



Language Acquisition Factors: Scenarios I and II

Scenario I: Anale

Anale was born in Los Angeles. Spanish is the primary language in her home and neighborhood. Although she was born in Los Angeles, Anale has lived in multiple states and homes and as a result of her moves, has been exposed to a variety of different languages. It has been noted that Anale has not truly acquired Spanish at an age-proficient level nor any other language for that matter.

Although Anale has been in school for a while, she does not have a literary foundation in her first language (L1), but is motivated to learn English. She is 11 years old and has been in school since first grade. Her grandparents tell her and feel that English is of a higher status, and encourage her to learn it. The neighborhood where she lives is totally Spanish-speaking.

Anale's teacher reports that she is highly motivated to learn English and generally has a confident personality. She is not afraid of making mistakes or being corrected in class. Anale has stated that she likes attending school and that her current primary goal is to learn English.

Scenario II: Ahmad

Ahmad is an Iraqi high school student who arrived in the United States at the beginning of the school year. He is in 10th grade in a local public high school in Arizona. Due to the many years of violence in his country, Ahmad had been unable to attend school on a regular basis and for many years was not able to attend school at all.

Ahmad remembers his first few weeks of school in the United States as a very emotional experience, and compounded with his lack of English skills, a very confusing one as well. He was often embarrassed by his inability to follow what were clearly social norms within the school setting. Students understood what the loud noise at the end of the class period meant, that you had to ask permission to use the restroom, and even how to behave in the hallways. This lack of understanding resulted in Ahmad being labeled as a *shy* student by his teachers. His parents found this description of their son odd given his outgoing personality in Iraq. In addition to the cultural norms to be learned, Ahmad also had to try to remember to read left to right across a page of text instead of right to left as Arabic print literacy skills dictate.

While in Iraq, Ahmad had the great benefit of having literate parents who had attempted to ensure his continued education by buying and sharing books between friends and relatives.

Ahmad's parents are also currently attempting to learn English by attending classes in the evening. Currently the family lives in a small Arabic community where the only spoken language is Arabic.

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