

INTRODUCTION

“To have another language is to possess a second soul.”

(Emperor Charlemagne, 1998: 79)

Linguists, foreign language teachers, as well as researchers have already spent decades trying to figure out what influences acquisition of a foreign language, which have led to some fascinating outcomes. In the same way, they have also tried to understand the specifics of intelligence and how it enhances the abilities of human beings to acquire new knowledge and skills. Although a lot has been achieved in the field, there is always more to search for. There is a plentiful pool of approaches, factors, aspects and groups of learners of various ages, nationalities and at various levels of English to choose from.

The present treatise is a continuation of the one entitled “On the interconnections between selected aspects of English grammar in Slovak learners’ acquisition” (Eddy, 2011), which studied the extent to which the results achieved in selected grammatical subtests influenced the scores of the respondents in other grammar-based subtests. The above publication presents theoretical background regarding English grammar acquisition, explaining such notions as *foreign language*, its *learning* and *acquisition*, as well as the *environment* in which these processes take place, and it also pays attention to *factors* that are generally considered to influence foreign language acquisition, namely the roles of the language environment, input, the first language, and internal processing. Moreover, it provides a brief look into individual learner differences.

Implementing the findings from the above treatise, the present publication aims to provide a closer view into the involvement of cognitive processes in English grammar when acquired by Slovak learners. The **aim** of the presented research was to find out whether and to what extent the observed cognitive processes are involved in the acquisition of the selected grammatical aspects in Slovak learners. As a **hypothesis** it was accepted that the involvement of the observed cognitive processes in the acquisition of the selected grammatical aspects in Slovak

learners is statistically significant. To achieve the aim, the following **plan** was set up: (a) to contact the target group participating in the research on grammar; (b) to select tests of intelligence; (c) to carry out the testing; (d) to carry out factor analysis; (e) to find out which cognitive processes are involved in solving particular grammatical tasks; (f) to apply the findings to the process of English grammar acquisition; and (g) to draw conclusions and suggest possible areas of further research. The same group of 15-year-old learners attending 8-year secondary comprehensive schools in Slovakia as the one involved in Eddy (2011) was approached and asked to complete a psychological test specifically designed for this purpose.

The treatise is divided into four chapters. Resuming where Eddy (2011) left off, the present treatise explains in more detail (in **Chapter 1**) which individual learner differences might influence foreign language acquisition. It provides various researchers' views with regard to the age and sex of a learner, their motivation and attitude, personality, their preferred learning style and strategies, as well as their intelligence and aptitude. Since the research presented in this treatise studied the involvement of cognitive processes in the acquisition of English grammar, **Chapter 2** broadly defines intelligence and multi-perspective views of academics on this notion. It explains the most important terms involved in the research, namely psychological and cognitive processes. A brief historical overview of intelligence testing can also be found in the same chapter. Finally, the influence of intelligence on academic achievement is explained. **Chapter 3** presents the methodology used in the research, describing the methods used to obtain and process research data. The actual results of the research are contained in **Chapter 4**, which, in a number of subchapters, presents and comments on the relationships found between the observed variables. At the end of each subchapter, a summary of the discussed research results is provided to clarify the outcomes.

While the presented research results only represent a tiny stone in the immense mosaic of foreign language acquisition, I sincerely hope that the outcomes can be used by other researchers to develop them as well as to refer to them. I also hope that the research shed some light on the amazing capabilities of human beings in the process of developing their skills and abilities.