FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT PROFICIENCY IN LISTENING AND READING IN ENGLISH AND IN RUSSIAN

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Keywords: receptive skills, foreign language, background factors

This study reports on how Azerbaijani students' performance in English and Russian is influenced by an interplay of socioeconomic status (SES), school motivation, school attitude and parental education. The main objective of educational equality is to prevent factors that are beyond students' control, such as SES, from making an impact on their academic achievement. In the present paper listening and reading skills are targeted. Some studies (Nikolov, 2007; Nikolov & Csapó, 2002; Nikolov & Józsa, 2003, 2006) focused on individual differences of foreign language learners in their attitudes and motivation. However, there is a shortage in international and national, empirical studies aiming to define further factors that affect student performance in foreign languages. Participants of the present study were 8th grade students (N=540) of Baku city schools (16 schools of 12 districts), Azerbaijan. They completed an online background questionnaire that was adapted from PISA (2015). English as a foreign language achievement tests were adopted from *Célnyelvi mérés 2013-2014* (Oktatási Hivatal, 2014). These were translated to Russian by professionals, two-way translators for ensuring clear comprehension. The exam booklets consisted of the same number of tests in English and Russian. The reliability of the whole battery (Cronbach's alpha) was .97; English listening: .84; English reading: .88; Russian listening: .84; Russian reading: .84. A multiple regression analysis was computed using Mplus version 7.31 to reveal the relationships between the background factors involved in the model and student achievement. The maximum likelihood estimator was used. The analysis revealed that school motivation (Standardized Estimate (SE)=0.175, p<.0001), maternal education (SE=0.506, p<.0001), school attitude (SE=0.422, p<.0001), SES (SE=0.182, p<.007) are significant predictors of student achievement in English (R^2=.672, p<.0001), whereas SES (SE=0.106, p<.0001) and school attitude (SE=0.767, p<.0001) play significant roles in Russian language (R^2=.646, p<.0001). The findings of the study suggest that educators need to support students more effectively.