A Phenomenological Study of College ESL Speakers' Experiences in Acquiring English as a Second Language

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Abstract

This phenomenological study investigates the experiences of Filipino college students learning English as a second language (ESL) within the Philippine higher education system. By conducting in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the research identifies key challenges such as language anxiety, cultural adaptation, and identity negotiation in a multilingual context. The findings highlight the significance of English proficiency for academic and professional success, as well as social integration and personal growth. This study provides recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to enhance ESL pedagogy, foster inclusive learning environments, and support the holistic development of Filipino ESL learners, ultimately promoting linguistic empowerment and cultural appreciation.

Keywords: English as a second language, English proficiency, social integration, personal growth

1. Introduction

Language learning and second language acquisition play crucial roles in shaping the communication abilities of individuals, especially college students, and fostering global interconnectedness. As a widely spoken language, English holds substantial importance in various domains, prompting nations like the Philippines to implement English language education to equip their learners with the necessary linguistic skills for success in the modern world (Bahji, et al., 2023). However, despite historical ties and a concerted focus on English language education, challenges persist in effectively acquiring and teaching the language for college ESL speakers.

For college learners, the acquisition of the English language is of paramount importance. It impacts their academic journey and shapes their future career opportunities and interactions in a globalized world. In college education, language learning encounters various obstacles that affect learners. Socioeconomic factors, resource limitations, and a dearth of qualified teachers have contributed to the suboptimal academic performance of Filipino students (Madrunio, et al., 2016). Code-switching, a common practice in multilingual societies, also poses unique challenges for learners, impacting their fluency and language development (Li, et al., 2022). Studies have shown that college learners with strong linguistic abilities may struggle to progress in environments where code-switching is prevalent, thus hindering their language acquisition journey (Liu & Wei, 2022).

The legal basis for language policies in the Philippines is enshrined in Article XIV, Sections 6 and 7 of the Constitution, highlighting Filipino and English as the principal media for communication and instruction (National Commission for Culture and the Arts, n.d.). English language education has undergone major development, with the Department of Education continuously aligning curricula, such as the K to 12 programs, to international standards to enhance college learners' proficiency in English (Department of Education, 2016). Nevertheless, the country's English proficiency ranking has fluctuated, necessitating renewed efforts to address language learning challenges (Education First, 2020).

The acquisition of English as a second language (ESL) has garnered considerable attention in educational research due to its critical role in global communication and employability. In the context of the Philippines, where English is an official language and a medium of instruction, understanding the experiences of college ESL speakers in their journey of ESL acquisition becomes imperative. This phenomenological study explores college students' embodied language learning experiences, particularly those enrolled in state universities, specifically focusing on the case of Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU).

The Philippines has a complex linguistic landscape with a rich tapestry of languages and dialects reflecting its diverse cultural heritage. As a former American colony and a nation with a rich history of international trade, English has become an integral part of Philippine society and education. The American colonization period (1898-1946) knowingly influenced the establishment of English as an official language, and since then, it has remained an essential component of the country's education system (Schneider, 2022).

In the Asia Pacific region, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have experienced a notable trend towards the adoption of English Medium Instruction (EMI). However, this transition is accompanied by several intricacies related to policy directives, the phenomenon of code-switching to the mother tongue within classroom settings, inadequacies in professional development programs, utilization of local educational materials, and shortcomings in teachers' pedagogical approaches. The incorporation of English as a medium of instruction within Philippine higher education institutions is motivated by the perceived significance of English proficiency for students' academic and professional advancement, both domestically and internationally. Nevertheless, this policy implementation encounters various hurdles (Chowdhury, 2023).

For instance, many students enrolled in state universities, including Laguna State Polytechnic University, originate from regions where languages other than English hold primary linguistic prominence. Consequently, the linguistic diversity among students poses distinct challenges to the acquisition of English as a second language. Research in ESL acquisition has traditionally focused on cognitive and linguistic dimensions, but recent educational paradigms emphasize the importance of exploring language learning as an embodied and holistic process (Jusslin, et al., 2022). Embodied language learning considers the interaction between the mind, body, and sociocultural context in shaping language acquisition experiences (Huxley, 2023). The embodied perspective recognizes that language is not just an abstract set of rules but is intricately connected to the learners' physical, emotional, and social experiences.

The overarching aim of this phenomenological study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the embodied language learning experiences of college ESL speakers,

focusing on the challenges, coping strategies, and emotional aspects involved in acquiring English as a second language in the context of state universities in the Philippines, with a specific case study at Laguna State Polytechnic University.

Objectives of the Study

This research aimed to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how college ESL speakers experience the process of acquiring English as a second language in the context of state universities in the Philippines, with a specific focus on Laguna State Polytechnic University. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do Laguna State Polytechnic University students who speak English as a second language feel about learning English?
2. What problems do college students face while learning English, and how do they deal with these challenges?
3. Can emotions and physical experiences influence how college students learn English as a second language?
4. What strategies do college students learning English use to handle challenging situations, and how does this affect their overall learning experience?

2. Methodology

The research design most appropriate for this study is a qualitative phenomenological study. Given the goal of comprehending the subjective experiences of college ESL speakers during their English language acquisition journey, a qualitative approach is well-suited. Phenomenological research facilitates a thorough investigation of participants' lived experiences and individual perspectives, yielding valuable insights into the complexities of language learning from their distinct vantage points.

As researchers, Creswell (2013) and Moustakas (1994) have emphasized the significance of phenomenology in exploring human experiences and understanding the essence of a phenomenon. The phenomenological approach seeks to delve into the importance of a lived experience by analyzing how individuals perceive and interpret the world around them (Creswell). By adopting this approach, the study can illuminate the nuanced facets of language learning, highlighting the role of embodied cognition and how participants' perceptions, emotions, and actions influence their language acquisition process.

This study employed a purposive sampling approach to enlist a diverse group of ten (10) college students who are ESL speakers of English. These participants were selected based on specific criteria, such as their level of language proficiency, duration of English language learning, and cultural background. Using purposive sampling, the research aims to intentionally target individuals with relevant insights and experiences related to the subject under investigation (Creswell, 2013).

By carefully considering these criteria, the research ensures that the chosen participants possess the necessary language skills to effectively express their encounters in acquiring English as a second language. Furthermore, including participants from varied cultural backgrounds enhanced the study's findings by offering various perspectives (Guest, et al.,

2013). The objective is to create an all-encompassing and comprehensive representation of the language learning journeys among college ESL speakers of English.

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary research instrument for data collection. Open-ended questions enabled participants to freely express their experiences, emotions, and perceptions of acquiring English as a second language (Guest, et al., 2013). The interview protocol was designed to elicit responses that explore participants' embodied language learning experiences and the factors influencing their language acquisition journey.

Using open-ended, semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method aligns with phenomenological research principles (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). This technique enables participants to express their experiences freely and provides the researcher with rich, detailed narratives to analyze. As participants share their language learning journeys, the researcher can capture the diverse feelings, challenges, and triumphs encountered while acquiring English as a second language.

To ensure rigor and trustworthiness in the research process, the study implemented various strategies, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These strategies include prolonged engagement with participants to develop rapport and establish trust, member checking to verify the accuracy of the findings, and peer debriefing to solicit feedback and enhance the study's credibility. Additionally, the researcher's reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process to recognize and manage any personal biases that may influence the interpretation of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data were collected through audio-recorded interviews to capture college ESL speakers' rich and nuanced experiences in acquiring English as a second language. The interviews were conducted in a comfortable and private setting, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts, emotions, and perceptions about their language learning journey. The open-ended nature of the interviews enabled participants to share their embodied language learning experiences, reflecting on how their body, mind, and language acquisition are interconnected.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and thoroughness in data analysis. The verbatim transcription provided a detailed and comprehensive representation of participants' responses, ensuring no valuable information was overlooked during the analysis phase. The transcriptions served as the primary data source, allowing the researcher to delve into the intricate details of participants' language learning experiences.

Data analysis involved a thematic approach, following the guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The researcher carefully read and re-read the transcriptions to identify recurring patterns and themes from the participants' narratives. These themes were examined in-depth to uncover the essence of participants' embodied language learning experiences and the factors influencing their language acquisition journey.

Throughout the research procedure, validation techniques were employed to enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings. Prolonged engagement with participants fosters trust and rapport, ensuring they feel comfortable sharing their experiences openly. Member checking was conducted to validate the accuracy of the data, allowing participants to verify the researcher's interpretation of their experiences. Additionally, peer debriefing was

employed to seek feedback from external researchers, providing an external perspective on the research process and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

By following this comprehensive research procedure, the study aims to provide invaluable insights into the embodied language learning experiences of college ESL speakers in acquiring English as a second language. The methodological rigor and ethical considerations undertaken in this research contributed to the trustworthiness and significance of the study's findings.

In treating qualitative data, the research employed thematic analysis as the primary method to analyze the rich and detailed data collected from the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis offers a systematic approach to identify, analyze, and interpret recurring themes and patterns that emerge from participants' narratives, shedding light on the essence of their embodied language learning experiences. By examining the data for common themes, the researcher aims to uncover the interconnectedness of participants' body, mind, and language learning processes, providing a comprehensive understanding of how these elements influence their language acquisition journey.

The thematic analysis process followed the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Firstly, the respondents familiarized themselves with the data by repeatedly reading and immersing themselves in the interview transcriptions, gaining a holistic understanding of the participants' experiences. Next, initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful units of information related to embodied language learning experiences. These codes were organized into potential themes, capturing the essence of participants' experiences and reflections.

The subsequent phases involve reviewing and refining the themes to ensure coherence and relevance to the research objectives. The researcher examined how the identified themes align with the data and participants' language learning experiences, ensuring they accurately reflect their perspectives. The final step involves naming and defining the themes, representing the essence of participants' embodied language learning experiences.

To enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the analysis, the researcher engaged in reflexivity, acknowledging their assumptions and biases that may influence the interpretation of the data. Additionally, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to validate the identified themes and ensure the accuracy of their portrayal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing was also employed, seeking feedback from external researchers to ensure the objectivity and credibility of the analysis.

By employing thematic analysis to treat qualitative data, the study aims to present a comprehensive and insightful exploration of college ESL speakers' experiences in acquiring English as a second language. This methodological approach allows for systematically examining the data, providing valuable insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of embodied language learning experiences. The trustworthiness and validity of the thematic analysis contributed to the robustness of the study's findings, supporting the advancement of knowledge in second language acquisition and language education.

3. Results and Discussion

Interview Question 1: How do Laguna State Polytechnic University students who speak English as a second language feel about learning English?

Table 1. List of Significant Statements Participants Who Speak English as a Second Language and how they feel about learning English

Emerging Themes	Responses	Participants
Emotional Experiences and Challenges	**Worried and insecure:** "As a student who speaks [the] English language as my second language, I feel...worried and insecure because if you don't feel enough around others..."	R1
Holistic Learning Experience	**Feeling privileged:** "I think that LSPU students who speak English as a second language...it is a privilege for us to learn more about English..."	R2
Psychophysiological Responses	**Excitement:** "For me naman po, I feel excited because since when I was a child it's [been] my dream course."	R3
Active Learning Strategies	**Feeling assertive:** "For me, I feel assertive about learning English as my second language because learning English as a second language provides me [with] more opportunities..."	R8
Emotional Experiences and Challenges	**Anxious:** "Though, na-ge-gets ko... or parang I'm quite anxious kasi I can't practice it that well...parang nahihirapan po ako kasi medyo nag-wo-worry po ako about what people might say when they hear me talk in English."	R4
Holistic Learning Experience	**Happy:** "Just like what was mentioned earlier, I feel both privileged and happy na I [can] receive this kind of education from our institution..."	R10
Psychophysiological Responses	**Pressured:** "I also feel pressured din kasi as an English major, people are expecting me to be fluent in speaking."	R3
Active Learning Strategies	**Feeling proud:** "As someone who is very sociable and outgoing, I feel proud that I [can] learn English as our second language..."	R9
Emotional Experiences and Challenges	**Insecurity and self-doubt:** "...there is also the feeling of self-doubt and the insecurity that comes with it..."	R2
Holistic Learning Experience	**Privilege:** "...privileged in the sense that I can speak English, yes. But, not that fluent and [have] the opportunity to learn English as well while I am [at] the university."	R1
Psychophysiological Responses	**Challenging:** "I think learning English is a mix of feelings. I sometimes find it challenging because of my linguistic intelligence. However, it opens opportunities for personal (inaudible)."	R6
Active Learning Strategies	**Intimidation:** "...I [felt] so intimidated at first whenever I [heard] my classmates speak English...the process of learning a new language can be quite challenging and sometimes frustrating..."	R7

Interview Question 2: What problems do college students face while learning English, and how do they deal with these challenges?

Table 2. List of Significant Statements from the Problems College Students face while learning English and how they dealt with these Challenges

Emerging Themes	Responses	Participants
Emotional Experiences and Challenges	**Complexities and difficulties in studying English:** "One problem that college students face while learning English would be the complexities and difficulty of the grammar itself…with a lot of rules..."	R1
Holistic Learning Experience	**English pronunciation:** "The problems that I've seen that college students face while learning English [are] the pronunciation of English words as well as the...sounds that we use when speaking the Filipino language and the English language..."	R2
Psychophysiological Responses	**Anxiety:** "For me, I think one of the problem[s] is anxiety since learning English po, requires speaking so minsan po kasi natatakot po tayo to use it in communication..."	R3
Active Learning Strategies	**Lacking confidence:** "My answer will be…yung struggle of some English majors with using the right terminologies and their overall confidence itself...We tend to use yung mga words na hindi talaga tama doon sa sentence na gusto nating sabihin."	R4
Emotional Experiences and Challenges	**Lacking confidence in grammar:** "As what I have observed and sa experience ko na rin po, yung mga problems po na fine-face ngayon ng mga college students habang nag-aaral ng English is how will they construct the grammar..."	R5
Holistic Learning Experience	**Expanding vocabulary:** "One of the most common [problems] that [students] face while learning English is expanding our vocabulary which is one of my problems din po and I face these challenges by practicing and making reading a habit."	R6
Psychophysiological Responses	**Challenging:** "I think college students who are learning English sometimes find it hard to understand grammar, how to learn new words, how to write well, how to say words correctly, or the pronunciation..."	R7
Active Learning Strategies	**Lacking confidence in grammar:** "For me, the problem that college students face while learning English is the complexity of grammar rules...I still need some help...when I am making some academic papers, I still need some help from, like, AI, to correct my sentences, especially on prepositions..."	R8
Emotional Experiences and Challenges	**Peer influence and exposure:** "I believe that the problem revolves around three things po talaga: peer influence, internal conflict, and exposure...you tend to be demotivated [by] your environment..."	R9
Holistic Learning Experience	**Contextualization:** "Yung sa akin naman po, Ma'am is more on contextualizing what I learned inside the classroom and applying it in real life. For example po, sa productive macroskill po ng writing and speaking..."	R10
Psychophysiological Responses	**Practice/using apps:** "I think to deal [with] those challenges, napapansin ko po sa mga classmates ko they're using an app, an English app, or they're communicating with their classmates kahit hindi ganun ka-fluent yung English nila basta ma-deliver nila yung gusto nilang sabihin."	R5
Active Learning Strategies	**Adapting technology use:** "For example, when I am making some academic papers, I still need some help from, like, AI, to correct my sentences, especially on prepositions, because that is one of my weaknesses..."	R8

Interview Question 3: Can emotions and physical experiences influence how college students learn English as a second language?

Table 3. List of Significant Statements from the Emotions and Physical Experiences that Influence how College Students learn English as a Second Language

Emerging Themes	Responses	Participants
Emotional Experiences	I do believe that emotions and physical experiences may influence language learning by mediating or [reconciliation] the knowledge or the cognitive process. It has something to do with enjoyment because if you enjoy what you are doing through utilizing various learning techniques, through appreciating the learning materials itself. Emotions will play an important role [in] the student's disposition.	R1
Emotional Experiences	So just like R1, I do believe that emotions and physical experiences can influence how college students learn English because as I've observed inside our classroom many of our classmates have shared that when they are constantly shamed for using wrong grammar or pronouncing a word wrong, they tend to be insecure and frustrated with themselves because nagkakaroon po ng lack of self-confidence po sila sa pag-a-aral ng English language kumbaga po is nade-demotivate sila in learning more about the language when they are being constantly shamed and ostracized for not being the "perfect English major."	R2
Emotional Experiences	Ganun din po, the emotions can also influence how us, the students, learn English po since meron nga din pong… na-experience ko po yung mga shinare din po ng mga kaklase ko nung first day, meron pong may mga napahiya po ng mga teachers po nung sa interview ata po iyon. Parang may napahiya na estudyante po since mas maano siya sa Tagalog, yung ginamit niyang language nung interview so napahiya po siya. Pero because of the eagerness to learn hindi po yun tumigil sa kanya para po i-take yung English major so ayun po, siguro po that's how emotions can influence our learning.	R3
Emotional Experiences	Medyo redundant na po pero I actually agree po doon sa sentiment po ng mga nauna pong interviewees. So, kasi po I actually believe that physical and emotional experiences can deeply influence on how English majors can learn or practice the language kasi po. For example, more in the negative side, nabanggit din naman po kanina yung judgment or shaming dun sa mga… sabihin na nating mga kaklase ko or sa ibang tao na they tend to use the grammar wrong or pronounce words wrong tapos may mga… unfortunately, judgmental people na… will or will not be judging yung kanilang wrong grammar or wrong pronunciation pero on the contrasting side naman po of that, it can be… yung when you are well-spoken especially in front when you are practicing or doing a report po in front of the class yung simple na naiintindihan po nila or yung agreement yung nag-a-aggree po sila or they can understand whatever… for example, me—yung sinasabi ko sa harap parang nagkakaroon po ako ng sense of acknowledgement or parang natutuwa po ako na "okay they understood what I said," parang ganun po. So, [it's] kind of negative and positive po siya.	R4
Emotional Experiences	For me naman po, yes din po. For example po, motivated ka parang gusto mo or willing kang gawin mo yung bagay na yun kasi nga motivated ka or anxious ka kasi feeling mo they're judging your grammar kapag sumasagot ka or nagpo-pronounce ka ng unfamiliar na mga words sa kanila.	R5
Emotional Experiences	I think yes din po and magfo-focus po ako sa emotional experience which can have a positive and negative impact on their progress depending on their emotional state and I think it will be harder on those students [who] can't control their emotions po.	R6
Emotional Experiences	I think yes din po. Yung mga positive emotions po like curiosity and confidence, can enhance learning by increasing motivation and engagement. However, yung mga negative emotions naman po like anxiety, frustration, or self-doubt, can	R7

	hinder learning by causing distractions and reducing focus. With this, I think we need to create a supportive and positive learning environment kung saan nama-manage yung stress levels and naa-add yung physical needs that can help optimize the language learning experience for college students.	
Emotional Experiences	For me po, yes, because I remember this one experience [from] last sem… when a prof told me that "Parang gusto kong mambagsak ng English major!" and with that experience I [felt] like I was shamed publicly and I [felt] like, "Am I that bad to be undeserving on pursuing this major?" So, during that time, I [felt] like I [was] demotivated [to] trying to learn that subject, and I [felt] like I'm always tired whenever the time for that subject came and I believe that emotion affects my learning when it comes to that. So, I think I had 3 weeks before I was able to recover [from] that feeling because it was [the] first time that I was being shamed publicly because of a professor and that really [affected] my learning.	R8
Emotional Experiences	In my perception, yes, of course, emotions and physical experiences can influence how we learn English majors po and other people na rin who's trying to learn the English language because po again katulad ng sinabi nilang lahat na motivations, being interested about something, mentally stable ka po you will be able to learn everything and more so pa po if someone or an individual po is trying to learn a new language, it starts po muna sa mind nila, they need to condition their mind to be ready. Mentally capable po dapat sila and in terms naman po of physical, of course, naman po, Ma'am, you will not be able to learn if you are not physically capable. Kunwari you encounter an accident, you met an accident, kahit… alam niyo po yung kahit maliliit lang na sugat diba parang you are [demotivated] to learn na parang ayaw mo na matuto dun sa mga ganung bagay so it really varies and i think po dito na po papasok yung concept ng affective method po natin sa teaching kasi if the teachers po, kayo po, you keep on saying na affective values are very important methods. That's why nga po may mga grading system pa doon. Although it's not very reliable, 'di ba? Kasi plays a crucial role in learning. We need to feel it. Parang ganon. We need to establish our mind condition ourselves. Kasi, it's not just about how we learn. It's about how we absorb everything din po.	R9
Emotional Experiences	Sa akin po, ayun nga po. Just like what they said po. Meron po siyang effect sa pag-le-learn po ng English kahit po sa aming mga college students na. Like halimbawa na lang po yung sa emotions kapag po maganda ang mood is, ayun nga po, mas motivated po ang bata na matuto. However, kapag may mga bad experiences siyang na… kumbaga, na-experience nung araw na yon, hindi po ganon ka-willing yung batang matuto. Kasi more on the emotions po sila naka-focus. Yung sa physical experience naman po, ma'am, I also think na kasama po dito yung sa environment if it is conducive enough for our students po to learn. Like kanimbawa po ngayon na nag-online po tayo bigla kasi hindi po conducive masyado yung ating classrooms for… sa CTE para kasi sobrang init po.	R10

Interview Question 4: What Strategies do College Students learning English use to handle Challenging Situations, and how this affect their overall learning experience?

Table 4. List of Significant Statements from the strategies of college students learning English use to handle challenging situations, and how does this affect their Overall Learning Experience

Emerging Themes	Responses	Participants
Emotional Experiences and Challenges	R1: "Emotions and physical experiences may influence language learning... Emotions	R1

	will play an important role [in] the student's disposition."	R2
	R2: "Constantly shamed for using wrong grammar or pronouncing a word wrong... they tend to be insecure and frustrated... lack of self-confidence... demotivated."	R3
	R3: "Emotions can also influence how... students learn English... eagerness to learn... that's how emotions can influence our learning."	R4
	R4: "Physical and emotional experiences can deeply influence how English majors can learn or practice the language... judgment or shaming... but also acknowledgment and understanding... a sense of acknowledgment."	R5
	R5: "Motivated... or anxious... feeling they're judging your grammar."	R6
	R6: "Emotional experience... can have a positive and negative impact on their progress... harder on those students [who] can't control their emotions."	R7
	R7: "Positive emotions like curiosity and confidence can enhance learning... negative emotions like anxiety, frustration, or self-doubt can hinder learning... create a supportive and positive learning environment."	R8
	R8: "Shamed publicly... demotivated... always tired whenever the time for that subject came... emotion affects my learning... took 3	R9

	weeks to recover from that feeling."	
	R9: "Emotions and physical experiences can influence how we learn English... mentally stable... condition their mind to be ready... physically capable."	R10
	R10: "Meron siyang effect sa pag-le-learn po ng English... more on the emotions po sila naka-focus... physical experience... environment if it is conducive enough for our students to learn."	
Holistic Learning Experience	R1: "Trying alternative methods of building vocabulary by reading textbooks, articles... writing articles, poems... practicing regularly to refine their skills."	R1
Psychophysiological Responses	R3: "Nagkahalo-halo... yung mga words... nagme-meditate po muna ako to release the stress... affecting my speaking."	R3
	R7: "Culture shock... high school tas college agad... transition... learning English... ask teacher or friends for help... self-study using books or websites... practice speaking or writing... build a strong foundation."	R7
Active Learning Strategies	R1: "Using various learning techniques... practicing regularly... build confidence and enhance strategies."	R1
	R2: "Mimic or copy a native English speaker... 'fake it till you make it'... progress by mimicking and studying."	R2
	R4: "Incorporating hobbies... read a lot of books... look up words I don't understand... listening to audiobooks... helped with	R4

	vocabulary and pronunciation."	
	R5: "Asking friends, classmates, or teacher for clarifications... self-study using modules and search engines."	R5
		R6
	R6: "Practice conversations... use digital language learning app."	
		R7
	R7: "Ask for help from teacher or friends... self-study using books or websites... practice speaking or writing."	
		R8
	R8: "Turning criticism into fuel... consult online videos to enhance skills... develop them to prove myself."	
		R9
	R9: "Use all available resources... social media, e-books, content creators... collect and save useful content."	
		R10
	R10: "Prepare for speaking tasks... practice script... follow English-speaking personalities on social media for pronunciation and speaking standards."	

Table 5. Clustering Initial Themes to Sub-Themes

Interview Questions	Initial Themes	Sub Themes
1. How do Laguna State Polytechnic University students who speak English as a second language feel about learning English?	Feeling privilege Worried and insecure feeling privilege insecurity and self-doubt Excitement Pressured Happy Anxious Anxious Challenging Intimidation Challenging Feeling assertive Feeling proud	Privilege and Pride Insecurity and Anxiety Excitement and Happiness Pressure and Challenge Intimidation and Anxiety

		Privilege and happy	
2.	What problems do college students face while learning English, and how do they deal with these challenges?	Complexities and difficulties in studying English English pronunciation anxiety Lacking confidence Lack of immersion in the English language Lacking confidence in grammar Adapting technology use Expanding vocabulary Lacking confidence in grammar Practice/using apps Lacking confidence in grammar Adapting technology use Peer influence and exposure Exposure Contextualization Vocabulary and confidence	Confidence Issues Anxiety and Emotional Challenges Pronunciation and Vocabulary Language Immersion and Exposure Technological Adaptation and Practice Contextual Learning
3.	Can emotions and physical experiences influence how college students learn English as a second language?	Emotions and physical experiences Emotions and physical experiences Emotions Emotions and physical experiences Emotions and physical experiences Emotions and physical experiences Emotions and physical experiences Emotions and physical experiences Emotions and physical experiences Unmotivated Emotions and physical experiences	Emotions Physical Experiences Specific Emotional States Combined Emotional and Physical Experiences
4.	What strategies do college students learning English use to handle challenging situations, and how does this affect their overall learning experience?	Trying alternative methods Mimicking Meditation Reading and listening more Self-study Practicing Practicing Practicing Being resourceful Practicing and mimicking	Practicing and Application: Alternative Learning Methods Enhanced Exposure

Clustering Sub-themes to Main Themes

Table 6. Clustering Sub-themes to Main Themes

Sub-themes	Main Themes
Privilege and Pride Insecurity and Anxiety Excitement and Happiness Pressure and Challenge	**Emotional Experiences and Challenges**

Intimidation and Anxiety	
Confidence Issues Anxiety and Emotional Challenges Pronunciation and Vocabulary Language Immersion and Exposure Technological Adaptation and Practice Contextual Learning	**Holistic Learning Experience**
Emotions Physical Experiences Specific Emotional States Combined Emotional and Physical Experiences	**Psychophysiological Responses**
Practicing and Application Alternative Learning Methods Enhanced Exposure	**Active Learning Strategies**

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings from the participants' experiences shed light on several key issues and implications for language learning. Firstly, the importance of addressing emotional factors in language acquisition emerges prominently, as students grapple with feelings of insecurity, self-doubt, and anxiety. Understanding and managing these emotions are crucial for fostering a positive learning environment. Secondly, the challenges faced by students in mastering English grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary highlight the need for comprehensive support mechanisms, including targeted instruction, practice opportunities, and resources for self-study. Additionally, the significance of holistic learning approaches, encompassing both cognitive and affective dimensions, becomes evident in facilitating students' overall language development. Lastly, the participants' utilization of diverse learning strategies underscores the importance of promoting active engagement and autonomy in language learning processes. These insights underscore the multifaceted nature of language acquisition and underscore the importance of tailored interventions to support students effectively.

Based on the study's findings, the study has the following recommendations.

1. Implement Emotional Support Mechanisms: Educational institutions should prioritize the provision of emotional support services to assist students in managing feelings of insecurity, self-doubt, and anxiety associated with language learning. This can include counseling services, peer support groups, and mindfulness practices aimed at promoting emotional well-being.

2. Enhance Grammar and Pronunciation Instruction: Language learning programs should incorporate targeted instruction and practice opportunities to address students' challenges in mastering English grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Interactive and communicative approaches, such as role-playing exercises and pronunciation drills, can be effective in enhancing students' language proficiency.

3. Foster Holistic Learning Environments: Educators should adopt holistic learning approaches that integrate cognitive and affective dimensions to support students' overall language development. This can involve creating immersive language learning experiences, integrating cultural elements into language instruction, and promoting reflective practices to enhance students' language acquisition processes.

4. Encourage Active Learning Strategies: Students should be encouraged to employ diverse learning strategies, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, to actively engage with the language and reinforce their learning. Educators can facilitate this by providing access to a variety of learning resources, including digital tools, authentic materials, and language learning apps, tailored to students' individual needs and preferences.

5. Promote a Growth Mindset: Educational institutions should foster a growth mindset among students, emphasizing the importance of effort, persistence, and resilience in language learning. By reframing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning, students can develop a positive attitude toward language acquisition and build confidence in their language abilities.

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