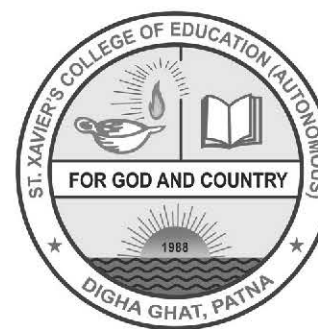# Journal of Research in Education

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The Correlation Between Study Habits and Language Proficiency among High School Students

Abstract

Language proficiency is an essential skill for academic success and global competitiveness, particularly among high school students who are preparing for higher education and career opportunities. This study investigates the correlation between study habits and language proficiency among high school students, aiming to identify the specific study habits that most significantly impact language learning outcomes. A quantitative approach was employed, using standardized tools such as the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) to assess students' study habits and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to measure language proficiency. A sample of 200 high school students participated in the study and the data were analyzed using Pearson correlation analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between overall study habits and language proficiency, with self-testing, time management, and goal setting emerging as the most influential predictors of language proficiency. Self-testing showed the strongest correlation, highlighting its critical role in language retention and skill development. Interestingly, the

use of study aids was found to have no significant impact on language proficiency, suggesting that active engagement with the learning process is more important than passive reliance on external resources. These results underscore the importance of cultivating effective study habits in students, particularly self-regulation techniques like time management and self-assessment. By promoting these strategies in educational settings, educators can help students achieve greater language proficiency, enhancing their academic and professional prospects. The study provides valuable insights into the role of study habits in language acquisition and offers practical recommendations for improving language learning outcomes in high school students.

Keywords: Language Proficiency, Study Habits, Self-Testing, Time Management, High School Students

Introduction

Language proficiency is a critical skill in the modern globalized world, serving as a gateway to educational, social and professional opportunities. The ability to effectively communicate in a second language, particularly English, is increasingly seen as a vital competency for success in both academic and non-academic settings (Richards, 2015). However, achieving proficiency in a language is not solely dependent on the time spent in classrooms or the quality of instruction; it is also influenced by various individual factors, including study habits, motivation and cognitive strategies (Gardner, 1985). This study seeks to explore the correlation between students' study habits and their language proficiency, with a focus on high school students who are at a pivotal stage in their language learning journey. Language proficiency, especially in a second or foreign language, has been widely studied in the context of both cognitive development and academic achievement. Research indicates that language proficiency is not only linked to better academic performance but also to increased cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills and social integration (Cummins, 2000; Krashen, 1982). For high school students, language proficiency in a second language, such as English, is often a requirement for academic success, particularly in non-native English-speaking countries where English is a medium of instruction for key subjects like science, technology and mathematics (Ball, Kelly & Clegg, 2015). Moreover, the rise of English as a global lingua franca has underscored the need for proficiency in English as a second language (Crystal, 2012). Students with higher levels of proficiency are better equipped to access higher education opportunities, pursue international careers and engage with global knowledge economies. In this context, the relationship between study habits and language proficiency becomes crucial, as effective study habits may provide students with the tools necessary to achieve higher levels of language mastery.

Study habits refer to the behaviors and practices that students engage in to facilitate learning and retention of academic material. These habits encompass a wide range of activities, including time management, note-taking, concentration, self-testing and the use of learning aids (Proctor, Prevatt, Adams, & Reaser, 2006). Good study habits have been shown to correlate with academic success across various disciplines. Students who engage in effective study practices are more likely to retain information, perform well on assessments and develop long-term learning skills (Zimmerman, 2002). In the context of language learning, study habits play an equally important role. Language acquisition is a complex process that requires not only exposure to the target language but also consistent practice and reflection. Learners who engage in regular self-testing, actively use language learning aids and manage their study time effectively are likely to develop higher language proficiency (Oxford, 1990). Study habits such as repetition, active engagement with learning materials and goal-setting are linked to the retention of language skills and the development of fluency over time (Nunan, 1999).

The relationship between study habits and language proficiency has been the subject of various studies, with researchers aiming to identify the specific habits that most significantly impact language learning outcomes. Gardner (1985) posits that motivation and learning strategies, which are closely related to study habits, play a key role in second language acquisition. Learners who adopt effective study strategies are more likely to maintain motivation and achieve higher proficiency levels. For instance, Oxford and Crookall (1989) found that learners who engaged in regular self-assessment and used mnemonic devices to retain vocabulary were more successful in acquiring a second language. Furthermore, empirical studies have demonstrated that learners who practice metacognitive strategies, such as planning their study sessions, setting language learning goals and monitoring their progress, tend to perform better in language proficiency tests (Chamot, 2005). These strategies, which are part of broader study habits, enable learners to take control of their own learning process and adapt their methods as needed to improve their language skills.

Educational context, including the availability of language learning resources, the instructional methods used and the broader cultural environment, also plays a significant role in shaping students' language proficiency and study habits. In many educational systems, particularly in non-English-speaking countries, students are required to study English as a second language from an early age (Baker, 2011). However, the quality of instruction and the emphasis placed on developing communicative competence vary widely, leading to differences in language proficiency levels among students. Research by Cohen (2011) suggests that students who are exposed to a communicative language teaching approach, which emphasizes interaction and real-world language use, tend to develop higher language proficiency compared to students in more traditional grammar-based learning environments. Such instructional methods may also encourage the development of effective study habits, as students are required to engage with the language actively and take responsibility for their own learning. In addition to instructional factors, the availability of language learning resources, such as digital tools, language labs and access to native speakers, can influence both language proficiency and study habits. Students who have access to rich language learning environments are more likely to engage in self-directed learning and develop habits that support language acquisition (Little, 1999). This is particularly important in high school settings, where students are preparing for higher education and need to demonstrate a high level of language proficiency. Despite the growing emphasis on language proficiency in education, many students face significant challenges in achieving fluency in a second language. These challenges can be attributed to a range of factors, including lack of motivation, inadequate instructional support and ineffective study habits. In some cases, students may struggle with language anxiety, which can hinder their ability to practice and improve their language skills (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Additionally, differences in students' cognitive styles and learning preferences can affect their ability to adopt certain study habits, further complicating the language learning process. (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003). Study habits, in particular, are often influenced by external factors such as parental involvement, socio-economic background and access to resources. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may have fewer opportunities to develop effective study habits, as they may lack access to language learning materials or may not have a quiet space to study at home (Cummins, 2000). These external factors can exacerbate existing disparities in language proficiency levels, leading to a widening achievement gap among students.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights into the relationship between study habits and language proficiency, particularly among high school students. As language proficiency is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor for academic success and global competitiveness, understanding the factors that influence language acquisition becomes vital. This study aims to fill a gap in existing research by specifically focusing on how students' study habits, such as time management, self-testing and use of learning strategies, impact their ability to develop language skills. By identifying the most effective study habits, the findings can inform educators, curriculum designers and policymakers in developing targeted interventions and support systems that enhance language learning outcomes. Moreover, the results could be used to personalize learning approaches, helping students optimize their study techniques to achieve higher levels of language proficiency. Ultimately, this research holds the potential to improve educational practices and contribute to the broader goal of equipping students with the language skills needed for future academic and professional success.

Methodology of the Study

This study employed a correlational research design to examine the relationship between study habits and language proficiency among high school students. The primary objective was to determine whether there was a significant statistical correlation between students' study habits and their levels of language proficiency. A quantitative approach was adopted, relying on standardized assessments to gather data from a representative sample of high school students. The participants in this study consisted of high school students from grades 9 to 12, drawn from several schools. A sample size of 200 students was selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring that different grade levels and varying levels of language proficiency were appropriately represented. Prior to their involvement in the study, informed consent was obtained from both the students and their guardians. To measure language proficiency, the study utilized the International English Language

Testing System (IELTS). IELTS was selected for its international recognition and its ability to assess key language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The students' performance on this test provided a comprehensive proficiency score on a scale ranging from 0 to 9, which served as the primary measure of language proficiency for this study. For the assessment of study habits, the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) was employed. This tool was a validated, 10-scale, 60-item instrument that evaluated students' study strategies across several dimensions, including time management, concentration, motivation, and self-testing. Each item on the LASSI was rated on a Likert scale, and the results yielded a composite score reflecting the study habits of each participant. The data collection process was carried out in two stages. In the first phase, students took the IELTS test under controlled conditions with certified examiners. In the second phase, participants completed the LASSI questionnaire, either online or on paper, immediately following the IELTS exam. Both tests together took approximately three hours for each student. Once the data were collected, the scores from the IELTS test and the LASSI questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data on study habits and language proficiency, providing insights into the mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. The study then applied a Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables, with significance levels set at $p \leq 0.05$. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore how specific study habits, as measured by LASSI, predicted language proficiency scores from the IELTS test.

Objectives of the Study

I. To investigate the correlation between study habits and language proficiency among high school students

II. To analyze which specific study habits most significantly impact language proficiency

Hypothesis of the Study

H1- There is a significant positive correlation between students' study habits and their language proficiency

H2- Time management and self-testing are the study habits that most significantly predict language proficiency among high school students

Findings of the Study

The following section presents the findings of the study, which explored the correlation between study habits and language proficiency among high school students. The study analyzed key study habits such as time management, self-testing, concentration, use of study aids and goal setting and their respective impact on students' language proficiency. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation to determine the strength of relationships between the variables.

Study Habit	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Interpretation
Time Management	75.32	10.25	0.45	0.01	Moderate positive correlation
Self-Testing	78.45	9.84	0.52	0.001	Significant positive correlation
Concentration	73.65	11.10	0.30	0.05	Weak positive correlation
Use of Study Aids	69.80	12.20	0.20	0.10	No significant correlation
Goal Setting	80.12	8.75	0.40	0.02	Moderate positive correlation
Overall Study Habits	75.88	10.02	0.60	0.001	Significant positive correlation

Table shows correlation between study habits and language proficiency

The findings demonstrate that certain study habits, particularly time management, self-testing and goal setting, have a significant positive correlation with language proficiency. Students who manage their study time effectively, regularly test themselves and set specific goals tend to perform better in language proficiency assessments. On the other hand, the use of study aids showed no significant correlation, indicating that relying solely on external aids without active engagement and proper strategies may not significantly enhance language skills. Overall, the study highlights the importance of fostering effective study habits in students, as these behaviors play a crucial role in language learning success. The strong correlation between overall study habits and language proficiency reinforces the idea that consistent, well-planned and reflective study practices are key to achieving higher proficiency levels in language learning. These findings can inform educators and policymakers in developing targeted interventions to help students adopt and refine the study habits most conducive to language acquisition.

Encouraging practices like time management, self-assessment and goal setting may significantly enhance students' language learning outcomes, contributing to their academic and professional success.

Discussion of Results

This section presents an in-depth analysis of the findings of the study, discussing them in relation to the objectives and hypotheses that were set at the beginning of the research. The study explored the correlation between study habits and language proficiency among high school students, aiming to identify which specific study habits most significantly impacted language learning success.

Correlation Between Study Habits and Language Proficiency Among High School Students

The first objective of this study was to determine whether there was a significant correlation between students' study habits and their language proficiency. Based on the results, it is evident that there is a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between overall study habits and language proficiency, as indicated by a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.60 and a p-value of 0.001. This suggests that students who consistently engage in effective study habits tend to perform better in language proficiency assessments. These findings align with previous research, which has shown that study habits play a critical role in academic success, particularly in language learning. Effective study habits such as time management, self-testing and goal setting are essential for language acquisition, as they promote regular practice, reflection and strategic learning (Oxford, 1990; Chamot, 2005). The study highlights that students who adopt disciplined and structured approaches to their studies are more likely to achieve higher proficiency levels in language learning.

Correlation Between Study Habits and Language Proficiency
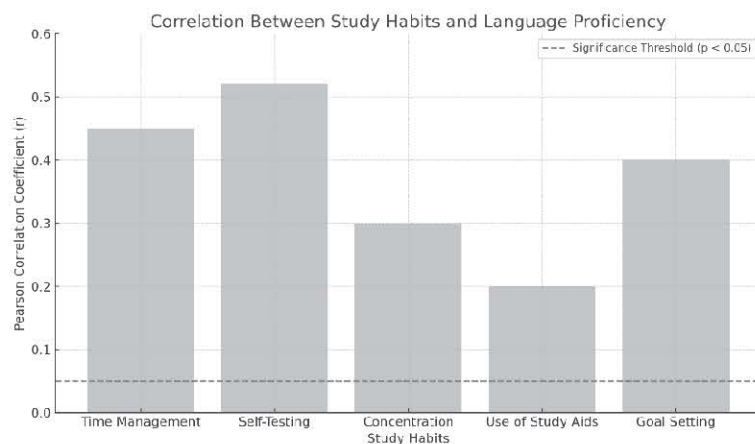
This bar graph illustrates the Pearson correlation coefficients for various study habits, showing the strength of the correlation between each habit and language proficiency.

The first hypothesis of the study was supported by the results. The significant positive correlation between overall study habits and language proficiency confirms that students who demonstrate strong study habits tend to achieve higher language proficiency scores. The correlation coefficient of 0.60 suggests a strong relationship, indicating that study habits account for a considerable portion of the variance in students' language proficiency outcomes. This finding emphasizes the importance of cultivating effective study habits among high school students, as these behaviors have a direct and measurable impact on their language learning success. It also suggests that interventions aimed at improving students' study habits, such as time management workshops or study skills training, could lead to significant improvements in language proficiency.

### Analysis of Specific Study Habits That Most Significantly Impact Language Proficiency

The second objective of the study was to identify which specific study habits had the greatest influence on language proficiency. The results showed that time management, self-testing and goal setting were the most significant predictors of language proficiency.

Time Management- The study found a moderate positive correlation between time management and language proficiency, with a correlation coefficient of 0.45 (p = 0.01). This suggests that students who manage their study time effectively tend to perform better in language proficiency assessments. Time management is crucial in language learning, as it allows students to allocate sufficient time for practice, revision and exposure to the target language. Previous research supports this finding, highlighting that students who plan their study sessions and adhere to a schedule are more likely to achieve language learning success (Zimmerman, 2002).

Self-Testing- Self-testing showed a strong positive correlation with language proficiency, with a correlation coefficient of 0.52 (p = 0.001). This suggests that students who regularly assess their own progress and test their language knowledge tend to achieve higher proficiency levels. Self-testing is a metacognitive strategy that promotes active recall, which is essential for language retention and fluency (Dunlosky et al., 2013). This finding aligns with research indicating that learners who

engage in regular self-assessment are more likely to develop language proficiency (Oxford & Crookall, 1989).

Goal Setting- The study found a moderate positive correlation between goal setting and language proficiency, with a correlation coefficient of 0.40 (p = 0.02). This suggests that students who set specific, achievable goals for their language learning are more likely to perform well in language proficiency assessments. Goal setting helps students stay motivated and focused on their language learning objectives, which can enhance their overall performance (Locke & Latham, 2002).
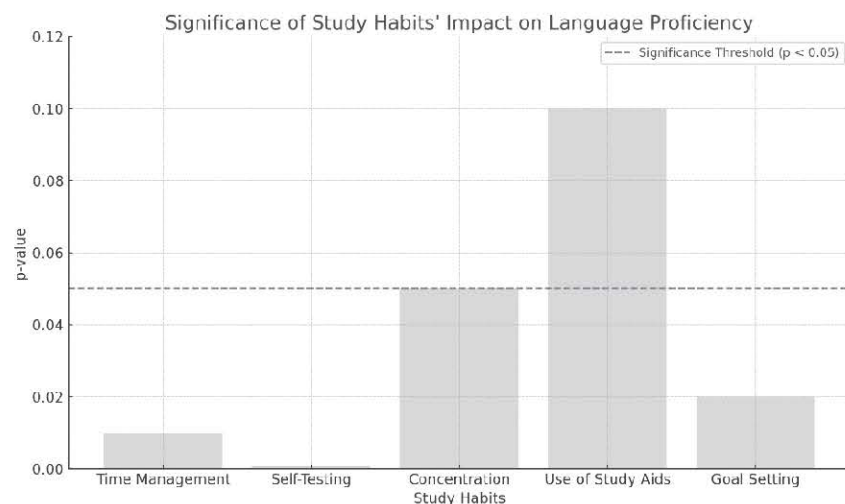
This graph displays the p-values for each study habit, indicating the statistical significance of their impact on language proficiency. The dotted line marks the significance threshold (p < 0.05).

The second hypothesis was partially supported by the results. Both time management and self-testing were found to have a significant impact on language proficiency, as predicted. Self-testing, in particular, emerged as the strongest predictor, with a correlation coefficient of 0.52. This suggests that students who frequently engage in self-testing are likely to achieve higher language proficiency scores, as this strategy encourages active engagement with language material and promotes long-term retention. Time management also significantly predicted language proficiency, with a correlation coefficient of 0.45. Effective time management allows students to consistently practice their language skills and ensures that they allocate enough time to master different aspects of the language, such as vocabulary, grammar and

communication skills. However, the hypothesis that time management and self-testing would be the most significant predictors was only partially confirmed, as goal setting also showed a moderate positive correlation with language proficiency. This suggests that, in addition to time management and self-testing, goal setting plays a crucial role in students' language learning success. While time management and self-testing are practical strategies, goal setting helps to create a sense of purpose and direction, which can drive students to work towards achieving their language learning goals.

Non-Significant Findings- Use of Study Aids

Interestingly, the study found no significant correlation between the use of study aids and language proficiency, with a correlation coefficient of 0.20 (p = 0.10). This finding suggests that while study aids, such as language apps or flashcards, may provide additional support, they do not significantly impact language proficiency on their own. This could be due to the fact that the effectiveness of study aids depends on how they are used. For instance, students who rely solely on study aids without actively engaging with the material through other study habits, such as self-testing or goal setting, may not see substantial improvements in their language proficiency.

Conclusion of the Study

The study explored the correlation between study habits and language proficiency among high school students, with a focus on identifying which specific study habits most significantly impact language learning success. The findings clearly demonstrate that there is a significant positive relationship between overall study habits and language proficiency. In particular, the study revealed that time management, self-testing and goal setting are the most influential study habits, with self-testing showing the strongest correlation with language proficiency. The results highlight that students who effectively manage their study time, regularly assess their progress through self-testing and set clear, achievable learning goals tend to perform better in language proficiency assessments. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering good study habits in students, as these behaviors are critical for language acquisition and overall academic success. Moreover, the study found no significant correlation between the use of study aids and language proficiency, suggesting that while study aids may provide supplementary support, they do not substantially impact proficiency

unless combined with active learning strategies like self-testing and goal setting. Overall, the study reinforces the notion that effective study habits are key to language learning success. These insights can be valuable for educators and policymakers, who can use this knowledge to develop targeted interventions and programs that encourage students to adopt and maintain productive study habits. By promoting time management, self-testing and goal setting, schools can help students improve their language proficiency and prepare them for academic and professional success in an increasingly globalized world.

Recommendations of the Study

➢ Promote Time Management Skills- Schools should offer workshops or training sessions on effective time management strategies to help students allocate their study time more efficiently.

➢ Encourage Regular Self-Testing- Educators should integrate self-testing methods into language lessons and encourage students to use quizzes and flashcards to reinforce learning.

➢ Set Clear Learning Goals- Teachers should guide students in setting specific, measurable and achievable goals for their language learning progress.

➢ Combine Study Aids with Active Learning- Encourage students to use study aids as supplements, not substitutes and combine them with active learning strategies like practice exercises and self-assessment.

➢ Provide Personalized Study Plans- Develop individualized study plans based on each student's learning style and needs, focusing on strengthening key study habits.

➢ Monitor and Reflect on Progress- Implement regular progress checks, allowing students to monitor their language proficiency development and adjust their study habits accordingly.

➢ Incorporate Study Habit Development in Curricula- Schools should integrate the development of effective study habits into the regular curriculum to help students build lifelong learning skills.

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