

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Foreign Language Literacy Aptitude:**

Language as a human behavior is used to communicate thoughts, ideas, feelings, and needs. Because of time and place considerations, different people have been using different languages. Recently, the world seems to have a one-society structure because of the contemporary technological revolution. Aspects of this revolution include progress in fields such as transportation, telecommunication, mass media, computer science and so on. This direct contact among individuals of different nations has demanded the usage of foreign languages. Hence, the school curricula of most of the nations involve the study of one, or more, foreign language(s). In addition, the regulations of most of the universities in several countries require a certain level of foreign language proficiency.

In the Egyptian school curricula, English is taught as a foreign language. However, no considerations are given to

diversity in language aptitude when teaching English as a foreign language. Sparks and Ganschow (1995), citing MacIntyre, mention that it is very essential when teaching a foreign language to give enough attention to the Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis (LCDH) which posits that language aptitude is the primary source of individual differences in foreign language achievement.

Recently, a universal interest has been directed toward the study of foreign language aptitude. For instance, in September 1988 an invitational conference was held in Washington D.C. to bring together people interested in prediction of success in second language learning. As Parry and Stansfield (1990) say, the participants of that conference came out with a fact that language aptitude research, test development, and data collection and analysis might improve our ability to predict successful language learning and tailor the classroom environment and instruction to individual students.

Barnwell (1992) and Rudman (1989) believe that school curricula and expectations need to be adapted to learners' aptitude. Consequently, aptitude testing needs to be considered in our Egyptian school. Hence, the present chapter is concerned with reconsidering English language in the Egyptian school curricula on the basis of foreign language aptitude.

It is concerned with English language learning rather than acquisition since English is taught as the primary foreign language in the Egyptian school curricula. In addition, both Krashen (1981, 1982) and Reber (1989, 1993) mention that differences in measures of cognitive variables such as aptitude should only be related to conscious learning that takes place in classroom environment.

Furthermore, this chapter focuses on foreign language literacy including only reading and writing skills because of the two following reasons:

a. Speech could be acquired by all normal human beings

without explicit instructions (Schmidt, 1995), and

- b. Written form has to be taught through explicit effort directed toward the explanation of grammar, lexicon, and phonology (Milroy & Milroy, 1991, p. 65).

Thus, it could be assumed that all normal human beings have an aptitude to acquire, without conscious learning or explicit instruction, the spoken foreign language. Meanwhile, the aptitude of learning the written form of the foreign, as well as the native, language is still subject to study. In other words, it is certain that all individuals who spend some time in a foreign country can communicate, at different ranks, orally in such a language. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the learners who study foreign language classes are not necessarily literate in that language. This phenomenon can be explained by assuming that there should be a foreign language literacy aptitude which correlates positively with proficiency level of the target foreign language. For more detail, see review of literature.

## **Intelligence and Foreign Language Learning**

As Ellis (1991, p. 110) says, learning a foreign language in a classroom involves two sets of intelligence abilities. The first ability is called, by Stern (1983, p. 368), *the general academic or reasoning ability* which is often referred to as intelligence. This ability is involved not only in learning a foreign language but also in studying the other school subjects. The second ability, which consists of specific cognitive qualities needed for learning a foreign language, is often referred to as aptitude.

Ehrman (1996, p. 208) mentions that intelligence is not necessary for language learning. She says that very dull people learn their native languages. In addition, as she believes, unintelligent people can communicate successfully in a foreign language if they are living where this language is used regularly. However, Ehrman says that when the foreign language is learned in relatively shorter times, inside the classroom, intelligence is required.

Previous related studies agree with Ehrman's view. For instance, Genesee (1976) found that intelligence was strongly related to the development of academic L2 French language skills, namely reading, grammar, and vocabulary. Nevertheless, Genesee's study revealed that intelligence was not significantly related to the oral productive skills of the native speakers. Also, Ekstrand (1977) found that there were low-level correlations between intelligence and proficiency as measured by listening comprehension and free oral production tests.

It could be said that intelligence has much less influence on the acquisition of oral fluency skills. Nevertheless, it strongly affects foreign language literacy. Hence, intelligence may be a powerful predictor of success on foreign language learning which takes place in the classroom (Ellis, 1991, p. 111). In other words, intelligence is required when foreign language learning takes place within teaching methods. However, there is no evidence, as stated previously, that intelligence affects foreign language acquisition that is due to

**spontaneous language usage.**

### **Aptitude and Language learning**

**The terms intelligence, ability, and aptitude are often used interchangeably to refer to the behavior that is used to predict future learning or performance (Harrington, 1995; Wesche, Edwards & Wells, 1982). However, subtle studies have been done to define them. Ellis (1991, p. 294) mentions that aptitude refers to the specific ability a learner has for learning a second/foreign language. This is, according to Ellis, hypothesized to be separate from the general ability, to master academic skills, which is referred to as intelligence. Because of its difficulty, the term aptitude is usually defined in terms of the tests that have been constructed and used to measure it (Ellis, 1991, p. 112).**

**Aptitude of learning anything can be defined for operational purposes as the amount of time it takes an individual to learn the task in question (Parry & Stansfield (1990). Thus, individuals may differ not in whether they can**

learn a task or not, but rather in the length of time it takes them to learn it or reach a given degree of competence. This perspective, according to Parry and Stansfield (1990) is applicable to foreign language aptitude.

Like intelligence tests, aptitude tests measure a student's overall performance across a broad range of capabilities. But aptitude tests often include items which measure more specialized abilities such as verbal and numerical skills that predict scholastic performance in educational programs (Macklem, 1990). Gardner (1993, p. 9) believes that language aptitude represents a collection of abilities which facilitate the process of learning a second/foreign language. In the assessment of language aptitude, certain abilities/skills are being measured in order to predict the subsequent achievement in the target language. Ellis (1991, p. 113) thinks that these abilities/skills are not definitely determined yet.

Facione (1990) thinks that reading ability and vocabulary usage are predictors of success in foreign language

learning. Gardner (1993) recommends that foreign language aptitude tests need to focus on vocabulary and grammatical skills of one's own native language. Meanwhile, Carroll (1962, 1974, 1990) demonstrates that language aptitude tests are to assess four abilities which are necessary for learning second languages. These abilities are phonetic coding, grammatical sensitivity, memory (rote) learning, and inductive language learning.

Other components of aptitude tests, as listed by scholars of language aptitude, include motivation and knowledge of vocabulary in the native language (Ehrman, 1996, p. 202 citing Pimsleur, 1966). The ability to cope with the unfamiliar and tolerating for ambiguity is also included as predictors of success in foreign language learning (Ehrman, 1994). Also, Anastasi (1988) considers vocabulary use the best single overall measure of intelligence. This vocabulary usage in the native, as well as the foreign, language could be said to be a significant predictor of success in foreign language learning. Ehrman (1996, pp. 208-209) believes that flexibility has an

effective impact on learning to higher proficiency levels and on rapid learning at lower proficiency levels.

Ehrman (1996, p. 209) enlists a number of features that help in communicative language learning which seem to be related to fluid intelligence. These features are:

- a. cognitive flexibility (which may include the ability to cope with the unfamiliar),
- b. random (versus sequential) learning,
- c. orientation to meaning over form,
- d. ability to cope with surprises (linguistic and pedagogic),
- e. openness to input and tolerance of ambiguity, and
- f. ability to sort input , analyze as appropriate, and organize into mental structures.

(Ehrman, 1996:209)

Robinson (1995) assigns three abilities that need to be measured by language learning aptitude tests. These abilities are:

- a. paired-associate learning (measure of memory),
- b. grammatical sensitivity (inductive learning),
- c. noticing, looking for, and verbalizing rules (measure of awareness).

### **Language Aptitude Tests**

The history of language aptitude tests reveals that not several tests do exist in the field of assessing foreign language learning aptitude. The following description demonstrates common language aptitude tests.

### **Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT)**

Although some work on language aptitude tests was done during the 1920s and the 1930s, only in 1959 Carroll and Sapon came up with the first language aptitude test. This test, known as the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT), was developed to select candidates for language courses in the armed settings (Curral & Kirk, 1986, p. 108). The MLAT was designed for learners of 14 years old and above (Oxford & Ehrman, 1993, p. 189).

The MLAT is primarily based on a factor analysis of a large number of individual characteristics thought to affect language learning (Carroll & Sapon, 1959). These abilities are grouped into four categories:

1. Phonetic coding which is the ability to segment and identify distinct sounds, to form associations between those sounds and symbols representing them, and to retain these associations,
2. Grammatical sensitivity, which refers to the ability to recognize the grammatical function of words or other linguistic structures in sentences,
3. The rote learning ability (or memory ability) which is related to general memory, and the ability to apply memory to the foreign language situation, and
4. Inductive language learning ability which is the ability to infer the rules that govern the use of the language.

(Ehrman, 1996, p. 201)

These four abilities are represented by five sub-tests which are the components of the MLAT. These five parts are:

1. Phonetic script (sound-symbol coding),
2. Spelling clues (sound-symbol coding and English language vocabulary),
3. Words in sentences (grammatical sensitivity in English and some induction),
4. Number learning (rote memorization, aural comprehension, and induction of grammar systems), and
5. Paired associates (rote memorization and associative learning).

(Oxford & Ehrman, 1993, p. 189)

The reliability and the validity of the MLAT, as indicated in its manual and other research work related to it, is quite impressive (Carroll and Sapon, 1959, and Carroll, 1962, 1974, 1979). However, criticism has been directed against the MLAT. Oxford and Ehrman (1993), citing Skehan (1989), mention that the MLAT has the following deficiencies:

1. It fails to discriminate well at all levels. For instance, at the U.S. Foreign Service Institute, the MLAT effectively identifies the worst and the best candidates but differentiates poorly the middle two-thirds,
2. It is applicable to language learning in a classroom environment, but not in natural settings where language learning is spontaneous,
3. It does not take into account the way the learners approach foreign language learning, and
4. It depends on sophisticated knowledge of English, thus it may not be valid for non-native speakers of English.

(Oxford & Ehrman, 1993, p. 189).

### **Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB)**

Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB) was developed by Pimsleur (1966) for students in grades 7 to 12. This battery contains an index of general academic achievement, a scale of interest in learning a foreign language, and other sub-tests including language analysis, sound

discrimination, and sound symbols. Like the MLAT, PLAB addresses the ability to deal with sounds and symbols. However, it differs from the MLAT by including a portion directly addressing the ability to infer language structure from an artificial language stimulus (Ehrman, 1966, p. 202). In addition, as Ehrman says, it assesses phonological as well as grammatical sensitivity.

PLAB consists of six parts, two involving verbal reports of grade point average and ratings of interest respectively, and the last four comprising objective assessment. These latter four tests include measures of vocabulary, language analysis, sound discrimination, and sound-symbol association ability. (Gardner, 1993, p. 9).

Pimsleur (1966) refers to foreign language abilities as talents and argues that his test measures three primary components: verbal intelligence including analytic reasoning, motivation, and auditory ability. PLAB, as well as MLAT, has satisfying validity and reliability (Gardner, 1993, and Pimsleur,

1966).

### **Gardner and Lambert's Battery of Tests**

In order to conduct a study, for the Language Development Section of the U.S. Office of Education under Title VI of the National Defense Education Act, Gardner and Lambert (1972) developed a language aptitude battery for the sake of measuring aptitude and second language achievement.

Gardner and Lambert's Battery of Tests consists of 24 sub-tests. Variables 1-5 are sub-test from the MLAT. These sub-tests are:

1. **Number Learning:** this test measures both a memory component and a general auditory-alertness factor.
2. **Phonetic Script:** this test is a measure of both memory for speech sounds and the ability to learn correspondence between speech sounds and orthographic symbols.
3. **Spelling Clues:** scores on this test are dependent upon a student's knowledge of English vocabulary as well as the

sound-symbol association ability.

4. **Words in Sentences:** this test measures a student's sensitivity to grammatical structure.
5. **Paired Associates:** this test is a measure of student's rote-memory ability.

Variables 6-10 are five tests borrowed from Thurstone's Primary Mental Abilities (PMA) test battery. The tests included are:

6. **Verbal Meaning.**
7. **Space.**
8. **Reasoning.**
9. **Number.**
10. **Word Fluency.**

Variables 11-14 are sub-tests from the Cooperative French Listening Comprehension Test, borrowed from Brooks. The total test consists of four parts, each of which involves a different type of listening situation. The description of these

sub-tests is:

11. **Phonetic Discrimination:** a low score in this test indicates that the student is poor in making auditory distinctions in consonant, vowel, and nasal sounds; verb ending; linking; etc., in the aural comprehension in French.
12. **Answering Questions:** this test is a measure of the student's comprehension of isolated questions asked in French.
13. **Completion of Statements:** this test measures the student's ability to complete French statements presented aurally.
14. **Comprehension of Passages:** this test measures the student's ability to comprehend and retain impressions that are described in a series of aurally presented, related French sentences.

Variables 15-17 are the sub-tests borrowed from Greenberg and Spaulding's cooperative French Test, Elementary Form Q. The tests include:

15. **Reading:** incomplete French sentences are given, and, in

each case, the subject is required to select the alternative which most reasonably completes the sentences.

16. **Vocabulary:** 50 French words are presented, and, for each word, the subject chooses the English equivalent.
17. **Grammar:** the subject is presented a series of English sentences, each followed by an incomplete French translation. The subject is required to choose the word, word ending, or phrase which best completes each sentence.

The remaining sentences are either developed by Gardner and Lambert especially for their study (variables 18-21) or are obtained from the school records (variables 22-24).

18. **French Free Speech.**
19. **French Reading Fluency.**
20. **French Pronunciation Accuracy.**
21. **Standard French Accent.**
22. **Midterm French Grade.**
23. **Final French Grade.**

## 24. Academic Average.

(Gardner and Lambert, 1972, pp. 284-286).

### **Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB)**

The U.S. Department of Defense has developed, among other tests, the DLAB in order to assess whether, or not, its agents would be successful if sent to receive full-time language training (Parry & Stansfield, 1990). Peterson and Altaik (1976) prepared DLAB to aid in the selection of candidates to study at the Defense Language Institute.

The duration of testing the scholars using DLAB is 80 minutes. It is composed of four parts, and some parts have multiple sections. These four parts are described below:

- a. the first part pairs pictures with an artificial language, and subjects are required to deduce appropriate language forms,
- b. the second part involves recognition of foreign language sounds,
- c. the third part requires subjects to form associations between

sounds and symbols, and  
d. the last part involves the application of new grammatical rules in a translation task.  
(Gardner, 1993, p. 8).

All the previous parts, except the first, make use of language materials presented orally. As Gardner (1993) says, not much information about the validity of DLAB has been published.

### **The VORD**

VORD was designed to test the ability to cope with the grammar of languages in the Altaic family (Parry & Child, 1990). The items involved in VORD address mainly the abilities of grammatical analysis. Parry and Child (1990) mention that VORD has a predictive validity similar to that of the MLAT and DLAB.

## **Dadour's Foreign Language Literacy Aptitude Test (FLLAT)**

The author of the present book, in one of his studies (Dadour, 1999) constructed this instrument in order to predict success in foreign language learning of the zero-level learners' of English. The test consists of two parts; each one includes five sub-tests assumed to be predictors of success in foreign language learning. The first part deals with the native-language (Arabic) proficiency level. This part consists of five sub-tests that are listed below:

- 1. Flexibility of Letter use:** in this test the learners are given groups of letters and they are required to compose as much words as they can from each group of letters. (Time: one minute for each item)
- 2. Flexibility of Vocabulary Use:** the test measures the learners' ability to use one word in three different sentences in three different positions, initially, medially, and finally. (Time: one minute for each item)
- 3. Phonetic Rhythm:** in this test the learners are provided with

- groups of written words grouped into threes. Each group of three words has the same two final sounds. The learners are requested to fill out the space given with a fourth word that has the same two final sounds. (30 seconds for each item)
4. **Reading Comprehension:** this multiple-choice test measures the learners' ability to comprehend a written passage. (Three minutes for answering all the questions)
  5. **Fluency of Letter Use:** in this test the learners are required to write down as much words as they can begin with an assigned letter. (Time: one minute for each item)

The second part of FLLAT is concerned with the ability to reveal codes, deal with the unfamiliar, and discover new symbols related to the new foreign language (English). This part consists of five sub-tests which measure reasoning and the ability to recognize similarities and differences considering spelling, grammar and numbers. These five sub-tests are described briefly below:

6. **Discriminating Differences among Words:** in this test the learners are given words in fours, three of them have something similar while the fourth does not have this similarity. The learners are asked to find out the word that lacks that similarity. (Time: 30 seconds for each item)
7. **Comparison/Analogy:** in this test the learners are provided with pairs of sentences that are almost typical except for one minor difference. The learners are required to identify this difference. (Time: 20 seconds for each item)
8. **Symbol Sense:** in this test the learners are offered with five words, four of them are written in English letters while the fifth is written in some coined symbols. The learners have to find out the word which is written with symbols that differ from the other symbols. (Time: 10 seconds for each item)
9. **Reasoning:** this test measures the learners' reasoning ability through inferring how numbers are written in the foreign language from information given to them in the native language. (Time: 30 seconds for each item)

10. **Coping with a New Script:** in this test the learners are given groups of words in fives, two words have similar endings and the learners have to identify these two words. In this test, a note is written to the learners to inform them that English is written from left to right, while Arabic is written from right to left and the learners have to deal with *endings* in that sense. (Time: 30 seconds for each item)

Instructions of FLLAT are given in Arabic, the native language of the learners. Instructions of each test are followed by an example in order to help the learners understand what they are supposed to do. The FLLAT givers are recommended to read aloud the written instructions and make sure that the test takers know what they are required to do. They are also requested to read the instructions of each sub-test just before the learners start to answer it. A stop watch is required in order to manage the timing of answering each item.

A pilot study of the FLLAT was conducted to:

1. set timing for each item of the test.
2. find out if the items and instructions are comprehensible or not.
3. test the reliability of the FLLAT.

The reliability of FLLAT was measured by split-half method. Correlation coefficient between the two halves was 0.77. Then, Spearman-Brown equation was used and the reliability of FLLAT was 0.89 ( $N=45$   $p < 0.005$ ). Validity of FLLAT was determined by seven specialists in the field of TESOL, psychology, and methodology.

For more information about FLLAT, see appendices.

### **Research and Foreign Language Literacy Aptitude**

Foreign Language aptitude was the subject of intermittent research during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s (Parry & Stansfield, 1990). Furthermore, in the 1990s several researches have been conducted around foreign language aptitude. Some of these researches dealt with predicting

success in foreign language learning (Dreyer, 1992; Pajares & Valiante, 1996; Sparks & Ganschow, 1993). Other studies were concerned with defining and describing language aptitude from different perspectives (Brindley, 1990; Hafenstein, 1995; Lightbown & Spada, 1994; McLaughlin, 1995; Skehan, 1998, Sparks & Ganschow, 1991).

In addition, some other studies investigated the relationship between language aptitude and achievement (Galbraith & Gardner, 1990; Goodman, et al, 1990; Harley & Hart, 1997; Steel & Alderson, 1994). Meanwhile, another group of studies was concerned with testing and measuring language aptitude and abilities (Cilliers, et al, 1996; De Glopper, & Janssen-Van Dieten, 1999; Rudner, 1991; Sternberg, 1995; Wilson & Lynn, 1990).

Another group of studies have discussed the relationships between native and foreign language literacy such as the studies of Bell, 1991, 1995; Brown, 1999; Carrell, 1991, Carson, et al, 1990; Gupta, 1999; and Silva, 1993. It

could be concluded from the results of these studies that although the native language may impede foreign language learning, there is a common Linguistic/language ability that is responsible for the proficiency level of the learner whether in the native or the foreign languages.

Spark's (1999) study examined the extent to which there would be differences in native language skills, foreign language aptitude, and final foreign language grades among high-school students completing a second year of foreign language course and identified as high-, average-, and low-proficiency learners. Results showed significant differences among the three proficiency groups on native-language and foreign- language measures. Most differences were between low- and high-proficiency learners.

Alderson, Clapham, and Steel (1998) studied the relationship between meta-linguistic knowledge and language proficiency and aptitude. Tests of meta-linguistic knowledge, language aptitude and French linguistic proficiency were

administered to 509 undergraduate university students. The results showed that levels of meta-linguistic knowledge varied considerably. In addition, meta-linguistic knowledge and language proficiency appeared to constitute two separate factors of linguistic factors. Whilst knowledge about language may be worthwhile in its own right, there was no evidence, from that study, to justify the teaching of meta-linguistic knowledge as a means of improving students' linguistic proficiency.

Harley and Hart (1997) conducted an empirical study in order to investigate the relationship between language aptitude components and second language (L2) outcomes among learners whose intensive L2 exposure began at different ages. The results of the study revealed that there were positive relationships between L2 outcomes and the analytical dimension of language aptitude concerning the learners studying at late immersion starting in adolescence. Meanwhile, there were positive relationships between L2 and memory ability in early immersion beginning in grade one.

Robinson (1995) examined evidence for the claims of Krashen and Reber that non-conscious learning under implicit and incidental conditions was insensitive to measures of individual differences in cognitive abilities, in contrast to learning under conscious rule-search and instructed conditions. Participants were 104 learners of English as a second language. Individual differences were assessed using two subtests of the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT). Following training on easy and hard second language rules, learning was assessed through a grammaticality judgment test. Rule awareness was assessed on the basis of responses to debriefing questionnaire. The relationships between aptitude, rule learning, and rule awareness for participants trained in each condition were investigated in the study. Results suggested that aptitude was related to both learning and awareness in the implicit, instructed and rule-search conditions, though not in incidental condition.

A large-scale statistical study of predictors of language gain during study abroad was conducted by Brecht, and others

(1993). Subjects were 658 American college and graduate students in the Soviet Union between spring 1984 and spring 1990. Among other things, it was found that certain student characteristics were predictive of language gains abroad, including gender, experience in learning other foreign languages, and command of grammar and reading skills.

Sasaki's study (1993) investigated relationships among measures of second language proficiency (SLP), foreign language aptitude, verbal intelligence and reasoning in 160 Japanese college students studying English. The factor analysis of several different SLP test scores was examined, and the relationship between a general SLP factor and a hypothetical general cognitive factor was assumed to influence foreign language aptitude.

In Tannehill and Evans' (1994) study, the relationship between Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children III (WISC-III) and the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Revised (CELF-R) was investigated in 53 third graders from

students in the 15 educational cooperatives across Arkansas. Additional information regarding race, academic achievement and aptitude was gathered for each child. The results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the Full Scale IQ of the WISC-III and the total language score of the CELF-R ( $r = 0.724$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Statistically significant relationships were also found between the language achievement scores and the CELF-R.

Facione (1990) studied the correlations between California Critical Thinking Skills Test- College level (CCTST) and student-related factors regarded as indicators of academic ability and success. Relationships between reading ability and native English language ability in the CCTST were examined. It was found that CT skills could be predicted by a combination of Verbal Scholastic Aptitude test (SAT) score, mathematics SAT score, and grade point average. CCTST results correlated positively with reading test scores for vocabulary, comprehension, and total score. Non-native English speakers showed virtually no gains in CT skills from

pre-test to post-test.

Acone's (1992) study discussed the administration of the Test Di Attitudine Linguistica per Bambini (TALB) to students 7-9 years of age. Correlations between the TALB and achievement test administered at the end of the course were very high. It was concluded that aptitude was a main factor in successful learning of a second language.

## **Conclusion**

Discussions illustrated in the present chapter reveal that, in addition to native-language proficiency level, there are some general linguistic characteristics that may be promising indicators of success in foreign language learning. As for the abilities/skills related to native-language proficiency level, it can be said that they are almost related to creativity. They include flexibility of letter and vocabulary use, phonetic sense, reading comprehension, and fluency of letter use. Regarding the general linguistic characteristics, they are concerned with the ability to reveal codes, deal with the unfamiliar, and

discover the symbolic system of the new language. These characteristics include the following skills: discriminating differences among words, comparing, having a symbol sense, reasoning, and coping with a new script.

The components of the Foreign Language Literacy Aptitude Test (FLLAT) involve the aforementioned abilities/skills. FLLAT has been proven to have high validity and reliability as previously described. In addition, it has been mentioned that FLLAT can help in predicting the younger learners' (9-11) success in studying English as a foreign language in the Egyptian schools.

The present author suggests that FLLAT needs to be used, as a diagnostic and/or placement test, to help in reconsidering English language in the Egyptian school curricula. This reconsideration can be summarized in the following suggestions:

1. English is required as an international language, thus, opportunities to learn such a language should be offered to

every individual learner studying in Basic education as a component of Literacy even though some learners may have a low level of foreign language literacy aptitude.

2. Course designers are recommended to construct contents that are based on the concept of English as an international language. Prior to course designing, these course designers need to investigate and find out the profile of the English language literacy aptitude among the Egyptian (Arabic-speaking) learners. This step will give them enough information about foreign language literacy aptitude of the learners they are constructing the course for. Consequently, they can adapt aims, feasible content, appropriate teaching and testing techniques that can cope with the Egyptians' (as Arabic speakers) average level of foreign (English) language literacy aptitude.
3. Researchers may need to conduct further research work in order to investigate the relationships between foreign language aptitude, age, and achievement.

4. Teachers of English need to have a record of the foreign language literacy aptitude of each individual learner, in order to deal with such learners on the basis of these records. In that sense, the teachers can be more flexible with the mistakes of certain learners than the others. In addition, the teachers need to be knowledgeable of Parry and Stansfield' (1990) belief which declares that individuals may differ not in whether they can learn a task or not, but rather in the length of time it takes them to learn it or to reach an expected degree of competence.
  
5. Teachers are advised to know not only the learners with low level of foreign language literacy aptitude, but also those who have a remarkable higher foreign language literacy aptitude. Ethically, these learners need from the teachers, as well as course designers, special care directed toward polishing their linguistic competence and providing them with additional literary tasks.

6. There should be an average of English points for each individual learner which could be considered as one of the requirements to join the following educational stage. In that sense, the graduates of preparatory school can join the General Secondary School with a certain score of English which is the average of the learners' scores in English in the fourth- and fifth-year in Primary School and their scores in English in the first-, second-, and third-year in Preparatory Stage. The Technical Secondary Schools will also have their own requirements of the average points of English, and so on. Similarly, each faculty has to assign the average points of English that are required for joining such a faculty. These points could be the learners' average points they got during the three educational stages previous to university education. This advice is fair for all those involved in the educational process for the following reasons:

a. The learner who starts taking English classes with a low level of foreign language literacy aptitude because of, among other reasons, a low level of IQ, abstraction,

reasoning, or attention can compensate for that shortage in the following years since aptitude is age-related. This will give some security to the learners and their parents and will also decrease their level of anxiety that might affect their level of achievement.

- b. Universities will have a valid and reliable measure to admit students in certain faculties or departments.
  
- c. Some students may join certain faculties because of their general points in all subjects even though their English proficiency level is not adequate to study in that faculty. After one, or more, year(s) these students may fail or be flunked out of the faculty because they were not qualified to study in this faculty which depends on a higher level of competence in English. Following the proposed system, parents, learners, educators and the government might save a reasonable amount of effort, time, and money.

## References

Acone, I. (1992). Research on the application of the TALB (A Test for Linguistic Aptitude for Children) in elementary school. *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata*, 24, 85-112.

Alderson, J., Clapham, C., & Steel, D. (1998). Meta-linguistic knowledge, language aptitude, and language proficiency. *Language Teaching*, 31, 23.

Anastasi, P. (1988). *Psychological testing*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Barnwell, D. (1992). Applications of foreign language aptitude and learning style research. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED 364-075).

Bell, J. (1995). The relationship between L1 and L2 Literacy: Some complicating factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 687-704.

Bell, J. (1991). *Becoming aware of literacy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada.

Brecht, R., et al (1993). Predictors of foreign language gain during

study aboard. Available at the National Foreign Language Center, John Hopkins University, Washington D.C.

Brindley, G. (1990). Defining language ability: The criteria for criteria. Paper presented at the regional language center seminar on language testing and language program evaluation, Singapore (April 9-12).

Brown, C. (1999). the role of L1 grammar in the L2 acquisition of segmental structure. *Language Teaching*, 32, 38.

Carrel, P. (1991). Second language reading: Reading ability or language proficiency? *Applied Linguistics*, 12, 159-179.

Carroll, J. (1990). Cognitive and foreign language aptitude. In T. Parry & C. Stansfield (Eds.), *Language aptitude reconsidered*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Carroll, J. (1979). Psychometric approaches to the study of language abilities. In C.Fillmore, D. Kempler & W. Wang (Eds.), *Individual differences in language ability and language behavior*, New York, NY: Academic Press.

Carroll, J. (1974). Aptitude in second language learning.

*Proceedings of the fifth symposium of the Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics*, 8-23.

Carroll, J. (1962). The prediction of success in intensive foreign language training. In R. Glaser (Ed.), *Training research and education* (pp. 87-136). Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Carroll, J., & Sapon, S. (1959). *Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT)*. New York, NY: Psychological Cooperation.

Carson, J., Carrel, P., Silberstein, S., Kroll, B., & Kuehn, P. (1990). Reading-writing relationships in first and second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 24, 245-266.

Cilliers, J., et al (1996). Psychometric testing as a predictor of student performance in first year physics practicals. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 5, 47-57.

Currall, S., & Kirk, R. (1986). Predicting success in intensive foreign language courses. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70, 107-113.

Dadour, E. (1999). *Assessing Foreign Language Literacy Aptitude. Paper presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> CATESOL*, Reno, Nevada, April 23-24.

De Glopper, K., & Janssen-Van Dieten, A. (1999). Models and measurement of language ability. *Language Teaching*, 32, 39.

Dreyer, C. (1992). Learner variables as predictors of EFL Proficiency, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Potchestroom, South Africa.

Ehrman, M. (1996). *Understanding second language learning difficulties*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Ehrman, M. (1994). Weakest and strongest learners in intensive language training: A study of extremes. In C. Klee (Ed.), *Faces in a crowd: Individual learners in multi-section programs* (pp. 81-118). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Ekstrand, L. (1977). Social and individual frame factors in second language learning: Comparative aspects. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas (Ed.), *Papers from the First Nordic Conference on Bilingualism*. Helsingfors Universitat.

Ellis, R. (1991). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Facione, P. (1990). *The California critical thinking skills test: College*

level. (Technical report # 2. Factors predictive of CT Skills). Millbrae, CA: California Academic Press.

Galbraith, V., & Gardner, (1990). Individual differences correlate of second-language achievement: Second Annotated Bibliography 1988, and 1989. *Research Bulletin No 691*. University of Western Ontario, Department of Psychology.

Gardner, R. (1993). Second-language learning in adults: Correlates of proficiency. *Applied Language Learning*, 2, 1-28.

Gardner, R., & Lambert, W. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

Gardner, R., & Lambert, W. (1965). Language aptitude, intelligence, and second-language achievement *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65, 191-199.

Genesee, F. (1976). The role of intelligence in second language learning *Language Learning*, 26, 267-280.

Goodman, J., et al. (1990). Determining exemptions from foreign language requirements: Use of the Modern Language Aptitude Test. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 15, 131-141.

Gupta, A. (1999). When mother-tongue education is not preferred. *Language Teaching*, 32, 59.

Hafenstein, N., & Tucker, B. (1995). Case studies in diversity: Individual differences in abilities and traits of young gifted children. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA (April 18-22).

Harley, B., & Hart, D. (1997). Language aptitude and second language proficiency in classroom learners of different starting ages. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19, 379-400.

Harrington, T. (1995). Assessment of abilities. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED 389-960).

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language learning*. Oxford, NY: Pergamon.

Krashen, S. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (1994). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Macklem, G. (1990). Measuring aptitude. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED 328-608).

McLaughlin, B. (1995). Aptitude from an information-processing perspective. *Language Testing*, 12, 370-387.

Milroy, J., & Milroy, L. (1992). *Authority in language: Investigating language prescription and standardization* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Oxford, R., & Ehrman, M. (1993). Second language research on individual differences. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 13, 188-205.

Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (1996). Predictive utility and causal influence of the writing self-efficacy beliefs of elementary students. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, New York, NY (April 8-12).

Parry, T., & Child, J. (1990). Preliminary investigation of the relationship between VORD, MLAT, and language proficiency. In T. Parry & C. Stansfield (Eds.), *Language aptitude reconsidered* (pp. 30-66). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Parry, T., & Stansfield, C. (Eds.) (1990). *Language aptitude reconsidered*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Peterson, C., Altaik, A. (1976). The development of the defense language aptitude battery (DLAB). *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 36, 369-380.

Pimsleur, P. (1966). *Pimsleur language aptitude battery*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch.

Reber, A. (1993). *Implicit learning and tacit knowledge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press

Reber, A. (1989). Implicit learning and tacit knowledge. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 118, 219-235.

Robinson, P. (1995). Aptitude, awareness, and the fundamental similarity of implicit and explicit second language learning. In R. Schmidt (Ed.), *Attention and awareness in foreign language learning* (Technical Report # 9 pp. 303-357). Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.

Rudman, H. (1989). Integrating testing with teaching. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No ED 315-432).

Rudner, L. (1991). Reviews of tests approved by the Secretary of Education for Ability to Benefit Admissions (ERIC Document

Reproduction Service No ED 329-579.

Sasaki, M. (1993). Relationships among second language proficiency, foreign language aptitude, and intelligence: A structural equation modeling approach. *Language Learning*, 43, 313-344.

Schmidt, R. (Ed.) (1995) *Attention and awareness in foreign language learning* (Technical Report # 9 pp. 303-357). Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.

Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Skehan, P. (1989). *Individual differences in second-language learning*. London: Edward Arnold.

Sparks, R., & Ganschow, L. (1995). A strong approach to casual factors in foreign language learning: A response to MacIntyre. *Modern Language Journal*, 79, 235-244.

Sparks, R., & Ganschow, L. (1993). The effects of multi-sensory structured language instruction on native language and foreign language aptitude skills of at-risk high school foreign language learners: A replication and follow-up study. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 43, 194-216.

Sparks, R., & Ganschow, L.(1991). Foreign language learning differences: Affective or native language aptitude. *Modern Language Journal*, 75, 3-16.

Sparks, R., Artzer, M., Ganschow, L., Siebenhar, D. Plageman, M., & Patton, J. (1999). Differences in native-language skills, foreign language aptitude, and foreign language grades among high-, average-, and low-proficiency foreign language learners: Two studies. *Language Teaching*, 32, 52.

Steel, D., & Alderson, C. (1994). Meta-linguistic Knowledge, language aptitude, and language proficiency. *Paper presented at the Annual Language Testing Research Colloquium, Washington, D.C. (March 5).*

Stern, H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sternberg, R. (1995). Styles of thinking and learning. *Language Testing*, 12, 265-291.

Tannehill, R., & Evans, L. (1994). A study of the WISC-III, CELF-R, achievement, and aptitude among public school students in Arkansas.

*Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Nashville, TN (November 9-11).*

Vandrick, S. (1994). Exploring gender: questions and implications for English language education. [A book notice]. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 825-826.

Wesche, M., Edward, H., & Wells, W. (1982). Foreign language aptitude and intelligence. *Applied Psycho-linguistics* 3, 2.

Wilson, R., & Lynn, R. (1990). Personality, intelligence components and foreign language attainment. *Educational Psychology*, 10, 57- 71.



**Foreign Language Literacy  
Aptitude Test  
(FLLAT)**

اختبار الاستعداد لتعلم قراءة وكتابة لغة أجنبية

. إعداد

د. السيد محمد دويور  
قسم اللغاه وطرق التدريس ( لغة الإنجليزية )  
كلية التربية بدمياط  
جامعة المنصورة

١٩٩٨