

The Growing Interest among Saudi Adults in Relearning English: A Phenomenological Study of Their Underlying Motivations

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المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم الظاهرة المتعلقة بزيادة الاهتمام بين البالغين السعوديين بإعادة تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. على وجه الخصوص، سعت الدراسة إلى تقصي الدوافع وراء هذا الاهتمام. شارك في الدراسة سبع أفراد سعوديين (أربع ذكور وثلاث إناث) مسجلين في برنامج مكثف لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية مدته ست أشهر تقدمه إحدى الجامعات السعودية. تراوحت المدّة بين توقف المشاركين عن آخر تجربة تعلم للغة الإنجليزية وبين التحاقهم بالبرنامج بين 10 إلى 20 عامًا. وللوصول إلى فهم عميق للظاهرة المدروسة، استخدمت الباحثة المنهجية الظاهرية. وكشفت المقابلات المتعمقة مع المشاركين أن الاهتمام بإعادة تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كان مدفوعًا بالرغبة في تحسين الذات، وتعزيز مفهوم الذات، وتلبية الحاجة إلى الشعور بالكفاءة. وقد أمكن تفسير هذه الدوافع في ضوء نظرية L2 Motivational Self-System وتحديدًا مكوناتها الأساسية: (the ideal L2 self) و (the ought-to L2 self). وتعزز هذه النتائج دور النظرية ليس فقط في التنبؤ بنية الفرد في السعي لتعلم اللغة الأجنبية بل وفي إحداث تغيير حقيقي في السلوك. وتوصي الباحثة ممارسي تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية بتعزيز هذين المكونين من خلال الأنشطة الاجتماعية التواصلية التي تساعد المتعلمين على إدراك مكانة اللغة الإنجليزية في المجتمع السعودي.



Abstract

This study aimed to understand the recent phenomenon in Saudi Arabia concerning the increased interest among Saudi adults in relearning English. In particular, the study sought to uncover what motivated these individuals to embark on this endeavor. The participants were seven Saudi individuals (four male and three female) enrolled in a six-month intensive English language program offered by a Saudi university. The duration between the cessation of the participants' prior instructed English language learning and the time of their enrollment in the current program ranged from 10 to 20 years. The transcendental phenomenological approach was deemed a suitable methodology for this study, given its logical and systematic design that allows for an essential description of the phenomenon studied. In-depth interviews with the participants revealed that relearning English was essentially driven by a desire for self-improvement, enhancement of self-concept, and satisfaction of the need to feel competent. These results were explained through the L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS), specifically its two components: the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self. These results highlight the role of L2MSS not only in predicting intended effort but also actual behavior. These insights suggest that English language teaching (ELT) practitioners should focus on fostering the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self through social communicative activities that help learners recognize the newfound status of English in Saudi society.

Keywords: *English language relearning, L2 motivational self-system, Saudi adults, transcendental phenomenology*

Introduction

The Saudi Vision 2030, conceived in 2016, has contributed to all domains and aspects of life. Of particular importance is the impact of the vision on the education system, specifically on English language teaching (ELT). Vision 2030 has been the catalyst for a significant transformation in the status of ELT in Saudi Arabia (Bahanshal, 2023). Coinciding with this shift in status is a remarkable change in Saudi learners' attitudes and motivations toward English language learning. That is, the negative attitudes and lack of motivation related to English language learning that characterized Saudi English learners in the past (Faruk, 2013) have changed, with evidence from recent studies pointing to student traits and outlooks that are more positive for learning English (Almegren, 2022). These results have been ascribed to Saudi students' internalization of the perceived value of English learning. For instance, Al-Mubireek (2020) reported that Saudi students were highly motivated to learn English because their learning brings a certain value beneficial for their future pursuits, such as securing a job or being able to communicate with English speakers. Similar findings have been reported by Daif-Allah and Aljumah (2020) indicating that in general, students have been significantly motivated to learn English upon realizing its importance to thrive in the new Saudi Arabia.

Even more intriguing is the growing interest among Saudi adults to relearn English—specifically, individuals who learned EFL through instructed learning, which had ceased many years ago. Given its recency, few, if any, studies have investigated this phenomenon. In prior research, the topic of foreign language attrition and relearning has typically been investigated through a linguistic lens. For instance, researchers extensively studied the impact of L2 attainment on L1 attrition (Arubaiy'a, 2023; Sorokina & Mugno, 2024). Researchers also focused on measuring the effect of some variables such as time of relapse (Al-Sulaiman, 2020), and age (Hansen et al., 2002; Hansen, 2011) on L2 vocabulary attrition and relearning. Likewise, attention has been devoted to investigating the sequence at which the attrition of L2 linguistic knowledge and language skills happens (Schmid, 2007; Wei, 2014).

While these studies provide valuable insights regarding foreign language attrition and relearning, there is a scarcity of studies investigating people's motivations for relearning a foreign language. Existing studies have acknowledged that positive attitudes toward the language motivate learners to implement different strategies to maintain the acquired language (Bartley, 1970; Kennedy, 1932; Park, 2018). This study attempts to extend current knowledge on foreign language relearning by exploring the motives driving individuals to relearn, rather than simply maintain, a foreign language. Therefore, the following research question guided this study:

1. How do changes in personal, professional, or social circumstances contribute to the motivation for Saudi adults to relearn the English language?

Literature Review

Attitude Shift toward English Language Learning Among Saudi Students

The introduction of the English language into the Saudi education system prompted discernible waves of resistance and negative attitudes (Faruk, 2013). Diverse factors have been identified in this regard. One of these factors was the lack of perceived value of learning English, primarily because Arabic was the language of communication in both official settings

and daily interactions. According to Zaid (1993), Saudi students did not value English learning because it was not required for life after school, such as at the university or workplace. This issue persisted, to a considerable extent, until more recent times. For instance, Alharbi (2019) stated that with the dominance of Arabic, Saudi students did not understand why they needed to learn English; in their view, learning English was not important for real-life situations. Moreover, even in EFL classrooms, where English language learning mainly took place, Arabic was extensively used for instruction (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Fareh, 2010). In this context, Saudi students perceived English language learning as a worthless endeavor.

However, recent years have seen a noticeable shift in attitudes toward English learning. In a review of studies conducted in the 1990s and the 2000s, Faruk (2013) noted that Saudi students' attitudes toward English learning shifted from negative to positive attitudes at the start of the 2000s; according to this study, this shift in attitude is attributable to Saudi Arabia's economic growth and the expansion of English language teaching in the nation. In a more recent study, Al-Mubireek (2020) investigated the motivations and attitudes regarding English learning among 403 male and female students in their preparatory year at the Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. The results revealed that students had positive attitudes toward English learning. The study also reported students' acknowledgment of the importance of English learning for success in university life and beyond. Similarly, Al-Hoorie (2016) and Boo (2021) found that Saudi students' positive attitudes towards English learning are correlated with their internalization of the importance of English for future success.

L2 Motivational Self-System

L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS), proposed by Dörnyei in 2005, is one of the most recent and influential theories in the field of L2 motivation. It is based on the concepts of Possible Selves Theory by Markus and Nurius (1986) and Self-Discrepancy Theory by Higgins (1987). Possible Selves represents what individuals would like to become or would like to avoid becoming. These perceptions significantly influence their current selves and motivations. As for Self-Discrepancy Theory, the discrepancies between the current self and possible selves generate negative emotions.

L2MSS identifies two versions of the future self: (1) the ideal L2 self, which represents one's aspirations and hopes to possess L2 competence; (2) the ought-to L2 self, which represents one's L2 learning in response to external pressure. L2MSS posits that the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experiences influence L2 intended learning efforts. A key assumption to L2MSS is that the mismatch between the current L2 self and the future L2 self must be adequate. Aiming for a future L2 self that is far from the current L2 self can be demotivating. Likewise, if the future L2 self is too easy to attain, it may fail to provide sufficient challenge and excitement, leading to a lack of motivation.

Several studies have been conducted to validate L2MSS in different EFL contexts. For instance, following a meta-analysis of 32 studies on the L2MSS involving 32,078 language learners, Al-Hoorie (2018) reported that the ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experiences were significant predictors of intended effort. More recently, in their meta-analysis, Yousefi and Mahmoodi (2022) examined 17 studies involving 18,832 language learners. The results of the study were in accordance with Al-Hoorie's (2018) results in that

the three components of the L2MSS, namely ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experiences, are good predictors of L2 learning motivation. This study also reported that this correlation is moderated by variables such as age, gender, educational level, learning context, target language, learning outcomes, and geographical location. Similar results were reported in studies conducted with Saudi EFL students (Khan, 2015; Moskovsky et al., 2016) showing a significant correlation between the ideal and ought to selves and language learning motivation. These results, however, found an inconsistent correlation between the L2 selves and L2 achievement.

Relearning a Foreign Language

Several researchers have argued that we do not lose what we once learned; it could be forgotten but not lost (MacLeod, 1988; Maxcey et al., 2022; Romano et al., 2010). Researchers have come to this conclusion upon discovering that relearning what is believed to be lost occurs faster than learning new information. This indicates that forgotten information still leaves traces in the brain, and as MacLeod (1988) pointed out, relearning facilitates the retrieval and recall of information. The possibility of relearning forgotten information at a faster rate was originally established in cognitive psychology by Hermann Ebbinghaus, and is referred to as the savings paradigm.

Linguists have developed a special interest in the savings theory and its applicability in the fields of second language and foreign language attrition. Particularly through the works of Kees de Bot and his collaborators, this theory was extended to second language attrition and relearning (de Bot & Stoessel, 1998, 1999, 2000; de Bot et al., 2004). The first such study was conducted by de Bot and Stoessel (2000), who compared the scores of two groups of adult Germans on a Dutch language test. Participants from the experimental group had learned Dutch for four years during their childhood, whereas the control group participants had no prior exposure to the Dutch language. The results revealed that participants who had learned Dutch performed better than the control group participants. Likewise, Ioup (2001) conducted an experiment involving an individual whose native and sole spoken language from the ages of 0-13 years was Arabic. The results of the test showed that after 45 years of not using Arabic, the participant recognized real Arabic words from nonsense words that he was taught during the experimental phase. This finding—relearning seemingly forgotten words occurs faster than learning new ones—is supported by many studies (de Bot et al., 2004; Hansen et al., 2002; Isurin & Seidel, 2015; Isurin, 2019), further consolidating the savings paradigm.

Second language attrition has been extensively studied. However, limited attention has been paid to second/foreign language relearning. Existing studies have mainly focused on investigating the effects of certain variables on the rate of the relearning process. Age is the most extensively studied factor. A seminal study in this regard was conducted by van der Hoeven and de Bot (2012), who compared three age groups—young, middle-aged, and older individuals—in the process of relearning French as a foreign language. Their findings indicated that age had no significant effect on second language relearning. Other studies have also examined the effects of gender (Hansen et al., 2002) and initial proficiency (Hansen et al., 2002) on the rate of relearning. These studies concluded that gender has no significant effect on second language relearning, while initial proficiency is positively correlated with the rate of relearning.

Methodology

Research Design

Drawing on the constructivist ontological and interpretivist epistemological approaches, qualitative research—specifically, phenomenological design—was considered the most suitable approach to achieve the aim of this study. This research design was implemented to understand why a group of Saudi adults chose to relearn English after years of its disuse. Moustakas (1994), as cited in Sheehan’s (2014) article, suggested that phenomenology is an appropriate tool for exploring and describing shared experiences related to phenomena.

This approach has been successfully applied in previous studies within the field of second/foreign language learning (e.g., Bawa & Watson, 2017; Fabre-Merchán et al., 2017; Nayman & Bavlı, 2022). However, there is a dearth in research employing phenomenology in the context of foreign language relearning, despite its potential to offer a nuanced understanding of subjective experiences.

Of the different phenomenological approaches, I selected the transcendental descriptive approach for this study, as my interest was in understanding the phenomenon from the participants' own perspectives, while setting aside all my preconceived ideas to minimize their impact on the interpretation of the data.

Setting and Participants

The participants were seven Saudi English learners enrolled in a six-month extensive English language program offered by a Saudi university. All the participants were non-English major teachers with varying years of teaching experience. They had initially learned EFL during their school years. The selection of the participants was based on accessibility, as I was one of their instructors in the English language program they attended. However, the study was conducted after the program had ended to mitigate potential biases that might result from the inherent power imbalance between the researcher and the participants.

This sample size is in compliance with Creswell’s (2013) suggestion of 3-25 participants and Boyd’s (2001) recommendation of 2-10 participants to reach saturation. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Years since exposure to instructed English Language learning
Ahmed	Male	31	12
Mansoor	Male	39	9
Haadi	Male	51	29
Aabid	Male	41	22
Hind	Female	40	13
Fatima	Female	44	17
Norah	Female	40	13

Data Collection

Prior to data collection, the study underwent review and approval by the ethics committee at the university where it was conducted. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with seven individuals relearning a foreign language (English) after years of its disuse (See Appendix A). All the interviews were conducted in Arabic, the first language of the researcher and participants. With the participants' permission, the interviews were audio recorded; each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy against the audio recordings. Participants' quotations, incorporated to illuminate significant themes, were translated into English by the researcher. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to all research participants.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed following Creswell's (2007) simplified version of Moustakas's (1994) modification of the "Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen" method of psychological phenomenological analysis. Accordingly, before commencing the data analysis process, I reflected on my own preconceptions and biases in relation to the phenomenon, which is referred to as "epoche." I then freed myself from these views and beliefs and focused on the participants' own perspectives. Husserl (1962) referred to this concept as "bracketing," wherein researchers set aside their preconceptions and approach the phenomenon with a fresh perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Then, the data analysis process began by highlighting every relevant statement and treating all statements with equal value. This step is referred to as "horizontalization." The next step involved the deletion of irrelevant or overlapping statements. The remaining significant statements were clustered into categories, and each category was then assigned a descriptive theme (See Appendix B).

I then generated textural descriptions of what the participants have experienced and structural descriptions of the contextual variables influencing the participants' experience of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). This step of analysis yielded the essential structures of the phenomenon. The final step involved synthesizing the textural and structural descriptions of each participant's experience to generate a universal description of the phenomenon, "representing the group as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122).

Rigor of the Study

To ensure the rigor of the research findings, trustworthiness was established based on the criteria of credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. Two strategies were implemented to enhance credibility: prolonged engagement and member checking. First, as the instructor of one of the English courses taught to the participants during the program, I was able to spend sufficient time with them, which allowed me to capture the nuances of their experiences and build trust and rapport with them. Second, the participants verified the interpretation of the data, which helped ensure that the data accurately reflected the essence of their experiences. Dependability was established by requesting a fellow researcher to check the consistency of coding based on a sample of interview data, and there was an agreement

regarding the final codes reaching 80%. The fellow researcher's primary discipline is applied linguistics and has conducted qualitative research projects in her field. To enhance confirmability, an audit trail consisting of files of recorded interviews and transcripts was developed and safely stored, and this can be made available upon request. Clear and adequate descriptions of the research context and the characteristics of the participants were provided to allow readers to judge the extent of the transferability of the study results to other contexts.

Results

The analyses and syntheses of the interview data indicated two key reasons underlying the participants' choice to relearn English after a prolonged period of cessation: (1) to improve themselves and their sense of self-concept; and (2) to feel competent.

Relearning English: Seeking to Improve One's Sense of Self-Concept

The participants enrolled in this intensive English language program to achieve the growth and improvement they were seeking. For the male participants, this was mainly with regard to improving the quality of their personal lives. They hoped that the certificate they would be granted upon program completion would facilitate their transition from their current schools, which are located far from where their families live. For instance, Ahmad, who demonstrated higher English proficiency compared to the other participants, stated: "my priority in enrolling in this program was mainly for the opportunity to transfer my school." Similarly, Mansoor and Aabid enrolled in the program to increase their chances of transferring from their current schools to those located in the cities in which their families live. Mansoor, who has been waiting for six years to transfer from his school, stated: "I want to settle in with my family. Therefore, once I knew that enrolling in this program would increase the likelihood of achieving this, I did not hesitate to participate regardless of my English level." Similarly, Aabid described the hassles he deals with because of his separation from his family: "I have a wife and three children living in a different city. I also run my father's business there. So, every weekend, I hit the road from my city to their city, which is approximately a six-hour drive. I have been doing this for years now. It is a tiring situation...I hope that participating in this program will help end my suffering."

Meanwhile, the female participants were more focused on seeking professional growth. They enrolled in this program to secure a promotion or to earn points that are counted as hours invested in professional development. Fatimah, for instance, explained: "I participated in this program because it is one of the first professional development programs implemented in 2020 to improve the quality of teachers and teaching. For the first time, the promotion of teaching staff in Saudi Arabia has been made possible." Similar hopes were echoed by Hind and Norah. For instance, Norah explained: "We teachers are now mandated to engage in ongoing professional development to enhance our skills and stay updated on the latest effective teaching practices." However, Hind prioritized learning English. She emphasized, "I have always loved English. I mainly enrolled to retrieve my English skills, and professional development was a byproduct."

However, both the male and female participants frequently referred to the drastic changes taking place in Saudi society, specifically the rise in the use of English, even among

Saudis. Such changes have led to a sense of dissatisfaction with their low English proficiency. Haadi clarifies this point: “I feel embarrassed on occasions that require the demonstration of English competence, such as in my work as a tour guide, especially after our country opened its doors to foreign tourists.” Similar feelings were echoed by Aabid, who runs his family business: “I hate when my weak English prevents me from negotiating with non-Arabic speakers or understanding contracts or regulations written in English; because I do not like to outsource, rather, I like to do and understand everything, I will work on my English.”

Relearning English: Seeking to Feel Competent

The lack of English proficiency at times when participants needed it most caused them some unpleasant emotional experiences. It was not difficult to discern feelings of shame or discontent in their accounts. For example, Haadi was a high achiever who did not settle for less. He occupied many leadership positions throughout his career and was a member of different committees. While enrolled in the program, he was pursuing his PhD in geography. He described his feelings pertaining to the lack of English proficiency: “I felt unease that, despite being a PhD student, I lacked English language proficiency. It hindered my accessing majority of the scientific papers in my field of study and attending international conferences.” He also worked as a part-time tourist guide. By the end of 2019, Saudi Arabia had started issuing tourist visas, so his lack of English proficiency had become another source of challenge. In his words, “lack of English proficiency made me feel incompetent; a feeling I could not embrace.” For people like him, English language incompetence is a major challenge; nonetheless, Haadi was determined to overcome this challenge.

Aabid mentioned similar experiences. In addition to being a teacher, he manages his father’s shop. He has worked hard to grow the family business. However, he finds his lack of English proficiency to be a major obstacle to achieving his goals. In his words, “I was not satisfied with my English competence. I always viewed my lack of English proficiency as a flaw which I one day is going to fix.” Moreover, he mentioned that he needed to improve his English language skills because he feels helpless when his children ask for help to study English taught in their school.

The amount of knowledge the participants had acquired and the improvements they noticed in their language skills satisfied their need for competence. Hence, it motivated them to keep up their efforts in English language learning, even though the program had ended. Participants’ responses to the following question highlighted this point: “As the program has ended and you earned your certificate, will you continue your language learning practice?” Haadi, for example, stated, “Definitely! ...I will continue enrolling in certified language learning institutes and engage in self-learning.” Similarly, Hind, Aabid, and Ahmad, respectively, answered as follows: “Absolutely, I have always wanted to master the English language,” “Yes, the program was only the beginning,” and “I really want to have the time to continue what I have started.” In summary, they all affirmed that this program constitutes a starting point for continuous research-informed and scientifically based English language learning.

Discussion

The results of this study are in line with the findings reported in several previous studies (e.g., Al-Hoorie, 2018; Moskovsky et al., 2016; Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022) in that the components of the L2MSS, namely the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, have a significant effect on L2 intended learning effort. That is, participants' relearning of English after years of its disuse was also driven by certain self-related beliefs.

The most powerful was their belief that demonstrating English proficiency is necessary to improve different aspects of their lives related to family settlement, job promotion, and social status. In other words, their relearning of English was driven by fear of certain negative or undesired outcomes associated with a lack of English proficiency. This result can be explained through the L2MSS theory. One of the three components of this theory is the ought-to L2 self, which represents "attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e. various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to avoid possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106) resulting from the inability to speak the L2. No prior studies in the L2 relearning literature have reported similar results. Nonetheless, a wealth of scientifically sound research (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Moskovsky et al., 2016; Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022) has established a strong correlation between the ought-to L2 self and L2 learning motivation. Therefore, it can be argued that the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self are also significant motivational factors for foreign language relearning.

Equally important was the belief that their lack of English proficiency was a flaw in their current L2 selves. Therefore, they aspired to future versions of their L2 selves who would possess greater competence in English. Moreover, their dissatisfaction with their current English proficiency led to negative feelings. These feelings can be understood through Higgins's (1987, 1998) theory of self-discrepancy. Higgins posited that people experience a sense of tension when there is a discrepancy between their real-life selves and the aspired version of themselves. He contended that this psychological tension drives them to work toward bridging this gap. Furthermore, the L2MSS explains this result through one of its components, the ideal L2 self. This component refers to one's image of the future L2 self, which shows one's command of the L2. Many studies (Magid & Chan, 2012; Nourzadeh et al., 2020; Yousefifard & Fathi, 2021) have found that the ideal L2 self strongly predicts L2 motivation.

This finding was not surprising given that self-concept is constructed and influenced by the social environment (Lyons, 2014; Syed, 2001). Put differently, the recent changes in Saudi society that have bestowed an unprecedented value on the English language have adversely impacted the participants' sense of self-concept. Therefore, mastery of the English language could potentially reverse this negative impact. This finding is in line with previous research (Chen et al., 2022; Csizér & Magid, 2014) establishing the strong effect of self-concept on language learning and motivation.

Conclusion

By exploring the motivations of Saudi adults for relearning English, we discovered that this decision was made either to avoid negative consequences associated with a lack of English proficiency or to fulfil a desire to master the language. These motivations were scrutinized

through the lens of L2MSS, particularly the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self. The ideal L2 self represents the envisioned future self-proficient in English, embodying aspirations and goals, while the ought-to self reflects the perceived obligations or responsibilities to acquire English skills, often influenced by societal expectations or personal standards.

These findings inform relevant lines of research and practice. The theoretical implications include the consolidation of the accumulating evidence correlating L2 perceived value and L2 learning motivation. Moreover, the results revealed the applicability of the L2MSS in foreign language relearning. It provided evidence that the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self not only generated motivation, but also led to taking action.

These results also have practical implications for the ELT field. For instance, ELT practitioners can be informed through this study about the importance of enhancing the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self of the learners to facilitate their L2 motivation. The results suggest that ELT practitioners can achieve this by encouraging learners to participate in social communicative activities that help them recognize the newfound status of English in Saudi society.

However, this study has some limitations, based on which future research avenues are proposed. A major limitation of this study is its sample size. Investigating this topic by recruiting participants with different characteristics compared to those from this study could probably result in more insights or even different findings. In addition, owing to the qualitative nature of this study, the conclusions cannot be generalized. Therefore, this study could be expanded by adopting a quantitative method to investigate the applicability of the L2MSS in foreign language relearning.

Bio

Dr. Haifa Al-Amri is an Assistant Professor at the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. She holds an MA from the United States and a PhD from Australia in the field of TESOL. Her main research interests involve second/foreign language learning motivation and ICT-based language learning, and she has published articles in these areas. Dr. Haifa is particularly interested in conducting qualitative research.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Background information:

Age _____ Academic major _____ Years of teaching experience _____

Introductory questions:

- 1) Firstly, how many years have passed since the last time you studied English as a school subject before joining the intensive language learning program?
- 2) During these years, did you lose much of what you learned?
- 3) If not, what strategies have you been using to maintain what you've acquired?

Core questions:

- 1) What were your motives for relearning English?
- 2) How would you describe this experience?
- 3) To what extent did you benefit?
- 4) What were the challenges?
- 5) How satisfied are you with the outcomes?
- 6) How has this experience shaped your beliefs or expectations about yourself?

Closing questions:

- 1) Now that you have completed the program and earned a certificate, do you intend to continue your journey of English learning?
- 2) If not, why? If yes, how?
- 3) Do you have anything else to say?

Appendix B

A Sample of Coding Framework

Step 1: Assigning a code.

What were your motives for relearning English? *lacking English competence* (anchor code)

Haadi: *I felt unease that, despite being a PhD student, I lacked English language proficiency. It hindered my accessing majority of the scientific papers in my field of study and attending international conferences.*

"I relearned English to prove that age is never a barrier. even though the program has ended, I won't stop learning English till I master it"

Aabid: *I was not satisfied with my English competence. I always viewed my lack of English proficiency as a flaw which I one day is going to fix.*

Norah: *"We teachers are now mandated to engage in ongoing professional development to enhance our skills and stay updated on the latest effective teaching practices."*

Fatimah: *"I participated in this program because it is one of the first professional development programs implemented in 2020 to improve the quality of teachers and teaching. For the first time, the promotion of teaching staff in Saudi Arabia has been made possible."*

Ahmad: *"my priority in enrolling in this program was mainly for the opportunity to transfer my school."*

Step 2: Categorizing codes.

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Causes negative feelings (3)	Hinders professional growth (3)	Poses a challenge (2)
Undermines self-esteem (1)	Hinders personal goals (1)	Proves incompetent (1)

Step 3: Cluster labels

Cluster 1: <i>to improve self-concept</i> (4)	Cluster 2: <i>to improve oneself</i> (4)	Cluster 3: <i>to feel competent</i> (3)
Causes negative feelings (3)	Hinders professional growth (3)	Poses a challenge (2)
Undermines self-esteem (1)	Hinders personal goals (1)	Proves incompetent (1)