



Received: 24-12-2024

Accepted: 04-02-2025

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Emotional Impacts of Language Learning: The Journey of Adult English Learners

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2025.5.1.3755>

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Abstract

Language learning is both a cognitive and emotional process, where emotions impact learners' engagement, motivation, and overall success. This study aimed to explore the emotional impact of language learning on adult English learners, focusing on key emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, resilience, and social support. It also examines the role of identity negotiation in language acquisition and how this experience impacts learners' success. The study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 adult learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Data were analysed using thematic and narrative analysis to identify repeating emotional patterns and personal experiences regarding second language acquisition. Findings reveal that anxiety particularly related to communication apprehension and test anxiety, negatively affects learners' confidence and

participation. However, intrinsic motivation and emotional resilience contribute to greater persistence and cognitive flexibility. Social support from instructors and peers plays a crucial role in reducing emotional challenges and enhancing engagement. Identity negotiation was also identified as a key challenge, with some learners experiencing cultural conflicts while others embraced bilingualism as an asset. Emotional factors are central to the success of adult language learners. Integrating anxiety-reduction techniques, fostering intrinsic motivation, and promoting structured peer support can create a more emotionally supportive learning environment. Future research should adopt mixed methods approaches to further explore the long-term emotional trajectories of adult learners. Addressing emotional dimensions in language learning can significantly improve both pedagogical strategies and learner outcomes.

Keywords: Language Learning, Cognition, Test Anxiety, Motivation, Resilience, Emotion, Linguistics

Introduction

Language learning is both a cognitive and emotional process. Cognitive abilities such as Verbal cognition, processing speed, and memory^[1] along with executive functions such as inhibition are related to effective language acquisition and processing demonstrating that training in cognitive skills could improve language learning^[2]. Emotions play a critical role in language learning acquisition and achievement^[3] with negative emotions affecting it such as anxiety, frustration, and burnout, and positive emotions facilitating it such as happiness, enjoyment, pride, gratitude, hope, and admiration^[4]. The effect of emotions on language learners' achievement depends on the interconnectivity of varying cognitive and motivational mechanisms^[5, 6]. Where positive emotions facilitate thinking, creative problem solving, and broadening attention span and cognition adding to better performance^[7], negative emotions result in divided attention, and emotionally impacted cognitive resources but they also facilitate memory and retrieval, stimulating extrinsic motivation to invest effort^[8].

Adult language learners face unique challenges such as ingrained communication patterns from their native language, restricting their ability to overcome and adapt to unique accents of pronunciation, grammatical patterns, and vocabulary acquisition^[9]. Lack of confidence in speaking abilities resulting in hesitancy of expressing opinions along with the time constraints due to work and family responsibilities. Catering to the demand of learning a new language while simultaneously fulfilling family and job commitments often leads to fatigue and learning difficulties. Irregular practice of the target language and not being consistent in attending classes also hinder effective language learning in adults^[10]. The pursuit of language learning in adults is often driven by professional goals such as effective communication at the workplace which otherwise

would lead to missing opportunities in their career development ^[11]. For better equipping to integrate into diverse social and cultural contexts ^[12], it also enhances the brain's neuroplasticity which is beneficial in improving performance in work-related or daily tasks with increasing age ^[13].

Emotions help language learners in shaping their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours which will ultimately impact their success in acquiring a foreign language ^[14]. The emotional spectrum of language learning is quite extensive as learners experience emotions depending on the skill they are using. For instance, feeling more anxious while speaking than reading, feeling bored while reading than speaking, and experiencing more positive emotions in productive skills i.e. speaking and writing than in receptive skills i.e. listening and reading ^[15]. Anxiety regarding language learning impacts learners' competence and has severe negative effects ^[16].

Language learning is impacted by learners' emotional state. However, the need to explore learners' emotional experiences would help establish strategies to effectively implement language learning both outside and inside the classroom ^[17, 18]. According to the "Affective Filter Hypothesis", learners' motivation, attitude, anxiety, and self-esteem are the factors that have a critical influence on language learning outcomes i.e. they can promote or impede language input ^[19]. Affective factors have the same influence as cognitive factors in language learning ^[20]. There is a strong relation between emotions and cognitive strategies in linguistic performances such as higher emotional intelligence correlates with increased cognitive processing benefitting language learning ^[21]. The impact of emotional states influences semantic processing and memory activation which are essential for acquiring language ^[22].

General Language Learning Anxiety collectively refers to the fear and anxieties in learning and using a foreign language ^[23] which consists of several components. Communication apprehension is when a learner has a fear or anxiety related to speaking in a foreign language which could have physical symptoms such as trembling or sweating, hindering learners' participation in speaking or classroom activities ^[24]. Test anxiety impacts learners before or during a test leading to avoidance or poor performance, learners with test anxiety underperform due to their fear of negative evaluation ^[25]. The fear of being judged or negatively evaluated by a peer or teacher also influences a learner's language anxiety level ^[23]. The resistance to speaking due to different types of anxieties has emerged as a significant contributor to students' participation, fluency, and retention of language learning skills impacting their overall performance ^[24, 26].

Intrinsic motivations such as interest and perceived value of the activity along with emotional states such as confidence and anxiety positively impact adult language learners' efficiency, interest, and retention ^[27]. Personal growth, travel, and cultural engagements result in enhanced persistence and engagement in language learning as compared to extrinsic factors ^[28] also establishing lifelong learning attitudes among adults ^[27]. Career advancements and social recognition serve as extrinsic motivational factors that demonstrate initial engagement and participation for adult language learners, however, the impacts of extrinsic motivators are not sustainable in the long run compared to intrinsic motivators ^[27, 28]. Strategies should be directed at

the collective incorporation of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators to enhance language learners' motivations ^[29]. Overcoming language learning challenges encompasses attaining emotional resilience which is enforced by positive emotions that improve resilience and persistence while learning a foreign language ^[30]. Mitigating the effects of anxiety allows the language learner to be completely engaged in their language learning pursuit leading to proficiency, persistence, and higher motivation ^[31]. Motivation can transform debilitating anxiety into facilitating anxiety which helps learners to persist even with their fears ^[32].

Literature Review

Language learning is not just a cognitive process but also an emotional journey that impacts learners' engagement, persistence, and success. Emotions such as motivation, anxiety, confidence, and frustration channel how individuals process and retain language input. Cognitive factors such as memory and attention are critical for language acquisition, research highlights that emotions can both hinder and promote learning outcomes ^[5]. Positive emotions, such as enjoyment and pride, help learners by enhancing cognitive flexibility and motivation ^[7]. On the other hand, negative emotions like anxiety and fear foster psychological barrier that diminishes learners' willingness to engage in communication ^[24].

In the case of adult learners, the emotional dimension of language learning is specifically crucial. Unlike children, adults experience increased anxiety due to concerns about proficiency, social evaluation, and the practical requirement of language acquisition for work, study, or migrations ^[15].

Research implies that emotions play an essential role in language learning by going through cognitive engagement, memory retention, and willingness to communicate ^[33]. Pekrun *et al.* (2011) introduced the Achievement Emotions Theory, which emphasizes the effect of emotions on learners' cognitive processing and effort regulation ^[5]. Likewise, Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Built Theory put forward that positive emotions expand learners' cognitive resources, resulting in enhanced language retention and problem-solving skills ^[7].

Studies demonstrate that learners who align language learning with enjoyment, pride, and excitement display greater engagement and progress ^[15]. Contrarily, anxiety, frustration, and fear will lead to delaying behaviors, restricting learners from adopting speaking skills and hindering language exposure ^[25]. These findings emphasize the importance of understanding and managing emotional experiences in language learning, specifically for adult learners who may already face time constraints and social pressures.

There are several theoretical frameworks, shedding light on how emotions shape language learning. Gardner's Socio-Educational Model of Motivation (1985) highlights integrative motivation such as learning a language for cultural or social integration and instrumental motivation such as learning for career or academic advancements being thoroughly related to emotional engagement and persistence ^[34]. Horwitz *et al.*'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) underscores communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation as foundational challenges to language learning. Increased anxiety learners face difficulty with fluency and avoid

speaking situations, which reduces language acquisition [24]. MacIntyre & Gregersen's (2012) *Positive Psychology in SLA* emphasizes the role of positive emotions such as enthusiasm and confidence in passing linguistic barriers. Their research highlights that learners who develop emotional resilience are more likely to show persistence in language learning [33]. Lastly, Dawaele & MacIntyre's (2014) *Emotional Intelligence in SLA* proposes self-regulation and emotional resilience, highlighting that learners with high emotional intelligence adapt more effectively to language-learning challenges [15].

Emotional challenges in language learning such as anxiety are one of the most notable emotional barriers in language learning. Language anxiety is categorized broadly into three types such as communication apprehension which is the fear of speaking due to concerns about pronunciation, grammar, or making mistakes in public. Second the fear of negative evaluation, and anxiety of being judged by teachers, peers, or even native speakers results in learners' hesitancy in speaking activities. Thirdly, test anxiety is the pressure of language exams, which leads to poor performance as a result of stress or cognitive overload [24]. Research demonstrates that high-anxiety learners avoid speaking opportunities, which restricts their exposure to real-world language use and minimizes progress [25]. For adult learners, anxiety is further complexed by social and professional pressures. Many adult English learners fear that their accents or grammatical errors will make them appear less competent in professional or academic settings [35].

Motivation is a significant predictor of success in language learning. According to Deci & Ryan's *Self-Determination Theory* (1985), Intrinsic motivation is driven by personal interest and enjoyment, resulting in long-term engagement whereas extrinsic motivation is based upon external rewards such as career advancement, which may provide short-term engagement but less sustained learning [36]. Studies highlight that intrinsically motivated learners engage more deeply in language learning and persist despite difficulties, whereas extrinsically motivated learners may struggle to maintain interest [36]. Emotionally resilient learners display higher persistence and an increased ability to face linguistic challenges. Strategies such as cognitive reframing that views mistakes as learning opportunities and relaxation techniques such as mindfulness and breathing exercises to help learners manage stress and anxiety [33].

Social supports play a vital role in mitigating anxiety and improving motivation. Teacher encouragement and peer collaboration have been shown to increase confidence and willingness to communicate [37]. Furthermore, cultural identity affects learners' emotional experiences, with some pressure to give in to the demanding language culture, leading to emotional conflict [38].

Despite an ever-increasing amount of research on second language acquisition (SLA), it lacks studies focusing particularly on the emotional experiences of adult English learners in real-world language-learning environments. Most of the existing studies associating emotion with SLA have focused on young learners or university students in structured classroom settings [3]. Moreover, adult learners face unique emotional challenges involving increased pressure from professional and social responsibilities, fear of failure, and the impact of past educational expectancies. Additionally, while anxiety and motivation have been

widely discussed in the literature, there is limited research on how emotional resilience and self-regulation strategies add to long-term language retention among adult learners. Understanding how adults navigate emotional issues and sustain motivation over time remains an underexplored area. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to examine the emotional impact of language acquisition on adult English learners, focusing on how these experiences affect their learning process and overall well-being. It identifies emotions experienced, examines factors influencing emotions, explores coping mechanisms, and proposes pedagogical implications. The research aims to deepen understanding of the emotional dimensions of language learning among adult immigrants and advance theoretical frameworks on emotions in second language acquisition.

Methodology

Study Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to assess the emotional experiences of adult English learners. The emotional nature of the study being subjective and deeply personal, a qualitative approach presented a thorough understanding of how learners navigate anxiety, motivation, and resilience in language acquisition.

A phenomenological approach is utilized to capture participants' lived experiences, deeming it suitable for the exploration of the emotional aspect of second language acquisition [39]. Primary data involved conducting semi-structured surveys to provide flexibility to participants while sharing personal insights and allowing the researcher to delve deeper into specific emotional dimensions. Thematic and narrative analyses were carried out to identify recurring themes and patterns along with individual stories in participants' emotional experiences.

Sample and Data Collection

Sample Population

The sample population comprised adult English learners aged 18 and above who were actively engaged in learning English as a second or foreign language. Selected participants were from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to maintain a comprehensive understanding of emotional factors in language learning.

Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants able to contribute rich, experience-based data on the emotional dimensions of SLA. A sample size of 30 participants was sought to ensure data saturation and thematic richness [40]. Participants selected were from language institutes, universities, online ESL platforms, and social media groups where adult learners actively engage in English learning.

Primary Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in person or via video conferencing through Zoom or Google Meet. The duration of each interview lasted for 30 to 45 minutes. Open-ended questions covering factors such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, resilience, and social influences on language learning. Follow-up questions were conducted based on participants' responses to gain detailed insights. All interviews were recorded with the participant's consent and interpreted for analysis.

Inclusion Criteria

Adult learners aged 18 and above and currently enrolled in learning English as a second foreign language were included

in the study. At least six months of experience of language learning in formal or informal learning settings along with the willingness to participate in a recorded interview sharing their emotional experiences were part of the study. Fluency in English or their native language was ensured to clearly express their thoughts during the interview.

Exclusion Criteria

Native English speakers or individuals who have acquired English from early childhood were excluded. Learners enrolled in an English language learning program with less than six months of experience along with individuals with clinical anxiety or depression diagnosis were not made the part of study as their emotional experience may differ significantly from those related just to language learning. Participants unwilling to be recorded or uncomfortable discussing personal emotional experiences were not selected.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis

The study utilized thematic analysis^[41] to identify patterns in participants' emotional experiences involving these steps. Researchers were familiarized with the data by reading the transcribed interviews multiple times to identify recurring themes. Initial coding followed emergent phrases and experiences linked to anxiety, motivation, and resilience. Identified codes were grouped into broader themes and then refined to ensure coherence and relevance to the study objective. Finally, the eligible themes were clearly defined and supported by participant quotes. NVivo software was employed to analyze and organize the large qualitative data.

Narrative Analysis

To further examine how participants constructed and expressed their emotional experiences in SLA, thematic analysis was complemented by narrative analysis. This approach emphasizes the sequences, structure, and meaning of their personal stories.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were given informed consent forms before interviews to provide detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by removing any identifying information during transcription and securely stored in password-protected files, accessible only to the authorized researchers. Participants were informed that participation is entirely voluntary, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any point in time. Data was securely stored and deleted after analysis of data. To ensure objective interpretation of participants' experiences, researchers maintained a reflexive journal to acknowledge and manage personal or participant biases throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Dissemination and Impact

After the methodology was established, dissemination of findings was planned to reach academic and broader audiences effectively by sharing it in academic conferences, peer-reviewed journals, webinars and workshops, and online platforms.

Impact Assessment

After the dissemination of findings into various platforms, the impact of the findings was assessed broadly into academic impact, industry impact, policy, and societal impact. Whereas emotional impact of the findings is described in the results.

Results

Thematic and Narrative Analysis

The main themes that emerged in the result of the thematic analysis of the reported qualitative data were anxiety, motivation and resilience, social support, emotional benefits, and identity-related conflicts. Further complimenting these themes, the narrative analyses assessed participants' personal stories demonstrating the intricacies and emotional journeys they navigated throughout their language learning process.

Anxiety and Language Learning

Anxiety was highlighted as a striking and notable theme in the participants' narrative about their language-learning journeys. Many expressed feeling apprehensive when speaking in front of classmates or interacting with native speakers.

Participant 12 shared:

"I always felt my heart race when the teacher asked me to answer a question. Even though I knew the answer, I was afraid my accent would make me sound foolish."

Communication apprehension was a frequently reported experience, mostly driven by doubts about pronunciation errors and misunderstandings. Test anxiety also emerged as a prominent challenge in discussions. Participants narrated being stressed related to assessments, especially proficiency exams required for academic or professional growth.

Participant 8 noted:

"The night before my language test, I barely slept. I kept imagining myself forgetting everything and failing miserably."

The fear of false evaluation by teachers and peers further exacerbated their anxieties, as learners underwent constant pressure to perform perfectly.

However, some participants found several strategies to face their anxieties despite the aforementioned challenges. Participants reported managing their anxiety through relaxation techniques and by slowly building their confidence.

Participant shared:

"I realized that making mistakes is part of learning."

Another participant endorsed:

"Once I accepted that, I started to feel less anxious and more willing to speak up."

A lot of other participants highlighted mindfulness exercises, deep breathing, and structured language practice as effective techniques.

Motivation and Emotional Resilience

The majority of participants displayed high levels of motivation and emotional resilience playing a crucial role in their language learning success. Intrinsic motivators like personal growth and the goal of connecting to English-speaking communities were increasingly emphasized.

Participant 23, a recent immigrant, shared:

“Learning English was my way of becoming part of this new society. I wanted to be able to make friends and feel included.”

Instrumental motivations like career growth were also noteworthy among participants.

Participant 8 noted:

“I needed to improve my English to get a promotion at work. That goal kept me going even when I felt like giving up.”

Participant 21 emphasized the importance of English proficiency required to open avenues for professional certifications and networking opportunities that were previously unimaginable to attain.

Remarkable emotional resilience was observed in participants' ability to continue despite challenges. Participant 15 recalled utilizing a growth mindset, viewing mistakes as a learning opportunity rather than a failure.

Participant 2 remarked:

“There were days I wanted to quit, but I reminded myself why I started. That kept me pushing forward.”

Participant 25 explained how aiming for success kept her motivated:

“I imagined myself confidently presenting in English at a work meeting, and that mental image gave me strength.”

The Role of Social Support

Social support was mentioned as a critical factor in addressing negative emotional effects and improving learners' experiences. Several participants highlighted the need for supportive teachers to foster a safe and encouraging learning setting.

Participant 18 recalled their teacher saying:

“It's okay to make mistakes. That's how we learn. That made a huge difference for me.”

Peer support was also reported as equally valuable. Participants recalled being fond of study groups and friendships developed in language classes.

Participant 5 described:

“We would meet after class to practice together. It was comforting to know I wasn't alone in my struggles.”

Online communities also relieved some pressure on participants and cultivated a sense of belonging and additional resources for learning.

Participant 27 emphasized:

“Sometimes my online study group was more motivating than my actual classes.”

However, the lack of social support could lead to feelings of isolation and anxiety.

Participant 8 noted:

“When I didn't have anyone to practice with, I felt stuck and demotivated.”

These reflections highlighted the importance of cultivating a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.

Emotional Benefits of Language Learning

Even with the challenges, participants highlighted several emotional benefits from their learning language experiences. Few of them expressed a degree of accomplishment and enhanced self-esteem as they progressed towards being efficient in English.

Participant 12 shared:

“The first time I held a conversation in English without stumbling, I felt so proud of myself. It was like I had conquered a mountain.”

Improvement in cognitive flexibility was another significantly positive insight. Participants underscored improvements in problem-solving skills and the ability to think more creatively.

Participant 10 narrated:

“Learning a new language changed the way I approach challenges.”

Participant 19 further added:

“It taught me to be more patient and open-minded”

The emotional outcomes of language learning usually extend even after the classroom. Participants expressed new opportunities for personal and professional growth along with fruitful social interactions.

Participant 22 remarked:

“Now I can connect with people from different backgrounds. It's opened up a whole new world for me.”

Another participant highlighted how this newly discovered confidence in English enables them to support their children with homework and interact better with teachers.

Identity and Emotional Conflict

English learning process often results in identity negotiation and emotional conflict. Few of the participants faced challenges in balancing their native cultural identity with their newly built identity as English speakers.

Participant 23 shared:

“I felt like I was losing a part of myself. Speaking English all the time made me feel disconnected from my roots.”

Some participants reported feeling guilt or alienation due to the clash of the norms of English-speaking settings against their cultural practices.

Participant 8 noted:

“Sometimes I felt like I had to choose between fitting in and staying true to my culture.”

Participant recalled an incident of being embarrassed when traditional sentences from their native language slipped into their English conversations, resulting in awkward situations. However, A lot of participants described improving English as empowering and added to a more integrated self-perception.

Participant 1 reflected:

“Learning English didn’t make me less of who I am. It added a new dimension to my identity.”

Other participants labeled bilingualism as a source of pride instead of a conflict for them.

Participant 30 shared:

“I didn’t have to choose one identity over the other; I could be both.”

These emotional experiences and narratives highlight the complexity of the emotional landscape of language learners, where challenges and achievements are interlinked with each other to foster learners’ experiences and personal growth.

Discussion

Emotional Challenges in Adult Language Learning

The present study findings highlighted anxiety as a significant emotional challenge among adult English learners. Participants reported experiencing communication apprehension, specifically while speaking in front of peers or native speakers. This fear stems from physical symptoms such as increased heart rate and trembling, resulting in avoiding speaking opportunities. Aligning with Horwitz *et al.* (1986), test anxiety was also revealed as a critical barrier where learners experienced increased levels of stress before and during assessments. The fear of negative evaluation additionally impacted language anxiety, affecting participants’ willingness to participate in classroom activities.

Several coping mechanisms were reported by participants despite these challenges to address anxiety. Employing relaxation techniques, mindfulness, and cognitive reframing was highly narrated as supportive in the management of language-related stress. Participants who perceived their mistakes as a part of the learning process demonstrated greater emotional resilience, consistent with MacIntyre & Gregersen’s (2012) argument that a positive mindset allows effective second language acquisition^[33]. Furthermore, learners engaged in continuous practice, both inside and outside the classroom, showed a gradual lowering in anxiety levels, supporting the need for experiential learning in mitigating emotional hurdles. The results further underlined the part structured exposure to language practice plays in decreasing fear-led avoiding behaviors. This emphasizes the need to encourage students to engage in incremental exposure to speaking tasks that will lead to their overall comfort and proficiency.

Additionally, participants who expected emotional support from instructors and peers were more likely to address their fears, displaying the importance of social interactions in language acquisition. The findings underscore that a learning setting that supports encouragement, practice, and constructive feedback can minimize the pressures linked to speaking anxiety, allowing learners to foster confidence

over some time. Moreover, the integration of storytelling, role-playing, and interactive activities arise as practical strategies to minimize communication apprehension, helping learners focus and divert from perfection to progress.

Another notable finding was the impact of language learning history on emotional experiences. Participants with past negative language learning experiences demonstrated elevated anxiety levels, in comparison to those who had positive experiences and showed better confidence levels in learning English as adults. This emphasizes the ever-lasting influence of past educational experiences on learners’ emotional responses. Mitigating these challenges, educators should prioritize structured and flexible language learning experiences that allow learners to cultivate self-efficacy while feeling secure in their learning journey. Encouraging learners to set realistic and personal learning goals, practice self-evaluation, and engage in constructive feedback processes can further improve the efforts to reduce anxiety and create a more positive emotional experience in language acquisition.

Motivation and Persistence in Language Learning

Motivation plays an essential role in supporting learners’ engagement even with emotional difficulties. The findings show that intrinsic motivation- facilitated by personal growth, cultural engagement, and social integration, was found to be a critical predictor of persistence in comparison to extrinsic motivators like career growth. Learners who experienced personal meaning in language learning demonstrated increased engagement, aligning with Deci & Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory, which highlights the long-term sustainability involving intrinsic motivation. Contrarily, extrinsic motivation aided in initial engagement but had a limited effect on long-term perseverance. External rewards were a source of motivation for participants like workplace requirements, which led them to be inconsistent when they faced learning difficulties. However, when extrinsic motivators were employed involving intrinsic interests, learners showed enhanced persistence. Furthermore, goal-setting and self-regulation techniques were suggested to be helpful elements in sustaining motivation. Participants who break down their learning targets into small manageable steps narrated increased levels of persistence and satisfaction, supporting previous studies on self-regulated learning.

A remarkable finding was that learners who can envision their success and set realistic yet ambitious targets experienced a tremendous boost in consistent efforts and engagement. This underscores the need for language programs to include motivational reinforcement strategies that allow learners to keep track of their progress and stay committed. Additionally, participants who engaged in regular self-assessment and reflection displayed greater accountability in their learning process. Implementing language portfolios and progress journals allowed a practical way of measuring their improvements, adding to confidence and enhancing enthusiasm. The study also supports the celebration of small achievements and goals that add to the sense of accomplishment, fostering long-term motivation.

The Role of Social Support in Emotional Regulation

The present study findings reveal a striking impact of social support on emotional well-being in language learning. Participants fortunate enough to have supportive teachers and peer networks showed decreased anxiety levels and

increased motivation. Teachers who foster a non-judgemental and encouraging environment allow learners to take risks and engage more actively in classroom interactions. These findings are consistent with Richards (2022), who revealed that instructor support is a crucial factor in lowering language learning anxiety.

Peer support was also an emergent factor, with participants feeling supported and encouraged by study groups, online communities, and informal practice sessions. Learners who participated in collaborative learning demonstrated feeling more confident and less isolated, supporting Dewaele & MacIntyre's (2014) argument that social interactions improve emotional resilience in language learners [15]. However, participants lacking strong social networks reported feeling isolated and demotivated, emphasizing the need for structural peer support initiatives involving language learning programs.

Furthermore, participants involved in reciprocating teaching strategies-where learners help each other strengthen concepts and enhance self-confidence and language retention, additionally displaying the benefits of collaborative learning models. Despite peer learning, a feeling of belonging was established as essential for language success, directing that institutional frameworks should prioritize community-building activities to enhance student engagement. The study also establishes that learners who engage in structured group projects, conversational exchanges, and mentorship programs benefit from consistent encouragement, lowering stress related to language acquisition. Educators are suggested to foster creative environments that highlight teamwork and shared responsibility, ensuring that emotional and academic support networks are accessible to all learners.

Emotional Benefits of Language Learning

Even after facing several difficulties, participants expressed attaining emotional growth and enhanced self-confidence as they moved forward in their language-learning journey. Successfully engaging in English communication, specifically in the real-world context, cultivated a sense of accomplishment. Participants highlighted moments of pride and excitement while continuing conversation without hesitation, reflecting Pekrun *et al.*'s (2011) findings on achievement emotions involved in learning [15].

Additionally, cognitive flexibility and adaptability were found to be essential emotional benefits. Participants expressed enhancements in problem-solving skills and an increased willingness to new experiences. These findings are aligned with Fredrickson's (2005) Broaden-and-Build Theory, which demonstrates the cognitive expansion due to positive emotions [7]. Similarly, language learning serves as an effective tool to aid in both linguistic and personal development, supporting the idea that emotional resilience is strengthened with continuous engagement. Furthermore, the capability of moving through different social and cultural contexts with improved confidence was dominantly reported, demonstrating that language learning ensures not only linguistic competence but also cultural integration and emotional intelligence.

The emotional benefits are stretched far beyond language itself, as learners reported a newly experienced ability to manage stress, enhance interpersonal communication, and face challenges with boosted confidence. Participants involved in immersive cultural experiences and cross-linguistic interactions underscored remarkable emotional

enrichment, highlighting the multidimensional nature of language acquisition. The present study findings also reveal the significance of creating emotionally supportive learning settings where learners can adopt self-efficacy and resilience while sharpening their linguistic skills.

Identity Negotiation and Cultural Integration

The emotional complexity of identity negotiation between adult English learners was also highlighted in the study findings. Several participants raised concerns about losing different dimensions of their native cultural identity as they become more proficient in English. This emotional conflict was significantly highlighted among those who migrated to English-speaking environments. Some learners mentioned feeling guilt when prioritizing English over their native language, which was also evident in Norton's (2000) research on language and identity [38].

Interestingly, other participants perceived bilingualism as an empowering factor in their identity. Instead of looking at English proficiency as a threat, they embraced it as an additional benefit to their cultural involvement. This advancement of perception led to enhanced self-esteem and motivation, highlighting the role of emotional adaptability in language acquisition. Educators and policymakers are suggested to involve the emotional aspect of cultural identity while designing language learning programs to cultivate a mutual feeling of inclusivity and emotional well-being, strengthening the criticality of identity-assertive language education. Further, active engagement of learners in bilingual communities and cultural exchange programs demonstrates increased emotional satisfaction and confidence warrants cultural integration into educational frameworks.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the present study make it evident that emotional factors play a very central role in adult language learning. To further improve language acquisition outcomes, pedagogical strategies should incorporate techniques that address anxiety, improve motivation, and foster social support. Strategies such as anxiety-reduction workshops, mindfulness training, and growth mindset approaches can help learners to address emotional restrictions. Furthermore, personalized learning interventions that cater to individuals' emotional needs and backgrounds may additionally improve engagement and lower dropout rates. Integrations of these pedagogical strategies, language programs can cultivate an emotionally supportive and engaging learning environment, enabling adult learners to increase their linguistic and personal growth potential.

Study Limitations

Despite the detailed insights, this study is limited by its qualitative nature which does not offer generalizability to broader populations. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce recall or social desirability biases in participants' responses. Moreover, the sample is restricted to adult learners involved in formal language learning settings, excluding informal or self-directed learning settings.

Conclusion

This study illustrates the emotional impact on adult language learners, reporting that anxiety, motivation, resilience, and social support play critical roles in cultivating language acquisition experiences. While negative emotions such as anxiety and fear restrict learners' progress, positive

emotions like confidence and enjoyment lead to enhanced persistence and cognitive flexibility. Intrinsic motivation was highlighted as an important predictor of long-term success compared to extrinsic motivators, stressing the importance of aligning learning with personal growth and cultural integration. Social support from peers and instructors notably lowers emotional challenges, encouraging a conducive learning environment. Furthermore, identity negotiation persists as a critical factor, with some learners facing cultural conflicts while others accept bilingualism as an empowering aspect of their identity. The findings reveal that effective language education should integrate emotional resilience strategies, anxiety-minimizing techniques, and structured peer support to enhance learner engagement. Addressing emotional aspects of language learning will add to more effective pedagogical practice and improved learning outcomes.

Future Recommendations

Future research should target to explore larger, more diversified samples, encompassing learners from different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. A mixed-methods approach incorporating quantitative data could improve the validity and generalizability of findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies may enable deeper insights into how emotional experiences evolve in adult language learning.

Acknowledgement

None.

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