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This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

Past study has shown that second language acquisition is equally important as second language learning. Second language acquisition is the subconscious process of absorbing the second language knowledge, and it happens automatically when the students are exposed to the use of the language around them. This study aims to identify the factors affecting second language acquisition among boarding school students and how they acquire the language. The participants were students in one of the boarding schools in Peninsular Malaysia. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The findings demonstrate two factors affecting second language acquisition among boarding school students: intellectual process and mother tongue influence. Of the two categories, intellectual processes are the most dominant factors in which are the two major contributing factors affecting second language acquisition among boarding school students. This study implicates the importance of second language acquisition in driving proficiency and enhancing the learning process among boarding school students.

**Keywords:**

Second Language Acquisition, Boarding School Students, Psychological Factors, Intellectual Processing, Mother Tongue

**Introduction**

Second language acquisition is a process of students acquiring their second language after their native language. The acquisition is crucial as once the first language has been established,

second language learning is needed to enhance their language learning. As in Malaysia, second language acquisition is English, as English holds a vital role in education.

It is believed that two factors affect second language acquisition, which is the intellectual process and mother tongue (Steinberg & Sciarini, 2006). By right, children acquire a second language better than adults. The reason is due to the psychological factors that affect them. The psychological factors that Steinberg has mentioned are intellectual processing.

In this article, the outcomes will be discussed on the factors affecting second language acquisition among boarding school students based on the factors that have been mentioned. The study indicates that language learners tend to improve and increase language proficiency.

This research sheds further light on the impacts on second language development while language learning occurs. It also provides further evidence that even at an advanced age, learning a second language can profoundly impact language development.

## Literature Review

### *Intellectual Processing: Explication and Induction*

Intellectual processing is how people learn something either by the explication of induction learning. Learning that occurs based on statistical trends in input but is not subject to verbalization is referred to as induction learning (Reber, 1967). Differentiating between explicit and implicit learning is generally achieved in terms of learning intention and consciousness or awareness: explicit occurs consciously and with intention (one is aware that one is learning something); induction learning occurs unconsciously and without intention (one is unaware that one is learning something) (Williams, 2009). There is a variety of explicit and induction literature in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) that explores teaching, learning, and awareness and their inter-relationships. However, since learning is conceptualized as occurring unconsciously and without purpose, there is a paucity of research on explicit learning and induction learning in SLA.

Steinberg and Sciarini (2001) stated two main points of the primary psychological category. The first is intellectual processing, an individual's analytical determination of the grammatical structures and rules. Then, the intellectual can be divided into two methods: explication and induction. Generally, there are two ways for people to learn the syntax of the second language, which is explicit and induction. Explication is a process of learning the rules and structures of the second language through learners. It means that the instructor will first give the explanations using the first language. By right, all the learners are expected to understand the method used by the instructor. In this method, the learners will usually explain the second language using the first language. It is vital to do so as some learners might not know the second language very well. It means that those learners with a high level of the second language will only understand the second language if the learning process is being done using the second language.

However, it is said that most learners cannot entirely depend on the explicit way as some of the rules and structure can only be made by induction. By right, the learners cannot learn some part of the second language by explicit means. This is because some of the rules and structures need

to be discovered by the learner itself. It means that the learners will need their own time to discover the rules by learning through induction. In addition, when learning a second language, it is said that learners will always find help, such as English journals and other aids to help them learn the second language. Thus, it can be said that the nature of learning the second language is induction.

Furthermore, when it is said that nature is the induction method, children will apply it when they are young. This is because most of the explaining and teaching parts will not be done by their parents. It happens because parents will not usually explain the rules and structures of the second language to the children at the age of 4 to 5 years old. Some of the children will only learn explicitly when they go to their primary school. This is where the classroom situation plays a vital role in applying the explicit method.

It is where the teacher will act as the learners and explain the rules and the structures to the students. As in the classroom, the learning method will automatically turn into the explicit method. It can be called a natural situation for students learning the second language as all the learning processes will be controlled by the teacher. As for the explicit method in the classroom, it is said that it is vital for learners to learn the second language in a grouping as all the learners will exchange ideas and get feedback from the others (Steinberg & Sciarini, 2006).

Herschensohn (2007), in a past study, stated that induction is a process where children undergo learning rules by self-discovery. Those children exposed to second second-language speech will remember what they have heard. By right, they will analyze and discover the rules that underlie the speech. After discovering the rules, it is expected that the learners will understand the complicated rules. Children must learn by self-discovery before entering school as a preparation for them to learn a second language. Dornyei (2005) stated that the second language learners will always try to understand language by induction method. This is simple and has been considered a natural thing to do.

There is a good opportunity that the learner can discover the rules by self-analysis. According to Ghonchepour and Moghaddam (2017), the intellectual process is one of the elements that academics are investigating to see if it influences second language learning. Some academics agree that intelligence impacts language learning, whereas others argue that intelligence has no impact on second language learning. We know that there is no evidence that intellectuals have a negative impact on language learning. Others still believe that the intellectual process dictates language learning, although this does not preclude people with lower intelligence from mastering a second or language. Instead of dismissing these people as incapable of acquiring a foreign language, they argue that we should provide them with more significant support and resources to help them succeed. This can be described as learners learning a second language through explication.

The IQ scores among second-language learners are a good predictor of improvement in multiple studies employing various intellectual evaluations and diverse techniques of measuring language learning over the years. A previous study has found that specific intellectual assessments, particularly explication ones, are more strongly associated with specific foreign language skills than others. While the intellectual process was associated with the growth of French as a second language reading, grammar, and vocabulary in research with French immersion kids in Canada, it was not linked to verbal speaking proficiency (Genesee,

1976). This means that, while the intellectual process may be a crucial factor, it is not the only one. Furthermore, studying a second language in a classroom is considered explication learning. Low intellectual and learning issues are also regarded to hinder second language learning in organized learning situations more than foreign learners and those in immersion settings (August & Hakuta, 1997).

### ***Mother Tongue***

One of the most critical milestones in a child's first two years of life is language development. There is currently a wealth of knowledge about the factors that influence the emergence of language in both typically and atypically developing children. It is widely known that cognitive development during these periods of life has a significant impact on the linguistic system that emerges.

The mother tongue refers primarily to the language that one learns from one's mother and the dominant and home language of the speaker. It is also recognized as the native language (Denizer, 2017). The distinctions between one and another in the native language are the features we can look for during language learning. Pronunciation errors, though a large number in the first language, exhibit more in the first language effect than speaking errors. According to Subandowo (2017), children's pronunciation errors are close to those made by monolingual first language learners, though only a small proportion of speech pronunciation errors are traceable to first language learners.

Every person's mother tongue is the language he or she has learned since birth. When learning or speaking a foreign language or target language, a student is influenced by his or her mother tongue. Mother tongue influence is when a person's mental process is influenced by the fact that he thinks in his mother tongue and communicates himself in English or a second language (Delbio, Abilasha & Ilankumaran, 2018). People mispronounce things in English because their mother tongue's sound patterns impact them. A second language learner's implicit preference is to transmit his first language's customs to the target language. The influence of one's mother tongue has grown to be a significant factor, referred to as 'Language Interference.' This is a problem that every language learner encounters. When conversing in English, students may utilize vocabulary from their native tongue.

A student's mother tongue is the language that he learns from his mother. Language is utilized to generate innovative ideas and to devise complex communication systems. Linguistics is the scientific study of language. A language is a tool for expressing one's thoughts and sharing them with others. Language allows people to share information, beliefs, opinions, demands, gratitude, and sentiments. Language can express amusement, joy, praise, or harsh feelings. There are many languages spoken across the world. One tool to begin our point of view is the English language. People can compare outsiders' theories to their own experiences. Furthermore, they can disseminate their theories to a global audience and readership.

The communicative method is used in current language instruction. It emphasizes teaching the English language using the same language, which is English. For most learners, the thought of relinquishing the original language is a difficult task. In this case, the student is having trouble acquiring a foreign language without the help of his or her mother tongue. Most instructors employ translation as professional competence, while others teach the target language in their

mother tongue. Non-native teachers find it simple to teach the target language using the parent language, whereas native second-language teachers overlook the mother tongue. They discover that this is not the proper method of teaching the target language. The psychological approach to language learning teaches the natural way to learn a language.

### **Research Objectives**

This study aims to discover factors affecting second language acquisition among boarding school students.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the objectives, two research questions are formed:

1. How do boarding school students acquire their second language? Explication or induction?
2. How does mother tongue help boarding school students to acquire a second language?

### **Methodologies**

#### ***Sample***

Five boarding school students from one of the boarding schools in Peninsular Malaysia, located at Kelantan, were selected as participants of the study. Five of them were female and currently on their secondary 1.

#### ***Materials and Instrument***

To collect information, a semi-structured interview was conducted with them. The construct of the interview included their factors in affecting second language acquisition among them. The interview questionnaire was divided into two demographic sections and another section asking the factors affecting second language acquisition among boarding school students.

### **Results and Discussion**

Data collected from the study shows that five boarding school students acquire a second language through explication. The first factor is the intellectual process that has been discovered to be the significant factor contributing to second language acquisition.

#### ***Research Question 1: How Boarding School Students Acquire Their Second Language: Explication Or Induction?***

The findings show that boarding school students acquire their second language through explication and induction. Explication is the process of conveying the rules and structures of a second language to a learner. The explanation is delivered in the learner's native tongue. The student is then required to comprehend, remember, and implement the rule in the second language. Because the learner still does not know enough of the second language, the explanation is not offered in that language. It can only be delivered in a second language to students who are very proficient in their second language.

On the other hand, induction is the process of learning rules via self-discovery (Herschensohn, 2007). Children exposed to a second language will learn it through themselves. The learners are working on using and understanding more complicated rules. Induction-based processes

like pronominalization, negation, and the plural form part of a young native speaker's language knowledge long before the child are in school.

In this study, the responses portray that boarding school students need someone to teach the rules and structures of a second language to them. In this case, boarding school students fully applied their second language during their primary schooling term. Out of five respondents, only one acquired a second language when she was five years old.

In the semi-structured interview, it can be said that there are three primary sources for Student A to obtain a second language which are through her mother, teacher, and friends. Student A emphasized that she started to be exposed to English as a second language in kindergarten when she was five years old.

*AAAA... I started begin learning English when I was five years old... umm... my mom sent me to the kindergarten and I also learned English with my mom.*

(Student A, Semi-structured interview)

Student A elaborated on how she acquired a second language from kindergarten through her teachers. She also receives the input of a second language from her mother. According to her, her mother's role plays a vital role in her second language acquisition. She mentioned that her mother would force her to spell words in English and consistently teach her the English language. She also mentioned that she learnt the English language at school and with her friends. This idea supports that she learnt a second language through explication.

*Okay, what I remember is when I was five year old. I back from kindergarten and my mom ask me to spell ...AAAA...a word about a name of a animal and at that time I really hard to spell because I think English is very hard for me at that time and I really lazy at that time and even though I lazy but my mom force me to learn English. And now because of that thing I can ...AAAA... speak English...*

(Student A, Semi-structured interview)

This is in line with a past study from Hadna Suryantari (2018) in which Hanna stated that children usually acquire a second language through explication due to the learner not knowing enough of the second language. By right, the explanation should be offered and be done by the people around them. From her answer, it can be assumed that her mother explains to her and provides second language acquisition for her. It can be said that the explanation is delivered in the learner's native language to make it easy to understand. Hanna later explained that a second language could only be offered in the native language unless that person is proficient in the second language.

The findings of boarding school students acquiring a second language through explication can also be found in Student B's responses. During the semi-structured interview, she explained that she learned English during the primary one schooling term from her teacher and her classmates. During the interview, Student B stated that:

*...aaaa... ..aaaa... pengalaman yang paling saya ingat masa tu saya darjah dua. Masa tu ...ummmm... my teacher ajar Bahasa Inggeris tentang vocabulary, and then dia bagi senarai perkataan suruh cari maksud. Pastu ...ummmm... ada satu perkataan ni saya ingat sampai sekarang maksud dia. Sebab kadang kadang saya ni mudah lupa.*

(Student B, Semi-structured interview)

*I sometimes speak English with my friends...*

(Student B, Semi-structured interview)

Student B elaborated on her English language learning process in the verbatim above. Her teacher taught her English vocabulary and asked her to look for the meaning of words she provided in a list. Student B stated that her teacher's learning activities helped her learn new vocabulary and remember the meaning of the words. During the interview, Student B also mentioned that she learned the language through interaction and communication. Thus, Student B also acquires her second language through explication.

As for Student C elaborated that she gains a second language through activities that she has joined. The activities included debates, choral speaking, and the gavel club introduced to her by her school. During the interview, Student C mentioned that:

*And I ever, get into choral speaking, debates and also gavel club, just to improve my speaking and my English skills.*

(Student C, Semi-structured interview)

According to Student C, her involvement in the activities mentioned above helped her improve her English language proficiency. As the activities required her to speak up in public, it provided her with an opportunity to use the language in a meaningful context. At the same time, she could also learn new vocabulary as she could listen to the other's speech and identify how they use the language. The findings collected from Students C shows that she acquires the language through her involvement in the activities and observation of how the language was used.

Student D's explanation regarding her second language acquisition is similar with Student C. During the interview; Student D stated that:

*So, the teachers usually ...urmmmm...occupied us with some ...Arrrrr... essay exercises and vocabularies so... we also do a lot of speaking activities... by the ....but we also do a lot of speaking activities like ...Arrrrr... try to communicate with others in the class and outside the class.*

(Student D, Semi-structured interview)

Student D also enhances her second language most of the time with her teacher. She mentioned that her teacher always provides her with exercises that expose her to new vocabularies to learn. She also described that her teacher always prepares her with speaking activities that enable her

to speak inside and outside the classroom. It is crystal clear that Student D acquired her second language through explication. She receives her explication process from her teacher at the school.

The fifth participant of the study, Student E, also experiences similar language learning and acquisition process. During the interview session, she mentioned that she learned the language through songs played by her teacher during the classroom session. However, she also added that she learned the language through the internet and daily communication with family members. She stated that:

*Yes...Umm... I would..... sometimes I would listen to song. My teacher will project a song for me.*

(Student E, Semi-structured interview)

Student E elaborated that she learned the language through one of the classroom activities conducted by her teacher. According to her, sometimes her teacher will play songs in the English language during the teaching and learning session. The students were required to listen to the songs, identify the lyrics of the songs, and identify if there was any unfamiliar vocabulary used. They then must identify the meaning of the words. The students must also fill in missing words redacted from the lyrics and identify the missing words.

Besides that, Student E also emphasizes that she acquires the second language through induction. This can be seen from her interview saying that she continuously learns new vocabulary from the internet and her family. Based on her answer, she always uses technology such as the internet to help her obtain information and at the same time improve her proficiency in the language. Student E's responses show that she acquired the language through induction.

Based on the findings, generally, all the students acquire a second language through explication, except for Student E. Explication refers to how second language acquisition is made through the explaining process to the learner. This includes learning rules and structures and commonly will be explained through the native language. Thus, students could not acquire a second language by themselves, which is through self-analysis or the induction process. Children learn a second language by engaging in natural, meaningful dialogue with their caregivers and teachers and structured classrooms.

They naturally gain complex knowledge of the structure of their language based on this evidence. However, they cannot characterize this information which includes the rules and structures of a second language, unless being taught through explication. This is where the induction process takes place. Based on the finding with Student E, it can be concluded that in terms of induction, this ability remains relatively high with age, except for a few students. This skill enables students to make discoveries in their daily lives, even to the point of analyzing the grammar rules of a second language.



**Research Question 2: How Mother Tongue Helps Boarding School Students To Acquire A Second Language?**

Mother tongue refers primarily to the language that one learns from one's mother and the dominant and home language of the speaker. It is also recognized as the native language (Denizer, 2017). The study's findings show the influence of mother tongue on second language acquisition among boarding school students.

During the interview, Student A admits that she usually transfers her second language first as she is afraid of making mistakes. She will translate from Malay to English in her mind first before speaking it out. She stated that:

*Yes... aaa... yes because at the first... I'm scared if ...aaaa... I will do mistakes if I didn't apa ...aaaa... interpret... Ayat tu kat mind dulu takut salah bila kita bercakap kan eventhough kita ni dah susun dah ayat tu dekat minda kita tapi still buat salah tapi kita still cuba untuk... betulkan Bahasa Inggeris kita sebaiknya.*

(Student A, Semi-structured interview)

This explains the importance of the mother tongue itself in second language acquisition. Boarding school students tend to translate their first language to the second language before interacting with others.

The same findings can be found in Student B responses, in which she uses the same approach before articulating in the second language. However, instead of translating the language in her mind, she mentioned that she would need to prepare the text on paper before translating it to English. This can be found in the verbatim:

*Kalau ada situasi yang macam situasi formal, saya kena berucap ke... haa... kalau macam tu saya kena buat Bahasa Melayu dulu baru saya translate kan ke Bahasa Inggeris...*

(Student B, Semi-structured interview)

The third participant, Student C, also uses the same approach. During the interview, she responded that:

*Yes... So that I can... I can create a better sentence so my words will sound... would sounds more confident.*

(Student C, Semi-structured interview)

Student C explains that she needs to first translate the first language into the second language in her mind to create better words for her to communicate with others. According to her, translating the sentences in her mind would help her develop better sentences that are free from errors. She also added that she would be more confident in speaking and articulating her ideas.

Student D's were also found to use the same approach. However, instead of translating in her mind or writing it on a piece of paper, Student D plans what she wants to say. She prepares a script and chooses the words carefully. During the interview, she stated that:

*Yes, I do translate it before I speak. I don't really feel bad about that because... arr... I know myself and I don't want to rush things... uhh... so usually I have to... uh... prepare myself or write the script or the point about... aaa... to... save myself from embarrassing moments.*

(Student D, Semi-structured interview)

According to Student D, she identifies her weakness in speaking in the second language, and she does not want to make any mistakes. To avoid such embarrassing moments, she plans what she wants to say by preparing a script and identifying possible ideas that she could use during the verbal communication process. She believes that by doing this, she will be able to speak clearly and smoothly without worrying about making mistakes that could cost her embarrassment.

Finally, when Student E was asked whether she translated the first language to the second language, she responded that:

*Sometime... If it too difficult*

(Student E, Semi-structured interview)

Based on the findings above, all the students learned the second language during their primary schooling term. Moreover, during that term, they were yet to develop their second language, resulting in each of the students applying the same method in translating their first language into English.

In this era of globalization, translation plays a critical role in transmitting messages from one language to another. However, translation is a complex undertaking, as there are numerous examples of wrong translations. This is in keeping with Mardin Silalahi, Zainal Rafli, and Yumna Rasyid's (2018) prior research, which indicated that translation is a process centred on the meaning of a second language text from the first language. The definition of translation should be capable of effectively utilizing the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the source language. The distinctions between one and another in the native language are the features we can look for during language learning. Pronunciation errors, though a large number in the first language, exhibit more in the first language effect than speaking errors.

It can be said that the students were using a bilingual approach too, which is learning where two languages have been used. The target language and the mother tongue are both utilized. At the same time, a student learns his or her native tongue and foreign language vocabulary. The bilingual approach is distinct from the translation method. Only the teacher's mother tongue is used to clarify the meaning of complex terms. Students are given plenty of opportunities to practice sentence patterns. The translation technique does not specify this. In an actual circumstance, a youngster learns the mother tongue. He relates the meaning of words to his own life. In this approach, the youngster develops the idea into other concepts in his or her

head. These circumstances could have arisen because of teaching a foreign language. The bilingual technique uses the language habits developed when learning the mother tongue. According to Subandowo (2017), student's pronunciation errors are close to those made by monolingual first language learners, though only a tiny proportion of speech pronunciation errors are traceable to first language learners.

Based on the findings from the semi-structured interview, the interviewees had faced difficulties in switching from their mother tongue to their second language. Perhaps they have a limited vocabulary of the second language, resulting in not knowing the appropriate word to use in verbal communication. Nor Hani Misbah, Maslawati Mohamad, Melor Yunos and Azizah Yaacob (2017) state that students struggle to communicate in English because of minimal vocabulary.

Other than that, mispronunciation and grammatical errors are the most common forms of interference between the mother tongue and the target language (Manrique, 2013). It was also established that writing is the most challenging among the four language skills. Furthermore, he indicated that the Subject with improved disclosure discovered various other faults in written texts that are very difficult to recognize, such as semantic, syntactic, morphological, spelling, vocabulary mistakes, and even phonological errors.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, many factors affect second language acquisition among boarding school students, but only two factors have been discussed in this study. Both factors are intellectual processing and mother tongue. Intellectual processing that requires both the explication and induction process and mother tongue, which affect students' articulatory speech, can make a massive difference towards successful learning. These factors influence boarding school students' acquiring a second language as the factors play a crucial role in determining the students' learning ability. It can be seen that boarding school students' success in acquiring a second language depends on the factors that affect them in terms of intellectual processing and mother tongue. As generally known, learning itself is a process of an individual to gain skills and knowledge for themselves. To acquire a second language, students should have received second language input since they are young and fully occupied by the two essential psychological factors.

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