

## Unveiling the Role of Psychological Factors in Adult Learners' English Language Development

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the psychological factors influencing the English language development of adult learners in Pakisan Village, a rural community preparing for community-based tourism. Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, the research examines how ten adult learners aged 30–50 interpreted their experiences of motivation, anxiety, confidence, and psychological empowerment while participating in a short English course. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and classroom observations. The findings reveal that learners' motivation was initially driven by instrumental needs related to tourism but gradually shifted toward intrinsic interest as they experienced competence and enjoyment. Anxiety shaped by age, educational history, and fear of making mistakes, initially hindered participation but decreased through shared struggles, peer support, and positive classroom interactions. Confidence developed slowly as learners accumulated successful learning moments, enabling them to take risks and communicate more willingly. Notably, the study found evidence of psychological empowerment, as learners began to view themselves as capable of engaging with tourists and contributing to the village's tourism development. These psychological processes collectively shaped learners' readiness to use English in real-world tourism contexts. The study concludes that emotional and psychological experiences play a central role in adult English learning in rural settings, suggesting that community-based language programs must attend to learners' psychological needs to support sustainable language development and tourism participation.

**Keywords:** *Adult language learning; applied psycholinguistics; rural education; English as a foreign language (EFL).*

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### A. Introduction

English has become increasingly important in the daily life of tourism communities, especially in rural areas that are developing community-based tourism initiatives. For these communities, English is more than a school subject; it acts as a bridge that links local cultural knowledge with global tourism markets. It allows villagers to welcome visitors, share stories about their traditions, and communicate more confidently with people from different countries. Research in several Indonesian tourism villages shows that English proficiency helps communities strengthen their tourism potential while also supporting cultural expression and economic growth (Menggo et al., 2022; Resmayasari et al., 2024; Suprina et al., 2023). Studies

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in Bali likewise emphasize that targeted English training particularly for tour guides can significantly improve visitor interactions and enhance the representation of local identity (Laba & Narlianti, 2025). Community empowerment programs that incorporate English language education have also produced positive outcomes, improving villagers' communication abilities and supporting sustainable tourism development (Resmayasari et al., 2024; Ugli & Qizi, 2025). As a result, communities like Pakisan Village increasingly recognize English as a practical necessity to participate more fully in tourism activities.

Adult learners approach language learning differently from younger learners because they bring with them a lifetime of responsibilities, experiences, and personal motivations. For adults aged 30 to 50, such as the villagers involved in this study, motivation tends to be rooted in real-life goals, such as becoming capable guides or communicating effectively with tourists (Isik, 2025; Mardani et al., 2024; Nannaparaju, 2025). Many of these learners return to study after years away from formal education or with very limited exposure to English, which can influence their confidence and expectations. Emotional factors also play a substantial role, while enjoyment can boost engagement, anxiety often makes adults hesitant to speak or participate (Isik, 2025; Pavelescu, 2023). Their motivation often reflects a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Although practical needs usually drive them to start learning, intrinsic motivation, such as pride, curiosity, or cultural interest, often sustains them over time (Mardani et al., 2024; Naumčiuk, 2023). At the same time, adults frequently encounter obstacles such as limited time, psychological resistance, and a lack of learning resources, all of which make supportive and context-sensitive learning environments especially important (Lazareva, 2025; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024).

Although the importance of English in rural tourism is well-established, research that specifically examines how adult learners in these settings psychologically experience language learning remains scarce. Much of the existing studies focus on younger learners or classroom-based contexts, leaving less understood about the emotional and cognitive dimensions experienced by adults in rural communities. Qualitative research from Bali illustrates that adult hospitality workers draw on diverse cognitive, social, and affective strategies, supported by personal motivation and a multilingual environment, to help them overcome learning challenges (Dewa et al., 2024). A study in another Indonesian tourism village highlights that targeted English programs can empower communities, although adult learners still face substantial constraints (Resmayasari et al., 2024). Meanwhile, research from Thailand underlines the importance of learner-centered curricula designed around adult learners' practical needs (Chanpradit, 2022). Studies on adult migrants in Europe also show that language

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learning is tied to identity, well-being, and social participation, dimensions that cannot be fully captured by quantitative measures alone (Häkkinen & Mikkilä-Erdmann, 2024). Furthermore, work on community-based tourism reveals that English proficiency intersects with issues of identity and reliance on external translators, adding layers of sociocultural complexity to the learning process (Nomnian et al., 2020). These studies collectively point to the need for deeper qualitative understanding of how adult learners in rural tourism contexts interpret their motivations, fears, hopes, and progress.

At the same time, adult learners in rural areas often face significant psychological barriers that affect their willingness and ability to learn. Anxiety, low self-efficacy, and self-doubt are common among adults who believe that learning a new language at an older age is difficult or unrealistic, especially when past educational experiences were discouraging (Sharmin, 2019; Soomro et al., 2023). These barriers can take many forms, including feelings of inferiority, fear of making mistakes, peer pressure, and shyness, all of which weaken the desire to communicate (Soomro et al., 2023). In rural settings, these internal challenges are often intensified by external limitations such as limited resources, poor internet connectivity, and fewer opportunities for meaningful interaction in English (Butarbutar et al., 2023; Francisco, 2021). Importantly, these challenges do not only affect participation but also shape how learners perceive their own progress, an aspect that test scores alone cannot reflect. While teacher intervention, peer support, and self-directed strategies can reduce some of these obstacles, addressing socio-psychological factors remains essential in designing effective programs for adult learners in rural communities (Francisco, 2021; Sharmin, 2019).

Because of these realities, English programs designed for rural community tourism need to provide more than language instruction, they must also support learners' psychological needs. Research informed by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) shows that when learning environments support autonomy, competence, and relatedness, learners develop stronger motivation, greater emotional resilience, and a deeper sense of personal investment (Shelton-Strong, 2020, 2022). Emotional support from teachers, especially when delivered through warmth and sensitivity, can reduce anxiety and help learners engage more confidently in class (Alrabai & Algazzaz, 2024). Social support from peers likewise contributes to peace of mind and positive achievement emotions, which boost motivation and communication (Namaziandost & Çelik, 2025). Yet in many rural programs, instructional efforts remain centered on functional language needs, while psychological support receives less emphasis (Karbakhsh & Safa, 2020). Integrating strategies such as anxiety reduction, collaborative

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learning, and intrinsic motivation-building could help adult learners feel more secure and valued, making language learning more sustainable and meaningful (Isik, 2025).

The progress shown by adult learners in Pakisan Village, such as increased confidence, greater communicative ability, and a stronger willingness to use English, suggests that their development is tied to deeper psychological transformations. Reduced anxiety, strengthened intrinsic motivation, improved resilience, and rising self-efficacy all contribute to sustained engagement (Alqarni, 2024; Isik, 2025; Yoon & Maeng, 2024). Research in positive psychology further shows that foreign language enjoyment, grit, and one's ideal L2 speaking self can predict improvements in speaking ability by helping learners persist through challenges (Fathi & Behzadpoor, 2025). Changes in learners' beliefs about their ability to learn, including reduced self-consciousness and increased integrative motivation, are strongly associated with gains in proficiency (Yoon & Maeng, 2024). Peer and instructor support also help learners overcome emotional barriers, allowing them to participate more actively (Isik, 2025).

The short English course conducted in Pakisan Village offers an important window into how these psychological processes unfold in real learning situations. Throughout the program, learners were introduced to basic guiding vocabulary, simple conversational exchanges, foundational grammar, and pronunciation practice. Although the course was relatively short, the learners showed noticeable improvements in their confidence, communicative ability, and willingness to use English in front of others. These gains cannot be explained by instructional techniques alone. Instead, they appear to reflect deeper internal changes, such as growing motivation, increasing confidence, reduced fear of making mistakes, and a stronger belief in their ability to learn. Recognizing these internal shifts is essential for understanding how adult learners in rural tourism contexts develop English proficiency over time.

To investigate these psychological developments more closely, this study adopts Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a qualitative approach that focuses on how individuals make sense of their lived experiences. IPA allows researchers to move beyond what learners do in the classroom and explore how they interpret their emotional states, self-beliefs, and personal challenges during the learning process. This makes IPA particularly suitable for a community-based context like Pakisan Village, where learning is intertwined with identity, emotion, and the desire to participate more fully in local tourism activities. Through this approach, the study seeks to understand how adult learners experience motivation, anxiety, confidence, and psychological transformation as they engage in the English learning program.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on adult learners in a rural tourism village, a group rarely examined in SLA research, combined with its use of learners' lived experiences

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rather than standardized quantitative measures to understand psychological factors. This approach provides a clearer picture of psychological readiness and how it shapes both language learning and community involvement. Research on rural tourism empowerment emphasizes that psychological empowerment, encompassing autonomy, belief, and collective action, is central to enabling communities to participate meaningfully in tourism development (Park et al., 2023; Scheyvens & Van Der Watt, 2021). Psychological empowerment strengthens place identity and promotes positive attitudes that support community resilience and active engagement (Strzelecka et al., 2017; Sutrisna, 2025; Truong et al., 2025). Because empowerment involves interconnected psychological, social, economic, and political dimensions, language learning may also play a role in supporting broader community empowerment (Park et al., 2023). By integrating insights from adult education and tourism empowerment frameworks, this study contributes a fresh perspective on how English learning can support both personal and community development.

The significance of this study is both academic and practical. Academically, it contributes to SLA research by highlighting the role of psychological experiences, such as emotional intelligence, motivation, self-confidence, and enjoyment, in shaping adult language learning, particularly in non-formal contexts. Emotional intelligence supports communication skills and fosters a positive learning environment (Thao et al., 2023), while teacher support, and foreign language enjoyment have been shown to enhance willingness to communicate (Derakhshan, 2022; Yang et al., 2024). Adult learners' beliefs about their own learning capacity also strongly influence their engagement and achievement (Lundell & Arvidsson, 2021). Practically, insights from this study can help educators design English learning programs that are more responsive to the emotional and psychological realities of adult learners in rural areas (Thao et al., 2023). These findings are also relevant for tourism stakeholders who aim to develop confident, communicative communities capable of participating more fully in tourism activities.

Guided by these concerns, the present study addresses three research questions. It examines (1) the psychological factors that influence the English development of adult learners in Pakisan Village, (2) how these learners interpret their experiences of motivation, anxiety, and confidence during the learning process, and (3) how these psychological experiences support or hinder their progress in acquiring English for tourism-related purposes. In line with these questions, the study aims to identify the key psychological factors shaping adult learners' engagement, explore how they make sense of their emotional and cognitive experiences, and describe how these processes influence their English development in a rural tourism setting.

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In sum, this study seeks to offer a better understanding of how adult learners in Pakisan Village psychologically experience English learning within a community-based tourism context. By adopting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), it aims to illuminate the meanings, emotions, and internal negotiations that accompany their learning journey—areas that have received limited attention in mainstream SLA research. Through this approach, the study aspires to support the development of more psychologically informed language programs for rural adult learners while contributing to broader goals of community empowerment and sustainable tourism development.

## **B. Research Method**

This study adopted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its methodological framework. IPA is a qualitative approach designed to explore how individuals make sense of their lived experiences, especially those involving emotional, psychological, or identity-related processes. In the context of language learning research, IPA enables researchers to engage deeply with participants' reflections, interpretations, and meaning-making, allowing for an understanding of the inner experiences that shape their engagement with language (Sutrisna, 2025; Tai & Chung, 2024). Rather than aiming for broad generalizations, IPA emphasizes the richness, depth, and complexity of each participant's narrative, making it well suited for studies that seek to understand personal change and psychological development. Given the focus of this research on the psychological experiences of adult learners in a rural tourism setting, IPA provided an appropriate and meaningful methodological fit. The approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of learners' motivation, anxiety, confidence, and evolving self-beliefs as they participated in a short English course designed to prepare them for tourism-related communication. IPA's idiographic and interpretative nature made it possible to examine how learners constructed personal meaning from their experiences and how those meanings related to broader goals of community empowerment and participation.

The study was conducted in Pakisan Village, a rural community in Kubutambahan District, Buleleng Regency, Bali, which is currently developing community-based tourism initiatives. The English short course offered in the village provided the natural context for participant involvement. A total of 10 adult learners participated in the study. They were selected using purposive sampling, consistent with IPA's emphasis on small, information-rich samples. The participants were between 30 and 50 years old, representing a range of adult learners who were motivated to learn English for tourism-related purposes. All participants had limited exposure to English prior to the program and came to the course with diverse personal backgrounds, learning histories, and levels of confidence. Their shared goal, to improve their

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ability to communicate with tourists and prepare themselves as potential tour guides, made them a relevant group for exploring how psychological factors shape adult English learning in a rural tourism context.

Data for this study were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, both of which align well with the interpretative focus of IPA. The in-depth interviews allowed participants to share their psychological experiences in their own words, offering insight into what motivated them, what made them anxious, how their confidence changed, and how they interpreted their learning journey. Interviews were conducted individually, either in Indonesian or Balinese depending on the participants' comfort, and each session lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The semi-structured format ensured that key topics were explored consistently while still allowing participants to guide the conversation toward personally meaningful issues. Alongside the interviews, observational data were collected throughout the short English course. The researcher observed how learners behaved during lessons, how they interacted with peers and instructors, and how psychological factors such as hesitation, enthusiasm, or anxiety manifested during learning activities. These observations offered valuable contextual detail that complemented the interview data, helping the researcher understand not only what participants said about their experiences but also how these experiences appeared in practice as the course unfolded.

The analysis of the data followed the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The process began with repeated readings of each interview transcript to gain an intimate understanding of each participant's account (Monaro et al., 2022). As the researcher immersed themselves in the data, initial notes were made focusing on descriptive details, language use, emotional expressions, and emerging ideas. From these notes, the researcher developed emergent themes that captured essential aspects of each participant's psychological experience. These themes were then examined for connections, eventually forming larger, more abstract superordinate themes that reflected shared patterns across participants. Throughout this process, the analysis remained grounded in the idiographic commitment of IPA, meaning that each case was treated with detailed attention before broader comparisons were made (Larkin et al., 2006, 2018). Observation notes were used to support and enrich the interpretation of interview data, helping to verify patterns and provide additional layers of meaning. The researcher maintained a reflexive stance throughout the analysis, acknowledging how their own background, assumptions, and expectations shaped the interpretative process.

Several strategies were employed to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study's findings. First, data triangulation was achieved by using both interviews and classroom

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observations, allowing insights from one source to be validated or deepened by the other. Member checking was also conducted by sharing summaries of interview interpretations with participants to ensure that their perspectives had been represented accurately and respectfully. To maintain reflexivity, the researcher kept a reflexive journal throughout the data collection and analysis stages, documenting personal thoughts, assumptions, and emerging interpretations; this helped minimize bias and maintain transparency in the analytic process. Together, these strategies strengthened the credibility, dependability, and overall rigor of the research.

### **C. Research Findings and Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal a complex set of psychological experiences that shaped how adult learners in Pakisan Village engaged with, interpreted, and applied English learning within the context of a short community-based tourism course. Across the ten participants, motivation, anxiety, confidence, and empowerment emerged not as isolated variables but as interwoven, shifting emotional and cognitive states influenced by social interactions, prior educational histories, and perceptions of tourism's growing relevance for the village. Through an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, these psychological dimensions emerged vividly as participants narrated their experiences, often in humble, reflective, and emotionally honest ways. Their stories illuminate not only the process of learning English but also the process of learning how to see themselves differently, as capable learners, as communicators, and as future contributors to the village's tourism aspirations.

At the beginning, nearly all learners expressed strong, practical motivation for joining the English course. Tourism had begun to take shape in Pakisan Village, with hikers and cultural tourists visiting the area more frequently. This created a sense of urgency among villagers who felt they needed at least basic English to avoid embarrassment or missed opportunities. One learner explained, "*Turis makin sering lewat sini. Masa kita diem aja? Minimal bisa jawab kalau ditanya apa. Kalo gak, kayak gak menghargai tamu,*" capturing a common sentiment that English was no longer just a school subject but a necessity for interacting respectfully with visitors. Others described wanting to help fellow villagers who were beginning to organize trekking routes or cultural tours. This form of instrumental motivation reflects Self-Determination Theory's concept of controlled motivation, where learners act out of perceived obligation or external need. It also aligns with Andragogy, which notes that adults are most motivated when learning directly supports practical roles and responsibilities.

However, as the course progressed, learners' motivation deepened into something more internalized. What began as a sense of duty evolved into curiosity, enjoyment, and personal

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satisfaction. Several participants admitted that they did not expect to enjoy learning English, given negative experiences in their school years or long gaps since formal education. Yet as they began to understand basic vocabulary or successfully complete simple speaking tasks, they experienced a growing sense of competence. One learner described this shift: “*Awalnya saya ikut ya karena disuruh desa. Tapi lama-lama kok jadi suka ya... apalagi kalau bisa jawab pertanyaan guru.*” Another shared, “*Dulu takut belajar Inggris. Tapi setelah ikut beberapa kali, rasanya pengen belajar lagi. Seru juga.*” These expressions reflect the satisfaction of SDT’s psychological needs competence, autonomy, and relatedness, indicating that learners were not simply participating but were becoming emotionally invested in their progress.

Despite these positive developments, many participants carried long-standing insecurities related to their educational backgrounds. Several learners noted that they had not studied English for decades, or that they had dropped out of school early, leading to feelings of intellectual inadequacy. One participant confessed, “*Saya sekolah cuma sampai SMP, jadi minder kalau lihat tulisan Inggris. Kadang mikir, ‘bisa gak ya saya?’*” Another explained that their poor reading skills made them particularly anxious when asked to read aloud. These expressions of self-doubt reflect low self-efficacy, a key barrier in adult learning. Yet participants also described moments of realization, small but meaningful, that changed their beliefs about their ability to learn. One person noted, “*Ternyata saya masih bisa belajar. Pelan-pelan tapi bisa,*” signaling that positive learning experiences gradually rewrote their internal narratives about themselves as learners.

A significant part of this psychological transformation was the presence of social support. Learners frequently emphasized how comforting it was to learn alongside peers who shared similar fears and challenges. One participant said, “*Kalo bareng-bareng gini, rasanya lebih enak. Kita sama-sama bingung, sama-sama belajar. Jadi gak malu,*” capturing how collective vulnerability created a sense of safety. Another learner recalled how a friend would often whisper, “*coba aja dulu,*” whenever they hesitated to speak. These small acts of encouragement reduced intimidation and strengthened relatedness, a core component of SDT, while also reflecting Sociocultural Theory’s emphasis on learning through social mediation. Instructor support also played a crucial role. Participants appreciated when the teacher encouraged effort rather than perfection and corrected mistakes gently. Such moments lowered the emotional stakes of learning and made learners more willing to take verbal risks.

Even with growing motivation, anxiety was a persistent psychological barrier during the early stages of the course. Many learners described intense nervousness when asked to speak or repeat sentences. One participant explained, “*Kalau mau ngomong, lidah kayak kaku. Takut*

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*salah. Takut diketawain.*” Another admitted, *“Saya suka deg-degan kalau disuruh maju. Takut salah sebut kata.”* These emotional states are consistent with Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that fear, embarrassment, or low confidence can block language input and hinder learning (Sutrisna et al., 2018). Observational notes confirmed these accounts, showing learners avoiding eye contact, speaking in low volume, or hesitating before attempting pronunciation. These behaviors illustrate how emotional discomfort manifests physically and cognitively, especially in adult learners who feel socially exposed.

Yet anxiety did not remain static. As learners noticed that others also struggled, their interpretation of anxiety shifted. Many participants explained that realizing their peers were equally unsure reduced the shame associated with making mistakes. One participant noted, *“Ternyata bukan saya aja yang grogi. Jadi lega. Jadinya lebih berani ngomong.”* Another shared, *“Pas lihat teman juga salah-salah, saya jadi mikir wajar rupanya kalau salah.”* This reframing was instrumental in lowering the affective filter and increasing willingness to communicate. The role of peer solidarity in transforming emotional experience aligns strongly with Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the importance of shared experience and mutual scaffolding.

Confidence grew through repeated exposure, successful moments, and emotional support. Learners often referred to specific turning points, such as correctly pronouncing a difficult word or successfully answering a question. One participant described, *“Pas pertama kali bisa jawab pertanyaan guru, saya senang banget. Dari situ mulai pede.”* Others expressed an emerging willingness to use English imperfectly, acknowledging that mistakes were part of learning: *“Dulu malu. Sekarang meskipun salah ya coba aja. Yang penting belajar.”* These reflections resonate with Positive Psychology in SLA, which highlights the importance of L2 enjoyment, resilience, and emotional growth.

Confidence was not merely an internal psychological change; it also manifested socially. Learners began initiating English phrases during casual interactions, joking with each other using basic greetings, or helping peers practice pronunciation. Such behaviors showed not only increased comfort but also an emerging identity as English speakers even at a beginner level. This growing sense of themselves as legitimate English learners strengthened their persistence and broadened their emotional openness to language practice.

As learners internalized these positive experiences, they began connecting their English learning to their future roles in tourism. Many reported feeling increasingly ready to communicate with visitors, describing themselves as *“lebih siap,” “lebih berani,”* or *“lebih percaya diri.”* One learner expressed, *“Sekarang kalau ada turis lewat, saya gak kabur lagi.”*

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*Minimal bisa salam atau jawab sedikit.*” Another offered a more ambitious vision: “*Suatu hari saya pengen bisa mandu turis, jelasin sejarah pura di sini.*” Such statements reflect the development of psychological empowerment, particularly the dimensions of competence, meaning, and impact. Learners were not only acquiring linguistic skills; they were gaining a sense of personal agency connected to their community’s tourism aspirations.

A powerful aspect of empowerment was the emergence of the Ideal L2 Self. Many learners developed mental images of themselves guiding tourists, greeting guests, or explaining local traditions in English. This imagined future identity provided emotional fuel and helped learners sustain effort through challenges. One participant shared, “*Saya kebayang nanti bisa nyambut tamu waktu ada trekking.*” Another said, “*Ingat kata guru, kalau mau lancar harus sering coba. Jadi saya bayangin diri saya bisa jelasin air terjun ke tamu.*” These imagined scenarios gave purpose to their learning and helped reinforce motivation during difficult moments.

Despite the overall psychological growth, some learners continued to face barriers. Lingering insecurity around pronunciation or grammar sometimes affected their willingness to engage. One participant reflected, “*Ngomong panjang masih takut. Takut belepotan, nanti turis bingung,*” demonstrating how anxiety can resurface in more complex communicative tasks. Others described feeling fatigued or discouraged when unable to remember vocabulary easily: “*Kadang capek, susah ngafal katanya. Pernah hampir nyerah.*” These accounts reveal the fragile nature of adult confidence and the nonlinear progression of emotional development in language learning.

Nonetheless, social support often helped learners overcome these setbacks. Participants who practiced with peers outside class felt more confident during actual interactions. One participant explained, “*Biasanya pulang latihan sama teman. Jadi pas ketemu turis beneran, lebih berani nyapa.*” This collaborative practice illustrates the power of community-based learning and highlights how language development in rural contexts is inseparable from social relations and communal identity.

Taken together, the findings indicate that psychological factors, motivation, anxiety, confidence, self-efficacy, and empowerment, play a decisive role in shaping adult learners’ engagement with English and their readiness for tourism communication. Motivation shifted from obligation to enjoyment as learners experienced competence and connection. Anxiety decreased as learners reframed it through shared vulnerability. Confidence grew through emotional successes and supportive relationships. Empowerment emerged as learners imagined themselves as capable contributors to tourism. Across these interwoven experiences,

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psychological processes deeply influenced how adult learners learned English, how they interpreted their progress, and how they envisioned their future roles within the village's tourism development.

The findings of this study show that adult learners in Pakisan Village experienced a gradual but meaningful psychological transformation as they participated in the community-based English course. Their journey was shaped by shifting motivations, decreasing anxiety, increasing confidence, and growing psychological empowerment, patterns that resonate strongly with existing research on adult language learning, positive psychology, and rural community-based education. This discussion section interprets these findings through the lens of previous studies and the theories guiding this research, demonstrating how the psychological experiences of these adult learners both reflect and extend established knowledge in SLA and adult education.

To begin with, the strong instrumental motivation observed among learners aligns with numerous studies showing that adults in tourism contexts often view English as a practical tool for economic participation and cultural communication (Laba & Narlianti, 2025; Resmayasari et al., 2024; Suprina et al., 2023). The learners' initial reasons for joining the program, such as not wanting to disappoint tourists or wanting to help the village develop tourism, mirror earlier findings indicating that adults are driven by practical needs and community responsibilities. This pattern, interpreted through Self-Determination Theory (SDT), suggests that learners entered the course with external motivations rooted in social expectations and economic opportunity. However, as the findings demonstrate, many participants gradually developed intrinsic motivation as they began to enjoy learning and experience small successes. This motivational shift reflects SDT's internalization process, in which external goals become personally meaningful as learners feel more competent, supported, and autonomous (Shelton-Strong, 2020, 2022). Similar patterns were reported by Nannaparaju (2025) and Mardani et al. (2024), who found that adult learners often begin with instrumental intentions but become intrinsically motivated through positive learning experiences. The findings from Pakisan Village therefore affirm previous research while illustrating how SDT's psychological needs, competence, relatedness, and autonomy were fulfilled in a rural tourism learning environment.

The emotional challenges described by participants echo the well-documented anxiety and self-doubt experienced by adult language learners worldwide (Isik, 2025; Pavelescu, 2023; Sharmin, 2019). Consistent with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, learners initially exhibited high anxiety, especially around pronunciation and fear of making mistakes, a pattern also observed in rural contexts with limited prior exposure to English (Francisco, 2021; Soomro

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et al., 2023; Sutrisna, 2021). However, the findings reveal that anxiety decreased over time as learners recognized that their peers shared similar struggles. This reframing of anxiety, from personal defect to shared challenge, highlights the role of Sociocultural Theory, which posits that learning is mediated by social interactions and emotionally supportive environments. Peer encouragement not only created a safer emotional space but also lowered the affective filter, allowing learners to take risks and absorb more language input. These developments echo previous research demonstrating the beneficial effects of collaborative learning, social support, and peer relationships on language anxiety reduction (Butarbutar et al., 2023; Namaziandost & Çelik, 2025).

The rise in confidence documented in this study also aligns with current research on Positive Psychology in SLA, which emphasizes constructs such as enjoyment, resilience, and the ideal L2 self as predictors of language development (Derakhshan, 2022; Fathi & Behzadpoor, 2025; Yang et al., 2024). Participants frequently described feelings of pride, excitement, and enjoyment when they successfully completed learning tasks, emotional states associated with heightened willingness to communicate and long-term learning engagement. These positive emotions served as psychological momentum, building learners' resilience and encouraging them to persist even when tasks were challenging. The emergence of imagined future selves, such as learners envisioning themselves guiding tourists or welcoming visitors, reflects concept of the Ideal L2 Self, which has been shown to be a powerful motivational force in adult English language development (Yoon & Maeng, 2024). These internal visions not only strengthened learners' motivation but also connected personal growth with community aspirations, demonstrating a unique synergy between Positive Psychology and community-based tourism development.

A particularly notable finding of this study is the emergence of psychological empowerment, a dimension previously highlighted in tourism development research but not widely explored in language learning studies (Park et al., 2023; Scheyvens & Van Der Watt, 2021; Truong et al., 2025). As learners gained confidence and perceived themselves as capable of interacting with tourists, they began to see English not merely as a skill but as a form of empowerment, an avenue for participating more fully in village tourism initiatives. This sense of empowerment included increased belief in personal competence, greater autonomy in attempting communication, and a sense of impact in contributing to the village's tourism goals. These developments align with empowerment frameworks emphasizing the interconnectedness of psychological, social, economic, and political dimensions (Scheyvens & Van Der Watt, 2021). By learning English, participants felt they were enhancing not only their personal

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capabilities but also the collective capacity of the village to engage with visitors. This finding extends previous research by showing how language learning can function as a pathway to psychological empowerment in rural tourism settings.

The findings also confirm that adult learning is deeply influenced by the realities of learners' daily lives, consistent with Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy). Participants' learning experiences were shaped by their educational histories, responsibilities, time limitations, and community roles. Many learners carried negative associations with formal schooling or concerns about being "too old to learn," echoing patterns found in studies by Nguyen & Nguyen (2024) and Lazareva (2025). Yet the relevance of English for tourism and the supportive environment created by peers and instructors helped mitigate these barriers. These insights affirm Andragogy's assumption that adult learners are self-directed, desire relevant learning, and require psychologically supportive environments to thrive.

Altogether, the findings closely align with previous research but also contribute new insights. While earlier studies have documented motivation, anxiety, and confidence in adult learners, this study shows how these psychological experiences unfold specifically in the context of rural community-based tourism, a setting that combines economic motivation, cultural identity, and collective responsibility. The integration of empowerment theory into SLA provides a novel lens for understanding how language learning intersects with community development, an intersection that remains underexplored in existing literature. Moreover, by using IPA, this study captures the rich complexity of learners' emotional and psychological lives, offering depth that standardized measures often overlook. The lived experiences of learners in Pakisan Village demonstrate that psychological transformation, not merely instructional input, is central to English development among adults preparing for tourism engagement.

In summary, the findings support and expand previous research by showing that adult language learning in rural tourism contexts is shaped by intertwined psychological processes. Motivation evolves as learners feel more competent and connected; anxiety diminishes in safe social environments; confidence and enjoyment sustain engagement; and empowerment emerges as learners imagine themselves contributing to tourism activities. These processes are best understood through the interplay of SDT, Affective Filter Hypothesis, Andragogy, Positive Psychology, Empowerment Theory, and Sociocultural Theory. Together, they provide a holistic explanation of how psychological experiences shape the English language development of adult learners in Pakisan Village, offering valuable implications for designing community-based language programs that support both individual and collective growth.

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#### **D. Conclusion**

This study revealed that the English language development of adult learners in Pakisan Village was shaped by a complex interplay of psychological experiences that unfolded throughout their participation in a short community-based English course. The findings show that motivation served as a central driving force, beginning with strong instrumental motives rooted in the practical demands of tourism and gradually evolving into intrinsic motivation as learners experienced enjoyment, competence, and meaningful progress. At the same time, anxiety emerged as a significant early barrier, linked to past schooling experiences, fear of mistakes, and a sense of being “too old to learn,” all of which initially suppressed learners’ willingness to speak and limited their engagement. Over time, however, anxiety began to diminish as learners recognized that their struggles were shared, not individual, and as peer support and positive classroom dynamics helped them reinterpret their fears as normal parts of the learning process. Confidence developed slowly but steadily through repeated exposure, small achievements, and emotional encouragement, becoming a decisive factor that enabled participants to take risks, use English more freely, and imagine themselves communicating with tourists. These psychological shifts ultimately contributed to a growing sense of empowerment, with learners beginning to view themselves as capable cultural communicators and contributors to their village’s tourism development. Even though some insecurities persisted, the overall trajectory demonstrated that psychological transformation, not simply exposure to language, was the foundation of learners’ readiness to use English for real-world tourism interactions. Thus, the conclusion of this study is that motivation, anxiety, confidence, and empowerment collectively shaped learners’ psychological journey, and it was this internal evolution that made meaningful English development possible in the rural tourism context of Pakisan Village.

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