

Determining Factors Affecting EFL Learning Process: Implications for Teaching EFL to Congolese Learners

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Introduction

In Congo, classroom-based EFL learning is the main way in which students learn English at secondary level, and recently at primary level. It follows that what they learn is guided and controlled a great deal by a formal program of an EFL course designed by Institut National de Recherche et d'Actions Pédagogiques (INRAP), a government body in charge of designing programs. The program for learning EFL at primary and secondary levels outlines the aims, objectives, content, and the kind of tests for each unit. To implement the program, INRAP has designed also a written set of teaching materials to aid the teaching. The students, in their learning, are expected to acquire knowledge in the four skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing.

When students embark on the study of an EFL, they are not merely 'empty vessels' that will need to be filled by the wise words of the teacher; instead, they carry a considerable 'personal baggage' to the EFL that will have a significant bearing on how learning proceeds. Past research in applied linguistics has identified several key components of what we label 'learner baggage' and has also provided clear evidence that these components determine how fast and how well pupils are likely to master EFL.

Improving the teaching of a foreign language is very much based on our understanding of the process of language learning; and a good background for such an understanding can be the successful language learner. Many factors need to be taken into account when considering the qualities of successful learners. What are their backgrounds, for example, their past learning experiences? Why are they in the classroom? Why is one method appropriate for student A but not for student B? Because each student brings a unique personality to the classroom, it is often difficult to assess the factors involved.

Research results do not necessarily tell us what we really want to know either. For example, a recent university research team in Britain wanted to find out why some children who learn musical instruments became very good at it while others remained at best competent. They found that the most common factor was simply the number of hours the children had practiced. It is comforting when old sayings like 'practice makes perfect' come true! But the research still leaves us with questions.

Teachers have some commonly-held views about successful learners. Anecdotaly, they will tell us that the students who do best are the ones who always do their homework, for example. We might be able to say therefore, that doing homework is the trademark of a successful learner. But again, we are left with questions. Why do some students do homework while others do not? Why do some exceptional students succeed who do not do homework? Is it the homework itself that makes the difference or the underlying state of mind of the student?

The goal of this paper is to look at factors affecting foreign language learning. They have a crucial influence on students' accomplishment in acquiring language. Several factors, including internal and external factors, result in students' ability to learn. Knowledge about learner factors contributes to understanding how to manage suitable classroom environment for second or foreign language learning. Internal Factors — intelligence, age, personality and motivation, are likely to play a crucial role in students' language learning accomplishment, while external factors including motivation, opportunity and environment can bring about students' positive attitude toward the instructor and subject. Other factors that are specific to the Congolese context will also be dealt with.

The remaining structure of this article consists of significance of the study, research methodology, the review of the related literature, and pedagogical implications for teaching EFL to Congolese students, as well as conclusion.

I. Significance of the Study

The primary aim of the study lies in its attempt to identify factors which might be associated with the learning of English language. The focus is on investigating whether there are any correlations between the factors it explores and the learning of English language. If certain factors correlate with students' performance in English language, then such factors may be contributing to the difficulty faced by students in learning English language. This kind of information can be useful, not only for the teaching of English in the classroom but also to language planners and writers in their decision-making. The study should also contribute to the research literature in the field of a foreign language learning.

II. Research methodology

Having taught applied linguistics for years at University level, and observed high school trainee teachers of English as part of their assessment, we decided to carry out the present research. It is concerned with selecting and describing the most important factors which affect learning English as a foreign language in classrooms

within French speaking settings, in order to draw some pedagogical implications for teaching EFL to Congolese learners. The methods used to carry out this research are documentary research and classroom observations. Other information emerged from our own experience as an EFL teacher trainer.

III. The review of the related literature

This review is intended to shed some light on important factors influencing foreign language learning. It is divided into three parts. In the first part, we will deal with some external factors that influence a foreign language learning. The second part will be devoted to internal factors. The third part describes some specific factors to the Congolese educational context, which emerged during classroom observations.

III.1. External factors

The quest to identify significant and potential factors leading to success or failure in the learning of a foreign language has been part of research in second language acquisition for quite some time (Olshtain, Shohamy, Kemp and Chatow, 1990). Because these potential factors are many, any investigation of this kind needs to have some clear understanding of foreign language learning as a phenomenon, particularly the many different aspects that are involved in the learning of a foreign language. Having some understanding of those aspects would provide a good basis as to the kind of factors to be investigated.

Ellis (1986) refers to foreign language learning as a non-uniformed as well as an unpredictable phenomenon. This view immediately signifies the complexity and diversity of acquiring or learning a foreign language. The complexity of foreign language learning as a process leads Beebe (1988) to suggest that a multiple interdisciplinary approach can be used to view foreign language learning in order to achieve a full understanding. Included in this multiple interdisciplinary perspective are: the psycholinguistic perspective which stresses the central role played by the mental processing in foreign language learning; the sociolinguistic perspective which puts an emphasis on the role of social context in the acquisition of linguistic code and how the social context influences the development of communicative competence in foreign language learning; and the neurolinguistic perspective which seeks to establish relationships between the brain and acquiring, knowing and using a foreign language.

Another way of looking at a foreign language learning is reflected again by Ellis's view (1986:4), 'Foreign language learning is a product of many factors pertaining to the learner on the one hand and the learning situation on the other'. What is offered by this view is not an entirely different description of second language

acquisition from the one mentioned above, but rather an alternate way of organizing the same aspects of second language acquisition and explaining them in terms of their specific relevance to factors related to the learner of the language and the situation where learning takes place. Even within this approach, the perspectives mentioned above cannot be ignored. This approach has been taken up by researchers in factor studies, though with various modifications as to how these factors are conceptualized and categorized.

Pienemann and Johnston (1987), for example, came up with a distinction between factors which are 'external' and 'internal' to the learner. Under the title of 'external factors' are variables ranging from first language, social environment, and biological factors such as age. 'Internal factors', on the other hand, are described as aspects of the learner's cognitive and linguistic capacities and the mental structures which determine these capacities. This general typology of factors was incorporated into their multidimensional framework used in investigating factors relevant to the acquisition of a second language.

The environment in which opportunities take place affects language learning. A supportive environment affects directly learners' language competency. For instance, home environment is important to learners when they are supported from their parents with careful attention. Many parents take a good effort supporting their child to learn a language at home by which attempting to use English, for example, with child as much as they can. However, some children cannot develop a foreign language effectively if their parents lack enough ability to teach or understand the target language themselves. Parental educational background is, therefore, one of crucial aspects affecting foreign language learners. Most parents, who do not have enough capacities in teaching or understanding the importance of a target language, support their children by finding a good English school to provide more opportunities for interaction with native speaker teachers to their child. Facing authentic situations in English speaking context can facilitate children to learn second language effectively. Recent research suggests that:

'the language and literacy learning is deeply embedded in the social fabric of schools and homes and that school success is dependent upon a complex combination of home and school variables that may vary from child to child.' (Hull & Schultz, 2002).

During the past 40 years, there have been important shifts in how language educators have viewed context. The enduring issue has been the search for settings which could best promote language and culture learning. The central questions have been around the classroom as a learning setting as opposed to the 'field', i.e., real

world settings where the target language and culture are used. In the 1960s, many researchers and language educators believed that an understanding of context was crucial to language study, thus a lot of support was generated for experience-based learning such as study abroad programs and culture simulations in the classroom. The 1970s witnessed a shift toward cognitively-focused instruction with much less attention given to the role of context and experience in the learning process (Edwards & Rehorick, 1990).

From the 1980s up to the present time, much attention has been directed to context by language educators. Immersion schools, for example, represent an attempt to 'contextualize' the learning environment (Moos & Trickett, 1987). Study abroad programs, which have grown in popularity, constitute efforts to locate the language learner in the actual cultural context. The methodology suggested by Crawford-Lange & Lange (1984), Kramsch (1993), and, particularly, Byram (1988) is anchored in three fundamental learning processes: (1) the learners' exploration of their own culture; (2) the discovery of the relationship between language and culture, and (3) the learning of the heuristics for analyzing and comparing cultures. This implies providing opportunities for interaction such that 'members of the host culture can impart their own epistemology, their own way of seeing things' (Jurasek, 1982: 228) on the learner.

Hannigan (1990) found a strong relationship between successful intercultural communication and certain personal traits such as: cultural empathy, flexibility, organizational skills, and superior linguistic skills. But his study, like many others, could not demonstrate a causal relationship between the intercultural experience and the development of these qualities.

Carlson, J. & *al.* (1991) conducted a longitudinal study of the long-term effects of the undergraduate study abroad experience involving 400 American and European students as well as a control group. They found, in addition to the language gains correlated with length of stay, that: (1) students who choose to study abroad differ in predictable ways from non-study-abroad students by showing greater 'cultural interest' and a lower 'domestic orientation', (2) social and personal development are important parts of the international experience, and (3) participants in the study abroad program scored higher than the comparison group on cultural interest and 'peace and co-operation' indicators. Norton & Toohey (2001) concluded their study by saying that understanding good language learning requires attention to social practices in the contexts in which the individuals learn foreign languages.

Other authors have theorized that the classroom as an artificial community can provide some unexpected benefits for language and culture learning (Kramsch, 1993).

In particular, they hypothesize that the classroom is a protective environment where students can feel free to make mistakes without any lasting repercussions, in contrast to a student who is studying abroad and makes a mistake which can have enduring consequences. This protective setting enables students to safely experiment with the language and thus encourages them to make sense of the language and culture for themselves.

In the study of EFL classes in South Asia, Canagarajah (1993) found that the students felt alienated and negative towards the target language and culture. They discovered that this was due to the implicit Western bias of the materials and of the instructor, reinforced by the fact that the cultural context was never explicitly discussed. Consequently, the students felt anxious about and disconnected from the target language and culture. Because of the circumstances, these students indicated that they favored the more traditional approach of memorizing the grammar and vocabulary, presumably because it was a process which allowed them to keep a certain distance from the language and the culture. The foreign language students' fear of being 'absorbed' by the culture of the language they are studying is repeatedly brought up by researchers in the United States and abroad (Hoffman, 1989).

Gholami from the University of Putra in Malaysia in the year 2012 investigated the social context as an indirect trigger in EFL contexts. In this study, the author tries to understand the value of the social context and the role it plays in language learning. According to Gholami, the social context is believed to have an influence on students' attitude and motivation by providing learning opportunities that will enhance learners' outcomes. Based on this, it is understood that students acquire a language by using social interaction with speakers of that language. However, according to the researcher, the significance of the social context is usually underestimated in many countries.

Students' cultural background has an influence on their foreign language learning. Bernaus, M. & *al.*, from the University of Barcelona conducted a study in 2004 in which they intended to understand the effect of the cultural background of immigrant children in their language learning process. They worked with 114 students, aged 12 to 16; they all answered a questionnaire based on Gardner's Attitude- Motivation Test Battery in which they assessed their attitudes, motivation and anxiety towards language learning. At the end of this study, it was concluded that there were few differences attributable to the cultural background.

In short, once children are put into an environment that supports their foreign language learning, they will eventually learn and acquire the language. As good environment provides good experience in learning, children will have more chance to

participate with instructors and friends. In fact, learning occurs by playing or interacting with people. The more children interact with people using language in different kinds of situations, the higher effective outcome in second language acquisition occurs. Either school or home environment provides learners appropriate and effective learning experiences. Therefore, learners who have acquired general knowledge and experience are in a stronger position to develop a new language than those who have not.

As far as extrinsic motivation is concerned, it comes from outside the individual. Learners are extrinsically motivated when learning is done for the sake of rewards such as grades or praise that are not inherently associated with the learning itself, that is, when learning or performing well becomes necessary to earning those rewards. Many researchers and theorists have contended that intrinsic motivation correlates more closely with language learning success than extrinsic motivation, but a learner's total motivation is most frequently a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. External rewards can either increase or decrease intrinsic motivation, depending on how they affect self-efficacy.

According to Dornyei (1994: 273-284), motivation in language learning is affected by various external influences such as the school environment which constitutes factors such as teachers, peer-groups and instructional material. However, social and contextual factors such as immediate family and friends also influence motivation. These factors that make up learners' immediate environment play a critical part in learners' practice of setting goals, forming attitude towards learning, influencing their own self-efficacy beliefs in learning and determining the effort and persistence in accomplishing a learning activity. Researchers identified the influence of this environment on language learning as influence of parental encouragement and praise on student's motivated behavior in his initial research.

Motivation is a powerful tool that teachers can explore and utilize further in their teaching. Teachers are one of the most determinant factors of a foreign language learners' motivation. EFL teachers play one of the most influential roles to help their learners engaging and persisting in the long process of EFL learning. Among the role that teachers play are as initiator, facilitator, and motivator, ideal model of the target language speaker, mentor, consultant, and mental supporter. These roles are assumed to influence each learner's motivation.

So, one of the main tasks for teachers is to provoke interest and involvement in the subject even when students are not initially interested in it. It is by their choice of topic, activity and linguistic content that they may be able to turn a class around. It is by their attitude to class participation, their conscientiousness, their humor and their

seriousness that they may influence their students. It is by their own behavior and enthusiasm that they may inspire.

As mentioned earlier, another meaningful supportive factor that leads learners to accomplish in language learning is the opportunity to use or deal with language. Spolsky (1989:166) argued that 'whatever the language learner brings to the task, whether innate ability, a language acquisition device, attitudes, previous knowledge, and experiences of languages and language learning, the outcome of language learning depends in larger measure on the amount and kind of exposure to the target language'.

The amount and kind of exposure to the target language are considered important because they provide opportunities for the language learner to successfully perform the tasks essentially involved in learning a foreign language. Klein (1986) claimed that the second language learner has four essential tasks to perform in second language learning: 'first, he or she must successfully analyze the speech input, he or she hears into appropriate units. Second, he or she must learn how to synthesize these minimal units into larger units. Third, he or she must learn how utterances are embedded in context (including of course non-linguistic context). Finally, he or she must learn to match his or her own present command of a language with the target aimed at'.

Spolsky (1989) pointed out two other tasks which Klein seemed to have left unstated yet involved in all kinds of learning. The first of these is the remembering of the newly learned items, and the second is the practice of the newly learned items to help the development of fluency and automaticity. In his general theory for second language learning, Spolsky restated all these six task elements as conditions which must be met for second language learning to take place. That is, learners must be provided with opportunities so that they can perform these tasks of language learning.

There are two kinds of exposure commonly referred to in foreign language learning literature. Although they are distinct in many aspects, they both provide opportunities for the language learner to carry out the various tasks involved in learning a foreign language. The 'natural language learning' is a situation where the language learner picks up a foreign language in the environment in which it is spoken from others speaking with the purpose of using it to communicate. The 'formal or classroom learning' is the learning of language in a situation where only one person (the teacher) has command of it and the teacher controls the exposure so it will lead to learning. Spolsky (1989) outlined sets of contrasting conditions between these two learning situations. As the goal for natural language learning is communication, the learner is under pressure to utilize his entire language potential to communicate

successfully. This provides a necessary kind of practice. Negotiation of meaning between the non-native speakers and the native speakers provides a very valuable form of practice. In the formal situation, the goal is learning so the tasks presented to the learner is smaller making it easier for the learner to analyze, synthesize, and match thus giving time for memory and opportunity for sufficient practice.

Many speakers in the natural environment are fluent and native, so the learner is consequently exposed to a variety of forms and styles with which he or she can match his or her own knowledge. The one fluent model of the teacher in the classroom provides the learner with time to get used to one style at a time, and also there is no competition from other speakers better than the learners to make them feel inadequate.

III.2. Internal factors

Having dealt with external factors affecting success and failure in learning a foreign language, let us now say a few words about internal factors: age, intelligence, personality and motivation.

The learner's age has been the subject of a great deal of research over the last 40 years. The traditional view has been that the younger people start to learn a foreign language, the better chance for success they have. Previously, this advantage was explained in terms of a 'critical period', where a person needed to learn the foreign language in the period roughly before puberty, or lose the ability to become native-like altogether.

However, recent research shows that 'the younger the better' principle is only valid in environments where there is a constant and natural exposure to the foreign language (for example, learning Russian in Russia); in typical classroom environments where the amount of exposure is relatively small, older learners seem to have the advantage over their younger peers, that is, here, older is better. Also, age seems to have a much greater effect on pronunciation than on other linguistic abilities, such as grammar or vocabulary. Even here, it seems that late-starting learners have been able to develop native-like pronunciation.

As far as intelligence is concerned, every student has intelligent differences. As intelligence of learners tells limitations of individual learning ability, knowing students' intelligence or background can help to design appropriate content in learning and teaching. Most learners, who have high intelligence, are likely to reach the goal of learning objectives and can learn thing faster than those who has lower. However, everyone can be a successful language learner if they have a good facilitator and instruction that support their learning.

According to Bennett et al. (2004), the things that learners already understand have a significant influence on whether and how well they can learn something new. So, students' background is an important aspect that teachers need to know to create a suitable lesson with appropriate levels of different students.

Concerning student's personality, studies indicate that personality relates to communicative ability (Lightbown, 2001: 33). This can be seen in self-confident students. These students readily interact with those around them. These interactions allow them to recall information and apply it to the conversational settings.

Language ambiguity tolerance is another personality trait commonly found in foreign language learners. Naiman suggests that 'those students who have a high intolerance of ambiguity may have great difficulty in coping with the amount of ambiguity present in the second language classroom' (1978: 147). The students that are ambiguity-tolerant are better able to analyze the differences between the first and second or foreign languages. Persons with a low tolerance of ambiguity experience frustration and diminished performance.

Learners with clearly defined goals and a sense of positive self-efficacy engage in activities they believe will lead to goal attainment (Covington, 1992). Once learners have their personal goal and interest into language, they will learn the language faster, or even easier than others. Some learners will seek opportunities in which to use the new language and to take the risks involved in experimenting with English, for example. Others may prefer to wait until they know that they can get it right. Likewise, personality plays an outstanding role in terms of promoting or demoting native-like learning outcomes.

Negative personality factors such as lack of self-esteem, inhibition, anxiety, introversion, and fear of risk-taking, can influence the second language acquisition process negatively. Anxious learners usually make slower progress, particularly in the development of oral skills. They are less likely to take advantage of opportunities to speak, or to seek out such opportunities. More outgoing students will not worry about making mistakes. They will take risks, and thus will give themselves much more opportunity to practice.

As far as internal motivation is concerned, one of the most successful language experiences we know about took place towards the end of the Second World War when the American military needed to train their personnel in the language of the countries they would have to administer and/or deal with. In short, intensive courses the students learnt fantastically fast. Likewise, in Britain, Air Force personnel were taken to Cambridge and taught Russian, for example, with enormous success.

Whatever we think of the teaching methods used or the reasons for the language learning, the teachers and students in these cases had a number of things on their side: they were highly motivated, they really wanted to learn and they had powerful reasons for doing so, including, of course, a fear of failure.

It is claimed that integrative motivated students would sustain their interest in learning and become more successful than others (Caizér & Dörnyei, 2005). This process is established intrinsically, namely, from inside the learners. Gardner (1985) explains simple description of intrinsic motivation that 'when the desire to achieve the goal and favorable attitudes toward the goal are linked with the effort or the drive, then we have a motivated organism'. It means that students who have more enjoyment and intrinsic motivation in language learning are likely to reach their competency to the highest goal of the learning than those who feel anxious and uncomfortable in language class. In relation to intrinsic motivation, interest in language learning reflects love and enthusiasm as well as the desire to perform an activity simply for the pleasure and satisfaction that accompany the action and these feeling of pleasure derive from fulfilling innate needs for competence and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Famous research carried out in the second half of the 20th century by Gardner and Lambert suggested that students who felt most warmly about a language and who wanted to integrate into the culture of its speakers were more highly motivated (and learnt more successfully) than those who were only learning language as a means to an end (e.g. getting a better job). In other words, integrative motivation was more powerful than instrumental motivation. But whatever kind of motivation students have, highly motivated students do better than ones without any motivation at all.

III.3. Factors that are specific to the Congolese Context

Apart from the general factors that have been dealt with in the previous sections, there are some other factors that are specific to the Congolese educational context. We noticed them during classroom observations. These are: the duration and intensity of the EFL course, the appropriateness of the teaching methodology, the quality of the teaching materials, the size and composition of the learner group.

As far as the duration and intensity of the EFL course is concerned, the maxim that 'practice makes perfect' reflects a common belief that practice is directly related to improvement in performance. This observation has been described in cognitive psychology by the "power law of practice" (Newell & Rosenbloom, 1981), according to which time devoted to practicing a skill is a determining factor in automatization, as reflected in a more accurate and faster performance. Similarly, the second language acquisition literature has emphasized that, all things being equal, the more time

students devote to learning a second language, the higher their level of proficiency will be. Unfortunately, in the Congolese context, the amount of instructional time allocated to the teaching of EFL is insufficient: usually, three hours per week and per class.

Foreign language learning is a global phenomenon. Its concern is to find appropriate methods to facilitate learning process. In the Congolese context, the method used focuses on the teachers who instill knowledge into the minds of passive students, and on using both native language (French) and English translation. These methods obviously have a negative impact on learners' motivation.

Most of the teachers in the department of English in Congo show their reluctance to teaching English in large classes (60 to 120). They complain that they find it impossible to reconcile the achievement of the course objectives with the actual classroom situations which cause the decline of the students' motivation and achievement.

There are various perspectives on the definition of teaching materials. Tomlinson (2003: 2), for instance, defines it as 'anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language'. Moreover, Nash (1999: 1) defines material as 'aids in the learning process [which] facilitate the students' learning'. Interestingly, the word 'facilitate' is common in both definitions. However, the methods by which materials can facilitate learning are different. One important way probably is to push or motivate the learner to participate in a real conversation or real language use (Harmer, 2007). Although there are various types of materials, printed 'instructional' materials in the form of textbooks are the majority of the available materials nowadays.

From the above literature review, there is so much need for further investigation of factors that contribute to success or failure in foreign language learning. The present study, therefore, attempts to investigate some of these factors.

VI. Implications for teaching EFL to Congolese learners

The study of factors affecting foreign language learning has several pedagogical implications that might lead to improved classroom practices. It would be necessary for teachers, learners and policy makers to take them into account to make learning and teaching practices more effective and relevant. Therefore, it would be a good idea to start devoting time, financial and human resources to:

1. Prepare or improve the learning environment and support learning opportunity.

The Congolese school authorities should deal with the problem of overcrowded classes. Indeed, the size of English classes often makes it impossible to prescribe some activities or to use more effective strategies to increase learners' performance. The lower the number of learners per class, the better the instruction: students are given more opportunities to learn effectively and express themselves.

Also, teachers should create a good learning atmosphere in class to gain students' positive attitude toward language learning. Policy makers or schools should develop exchange programs with schools abroad (English speaking countries) for Congolese students to interact with native speakers or have the chance to face authentic situations.

Teachers can also use authentic material such as different kinds of magazine, travelling brochures, and other aids to encourage language learners because interesting materials support good environment in classroom as well.

2. Design appropriate course materials

With the widespread use of English language and its teaching, the main concern of teachers, syllabus designers, policy makers, institutions are to design course materials that can fulfil learners' language needs appropriately. Teachers and curriculum designers should think globally and act locally; in that the majority of course books are written in other countries; teachers or curriculum designers have to do amendments in order to meet or adapt those textbooks to the needs of their own learners.

3. Increase the instructional time allocated to EFL teaching

The number of hours devoted to instruction and practice of the language is not sufficient; hence the need to increase it, because 'practice makes perfect' as mentioned earlier.

4. Teach learners 'how to learn'

It would be necessary for Congolese EFL teachers to teach learners how to use learning strategies more effectively and to encourage them to make the most of their learning opportunities.

5. Vary the teaching methodologies

Teaching content, teaching approaches and teaching methodologies all impact directly on students' interest in studying the course." It means that teachers should be as a motivator who encourages students to have positive attitudes toward the subject and instructor in order to gain their language learning. Teachers' role, therefore, is to provide good instruction, materials, and use a variety of effective teaching methodologies to promote students' learning achievement.

Conclusion

We can conclude from the foregoing analysis that **EFL** learning accomplishment of students undoubtedly deals with either internal or external factors. To support students' learning, teachers and policy makers should create an appropriate environment and enough opportunity to interact with the language. These can help to motivate students to have more interest which eventually leads to succeed in language learning. Successful learners are motivated both externally and internally, but sources of internal drive are predominant.

In order to create instruction activities and materials, teachers need to learn from their students. Learner factors, therefore, are tools that guide teachers to choose the right way of teaching. It is a teacher role to make understanding of these factors in order to help students to accomplish in foreign language learning. For learners in general, intelligence, age, motivation, opportunity and environment are factors that influence their language learning achievement. For the Congolese learners, other factors such as the duration and intensity of the EFL course, the appropriateness of the teaching methodology, the quality of the teaching materials, the size and composition of the learner group are influential in affecting their EFL learning.

We did not consider other factors such as language learning styles of students. For example, language learners who have high intelligence in visual-spatial skill should be provided with materials includes different kinds of pictures to promote their language learning. As these learners can remember and recall the lesson easily through pictures, visual aids should be used in classroom.

This factor is not taken into account in the Congolese educational system. No study has been carried out on that factor so far, may be because it requires the use of materials that the system cannot provide to schools. Hence, the need for further investigation of this topic.

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