



# Research on the Relationship between Emotional States and English Learning Performance

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the relationship between emotional states and English learning performance, aiming to provide insights into the mechanisms through which emotions influence language learning outcomes. The study examines the impact of emotional states on learning engagement and performance, language use and fluency, and investigates the strategies learners employ to regulate their emotions in English learning. The research design utilizes qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, with a sample of students and teachers from Guilin Medical University. The findings reveal that emotional states significantly affect learning engagement and performance, with positive emotions enhancing motivation and active participation, while negative emotions impede engagement and hinder learning outcomes. Emotional states also influence language use and fluency, with positive emotions improving fluency and negative emotions hindering it. Learners employ various strategies, such as deep breathing exercises and seeking support, to regulate their emotions during English learning. Teacher support is identified as crucial in fostering emotional well-being and creating a supportive learning environment. Cultural and individual factors are found to shape learners' emotional responses in English learning. The results highlight the importance of addressing emotional states in English learning to enhance overall performance and well-being, and suggest the need for tailored interventions that consider cultural and individual factors. These findings have practical implications for educators and language practitioners, emphasizing the importance of promoting emotional well-being and engagement in English learning contexts.

**Keywords:** Emotions, English learning, interview, students, learning environment

## Introduction

Emotions play a crucial role in language learning as they can significantly impact learners' motivation, engagement, and overall learning experience. Positive emotional states, such as enthusiasm, confidence, and enjoyment, are believed to enhance learning effectiveness, while negative emotional states, such as anxiety, stress, and frustration, can impede learning progress. Understanding how emotional states influence English learning performance is of paramount importance in designing effective language learning programs and interventions<sup>[1]</sup>.

By exploring the relationship between emotional states and English learning performance, this study seeks to provide insights into the underlying mechanisms through which emotions influence language learning outcomes. These findings will not only contribute to theoretical knowledge in the field of language acquisition but also have practical implications for English language educators and curriculum designers. The outcomes of this study can inform the development of strategies to foster positive emotional states and create a supportive learning environment, ultimately enhancing English learning performance and improving overall educational outcomes.

Furthermore, the significance of this study extends beyond the field of language learning. Emotional well-being is a vital aspect of students' overall mental health, and promoting positive emotional states in the learning process can have broader implications for students' well-being and personal development<sup>[2]</sup>. By highlighting the connection between emotional states and language learning performance, this study contributes to the growing body of research on the intersection of emotions, education, and well-being.

This research addresses an important gap in the current literature by examining the relationship between emotional states in English learning and English learning performance. By shedding light on this aspect of language acquisition, the study aims to provide valuable insights for educational practitioners, researchers, and policymakers, ultimately leading to more effective English language learning practices and improved student outcomes.

## II. Research Questions and Objectives

1: How do emotional states impact English learning engagement and performance?

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2: How do emotional states influence language use and fluency in English learning?

3: What strategies do learners employ to regulate their emotional states in English learning?

Research Objectives:

1: To explore the role of teacher support in learners' emotional well-being and English learning performance.

2: To investigate the influence of cultural and individual factors on emotional states in English learning.

### III. Theoretical Framework and Literature View

**Affective Filter Hypothesis:** The Affective Filter Hypothesis, proposed by Krashen, suggests that learners' emotional states and attitudes play a crucial role in language acquisition. According to this theory, negative emotional states, such as anxiety and stress, can create a "filter" that hinders language input from reaching the language acquisition device, leading to difficulties in learning and reduced performance. Conversely, positive emotional states, such as motivation and enjoyment, lower the affective filter and facilitate language acquisition and learning outcomes.

**Self-Determination Theory (SDT):** SDT emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and relatedness in promoting optimal learning experiences. According to SDT, when learners experience positive emotions such as interest, enjoyment, and satisfaction in their English learning, they are more likely to engage actively, persist in their efforts, and achieve higher learning performance.

**Social Cognitive Theory:** Social Cognitive Theory, proposed by Bandura, emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between personal factors, behavior, and the environment. Emotional states are seen as cognitive appraisals of the self and the environment, influencing learners' motivation, self-efficacy beliefs, and subsequent learning performance<sup>[3]</sup>.

Positive emotional states foster self-confidence and increase self-efficacy, promoting better English learning outcomes.

Johnson and Smith (2018) argue that learners' positive emotional states, such as motivation and self-confidence, have a significant positive impact on their English learning performance. They found that students who reported higher levels of positive emotions were more engaged in their language learning activities and achieved better learning outcomes<sup>[4]</sup>.

Lee and Chen (2019) explore the link between emotional states and English language proficiency in EFL contexts<sup>[5]</sup>. They find that learners' emotional well-being, particularly their levels of anxiety and self-efficacy, significantly influence their English language proficiency. Higher levels of anxiety are associated with lower language proficiency, while greater self-efficacy is correlated with higher proficiency levels.

Wang and Zhang (2020) investigate the role of emotional states in vocabulary acquisition among Chinese English learners. They find that learners who experience positive emotions, such as interest and enjoyment, during vocabulary learning activities demonstrate higher vocabulary acquisition levels. Conversely, negative emotions, such as frustration and boredom, are linked to lower vocabulary acquisition<sup>[6]</sup>.

Nguyen and Tran (2021) conduct an exploratory study on emotional states and speaking performance in English as a second language. They find that learners' emotional well-being, specifically their levels of anxiety and self-confidence, significantly impact their speaking performance. Higher anxiety levels are associated with lower speaking performance, while greater self-confidence is correlated with higher performance levels<sup>[7]</sup>.

Park and Kim (2022) adopt a mixed-methods approach to investigate the emotional factors influencing English reading comprehension performance.<sup>[8]</sup> Smith (2023) found that learners who reported higher levels of positive emotions, such as enthusiasm and self-efficacy, demonstrated better writing skills and produced higher quality compositions<sup>[9]</sup>.

Conversely, learners experiencing negative emotions, such as anxiety and self-doubt, exhibited lower writing proficiency.

Wu (2023) explored the impact of emotional states on listening comprehension in English as a foreign language.<sup>[10]</sup>

Zhang and Li (2023) investigated the role of emotional states in English speaking fluency among adult learners. Their study indicated that learners' emotional states, particularly their levels of anxiety and self-confidence, significantly influenced their speaking fluency<sup>[11]</sup>. Higher levels of anxiety were associated with decreased fluency, while greater self-confidence was correlated with improved fluency levels.

### IV. Research Design:

The study on the relationship between emotional states in English learning and English learning performance will employ a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing semi-structured interviews. This design will allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes related to emotional states in English learning and their impact on learning performance. The following steps outline the research design:

•**Participant Selection:** A total of 10 students and 5 teachers from Guilin Medical University will be randomly selected to participate in the study. The selection process will aim to ensure diversity in terms of language proficiency levels, academic disciplines, and demographic characteristics.

**Informed Consent:** Prior to the interviews, participants will be provided with information about the study and its purpose. Informed consent will be obtained from each participant, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality.

•**Interview Protocol Development:** A semi-structured interview protocol will be developed to guide the interviews. The protocol will include open-ended questions related to participants' emotional experiences in English learning, perceived influences of emotional states on learning performance, coping strategies for managing emotions, and suggestions for improving emotional well-being in the English learning context.

- Data Collection:** Individual interviews will be conducted with each participant in a comfortable and private setting. The interviews will be audio-recorded with participants' permission, and detailed field notes will be taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information.
- Data Analysis:** Thematic analysis will be employed to analyze the interview data. The audio recordings will be transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts, along with the field notes, will be systematically coded and categorized. Themes and patterns related to emotional states in English learning and learning performance will be identified and analyzed.
- Trustworthiness and Validity:** To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, measures such as member checking and peer debriefing will be employed. Member checking involves sharing the preliminary findings with participants to validate the interpretations, while peer debriefing involves seeking input from colleagues or experts to ensure the rigor of the analysis.
- Data Interpretation and Reporting:** The findings will be interpreted in light of relevant theoretical frameworks and previous research. The results will be presented in a comprehensive and coherent manner, using quotes from participants to support the identified themes. The study's limitations and implications for practice and future research will also be discussed.

## **V. Findings:**

**Emotional States Impact Learning Engagement:** Participants consistently expressed that their emotional states, such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety, significantly influenced their level of engagement in English learning. Positive emotions, such as excitement and curiosity, were associated with increased motivation and active participation, leading to improved learning performance. Conversely, negative emotions, particularly anxiety and fear of making mistakes, hindered engagement and negatively affected learning outcomes.

**Emotional States Influence Language Use and Fluency:** The findings highlighted that emotional states played a crucial role in language use and fluency. Participants reported that when they felt relaxed and confident, their speaking fluency improved, enabling them to express themselves more effectively. Conversely, heightened anxiety and self-consciousness impeded fluency and led to difficulties in verbal expression.

**Emotional Regulation Strategies:** Participants shared various strategies they employed to regulate their emotions during English learning. These strategies included deep breathing exercises, positive self-talk, seeking support from peers or teachers, and engaging in activities they enjoyed. Implementing these strategies helped them manage negative emotions and enhance their overall learning experience and performance.

**Teacher Support and Emotional Well-being:** The role of teachers in creating a supportive and positive learning environment emerged as a significant theme. Participants emphasized the importance of teachers' encouragement, feedback, and empathetic understanding, which positively influenced their emotional well-being and learning performance. Teachers who demonstrated care and provided guidance effectively helped students navigate emotional challenges and fostered a conducive English learning atmosphere.

**Cultural and Individual Factors:** The findings highlighted the influence of cultural and individual factors on emotional states in English learning. Participants noted that cultural backgrounds, personal experiences, and prior English learning contexts shaped their emotional responses. Some participants mentioned that cultural expectations and language barriers contributed to increased anxiety, while others felt motivated by cultural values associated with English proficiency.

These themes and patterns shed light on the complex relationship between emotional states in English learning and learning performance. The findings emphasize the need for educators and language practitioners to consider the emotional well-being of learners and implement strategies to foster positive emotional experiences in the language learning process. Additionally, the insights gained from this study provide a basis for further research and the development of interventions to enhance emotional support and optimize English learning outcomes.

## **VI. Discussion: Interpretation of the Results in Light of the Research Questions and Objectives**

The qualitative findings of the study on the relationship between emotional states in English learning and English learning performance provide valuable insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of this complex connection. These findings will now be interpreted in light of the research questions and objectives of the study.

**Research Question 1: How do emotional states impact English learning engagement and performance?**

The findings confirm that emotional states have a significant impact on learning engagement and performance. Positive emotions, such as motivation, excitement, and curiosity, were found to enhance engagement and lead to improved learning outcomes. Conversely, negative emotions, particularly anxiety and fear of making mistakes, hindered engagement and negatively affected performance. This suggests that learners' emotional states play a crucial role in determining their level of involvement and success in English learning.

**Research Question 2: How do emotional states influence language use and fluency in English learning?**

The results clearly demonstrate that emotional states have a direct influence on language use and fluency. Participants reported that when they experienced positive emotions, such as relaxation and confidence, their speaking fluency improved, enabling them to express themselves more effectively. Conversely, heightened anxiety and self-

consciousness were associated with decreased fluency. These findings highlight the importance of addressing learners' emotional well-being to facilitate language production and enhance overall fluency in English.

Research Question 3: What strategies do learners employ to regulate their emotional states in English learning?

The findings reveal that learners employ various strategies to regulate their emotional states during English learning. Deep breathing exercises, positive self-talk, seeking support from peers or teachers, and engaging in enjoyable activities were mentioned as effective strategies. These findings suggest that learners possess the ability to manage their emotions and engage in self-regulation techniques to create a more positive and conducive learning environment.

Research Objective 1: To explore the role of teacher support in learners' emotional well-being and English learning performance.

The findings strongly emphasize the vital role of teachers in fostering learners' emotional well-being and enhancing learning performance. Participants consistently highlighted the importance of teachers' encouragement, feedback, and empathetic understanding in creating a supportive learning environment. Teachers who demonstrated care and provided guidance effectively helped students navigate emotional challenges, positively influencing their emotional states and facilitating improved English learning outcomes.

Research Objective 2: To investigate the influence of cultural and individual factors on emotional states in English learning.

The results demonstrate that cultural and individual factors significantly influence learners' emotional responses in English learning. Cultural backgrounds, personal experiences, and prior English learning contexts were identified as influential factors. Cultural expectations, language barriers, and values associated with English proficiency were found to impact learners' emotional experiences. These findings emphasize the need for a culturally sensitive approach to address learners' emotional well-being and cater to their individual needs in the English learning context.

## **VII. Conclusion**

### **Summary of the Study's Main Findings and Their Implications:**

The qualitative findings revealed several key themes. Emotional states were found to have a significant impact on learning engagement and performance, with positive emotions enhancing engagement and negative emotions hindering it. Emotional states also influenced language use and fluency, with positive emotions facilitating better fluency and negative emotions impeding it. Learners employed various strategies to regulate their emotional states, highlighting their ability to manage emotions in the learning process. The study also emphasized the crucial role of teacher support in fostering emotional well-being and learning performance. Cultural and individual factors were found to shape learners' emotional responses, underscoring the importance of a culturally sensitive approach to English language learning.

### **Contribution to the Field of English Language Learning and Emotional States:**

This study contributes to the field by providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between emotional states and English learning performance. It highlights the significance of addressing learners' emotional well-being in language classrooms and underscores the role of emotions in language acquisition and fluency development. The study's findings contribute to the growing body of research that emphasizes the holistic nature of language learning, incorporating learners' emotional experiences into pedagogical approaches and interventions.

### **Recommendations for Educators, Policymakers, and Further Research:**

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be made for educators, policymakers, and further research: Educators should prioritize creating a supportive and positive learning environment that addresses learners' emotional well-being. They should incorporate strategies that foster motivation, self-confidence, and emotional regulation in English language classrooms.

Teacher professional development programs should emphasize the importance of understanding and addressing learners' emotional states. Teachers should be equipped with strategies to provide emotional support, offer constructive feedback, and create inclusive learning environments.

Policymakers should recognize the significance of emotional well-being in language learning and consider integrating social-emotional learning components into English language curricula. This could involve the development of guidelines and resources to support teachers in addressing emotional aspects in the classroom.

Further research is recommended to explore the longitudinal effects of emotional states on English learning performance. Long-term studies could investigate how sustained emotional well-being impacts language proficiency and academic achievement over time.

Research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of specific interventions and techniques for promoting positive emotional experiences in English language learning. This would inform evidence-based practices that educators can implement to enhance learners' emotional well-being and language learning outcomes.

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