

Received date: 2021/06/20 Revised date: 2021/09/14

Accepted date: 2021/10/04

## English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Perceptions of their Unique language acquisition device Construction in Second Language Acquisition

Process: (Grounded Theory)

Milad Omidi<sup>1</sup>, Hamid Reza Khalaji<sup>2,\*</sup>, keyvan Mahmoudi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D candidate in TEFL, Department of English Language, Malayer Branch, Islamic Azad university, Malayer, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor in TEFL, Department of English Language, Malayer Branch, Islamic Azad university, Malayer, Iran.

• Corresponding Author E-mail: h. Khalaji1399@gmail.comz

### Abstract:

In this study, the perceptions of selected experienced English teachers about the construction of their unique language acquisition device (LAD) in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) process is investigated. The grounded theory and constructive design were employed and open, axial, and selective coding after semi-structured interviews ranging from 30 to 90 was used. The teachers' perceptions showed seven categories related to the construction of their unique LAD, namely, (a) unique environment; (b) Psychological problems; (c) genetic factors; and (d) cyberspace. Perceptions showed that the following mentioned factors have been affected uniquely by those mentioned categories separately and uniquely. Factors such as motivation, interest, self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude, viewpoint, opinion, intentions, learning styles and strategies, exposure to the TL, rate of acquisition, acquisition progress, IQ and intelligence, social interaction, mental status, memory capacity, concentration, learning potential, metaphorical thinking, and ideology so that they would be equipped with the unique language acquisition device (ULAD) in SLA.

34 **Key words:** Unique language acquisition device; Second Language Acquisition; Grounded  
35 theory; Individual differences.

36

37

38

### 39 **1. Introduction**

40 There have been many efforts about different aspects of Individual Differences (IDs) and  
41 the way they relate to the study of SLA. The overviews conducted by Gregersen and Macintyre  
42 (2014), or Williams, Mercer, and Ryan (2015) are among the obvious example of those efforts.  
43 Other studies, (such as Dörnyei & Kubanyiova,2014; Oxford, 2011), highly likely to apply  
44 unique ID factors to their implications for language pedagogy. Besides, among all those factors  
45 influencing IDs, Biedroń and Pawlak (2016) scrutinized the role of intelligence, foreign  
46 language (FL) aptitude, working memory (WM) and personality. As mentioned in Biedroń et  
47 al. (2016), these factors root in classical cognitive psychology that view these cognitive IDs as  
48 hidden features, affected by genetic and environmental influences, with the former having been  
49 more completely investigated and firmly confirmed (Jensen, 1997; Plomin, 1997; Plomin &  
50 Deary, 2015). Research into these crucial factors in the study of SLA has a long tradition (see  
51 Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Ellis, 2008; Pawlak, 2012).

52 In contrast to Behaviorists such as Skinner, emphasizing on the importance of imitation and  
53 repetition in children learning, or nativists like Noam Chomsky, believing in innate capacities,  
54 Piaget (1957) asserted this is the result of interaction between individuals and the environment  
55 leading to cognitive development and higher levels of children knowledge is constructed by  
56 both innate capacities and environmental information. Opposite to Chomsky's innate LAD, he  
57 asserted mental structures change constantly while children interact with their environment and  
58 intellectual development happened as a consequence of qualitative changes. "Social  
59 Constructivists argue that the same biological or environmental factors have different effects  
60 on different individuals" (Kappur, 2018, P. 7069). However, the unique influences of these  
61 environmental interactions and intellectual developments on learners' LAD in SLA have never  
62 been investigated before.

63 The outlook of constructivism seems ideal to educators since it takes the role of the  
64 individual, the significance of meaning- making, and the active role of the learner into  
65 consideration (Gail Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). They recognize that students are not blank  
66 slates that need to be filled with knowledge. Instead, according to them, learners bring with  
67 them a repertoire of prior experiences, knowledge, and beliefs which they use while  
68 constructing new perceptions. Vygotsky (1980) stressed the role of the social environment in  
69 human cognitive development. Like Piaget, he considered children as active organizers of their

70

71

72

73

74 own knowledge and believes that the child has a ZPD. Similarly, Kappur (2018) asserts that  
75 children learn a lot while just watching their parents, or participating in adult activities from an  
76 early age. Vygotsky believes teachers should provide the necessary scaffolding to help learners  
77 develop their ability to think on their own, which is fit for their ZPD.

78 Despite the broad scope of this literature, little effort aims to explore the most important  
79 categories with their properties affecting the participants' LAD uniquely and equipping them  
80 with the ULAD and consequently the unique ZPD in SLA. Moreover, the researchers aim at

81

82

83 investigating those aspects of SLA that are influenced uniquely by each property. To that aim  
84 the central research question of the present study is " Is there any factor forming the LAD of  
85 twelve L2 instructors at three foreign language institutions in Tehran uniquely; if yes what  
86 are they?" The emerged sub research question of the study is: "How do those factors affect  
87 the LAD uniquely and equip each participant with the ULAD in SLA?" This research study  
88 needed to be conducted because the previous studies failed to investigate the influences of  
89 learners' unique LAD in SLA.

## 90 **Method**

91 Since the purpose of this study was to explore the uniqueness of the LAD among learners, a  
92 grounded theory methodology was chosen. The grounded theory in the present study reflects  
93 the uniqueness of the LAD among L2 teachers who had experience acquiring an L2 effectively  
94 and have been experienced L2 instructors for many years. In this study, after the pilot study, in  
95 order to benefit from a homogenous sampling, L2 instructors were chosen as the target  
96 population. In convenience sampling, the researchers chose the participants from three  
97 language institutions in Tehran that the researcher had teaching experience. Moreover, the  
98 characteristics of participants are listed in table 1. During the interviewing, as a research tool,  
99 the setting should be quiet, with less background noise to have a clear recording data. Hence,  
100 the interview sessions were conducted in the available private classrooms.

101

102

103

104

105

106

Table 1. The participants' Demographics

Name	Academic Background	Mother Tongue	Knowledge of Other Languages	Instructor of	Years of Experience	Other Degrees
T1	Ma in TEFL	Turkish	Persian English	English	8	IELTS 7
T2	BA degree in Spanish Literature	Persian	Spanish English	English Spanish	5	TTC IELTS 7
T3	BA degree in English Literature	Persian	English	English	4	TTC
T4	MA degree in German translation	Persian	English German	German	10	International B2 in German
T5	BA degree in TEFL Ma in MBA	Persian	English French	English	10	IELTS 7
T6	B.Sc in computer science	Persian	English French	English	3	IELTS 7.5 TTC
T7	B.Sc in materials engineering	Persian	English Japanese	English	2	TOEFL ibt 100 TTC
T8	Ma in TEFL	Turkish	Persian English	English	10	
T9	BA degree in Italian literature	Persian	English Italian	English	4	IELTS 6.5 TTC
T10	Ma in French literature	Persian	English French	French	5	
T11	Ma in IT	Persian	English	English	12	IELTS 8 TTC
T12	PhD Candidate in TEFL	Persian	English German	English	12	

108

109 **The Research Instrument**

110 The research instrument used in the study was open-ended questions of the semi-structured  
 111 interview, which allow the researcher to not strictly follow a formalized list of questions. The  
 112 questions were based on the issue related to different environmental and genetic factors  
 113 influencing L2 acquisition of the learners. Initially, the questions were adapted and modified  
 114 from the literature reviews of constructivism, individual differences, intelligence, Foreign  
 115 language aptitude, working memory, and personality. The main idea of creating these interview  
 116 questions was to seek more information and explanation from the respondents on the influences  
 117 of their unique environment (6 main questions), their unique features and characteristics (6  
 118 main questions), their genetic factors (1 main question), and other influential factors (1 main

119

120

121 question) on their L2 acquisition process. The researcher then gave the interview questions  
122 together with the cover letter explaining the significance of the study and feedback form to the  
123 panel experts to review the content of the instrument. The interview questions were arranged  
124 based on the panel experts' comments and suggestions. Moreover, the researcher debriefed with  
125 different faculty member, especially those who were professional in conducting qualitative  
126 researches to arrange the interview questions. At this point in the process, any unclear questions  
127 were rephrased by the interviewer in order to give a clear understanding of the interviewees  
128 and at the same time elicit more information regarding this study. At this point, the unclear

129 questions were rephrased by the interviewer to give a clear understanding of the interviewees  
130 and at the same time elicit more information regarding this study. One close-ended question  
131 along with 14 main open-ended questions was designed to elicit information from participants.

132

133

#### 134 **Data Analysis**

135 To analyze the data, the researchers used open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin,  
136 1998). They analyzed each transcript in phrases, sentences or groups of sentences to reveal  
137 single ideas through open coding. Then, as Strauss and Corbin suggested, they gave a code to  
138 each unit to display that idea or concept. The open coding determined 1724 items being  
139 combined during axial coding into 102 abstract concepts. In selective coding, the concepts were  
140 finally arranged into one central category, "what the research is all about" (p. 146), in this  
141 study, Unique Language Acquisition Device (ULAD) along with seven categories: (a) unique  
142 environment; (b) entertainment; (c) genetic factors; (d) cyberspace; (e) psychological  
143 problems; (f) individual uniqueness; (h) Unique Socio-emotional factors. The researchers  
144 identified properties for each category.

#### 145 **Unique Environment**

146 Unique environment played the most important role on shaping the ULAD among the  
147 participants. The essential unique environment that fostered the ULAD among the participants  
148 are immediate family, extended family, workplace, and educational context. Among the  
149 properties of this concept, immediate family and the L2 educational context played the most  
150 important role on shaping a unique capacity in SLA among learners. Learners' parents and  
151 siblings played one of the most influential roles in their motivation and self-confidence while  
152 acquiring an L2. As one of the participants said, " My brother is seven years older than me and  
153 he is exactly my mentor. I even followed him in choosing my university field of study. (onsite  
154 interview, participant 1)" Familial values and family encouragement could influence children's  
155 attitude, view, interest and motivation in learning and study. As Shima quoted that, "financial  
156 issue is not as important as scientific progress for my family. (onsite interview, participant 3)"

157 She said that " if I tell my father that I am a hairstylist and I earn fifty million in a month, he  
158 wouldn't be as glad as when I tell him my article is accepted in a famous journal." Family  
159 literacy and immediate family's opinion and views, especially parents, toward the SLA, its  
160 culture, its people, etc., could play an important role in the learners' opinion, view, motivation,  
161 and the process of SLA uniquely. With regard to this, one participants quoted, "My parents are  
162 into studying. My mother reads novels a lot, but my father reads a lot in his major. I saw books  
163 in their hands from childhood and I think it was effective in my interest in studying. (onsite  
164 interview, participant 9)"

165 The second language educational contexts and materials plays another important role in SLA.  
166 Class environment and classmate rivalry affect SLA. Instructors also played an important role  
167 in SLA. A positive feedback from an instructor can have an important impact on learners'  
168 motivation, interest, self-confidence, acquisition process and also their academic life. As one  
169 participant quoted, "I heard a sentence from one of my German instructors that I still think that  
170 this sentence got me to pursue my education up to the MA level in the field of German literature  
171 and studies. (onsite interview, participant 3)" Educational books and materials also affects the  
172 interest, motivation, and acquisition progress in SLA.

173 Workplace is another factor that directly effects the quality and progress in SLA. There are  
174 two kinds of working conditions. One is directly related to second language, such as those  
175 who are supervisors or L2 teachers. And the other is not directly related to the second  
176 language.

177 With regard to the workplace, one participant quoted,

178           The view of those who worked in the company and the respect that I received from  
179           them. It was twice the ordinary workers whose work was not related to English.  
180           When I saw that I knew a second language that the other didn't know that, I thought  
181           that this was really good and tried my best to make this gap more and increase my  
182           proficiency level. It really affected my motivation to improve my English. (onsite  
183           interview, participant 3)

184 In the above extract, we can find how workplace and its unique environment may influence  
185 learners' motivation to improve their L2. Sometimes, learners' extrinsic motivation influences  
186 the participant's intrinsic motivation to acquire the L2 better. The interaction between the  
187 extrinsic and intrinsic motivation help them acquire the L2 better.

188 Extended family was another factor, having a unique influence on SLA. In this regard, one  
189 participant talked about the impact of his uncle who had been a pilot and had an English  
190 language diploma.

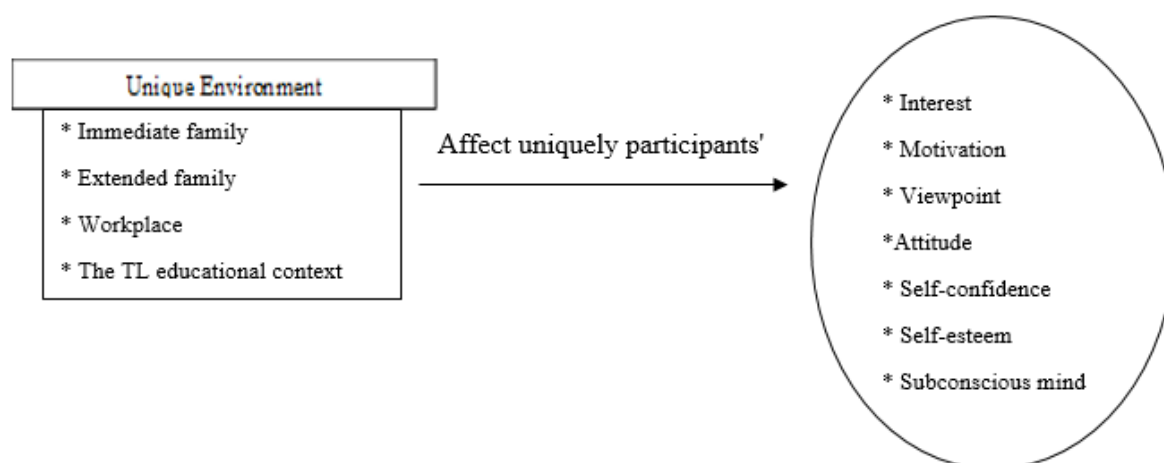
191 The above quotes from this participant revealed how a member of an extended family may  
192 influence learners' intrinsic motivation, interest, and attitudes uniquely to acquire an L2.

193 Figure 1 illustrates how this category with its subcategory affected participants' LAD uniquely.

194

195

196  
197  
198  
199



200  
201  
202  
203  
204

Figure 1. Unique effects of the participants' Unique Environment on SLA

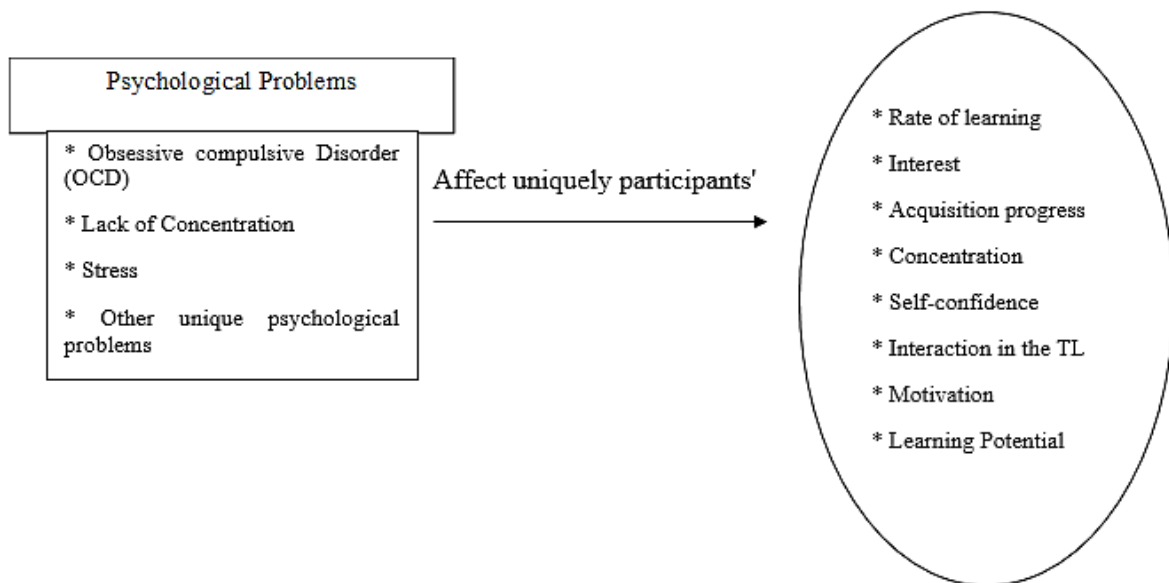
## 204 Psychological Problems

205 Psychological problems played the next important role on shaping the ULAD that caused many  
206 problems during L2 acquisition. The properties in this category are OCD, lack of concentration,  
207 stress, and other unique psychological problems.

208 OCD was the most influential property that directly and indirectly affects SLA among learners.  
209 Sometimes learners have some unique OCD in their life that somehow stretches to SLA. It also  
210 may have genetic roots. The researchers also found how this problem may have root in the  
211 ordinary life of the participants and somehow affected SLA. As one participant told "When I  
212 want to learn something new, I have an OCD. I spend too much time on an issue while studying,  
213 but I found that I would learn it more easily if I read the rest of the lesson. (onsite interview,  
214 participant 7)" Meanwhile, the researcher asked "how about the issues you understand? Do you  
215 read them again?" she replied, "Yes, yes. For example, I read and understand the previous page,  
216 but suddenly I come back to the previous page unconsciously and read it again." At this time,  
217 the interviewer asked whether she has such a problem in her real life? She answered, "Yes, yes,  
218 for example, during the night, I check the alarm clock almost every 10 minutes to see whether  
219 I tune it correctly or not. I have these challenges many nights. It also influences SLA process."  
220 Lack of concentration was another property influencing learners' SLA as one participant  
221 quoted, " I have generally problem with concentration. It is not just related to studying. I have  
222 problems with concentration generally. Everything making my mind busy out of the time of

223 studying would make my mind busy while studying. (onsite interview, participant 7)". Quotes  
 224 from the participants showed that even those who have problems with concentration could  
 225 concentrate well on the subject for 20 minutes. Stress is another property affecting SLA  
 226 negatively, especially when it could not be controlled at a normal level. As one participant  
 227 quoted "Sometimes I experience stress which couldn't be maintained at the normal level. So it  
 228 had a really bad effect on my learning. (onsite interview, participant 8)" There are also other  
 229 unique psychological to each person affecting SLA, such as depression, mood levels, etc. which  
 230 should be taken into consideration more rigorously by scholars in SLA. Figure 2 shows how  
 231 this category and its subcategory affected participants' LAD uniquely.

232



233

234

235 Figure 2: Unique effects of the participants' psychological problems on SLA

236

237 **Genetic Factors**

238 Another factor playing a role in shaping learners' ULAD is genetic factors. Through the  
 239 interviews, we found that both immediate family and extended family played a genetic role on  
 240 SLA. In this regard, one participant mentioned,

241 my paternal relatives really like talking, using the words, and playing with the words.  
 242 I also have a cousin who had good progress in language acquisition. He loved  
 243 language learning and had a good capability in using that language, I also have such  
 244 characteristics. I see such characteristics in my father too. I think that my father's job  
 245 is related to the use of language. It means that my father has the art of using the  
 246 language to change the people's sensations. I feel that it is a genetic and familial  
 247 relation which is extremely transmitted from my paternal relatives.

248



249

250

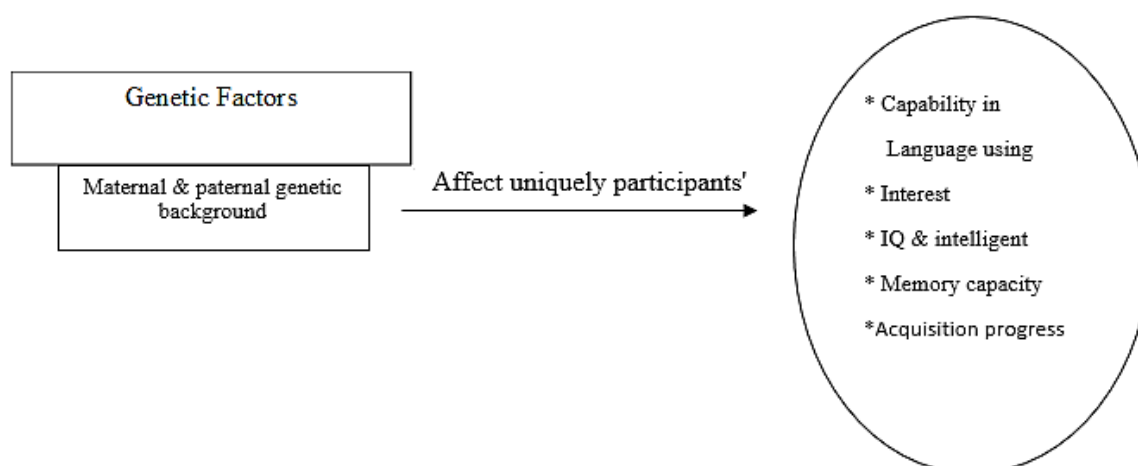
251 He continued and mentioned about the genetic role of his mother and maternal relatives. "My  
 252 mother and maternal relatives, on the other hand, love thinking and analyzing the issues in their  
 253 mind. I think that I also have the same characteristics. With this language, I started thinking."  
 254 Another participant, who was a trilingual of Persian, English, and French, quoted that "my  
 255 maternal grandfather also knew Latin, English, and Turkish. I generally have a genetic  
 256 background, (whats app interview, participant 10). Extracts and quotes from the participants  
 257 revealed that learners' LAD is affected uniquely by the genetic factors. The following extract  
 258 from another participant, who was an English teacher and studied Italian at university, showed  
 259 some interesting points with regard to the genetic factors in SLA,

260 "My father loved English. My mother loved Turkish and learnt it. I also learnt Turkish. I could  
 261 talk Turkish and understand Turkish but I couldn't write it at all." She pursued,

262

263 Learning Turkish was really interesting for me. It was also really strange. Many  
 264 people don't believe in me when I tell them about Turkish acquisition. Turkish  
 265 naturally come to my mind while speaking it. It may be because I was influenced by  
 266 lots of exposure while my mom was learning or by the Turkish songs.

267 They spoke Persian at home because her father was Persian. Through her interview, she told  
 268 that " my mother was originally Turkish. She was originally a Turkish person from Iran who  
 269 learned Istanbul Turkish. So it may be a genetic factor." This could be a genetic factor  
 270 transmitted from her mother and maternal ancestors to her. Figure 3, illustrates how this  
 271 category with its subcategory affected participants' LAD uniquely.



272

273

Figure 3: Unique effects of the participants' Genetic Factors on SLA

274

275

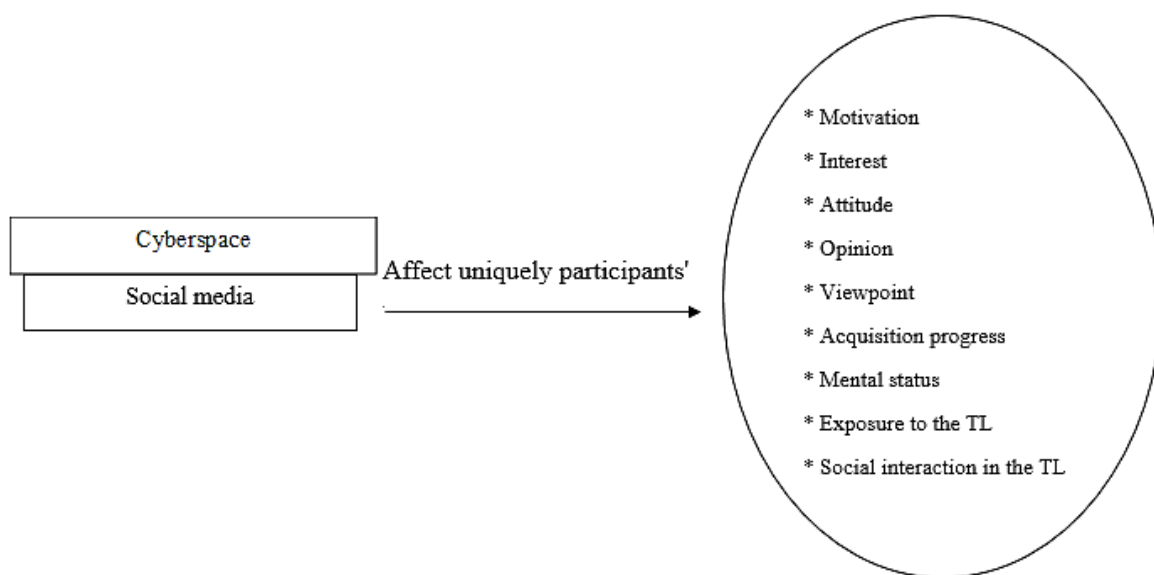
276 **Cyberspace**

277 Cyberspace was the other concept playing the least role among other concepts on shaping the  
278 ULAD. The category of cyberspace contains properties with dimensions of cyberspace that  
279 somehow affects learners' LAD uniquely. The main property in this category is social media.  
280 Reading posts, leaving posts, communicating in the target language, watching YouTube  
281 videos, face book, yahoo messenger and different chatrooms, etc. directly and indirectly have  
282 an influence on shaping the ULAD among learners. As one participant quoted that " Sending  
283 emails, reading weblogs, and writing posts in Instagram really helped me learn how to use the  
284 language better. (onsite interview, participant 7)" With regard to this theme, another participant  
285 added,

286 I used you tube a lot to watch some videos related to human mind, especially those  
287 of Jordan Peterson because I really like learning more about human's psychology. It  
288 also helped me improve my mental status. These videos were in English and got me  
289 to improve both my English language and my mental status. Improving my mental  
290 status also helped me acquire L2 better. These videos made me know myself better,  
291 and English language was a required tool to understand these videos.

292 This extract showed how a social media, such as YouTube, can influence learners' LAD  
293 uniquely in SLA. Learners could learn many words and structures in cyberspace. Moreover,  
294 they could improve their mental status and also cope with different psychological problems  
295 and consequently influence their LAD and ZPD uniquely. Sometimes cyberspace may trigger  
296 learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation uniquely in SLA.

297 The above-mentioned extract showed how a social media, such as facebook, can trigger  
298 learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation uniquely in SLA. Figure 4 illustrates the way this  
299 category with its subcategory affected participants' LAD uniquely.



300

301

Figure 4: Unique effects of the participants' Genetic Factors on SLA

302

303

304

305 **A Conceptual Model of the Integration of Categories**

306 The conceptual model in Figure 2 illustrates a cycle of how learners engaged in the categories  
307 that in turn influenced their LAD, as a result, how they are equipped with the ULAD in SLA.  
308 Unique immediate environment is one important category influencing the ULAD among L2  
309 learners. While growing in *their unique immediate family, learners' interest, viewpoint,*  
310 *motivation, opinion, self-confidence, attitude, intentions, self-esteem, and exposure to the TL*  
311 *would be affected uniquely. Parents and siblings' interest in SLA, study, opinion, attitude,*  
312 *advice, literacy level, and their belief in the learner's abilities have a unique influence on these*  
313 *factors. Extended family's interaction with the TL and its community and also their memories*  
314 *influence learners' motivation, interest, subconscious mind, interest, and their exposure to the*  
315 *TL uniquely. The workplace and its unique environment is another property of this category,*  
316 *affecting learners' motivation, interest, opinion, viewpoint, self-confidence, intention, and*  
317 *attitude. The TL educational context is another important property, influencing learners'*  
318 *motivation, interest, styles and strategies, self-confidence, attitude, opinion, and viewpoint*  
319 *uniquely in SLA.*

320 *Individual uniqueness is another category, shaping the ULAD in SLA. Unique ideology and*  
321 *attitude, unique characteristics, unique interests, and knowledge of another language are*  
322 *among the properties of this category. Learners' unique ideology and attitude, such as their*  
323 *general unique ideology and attitude in life, their unique beliefs, their flexibility to the TL*  
324 *culture have a unique influence on learners' attitudes, interests, motivation, self-confidence*  
325 *learning styles and strategies, opinion, and their viewpoint. Learners' unique characteristics*  
326 *like their favorite materials, their unique rate of learning, their unique intelligence, their unique*  
327 *flexibility, their unique feeling while using the TL, etc., affects their metaphorical thinking,*  
328 *learning styles and strategies, motivation, acquisition progress, attitude, opinion, viewpoint,*  
329 *self-confidence, and interest uniquely. Unique interests such as inspiration from the TL literati,*  
330 *interest in the TL country, interest in the TL songs and stories, interest in the TL literature and*  
331 *cinemas, and interest in history and etymology of words have a unique influence on learners'*  
332 *motivation, attitude, opinion, viewpoint, styles and strategies, and exposure to the TL.*  
333 *Knowledge of another language affects self-confidence, metaphorical thinking, ideology,*  
334 *interest, intention, styles and strategies, exposure to the TL, and acquisition progress.*

335 Another important category affecting learners' LAD uniquely is *unique socio emotional*  
336 *factors. Empathy with the target language life style affects learners' interest, life style,*  
337 *motivation, and fluency uniquely. Ethno cultural empathy, such as open-mindedness and*  
338 *interest to the TL culture, flexibility to the TL culture, etc., has a unique influence on learners'*  
339 *motivation, interest, attitude, opinion, viewpoint, intention, exposure to the TL, and their*  
340 *acquisition progress. Unique social interaction is another important property of this category*  
341 *affecting learners' learning styles and strategies, interest, motivation, intention, and exposure*  
342 *to the TL uniquely. Inspirations from friends, their attitude and goals, their familial values, their*

343 interest, their inspirational sentences, etc., have a unique influence on learners' *self-confidence*,  
344 *styles and strategies, intention, exposure to the TL, attitudes, opinion, viewpoint, motivation*,  
345 and *interest*. The participants' story in this grounded theory showed that *society* is an important  
346 property having a role in shaping the ULAD. Society environments, society needs, society  
347 people attitudes to the TL acquisition, importance of the TL in society, and the TL as foreign  
348 or second language in society affect learners' *attitude, opinion, viewpoint, motivation, intention*,  
349 and *interest*. *Unique critical period of life* is another property which affects uniquely learners'  
350 *interest, motivation, attitude, opinion, viewpoint, styles and strategies, metaphorical thinking*,  
351 and *intention*.

352 According to the extracts, *entertainment* turned out to be another influential category affecting  
353 the LAD of the participants uniquely. *Song, computer games, movies, and media* are among  
354 the properties of this category. The *song* influences on learners and interest in songs and their  
355 lyrics affect learners' *motivation, interest, self-confidence, and exposure to the TL uniquely*.  
356 *Computer games*, their missions and instructions in the TL with their subtitle, and  
357 communicating with teammates from other countries in the TL influence learners' *motivation*,  
358 *exposure to the TL*, and *their social interaction in the TL* uniquely. Interest in *movies* and in  
359 going to those TL countries that learners watch in the *movies* have a unique influence on  
360 learners' *motivation, interest, intentions, attitude, opinion, viewpoint, and exposure to the TL*.  
361 *Media* is another property of this category affecting learners' *motivation, exposure to the TL*,  
362 *interest, attitude, viewpoint, and the TL acquisition progress* uniquely.

363 Another category that really influences the acquisition of the participants is *psychological*  
364 *problems*. *OCD* is one of the most influential psychological problems affecting learners' LAD  
365 uniquely. Learners' unique *OCD* in real life, tendency to repeat actions, spending too much  
366 time on an educational issue, idealism in the TL acquisition, genetic factors with regard to the  
367 *OCD, OCD* with repeated thoughts in the TL acquisition, *OCD* with regard to learning a subject  
368 thoroughly, etc., have a unique influence on learners' *rate of learning, interest, acquisition*  
369 *progress, TL acquisition progress, and exposure to the TL*. *Lack of concentration* is another  
370 property affecting learners' LAD uniquely. Getting easily distracted, thinking unconsciously  
371 about unrelated subjects during the TL acquisition, tendency to lose concentration while trying  
372 to concentrate on an issue in the TL affect learners' *rate of acquisition, acquisition progress*,  
373 and *acquisition progress*. Not being able to maintain stress at a normal level, bad memories  
374 from the past, future concerns, shyness, and instructors' bad behavior lead to emergence of  
375 *Stress* as an important property of this category. Participants' stories showed that *Stress* has a  
376 unique influence on learners' *self-confidence, concentration, interaction in the TL, acquisition*  
377 *progress, using new materials in context, and interest*. *Other unique psychological problems*  
378 such as mental status, mood, feeling conditions, depression, disappointment, and so on lead to  
379 another property of this category which affects learners' *motivation, learning potential*,  
380 *acquisition progress, and intention* uniquely.

381 Genetic is another influential category affecting learners' LAD uniquely. *Genetic background*  
382 is a property of this category that has a unique influence on learners' *capabilities in language*  
383 *using, interest, IQ and intelligent, memory capacity, and acquisition progress*. *Cyberspace*  
384 with the property of *social media* is another category affecting learners' *motivation, interest,*

385

386

387

388 *attitude, opinion, viewpoint, acquisition progress, mental status, exposure to the TL, and social*  
389 *interaction in the TL in a unique way.*

### 390 **Results and Discussion**

391 The findings of the present study prove that all the emerged factors in this research have  
392 important influences on shaping the ULAD in SLA. Chomsky first proposed the issue of LAD  
393 as an instinct capacity of an inborn child to acquire a first language ("Language acquisition  
394 device," n.d.). The issue of LAD has never been investigated in the history of SLA before.  
395 Therefore, based on the findings of the present study, the researchers aim to introduce the  
396 ULAD in SLA as a nurtured capacity of a person.

397 Tabula rasa theory proposed people are born with a blank slate without built-in mental content,  
398 so all knowledge emerged from experience or perception ("Tabula rasa" n.d). This study  
399 investigates how these emerged knowledge, especially those emerged concepts in this research,  
400 influences learners' LAD uniquely and equips them with a Unique Second Language  
401 Acquisition Device (USLAD). This study affirms that learners are not a blank slate in SLA,  
402 instead, their blank slate is nurtured in their own unique way and equips them with the ULAD  
403 in SLA.

404 The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Biedroń and Pawlak (2016) who  
405 investigated the role of intelligence, foreign language (FL) aptitude, working memory (WM)  
406 and personality as individual differences in SLA. As cited in Biedroń et al. (2016), these factors  
407 root in classical cognitive psychology that view them as hidden features, affected by genetic  
408 and environmental influences, with the former having been more completely investigated and  
409 firmly confirmed (Jensen, 1997; Plomin, 1997; Plomin & Deary, 2015). Research into these  
410 crucial factors in the study of SLA has a long tradition (see Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Dörnyei &  
411 Ryan, 2015; Ellis, 2008; Pawlak, 2012). In this study, the researcher scrutinized the influences  
412 of these issues, especially the latter, environmental factors, and found the most important  
413 concepts with their properties on shaping the USLAD and the way these factors equipped the  
414 participants with the ULAD in SLA.

415 The findings are somehow in line with studies aiming at applying unique ID factors to language  
416 pedagogy (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Oxford, 2011) and also with those examining IDs as  
417 heterogeneous constructs, consisted of different factors, interacting both together and with the  
418 environment (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003; Robinson, 2002). They are also in line with those  
419 showing the benefit of different ID factors in various learning and real world situations  
420 (Robinson, 2002; Skehan, 2002). The results are also in line with the assumption of dynamic  
421 systems theory and those researchers insisting all these factors are changing and influencing  
422 each other dynamically and are better to be considered as a system than single entities (see

423 Dörnyei, 2005, 2009, 2010; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Larsen-  
424 Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

425 Moreover, the findings of the present study are in line with Plomin and Deary (2015) who  
426 argued that the inheritability of intelligence expands from about 20% in infancy up to nearly  
427 80% in later life. It is also in line with Biedroń et al. (2016) who emphasized on the important  
428 role of the family environment in childhood and stressed that this role slowly alleviate at an  
429 older stage until it becomes of minor importance in adulthood. In this study, the researcher also  
430 finds the important role of immediate family in shaping the ULAD.

431 The findings are also in line with Cattell's theory of crystallized intelligence (Gc) referring to  
432 the individual ability in using skills, knowledge, and experience which is directly related to  
433 one's lifetime of intellectual achievement, as recognized through the person's vocabulary and  
434 general knowledge. In this study, the researcher found how these factors equipped individuals  
435 with a the ULAD in SLA.

436 The findings of the study also are in line with the socialization aspect of FL aptitude which is  
437 seemed to be dynamic, having the ability to develop evolutionarily while interacting with the  
438 environment (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2000) and also with different scholars working on the  
439 personality factors and learning styles (Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2001, Gregersen & MacIntyre,  
440 2014; Oxford, 1999, 2003). In this study, the researchers see how personality factors, unique  
441 characteristics, and unique styles and strategies have an important role on shaping USLAD.

442 The findings are in line with those researches that show the significant role of empathy, having  
443 been discovered to influence success while acquiring pronunciation (Hu, Ackermann, Martin,  
444 Erb, Winkler, & Reiterer, 2013; Rota & Reiterer, 2009) and to be highly placed in a mutual  
445 relationship with FL aptitude (Forsberg Lundell & Sandgren, 2013), since empathy with the  
446 target language life style and ethnocultural empathy are two properties of socio emotional  
447 factors equipping the participants with the ULAD. As one participant quoted how her interest  
448 to Kristen Stewart affected her language acquisition uniquely. She even made her room similar  
449 to hers in the movie. She quoted, " I was repeating Kristen Stewart's dialogues exactly similar  
450 to her. I tried to listen carefully to those dialogues and repeat them in exactly the same way as  
451 Kristen Stewart. (onsite interview, participant 2)"

452 The findings of the study are in line with the tenants of constructivism, such as the theory of  
453 Plato, according to Kappur (2018), insisting on the learners' belief system that can be  
454 challenged by their own investigations while identifying what is true or false based on their  
455 previous knowledge. Kappur (2018) also states that constructing meaning is based upon the  
456 learner's experiences. The findings are also in line with Piaget (1957) emphasizing the  
457 importance of the individual's interaction with the environment in their cognitive development  
458 and higher levels of children's knowledge and learners' schema. In this study, we find those  
459 important concepts and properties in the environment of the participants affecting their schema  
460 uniquely with regard to SLA and equip them with a USLAD.

461 Kappur (2018) also cites that opposite to Chomsky's innate LAD, these mental structures  
462 change constantly as a result of the child's interaction with their environment and intellectual  
463 development happened as a consequence of qualitative changes. And this study shows how this

464

465

466 intellectual development as a result of qualitative changes through interaction with the unique  
467 environment equips each learner with the ULAD in SLA.

468 It is worth mentioning that the researcher examined the ULAD and its influences on SLA for  
469 professional teachers who were selected purposefully to disconfirm the findings to reach data  
470 saturation. Therefore, the study reflects the influences of the emerged concepts and properties  
471 on SLA for these participants and may not be exactly the same for other participants.  
472 Moreover, a more diverse research team might have analyzed the data differently.

473 Finally, the ULAD theory has implications for scholars since it may be a solution to understand  
474 the reason why learners could not progress beyond a specific level and reach native like  
475 competence in SLA. They may even find some features in the ULAD of the learners preventing  
476 them to improve their proficiency level up to the native like competence such as those  
477 mentioned psychological problems in the present study. The theory also has implications for  
478 parents as they could prepare a unique environment for their children to get them to get  
479 interested in learning and studying. It is not necessary for them to have an academic education.  
480 However, their views, attitudes, encouragement, and their interest in studying could affect their  
481 children's motivation, interest, self-confidence, and success in SLA and influence their ULAD.  
482 Its implication for learners is when they feel they are not good enough in SLA, or when they  
483 are in lack of motivation and self-confidence to acquire it, they can pay more attention to their  
484 ULAD. They could improve themselves with some special therapies or consultation to come  
485 up with a solution. Moreover, this theory has implications for L2 instructors. They should take  
486 the humanistic approach more into consideration and be really cautious with regard to their  
487 instruction and behavior with the learners since they have an important role in affecting  
488 learners' interest, self-confidence, learning styles and strategies, and motivation, etc., in SLA  
489 and equip them with the USLAD.

## 490 **Conclusion**

491 In this research, based on the grounded theory, seven influential categories affecting the LAD  
492 of the participants uniquely. These categories are namely, unique environment, individual  
493 uniqueness, unique socio emotional factors, entertainment, psychological problems, genetic  
494 factors, and cyberspace were found. All these categories with their properties have a unique  
495 influence on learners' LAD. As a result, they equip learners with the ULAD in SLA. The ULAD  
496 make learners have a unique motivation, unique interest, unique self-confidence, unique self-  
497 esteem, unique attitude, unique viewpoint, unique opinion, unique intentions, unique learning  
498 styles and strategies, unique exposure to the TL, unique rate of learning, unique acquisition  
499 progress, unique IQ and intelligent, unique social interaction in the TL, unique mental status,  
500 unique memory capacity, unique concentration, unique learning potential, unique metaphorical  
501 thinking, unique ideology, and unique ability in using the TL.

502

503 **Abbreviations**

504 EFL: English as a Foreign Language

505 L2: Second/Foreign language

506 SLA: Second Language Acquisition

507

508

509 **References**

510 Al Ghazali, F. (2018). Understanding the sociolinguistic variation in EFL among Arab  
511 siblings. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 14(4), 301-315

512 Al-khresheh, M.H. (2013) The misuse of word order in the writing of Jordanian EFL Learners.  
513 Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

514 Al-khresheh, M.H. (2016). A review study of contrastive analysis theory. *Journal of Advances  
515 in Humanities and Social Sciences*.

516 Biedroń, A & Pawlak, M. (2016). The interface between research on individual difference  
517 variables and teaching practice: The case of cognitive factors and personality. *Studies in  
518 Second Language Learning and Teaching*.

519 Bouchard, T. J. Jr., & McGue, M. (2003). Genetic and environmental influences on human  
520 psychological differences. *Journal of Neurobiology*, 54, 4-45.

521 Bowers, J. (2002). Transitivity. *Linguistic Inquiry* 33, no. 2: 183-224.

522 Bourke, B. (2014). Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process. *The Qualitative Report*,  
523 19 (33), 1-9.

524 Stacy A. Jacob, & S. Paige Furgerson. (2012). Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting  
525 Interviews: Tips for Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*.

526 Dörnyei, Z., & Skehan, P. (2003). Individual differences in second language learning. In C. J.  
527 Doughty & M. H. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 589-630).

528 Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *The psychology of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford  
529 University Press.

530 Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learner revisited*. New York:  
531 Routledge.

532 Dörnyei, Z., & Kubanyiova, M. (2014). *Motivating learners, motivating teachers. Building  
533 vision in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

534 Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.

535 Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



536

537

538 Forsberg Lundell, F., & Sandgren, M. (2013). High-level proficiency in late L2 acquisition:  
539 Relationships between collocational production, language aptitude and personality. In G.

540 Granena & M. H. Long (Eds.), *Sensitive periods, language aptitude, and ultimate L2*  
541 *attainment* (pp. 231-255). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Gregersen, T., & MacIntyre, P. D.  
542 (2014). *Capitalizing on language learners' individuality: From premise to practice*. Bristol:  
543 *Multilingual Matters*.

544 Hu, X., Ackermann, H., Martin, J. A., Erb, M., Winkler, S., & Reiterer, S. M. (2013). Language  
545 aptitude for pronunciation in advanced second language (L2) learners: Behavioral predictors  
546 and neural substrates. *Brain and Language*, 127, 366-376.

547 Jensen, A. R. (1997). The puzzle of nongenetic variance. In R. J. Sternberg & E. L.

548 Jones, M.G & Brader-Araje, L. (2002). The Impact of Constructivism on Education: Language,  
549 Discourse, and Meaning. *American Communication Journal*.

550 Jones, M. G., Carter, G., & Rua, M. (1999). Exploring the development of conceptual  
551 ecologies: Communities of concepts related to convection and heat, *Journal of Research in*  
552 *Science Teaching*, 37, 139-159.

553 Kappur, V. 2018. Understanding Constructivism in the Second Language Context. *Scholarly*  
554 *Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language*, 2348-3083, 7061- 7080.

555 Khansir, Ali A. (2012). *Error Analysis and Second Language Acquisition*. Academy Publisher.  
556 *Manufactured in Finland*. No. 5, pp. 1027-1032, doi:10.4304/tpls.2.5.1027-1032.

557 Larsen-Freeman, D., & Cameron, L. (2008). Research methodology on language development  
558 from a complex system perspective. *Modern Language Journal*, 92, 200-213.

559 Mercer, S. (2012). Dispelling the myth of the natural-born linguist. *ELT Journal*, 66, 22-29.

560 Merriam, S. B., & Associates (2002). *Qualitative research in practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-  
561 *Bass*.

562 Moyer, A. (2013). *Accent and the individual – foreign accent – the phenomenon of non-native*  
563 *speech*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

564 Oxford, R. L. (2011) *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Harlow: Pearson  
565 *Education*.

566 Oxford, R. L. (1999). Style wars as a source of anxiety in language classrooms. In D. J. Young  
567 (Ed.), *Affect in in second language learning: A practical guide to dealing with language anxiety*  
568 (pp. 213-237). Boston, MA: MacGraw-Hill.

569 Oxford, R. L. (2003). *Language learning styles and strategies: An overview*. Gala, 1-25.

570 Pawlak, M. (2012). Individual differences in language learning and teaching: Achievements,  
571 prospects and challenges. In M. Pawlak (Ed.), *New perspectives on individual differences in*  
572 *language learning and teaching* (pp. xix-xlvi). Heidelberg: Springer.

573 1983. Piaget's theory. In W. Kessen, editor., ed., *Handbook of Child Psychology. Vol. 1.*  
574 *History, Theory, and Methods.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

575 Plomin, R. (1997). Identifying genes for cognitive abilities and disabilities. In R. J. Sternberg  
576 & E. L. Grigorenko (Eds.), *Intelligence, heredity, and environment* (pp. 89-104). Cambridge:  
577 Cambridge University Press.

578 Plomin, R., & Deary, J. (2015). Genetics and intelligence differences: Five special findings.  
579 *Molecular Psychiatry*, 20, 98-108.

580 Robinson, P. (2002). Learning conditions, aptitude complexes and SLA: A framework for  
581 research and pedagogy. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Individual differences and instructed language*  
582 *learning* (pp. 113-133). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

583 Rota, G., & Reiterer, S. M. (2009). Cognitive aspects of pronunciation talent. In G. Dogil &  
584 S. Reiterer (Eds.), *Language talent and brain activity* (pp. 67- 112). Berlin: Mouton de  
585 Gruyter.

586 Seidman, I. E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education*  
587 *and the social sciences.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University

588 Si, M. A Virtual Space for Children to Meet and Practice Chinese. *Int J Artif Intell Educ* 25,  
589 271–290 (2015).

590 Skehan, P. (2002). Theorizing and updating aptitude. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Individual*  
591 *differences and instructed language learning* (pp. 69-95). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

592 Sternberg, R. J., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2000). *Teaching for successful intelligence.* Arlington  
593 Heights, IL: Skylight Training and Publishing.

594 Sternberg, R. J. (2002). The theory of Successful Intelligence and its implications fo language  
595 aptitude testing. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Individual differences and instructed language learning*  
596 (pp. 13-43). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

597 Sternberg, R. J., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2000). *Teaching for successful intelligence.* Arlington  
598 Heights, IL: Skylight Training and Publishing.

599 Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA:  
600 Sage.

601 Williams, M., & Burden, R. L. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers: A social*  
602 *constructivist approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

603 Zafar Sh, and Meenakshi, 2012, Individual Learner Differences and Second Language  
604 Acquisition: A Review. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(4), 639-646

605