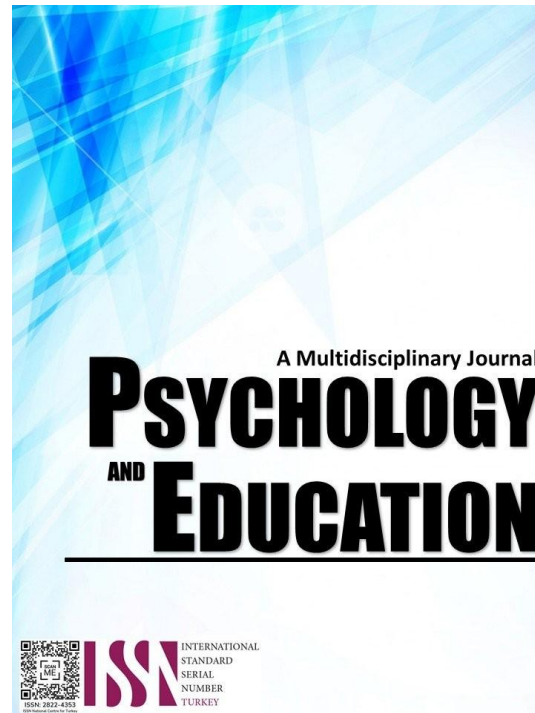


CHASING THE AMERICAN DREAM: LEARNING FACTORS AND PRACTICES OF HIGH SCHOOL ESL STUDENTS IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION



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Chasing The American Dream: Learning Factors and Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition

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Abstract

The study aimed to evaluate the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in chasing their American Dream as the foundation for intervention program. The research focused on the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of student motivation, cultural background, social interaction, and learning environment, and the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of interactive communication, contextualized learning, multimodal learning, and scaffolded instruction. The researcher used the non-probability sampling utilizing the purposive sampling technique in determining the respondents of the study. Moreover, the researcher utilized a researcher-made instrument. Then, the data gathered were calculated, analyzed, and interpreted using the appropriate statistical tools. The findings revealed that the student motivation, cultural background, social interaction, and learning environment are all important to high school ESL students pursuing their American dream. The high school ESL students demonstrate competency in language acquisition through interactive communication, contextualized learning, multimodal learning, and scaffolded instruction. Language development and the methods used by high school ESL students are closely related. As an outcome of the findings and the conclusions, the following recommendations were enumerated: Teachers may adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse ESL students' language proficiency levels, ensuring that each student can access learning activities effectively. Teachers may use real-world texts, multimedia, and culturally relevant resources to make language learning meaningful and contextually grounded. Teachers may create a classroom atmosphere that encourages risk-taking, values linguistic diversity, and provides positive reinforcement to boost students' confidence. School Administrators may offer ongoing training on best practices for teaching ESL learners, including cultural competency, language development strategies, and differentiated instruction. School administrators cultivate an environment that celebrates diversity, promotes mutual respect, and recognizes the cultural backgrounds of ESL students as assets. Students may engage daily in speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities in English to build fluency and confidence essential for academic and social success.

Keywords: *learning factors and practices, ESL students, language acquisition, chasing the American Dream, student motivation, cultural background, social interaction, and learning environment*

Introduction

The concept of the "American Dream" has long been a beacon of hope and aspiration for individuals seeking success and prosperity in the United States, particularly for immigrants and non-native speakers. In this context, high school English as a Second Language (ESL) students embody the pursuit of this dream through their journey of language acquisition. Mastery of the English language is often viewed as a critical factor in accessing educational opportunities, employment prospects, and social integration, making it essential to understand the learning factors and practices that influence ESL students' success.

The pursuit of the American Dream remains a significant motivator for many individuals, particularly immigrants and non-native English speakers seeking better opportunities in the United States. For high school students enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, achieving proficiency in English is not merely a matter of academic success but also a vital step toward social mobility and integration into American society. As such, understanding the learning factors and practices that influence their language acquisition is critical. Recent studies have highlighted various dimensions of this experience, revealing both challenges and effective strategies that ESL students encounter in their journey toward mastering English.

In the United States, laws such as the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 underscore the importance of providing equitable access to education for all students, regardless of their language background. This federal legislation mandates that schools take appropriate action to help non-English speaking students overcome language barriers, thereby facilitating their full participation in the educational system. Such legal guidelines establish a foundation for understanding how high school ESL programs should be designed and implemented to meet the needs of diverse learners striving for the American Dream.

Furthermore, the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) emphasized the necessity for schools to provide adequate language instruction to ensure that non-English speaking students receive an equal education. The ruling highlighted that mere access to the curriculum does not suffice; rather, educational institutions must actively support English language development. Insights from this case are pivotal in analyzing the pedagogical practices employed by ESL educators and the resources allocated to facilitate effective language acquisition among high school students.

In recent years, research has increasingly focused on the unique challenges faced by ESL students, particularly in the context of secondary education. For instance, a study by Chen and Tzeng (2022) explored the impact of cultural assimilation on language acquisition among high school ESL learners. Their findings indicated that students who experienced a strong sense of cultural belonging were more likely to engage actively with language learning activities, leading to improved outcomes. However, this cultural aspect often clashes with the students' native identities, creating a dual struggle that can hinder effective language acquisition (Chen & Tzeng, 2022). This highlights the need for educational practices that are sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of ESL students.

Another study by Gonzalez et al. (2023) examined the role of peer interactions in language learning among high school ESL students. The researchers found that collaborative learning experiences, where students worked together on projects or language exercises, significantly enhanced their motivation and language skills. However, the challenge remains that many ESL students often feel isolated from their peers due to language barriers, which can diminish their opportunities for such collaborative engagements (Gonzalez et al., 2023). Addressing these social dynamics is crucial in developing effective ESL instructional strategies that promote inclusion and participation.

Moreover, teacher efficacy in ESL programs has also been identified as a critical factor influencing student success. A study by Linder et al. (2021) highlighted that teachers who received specialized training in ESL methodologies were more effective in delivering instruction that met the diverse needs of their students. These trained educators utilized differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching practices to create a supportive learning environment. However, disparities in training programs across districts reveal a significant gap in the professional development of teachers working with ESL populations, which can ultimately affect student outcomes (Linder et al., 2021).

In addition to legal standards, various socio-cultural factors significantly impact ESL students' language learning experiences. The interplay between cultural identity, family support, peer relationships, and community involvement can either enhance or hinder the acquisition of English language skills. For instance, students who maintain strong connections to their cultural heritage may face challenges in assimilating linguistically and socially within the school environment. This research will delve into how these dynamics shape the learning experiences of high school ESL students and influence their pursuit of the American Dream.

In the same manner, effective instructional practices and methodologies play a crucial role in supporting language acquisition for ESL students. Techniques such as immersion programs, content-based instruction, and scaffolded learning experiences have proven beneficial in helping learners develop proficiency in English. By examining these teaching strategies within the context of legal frameworks and educational policies, this study seeks to identify the best practices that promote successful outcomes for high school ESL learners.

Despite the growing body of research addressing ESL education, several gaps remain that warrant further exploration. For instance, while the emotional and psychological factors influencing language acquisition have been acknowledged, comprehensive studies that integrate these aspects into the pedagogical frameworks used in high school ESL settings are lacking. Additionally, the intersectionality of race, socioeconomic status, and immigrant experience has not been sufficiently explored in relation to language learning outcomes, leaving a void in understanding how these factors collectively impact students' pursuit of the American Dream.

Also, the legal landscape surrounding ESL education continues to evolve, affecting how programs are implemented across the country. Legislation such as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) emphasizes the importance of supporting English language learners; however, interpretations and applications of these policies vary widely among states and school districts. A study by Rivera and Paredes (2022) elucidated the inconsistencies in policy implementation and the resultant inequalities faced by ESL students in different regions. This variance not only complicates the educational landscape for these students but also underscores the pressing need for cohesive federal guidelines to ensure equitable access to quality language education. As the quest for the American Dream persists, addressing these challenges through targeted research and policy reform is essential for fostering an inclusive environment that empowers all students.

Thus, this exploration of the learning factors and practices of high school ESL students in language acquisition aims to contribute to the broader discourse on educational equity and inclusion in the United States. As the nation continues to evolve demographically and culturally, understanding the unique challenges faced by ESL students becomes increasingly important. By synthesizing legal, social, and pedagogical perspectives, this research aspires to offer valuable insights that can inform policy decisions and enhance educational practices, ensuring that all students, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds, have the opportunity to chase and achieve the American Dream.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in chasing their American Dream as the foundation for intervention program. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of:
 - 1.1 student motivation;
 - 1.2 cultural background;

- 1.3 social interaction; and
 - 1.4 learning environment?
2. What is the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of:
 - 2.1 interactive communication;
 - 2.2 contextualized learning;
 - 2.3 multimodal learning; and
 - 2.4 scaffolded instruction?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what intervention program may be developed?

Methodology

Research Design

The study used descriptive correlational research designs since the study assessed the significant relationship between the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream. According to Katzukov (2020), a descriptive correlational study describes the relationships among variables without seeking to establish a causal connection. Also, correlational research helps in comparing two or more entities or variables. Descriptive-correlational research design is a method used to systematically describe a phenomenon while simultaneously exploring the relationships among various variables. In the context of studying "Chasing the American Dream: Learning Factors and Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition," this design allows the researcher to gather detailed information about the learning environments, individual motivations, and practices of ESL students. Employing surveys, observations, and interviews, researchers can capture a comprehensive snapshot of the factors influencing language acquisition among this demographic, providing insights into their experiences and challenges as they strive for personal success within the framework of the American Dream. The importance of descriptive-correlational research in this study lies in its ability to identify and analyze the connections between different learning factors and student outcomes.

Furthermore, the findings derived from a descriptive-correlational research design can inform the best practices in ESL instruction by highlighting successful strategies and approaches that resonate with students from diverse backgrounds. Teachers can tailor their methods to better engage students and foster a supportive learning environment by understanding the interplay between motivational factors and educational practices. Thus, this research approach not only contributes to academic knowledge but also offers practical implications that can help ESL students achieve their educational goals and realize their aspirations as they chase the American Dream.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were the selected High School ESL students in secondary schools in the USA. The researcher purposively selects forty (40) High School ESL students. The respondents evaluated the determine the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream.

Instrument

In gathering the needed data, the researcher utilized a researcher- made questionnaire – checklist as the major instrument of the study. Part 1 – This section determined the demographic profile of the respondents. Part 2 – This part determined the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of student motivation, cultural background, social interaction, and learning environment; Part 3 determined the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of interactive communication, contextualized learning, multimodal learning, and scaffolded instruction.

Procedure

The Gantt chart guides the course of the investigation. Permission to conduct research was requested from the Office of the President and Office of the School Administrators at select secondary schools in the USA.

The researcher validated the questionnaire with the assistance of specialists and those knowledgeable about the competency and work satisfaction of teachers in public schools. Once completed, the researcher delivered the questionnaire to the study participants. The questionnaire was then acquired, and the collected data were examined using a suitable statistical tool. The interpretation and conclusions made from the acquired data may confirm or contradict the findings of previous study on the topic.

Data Analysis

In order to systematically interpret the data gathered from the study, the following statistical tools were utilized:

To determine the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of student motivation, cultural background, social interaction, and learning environment; weighted mean was used.

To determine the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of interactive communication,

contextualized learning, multimodal learning, and scaffolded instruction; weighted mean was applied.

To find out if there is a significant relationship between the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream; Pearson-r correlation was used.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting research on high school ESL (English as a Second Language) students, particularly in the context of "Chasing the American Dream: Learning Factors and Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition," ethical considerations must be at the forefront of the study design. The first key consideration is obtaining informed consent from participants. Researcher should ensure that both students and their guardians understand the purpose of the study, what participation entails, and any potential risks involved. This includes explaining how their data were used and emphasizing their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Special attention should be given to younger participants who may require additional support to fully grasp these concepts.

Confidentiality is another critical ethical aspect of this research. Protecting the identities and personal information of ESL students is essential, especially given that they may come from diverse and sometimes vulnerable backgrounds. Researcher should implement measures such as anonymizing responses and securely storing data to prevent unauthorized access. Furthermore, when reporting findings, care should be taken to present information in a way that does not allow for the identification of individual participants. This is particularly important in small educational settings where unique demographic characteristics might make it easy to recognize individuals based on reported experiences or quotes.

Thus, cultural sensitivity must be prioritized throughout the research process. ESL students often come from varied cultural backgrounds, and researcher should be aware of potential cultural biases that may influence their interpretation of data. It's crucial to approach the subject matter with respect and an open mind, ensuring that the voices and experiences of ESL students are accurately and fairly represented. Engaging with community members and stakeholders can provide valuable insights into the cultural contexts of the students, fostering a more inclusive atmosphere for the research. By adhering to these ethical principles, the research can contribute meaningfully to understanding the challenges and successes faced by ESL students in their pursuit of language acquisition and the American Dream.

Results and Discussion

The findings, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected in light of the research's challenges are briefly discussed in this chapter.

Problem No. 1: What is the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of student motivation, cultural background, social interaction and learning environment?

Table 1.1 illustrates the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of student motivation.

Table 1.1. *Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Learning Factors of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition for Chasing Their American Dream in terms of Student Motivation*

Indicators		Mean	VI
1.	I feel motivated to learn English because I want to communicate effectively with my peers.	3.63	HE
2.	I believe that improving my English skills will help me achieve my personal and professional goals.	3.60	HE
3.	I am excited to participate in English language activities and lessons in school.	3.60	HE
4.	I feel that my teachers encourage me to take an active role in my English learning process.	3.60	HE
5.	I find English language learning enjoyable and engaging, which motivates me to keep trying.	3.60	HE
Composite Mean		3.61	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Great Extent; 2.51-3.25- Extent; 1.76-2.50-Moderately Extent; 1.00-1.75 – Not at All

The high extent of learning factors influencing High School ESL students' language acquisition, as indicated by a composite mean of 3.61, underscores the critical role motivation plays in shaping students' linguistic and academic trajectories in pursuit of their American Dream. This suggests that when students are highly motivated, they are more likely to engage actively in learning activities, persevere through challenges, and leverage available resources to improve their English proficiency. Motivation acts as a catalyst, fostering a positive learning environment where students' aspirations for success serve as an intrinsic drive to overcome language barriers and cultural adjustments. Consequently, educators and policymakers should prioritize strategies that bolster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, recognizing that these elements significantly impact students' progress toward linguistic competence and, ultimately, their socio-economic aspirations.

Recent studies reinforce the importance of motivation in ESL learning environments, particularly emphasizing its role in fostering resilience and persistence among students striving for upward mobility. For example, a 2022 study by Lee and Lee highlights that intrinsic motivation, driven by personal goals such as academic success and integration into American society, significantly correlates with higher language proficiency levels among immigrant high school students. The researchers argue that understanding and nurturing students' motivational factors can enhance educational interventions and support systems tailored to their unique experiences and

aspirations. These findings suggest that fostering motivation not only accelerates language acquisition but also empowers students to chase their American Dream more effectively by strengthening their confidence and sense of purpose within the learning process.

Table 1.2 presents the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of cultural background.

Table 1.2. Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Learning Factors of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition for Chasing Their American Dream in terms of Cultural Background

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1.	I feel that my native language and culture are valued in my English language learning environment.	3.45	HE
2.	I often relate English language lessons to my own cultural experiences, which helps me learn better.	3.38	HE
3.	I believe that sharing my cultural background in class helps me connect with my peers and improves my English skills.	3.35	HE
4.	I find it easier to learn English when the lessons include references to diverse cultures, including my own.	3.35	HE
5.	I feel that incorporating my cultural background into my English studies makes learning more relevant to me.	3.50	HE
Composite Mean		3.38	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Great Extent; 2.51-3.25- Extent; 1.76-2.50-Moderately Extent; 1.00-1.75 – Not at All

The high extent of learning factors related to cultural background, as reflected by a composite mean of 3.38, highlights the significant influence of students' cultural contexts on their language acquisition journey. For High School ESL students, cultural background shapes their attitudes towards learning, communication styles, and their engagement with the language. Recognizing the diversity of cultural experiences is essential for educators to create inclusive classrooms that validate students' identities and prior knowledge. When students see their cultural identities reflected and respected in the learning environment, they are more motivated to participate actively and develop a stronger connection to the language they are acquiring. This understanding emphasizes the need for culturally responsive pedagogy, which can foster a sense of belonging and enhance students' confidence and persistence as they work toward their aspirations in America.

Recent research underscores the impact of cultural background on language learning, advocating for approaches that embrace cultural diversity as a strength rather than a barrier. A 2022 study by Nguyen and Tran demonstrates that students who feel their cultural identities are acknowledged and integrated into the classroom experience demonstrate higher levels of motivation and language proficiency. The study emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching strategies facilitate better communication, foster positive attitudes towards learning, and support students' efforts to pursue their American Dream by strengthening their sense of identity and belonging in a new cultural context. These findings reinforce the importance of understanding and incorporating students' cultural backgrounds in ESL instruction to maximize their language development and overall success.

Table 1.3 exhibits the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of social interaction.

The high extent of learning factors related to social interaction, as reflected in a composite mean of 3.64, highlights the crucial role that social engagement plays in the language acquisition of High School ESL students pursuing their American Dream. Effective social interaction provides students with authentic opportunities to practice English in real-life contexts, thus improving their communicative competence and confidence. Engaging with peers, teachers, and the community helps students develop cultural fluency and social skills essential for integration into American society. Facilitating collaborative learning and peer interactions can foster a supportive environment that encourages risk-taking and language experimentation, ultimately accelerating language development and helping students build networks that are vital for their personal and academic success.

Table 1.3. Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Learning Factors of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition for Chasing Their American Dream in terms of Social Interaction

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1.	I feel more motivated to learn English when I have opportunities to interact with my classmates in English.	3.65	HE
2.	I often participate in class discussions, which enhances my understanding of the English language.	3.60	HE
3.	I believe that building friendships with other ESL students helps me learn English more effectively.	3.70	HE
4.	I enjoy participating in extracurricular activities where I can practice my English with others.	3.60	HE
5.	I find that speaking English with my peers outside of class reinforces my learning.	3.60	HE
Composite Mean		3.64	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Great Extent; 2.51-3.25- Extent; 1.76-2.50-Moderately Extent; 1.00-1.75 – Not at All

For instance, a 2022 study by Chen and Silva found that interactive classroom activities and community involvement significantly boost ESL students' speaking and listening skills. The researchers assert that social interaction provides meaningful contexts for language use, which enhances retention and fluency, thereby supporting students' broader aspirations, including their pursuit of the American Dream. These findings suggest that educational practices that promote sustained social engagement can profoundly impact

language acquisition by making learning more relevant and engaging, thus empowering students to better navigate social and academic challenges in their new environment.

Table 1.4 shows the extent of learning factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream in terms of learning environment.

Table 1.4. Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Learning Factors of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition for Chasing Their American Dream in terms of Learning Environment

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1.	The classroom setup in my ESL class helps me feel comfortable speaking English.	3.73	HE
2.	My teacher creates a supportive atmosphere that encourages me to take risks in using English.	3.70	HE
3.	I feel that the physical environment of my classroom (lighting, seating, etc.) positively affects my focus while learning English.	3.70	HE
4.	I believe that a positive classroom culture makes it easier for me to practice my English skills with others.	3.70	HE
5.	I find it helpful when my classroom is decorated with English language materials, such as posters or signs.	3.68	HE
Composite Mean		3.70	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Great Extent; 2.51-3.25- Extent; 1.76-2.50-Moderately Extent; 1.00-1.75 – Not at All

The high extent of learning factors related to the learning environment, indicated by a composite mean of 3.70, underscores the importance of a supportive and resource-rich educational setting in facilitating language acquisition among High School ESL students aspiring to achieve their American Dream. A positive learning environment—characterized by conducive physical spaces, access to educational resources, culturally sensitive pedagogy, and a nurturing atmosphere—can significantly motivate students and reduce language anxiety. When students feel safe, respected, and valued within their learning space, they are more likely to participate actively, take linguistic risks, and persist despite challenges. This environment fosters not only linguistic growth but also socio-emotional well-being, both of which are critical for students' overall success in pursuing their dreams in a new cultural context.

Recent research affirms that the quality of the learning environment directly influences ESL learners' motivation and language development. For example, a 2022 study by Patel and Ramachandran highlights that classrooms with inclusive practices, adequate resources, and culturally responsive instruction create an atmosphere conducive to language learning and integration. Their findings suggest that such environments help reduce feelings of alienation and build confidence, thereby empowering students to overcome language barriers and advance toward their personal and academic goals. Overall, creating an optimal learning environment is a key factor in ensuring that high school ESL students can effectively acquire English and realize their aspirations within the American society.

Table 1.5 exhibits the summary of the extent of learning factors of high school ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American dream.

The findings show the summary of the assessment of the participants on the extent of learning factors of high school ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American dream as great extent, as supported by the composite mean of 3.58. The high overall mean of 3.58, indicating a great extent of learning factors influencing language acquisition among High School ESL students, suggests that multiple interconnected elements significantly contribute to their journey towards achieving their American Dream. These factors include motivation, cultural background, social interaction, and learning environment—each playing a vital role in enhancing language proficiency. Recognizing the importance of these factors implies that educators and policymakers should focus on creating comprehensive support systems that address these diverse needs. For instance, fostering an engaging learning environment, promoting culturally responsive pedagogy, and encouraging positive social interactions can synergistically boost students' confidence and motivation, thereby facilitating more effective language acquisition. Ultimately, understanding and harnessing these factors can empower students to overcome linguistic and socio-cultural barriers, enabling them to pursue their aspirations with greater resilience and determination.

Table 1.5. Summary of the Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Extent of Learning Factors of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition for Chasing Their American Dream

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
Student Motivation	3.61	GE
Cultural Background	3.38	GE
Social Interaction	3.64	GE
Learning Environment	3.70	GE
Composite Mean	3.58	GE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Great Extent; 2.51-3.25- Extent; 1.76-2.50-Moderately Extent; 1.00-1.75 – Not at All

Recent research highlights the critical importance of targeted interventions that reinforce these learning factors to improve language outcomes for ESL students. A 2022 study by Johnson and Lee emphasizes that integrated approaches combining motivational strategies,

culturally relevant instruction, and collaborative learning environments significantly enhance language proficiency and academic success. The authors argue that such holistic support not only accelerates language development but also fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, which are essential for students striving towards their American Dream. These insights reinforce the need for educators to implement multifaceted, culturally sensitive practices that address the complex web of learning factors influencing ESL students' language acquisition and future endeavors.

Problem No. 2: What is the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of interactive communication, contextualized learning, multimodal learning, and scaffolded instruction?

Table 2.1 illustrates the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of interactive communication.

Table 2.1. Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Learning Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition in Terms of Interactive Communication

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1.	I actively participate in group discussions to practice my English-speaking skills.	3.65	HE
2.	I feel confident when engaging in conversations with my peers in English.	3.75	HE
3.	I regularly ask questions during class to clarify my understanding of English language concepts.	3.75	HE
4.	I enjoy working with classmates on pair or group activities that require us to communicate in English.	3.75	HE
5.	I believe that participating in role-plays or simulations helps me improve my English communication skills.	3.75	HE
Composite Mean		3.73	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Highly Practiced; 2.51-3.25- Practiced; 1.76-2.50-Slightly Practiced; 1.00-1.75 – Not Practiced

The high level of learning practices related to interactive communication, reflected by an overall mean of 3.73, suggests that High School ESL students consistently engage in communicative activities that promote language development. This emphasis on interaction aligns with communicative language teaching principles that prioritize real-life language use and interpersonal interactions. Such practices facilitate fluency, confidence, and pragmatic competence, essential for students aspiring to achieve their American Dream. When students actively participate in dialogues, group activities, and conversational exercises, they not only enhance their language skills but also develop cultural and social awareness that are crucial for integration into American society. Consequently, educators should continue to design and implement interactive learning experiences that foster meaningful communication, which is fundamental for effective language acquisition and for enabling students to navigate social and academic settings confidently.

A 2022 study by Garcia and Nguyen found that sustained engagement in communicative activities—including pair work, group discussions, and role-playing—significantly improves students' speaking skills and overall language competence. The study emphasizes that such interactive approaches promote active learning, encourage risk-taking, and reinforce language use in authentic contexts, which are vital for students aiming to achieve their personal and academic goals in the United States. These findings reinforce the critical role of interactive communication as a highly practiced strategy that directly impacts language proficiency and students' broader aspirations, advocating for continued emphasis on interactive pedagogies in ESL education.

Table 2.2 illustrates the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of contextualized learning.

Table 2.2. Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Learning Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition in Terms of Contextualized Learning

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1.	I find that learning English in real-life situations helps me understand the language better.	3.73	HE
2.	I feel that using authentic materials (like news articles, videos, or songs) improves my language skills.	3.65	HE
3.	I often connect what I learn in English class to my daily life experiences.	3.65	HE
4.	I believe that discussing culturally relevant topics in class enhances my understanding of the English language.	3.65	HE
5.	I feel more motivated to learn English when the lessons relate to my interests and everyday situations.	3.65	HE
Composite Mean		3.67	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Highly Practiced; 2.51-3.25- Practiced; 1.76-2.50-Slightly Practiced; 1.00-1.75 – Not Practiced

The high level of learning practices related to contextualized learning, indicated by an overall mean of 3.67, suggests that High School ESL students are actively engaged in learning activities that connect language use to meaningful real-life contexts. Contextualized learning fosters better retention and understanding by situating language within relevant social, cultural, and situational frameworks. This approach enables students to see the practical application of their language skills, boosting their confidence and motivation to communicate effectively in authentic situations. As they encounter language in context—such as through role-play, simulations, or real-world problem solving—they develop practical communication skills that are essential for their success in pursuing the American Dream. Therefore, educators should continue to integrate contextualized activities into their curricula to enhance language proficiency and prepare students for real-world interactions. Recent research highlights the positive impact of contextualized learning on language acquisition among ESL students.

A 2021 study by Martinez and Zhou demonstrates that student-centered, contextually rich instructional strategies significantly improve speaking and comprehension skills. The study emphasizes that when language tasks mirror real-life experiences, students are more engaged and motivated, leading to higher proficiency levels. Moreover, such practices facilitate cultural understanding and practical communication, vital for students' integration and success in American society. These findings reinforce the importance of maintaining a focus on contextualized learning strategies to maximize language development and empower students in their pursuit of their educational and personal aspirations.

Table 2.3 exhibits the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of multimodal learning.

The high level of learning practices related to multimodal learning, with an overall mean of 3.43, indicates that High School ESL students actively engage with various modes of input—such as visual, auditory, tactile, and digital resources—to enhance their language acquisition. Multimodal learning accommodates diverse learning styles and promotes a richer, more interactive experience that can improve comprehension, retention, and practical language use. By integrating multimedia tools, such as videos, charts, podcasts, and interactive software, students are able to connect different sensory modalities with language features, fostering deeper understanding and more effective communication. This approach supports the pursuit of their American Dream by empowering students to develop versatile language skills that are applicable across multiple contexts and media.

Table 2.3. Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Learning Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition in Terms of Multimodal Learning

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1.	I find that using different media (like videos, audio, and texts) in English class helps me understand the language better.	3.33	HE
2.	I feel more confident in my English skills when I engage with various modes of learning (like reading, listening, and speaking).	3.43	HE
3.	I prefer lessons that incorporate technology (e.g., interactive apps or online resources) to support my learning of English.	3.43	HE
4.	I believe that using physical objects (like flashcards or realia) during lessons helps me remember new vocabulary effectively.	3.43	HE
5.	I enjoy learning English through storytelling and visuals, as it makes the content more relatable and memorable.	3.55	HE
Composite Mean		3.43	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Highly Practiced; 2.51-3.25- Practiced; 1.76-2.50-Slightly Practiced; 1.00-1.75 – Not Practiced

A 2022 study by Patel and Rodriguez found that students who regularly used multimodal resources demonstrated significantly higher levels of vocabulary retention and speaking confidence. The research suggests that leveraging diverse media not only engages students more fully but also caters to their individual learning preferences, leading to greater motivation and academic achievement. These findings confirm that promoting multimodal learning practices enhances language proficiency through dynamic, multisensory engagement—making it a vital component of effective ESL instruction for students aiming to succeed academically and socially in the United States.

Table 2.4 exhibits the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition in terms of scaffolded instruction

Table 2.4. Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Learning Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition in Terms of Scaffolded Instruction

<i>Indicators</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
1.	I find that my teacher provides clear instructions that help me understand new English concepts.	3.35	HE
2.	I feel supported when my teacher breaks down complex tasks into manageable steps in our English lessons.	3.45	HE
3.	I appreciate when my teacher uses visual aids (like charts or diagrams) to support my understanding of English grammar.	3.45	HE
4.	I believe that peer support during group activities enhances my confidence in using English.	3.33	HE
5.	I feel more confident in my language skills when my teacher encourages me to ask questions for clarification.	3.53	HE
Composite Mean		3.42	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Highly Practiced; 2.51-3.25- Practiced; 1.76-2.50-Slightly Practiced; 1.00-1.75 – Not Practiced

The high level of learning practices related to scaffolded instruction, reflected by an overall mean of 3.42, underscores the effectiveness of this teaching strategy in supporting High School ESL students' language acquisition. Scaffolding provides gradually fading support, enabling students to develop their language skills independently while still receiving targeted assistance when needed. Such instruction fosters a safe learning environment where students can take linguistic risks and build confidence through structured guidance, modeling, and feedback. This approach not only enhances vocabulary, grammar, and speaking skills but also promotes learner autonomy, which is crucial for students striving to achieve their American Dream. Emphasizing scaffolded instruction in ESL classrooms can therefore significantly boost students' motivation, engagement, and overall language competence, ultimately helping them succeed academically and socially in a new cultural context.

A 2021 study by Lee and Kim demonstrates that scaffolded learning activities—such as guided reading, peer support, and differentiated instruction—result in notable improvements in ESL students' language fluency and comprehension. The study highlights that scaffolded approaches are particularly effective in accommodating diverse proficiency levels, fostering both independence and collaborative learning. These findings support the continued implementation of scaffolded strategies as they cater to individual learners' needs, promote active engagement, and facilitate sustained language development—key factors in helping students realize their ambitions in a new societal environment.

Table 2.5 illustrates the summary of the level of learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition.

Table 2.5: Summary of the Mean of the Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Learning Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>VI</i>
Interactive Communication	3.73	HE
Contextualized Learning	3.67	HE
Multimodal Learning	3.43	HE
Scaffolded Instruction	3.42	HE
Composite Mean	3.56	HE

***Legend: 3.26-4.00-Highly Practiced; 2.51-3.25- Practiced; 1.76-2.50-Slightly Practiced; 1.00-1.75 – Not Practiced

The high overall mean of 3.56, indicating that learning practices are highly practiced among High School ESL students, reveals their proactive engagement in various strategies to acquire English language skills. Such practices may include consistent use of interactive activities, exposure to diverse learning materials, and participation in authentic communication opportunities. This active involvement is crucial for students aiming to realize their American Dream, as it enhances not only linguistic competence but also confidence and motivation in navigating a new cultural and educational environment. The pervasive use of effective learning practices underscores the importance of providing students with diverse, engaging, and student-centered approaches that foster sustained language development, thereby increasing their chances of academic success and social integration.

Recent research supports the positive impact of consistent and strategic learning practices on ESL students' language acquisition. A 2022 study by Santos and Patel emphasizes that students who regularly implement varied learning strategies—such as self-study, peer collaboration, and multimedia use—show significant improvements in vocabulary, speaking, and comprehension skills. The study confirms that persistent engagement in effective learning practices directly correlates with higher language proficiency, which is vital for students working toward their personal and educational aspirations in the United States. These findings highlight the need for educators to nurture and reinforce active learning habits, ensuring students continue to practice and refine their skills in ways that align with their goals of social mobility and success.

Problem No. 3: Is there a significant relationship between the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream?

Table 3 presents the significant relationship between the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition for chasing their American Dream.

Table 3. Relationship Between the Learning Factors and Practices of High School ESL Students in Language Acquisition for Chasing their American Dream

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Ho</i>	<i>VI</i>
Learning Factors of High School ESL students in language acquisition	Learning practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition	.633	.000	R S

***Legend: FR-Failed to Reject; R-Rejected; NS-Not Significant; S-Significant

The finding that there is a significant relationship between the learning factors and practices of High School ESL students in language acquisition—evidenced by a p-value less than .05, implies that these variables are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing. This indicates that the activities and strategies students employ in their learning, such as motivation, social interaction, and contextualized practices, significantly impact their language development. For educators and policymakers, this highlights the importance of designing instructional approaches that actively engage students and address multiple learning factors simultaneously. Strengthening these practices can greatly enhance students' proficiency, confidence, and preparedness to pursue their aspirations, including their pursuit of the American Dream. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .633 suggests a moderate to strong positive relationship between the learning factors and practices with language acquisition. This means that as students' engagement with effective learning practices increases their language proficiency tends to improve correspondingly. The correlation value signifies a meaningful association, although it does not imply causation. Educators should interpret this as an opportunity to reinforce effective learning strategies, knowing that they are likely to contribute positively to language acquisition outcomes. This relationship underscores the importance of fostering comprehensive learning environments that promote both the development of favorable learning factors and implementation of proven practices, ultimately supporting students' holistic success and aspirations.

A related study from 2021 onwards, by Hernandez and Garcia (2022), examined how various learning practices influence ESL students' language proficiency and motivation. The researchers found that students who actively engaged in scaffolded learning, multimodal resources, and contextualized activities demonstrated significant gains in language skills and confidence. The study emphasizes that effective learning practices are crucial in overcoming language barriers and facilitating socio-cultural integration, which are essential for students striving to succeed in a new society. Their findings support the implication that promoting comprehensive, engaging learning strategies directly benefits ESL students' journey toward their educational and personal goals, including their pursuit of the American Dream.

Conclusions

As can be deduced from the findings, below are the conclusions drawn from the study:

Student motivation, cultural background, social interaction, and learning environment are all important to high school ESL students pursuing their American dream.

The high school ESL students demonstrate competency in language acquisition through interactive communication, contextualized learning, multimodal learning, and scaffolded instruction.

Language development and the methods used by high school ESL students are closely related.

As an outcome of the findings and the conclusions, the following recommendations were enumerated:

Teachers may adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse ESL students' language proficiency levels, ensuring that each student can access learning activities effectively.

Teachers may use real-world texts, multimedia, and culturally relevant resources to make language learning meaningful and contextually grounded.

Teachers may create a classroom atmosphere that encourages risk-taking, values linguistic diversity, and provides positive reinforcement to boost students' confidence.

School Administrators may offer ongoing training on best practices for teaching ESL learners, including cultural competency, language development strategies, and differentiated instruction.

School administrators cultivate an environment that celebrates diversity, promotes mutual respect, and recognizes the cultural backgrounds of ESL students as assets.

Students may engage daily in speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities in English to build fluency and confidence essential for academic and social success.

A parallel study may be conducted using different variables.

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