hearing, English communication, and cognitive abilities, particularly affecting those in suburban town areas. Hesitation to speak in English due to fear of others' opinions, registering (%13) agreement and (%43) strong agreement, aligns with Ali Khan's (2015) observations that students often refrain from English conversation for fear of ridicule or mistreatment. Additionally, the belief that mixed-gender classrooms foster future English language use without shyness garnered (%13) agreement and (%57) strong agreement, echoing Jersey's (2018) perspective that a unified, coeducational environment is essential for practical language development. However, the preference for same-gender and same-ethnic class learning environments, yielding (%23) disagreement and (%33) strong disagreement, challenges Natalie's (2019) assertion that such settings can enhance confidence and outcomes.

In the interview discussions, a seasoned student highlighted that university students tend to prioritize high grades over English proficiency, echoing Lewis's (2020) observation that students often perceive learning English as a non-priority. Another interviewee emphasized the communication barrier arising from teachers delivering lectures in Kurdish, as discussed by Iglesias (2022), who noted the efficiency of quick and accurate translation, albeit raising concerns about complete comprehension. These insights underscore the complex interplay of priorities, teaching

language, and perceived value among university students who come from suburban struggles with English communication.

5.2 Second Research Question's Answer

This sub-section is for the answer to the second research question as the question in the statement form is "The previous educational system and technological interventions' influences on suburban towns' university students' English language proficiency". According to participant responses, students' proficiency in writing sentences with proper grammar is hindered, with (%10) agreeing and (%50) strongly agreeing. This aligns with Thakur's (2019) observation that students face challenges in sentence construction due to the prevalence of multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank exam questions discouraging sentence formation attempts. Another survey statement emphasized the limited development of thinking in the target language, attributing it to the exclusive focus on grammar in their high school classes. Participants registered (%10) agreement and (%53) strong agreement, resonating with Gupta's (2018) insight that an overemphasis on grammar rules restricts students from engaging in critical thinking in the target language. In contrast to the students' ideas, Kashif, et al. (2020) opposed that school facilities expressively subsidise improved learning outcomes, emphasizing the importance of an encouraging learning environment.

In the interview discussions, students emphasized the pivotal role of grammar in English language learning, noting that it facilitates the connection of words and phrases to form coherent sentences. Despite the recognition of grammar as foundational, Gupta (2018) expressed concerns about teacher-centred classes with minimal oral engagement, hindering effective communication and pronunciation development. Participants' preferences for communication over grammar in learning English were highlighted, underscoring their belief that effective communication is best achieved through interactive language use. This preference aligns with Natsir's (2014) endorsement of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, emphasizing daily communication tasks for enhanced language proficiency compared to the Grammar Translation Method (GTM).

5.3 Third Research Question's Answer

This sub-section is for the answer to the third research question as the question in the statement form is "The intrinsic and extrinsic factors impacting academic performance and language learning in suburban towns' university students". As per the participants' responses, the imperative role of motivation in English language learning is underscored, with (%20) agreeing and (%60) strongly agreeing. Dörnyei (2005), cited in Erdogan and Tunaz (2012), affirms that lacking motivation poses a formidable challenge for individuals to acquire new knowledge and master a new language. The impact of environmental factors, encompassing school and home surroundings, on students' motivation to learn English is revealed, as reflected by (%30) agreement and (%30) strong agreement. Kurnianingsi et al. (2019) assert that friends and family play pivotal roles in shaping students' motivation, emphasizing the influential role of parents as the primary motivators in English language learning.

Furthermore, the behaviour and attitude of teachers appear as crucial causes of students' willingness to learn English, gathering responses of (%23) agreement and (%57) strong agreement. Marroquin (2018) explains the significant influence of teachers' attitudes on students' motivation, achievement, and willingness to learn the language. The link between parental educational backgrounds and students' English language learning is discovered, as the participants responded with (%33) agreement and (%23) strong agreement. This supports the recent studies, such as Asgari (2010), cited in Zhou (2020), emphasizing the impact of parental education on children's learning outcomes.

Addressing the influence of classmates, participants reveal their concerns about selfish classmates who hamper English learning by refusing to share knowledge, resulting in (%17) agreement and

(%40) strong agreement. WebMD Editorial Contributors (2022) highlight the detrimental impact of such friendships, underscoring the need for positive and supportive social circles. Age-related considerations in English language learning are examined, with (%30) agreement and (%23) strong agreement. Ellis (1986), cited in Pertiwi (2015), delineates distinctions between younger and older students in language comprehension capacities.

In the interview discussions, the critical role of motivation from parents and teachers is emphasized, along with the participants asserting the need for self-motivation. Ahmad (2021) and Erdogan and Tunaz (2012) emphasize the pivotal role of motivation in achieving long-term goals, stressing that excellent abilities alone are insufficient without adequate motivation. Participants elaborate on the varying impact of classmates, identifying supportive and demotivating friends. Shyness's impact on English learning is dissected, revealing students' fear of making mistakes due to embarrassment. Rivera and Hernández (2014) and Marhamah (2016) underscore the role of self-confidence and the inevitability of making mistakes in the language-learning process.

5.4 The Main Findings

1. Suburban Educational Environment Challenges: Unlike urban settings, students in suburban areas face significant barriers due to crowded classrooms and noisy environments, which impede effective English language acquisition. Fear of judgment when speaking English is also more pronounced in suburban settings.
2. Impact of Previous Educational Systems: In suburban areas, the overemphasis on grammar in previous education systems restricts students' ability to think critically and develop strong writing skills, a challenge that may differ from urban students who might experience more balanced curricula.
3. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation Factors: Motivation, particularly from teachers and parents, plays a crucial role in suburban students' English proficiency. Environmental factors, such as home surroundings and peer influences, appear to have a more pronounced impact in suburban areas compared to urban contexts, where resources and support systems may differ.
4. Shyness and Age-Related Learning Differences: Suburban students exhibit higher levels of shyness and fear of making mistakes, which can hinder their language learning. Additionally, age-related differences in language comprehension are more evident in suburban settings, suggesting that older students may struggle more with language acquisition than their urban counterparts.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the key role that conducive learning environments play in developing student growth and potential. On the contrary, poor conditions, such as noisy classrooms and overcrowded settings, present significant barriers to effective learning. A key finding of this research is the communication challenges faced by students, particularly their hesitancy to speak English due to fears of ridicule or mistreatment. The influence of the curriculum was a central theme, with participants pointing out the crucial role of teacher training, knowledge, and qualities in shaping the learning experience.

The study identifies several major challenges, including facility issues, educational methods, and factors contributing to student demotivation. For instance, when teachers revert to speaking Kurdish in high school English classes, students struggle due to their low socioeconomic status and limited exposure to the target language. Furthermore, the overemphasis on grammar instruction in high school impedes students' ability to think in English, leading participants to promote a shift toward a more communication-focused pedagogy. Interestingly, the proposition for same-gender learning environments did not resonate with the majority of participants, indicating that such an approach may not be as beneficial as expected.

From the findings, it is clear that encouragement from both teachers and parents plays a significant role in improving students' struggles with English learning. Students who received positive reinforcement were more likely to overcome obstacles and develop greater confidence in their language abilities.

Based on these insights, several practical recommendations can be made. Teachers should prioritize the active use of English in the classroom and integrate listening exercises with native speakers to enhance language comprehension. Providing opportunities for language practice through structured tasks and exercises is essential, particularly for improving reading and writing skills. Furthermore, grammar should be taught with an emphasis on practical application rather than rote memorization.

While the study provides valuable insights, it also encountered certain limitations. Time constraints arose due to the integration of three additional disciplines at the outset, delaying the completion of the research. The choice of a single university as the research site presented challenges, particularly concerning questionnaire and interview scheduling, which had to be extended due to students' holidays. Additionally, the interview process was complicated by varying levels of English proficiency among participants, which affected the depth of responses.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of a well-rounded, communication-focused approach to English language teaching and the role of encouragement from both teachers and parents in fostering a more effective learning environment. Future research should explore the impact of different teaching methods and the role of social factors in language acquisition to further inform pedagogical strategies.

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ليكولينه وه له ئاستهنگه كاني فيربووني زماني ئينگليزي له لاي خوڤندكاراني زانكو له ژينگه ي شاروچكه ي دهره وه ي شار

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پوخته

سه ره پاي 12 سال خوڤندي ئينگليزي، ئه و خوڤندكاره كوردانه ي كه له زانكوكاني ههریمی كوردستاندا ده خوڤنن به تايبه تي ئه وانه ي له شاروچكه كاني دهره وه ي شار ده ژين، رووبه رووي ئاستهنگي به رده وام ده بنه وه له شاره زابوون له زماني بيانيدا، ئه مهش ريگري له خواسته ئه كاديبييه كانيان دهكات. ئه م توڤينه وه يه سه رنج دهخاته سه ر ئه و خوڤندكارانه بووه كه له چه مچه مال و ناوچه كاني دهره وه ي ده ژين و ئاستهنگه سه ره كيبه كاني وهك يسه مي قوتابخانه كان، ژينگه ي په روه رده ي پيشوو، و هوكاره كاني بي پالنه ركه كان چ له دايك و باوكيانه وه يان كومه لگاوه ده ستنيشان دهكات. ئه و زانياريانه ي له ريگه ي چاوپيكه وتن و پرسيارنامه كانه وه كوكراونه ته وه كه 30 خوڤندكار به شداربوون، ئاشكراي ده كه ن كه شه رمني به شيويه يكي به رچاو ريگري له فيربووني زمان دهكات، رهفتاري ماموستاي قوتابخانه كاريگه ري له سه ر ده رته نجامه كان هه يه، كه مي هه ماسه تي خوڤندكاران ريگري له فيربوون دهكات. توڤينه وه كه ئيديعاكان سه باره ت به كاريگه رييه كاني دايناميكي ده سه لات و ده ستره گه يشتن به كتبخانه كان پووچهل ده كاته وه، تيرواينه كان بو تهحه ددياته كان و پيشنياركردي چاره سه ره كان بو به رزكرديه ي فيربووني زماني ئينگليزي له نيو خوڤندكاراني شاروچكه كاني دهره وه ي شار و هوشياركرديه ي خيزانه كاني خوڤندكاران سه باره ت به پرسه كاني فيربووني زماني ئينگليزي وهك زمانكي بياني منداله كانيان.

وشه سه ره كيبه كان: فيربووني زماني ئينگليزي؛ ريخسته كاني شاروچكه ي دهره وه ي شار؛ ئاله نكارييه كاني فيربوون؛ شه رمني و زمان وه رگرتن؛ سيسته مي قوتابخانه كان؛ به رزكرديه ي فيربوون و په روه رده.

دراسة تحديات تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب الجامعة في بيئة الضواحي

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ملخص

على الرغم من 12 عاما من دراسة اللغة الإنجليزية، لا يزال الطلاب الأكراد الذين يدرسون في جامعات إقليم كردستان، وخاصة أولئك الذين يعيشون في مدن الضواحي، يواجهون صعوبات في إتقان اللغات الأجنبية، مما يعيق تعلمهم الأكاديمية. ركزت هذه الدراسة على الطلاب الذين يعيشون في جمجمال والمناطق المحيطة بها وحددت العقبات الرئيسية مثل النظام المدرسي، والبيئة التعليمية السابقة، ونقص التحفيز من أولياء أمورهم أو المجتمع. تكشف البيانات التي تم جمعها من خلال المقابلات والاستبيانات التي شملت 30 طالبا أن الخجل يعيق بشكل كبير تعلم اللغة، وأن سلوك معلم المدرسة يؤثر على النتائج، كما أن افتقار الطلاب إلى الحماس يعيق التعلم. تكشف الدراسة زيف الادعاءات حول تأثيرات ديناميكيات السلطة والوصول إلى المكتبات، ورؤى ثاقبة للتحديات وتقدم حولا لتعزيز تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بين طلاب الضواحي وزيادة الوعي بين أسر الطلاب حول قضايا تعلم أطفالهم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؛ ترتيبات الضواحي؛ تحديات التعلم؛ الخجل وجدل اللسان. الأنظمة المدرسية؛ تعزيز التعلم والتعليم.