

In-depth Study of How Rahim Shah Learned to Speak English and Persian Better Than His Native Language: An Explanatory Case Study

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Abstract

This mixed-methods case study explores how Rahim Shah learned to speak English and Persian much more fluently than his native language (Pashto). In this study, different aspects of the subject- including his personality, language learning style, language learning history, oral and written language skills- are analyzed to seek patterns and causes of behavior. Accordingly, attempts have been made in this paper to enlighten his exposure to three languages, Pashto (native), Persian (second) and English (foreign). The results drew that he speaks Persian much more confident than his native language mainly because his parents moved to a Persian-speaking community when he was a child of three years old. This makes it clear that non-native speakers use their knowledge of the new language through interaction with others. The results also recovered that he learned how to speak English better than his native language mainly because he was intrinsically motivated, knowing the positive consequences of learning English. In addition to his high motivation, he consistently listened to native speakers as he spent three years with Americans. Therefore, this case study embraces nearly all the aspects of how Rahim Shah managed to speak English and Persian, and how he failed to speak his native language.

1. INTRODUCTION

The participant in this case study project is Rahim Shah. He was born in Wardak, a Pashto-speaking province, but grew up in Ghazni, a Persian-speaking community. Currently, he works as a shop manager in the company of AWCC, Ghazni branch. He is 27 years old. His native language is Pashto, but he cannot speak Pashto in the way that he should speak. (The reasons why he could not learn Pashto are disclosed in the discussion section of this study.) He knows Persian and English (his second and foreign languages), and he can read and write in these two languages as head and shoulder above his native tongue. According to Rahim Shah, he was not a very successful student at school; however, his tendency to associate with others and his

In-depth Study of How Rahim Shah Learned to Speak English and Persian Better Than His Native Language: An Explanatory Case Study

enthusiasm for English finally made him a reasonable speaker of Persian and English. Furthermore, it is important to mention that he has remarkable speaking, reading and writing problems in Pashto. The only thing he can do in Pashto understands when others speak.

We selected this participant as the subject of our case study project for several reasons. First of all, it is very interesting to watch him speak English more fluently than his native language, Pashto. He is a Pashtun, but as he grew up in a Persian-speaking community, he started to speak comprehensive Persian and lose track of Pashto. It is notable to see his regret for not learning his native language. The relationship between him and his native language and the relationship between him and the English language looks interesting. Second, when he speaks English, you think he is a native English speaker. Although he was our student in English classes, sometimes, when we (the researchers) talked to him in English, we could not understand some of his utterances due to his fast speaking. The third special thing in him is his enthusiasm for the English language. He talks English with everyone. Even if his mother calls him in an emergency, he automatically replies in English. When we observed these special characteristics in him, it pushed us to study his case of language learning.

The purpose of this case study research is to explore and analyze how he learned English. The hope is that learning gained from studying one case can be generalized to many others, although different students prefer different approaches and strategies for learning a language. We would like to discover what problems he faced during his language learning process and how he dealt with his problems. Additionally, this case study research will explore Rahim Shah's learning styles, learning preferences, oral and written skills, and a clear picture of his lifestyle. Moreover, efforts have been made to discover the strengths and weaknesses of our participants and what made him very successful and special language learners. Investigating this information about our participants will help us bring remarkable and positive changes in our teaching career at Ghazni University, Afghanistan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Case studies can be used in various fields, including psychology, medicine, education, anthropology, political science, and social work. In other words, it is an approach that allows the in-depth analysis of a social phenomenon through a detailed context study. One idea related to our case is behaviourism. Behaviourism is a language learning theory that mainly focuses on imitation, practice, and language acquisition reinforcement. In other words, this theory of learning says that children learn a language through imitating the language produced by others around them and practising what they heard. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), "the behaviourists viewed imitation and practice as the primary processes in language development" (P. 10). Our participants for this case study learned to speak Persian from a behaviourist's perspective. He was raised in a Persian-speaking community. The more he imitated and practised the Persian language, the more fluent he became in it. In other words, he imitated and practised the sounds and utterances he heard from the environment until he established the habits of correct language use. He failed to speak his native language also refers to behaviourism. He did not have the opportunity to imitate and practice Pashto because his parents moved to a different community when he was a child of two years. Lightbown and Spada (2006) also state that behaviorism has a powerful influence on second and foreign language teaching, in which the learners imitate and copy the words, phrases and sentences

they hear. Therefore, our participant started learning Persian through behaviorism and he lost track of Pashto because almost nobody talked Pashto around him.

Another related literature review is the issue of self-motivation. Intrinsic motivation has an internal origin that encourages us to try to succeed. For example, intrinsically motivated students try to study as hard as possible to become successful in their lives, and they enjoy what they study because they know the positive consequences of studying a particular subject. According to Deci and Flaste (1995), Intrinsic or inside motivation, as its name suggests, comes from our hopes and expectations and our desire to do something. The enthusiasm arises from within the individual with his or her own personal satisfaction of doing something. Intrinsically motivated students can digest everything easily and with great eagerness, putting everything in their long-term memory. Rahim Shah, our participant, dedicated all his time to studying English with great enthusiasm.

A further idea on learner-autonomy was reviewed. Learner autonomy is part of the concept of individualization, which means learner independence. In other words, learner autonomy is the learner's responsibility for learning. Autonomous learners decide how to learn when to learn, what to learn and where to learn. According to Benson (2001) (as cited in Cotterall, 2008), autonomous learners should determine their learning content. They should know how to study, the time when to study, the subject to study, and the place to study. The more students do additional studies, the more they will be autonomous. Rahim Shah knew the ways how to study, the time when to study, the subject what to study, and the place where to study. He has been an autonomous learner, and is upgrading his English proficiency and fluency in various ways.

Language learning styles are also connected literature for reviewing in this case. According to Reid (1995) (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2006), learning style represents an individual's natural, habitual and preferred way of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills. Students who cannot learn something until they have seen it have a visual learning style, while students who learn something best by their ears have an auditory learning style. Some students prefer to do physical actions such as miming or role-playing. These students have a kinesthetic learning styles.

Moreover, students who like to touch things such as books, notebooks, charts...etc, are called tactile learners. Therefore, language learning styles are the different ways and approaches through which students can acquire a language. Different students utilize different ways in order to learn a language or any other subject. For instance, one student likes to study while walking; however, another student likes to study lying down. Rahim Shah has a mixed styles of auditory and visual.

The banking and liberating concepts of education are other important literatures associated with our case. In the banking education, the teacher fills the minds of the students with content information, and the students receive the content information without making any judgments. This means that the teacher is the giver and the students are the receiver, the teacher is the only speaker, and the students are the listeners, the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing. According to Freire (1970), in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift from those who consider themselves knowledgeable to those whom they

In-depth Study of How Rahim Shah Learned to Speak English and Persian Better Than His Native Language: An Explanatory Case Study

consider to know nothing (teacher to student). In other words, in the banking concept of education, the teacher thinks that students are like banks. Whatever the teacher puts in the bank, the bank should store them. Therefore, the concept of banking education involves a lot of contradiction between student and teacher. Therefore, the banking concept of education is very teacher-centered and we, as his teachers, have always avoided to implement banking system in our classrooms.

On the other hand, Freire (1970) stated that liberating education makes the students to think cognitively. This means that liberating education focuses on understanding a concept and practicing it in the real world. Liberating education is against banking concept of education. Considering the fact that learning is a mutual process, liberating education tries to give students complete right of expressing their own ideas and participating in the classroom instructions. To say briefly, liberating education believes that students are part of learning procedure and says that the world is not separated from us. Hence, unlike the banking concept, liberating education is more student-centered, and the teacher tries to facilitate learning for students. Rahim Shah spent four years of his study in the English department of Ghazni University, where liberating concept of education was practiced in classrooms.

The terms ‘pedagogy’ and ‘andragogy’ should also be discussed as relevant literature in this case study. Pedagogy is basically the knowledge and profession of teaching and the study of the methods and activities regarding teaching. We studied that pedagogy deals with teaching children. According to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2012) “pedagogy literally means the art and science of teaching children” (p. 60). This is because the word *pedagogy* is derived from *paid* meaning “child” and *agogus* meaning “leader of”. Therefore, it becomes clear that pedagogy refers to the phrase “leader of children” and it is more teacher-centered. This means that in pedagogy, the teacher is the leader of children. In Afghanistan, the pedagogical model of education is applied widely and students are dependent to teachers and teachers take the full responsibility of running the classes

Conversely, andragogy is concerned with teaching adults and adolescents and it is more student-centered. The students in andragogy model of education have reasons for why they study something and they know the importance of what they study. According to Tough (1979, as cited in Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, 2012), adults know the importance of studying something as well as the negative outcomes of not studying it. Therefore, one of the main responsibilities of adult education facilitator is to make students understand the need and the reason why they study certain field of study. In adult education, the experiences of the learner are of great importance and they are more intrinsically motivated than extrinsically. For example, students who are newly graduated from school honor the lessons and studies when they go to universities. This is because they know the need to know and study what they are taught.

3. METHOD

In this study, we collected data based on our participants’ language learning history, learning styles and personality, oral language skills and written language skills. The instrument we used for data collection about his language learning history and learning styles are questionnaires. There were ten questions for each part, and the questions were both close and

open ended. This is because in closed items, it is easy for my participant to respond, and in open-ended items, it is likely for him to have a deep understanding of the target issue. It took us twenty minutes to finish with the first two sections.

For obtaining a recording of our participants' oral language, we printed two pictures on a piece of paper and asked him to describe or tell a story based on them. The pictures were about people solving the problems. As he started talking about the pictures, we recorded at least five minutes of our participants' speech. The tool we used for recording his speech was my cell phone. Moreover, for obtaining a sample of his written language, we gave him a topic to write an argumentative essay about should grammar be taught for students who want to learn spoken English. The reason we gave him such a hard topic was that we knew his English is quite fluent. It took us 50 minutes to conduct the second two parts.

We went to Ghazni province and gave a ring to Rahim Shah. He came and we told him about our study of his case. We went to Ghazni University, and we requested my participant to enter a peaceful room equipped with chairs, whiteboard and other related supplies. Before beginning, we thanked him in advance for granting us his precious time. We got his permission and wanted him to honestly help us through our research procedure and made sure that he is comfortable and had no problem. We made him sit on the chair and distributed our questionnaire consisting of four pages (four parts). Then, we used the board, explained the questionnaire (especially the explanatory questions), and asked him to answer all questions truthfully.

Field research can be considered a general and comprehensive approach to qualitative research or a method for collecting qualitative data. The basic idea is that the researcher goes into the field to observe the phenomena in their natural state, which is what we actually did at the University of Ghazni. Besides, in field research, observation is the main element, and the subject matter is available to the researcher(s). It is probably very close to participatory observation, where you see and understand what people are doing and compare it with what they say. Therefore, we had full access to our participant, and were immersed in the activities he was doing.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Language Learning History

Rahim Shah is a 27-year-old who was born and grew up in an uneducated family in Ghazni, Afghanistan. He is originally from Wardak province, but his parents moved from Wardak to Ghazni when Rahim Shah had only three years. He is the smallest member of his family. According to Rahim Shah, his parents were uneducated because they lived in Jekhato district of Wardak province, where most of the people were involved in agriculture and had very less opportunities to study. His parents' native language is Pashto, and they can also speak Persian. They started to learn Persian speaking after they moved to live in Ghazni city downtown. This is because, in Ghazni city, most of the people are Persian speakers in the city centre. It is important to mention that his parents only know the Persian spoken language, and they cannot read and write in the Persian language. Therefore, they acquired the Persian spoken language through living in a Persian-speaking society and making much contact with Persian speakers.

In-depth Study of How Rahim Shah Learned to Speak English and Persian Better Than His Native Language: An Explanatory Case Study

Rahim Shah's native language is Pashto. He also knows the Persian language very well. He acquired the Persian language because he was born in a Persian speaking society and his teachers, classmates, and friends were all Persian-speaking people. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), non-native speakers use their knowledge of the new language through interaction with others. At first, when he started class five of school in Ghazni, he was not able to talk in Persian. However, over time, he gradually learned how to talk, understand, read and write in Persian. According to Rahim Shah, he had to learn the Persian language because the teachers and students in the school were all Persian speakers, and he had to do his home works and other school-related tasks in the Persian. Therefore, Rahim Shah learned the Persian language through physical and social interactions in the environment.

Regarding Rahim Shah's English language history, we can say that he started English when he was a school student in the ninth class. Those days, Rahim Shah's favourite subject in school was English. This is because he could learn English more easily than other subjects and felt comfortable during the English class. He studied at Shamsul Arifin high school, and his English teacher was the only teacher he loved the most. This English teacher had an English course outside school named "Ariana Faham English Language Academy". At the end of his classes at school, he wanted his students to come to his course and study English. Rahim Shah started English in this private course and was one of the most hard-working students in his class.

Those days, Rahim Shah's father was working as a cook in Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), and he was able to support Rahim Shah in his education. Although his father was illiterate, he motivated Rahim Shah and told him about the positive consequences of learning English. When Rahim Shah came with satisfying grades and appreciation certificates, his father paid him much compliments and praised him very much. Therefore, he was intrinsically motivated to learn English. According to Deci and Flaste (1995), intrinsic or inside motivation, as its name suggests, comes from our hopes and expectations and our desire to do something. He continued studying English in this private course until he graduated from school. After he graduated from school, he lost many opportunities to study because his father died, and his mother could not afford to make him study English in private institutions. He also could not succeed in the Kankor examination to proceed with his higher education.

Now, he can speak English very well, but he needs some improvement in pronunciation and writing. His uncle working as a guard in Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) suggested he start a retail business in PRT selling edible merchandise. Since he needed to work and receive money, he accepted his uncle's suggestion and finished all the official documents for working inside the American base. When he started his personal business, he noticed that Americans did not come to him because they did not need the foodstuff he was selling. Rahim Shah decided to do something to be involved with American troops. He found out that there was an antique heritage exhibition inside the base on Wednesdays. He decided to start that business because he knew some decorative household objects were valued for their age. Consequently, he succeeded in starting this business in the base.

When he started selling antique stuff, he noticed that American troops, and their interpreters, came to him, especially on Wednesdays. Since Rahim Shah knew some English,

he interacted with the soldiers without letting the translators translate English for him and his speech to Americans. He was very fond of English speaking, and he became very happy when faced with English speakers. At first, he was troubled because he could not understand everything the American soldiers uttered. This is because he had never been with native speakers who spoke real English. When he could not catch what Americans wanted, he used gestures and body language most of the time. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) suggest that English language learners often fail to understand native speakers because native speakers of English use real English along with complicated expressions and slang. This means that a student can better learn a language when he/she is in touch with native speakers.

Gradually, Rahim Shah got used to Americans' English use through frequent and prolonged contact. He worked there as an antique stuff seller for two years. During this period, he mostly focused on applying English in the real world rather than learning English grammar. Rahim Shah says, "since I always had a smiley face, Americans tended to come to me more than any other antique sellers". Therefore, he found many opportunities to talk in English and use his knowledge of English. After some time, he was appointed as an English translator in PRT, carrying out the oral translation from Persian and Pashto to English and from English to Persian and Pashto. He got chances to go to rural areas of Ghazni province along with American soldiers.

Additionally, the only social and psychological barrier he faced during his job in PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) was that he was not allowed to see his family very often. It was also dangerous for him to meet his family because most people knew he was working with Americans. Moreover, he found chances to travel to other provinces of Afghanistan, such as Bamyán, Hilmand, Jalalabad, Konar and Kandahar.

After two years of working as a translator with Americans, Rahim Shah wanted to continue his education and resigned from his job as a translator. He took his second the Kankor exam in 2010 and succeeded in going to Ghazni University, faculty of languages and literature, English department. He selected the English department mainly because he was fluent in English, and he thought he would be much more successful in studying English professionally.

Rahim Shah started studying in the English department of Ghazni University in 2011. He became our formal student. We watched him develop academically and personally into a mature individual ready in every way for his graduate studies. However, Rahim Shah had one main problem. He was remarkably fluent in speaking, but his written papers were poor. This is because he had been with Americans for four years and put almost all of his energy into using English spoken language rather than in writing and grammar. He solved this problem by taking some private courses in writing and grammar.

Those days, there was an English program for Ghazni University students and teachers funded by the US Embassy. This program had special classes, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar. In order to improve his grammar and writing, Rahim Shah attended writing and grammar classes. According to Hess (2001), there is an extraordinary relationship between grammar and writing; those who want good writing should have good grammar. Therefore, Rahim Shah's writing and grammar improved remarkably in the next years. Even his teachers made him to go to some ESP classes at the university and

teach instead of them. Rahim Shah graduated successfully in 2014, and now he is a manager of Roshan private company in Ghazni province.

There are several reasons that Rahim Shah was a very good student. First, he was a very hard-working student and always put his best efforts into doing all the required tasks and responsibilities both in his personal and academic life. Second, he constantly evaluated himself in order to know what area of English he needed more improvement. For example, when he enrolled in the English department, he discovered that his grammar and writing needed to be improved. Third, he had a very high self-confidence. For instance, when he failed his first chance at the Kankor exam, he did not lose hope and self-confidence. Instead, he tried to pave the ground for himself, and finally, became successful with his second chance. Next, he was intrinsically motivated to learn English, and his tendency toward learning increased daily. We can say that he studied English not because it pleased his parents and teachers but because he knew that English is important to study. Finally, Rahim Shah had the habit of note-taking inside the class. Note-taking helps students to learn English or any other language better and to remember everything about the lesson.

Thus, Rahim Shah's English language history had many ups and downs. He was born in an uneducated family with no one to motivate him and make him go to school and take courses. After they moved to Ghazni city, Rahim Shah had to take the responsibility of running his family. However, he managed to deal with all his problems. He overcame his difficulties by building self-confidence and he built self-confidence through taking risks and engaging himself in society.

4.2. Language Learning Styles and Personality

To obtain our participant's learning styles and preferences, we developed a questionnaire in which there were ten questions. The questions were both close and open-ended. This is because it is very easy for my participant to respond in close-ended items, and in open-ended items, he can deeply understand the target tissue. After we collected the questionnaire, we found the result by carefully checking our participant's answers to the questions. In other words, there were two columns of questions in our questionnaire. If our participant circled lots of As, we decided that his learning style and preference were positive, and if he circled lots of Bs, we inferred that his learning style and preference should be changed. This means that if he circled lots of Bs, he has some negative learning styles and preferences and therefore he should work on his styles and preferences and change them to positive ones.

The data showed that Rahim Shah is a kinesthetic and visual learner. He likes lots of movement while learning and reading a great deal from visual instruction. We found that he does not prefer to hear lots of oral instruction and does not like working with touchable objects. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), different students have different learning styles. For instance, one student likes to study while walking; however, another student likes to study lying down. Regarding Rahim Shah's learning preferences, we can say that he is an extraverted learner. This means that he gains his great energy from external world through lots of interaction with people and having many friendships. Moreover, we found that when he make mistakes in speaking English, he does not get upset because he believes that he can learn from his mistakes.

Such students with these types of learning styles (kinesthetic and visual) learn a language better through body motions such as muscles, tendons, and joints moving. They also learn a language by seeing projectors, charts, movies...etc. Lightbown and Spada (2006) stated that kinesthetic learners like physical action such as miming and role-play, and visual learners could not learn something until they have seen it. Additionally, such students like social interactions and communicative events to get the main idea of what they study. For example, if the content is simple present tense, these students may quickly move their eyes over the information about simple present tense. Then, they may ask and answer questions about it with their classmates to find some general information.

4.3. Oral Skill Assessment

Rahim Shah's overall success in spoken English is really interesting. He speaks English interestingly and almost like a native speaker. We rank his general proficiency in spoken language as advanced. As we listened to him, we found that he has an extraordinary ability in English talking. He uses English in a way as if he is born with English, and he uses idioms and slang in their true positions. Despite these, there are some common errors in his oral language.

Rahim Shah's errors in oral grammar are hard to discover. This is because he talks fast and fluent. The words come out of his mouth automatically and naturally. However, we listened to the recording several times and found that sometimes he destroys the regulation of subject-verb agreement. According to Arnaudet and Barrett (1981), it is important in English that the subject of a sentence agrees with the verb in a way that if the subject is singular, the verb is singular; if the subject is plural, the verb is plural. The author also states that when the subject is 'each' or 'every', the verb remains singular. We heard Rahim Shah said, "every individual has the responsibility of struggling with problems". Since the phrase 'every individual' refers to a singular subject, the verb should remain singular to obey the regulation of subject-verb agreement.

Moreover, we know that the main position of the frequency adverb 'always' is after the subject and before the verb; however, Rahim Shah used 'always' the same as 'sometimes' at the end of his sentences. For instance, we noted two times that he said, "we, as human beings, should feel responsible about ourselves always". We, as teachers, feel that if he says "we should always feel responsibility" is more grammatical and to the point. We feel that his mis-using of 'always' is a result of the transfer influence because, in Persian, he uses the equivalent of 'always' at the end of most sentences.

Regarding his pronunciation, we can say that he sometimes mispronounces some uncommon words. By 'uncommonly words', we mean those words not commonly heard by Afghan English students. For example, he pronounced the word 'subtle' as /sʌbtl/ while its real pronunciation is /'sʌtl/ without the /b/ sound. Since this word has a visible 'b' in it, most students first pronounce it incorrectly. This word suddenly came into Rahim Shah's mind, and as we listened to his audio transcript, we found that he was unsure about the pronunciation.

Additionally, we hardly found that he pronounced the word 'government' as "government". It really surprised us. We did not expect him to pronounce this word incorrectly. These errors, we assume are the result of developmental influences because like many students, he has learned this word and it does not have any connection with his first language.

Regarding vocabulary errors in his oral language, we can say that he specifically made two errors. One error was that he used the preposition ‘from’ incorrectly. We heard him saying “he asked a question from me” which looks like a Persian sentence. The correct form of this sentence is ‘he asked me a question’. Such error is the result of transfer influence because the equivalent sentence for this one in Persian, uses the word ‘from’. Another error regarding vocabulary we discovered in his speech was using some words inaccurately. For example, we heard him saying “I run into a problem”. In this sentence, “run into” is used incorrectly because the word ‘ran into’ means meeting someone unexpectedly. We can say that “I ran into my old friend”. For his sentence, it is better to use the word ‘face’ as ‘I faced a problem. We assume this error is the result of developmental influence because, according to Lightbown and Spada (2006), making such errors in the learning process is natural when the learner is learning.

Consequently, Rahim Shah’s general proficiency in the oral language is high and well-developed. His ability to use English is appreciable. He has some minor weaknesses in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary when he talks. This means he pays little attention to subject-verb agreement, mispronounces some of the newly acquired words, and misuses some of the words in certain contexts. These errors are the result of his first language and developmental influence. As his case researchers, we think that to become more successful in oral language, Rahim Shah should work on his grammar and pronunciation of some of the points.

4.4. Written Skill Assessment

We obtained a sample of our participant’s written language by asking him to write an argumentative essay on whether teaching grammar is important in learning a language or not. After checking his essay on the topic, we concluded that his general proficiency in written language is upper intermediate. This is because he can write fast, having lots of ideas in mind; however, he has some problems how with managing his ideas in essay form. In the following paragraphs, his grammar skill, organization of ideas, and vocabulary skills are explained.

He had some critical mistakes in grammar when writing. First, he puts ‘s’ or ‘es’ at the end of some verbs while the subject of those verbs was not third person singular. For example, he wrote, “most language teachers emphasize teaching grammar in English language classes”. In this sentence, the verb ‘emphasize’ does not take ‘s’ because the subject is plural. Second, he did not put ‘s’ or ‘es’ at the end of the verbs with singular subjects in several sentences. For instance, in one sentence, he wrote, “grammar cause students to hesitate a lot during speaking”. In this sentence, he forgets that the subject is singular and that it needs a singular verb identified with ‘s’ or ‘es’ at the end. Third, he misused the passive structures in some sentences. One of his sentences says, “you are going to be confusing” instead of “you are going to be confused”.

Moreover, we think that these grammar mistakes are his developmental errors. In other words, these grammar mistakes come from his incomplete writing process knowledge. This means that he has put very little attention to writing. Instead, he has always put his best efforts into learning spoken English.

The overall organization of his essay is okay; however, some mistakes do not match with the expectations we had. One critical mistake we found regarding his organization is not paying attention to paragraph unity. According to Arnaudet and Barrett (1981), when all the

ideas in a paragraph are related to the topic sentence, the paragraph has unity. Our participant's topic sentence in one of the paragraphs of his essay was "teaching grammar makes it difficult to learn the English language". However, one of the supporting sentence says "they find English language easy to learn". This destroys the organization because the topic sentence is against teaching grammar, but the supporting sentence is in support of teaching grammar. Another important mistake based on organization was the wrong usage of transition words. In his essay, he wrote three reasons against teaching grammar; however, it is not clear how to move from one reason to another. For the third reason, he used "another reason" which should be stated to introduce the second reason. We infer these mistakes are developmental mistakes because they show learner's developing knowledge of English language. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), "many errors can be explained better in terms of learner's developing knowledge of the structure of the target language" (P. 79).

Regarding his vocabulary knowledge, he made two crucial errors. First, he misspelled some of the high level vocabulary word. For example, instead of 'acquisition', he wrote 'accquisition', instead of 'memorization', he wrote 'memurization'. He repeated these mistakes three to four times throughout his writing. Secondly, he used one word instead of another word with completely different meaning. For instance, he used the word 'role' instead of the word 'rule'. We suppose he made this mistake because the word 'role' and 'rule' are somehow pronounced equally. Third, he made one mistake using the phrasal verb 'keep away' which means preventing someone from going somewhere or doing something. Instead of writing "it keeps students away from learning", he wrote "it keeps students from learning". these mistakes, we think, are also developmental mistakes because these mistakes are to be learned, and they are not close to his first language.

To sum up, we can say that Rahim Shah's written language proficiency is in-between. He makes some mistakes because he has not practiced writing a lot during his English study. He specifically made some mistakes in terms of grammar, organization of ideas, and vocabulary. Most of his mistakes are developmental because they belong to the knowledge development of the target language rather than his first language influence. The ideas he write are all interesting, and if he works on his writing skills, he can produce captivating pieces of writing. Writing is creative if the ideas come constantly, and we see this creativity in Rahim Shah's paper.

5. DISCUSSION AND TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Language Learning History

Rahim Shah's English language history began when he was a school student in the ninth grade, and continued until he graduated from Ghazni University, English Department in 2014. During this period of time, he faced with some social and psychological factors that were influential in his English learning. The social factor that affected his English language learning

was that nobody in his family knew English, and when he had problems in English, there was nobody to help him. In addition, those days some people in Wardak province had a negative view against English language, and Rahim Shah could not carry English chapters or books freely in his society. The psychological factor that affected his English learning was that he could not talk in front of his classmates while he was studying English in private courses in Ghazni. This is because he had newly moved to Ghazni from Wardak and he was not familiar with learning situation in Ghazni city.

To motivate such type of students, we as teachers, say that they should be made to become autonomous learners. One way to do this is by motivating them intrinsically to study English for its own importance. According to Deci and Flaste (1995), (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2006) extrinsic motivation can enhance students' intrinsic motivation. For example, when the teacher explains that English learning helps students to get high paying jobs, students learn English for its own importance, not only for receiving high grades or passing the exam. Moreover, for such type of students, the teacher should pave the ground to take the risk and not to feel shy or discouraged during learning performance. An activity for such students is to put them into groups and ask them to divide the task between them so that everyone can take part. For example, in a group of four people, the teacher can ask students to review an article and present it in front of the class. The students divide the article and explain their shared parts one after another in front of the class. Doing this, students' self-confidence and attitudes towards learning increase.

In order to make such students to take the risk in the learning process, we believe that teachers should create a friendly atmosphere in the class so that the less courageous students can state their ideas and take part in the learning procedure. For example, during teaching, the teacher can use a variety of activities, such as group work, pair work so that the shy students find the heart to participate. In our own classes, when we see such students, we quickly pair them with more courageous students, or put them in groups where we think they can feel free and talk.

5.2. Learning Style and personality

Regarding Rahim Shah's learning style, we found that he is kinesthetic and visual. This means that he learns better through lots of movement and through visual instructions. For example, when he takes preparation for a presentation, he cannot learn sitting in one place; instead, he walks with his papers in his hands. Also, he learns better while the teacher uses a projector, chart, or other visual teaching materials. Regarding his personality, we can say that he is an extraverted learner. This means that he feels happy and learns better from external world through lots of interaction with people and through building friendships outside. Outside of the class, he builds relationships with people, and he thinks that he can even learn from animals.

These styles of learning really affected his learning positively. We can say this because when he presented his presentations in a very interesting way, we inferred that this is the result of being a kinesthetic learner. Moreover, we can remember the days when we used the projector in their class, and when we asked some questions the next day, Rahim Shah was the first student rising his hand. We conclude that his visual learning style influenced his learning in a positive

way. For this type of students, we suggest different activities that are based on movement and visual. For example, one day the teacher can show them a video or give them a picture about a particular topic, the next day he can make them to give short presentations in the class.

5.3. Oral and Written Language

Rahim Shah's oral English is better than his written English. This is because he has practiced oral language more than written language throughout his English learning journey. In other words, he has spent most of his time interacting in English, and he has had very less time to write. For his oral correction, I believe that 'clarification request' should be used. This is because he talks very fast, and the teacher can ask for clarification of meaning when he talks. Furthermore, we suggest that total physical response (TPR) and task-based language teaching should implement for such learners. There should be a variety of activities such as group work, pair work, and individual work for them. According to Hess (2001), it is very important to use different activities and techniques in all classes, especially in large multilevel classes. This is because using a variety of activities and tasks can cover students of different levels of understanding. For example, in teaching writing, some students may like to work with his/her partner while writing a paragraph. Some students may prefer to talk and discuss ideas with groups; some others may like to brainstorm ideas before the start of writing. In such classes, the teacher should use pair work, group work, and individual work in order to help all the students. In our teaching context, we usually use multiple activities in classes where there are students of different levels. Using different activities keep students' interest in the subject and affects students' motivation positively.

Therefore, Rahim Shah has both strengths and weaknesses. Regarding his strengths, we can say that he is a very hard-working student and always puts his best efforts to do all the required tasks and responsibilities both in his personal and academic life. He constantly evaluates himself in order to know what area of English he needs more improvement. In addition, he always takes the risk to give presentations, to participate in class discussions and to talk in public. He also has the habit of note-taking in the class which is a good learning habit. In addition to these strengths, he has some weaknesses that need to be improved. One of his weaknesses in writing is that he puts 's' or 'es' at the end of the verbs in which the subject is plural. Instead, he sometimes does not put 's' or 'es' at the end of the verbs in which the subject is singular. In oral language, he sometimes breaks the rule of subject-verb agreement. He sometimes fails to use frequency adverbs in their suitable position which is after subject.

5. CONCLUSION

The current study has attempted to explore Rahim Shah's perceptions and experiences in his Persian and English language acquisition journey. His mother language is Pashto; however, he speaks Persian and English a lot better than Pashto. This study relates his Persian language acquisition to that of behaviorism theory in language acquisition. The behaviorist theory believes that "infants learn oral language from other human role models through a process involving imitation, rewards, and practice. Human role models in an infant's environment provide the stimuli and rewards," (Cooter & Reutzel, 2004). When Rahim Shah attempted Persian oral language or imitates the sounds or speech patterns, he is usually praised and given affection for his efforts. Thus, praise and affection becomes the rewards. At age three, he lost track of Pashto, his mother tongue, as his family moved from Wardak to Ghazni which is a Persian speaking community. He has been practicing speaking Persian for years. Therefore, one of the best ways that pushed Rahim Shah to acquire Persian language was joining

In-depth Study of How Rahim Shah Learned to Speak English and Persian Better Than His Native Language: An Explanatory Case Study

a Persian language community. In this community, he practiced, shared resources, got experiences with language use, and developed all together. Regarding Rahim Shah's English language acquisition, it is important to draw attention to his high level of motivation in learning English, the time he spent with English native speakers, as well as his four years studying at English department of languages and literature faculty of Ghazni University. It is also important to mention that we hope that learning gained from studying one case can be generalized to many others; however, case studies tend to be highly subjective and it is sometimes difficult to generalize results to a larger population.

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