1. **Factors affecting teaching and learning**
2. **Socio-economic factors**

One characteristic that seems to distinguish the children of those who do and do not live in poverty is that the latter are more likely to acquire knowledge of the world outside their home and neighborhood at an earlier age. Through greater access to books, magazines, social networks, cultural events, the Internet, and people who have these learning resources, middle- and upper-class children develop their reading and speaking abilities more rapidly. This, in combination with parental teaching that tends to use more elaborated language that trains the child to think independently of the specific communication context, may give students in the middle and upper classes an advantage at the start of school. This contrasts with children who come from lower-class homes, which may emphasize obedience and conformity more than independent thinking and may emphasize rote learning (memorization, recall of facts, and so on) more than independent, self-directed learning (Grant & Ray, 2009).

In the last 30 years, the composition of the family has undergone a dramatic change. The traditional family unit is no longer the rule but the exception. A lot of families were traditional, or comprised of a working father and a mother who kept the house and took care of the children. But now things have changed. Both parents are now workers. Today’s family is more likely to be a dual-career family, a single-parent family, a stepfamily. All of these conditions affect the fabric of the family and the development of the school age learners within it. These learners are less likely to be immunized, more likely to be in poorer health, less ready to enter school, and more likely to experience academic failure and drop out.

1. **Language aptitude in language learning**

Researchers point out that if language is used by a cultural group differently at home than in the classroom, members of that subculture are at a disadvantage. Children whose language at home corresponds to that expected in the classroom more easily transfer their prior experiences to the classroom in ways that facilitate their academic progress. It has been found that learners who speak another language at home or express themselves in only “conversational or social language,” do more poorly in school than those who have attained Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, which includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing related to the subjects taught in school (Thomas and Collier, 2012). These authors suggest that students that do not attain cognitive academic language proficiency may take from up to seven to ten years to catch up with their peers. These students often experience difficulties transferring what they already know to classroom tasks.

**Aptitude**

Language Aptitude has been defined as the capability of learning a task…which depends on some combination of more or less enduring characteristics of the learner (Carrol, 1981, p. 84). In other words, language aptitude refers to the potential that a person has for learning languages. It refers to the set of specific abilities that allow us to adequately predict or explain why some people can learn a foreign/second language more efficiently and effectively than their peers when other things being equal.

AsKiss and Nikolov (2005) point out, the definition of Aptitude is based on four assumptions:

* There is a talent for languages different from general cognitive abilities
* Aptitude is relatively stable
* It is not a prerequisite for L2 acquisition but a capacity that enhances the rate and ease of learning
* It is composed by different characteristics

What are the 4 components of language aptitude?

(**phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, rote learning ability, and inductive learning ability**),

1. Phonetic coding ability: the ability to identify distinct sounds, to form associations between these sounds and symbols representing them, and to retain these associations
2. Grammatical sensitivity: the ability to recognize the grammatical functions of words in sentence structures
3. Rote learning memory: the ability to learn associations between sounds and meanings rapidly and efficiently, and to retain these associations
4. Inductive language learning ability: the ability to infer or induce the rules governing a set of language materials.
5. **The role of age in language learning**

**What is the role of age in second or foreign language learning? Text J.C. Richards**

It is a common observation that children seem to learn new languages relatively easily, while older learners, particularly adults, are often not so successful. Nevertheless, there is also evidence that adults have the advantage in several important areas, such as those involving cognitive skills, making them more adept, for example, at learner autonomy. In terms of children’s apparent success, a reason that was offered in the 1970s was that there was a critical period for second language learning (before puberty), and that once learners had passed this period, changes in the brain and in cognitive processes made language learning more difficult. This was the critical-period hypothesis that led some educationists to argue for an earlier start for second and foreign language instruction, in order to capitalize on the special language-learning capacities of young learners. Unfortunately, the considerable amount of research devoted to this issue has not confirmed the theory that younger equals better language learner. It is true that there are some aspects of language learning (such as pronunciation) where younger learners appear to have an advantage; learners who start learning at an older age often retain a ‘foreign accent’ in their English, which is not the case with young learners. However, there are many factors, aside from age-related ability, that account for the apparent ease with which young children often appear to ‘pick up’ a new language relatively easily. In the case of naturalistic language learning, young learners are typically highly motivated to do so; they receive large amounts of input geared to their level of learning, as well as copious amounts of practice. They also receive rewards and benefits for their efforts, since learning the new language is the key to peer acceptance and to the satisfaction of basic needs. These factors are often not the same for adult learners studying English in classroom settings. Dornyei (2009) points out that, in any given situation, there are invariably a multitude of factors involved, and age is often only one of them and not necessarily the most important one.

**4 Learners’ differences**

**What are learning differences?**

The term 'learning differences' refers to the diverse ways all students learn and the rates at which they learn. Learning differences take into account individual learning motivators; learner aspirations, interests, experience and cultural background; and individual students’ strengths and needs.

They are different in

* abilities and characteristics
* personal attributes
* learning styles
* motivation