

Understanding Lifelong Learning Tendencies and English Achievement among Postgraduate Students

SWATI TULSHAN¹ AND SUSMITA NEOGI*²

¹Ph.D. Scholar (Calcutta University) & Assistant Professor (J.D.Birla Institute)

²Professor, Calcutta University, Kolkata (W.B.) India

ABSTRACT

Lifelong Learning is emerging as a need of the hour. Education and knowledge does not stop at any age and with the current demand of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to any profession, there has been an increase in Lifelong learning among individuals. The current study seeks to establish the Lifelong learning dispositions of postgraduate students based on their second language acquisition. The second language considered for this study is the English language. The study was conducted upon 52 students, where various tools were administered and statistical analysis was done. The results indicated that individuals having English as their first language in school and the ones scoring higher on the English Language Achievement Test also fared relatively well on the Lifelong Inventory indicating towards the strong relationship between the knowledge of English Language and Lifelong Learning.

Key Words : Lifelong Learning, English Language Acquisition, Dispositions, Higher Learning, Education

INTRODUCTION

The commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners in late 1997, defined Lifelong Learning as a “a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals...to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes... and to apply them with confidence, creativity, and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments.” According to Werner *et al.* (2001) lifelong learning refers to the development of learnt skills through time as a result of interactions with the built environment, or culture, and includes both continuity (stability) and discontinuity (changing). Attempts have been made to identify the traits or dispositions of Lifelong learners. Among many other traits, the traits mainly exhibited by a Lifelong Learner are – setting effective goals, applying appropriate knowledge and skills, engaging in self-direction and self-evaluation, locating required information and adapting learning

strategies to different conditions.

Lifelong learning has become very important in the context of globalization and the growth of the fast-changing knowledge economy in which people require upgrading their skills throughout their adult lives to cope with modern life, both in their work and in their private lives. Castaneda (2017) found that for adult learners looking to enhance their working circumstances, lifelong learning has emerged as a crucial component. A hypercompetitive society’s socioeconomic imposition of such learning has replaced its previous status as a personal struggle. Some of the challenges faced by lifelong learners are their inability to adapt to new teaching methodologies and their inability to acquire linguistic skills. So researchers in this area try to find out the association of the phenomena of bilingualism and second language learning with the dispositions of lifelong learning. For instance, the study by Attila (2018) connects language acquisition and lifetime learning as part of a larger, intricate research project. According to Attila, measuring language learning

habits is one of the greatest ways to learn about self-education abilities and attitudes towards learning because of its extreme applicability and timeliness. The outcomes of this project indicate that there are variations in a few lifelong learning-related parameters. Zhang and Wei (2022) also opine that an individual's chances for work and personal development will increase if they can converse in a foreign language, which suggests the importance of taking a lifelong learning approach to language study. Further among the different demographic factors, college education is found to be correlated with the lifelong learning inclination.

The above discussion brings forth the importance of lifelong learning in the sectors of education and development. In India the subject of English is taught as a second language (L2) at undergraduate levels. Different studies indicate second language learning, especially English as a significant predictor of vocational success. So the present study seeks to elucidate the lifelong learning tendencies and dispositions among post graduate students who had English as a second language. The major research question is whether there is any association between their lifelong learning dispositions and English achievement.

Objectives:

- To find out if there is any difference in Lifelong learning factors according to medium of instruction in secondary school level.
- To find out if there is any difference in Lifelong learning factors according to primary language at college level.
- To find out if there is any effect of having English as medium of instruction at school on the different factors of Lifelong learning.
- To find out if there is any effect of English achievement of college students on the different factors of Lifelong learning.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The participants were final year post graduation students, who were selected irrespective of their discipline. The administration was both virtual and in-person, the locale of the sample was the state of West Bengal. 27 participants answered the tools in person, while the remaining 25 answered it virtually. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The total sample

size was 52. Amongst the participants, 44 were females while 08 were male students. The age of the participants ranged from 22-33.

Tool:

A standardized 5 - point Likert scale titled 'Characteristics of Lifelong Learner' by Copley and Knapper (2000) was administered virtually, via google forms on 52 participants. The tool consisted of 14 statements which assessed the respondents on the five domains of Lifelong Learning Namely Goal Setting, Application of Knowledge and skills, self-direction and Evaluation, locating Information and Adaptable Learning Strategies. The responses of 'Strongly disagree', 'Disagree', 'Uncertain', 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' were scored as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 respectively.

The second tool which was used was a standardized test named 'English Language Achievement Test' by Dr. Abha Pandey (now Retired professor – Department of English, Govt. Science College, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh). The test has 50 multiple choice questions divided into seven sections to understand the capabilities of the subjects in the English language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Table 1 elucidates that the difference in Lifelong Learning Factors between students having English as a medium of instruction in their secondary school vis-a vis students having their Mother Tongue is not stark. Both groups have a similar mean, however, the areas in which they excel are different from one another. The mother tongue learners have a slightly higher mean of 16 compared to the English learners with a score of 14.583 on the dimension of 'Goal Setting' indicating towards the fact that thinking in the mother tongue makes an individual more focused towards the future and the related aspirations. In the domain of 'Application of Knowledge and skills' the bilingual students scored higher, with a mean score of 10.05 compared to the mother tongue students who had a score of 8.5, bringing to light information that higher academics or work life entails individuals to exhibit their skills and knowledge in English and being bilingual (having known English simultaneously with the mother tongue) proves to be advantageous. In the third dimension of 'Self Direction and Evaluation' the mean scores of the bilingual learners (5.77) was higher than the mean scores of mother tongue learners (4.43), which is indicative of the fact that knowledge more than one

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of different factors of Lifelong learning according to Medium of instruction in Secondary school

Medium of Instruction		Total	Goal-Setting	Application of Knowledge and Skills	Self-Direction and Evaluation	Locating Information	Adaptable Learning Strategies
English	Mean	114.333	14.583	10.056	5.778	2.694	9.278
	N	36	36	36	36	36	36
	Std. Deviation	16.4855	2.3830	2.7974	1.8223	1.1166	2.0923
Mother Tongue	Mean	111.313	16.000	8.500	4.438	3.688	10.188
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16
	Std. Deviation	10.8978	2.2804	1.5492	1.0935	.7932	1.5586
Total	Mean	113.404	15.019	9.577	5.365	3.000	9.558
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52
	Std. Deviation	14.9473	2.4212	2.5694	1.7380	1.1202	1.9745

language, exposes an individual to more information and opportunities, giving them the scope of steering themselves and evaluating their actions to the current demands in the profession. Dimension four of the Lifelong Learning Inventory, namely ‘Locating Information’ saw the mother tongue learners scoring higher (3.68) compared to the bilingual learners, having a score of 2.69. Most mother tongue learners do learn English later on in their academic space, which requires them to expand their horizons and search for information, not previously encountered in order to match up to their contemporaries, explaining their better scores, compared to the other group. The final dimension of ‘Adaptable Learning Strategies’ showcased the mother tongue learners to have a slightly higher mean score of 10.19 in relation to the bilingual students’ mean score of 9.55. It becomes evident that as the mother tongue learners need to mould themselves often to learning various information, and this is reflects in their further Lifelong Learning Dispositions as well. The overall results show that Bilingual Learners have stronger Lifelong Learning Dispositions compared to the mother tongue

learners, however the individual domain scores reflect that the latter group may be more predisposed than the former.

The Table 2 reflects the Lifelong Learning tendencies of College students based on the language of instruction used in college. The mean scores of both the groups, namely the ones having the vernacular language as the medium of instruction and the ones having English as a medium of instruction had parity in their mean scores as well as individual dimension scores, with slight variations. The domain of ‘Goal Setting’ had a score of 15.5 and 14.65 for the bilingual and mother tongue learners respectively, providing a continuum to the scores obtained by the learners, based on the secondary school medium of instruction. The ‘Application of Knowledge and Skills’ with a score of 10.16 remains mostly consistent for the Bilingual learners, however the mother tongue learners show an improvement in this dimension, from their earlier score, with a current score of 9.67, throwing light on the fact that with time, mother tongue learners become better at applying their knowledge and showcasing their skills.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of different factors of Lifelong learning according to Primary language in college

Primary Language in college		Total	Goal-Setting	Application of Knowledge and Skills	Self-Direction and Evaluation	Locating Information	Adaptable Learning Strategies
English	Mean	114.167	15.500	10.167	5.167	3.000	10.000
	N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Std. Deviation	10.4770	2.7386	2.4014	1.4720	.8944	1.4142
Mother Tongue	Mean	113.275	14.650	9.675	5.550	2.900	9.300
	N	40	40	40	40	40	40
	Std. Deviation	16.0703	2.3044	2.7305	1.8529	1.1940	2.0280
Total	Mean	113.391	14.761	9.739	5.500	2.913	9.391
	N	46	46	46	46	46	46
	Std. Deviation	15.3659	2.3493	2.6703	1.7981	1.1513	1.9605

In the third dimension of ‘Self Direction and Evaluation’ both the bilingual and mother tongue learners have a competitive score of 5.16 and 5.50, respectively, however the mother tongue learners show a progression in this domain as well, as there is an upgrade from their previous mean score of 4.43. The fourth dimension of ‘Locating Information’ has a mirroring mean score of 3 and 2.9 of the Bilingual and Mother Tongue Learners, respectively, showcasing that both groups are almost equally competent at Finding out the information required for learning ahead. Moreover, both groups show better scores in this domain than when their scores based on the primary language in secondary school. The final domain of ‘Adaptable Learning Strategies’ sees a slight variation in the scores. While the Bilingual and Mother Tongue Learners have a score of 10 and 9.31 respectively, the scores also change from their scores when measured for primary language in secondary school. The bilingual learners show an improvement as their previous score was 9.2, however the mother tongue learners show a slight decrease as their previously obtained mean score was 10.18, showing that Adaptability might not always improve and is situation and person dependent. Overall the scores of the two groups are similar exposing the fact that Lifelong Learning dispositions may be showcased by all, and the Tendencies for Lifelong Learning improve over the years.

The one-way ANOVA was applied to understand if

learning English as a second language vis a vis first language in secondary school had an impact on the various dimensions of Lifelong Learning. It was seen that most of the dimensions were significantly affected. The dimension of Goal Setting had an F value of 4.01 at 0.05 degree of freedom, indicating that individuals goal setting dispositions are enhanced if they have known English as a first language in their secondary education. Further the second dimension of Application of Knowledge and Skills also showed the significant impact of learning English as a second language on the disposition towards the aforementioned domain. The F value of the same is 4.325 at 0.04 df. Those learners who had English as their first language in secondary school showed better Self Direction and Learning than those who did not and the same is reflected in the F value obtained, which was 7.416 at 0.009 df. In Locating Information too the knowledge of English as a primary language played an important factor, making individuals with the knowledge of English in their early years more pre disposed to being adept at Locating Information compared to individuals who have learnt English as a second language in the secondary level of education. Adaptable Learning Strategies is the only area where there was no significant distinction to be observed. This indicates that the medium of instruction/language usage at the secondary school level does not intensely impact the Disposition towards

Table 3: Summary of One-Way ANOVA including Medium of instruction in Secondary level as I.V. and different factors of Lifelong learning as D.Vs

Lifelong Learning Factors		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Goal-Setting	Between Groups	22.231	1	22.231	4.016*	.050
	Within Groups	276.750	50	5.535		
	Total	298.981	51			
Application of Knowledge and Skills	Between Groups	26.803	1	26.803	4.325*	.043
	Within Groups	309.889	50	6.198		
	Total	336.692	51			
Self-Direction and Evaluation	Between Groups	19.898	1	19.898	7.416**	.009
	Within Groups	134.160	50	2.683		
	Total	154.058	51			
Locating Information	Between Groups	10.924	1	10.924	10.290**	.002
	Within Groups	53.076	50	1.062		
	Total	64.000	51			
Adaptable Learning Strategies	Between Groups	9.167	1	9.167	2.417	.126
	Within Groups	189.660	50	3.793		
	Total	198.827	51			
Total Score	Between Groups	1.988	1	1.988	.048	.827
	Within Groups	2068.993	50	41.380		
	Total	2070.981	51			

Adjusting and Adapting Learning Strategies, as both native and bilingual speakers can adapt easily later in life (Table 3).

The Table 4 depicts the individual Lifelong Learning factors being impacted by their performance on the English Language Achievement Test, which assesses the English Language Capabilities of the individual. The One-way ANOVA was administered and the results obtained reflected the following – The domain of Goal Setting is not significantly affected by the English Language Achievement Score, as the F value obtained is 0.746 at 0.59 level of significance. The second domain of Application of Knowledge and Skills also showed similar results, indicating that the English Language proficiency does not predict Knowledge application and skill demonstration in the future, in terms of Lifelong Learning. The score obtained for the same was 0.209 at 0.95 level of significance. The third domain of Self Direction and Evaluation, again showed that an individual is capable of steering his/her future learnings and endeavours despite lacking the knowledge and use of the English Language. The score obtained for the same was 0.541 at 0.74 level of significance. The next domain of Locating Information, showed a score of 3.626 at 0.008 level of significance. This shows that the performance on ELAT is significantly and positively related to Locating and finding Appropriate

Information for future use, especially as a predictor of Lifelong Learning and thus individuals who score well in ELAT are also adept at locating information in their future learning pursuits. The last domain of Adaptable Learning Strategies is also not very significantly impacted by the performance on the ELAT. The score obtained is 1.96 at 0.10 level of significance. The scores are indicative of the lack of a substantial relationship of the knowledge of English language with Adaptable learning strategies, throwing light on the fact that individuals are capable of adjusting their learning strategies as per the need of the situation, irrespective of whether their English is up to the mark or not. Overall

The English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) was administered upon the subjects along with the Lifelong Learning Inventory. The results of the ELAT in general and its impact upon the various individual factors of Lifelong Learning were discussed in the previous table. The ELAT however had seven sections to it and some sections of the test had/were more useful in predicting some of the Lifelong Learning variables. The third section of the test corresponded to finding and using synonyms. It was seen that two domains of Lifelong Learning were significantly impacted by this domain of ELAT namely ‘Self Direction and Evaluation’ and ‘Locating Information’. The F-values obtained were 4.442 at 0.002

Table 4 : Summary of One-Way ANOVA including Level of English Achievement of College students as I.V. and different factors of Lifelong learning as D.Vs.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Goal-Setting	Between Groups	22.426	5	4.485	.746	.593
	Within Groups	276.555	46	6.012		
	Total	298.981	51			
Application of Knowledge and Skills	Between Groups	7.487	5	1.497	.209	.957
	Within Groups	329.205	46	7.157		
	Total	336.692	51			
Self-Direction and Evaluation	Between Groups	8.560	5	1.712	.541	.744
	Within Groups	145.497	46	3.163		
	Total	154.058	51			
Locating Information	Between Groups	18.095	5	3.619	3.626**	.008
	Within Groups	45.905	46	.998		
	Total	64.000	51			
Adaptable Learning Strategies	Between Groups	34.945	5	6.989	1.962	.102
	Within Groups	163.882	46	3.563		
	Total	198.827	51			
Total Score	Between Groups	58.026	5	11.605	.265	.930
	Within Groups	2012.955	46	43.760		
	Total	2070.981	51			

level of significance and 4.205 at 0.003 level of significance, respectively. The scores are reflective of the fact that individuals good at locating synonyms, truly understand the meaning which the text tries to convey, and this helps them in the further self direction and evaluate their work and performance accordingly. Moreover the ability to summarize and find appropriate

synonyms, is also helpful in locating the appropriate and sufficient information, in the future and further academic pursuits of the subjects. Therefore it is evident that performing well on certain section of the English Language Achievement Test, positively impacts the Lifelong Dispositions of the subjects in some areas (Table 5).

Table 5: Summary of One-Way ANOVA including Section 3 as I.V. and different factors of Lifelong learning as D.Vs.

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Goal Setting	Between Groups	28.073	5	5.615	.953	.456
	Within Groups	270.907	46	5.889		
	Total	298.981	51			
Application of Knowledge and Skills	Between Groups	44.008	5	8.802	1.383	.248
	Within Groups	292.684	46	6.363		
	Total	336.692	51			
Self Direction and Evaluation	Between Groups	50.164	5	10.033	4.442	.002
	Within Groups	103.894	46	2.259		
	Total	154.058	51			
Locating Information	Between Groups	20.076	5	4.015	4.205	.003
	Within Groups	43.924	46	.955		
	Total	64.000	51			
Adaptable Learning Strategies	Between Groups	4.231	5	.846	.200	.961
	Within Groups	194.596	46	4.230		
	Total	198.827	51			
Total	Between Groups	134.335	5	26.867	.638	.672
	Within Groups	1936.646	46	42.101		
	Total	2070.981	51			

Table 6: Summary of One-Way ANOVA including Section 4 as I.V. and different factors of Lifelong learning as D.Vs.

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Goal-Setting	Between Groups	17.792	4	4.448	.743	.567
	Within Groups	281.188	47	5.983		
	Total	298.981	51			
Application of Knowledge and Skills	Between Groups	59.987	4	14.997	2.547	.052
	Within Groups	276.705	47	5.887		
	Total	336.692	51			
Self-Direction and Evaluation	Between Groups	27.209	4	6.802	2.520	.054
	Within Groups	126.849	47	2.699		
	Total	154.058	51			
Locating Information	Between Groups	6.565	4	1.641	1.343	.268
	Within Groups	57.435	47	1.222		
	Total	64.000	51			
Adaptable Learning Strategies	Between Groups	22.151	4	5.538	1.473	.225
	Within Groups	176.676	47	3.759		
	Total	198.827	51			
Total	Between Groups	358.575	4	89.644	2.460	.058
	Within Groups	1712.406	47	36.434		
	Total	2070.981	51			

The English Language Achievement Test has several sections which test various aspects of the knowledge of an individual in terms of their proficiency in the English language. One of the sections was pertaining to fitting in the correct words to finish a particular sentence. This section was analysed with respect to the various domains of the Lifelong Learning Inventory. The results reflected significant impact in three domains. The domain of Application of Knowledge and Skills was positively influenced by the capabilities of the students to fill in the missing word. The students who had the judgement to use the correct word to finish a sentence, also had the judgement to apply their knowledge and demonstrate their skills. The F-value obtained for the same is 2.547 at 0.052 level of significance. Another domain which showed a positive impact was Self Direction and Evaluation. The individuals performing well on the section of completing the sentences using missing words, were better able to self-evaluate and therefore direct their future steps than those who performed sub optimally. The F-value for the same was 2.52 at 0.054 level of significance. Moreover the total scores of the Lifelong Inventory also affirmed to the scores obtained by the subjects in this particular section of the ELAT, because the overall F-value is 2.460 at 0.058 level of significance, thereby establishing that individuals scoring higher in certain sections of the ELAT show better Lifelong Learning Dispositions (Table 6).

The Table 7 depicts the relationship between one section of the English language Achievement Test (ELAT) and the individual Lifelong Learning factors. The last section of the ELAT measured the comprehension skills of the individual. The results showed that the individuals scoring high in this section of the ELAT, also scored higher in the Goal Setting Domain, with an F-value of 5.844 at 0.01 level of significance. The Goal Setting Disposition is positively affected by the English language comprehension of the subjects. Apart from this, the domain of Self Direction and Evaluation also showed a significant result, indicating that individuals whose comprehensions skills of the English language are good, also show good self-direction and are able to evaluate themselves based on their previous performances and in comparison to others. The scores obtained are – The F-value is 2.936 at 0.030 level of significance. The overall score was also noteworthy. The individuals scoring high on comprehension showed an overall higher score on their Lifelong Learning dispositions as compared to those who scored lower, showing that comprehension skills are important indicators towards Lifelong Learning Dispositions. The score supporting the same was an F-value of 6.546 at 0.00 level of significance.

Conclusion:

Effective cultural exchange, interactions, and lifelong learning may be facilitated by the following tactics: Expose

Table 7: Summary of One-Way ANOVA including Section 7 as I.V. and different factors of Lifelong learning as D.Vs.

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Goal-Setting	Between Groups	99.312	4	24.828	5.844	.001
	Within Groups	199.669	47	4.248		
	Total	298.981	51			
Application of Knowledge and Skills	Between Groups	51.011	4	12.753	2.098	.096
	Within Groups	285.682	47	6.078		
	Total	336.692	51			
Self-Direction and Evaluation	Between Groups	30.795	4	7.699	2.936	.030
	Within Groups	123.263	47	2.623		
	Total	154.058	51			
Locating Information	Between Groups	10.889	4	2.722	2.409	.062
	Within Groups	53.111	47	1.130		
	Total	64.000	51			
Adaptable Learning Strategies	Between Groups	18.086	4	4.522	1.176	.334
	Within Groups	180.741	47	3.846		
	Total	198.827	51			
Total	Between Groups	740.983	4	185.246	6.546	.000
	Within Groups	1329.998	47	28.298		
	Total	2070.981	51			

students to a variety of cultural experiences and knowledge beginning in their formative years; pair culture learning with studying foreign languages; and design culture learning programs that emphasize cultural relativism. Create learning metrics for every learner's cross-cultural proficiency. A person's heart, body, and brain should all be engaged in lifelong learning, but our existential values and emotions should take precedence. Life's uncertainties and inconsistencies can be managed through lifelong learning. The goal of lifelong learning should be to advance the art of human maturity, which is necessary for developing into a good citizen who actively engages in issues and problems on a local, national, and worldwide level.

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