



---

**RESEARCH PAPER****Predictors of English as Second Language Proficiency of Pakistani Undergraduate Business Students**

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Pir Suhail Ahmed Sarhandi, <sup>2</sup>Alia Ali Bhutto\* and <sup>3</sup>Shehla Sohail

1. Registrar, Aror University of Art, Architecture, Design & Heritage, Sukkur, Sindh, Pakistan
2. Lecturer and Manager Communication and Publications ORIC, The Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University Sukkur, Sindh, Pakistan
3. Instructor, English NUML Karachi Campus, Sindh, Pakistan

---

\*Corresponding Author | [alia.bhutto@bnbwu.edu.pk](mailto:alia.bhutto@bnbwu.edu.pk)

---

**ABSTRACT**

The study aims to identify the strongest predictors of English as a second language (ESL) proficiency, specifically in reading and writing, among undergraduate management sciences students across three Pakistani universities. Utilizing purposive sampling, data were collected from 350 participants through questionnaires and proficiency tests and analyzed with regression analysis via SPSS. Results indicated that motivation to learn English emerged as the strongest predictor of overall L2 proficiency, followed closely by attitudes towards learning English and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). For ESL reading proficiency, motivation again ranked highest, followed by SILL and attitudes. In contrast, SILL was the primary predictor for writing proficiency, with motivation and attitudes following. The study recommends that ESL teachers foster environments that enhance student motivation and cultivate positive attitudes towards learning English. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of training learners in effective language learning strategies both in and out of the classroom to improve their ESL skills.

**KEYWORDS** ESL Proficiency, Motivation & Attitudes, ESL Reading, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

---

**Introduction**

Language is the key for human communication, and individuals across the globe learn languages other than their mother tongue to convey their feelings and emotions within and across communities. In the current geo-political scenario of the world, the English language possesses unrivaled prestige as well as importance, and it is considered as the Lingua Franca of the World (Jenkins, 2019).

English has been learnt as a second or foreign language and it is used as a medium of instruction and contributes to social mobility in most countries around the world. To communicate within society, a speaker must have standard language competency (Channa, Manan & Davide, 2021). English has been a part of the educational system from pre-primary to tertiary level as a compulsory subject (Ahmed & Arif, 2020). It is also the language of international politics, media, and business in the 21st century, which is essential to be learned for career success (Lorincová, Štarchoň, Weberová, Hitka, Lipoldová, 2019). It is essential to identify the factors that affect students' L2 proficiency in English as a second or foreign language classroom, so teachers can focus on these factors in their English language teaching.

Motivation to learn a second language could be an essential factor that could affect students' L2 proficiency (Wu, 2022; Li & Zhang, 2021). Motivation is defined as a process through which a learner adopts the learning framework (Dörnyei, 2019). Students could be motivated to learn English as a second language for acquiring a good education, a lucrative job, and other incentives (Dincer & Yesilyurt, 2017).

In addition, the attitudes of language learners towards learning L2 may be another significant factor for L2 achievement. Attitudes are defined as an individual's belief or reaction towards a particular situation, and it is a psychological process to express positive or negative emotions (Eshghinejad, 2016). The behavioral engagement in English as a second language varies from student to student. The L2 learning attitude is influenced by the teacher's role as well as the environmental components of the course offered by the institute in which a learner is enrolled. In this scenario, both the negative and positive attitudes towards learning L2 can emerge, affecting the students' L2 proficiency (Getie, 2020).

Besides L2 motivation and attitudes towards L2 learning, language learning strategies can also be critical for attaining language proficiency. Learning strategies are defined as personal behaviors to engage in a particular task (Mohammadi, Birjandi, & Maftoon, 2015). Oxford's learning strategies model is believed to be one of the most comprehensive classifications in this regard (Ellis, 1994). Keeping in view the importance of the language learning strategies used by the students, it is highly imperative to investigate Pakistani students' language learning strategies using.

Moreover, L2 learning approaches are known as the integration between reasons and engagement of learning tasks. The learning approaches have been divided into two main categories: Deep and surface-level approaches. The surface-level learning approach involves minimal conceptual effort, while the deep learning approach involves the personal investment of effort and time towards a particular task. The deep approach may significantly impact L2 proficiency, while the surface-level approach could be less effective (Astika & Sumakul, 2020).

This study aims to identify the strongest predictors of L2 proficiency among motivation, SILL, learning approaches, and attitudes towards learning L2. A quantitative study will be conducted to determine the relationship between these variables and the L2 proficiency of Pakistani undergraduate students.

## Literature Review

### Measures of L2 Proficiency

The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) have been used as significant test authorities for EFL or ESL proficiency. A candidate's listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are examined to evaluate the whole sum of ESL or EFL proficiency. Minimal English Test (MET) followed the cloze-test pattern recorded students' simple performance in a one-way test (Gotto, Maki, & Kasai, 2010). To meet the needs of the twenty-first century, United States (US) generated an online language proficiency system, namely the "English Language Proficiency Assessment 21" (ELAP-21) system was generated as an online assessment system to measure language proficiency. ELAP was developed to meet the standards of educational institutes and to diagnose the weak area of the learners (Yao et. al., 2018).

## **Motivation to L2 Learning**

L2 learning motivation has been defined as an abstract term. It is not able to observe directly; there are multiple interactions associated with human behavior. It involves the possible concept such as: need to learn, encouragement to value and fulfill the aims, beliefs and relevant responses, motives, and insensible reasons (Spolsky, 2000, Dornyei, 2001). The area of motivation in L2 learning is associated with multiple theories. The theories aim to explain and investigate the students' efforts to learn the second language (Csizer, 2019). Motivation in L2 learning has been researched in the context of Asia and South Asia. It is a key factor to achieve long-term and short-term success in L2 learning. Long-term success is concerned with future goals, and in contrast, short-term success is to be successful in small projects (Kormos & Wilby, 2019). Motivation is the key element to learning L2. In Pakistan's context, motivation is defined by the learners as the source to complete the tasks, to pass the examination, and to have a good job (Nazir, Bashir, & Bashir, 2017).

Learning a second language is a challenge that requires motivation not only for an adult but also for an immigrant. The challenges faced while learning may create barriers to the learning process. Though the situation may lead to demotivation and lack of engagement, it may have a destructive impact on academic and employment issues. The affected person is not able to communicate and maintain the social relationship in the targeted language. Additionally, self-esteem is also affected. To increase and maintain second language acquisition (SLA) motivation, the researchers suggested that a teacher/instructors have to create an environment that includes group and peer work, follow-up tasks, interactive classroom sessions for successful SLA without any obstacle.

Motivation to learn English as ESL or EFL has always been a most important and risky factor (Dörnyei, & Csizér, 2002). Motivation is a condition where a person has to decide what he/she can do to achieve the goal. It also involves the attitudes and emotional states that enforce the learners to acquire the second language (Ellis, 1997). Gardner (1985) explained three main types of motivation, but one kind of motivation promotes successful SLA regardless of the age factor. According to Ellis (1985), that is integrative motivation. Integrative motivation is a process of language learning which requires the learner to affiliate his/her to the community while speaking the language. However, those interested in exploring the target language culture are more successful second language learners than less communicative learners. Besides, the essential type of motivation is "regulative motivation" (Ellis, 1997). It provides a path as an instrumental motivation to make their lives better and fulfill their life goals. This type of motivation invokes learners' souls to pass the examination for immigration purposes, to get a better job, higher education, or to communicate with schoolteachers (Morris, 2001; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). The other important key element of motivation is "Intrinsic motivation". This type of motivation regulates the process of enjoyment while learning the second language. It does not associate fear, anxiety, or negative feelings while learning a second language in classroom settings.

## **Language, Attitudes, Motivation, and L2 Proficiency**

The term attitude was considered as an abstract psychological processing concept approx. A century ago. Previously, it was only considered physical and was used to describe the pose people took for a portrait. From a psychological point of view, the attitude was first defined as a mental state of readiness to respond to something based on experiences and influencing posterior behavior toward a specific object.

There are several hypotheses raised in the literature about the relations of attitudes, motivation, and orientations to achievement in the second language (see, for example, Au, 1988; Cleament, DoÈrnyei, & Noels, 1994). These hypotheses have been proposed based on different researchers' results in very different contexts, often using different measures.

In SLA, Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two prominent roles of attitudes: 1. Instrumental attitudes are related to the desire to receive social-status recognition or good benefits, and 2. Integrative attitudes are related to the desire to be integrated into another language community. These roles describe the position of students concerning their language learning situation. Instrumental attitudes are when the student is learning the language for personal interest. Integrative attitudes are when the student is learning a language to be integrated into a specific community that speaks that language. Students learning a second language may report instrumental and integrative attitudes in response to instruments measuring these attitudes (Gardner, 1985).

Eshghinejad (2016) explains the construct of attitude as the behavior of people towards something or someone. In English as a foreign language context, various factors influence students' learning, for example, attitudes, aptitudes, anxiety, motivation, fear, learning objectives, intelligence, personality, and age. Fakeye (2010) believes that language learning significantly influences the learners' attitudes towards it. Fakeye studied attitudes of randomly selected senior secondary students' attitudes from the gender point of view and found that although attitude and achievement significantly related to each other, students' gender did not affect the attitudinal difference in results.

Learning is successful if the learners have positive attitudes towards language; therefore, attitudes play a vital role either as positive or negative influences that impact the language learning process. Also, attitudes are directly related to the experiences of learners that they undergo in the community. Brown (2001) relates attitude with emotions, feelings, and other moods that develop in a community.

According to Al-Mamun, M. Rahman, A. R. Rahman, and Hossaim (2012), attitudes are related to psychology and represent a particular behavior. The attitudes are personality traits that ostensibly cannot be observed, yet upbeat and negative attitudes can be measured through the learners' responses. In learning, the attitudes of learners play an essential role; as such, their learning is affected by various factors. This study tried to investigate the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive factors that may impact learners' attitudes towards learning the English language and found that participants possessed positive attitudes towards it.

Attitudes are the most vital factor in successful foreign language learning. In this study, the researchers have tried to uncover the participants' attitudes in three domains: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional. The results have shown that the students predominantly had positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. Positive attitudes can be deduced that their language learning is successfully carried out. It is expected that students in Pakistan are committed to English language learning. One of the facts that the students who were either already qualified or were studying for formal education somewhere in Sukkur viewed the English Works certificate course as an opportunity to improve their English language skills. It also shows their commitment and an overall positive attitude towards learning the English language.

Attitude is verbal and non-verbal action towards the uncompleted or pending tasks. Attitude is the state of mind, so it is also known as a set of beliefs to learn or acquire a new language. If a learner has a negative attitude towards the target language, the learner

will not achieve the required score. The attitude of a learner can be changed due to personality factors. It may vary from person to person (Anuradha & Rengaraj, 2017). To learn a new language in classroom settings, the learner must have a positive attitude. To maintain students' positive attitude teacher or instructor is the source. If the teacher does not show concern towards the students, they may not have positive attitudes towards the learning situation (Frida, 2008). The Study of Viet et. al (2017) suggested that students have positive attitudes towards learning; the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive component of the attitude motivation has a positive correlation with the English language learning. Rukh (2014) conducted a study on undergraduate students enrolled in the business management program. The researcher selected two hundred participants to form a public sector university located in Sargodha. The data was collected through a questionnaire, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The graphical representation investigated that all the participants had positive attitudes towards the English language with better academic achievements.

### **Language Learning Strategies (LLS)**

Second language learning strategies have been widely explored for decades to explore the relationship between (LLS) and other language proficiency predictors. However, the second language is acquired with strategies and sufficient input of the second language. Oxford (1990) defines strategies as "Specific actions used by learners to make learning stress-free, fast, self-directed. In addition to it, Ellis (1990) experienced as: "A strategy consists of mental or behavioral activity related to some specific space in the overall process of language acquisition or language in use (p.529). However, LLS are also described as a choice that learners make to make SL more effective and comfortable (Cook, 2000).

L2 learning strategies have been widely explored for decades to explore the relationship between (LLS) and other predictors of language proficiency. However, the L2 is acquired with a combination of strategies and sufficient input of L2. Oxford (1990) defines strategies as "Specific actions used by learners to make learning stress-free, fast, self-directed. In addition, Ellis (1990) experienced as: "A strategy consists of mental or behavioral activity related to some specific space in the overall process of language acquisition or language in use (p.529). However, LLS are also described as a choice which learners to make second language learning more effective and easier (Cook, 2000).

Attitudes towards learning the English language are one of the significant factors to maintain L2 proficiency and achievement. Ming, Ling, and Jaffar (2011) conducted a study on fifteen-hundred, and seventy-two undergraduate students enrolled at a public sector university in Malaysia. The researcher used the quantitative ANOVA technique to determine positive negative and attitudes of L2 learning and proficiency. The results of the study showed that 71 percent of students had positive attitudes. However, on the other hand, 29 percent had negative attitudes towards second language learning and proficiency. Besides, Karatas et. al., (2016) study aimed to explore the attitudes towards learning English from gender's perspective. The results showed that both genders had positive attitudes towards learning English to maintain L2 proficiency, and attitudes towards learning did not differ within both genders (Soomro, Bango, and Mahesar, 2018). However, the role of the teacher to maintain optimistic attitudes in a language classroom is significant. A teacher must teach the language with different techniques, and the process of learning must be enjoyable. A teacher must not be forced to learn, but the classroom environment encourages the students to participate throughout the session. The pessimistic attitude of a teacher or an instructor can affect learners' second language proficiency. Besides teachers' attitudes, other factors that can affect learning English are

classroom settings, course content, and language learning situations. These factors can have an insignificant impact on school students, but it can involve college and university students (Getie, 2020).

To investigate the relationship of attitudes towards L2 proficiency, Jaliyya and Irdus (2017) conducted in-depth interviews to investigate students' positive or negative attitudes. The results revealed that most of the students had positive attitudes towards L2 learning (which leads to L2 proficiency). On the contrary, there were few students who had a pessimistic view towards L2 proficiency. They reported that the negative attitude of the course instructor demotivates them to write in L2.

L2 learning strategies with L2 proficiency have been researched for decades. Researchers come across diverse findings of every study, so relationships like L2 and language learning strategies have been researched. The undergraduate learners preferred compensation language learning strategy (a sub-set of direct language learning strategies) to maintain their L2 proficiency. Compensation language learning strategy enabled learner to polish their respective and productive skills. It was also reported that direct language strategies had a significant impact on L2's descriptive and prescriptive purposes (Ahmad, & Arif, 2020).

In contrast, a few students suggested that they used indirect language learning strategies, and they were less famous (Saito, 2020). So, the direct and indirect strategies are used by the school, college, and university students. Most of the subsets from indirect strategies were used by school students. However, college and university students use a blend of both strategies. The basic objective was to maintain L2 proficiency (Stander, 2020). The least famous language learning strategy in undergraduate students was memory-based learning strategy. The university students did not promote rote learning, but they promote cognitive (practice) language learning strategies (Hidayah, 2020).

The role of motivation to maintain L2 proficiency cannot be neglected. Moreover, it has been considered a significant aspect of the learning process. Sallang and Ling (2019) suggested that instrumental motivation (a sub-set of motivation) plays a vital role in maintaining L2 proficiency. Khodadad and Kaur (2018) found a positive correlation between L2 proficiency and motivation. They suggested that motivation and its different types are essential to develop and maintain L2 proficiency. However, approaches to learning a new language can be taken as a significant element for L2 learning and proficiency. Approaches to learn have been divided into two major categories: "deep and surface-level". Learning approaches can vary from context to context, level to level, so the teachers and syllabus designers must add some practical exercises to enable the learners to practice on them (Yu, 2022).

## **Material and Methods**

The research study is based on the quantitative domain, and the researcher used a survey approach used to collect data. Besides determining the second language proficiency, reading and writing tests were selected from IELTS book 12. Furthermore, the questionnaire had different variables to predict L2 proficiency.

The study's primary aim is to determine the strongest predictors for second language proficiency of undergraduate students of the business administration program enrolled in significant divisions of Sindh province (both the developed and underdeveloped areas of Sindh are covered). To determine the strongest predictors of second language proficiency, the language and course teachers may have an idea to teach

English better. The results can be generalized to all undergraduate students of both the public and private sectors.

### Population and Sampling

A sample of 400 undergraduate program students enrolled in the management sciences department (BBA program) from the Karachi and Sukkur division participated in the present study regarding second language proficiency predictors. A sample of 350 students was collected during the main study, and the remaining 50 of that during the pilot study. Data was collected from the public and private sectors of the Karachi and Sukkur division.

Out of samples, 265 (76.8) % were male students. Simultaneously, 72 were female students making it 20.9 % of the total samples, indicating enthusiastic participation in the study by the male students (the rest of the students did not mark the gender identification). Exploring further into statistics, 181 (52.5) % of students belonged to the Sukkur division, and 163 (47.2) % belonged to the Karachi division. Besides it, 181 students were from the public sector, and 164 students were enrolled in private sector universities.

**Table 1**  
**Population**

	Students' demographics	Frequencies	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male students	265	76.8
	Female students	72	20.9
<b>Sector</b>	Public	181	52.5
	Private	164	47.5
<b>Location</b>	Karachi	181	52.5
	Sukkur	163	47.2

### Sample

The researcher used a non-probability convenient sampling technique to collect the data for pilot and final studies. The researcher had access to collect data from different educational institutes from Karachi and Sukkur. That is why a convenient sampling technique had used to reach the sample size.

### Research Instruments

The current study followed a quantitative paradigm. The researcher collected data through the survey technique. The instruments used in the data collection process were reading and writing tests and a questionnaire.

The questionnaire for the current study was based on fifty-four items and five variables. The reported value of the Cronbach alpha is 0.851 percent. The value of Cronbach alpha of the current study determined that data is reliable eight five percent out of hundred. Whereas the Cronbach alpha's values for individual variables stood at 0.812 for motivation, 0.799 for attitudes towards learning the English language, the value of SILL was 0.801, and the reported value for the approaches to learning a second language was 0.755 percent. The Cronbach values with the total number of items are below:

**Table 2**  
**Reliability Analysis**

S no:	Variable	Cronbach value	Total items
1	Motivation	0.812	04
2	Attitudes to learning English	0.799	04
3	SILL	0.801	28

4	Approaches to learn	0.755	18
---	---------------------	-------	----

### Language Proficiency Test

Besides, to record the level of L2 proficiency, a reading and writing test was selected from the series of IELTS books. Book 12 was selected for the present study. IELTS scoring scheme was used. The band system was converted into marks from 0-9. The marking scheme was the same for the reading and writing tests. The reading and writing test scores were computed to form a new variable to assess language proficiency.

### Marking Scheme of Writing Test

The marks scheme to assess the writing task is based on four primary categories, which are:

- Task achievement
- Cohesion and Coherence
- Lexical resources
- Grammatical range and resources

### Marking Scheme of Reading Test

The marking scheme to assess the reading proficiency task has nine categories, categories are:

- Do not attempt the test
- Non-reader
- Intermittent reader
- Minimal reading comprehension
- Limited reading comprehension
- Modest in reading comprehension
- Competent in reading comprehension
- Good at reading comprehension
- Better at reading comprehension
- Expert at reading comprehension

However, to calculate final marks for the reading and writing tests, IELTS raw band calculation system was converted into marks. The final marks were divided from 0-9; the same procedure was followed for the writing task. The band's score was converted into marks.

### Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire

In this present study, an updated version of SILL had been used; Ardasheva and Tretter (2013) had modified the SILL. The present version of SILL had the same six sub-categories, but it was limited to twenty-eight items. The first category of SILL was based on Memory, and it had seven items. The items were based on tips and techniques for dealing with new words. All the respective and productive skills were part of this sub-set. In addition to it, the cognition and thinking process was also part of the memory strategy. The second sub-set was based on the cognitive part of the learners. It had four items. In this part, techniques with psychological aspects are discussed; for example, one strategy was to summarize the paragraph to read it or write it again. The third sub-set was based on the problem-solving techniques consisting of cognitive, psychological, and physical activities that have been used by the learners to resolve language learning problems.



The fourth part of SILL deals with multiple strategies used by a person; however, these strategies involved the psychological and physical aspects of learning. It is the fifth sub-set of the complete set, and it has three items. In this section, the student had to reward him/herself after task completion. In addition to it, the student expresses his/her feelings after learning English.

Moreover, the last sub-set of SILL had four items. The primary element of this category is regarding society and surroundings. Tips and techniques regarding how to practice and seek help from others are discussed.

For the current study, the researcher used seven points of Likert-scale with different statements. In the first part, categories from "Never" to "Always" were used. The description of the statements was as below:

Here 1 stands for Never, 2 stands for very Rarely, 3 stands for Rarely, 4 stands for Occasionally, 5 stands for Frequently, 6 stands for Very Frequently, 7 stands for Always.

### **Motivation and Attitudes towards Learning English Questionnaire**

Hashimoto (2002) proposed a construct in Mini-AMTB regarding attitudes and motivation towards learning English. The construct of motivation (instrumental and oriental) and attitudes (teacher and course) towards learning English were used.

The motivation had two more sub-sets (instrumental and integrative). In the motivation section, desire, importance, interest in hard work to learn English were evaluated. It consisted of four items. Attitudes towards learning English had three categories; the attitude towards course instructor, learning environment, and community where EL was spoken, and it had four items.

In the second part of the questionnaire, the researcher used different categories for the Likert-Point Scale from weak to strong and unfavorable to favorable (such as) weak to strong, very high to very low, unfavorable to favorable, and very little to very high.

### **Approaches towards L2 Learning Questionnaire**

Biggs (1987) proposed a learning process questionnaire for the school level; later, changes were made to modify it. This questionnaire was linked with students' approaches to learning. However, this questionnaire measured all the essential factors (such as knowledge, ability, learning abilities and teaching context, method assessment, and study surroundings). The updated version of the revised study process questionnaire had twenty items and two main constructs. The primary constructs were: Deep approach and surface Approach. The primary constructs had sub-sets. The in-depth approach had two sub-sets: deep motive and deep strategy, and the Surface approach had two sub-sets, namely, surface motive and surface strategy (Biggs & Leung, 2001). Both the more in-depth and surface approach had ten items each. All the factors that are discussed above were investigated by using the R-SPQ questionnaire.

In the last part of the questionnaire, the statements were rated as "Strongly disagree to Strongly Agree. The descriptions of the statements were below:

1 stands for strongly disagree, 2 stands for slightly disagree, 3 stands for slightly disagree, 4 stands for neutral, 5 stands for slightly agree, 6 stands for agreeing, 7 stands for strongly agree.

## Data Analysis

The pilot study showed that data had minimum requirements to run major tests for the final study. The major quantitative analysis techniques were (descriptive) bar charts and Linear Regression Analysis (inferential statistics, ordinary least square method). The researcher run a few data cleaning techniques such as missing values analysis, removing outliers, data screening, and reliability analysis.

## Ethical Considerations

A researcher is obligated not to disclose the identity of the participants. With the help of a consent letter, the researcher ensured that all the identities would be kept confidential. Moreover, it was mentioned in the questionnaire that the researcher ensured not to disclose the identity.

## Results and Discussion

Research question three was set to find out the significant relationship of independent variables with the dependent variable and to determine the strongest predictors to maintain language proficiency in the English language. The results reported that a positive correlation existed among all variables. The estimated p-value was .000 with the R-square value .040. The results suggested that the model was accurate to report the analysis.

**Table 3**  
**Regression analysis**

F-statistics			.1739	
p- value			.141	
R square			.040	
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>t-statistics</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Motivation	.053	0.43	.000	1.195
Attitudes	.049	.045	.000	1.115
SILL	.035	.020	.001	1.162
Approaches to learn	.002	.120	.002	1.126

The above table presents the results of the regression analysis for the dependent variable and independent variables. To answer RQ 5 and RQ 6, the dependent variable was language proficiency. The coefficient of motivation proposed that the independent variable is the strongest predictor for English Language proficiency with reported value of .053. The value was of attitudes towards learning English were determined as the stronger predictor of English language proficiency; the value was .049. However, the SILL was marked as the strong predictor for English language proficiency; the value was .035. The data of approaches to learning remained constant; it did not forecast any insignificant correlation with dependent variable. The reported value of R square was 30 %, with a probability value of .002.

**Table 4**  
**Determining the Predictors of Language Proficiency (with Sub-Categories)**  
**Regression Analysis with sub-categories**

F-statistics			.1879	
p-value			.000	
R-square			.040	
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>t-statistics</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>VIF</b>
Motivation	.091	0.005	.001	1.191
Integrative	.089	0.235	.000	1.256
Attitudes towards learning English	.080	0.220	.001	1.256

Compensation	0.78	0.123	.000	1.139
Meta-cognitive	.068	0.167	.000	1.371
Surface Approach	.049	0.123	.001	1.433

The above table presents the results of the regression analysis of the sub-categories of the independent variables. The analysis aimed to cross-check generated results with their sub-categories. The results were the same as it was for the main categories. Motivation remained the strongest predictor for English language proficiency. Both motivation and integrative motivation were marked as the strongest predictors. The value of the motivation was .091 and for the integrative motivation was .089.

The dependent variable, attitudes towards learning English, was determined as the stronger predictor of English language proficiency. The positive attitudes of the teacher enabled learners to perform better in the English language. The reported coefficient was .080.

SILL was marked as a strong predictor. From the SILL, the most common strategies were compensation and meta-cognitive strategies. Learners used both strategies in reading and writing. The coefficient of compensation was .078 and .068 for the metacognitive strategies.

However, the approaches to learning a language remained significant. The students used a surface approach to maintain their language proficiency. The coefficient of the surface approach was .049.

## Conclusion

The research question was set to determine the significant correlation of independent variables with dependent variables and to predict the strongest predictor of L2 proficiency. The results reported that a significant correlation existed among all variables. The estimated *p*-value was .000, with the *R*-square value being .020. The results suggested that the model was accurate.

The coefficient of motivation's value proposed the independent variable as the strongest predictor for English Language proficiency. The value was .049. Besides, attitudes towards learning English were determined as the stronger predictor of English language proficiency. The value was .049. However, the SILL was marked as a strong predictor for English language proficiency. The value was .035. The beta of learning approaches remained constant; it did not forecast any negative correlation with the dependent variable. The reported value was .002, with a probability value of .002.

For decades motivation is an important factor in learning a new language or foreign language. Still, motivation is a constant element to enhance and maintain second language proficiency. The outcomes of the present study suggested that motivation (with sub-categories) was the first strongest factor for L2 proficiency. The results are like Hu and McGeown, (2020); Muñoz-Restrepo, Ramirez & Gaviria, 2020, so previous studies showed that motivation reinforces learners to learn the new and to beat the challenges of language proficiency. Students desired to learn English to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. They were willing to work harder to maintain fluency in the English language to communicate and a better future. In contrast, Hong and Ganapathy's (2017) study found instrumental motivation as an important element to maintain L2. It was suggested that if the learners were instrumentally motivated, they would better learn a foreign or second language.

Attitudes towards learning English have a significant impact on second or foreign language learning (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006). The positive attitudes towards learning language positively correlate with L2 proficiency (Johnson et. al., 2019). The estimated results of the current study suggested that positive attitudes towards learning second or foreign language assisted learners to maintain language proficiency. Moreover, it was determined as the second strongest predictor for L2 proficiency. It was observed in previous studies that the positive behavior of an instructor along with students' attitudes supported them to maintain their proficiency in reading and writing, and they were satisfied with the course offered by the university (Orfan, 2020; Lai & Aksornjarung, 2018).

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) have been defined as specific actions consciously employed by the learner for language learning (Griffiths, 2007, p. 91). The results of current strategies explored that SILL was the third strongest predictor of L2 proficiency. Learners used different LLS to polish their language skills. The results supported Ali, Zaman, and Khan, 2018. Hence, it had been proven that students used different strategies to maintain their language proficiency.

Among the four different independent variables, "Approaches to Learn" was determined as a constant predictor for L2 proficiency, as it enables the learners to understand and comprehend the topics effectively. It was reported by the students that the approach to learning a second or foreign language helped them to maintain their proficiency in reading and writing. According to Bobe and Cooper (2017), most of the undergraduate students use both approaches to maintain L2 proficiency. Besides, the deep and surface approach involved the student's engagement towards a task, the different strategies of how the student manages (comprehend or to memorize) the task, how to organize, and how much time is needed to complete the task. In addition to it, the approaches involved the teaching strategy and material provided by the teacher or course instructor. Results for the current study can provide a path to the teachers for how to help the students to their polish language proficiency.

### **Recommendations**

- Universities or educational institutes must establish the a content review committee/board which may approve the material before teaching it to the students.
- Instructors must check the relevancy and proficiency level of the content and the students.
- Instructors must introduce the SILL strategies for improving language's proficiency to the students and plan their teachings accordingly.

**References**

- Ahmad, I., & Arif, M. S. (2020). Teachers' perception of English language teaching at tertiary level education in Pakistan. *Pakistan Social Science Review*, 4(1), 191-203.
- Ali, A., Zaman, A., & Khan, F. A. (2018). Language learning strategy use and English language proficiency. *Global Social Sciences Review*, 3(2), 439-453.
- Anuradha, V., & Rengaraj, M. (2017). Students' attitude towards English language learning and their academic achievement among first year engineering graduates: A case study. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 10(29), 1-6.
- Astika, G., & Sumakul, D. T. Y. (2020). Students' profiles through learning approaches using Biggs' study process questionnaire. *ELTR Journal*, 4(1), 36-42.
- Biggs, J., Kember, D., & Leung, D. Y. (2001). The revised two-factor study process questionnaire: R-SPQ-2F. *British journal of educational psychology*, 71(1), 133-149.
- Bobe, B. J., & Cooper, B. J. (2019). The effect of language proficiency on approaches to learning and satisfaction of undergraduate accounting students. *Accounting Education*, 28(2), 149-171.
- Channa, L. A., Manan, S. A., & David, M. K. (2021). Global aspirations versus local resources: planning a sustainable English teaching policy in Pakistan. *Asian Englishes*, 23(3), 294-312.
- Cook, G. (2000). *Language play, language learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Csizér, K. (2019). The L2 motivational self-system. *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning*, 71-93.
- Dincer, A. L. İ., Yesilyurt, S., & Demiröz, H. (2017). Multi-Dimensional Classroom Engagement in EFL Contexts. *Online Submission*.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2003). Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. *Language learning*, 53.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2019). Towards a better understanding of the L2 Learning Experience, the Cinderella of the L2 Motivational Self System. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(1), 19-30.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Csizér, K. (2002). Some dynamics of language attitudes and motivation: Results of a longitudinal nationwide survey. *Applied linguistics*, 23(4), 421-462.
- Dörnyei, Z., Csizér, K., & Németh N. (2006). *Motivation, Language Attitudes and Globalisation: A Hungarian Perspective*. Multilingual Matters.
- Ellis, N. C. (1994). Consciousness in second language learning: Psychological perspectives on the role of conscious processes in vocabulary acquisition.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *SLA research and language teaching*. Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016-4314.

- Eshghinejad, S. (2016). RETRACTED ARTICLE: EFL students' attitudes toward learning English language: The case study of Kashan University students. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1236434.
- Fakeye, D. O. (2010). Students' personal variables as correlates of academic achievement in English as a second language in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 22(3), 205-211.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). Attitudes and motivation in second-language learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.
- Getie, A. S. (2020). Factors affecting the attitudes of students towards learning English as a foreign language. *Cogent Education*, 7(1), 1738184.
- Goto, K., Maki, H., & Kasai, C. (2010). The minimal English test: A new method to measure English as a second language proficiency. *Evaluation & Research in Education*, 23(2), 91-104.
- Griffiths, C. (2007). Language learning strategies: students' and teachers' perceptions, *ELT Journal*, 61 (2), 91-99
- Hidayah, T. (2020). Preference in language learning strategies (LLS) of the students in the English language education department at the University Of Muhammadiyah Jember. *ELP (Journal of English Language Pedagogy)*, 5(1), 61-72.
- Hong, Y. C., & Ganapathy, M. (2017). To Investigate ESL Students' Instrumental and Integrative Motivation towards English Language Learning in a Chinese School in Penang: Case Study. *English Language Teaching*, 10(9), 17-35.
- Hu, X., & McGeown, S. (2020). Exploring the relationship between foreign language motivation and achievement among primary school students learning English in China. *System*, 89, 102199.
- Jaliyya, F. G., & Idrus, F. (2017). EFL students' attitudes and perception towards English language learning and their English language proficiency: A study from Assa'adah Islamic boarding school, Indonesia. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 11(3), 219-228.
- Jenkins, J. (2019). English medium instruction in higher education: The role of English as lingua franca. *Second handbook of English language teaching*, 91-108.
- Karatas, H., Alci, B., Bademcioglu, M., & Ergin, A. (2016). Examining university students' attitudes towards learning English using different variables. *International Journal of Educational Researchers*, 7(3), 12-20.
- Khodadad, M., & Kaur, J. (2018). The relation of language learning strategy use with self-efficacy, motivation, and English language achievement. *Journal of Modern Languages*, 28, 1-19.
- Kormos, J., & Wilby, J. (2019). Task motivation. *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning*, 267-286.
- Lai, Y., & Aksornjarung, P. (2018). Thai EFL learners' attitudes and motivation towards learning English through content-based instruction. *MOJES: Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 6(1), 43-65.

- Li, M., & Zhang, L. (2021). Tibetan CSL learners' L2 motivational self-system and L2 achievement. *System*, 97, 102436.
- Lorincová, S., Štarchoň, P., Weberová, D., Hitka, M., & Lipoldová, M. (2019). Employee motivation as a tool to achieve sustainability of business processes. *Sustainability*, 11(13), 3509.
- Ming, T. S., Ling, T. S., & Jaafar, M. N. (2011). Attitudes & Motivation of Malaysian Secondary Students towards Learning English as a Second Language: A Case Study. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 17, 40-45.
- Mohammadi, M., Birjandi, P., & Maftoon, P. (2015). Learning strategy training and the shift in learners' beliefs about language learning: A reading comprehension context. *Sage Open*, 5(2), 2158244015579726.
- Moratinos-Johnston, S., Ballester Brage, L., Juan-Garau, M., & Salazar-Noguera, J. (2019). Attitudes and motivation in English language learning amongst multilingual university students in the Balearic Islands: the effect of the L1 and other influential variables. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 40(6), 475-490.
- Morris, A. S. (2001). Measurement and instrumentation principles. *Measurement Science and Technology*, 12(10), 1743-1744.
- Muñoz-Restrepo, A., Ramirez, M., & Gaviria, S. (2020). Strategies to enhance or maintain motivation in learning a foreign language. *Profile Issues in Teachers Professional Development*, 22(1), 175-188.
- Nazir, M., Bashir, S., & Bashir, Z. (2017). Motivation towards language learning: a study of Pakistani ESL learners at certificate level. *International Journal of English and Education*, 6(2), 284-297.
- Nguyen-Viet, H., Tuyet-Hanh, T. T., Unger, F., Dang-Xuan, S., & Grace, D. (2017). Food safety in Vietnam: where we are at and what we can learn from international experiences. *Infectious diseases of poverty*, 6(01), 83-88.
- Orfan, S. N. (2020). Afghan undergraduate students' attitudes towards learning English. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 7(1), 1723831.
- Rukh, S. (2014). A comparative study of students' attitude towards EFL teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1: a case of commerce and English discipline students. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 4(3), 526-539.
- Saito, A. (2020). Strategy Use, Self-Efficacy Beliefs, and Self-Regulatedness in Adult Foreign Language Learning. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(2), 152-167.
- Sallang, H., & Ling, Y. L. (2019). The importance of immediate constructive feedback on students' instrumental motivation in speaking in English. *Britain International of Linguistics Arts and Education (BloLAE) Journal*, 1(2), 1-7.
- Soomro, A. H., Bango, Z. A., & Mahesar, I. K. (2018). An Attitudinal Study of English as a Foreign Language in Sukkur Sindh Pakistan. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 5(1), 123-138.

- Spolsky, B. (2000). Anniversary article. Language motivation revisited. *Applied linguistics*, 21(2), 157-169.
- Stander, M. (2020). The relationship between language learning strategies and language proficiency amongst multilingual L2 students. *Scrutiny2*, 25(1), 86-103.
- Wu X (2022) Motivation in second language acquisition: A bibliometric analysis between 2000 and 2021. *Front. Psychol.* 13:1032316. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1032316
- Yao, B., Liu, Y., Huang, S. W., Choi, C., Xie, Z., Flor Flores, J., ... & Wong, C. W. (2018). Broadband gate-tunable terahertz plasmons in graphene heterostructures. *Nature Photonics*, 12(1), 22-28.
- Yu, Q. (2022). A review of foreign language learners' emotions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 827104.