

## **Socio-Demographic and Psychological Predictors of Second Language Achievement: A Systematic Review**

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### **Abstract**

There is a considerable amount of research investigating the impact of variables such as age, gender, and cognitive ability on second language acquisition. In second language acquisition, besides such individual variables, equal importance should be given to the social demographic variables. Therefore, it is crucial to direct this focus towards socio-demographic and psychological factors because, after the critical period, the difficulties faced by the students due to such variables are profound (Krashen, 1981). Even though research frameworks encompassing previous literature exist, a recent theoretical framework to study the socio-demographic variables and SLA relationship in higher education is still missing. This systematic literature review was undertaken to propose a theoretical model comprising socio-demographic and psychological factors and their impact on SLA. Four electronic databases—ERIC, ProQuest, SAGE Journals, and Science Direct, were used to locate relevant articles to the topic. Thereafter, a thematic analysis of the literature from 2014 to 2021 was performed. Out of 1021 studies, 45 research papers were systematically analyzed. The study offers recommendations for English language teaching and learning, which include focusing on individuals, their social and cultural background as well as their state of mind.

**Keywords:** language, literature review, psychological, socio-demographic, systematic review, theoretical model, culture

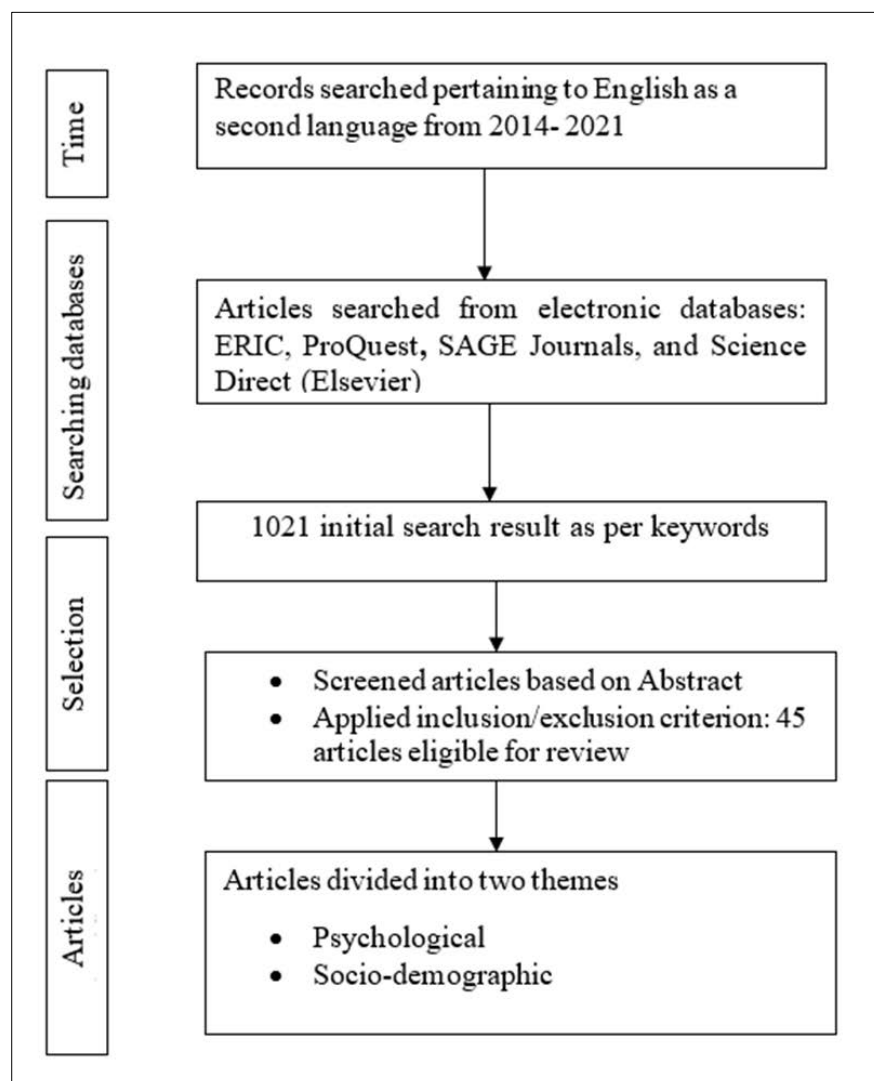
## **Socio-Demographic and Psychological Factors of Second Language Acquisition**

English as a second language is an area of interest for researchers and academicians. Ellis (1997) defined second language (L2) acquisition as the way of learning a language apart from students' mother tongue, inside or outside the classroom. In second language learning, knowing its grammatical and semantic rules is not sufficient to determine the success of L2 learning. Learners must know how to use the language in different social and cultural contexts (Kang 2002). Gardner's Socio-Educational Model (1985) asserts that second language acquisition takes place in a social and cultural context. It proposes that the cultural beliefs and the community that the individual are in, may influence language proficiency. Krashen (1985) proposed the affective filter hypothesis, which demonstrates that the learner's motivation, attitude, anxiety, and self-esteem are the major affective factors that influence SLA. Thereafter, several researchers have studied social and psychological variables, including socio-economic status, motivation, attitude, and anxiety and their impact on SLA. They have also explored factors such as age, personality, cognitive abilities, which influence language learning (Chen et al. 2020; Ellis 2019; Rajkumar, 2019). Few works of literature focus on aspects such as inter-language, bilingualism (Armon-lotem & Rose, 2020, Kan & Murphy, 2020, Murphy, 2020,) multilingualism (Early, M., & Kendrick, M., 2020; Tang, 2018; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2014), which may affect second language acquisition. Researchers have found that these variables play an important role in teaching and learning English apart from the school and the aspects related to classroom teachings, such as classroom interaction and management. Therefore, the current study attempts to survey the literature through thematic analysis to explore second language acquisition factors. It also proposes a theoretical model addressing factors affecting second language acquisition. Based on more than one thousand paper search results, two factors: socio-demographic and psychological with their sub-factors, have been identified. The factors mentioned above are more significant than the linguistic factors in accounting for students' difficulties with the English language. Moreover, these socio-demographic and psychological factors helped investigate how contextual and learner factors affect the second language acquisition process. Previous educational research investigated these socio-demographic and psychological variables. However, most of the studies were conducted at the elementary education level addressing the challenges of English language learning of school students. As the critical period passes, it becomes difficult to acquire a second language. Lenneberg (1967) hypothesized that language could be acquired only within a critical period, extending from early infancy until puberty. Achieving a very high proficiency in the second language is often tricky for post-pubertal learners. Therefore, this study was conducted in higher education, focusing on students' hardships due to their social and economic background and state of mind.

## **Methodology**

This study is based on a systematic literature review on second language acquisition that explores second language acquisition factors. Influenced by Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2018) and Barun and Clarke (2006), the researcher used the thematic analysis method to identify, screen, and report themes based on the data. Even though thematic analysis is used for grounded theory development, it is applicable in this study, as the authors sought to explore the themes on second language acquisition from published literature. The literature on second language acquisition was analyzed and categorized into different themes. For this review, the second language refers to English. Attention was given to articles related to graduating and post-graduate students. Following Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2018), the review methods comprise four

steps and discuss time frame, database selection, article selection, and article classification (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. The Literature Search Process for a Systematic Review of Factors Affecting the Second Language Acquisition Process**

### **The Time Frame for the Selection of Papers**

Thematic analysis of the literature on second language acquisition from 2014 to 2021 was performed to study the socio-demographic, psychological, and cultural aspects of SLA.

### **Selection of Databases**

The researchers used several online databases to explore the studies on second language acquisition. The study was carried out in the English language, and the studies were chosen from the following databases: ERIC, ProQuest, SAGE Journals, and Science Direct (Elsevier).

### **Searching and Selecting Articles**

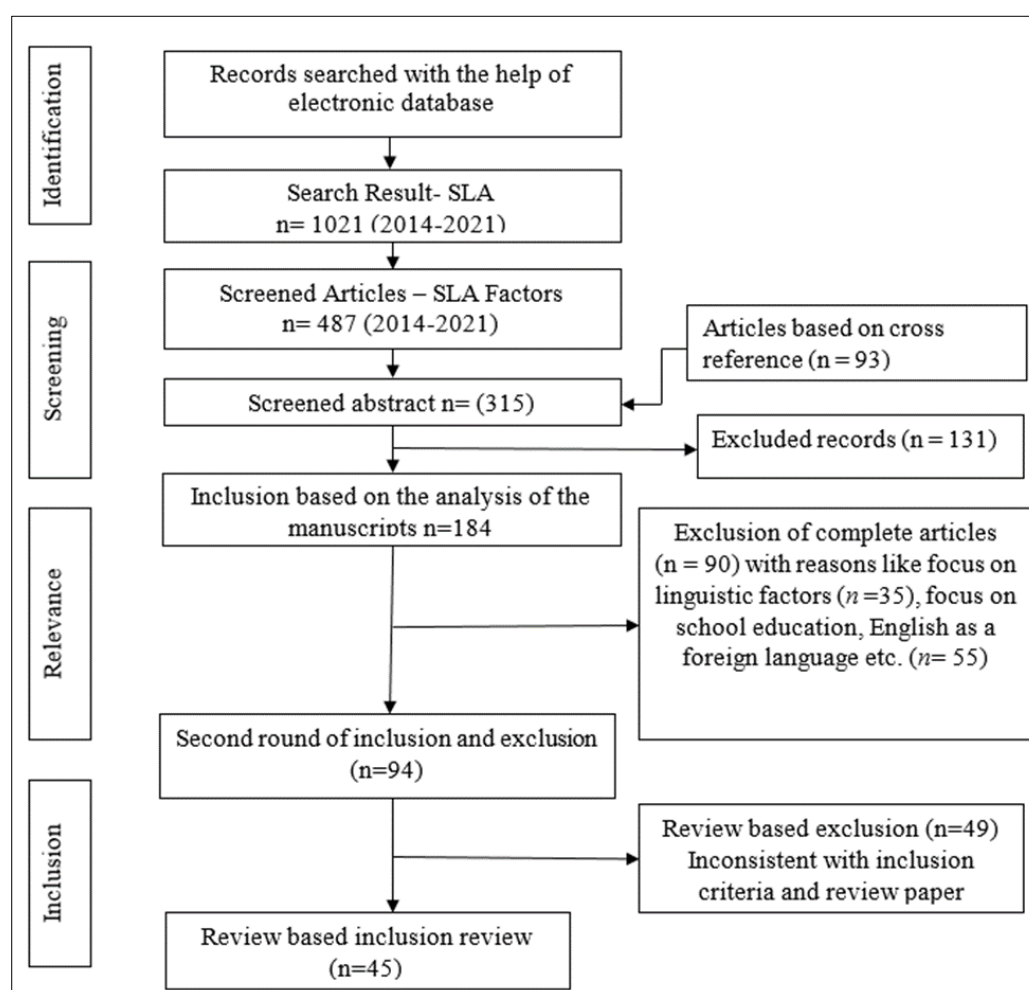
The literature search process was explained with the help of a diagram (Figure 1). Initially, 1021 outputs were received from the electronic database. After reading the abstract of the papers, 487 articles were found related to the themes of the current paper. The inclusion criteria for selecting the studies for this analysis were: (a) the study was empirical research; (b) the investigation has explicitly addressed issues of second language learning or second language

acquisition. The review focused only on English as a Second Language; therefore, articles that address the use of other foreign languages were excluded.

Articles that were unrelated to the study's themes and did not provide a thorough understanding of the identified themes were excluded from the study. Out of 487 articles, some articles were not fully available. Therefore, the abstracts and objectives of 315 articles were thoroughly studied. Finally, 184 manuscripts were found eligible for further study. After thoroughly reviewing these manuscripts, 45 were found suitable as the remaining focused on linguistic factors, English in school education, and English as a foreign language.

Several keywords were identified to get the best search results based on existing research on second language acquisition, such as "second language acquisition," "second language learning," "English as a second language," "factors affecting second language acquisition," "factors influencing second language acquisition," "second language acquisition factors," "factors influencing second language acquisition of undergraduates," "factors influencing while learning the second language." Subsequently, studies that focused on factors influencing second language acquisition were considered for the final review. The review focused only on English as a Second Language; therefore, any article that addressed the use of English as a Foreign Language was excluded as they are beyond the scope of the study.

### Article classifications



**Figure 2. Article Searching Process**

A bibliographical list was developed to structure the selected database of 45 journal publications, a file was created in an excel spreadsheet, and the results were analyzed to draw inferences. Subsequently, the articles were classified into two focus areas that were dominant in the extant literature.

## Findings

A thematic analysis was then undertaken on the 45 articles. This systematic literature review aimed to identify factors influencing second language acquisition. Thus, all 45 articles were reread to explore the factors influencing second language acquisition. To perform thematic analysis, we used a three-stage coding style. At the first stage of open coding, articles were categorized according to the factors used in the study i.e., socio-demographic and psychological factors. We found common sub-factors to link the relationship between themes using axial coding as the next phase. At this phase, we created fundamental categories of articles in sub-factors. The final stage of selective coding used items of each sub-factors. The review summary is presented in Table 1. The criteria for bifurcation were the author(s) name, key findings, and affecting factors. Using thematic analysis steps, we identified the two broad themes to represent available literature: Socio-demographic factors and psychological factors. In psychological factors, the authors discussed nineteen studies, whereas, in socio-demographic factors, twenty-six studies were discussed. Socio-demographic variables include age, sex, education, ethnicity, religious affiliation, marital status, household, employment, and income. In this study, authors studied socio-economic and cultural aspects in socio-demographic variables as discussed in the proposed model. The following section discusses each factor in detail.

**Table 1. Summary of Literature Findings**

Author	Key Findings	Affecting Factors
Aamna Khalid (2016)	Preference is given to the English language for Instrumental purposes.	Instrumental and integrative motivations
Adwani & Shrivastava (2017)	Motivation is a significant contributor to language achievement in terms of linguistic outcomes.	Motivation and linguistic outcome
Ali et al. (2015)	To achieve competence in intercultural communication, cultural awareness should be integrated into a language teaching programme.	Cultural awareness for intercultural communication
Ariani & Ghafournia (2016)	There is a positive relationship between the students' economic status and general language learning outcomes.	Socio-economic status (SES) and language learning
Babikkoi & Razak (2014)	The choice of cognitive, metacognitive, social, situational, and religious strategies of language learning is influenced by the socio-economic statuses of parents of the learner.	Language learning strategies and socio-economic status
Brito (2017)	There is a correlation between socio-economic status and language development across different ethnic and language-exposure groups.	SES and language development
Butler & Le (2017)	Parenting styles (autonomous style rather than controlled style), parental beliefs, and expectations were positively associated with students' English performance.	Parenting styles and SLA
Chen and Padilla (2019)	Emotional, social, psychological, and linguistic factors are crucial in second language acquisition.	Social, psychological, and linguistic factors

Author	Key Findings	Affecting Factors
Cha & Goldenberg (2015)	Bilingual home language environments with high levels of English use are associated with subtractive bilingualism.	Parents' level of education and English proficiency
Collins et al. 2017	Home language use and literacy practices affected the English proficiency of the learners.	Parents' level of education and English proficiency
Constantin et al. (2015)	In the business world, problems may occur due to inadequate cultural knowledge.	Inadequate cultural knowledge and business world
Dash & Das (2019)	Single-mode of instruction creates anxiety. Exploring more than one language in teaching can reduce speaking anxiety in the classroom.	Monolingualism and speaking anxiety
Davies et al. (2013)	Socio-economic contexts influence the students' confidence level, motivation, and engagement in learning.	Socio-economic context and engagement of the student in learning
Diaab S. (2016)	Overemphasis on accuracy at the expense of fluency by the teachers was one of the contributing factors of anxiety.	Speaking anxiety
Elachachi (2015)	Cultural differences create difficulties in linguistics and rhetorical matters, which reflect in the learners' written English.	Cultural differences and written English
Hu, X., & S. McGeown (2020)	Correlation between motivation and learning attitude.	Motivation and learning attitude
Huang et al. (2018)	The two variables SES and input were closely related, and the effect of SES was indirect and mediated by input.	Socio-economic status (SES), input, and SLA
Karami, A. (2019).	Importance of learner's motivation, attitudes, aptitudes, and self-efficacy in second language acquisition.	Motivation, learning attitude, aptitude, and self-efficacy
Karthiga (2019)	Speaking anxiety among tribal students occurs due to inference of the first language.	First language and speaking anxiety
Karthiga & Soundarya (2019)	Classroom instruction should be given to the minority children in their mother tongue at the beginning, and later on, the instructor can switch to their state language.	Importance of mother tongue for cultural awareness
Kim & Pae (2018)	Attitude can determine students' intention to learn English as a Second language.	Attitude and SLA
Kim. et al. (2014)	Dual language learners (DLLs) students come from diverse backgrounds, and poverty and other factors influence the speed of English language development for DLLs.	Parents' income and SLA
Merajia & Zamanian (2014)	The culturally adapted materials were more useful for learners and could improve the overall learning of EFL learners.	Efficiency of culturally adapted materials
Morales S. (2017)	Inaccessibility to the private schools due to poor economic state which consequently affects English language proficiency of the learners.	Parents' social class and SLA
Pastor & Mestre (2014)	Both Integrative and instrumental motivation play a crucial role in second language acquisition. However, integrative motivation is essential for long-term success.	Instrumental and integrative motivations

Author	Key Findings	Affecting Factors
Phon (2017)	Students' motivation and learning attitude strongly correlated with their English proficiency level.	Motivation and learning attitude
Pormouzeha & Azara (2015)	Monolinguals and high-class students have better English Language Proficiency than bilingual and high school students.	Parents' language of communication
Prasangani (2014)	There is a close link between the social requirements of learning English and a learner's English learning self-concept.	Social goals and SLA
Rajitha K & C. Alamelu (2020)	The primary anxiety factors are language factor, lack of knowledge of grammar, pronunciation factor, stage fear, lack of confidence, shyness, and peer factor.	Speaking anxiety
Scarino (2017)	The traditional assessment paradigm, which emphasizes linguistic knowledge, may create problems in acquiring communicative competence as it ignores cultural knowledge.	Cultural awareness in EFL classrooms
Seo Y. (2021)	Parental cultural capital such as language proficiency available learning resources at home renders positive results.	Parental cultural capital and SLA
Serquina & Batang (2018)	Household aggregate income has a significant relationship to students' English proficiency.	Parents' income and SLA
Song (2018)	English speakers with better economic backgrounds have good English proficiency due to their overseas exposure.	Parents' social class and SLA
Tekşan, et al. (2019)	There was a negative relationship between the students' speech anxiety and speaking skill attitudes.	Speech anxiety and speaking skill attitude
Teimouri et al. (2019)	Emphasized the negative role of L2 anxiety in L2 learning and the moderating effects of several (non)linguistic variables.	Speaking anxiety and SLA
Vijaya B. (2020)	Dialect assumes a vital role in molding our world. Sometimes create cultural barriers.	Dialect and language learning
Yaure (2016)	Dialectal differences in L1 Spanish impact the L2 English pronunciation of speakers.	Dialect and language learning
Yavuz & Hole (2017)	A significant difference was observed in the language performance of the participants with low socio-economic status and the participants with good or average socio-economic status.	Social class and language performance
Yeganeha & Raeesi (2015)	Comparing aspects of the students' own culture with those of the target culture is regarded as the most standard way of developing cultural awareness in EFL classrooms.	Cultural awareness in EFL classrooms
Yang Z. (2014)	Importance of cultural background knowledge in cross-culture communication and language teaching.	Cultural awareness for cross-culture communication
Zhang, D., & Wang (2020)	Highlighted the significance of positive psychology in learning a second language.	Positive psychology

## Proposed Theoretical Model

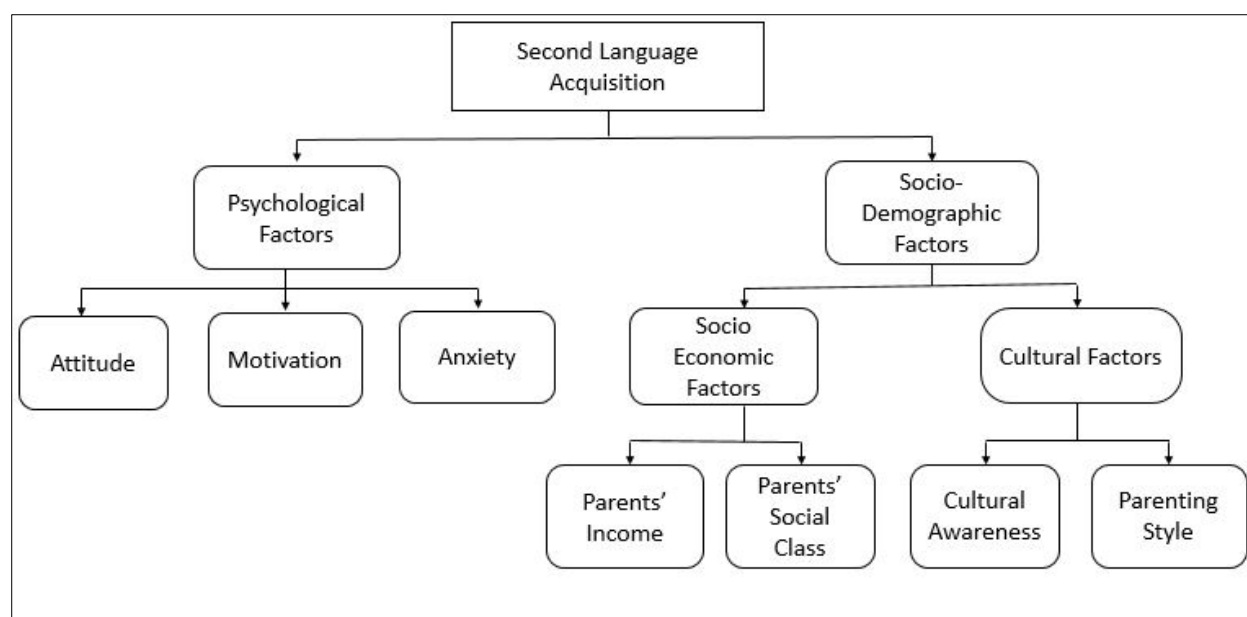
The above-identified factors can be used to develop a model of learning English as a Second Language. As per thematic analysis, we described the relevant codes to each theme and sub-themes in Table 2. The two significant factors identified in this study are socio-demographic and psychological factors. In socio-demographic factors, authors studied socio-economic and cultural aspects as discussed in the proposed model.

**Table 2. Themes, Underlying Codes, and Sample References**

Factors	Sub-factors	Underlying Code	Sample References
Psychological	Motivation	Integrative and instrumental motivation, positive psychology, language learning goals	Busse (2009); Henter (2014); Hong and Ganapathy (2017); Khalid, (2016); Kim and Pae (2018); Pastor and Mestre, (2014); Phon, (2017); Saqlain and Islam (2014); Wang and Wu (2020); Zhang et al. (2020)
	Attitude	Attitude to English learning, intention to learn English, English learning self-concept	Hu and McGeown, (2020); Prasangani (2014)
	Anxiety	Speech anxiety, different language backgrounds, single-mode of instruction, interference of the first language, the difference between two languages, stage fear, low confidence, inhibition	Dash and Das (2019); Rajitha and Alamelu (2020); Karthiga and Soundarya (2019); Madonsela, (2015); Milan, 2019; Tekşan et al. (2019); Tulgar, 2018
Socio-Economic	Parents' income and occupation	Parents' income and occupation, Household income and ESL, socio-economic status influencing ESL	Kim, Curby, and Winsler, (2014); Serquina and Batang, (2018)
	Parents' social class	Family background and ESL, upper-middle and high social class, and ESL	Ariani and Ghafournia, (2016); Babikkoi and Razak, (2014); Brito (2017); Huang et al. (2017); Kormos and Kiddle (2013); Morales (2017); Song (2018)
Cultural	Culture awareness	Awareness about culture, culture-general learning, culture-specific learning, awareness about socio-cultural values, norms, and beliefs of a society	Damar (2013); Paige et al (2003)
	Parenting styles	Guiding learners for learning English, parental ideology, and ESL	Deo Y. (2021); Butler (2014); Butler and Le (2017)

Research on second language acquisition lacks sufficient studies on developing a comprehensive theoretical framework addressing the role of socio-demographic and psychological factors in English language learning. The authors of this study propose to use the model shown in Figure 3 to study factors influencing English as a Second Language in the future. These two factors have been further sub-divided in the proposed theoretical model.





**Figure 3. Proposed Theoretical Model**

### **Theme 1: Psychological Factors**

Researchers (Liu & Thompson, 2018; Nofaie, 2018; Liu X et al., 2018; Natividad & Batang, 2018; Thompson & Erdil-moody, 2014) agreed that different psychological factors such as motivation, anxiety, aptitude play a vital role in the learner's learning the target language. Karami (2019), in his systematic literature review study, highlighted the importance of learners' motivation, attitudes, aptitudes, and self-efficacy while discussing the influential factors of second language acquisition. Motivation brings positivity among the learners and creates an urge to learn the target language enthusiastically. According to Cote and Waugh (2004), Gardner and Lambert first-time highlighted the significance of motivation in second language learning in 1959; after that, several studies were conducted to explore the relationship between motivation and second language achievement. The researchers also explored some other psychological factors such as enjoyment and love. Pavelescu and Petrić (2018) argued that love served as the fuel for the learning process, as it generates learners' interest in learning and makes the learning experience more enjoyable. In a recent study on bilingual US college students, Chen et al. (2019) found four important components (emotional, social, psychological, and linguistic) crucial in second language acquisition. Other researchers (Henter 2014; Asif et al. 2018) found that there are several factors such as cognitive factors (language aptitude, learning strategies), affective factors (attitudes, motivation, anxiety), and metacognitive factors which influence the learning process. Out of these, affective factors are explored extensively by the researchers. The psychological factors identified in this study have three variables, namely attitude, motivation, and anxiety. Extensive literature has been studied to analyze the impact of each variable on second language acquisition.

**English language learning motivation.** Pit Corder (1967) argued that given motivation, a human being will learn the second language inevitably if he or she is exposed to the language data. This statement was given five decades ago; thereafter, several studies have been conducted to study motivation and its impact on second language learning. Adwani & Shrivastava (2017), while discussing the factors influencing second language acquisition in their review study, mentioned that motivation is a significant contributor to language achievement in terms of linguistic outcomes. Henter (2014) analyzed how affective factors (motivation and anxiety) influence the English proficiency of learners across the discipline. It has been observed that students of English have a specific purpose of using it, i.e., getting a job

promotion or getting into a university. Therefore, they are more motivated, have a favorable attitude, and exhibit less anxiety about learning English than students of other disciplines. Other researchers in second language learning have also explored the role of integrative and instrumental motivation. As Brown (1994) defined, integrative motivation is where learners desire to integrate into the target language community culture and become part of that society. Gardner et al. (1983) defined instrumental motivation as learning for perceived utility. Such learners learn another language with the purpose of some pragmatic gains. It has been found that while both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation are essential elements of success, however, students are more instrumentally motivated than integratively motivated in ESL learning (Hong & Ganapathy, 2017; Pastor & Mestre, 2014; Saqlain & Islam, 2014). For instrumental purposes, Pakistani students who are additive bilinguals have also shown their inclination towards a policy that promotes English as a medium of instruction (Khalid, 2016). It has also been observed that the participants' motivation and language proficiency are mediated by foreign language enjoyment. Researchers found how motivation positively influences second language proficiency and thus highlighted the significance of positive psychology in learning a second language (Zhang et al., 2020).

***English language learning attitude.*** Students' motivation and learning attitude strongly correlated with students' English language proficiency level compared to other variables (Phon, 2017; Hu & McGeown, 2020). Kim and Pae (2018) examined whether learners' attitude can determine their intention to learn English. Much variation has been found among learners in their intention to study English based on their attitude. Wang & Wu (2020) found that affective factors influence different groups differently, and the study provides a reference for the teaching design of SLA for different groups of learners. There is a close link between the social requirements of learning English and learner English learning self-concept. Prasangani (2014) discussed students' English language learning motivation by considering their language learning goals. The results indicated a strong correlation between social goals and learners' ideal second language (L2) self. Thus, we may conclude that motivation factors are critical for second language acquisition. Students' attitudes and motivation have a strong correlation, and instrumental motivation and positive attitude are essential to learning a second language.

***English language speaking anxiety.*** The second affective factor which was explored extensively by the researchers is anxiety. English language speaking anxiety poses challenges in the entire teaching-learning process. Several internal and external factors impact speaking anxiety. K Rajitha and Alamelu (2020) found that the primary anxiety factors are language factors, lack of knowledge of grammar, stage fear, low confidence, inhibition, and peer pressure. Researchers (Tekşan et al., 2019) have also found a significant negative relationship between the students' speech anxiety and speaking skill attitudes. Moreover, the adverse effects of anxiety vary concerning the context, educational levels of students, and the target language. While counting the reasons for speaking anxiety, Tulgar (2018) found that insufficient exposure to the target language and frequent use of the first language, inside and outside the classroom, were the main factors of speaking anxiety. Teaching in a multilingual classroom has always been a challenge for the instructors in the ESL classroom. In multilingual countries such as South Africa, India, Switzerland, and Canada, classrooms usually comprise learners from different language backgrounds, and learners who are learning English as a second language may experience anxiety. A single mode of instruction cannot satisfy the need of the learners. Researchers (Madonsela, 2015; Dash & Das 2019) found that exploring more than one language in teaching can promote learning and enhance learner autonomy in the classroom. Speaking anxiety among tribal students also occurs due to inference of the first language (Karthiga & Soundarya, 2019, Milan, 2019). Differences between two languages lead to interference and ultimately arouse speaking anxiety. Thus, we summarize that multilingualism,

insufficient exposure to the target language, frequent use of the first language, stage fear, low confidence, and inhibition are factors that aroused anxiety while speaking English.

## **Theme 2: Socio-Demographic Factors**

In socio-demographic factors, authors studied socio-economic and cultural aspects as discussed in the proposed model.

### **Socio-Economic Factors**

In second language acquisition, social context plays paramount importance (Vygotsky, 1978). Researchers (Salameh & Sathakathulla 2018; Yavuz & Hol, 2017; Kormos & Kiddle, 2013; Von et al. 2019; Zhang et al., 2019) credited the success and failure of the ESL learners to their socio-economic status. In their systematic review, Davies et al. (2013) examined the educational development of adults, taking into account cultural and socio-economic contexts. It was found that learning context increased the students' confidence, motivation, and engagement in learning. Socio-economic factors have several variables: students' home environment and parents' income and occupation, and parents' social class. Extensive literature was studied to analyze the impact of each variable on second language acquisition.

***Parents' income and occupation.*** Language development among young, low-income, language-minority children is comparatively less explored. Kim et al. (2014) studied English language development among the low-income and dual language learners (DLLs). Researchers need to understand that DLL students come from diverse backgrounds and that poverty and other factors such as low-income, language-minority children influence the speed of English language development for DLLs. Household income has a significant impact on students' English proficiency. Due to low-income backgrounds, students cannot fully concentrate on their studies as their basic needs are not fulfilled, leading to anxiety. (Serquina & Batang, 2018). Song (2018) explored the role of English in learners' academic fields and how family background affects ESL in economically privileged families. It has been found that English speakers with better economic backgrounds have good proficiency in English due to the exposure they gained abroad.

***Parents' social class.*** Learners' social class also affects their English proficiency. Due to poor economic status, parents cannot send their children to private schools, and in public schools, proper attention is not given to them, consequently affecting their English proficiency (Morales, 2017). The two variables SES and input were closely related, influencing language learning outcomes (Huang et al., 2017). The input here refers to the learners' language while listening or reading. The language learning outcomes are also affected by the socio-economic status of the learners. It was observed that upper-class students were more excited to study English than lower-class students. The performance of lower-middle-class students was not good, and also, the performance of the lower class was the worst (Ariani & Ghafournia, 2016). There is also some association between English language learning motivation and different social classes. Kormos and Kiddle (2013) found that self-efficacy belief, which reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's motivation, is related to the different socio-economic status of the learners. The upper-class students are motivated and demonstrated better English language proficiency than the lower-class students. Language learning strategies are also affected by the socio-economic status of the learners. The difference was observed in the choice of cognitive strategies as less affluent families are less likely to have the financial and or time availability to provide their children with academic support compared to affluent families. However, no difference was observed in the choice of metacognitive, affective, social, situational, and religious language learning strategies and parents' SES (Babikkoi & Razak, 2014). The relationship between SES and language learning is robust, and this association

persists across diverse nationalities, races, cultures, and heritage languages (Brito, 2017). It is pretty evident that parents' social class has a considerable impact on the English Language proficiency of the learners. Researchers have extensively explored this area and identified how various variables such as parents' income and occupation, parents' social class influence second language acquisition of the learners.

### **Cultural Factors**

Another element that affects the second language acquisition of the learners is culture. Culture can be defined as a learned system of values, beliefs, and norms (Greey, 1994). Broad definitions of culture include ethnic background, nationality, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, and religion. Many people think that learning has to do with processes within learners. However, the culture in which a person learns influences learning in several ways. What and how a person learns is primarily influenced by the culture in which the learning occurs and the social interaction processes in which the learner engages (Munro, 1999). Cultural knowledge is crucial in achieving linguistic proficiency, and the culture of a society can be changed depending upon the language used (Kuo & Lai 1961). Researchers are exploring this area extensively, viewing the growing relevance of culture in second language acquisition. Prevailing customs, norms, and values inherited through a social system and parenting style are the prominent variables of culture.

**Cultural Awareness.** Cultural awareness means understanding cultural differences and being aware of different cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions. Paige et al. (2003) envisioned a model to incorporate language and culture teaching. They categorized culture teaching into two categories: culture general learning and culture-specific learning. Culture-general learning means learning about universal, cross-cultural phenomena such as cultural adjustment. On the other hand, culture-specific learning involves acquiring knowledge, behavioral skills, and attitude related to a given target speech society. Culture-specific learning is further divided into big "c" and small "c" domains. The big "c" domain includes awareness about the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals, food habits, and customs of a target speech society. The small "c" domain, on the other hand, refers to the invisible and more profound sense of a target culture. It includes socio-cultural values, norms, and beliefs of a society. In this direction, Damar (2013) examined Turkish teachers' and learners' perspectives on the teaching of "culture" in ELT classrooms. The majority of the participants were aware of only the big "c" domain. They exhibited less understanding regarding the small "c" domain.

Cultural awareness is required to survive and thrive in this globalized world. Universities have to prepare students to meet the requirements of the new working environment (Constantin et al., 2015). Comparing aspects of the students' own culture with the target culture is regarded as the most standard way of developing cultural awareness in ESL classrooms (Yeganeha, & Raeesi, 2015). To acquire communicative competence, a learner must also have adequate knowledge of the target culture. The traditional assessment paradigm, which emphasizes linguistic knowledge, may create problems in acquiring communicative competence as it ignores cultural knowledge (Saliacrino, 2017). Therefore, the cultural component should be integrated into language teaching programs to acquire competence in intercultural communication (Ali et al., 2015). Researchers have also realized the importance of cultural background knowledge in cross-culture communication and language teaching. Teachers should emphasize cultural education and integrate it into language teaching programs to cultivate learners' competence in cross-culture communication (Yang, 2014; Kuo & Lai, 1961).

**Parenting styles.** Parenting style is closely associated with second language achievement. Seo, Y. (2021) examined how parental ideology affects bilingual parenting at home. It has been found that parental cultural capital such as language proficiency, available learning resources, and social networks for supporting English language usage at home renders positive results. Butler and Le (2017) found that SES, parenting styles (autonomous versus-controlled style), and parental beliefs and expectations were positively associated with students' English performance. Parents' guidance to learners for learning English and the parents' educational background affect the learners' language proficiency (Butler, 2014). Thus we summarize that cultural awareness and parenting style influence the linguistic proficiency of the learners to a certain extent.

## Conclusion

Establishing a successful second language learning process is challenging as there are various external and internal aspects in the societies where it is brought in. This systematic literature review used thematic analysis to provide a comprehensive picture of global literature and suggested a theoretical model which should be considered for designing second language acquisition strategies for students. This review article highlights different psychological, socio-economic, and cultural factors affecting SLA. The abilities of language learners are necessarily tied to the learning situation and the abilities of the learner himself. Therefore, it is tough to allocate one element or factor to these generalized areas. The findings of this study are in line with Munro (1999), who discovered that learning is primarily influenced by the culture and social interaction in which the learner engages. The learning outcomes mainly depend on the quality of these interactions rather than the process solely within the learner. Therefore, besides some individual variables in second language learning, equal importance should be given to the social demographic variables to get accurate results. The knowledge of the identified factors with their sub-themes may help policymakers and classroom teachers accomplish the objectives of teaching and learning ESL in non-native English-speaking countries. In the future, quantitative research on two identified factors and their interrelationships in a multilingual context should be carried out. Similarly, future research using quantitative data on factors affecting second language learning in indigenous communities having varied social and cultural backgrounds should be carried out.

Based on the study results, some pedagogical recommendations for teachers of English could be derived. In a college environment, besides language competence, equal importance should be given to other factors, such as the mental and emotional well-being of the learners and cultural background. The instructors should create an anxiety-free environment conducive to ESL learning. Language and culture are woven together and cannot be separated. Therefore, cultural elements should be integrated into the language teaching program.

## Limitations and Further Research

Despite its contribution to second language acquisition research, the study is not free from limitations. The literature studied is limited to peer-reviewed research papers and articles. Secondly, despite applying the best possible ways by using related keywords for search, there might be a possibility of missing relevant studies if they are available in a language other than English. The authors have highlighted only those studies focusing on two identified factors, i.e., socio-demographic and psychological factors.

Future research can be conducted for a specific group of respondents, such as students who belong to indigenous communities. Such a study may help provide a specific solution for a specific group. A more meaningful and detailed study using primary data to test the

relationships between identified variables and testing the impact of each variable for a particular population group may be undertaken in the future. Future research can be carried out to determine the possible effect of sub-themes on each other and the combined effect on second language acquisition considering the proposed theoretical model.

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