

# PROMOTING ENGLISH LEARNING FOR ADULT STARTERS: A GAP BETWEEN EMOTION AND TEACHING STRATEGY

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## ABSTRACT

The investigation that focuses on English language learning by adult starters at the workplace is very much challenging. Thus, this study attempted to elaborate whether emotion (self-confidence, motivation, or anxiety) correlates with teaching strategy (CBI, CLT, and TBLT) and English language performance. This study applied a combination of qualitative with phenomenology design and quantitative with analytic descriptive design to analyze the effect of emotion on teaching strategy. The population was 355 employees whose ages range from 25 to 30. this study involved 100 samples using a random sampling technique. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions concerning self-confidence, 15 questionnaires about motivation, and 15 questionnaires about anxiety. A performance test measured the student's language competence. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics with SPSS 25, t-test, and Pearson Product Moment. The finding revealed that the emotion correlates positively either with the teaching strategy or with the learning achievement. The stronger the adult learners feel self-confidence and emotion, and less anxiety the more effective the CBI, CLT, TBLT can encourage their language performance. The factors that make emotion correlate more positively with language performance are (1) the demands of better achievements, (2) self-responsibility, and (3) teaching strategy.

**Keywords:** language learners, emotion, performance, achievement

## INTRODUCTION

Age of learners (AoL) in English language teaching (ELT) is a challenging issue that determines the strategy. English language learning by adult learners in workplaces differs from learning by young learners at schools. The learning aspects do not differ only in age, learning experience, motivation, the achievement but also the demands of learning (Dabbagh 2007., Dörnyei, et.al., 2017., Ketenci, et.al 2019). The focus of English

language learning at schools and university covers two concepts of language teaching; competence and performance. However, in non-formal education, adult learners may only develop language performance because the goal is only to gain functional communication with customers. Age may take some distinctive roles in the learning experience. Young students are not sure of the target learning because it is an obligatory lesson.

However, they can not use the language in communication. However, adult learners believe that physical and psychological conditions can influence learning targets and experiences.

The generalized characteristics that are common to the learners including autonomy, goal-oriented, practical, purposeful, emotional barriers oriented The adult learners assert to develop their English performance for better service to customers. Adults typically prefer a sense of control and self-direction (Lai, Shum, Tian, 2016., Hafner, Miller, 2011).

Language emotion is the inner drive in language teaching as a foreign language. Positive learning behavior includes strong desire, motivation, and confidence. Meanwhile, the negative behavior arises from anxiety, stress, depression, and unconfidence. Their outside responsibilities indicate that most adult learners are responsible for family, friends, community, and work. Carving out time for learning affects adult learners. So, specific characters of adult learners enable the tutors to map the affective teaching strategy to achieve the language performance. Language cognition (Gregersen &

MacIntyre, 2014; Pekrun, 2014; Schumann, 2004) evokes language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Every individual has different emotions towards four skills. Adult learners think that English language speaking and listening are more anxiety-provoking than writing and listening (Martirosian, Hartoonian, 2015). It is just closely related to their demand and target of learning. Therefore, the tutors find this challenging because many adults prefer to learn by doing rather than listening to them.

In English language teaching (ELT), a strategy refers to the appropriate ways to transfer learners to the target language (L2). However, the type of learners may require a different strategy for the same material or objectives. An effective strategy may depend on the students, teachers, and facilities. Successful learning for adult learners may develop the learning tasks (Zimmerman, 2008). These strategies may require some adaptations to the learning environment. To gain the successful learning, the tutors are obliged to map the conceptual learning, such as affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains. Affective

concerns with behavior or emotion, cognitive refers to linguistic knowledge (Benesch, 2017), and psychomotor relates to language performance. The goal is successful if the strategy contains the three conceptual learning and it must be free from learning anxiety, such as stress, depression, and unconfidence.

Most adult learners face the hard choice of handle two things in one action; emotion and demands. Emotion includes motivation, stress, depression, negative thinking, and uncertainty about learning English. Some adult learners are eager to master the language and the rest just follow the training program of the company without concerning the specific goal of English communication. Therefore, tutors should offer great effort to enhance them to build positive behavior with applicable strategies.

Many studies have elaborated on the effect of emotion on learning achievement (Perry & Potter, 2010., Nasir & Muhith, 2011, Barbalet, 2002) However, the tutor's role to promote adult learners' to reduce anxiety and activate learning strategy for English training program have not been a priority yet. Learning English by

employees after school or college could be challenging to search for.

The tutors are required to construct positive relationships with students to help them mitigate their language anxiety. This study focuses on (1) the type and level of the English language anxiety of adult learners towards their tutors' teaching strategy, (2) the tutor's roles in decreasing the negative emotion of the adult learners, and (3) the teaching model of language emotion. Considering the issue proposed in this study, this study cites and synthesizes some empirical and theoretical findings concerning the language emotion and teaching strategy for adult learners.

The first concern of the study is the age of learning (AoL). The effect of the age of learning (AoL) has been conducted by Huang (2014) who claims that the younger the students are to learn the language the better skills they outperform. However, most research on this hypothesis has been conducted in naturalistic immersion contexts. The questions remain unanswerable whether the early age language learning has gained better achievement in content or in the performance of the language they are

learning. Thus, this present study aimed to address this gap to better understand the effect of emotion on language learning outcomes in adult learning on EFL. Muñoz (2008) and Singleton, (2003) claim that the performance of adult learners is more straightforward to communication function than the young learners. Most studies revealed that the adult starters of EFL performed similarly or even better than younger learners. However, the only exceptions were older starters were outperformed by younger starters in pronunciation, speech production, and listening comprehension (Dörnyei, et.al., 2017).

In phonological acquisition, the adult learners of EFL tend to be mainly influenced by their native language articulation (Tanner,2012; On the other hand, the articulation of the young learners tends to be independent in articulating the new different sounds According to Dörnyei, et.al. (2017) incorrect pronunciation is not a matter of capability but goodwill. A positive or negative attitude towards a foreign language should not be underestimated (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014. Another factor to consider is the adults' motivation to learn a foreign language.

When an adult learns a foreign language there is always a reason behind it: education, social prestige, profession or social integration (Gilakjani & Ahmadi2011).

Learning any language will be always anxious for any AoL (Dewaele, & Al-Sara, 2015). One of the reasons this feeling comes around is because of obligation or demand (Kinginger, 2011). Obligation can help the young talented learners of EFL arise their curiosity about the target language (L2) and they try to perform it well. This condition may make the untalented learners feel anxious and they can not perform the language well. The demand of learning English in the workplace enables adult learners to develop their competence in the target language for their better carrier and the rest may fail due to anxiety (Pekrun, 2014). Anxiety may cause the obstacle in learning other languages. One of the problems that may accompany the learners in AoL is the different linguistic system of the L2. to the native language or L1.

Anxiety influences the learning outcomes for students with different backgrounds and conditions (Zheng, et.al. 2020). This emotion results in

confusion and distorted perception.. Emotional distortion can decrease the ability to concentrate, disturb the memory, and weaken the ability to connect one thing to another. Negative perception results in stress that influences the learning process and the learner's life generally. Therefore, teaching strategy has significant roles in the pedagogy of AoL.

One of the psycholinguistic models that enable the learners in EFL that has been very popular to evoke four language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing is the information processing approach This model enables the teacher to classify emotion (affective), knowledge (cognitive), and skill (psychomotor). The model provides grounded theory with three-dimensional language teaching methods including (1) language communication focus; linguistics vs literature, (2) meaningful learning focus; direct experience vs translation, and grammar learning focus; induction vs explication.

In fundamental pedagogy, Richards (2006) assert that the teaching method derives from theoretical language (linguistics) and language learning (psychology). Learning

methods can be classified into traditional, short-term, and temporal methods. English is considered difficult by Indonesian old starters and the errors make them feel anxious. Four possible sources of learners' errors include interlingua transfer that is related to the influence of native language into a foreign language, intralingual transfer that is related to the influence of foreign language into the native language, the context of learning that is related to the teachers, teaching material, and communication strategies that are related to the learners' strategies to enhance their capability in language learning (Brown (2007). This present study attempts to elaborate on the effectiveness of language teaching for adult learners. The teaching strategy concerns language behavior Those behavior-based models can be applied to Communicative language teaching (CLT), Content-based instruction (CBI), and Task-based language teaching (TBLT). It is assumed that these strategies may take significant rules for adult learners in EFL.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study applied a combination of qualitative with phenomenology design and quantitative with analytic descriptive design to analyze the effect of language anxiety to the adult learner's towards their tutors' teaching strategy, to describe the tutor's roles in decreasing the negative emotion of the adult learners, and to promote the teaching model of language emotion for adult learners. The data that are collected are not manipulated. Although differing groups are analyzed and compared in regards to independent and dependent variables, the assignment of subjects to different groups is based on whichever variable is of interest to the researchers. In the present study, the researcher used ex-post facto; moreover, it was specified on the correlational research design. The observation was conducted for the learning behavior of adult learners and their responses towards the tutor's strategy in English language learning and interrelationship between risk factors and reaction that occurs.

The study is concerned with the employees who work in 3 restaurants and 2 villas. The population was 355 employees. Each company trained 71

employees who work as bartenders, barback, waiters, waitresses, receptionists, cleaning service, housekeeping, and cashiers. Therefore, regarding the number of employees, it was highly unlikely to bring them as samples of this study. Each restaurant or villa sent 20 employees. So 100 employees were selected as samples by using a random sampling method. Therefore, the use of the random sampling method with a lottery system suggested that all populations had the same opportunity to be selected and included as the samples of the study.

Motivation and anxiety of the adult students and their responses to the tutor's teaching strategy were observed. The instruments administered in this study included a questionnaire about the teaching strategy for adult learners of English in restaurants. The questionnaire consisted of fifteen questions concerning self-confidence, 15 questionnaires about motivation, and fifteen questionnaires about anxiety. For the student's skills language competence, a performance test was administered. So, the score of the learner's behavior will be paired with

the result of their achievement on language performance.

The data analysis in the present study was divided into two steps; they were pre-requisite and hypothesis testing. In the first step, pre-requisite testing consisted of normality and homogeneity testing. Besides, in hypothesis testing, there were Pearson product-moment Correlation and T-test. Pearson product-moment was the next step that should be performed after the data were normally and homogeneously distributed in pre-requisite analysis to find the correlation between the variables of the study, self-confidence, and English language learning.

The t-test is used to test the alternative hypothesis which has been previously constructed. Moreover, the t-test presumes that both groups are normally distributed and have relatively equal variances. Besides, the t-statistic is distributed on a curve that is based on the number of degrees of freedom. Moreover, the data can be categorized as significantly correlated if the correlation coefficient is less than 0.05. Meanwhile, the data can be categorized as significantly uncorrelated if the coefficient

correlation is more than 0.05. There are three kinds of t-tests: independent-samples, paired-samples, and one-sample.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The result of the study only concerns three categories of observation by describing each finding. The subtopics that this study describes the adult learners' condition in learning English. The subtopics are self-confidence in language performance, motivation in language performance, and anxiety in language performance. The score of students' self-confidence and vocabulary mastery through CBI were obtained from 15 questionnaires and a language performance test. The total score of 30 adult learners in responding to the questionnaire about self-confidence was 2129 and the total score of their English language performance was 2056. The second emotion was motivation and speaking ability through *Communicative language teaching* (CLT). The 20 questionnaires and speaking performance tests were administered to 36 adult learners. The total score of the questionnaire was 2637 and the total score of language performance was

2985. The third was anxiety and writing ability through *Task-based language teaching* (TBLT). The questionnaire and writing test were administered to adult learners. The total score of

anxiety was 2.657 and writing performance was 2.751. The summary of the achievement can be presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The summary of the adult learners' achievement

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Self-confidence	30	64.00	76.00	70.0000
Vocabulary mastery through CBI	30	60.00	75.00	68.5333
Motivation	36	65.00	88.00	73.2500
Speaking performance through CLT	36	72.00	99.00	82.9166
Anxiety	34	60.00	90.00	78.1470
Writing performance through TBLT	34	72.00	90.00	80.9117

The self-confidence of 30 respondents was 2129. SPSS 25 revealed that the minimum score was 64, the maximum was 76, the mean was 70, and the standard deviation was 3.27460. Meanwhile, the score on the vocabulary mastery through CBI of 30 respondents was 2056 and SPSS 25 revealed that the minimum score was 60, the maximum was 75 and the mean score was 68, and the standard deviation is 3.67408. Next, the mean score of adult learner's motivation was 73 of which the lowest score was 65 and the highest one was 88. Meanwhile, the minimum score of the speaking performance through CLT was 72 and the maximum score was 99.

The mean score of the speaking ability was 83.

The last element of emotion was anxiety and writing ability through TBLT. The mean score of the questionnaire about anxiety was 78 in which the minimum score was 60 and the maximum one was 90. Meanwhile, the minimum score for writing ability TBLT was 72 and the maximum score was 90. The mean score of the writing ability was 81. To reveal the finding of the study, the two variable of each language emotion and language performance was measured by the statistic analysis. The Pearson Moment with SPSS 25 program that was applied

to find out the relation between two variables is described in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The correlation of two variables in Pearson product Moment

		Self-confidence (x)	Vocabulary mastery (Y)
Self-confidence	Pearson Correlation	1	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Vocabulary mastery through CBI	N	30	30
	Pearson Correlation	.836**	1
Motivation	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30
Speaking performance through CLT	Pearson Correlation	1	.366**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.014
anxiety	N	36	36
		Self-confidence (x)	Vocabulary mastery (Y)
Writing performance through TBLT	Pearson Correlation	.366**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	
	N	36	36
		Vocabulary mastery (Y)	Vocabulary mastery (Y)
	Pearson Correlation	1	.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012
	N	34	34
	Pearson Correlation	.384	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	N	34	34

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

After the correlation result of two variables is obtained, the next level is to give the interpretation of the 'r' score (r<sub>xy</sub>). From the calculation result, it is obtained that the value of r<sub>xy</sub> is 0.836. Based on the table above, it can be seen that the correlation index (r<sub>xy</sub>= 0.836) is in the interval of 0.80 - 1.00, this means that the correlation is considered a high correlation. It appears that the correlation index between self-confidence and vocabulary mastery of adult learners is

positive. It means that there was not any gap between both variables, there is a positive correlation. The stronger the adult learners feel self-confidence, the more effective the CBI can guide them to understand and use the English vocabulary.

The second variable is concerning motivation and speaking performance through CLT. The data shows that the correlation coefficient was 0.366 and the significance value (p) was 0.014. Then, 0.014 was lower

than 0.05. It means that the correlation between motivation and speaking ability was positive significance.

From the data analysis, the correlation index between the motivation variable and speaking performance variable was 0.366. It means that it has a low correlation. The study asserts that motivation sometimes can strongly or less strongly make the CLT strategy in speaking performance effective.

The last variable to describe here is the effect of anxiety on the writing ability through TBLT. The finding revealed that the correlation coefficient was 0.384 and the significance value ( $\rho$ ) is 0.012. Hence it can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between the two variables. The correlation between adult learners' anxiety (stress, depression), and their

writing ability are considered as a low correlation because the score scale is  $0.384 > 0.400$  (Arikunto, 2010:319). It means that the more the adult learners feel anxious about learning English, the less concentration and attention to the learning process they pay for.

The finding goes along with Perry & Potter (2010), Nasir & Muhith (2011)., Barbalet (2002) declare that language anxiety that reflects the worry and negative emotional reaction can affect either strongly or less strongly their competency and their teacher's performance. For testing T-Testing, statistical computation assisted by IBM SPSS Statistic 23.0 using Paired Samples Correlation is used to find the result and the interpretation of hypothesis testing. Therefore, the result of t-testing can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The result of t-testing

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Self-confidence – Vocabulary	2.43333	2.02882	.37041	1.67576	3.19091	6.569	29	.000
Pair 1	Motivation Speaking skill	-9.667	8.014	1.336	-12.378	-6.955	-7.237	35	.000
Pair 1	anxiety writing skill	-2.765	6.693	1.148	-5.100	-.430	-2.409	33	.022

From the table paired sample test above, the result showed the sig (2 tailed) is 0.00 and it is lower than 0.05 ( $0.00 < 0.05$ ). It means there is a significant difference between self-confidence and vocabulary mastery through the CBI strategy. The results show that the hypothesis of  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. It means that there is a significant correlation between adult learners' self-confidence and their vocabulary mastery. CBI teaching strategy plays important role in increasing the students' self-confidence. The more word the learners recognize the more confident they feel to use those words in context.

From the second variable, it is found that the significance of the paired-sample t-test is 0.000 is lower than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). It means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The output table of the paired-sample t-test above also contains information about the value mean paired differences which is the amount of -9.667. This value shows the differences between the average motivation results and the average speaking results or  $73.25 - 82.92 = -9.67$  and the differences

between -12.378 to -6.955 (95% Confidence Interval of the Differences Lower and Upper). From the positive correlation, it can be inferred that the gap of motivation and speaking performance is closely interrelated. The spirit of learning and the strategy can increase motivation and may reduce anxiety.

The anxiety also affects the effectiveness of the teaching strategy. The finding revealed that Sig (2-tailed) is 0.022. According to Pallant (2007:239) when the value less than 0.05, the result of the T-test is significantly accepted because of Sig. (2-tailed) less than 0.05 ( $0.022 < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the result of t counted was -2.409 and the result of freedom degree was 33. Moreover, the freedom degree of 33 means 1.692 Therefore, the result of t counted was  $-2.409 > 1.692$ . It means that  $H_a$  is accepted that anxiety affects the learning experience and achievement. The gap of anxiety and writing ability through TBLT is close, meaning the anxiety can closely affect the language performance.

The findings provide some factual conditions for adult learner's learning behavior. The self-confidence

in adult learners represents the inner drive to reach the learning goals (Lai, Shum, Tian, 2016., Hafner, Miller, 2011). The motivation of adult learners may increase strongly to achieve the learning goal due to the responsibility. Naturally, the fighting spirit of independent learners can empower their inner capacity to do the language task. Finally, adult learners may give up learning English in the training center due to anxiety. The anxiety occurs because of some factors; physical and mental. Physical anxiety results from tiredness or illness and mental anxiety derives from psychological pressure. So, adult learners must be free from this types of condition.

## CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that adult learners tend to apply their emotions to understand and use the language for functional reasons. The more positive emotion the learners gain in language learning the more broadly they expand their English competence. The CBI, CLT, and TBLT contain behavioral concepts to promote the adult learners' emotion in English language training. So, the emotion correlates positively

either with the teaching strategy or with the learning achievement. The factors that make emotion correlate more positively with language performance are (1) the demands of better achievements, (2) self-responsibility, and (3) teaching strategy. This study emphasizes that the gap of self-confidence, motivation, or anxiety and language performance is closely interrelated. Self-confidence and motivation may increase the intention of learning and the strategy can reduce anxiety. The study suggests the English teacher in the training center encourages the learning to the adult learners with a behaviouristic approach.

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