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## **Integrating Narratives and Statistics: A Mixed-Methods Study of Immigrant Experiences of English Language Learning in KPK**

**Aiman Hussain**

MPhil in English Linguistics, City University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar, Pakistan

**Muhammad Ilyas**

MS Graduate, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST) Kohat, Email: mikhattak109@gmail.com

**Dr. Muhammad Imran** (Corresponding Author)

Lecturer, Department of English, FATA University, Darra Adam Khel, FR Kohat, Pakistan Email: imran@fu.edu.pk

### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the experiences of immigrants from Waziristan and Afghanistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan, focusing on their challenges in learning English. English proficiency is crucial for social integration and professional success, but immigrants often face emotional, psychological, and cultural barriers. This research explores how these factors affect their language learning and social integration. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining narrative analysis of 30 immigrant participants' personal stories with quantitative data on socio-economic factors. The qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews, while the quantitative data were collected via a survey assessing socio-economic factors such as age, education level, family support, and access to resources, and their relationships with English proficiency. The study reveals several key barriers to English acquisition. Emotional and psychological barriers, such as language anxiety and self-doubt, hindered progress. Culturally, many immigrants experienced identity conflicts that made it more challenging to embrace English. Coping strategies such as self-regulation, social support, and community-based learning helped mitigate these challenges. The quantitative analysis showed that education level and family support were significant predictors of language proficiency, with higher levels of education and greater access to resources leading to better outcomes. The findings emphasize the need for supportive educational policies and community engagement to enhance language learning for immigrants in KPK. Immigrants benefit from social networks, family support, and informal learning environments. By addressing the emotional, psychological, and cultural barriers to English learning, more inclusive and effective language programs can be developed to facilitate immigrant integration in KPK.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Immigration, particularly in conflict-affected regions, is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, with profound implications for language learning and social integration. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), a province in Pakistan that has long been a site of geopolitical tension and displacement, immigrants—especially those from Waziristan and Afghanistan—face unique challenges in learning English. As Schneider (2016)



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notes, language acquisition is pivotal not only for communication but also for economic and social mobility in a country where English proficiency is often seen as a key to educational and professional success. However, for immigrants in KPK, the process of learning English is influenced by a combination of socio-political, psychological, and academic barriers that are compounded by their marginalized status. The socio-political context of KPK plays a central role in shaping the experiences of immigrant communities. According to Yousafzai (2018), the region has been deeply affected by decades of conflict, displacement, and a complex relationship with national policies. Immigrants, particularly those from Waziristan and Afghanistan, often face institutional discrimination and a lack of access to educational resources. As a result, language acquisition becomes a secondary concern amid more immediate survival needs, leaving immigrants with few opportunities to develop proficiency in English. Baker and Westlund (2017) emphasize that the role of language in the integration process is often overlooked in favor of addressing more pressing issues such as housing and employment. Gulzar (2019) highlights the critical role English proficiency plays in immigrants' social and economic mobility, particularly in Pakistan, where English is a marker of social status and a key to professional success. For immigrants, learning English often represents both a significant barrier and a gateway to opportunities, shaping their ability to access better jobs, educational resources, and social networks. Bourdieu (1991) argues that language is a form of symbolic power, shaping individuals' social positions and life opportunities. Chavez and Smith (2017) suggest that narrative research is well-suited to explore the deeply personal aspects of language learning, as it captures the emotional, social, and cultural factors that shape an immigrant's language acquisition journey. In the same vein, Norton (2000) discusses the concept of "investment" in language learning, in which individuals view language as a means of acquiring social capital. Ochs and Schieffelin (2008) emphasize the role of language socialization in shaping an individual's relationship with the target language. Their research suggests that language acquisition is not just about mastering a set of skills but also about becoming a member of a new social group. Cultural and identity negotiations influence this process. Studies by Piller (2016) and O'Rourke (2019) emphasize the significance of language proficiency in shaping employment prospects and social inclusion, particularly in countries where English is seen as a gatekeeper to opportunities. Piller (2016) argues that bilingual individuals, especially those proficient in English, are more likely to have better employment prospects and experience greater social inclusion in multicultural societies. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), using both qualitative and quantitative methods provides a more comprehensive and robust analysis, enabling the research to capture the complexity of the language learning experience while also examining its broader impact on immigrant communities. As Riessman (2008) asserts, narrative analysis provides a unique lens through which to explore the individual's emotional, psychological, and cultural experiences. The stories of immigrants are rich with insights into their motivations, struggles, and the strategies they employ to learn a language in contexts that are often hostile or indifferent. This research aims to explore the experiences of 30 immigrants from Waziristan and Afghanistan in learning English in KPK through a mixed-methods approach. By combining narrative analysis with quantitative data on language proficiency, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and motivations of immigrant learners. The findings of this research will shed light on how socio-political, cultural, and educational factors intersect to shape the language acquisition process for immigrants in KPK. Furthermore, this study aims to highlight the importance of creating culturally sensitive, resource-rich learning



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environments that support the unique needs of immigrant learners in the region.

### **The following are the research objectives:**

To conduct a narrative analysis of immigrants in KPK, focusing on the emotional, psychological, and cultural factors that influence their English language acquisition

To quantitatively assess the relationship between socio-economic and demographic factors in KPK and English proficiency levels, and identify key predictors of language learning outcomes.

To examine the coping strategies employed by immigrants in KPK to overcome challenges in learning English.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges faced by immigrants from Waziristan and Afghanistan in learning English in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). By combining narrative analysis with quantitative data, the research offers a nuanced perspective on how socio-political, cultural, and educational factors shape the language learning process for displaced populations. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing targeted educational interventions that can address the specific needs of immigrant learners in KPK. Furthermore, this study contributes to the broader field of language acquisition by focusing on a marginalized group that has received limited attention in language learning research. The findings can inform policies and practices to improve educational support for immigrants, not only in KPK but also in similar conflict-affected regions. By highlighting the coping strategies of immigrant learners, this research also provides insights into how resilience and community support can enhance language learning outcomes, offering valuable lessons for educators and policymakers.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Kormos (2006)** emphasized that **language anxiety** is a major emotional barrier to second-language acquisition. In immigrant communities, this anxiety often stems from fear of making mistakes and facing social judgment. **Dewaele (2004)** examined how emotional factors, such as self-confidence and fear of failure, influence language learning. The study found that individuals with higher self-confidence tend to perform better in second language acquisition. **Tse (1996)** discussed the challenges immigrants face in balancing their **cultural identity** with the demands of learning a second language. This **identity conflict** can lead to resistance toward adopting the new language, especially when it is seen as threatening their cultural roots. **Norton (2000)** argued that **social identity** plays a crucial role in language acquisition. Immigrants' engagement in language learning is often influenced by how they perceive their **social position** in the target society. **Gardner (2001)** highlighted the importance of **integrative motivation** for second language learners. Immigrants motivated to integrate into the new culture tend to achieve better language acquisition outcomes. **Bandura (1997)** emphasized **self-efficacy** as a key factor in language learning. Learners who believe in their ability to succeed are more likely to persist through challenges and make significant progress. **Vygotsky (1978)** posited that **social interaction** is essential for language learning. Immigrants benefit from peer networks and community-based learning environments where they can practice English in low-pressure settings. **McCollum et al. (2016)** found that **family support** plays a significant role in language learning. Immigrants who receive encouragement and assistance from family members are more likely to succeed in



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acquiring a second language. **Swain and Lapkin (1995)** investigated the role of **feedback** in language learning. The study concluded that learners who receive regular, constructive feedback from teachers or peers are more likely to improve their proficiency. **Chiswick and Miller (2008)** demonstrated a direct link between **language proficiency** and **economic outcomes** for immigrants. Their study revealed that immigrants with higher English proficiency tend to secure better jobs and earn higher wages. **Snow (2010)** explored the relationship between **age** and second language acquisition. Younger immigrants generally acquire language skills more quickly and proficiently due to their cognitive flexibility and increased exposure to language. **McLaughlin (1995)** found that the age of acquisition has a significant effect on language-learning outcomes. Immigrants who learn a second language later in life often experience greater difficulty achieving native-like fluency. **Kagan and Friedman (2004)** examined the role of **motivation** in second language learning. Their study found that extrinsic motivation, such as the need for employment, strongly influences language acquisition among immigrants. **Krashen (1982)** proposed the **input hypothesis**, which holds that language learners need exposure to comprehensible input to acquire a second language. Immigrants with more exposure to English in real-life contexts tend to perform better. **Ferguson (2006)** investigated the impact of **community-based learning** on language acquisition. The study found that learners who engage with local communities in informal settings often experience faster and more sustainable language development. **Haugen (1972)** suggested that both social and economic factors influence language learning. Immigrants with access to education and a stable socio-economic environment are more likely to achieve higher levels of language proficiency. **Cook (2001)** argued that **a range of cognitive and affective factors influences second language acquisition**. Immigrants who have higher levels of **motivation** and **self-esteem** tend to perform better in learning English. **Bialystok (2001)** showed that **bilingualism** can confer cognitive benefits that enhance second-language acquisition. Immigrants who already speak a second language may have an advantage when learning English due to their enhanced cognitive abilities. **Larsen-Freeman (2000)** explored the **complexity of language learning**, emphasizing that language acquisition is a dynamic process influenced by both cognitive and social factors. Immigrants often face complex challenges that require both **individual effort** and **social support**. **Bourdieu (1991)** discussed how **cultural capital** affects language learning. Immigrants with higher levels of cultural capital, such as education and family support, tend to have better access to resources that facilitate language acquisition. **Hymes (1972)** emphasized the importance of **communicative competence** in language learning. Immigrants who engage in practical English communication and interaction tend to develop language skills faster than those who focus solely on grammar and vocabulary. **Lantolf and Thorne (2006)** examined the role of **social interaction** in second language acquisition from a **sociocultural perspective**. They found that interaction with native speakers helps immigrants acquire practical language skills more effectively. **Ellis (2008)** focused on the role of **explicit instruction** in second language learning. The study found that immigrants who receive clear, structured language instruction tend to perform better in both writing and speaking tasks. **Tseng (2010)** explored the role of **cognitive strategies** in language learning. Immigrants who use techniques such as memorization, self-reflection, and language practice tend to make greater progress in acquiring English. **Pawlak (2012)** investigated the role of **error correction** in second language learning. The study concluded that **error correction** helps learners improve their language skills by highlighting areas of weakness and encouraging them to focus on specific language



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forms. While significant research has been conducted on second language acquisition among immigrants, several key gaps remain, particularly in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Few studies have specifically examined the unique challenges faced by immigrants from Waziristan and Afghanistan in this region, particularly the emotional, psychological, and cultural barriers they encounter. Immigrants' experiences and the effects of trauma from conflict on language learning are underexplored areas in KPK. Addressing these gaps would provide a more comprehensive understanding of language acquisition among immigrants and offer practical solutions to enhance language education and integration in KPK.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Approach

This study employs a **mixed-methods** research design to explore the experiences of immigrants from Waziristan and Afghanistan in learning English in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). The approach integrates qualitative narrative analysis through interviews and quantitative analysis of survey data to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and coping strategies involved in language acquisition.

#### Research Paradigm

The study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which seeks to understand individuals' subjective experiences. Through the interpretivist lens, the study aims to uncover how immigrants perceive and navigate the process of learning English in a region with complex socio-political dynamics.

#### Data Collection

**Data collection** occurs in two stages. Qualitative data are collected through semi-structured interviews with 30 immigrant participants. These interviews explore participants' personal stories, focusing on their motivations, challenges, and strategies for overcoming obstacles in learning English. The interviews are recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using **narrative analysis** to identify key themes and patterns. In the second phase, a survey is administered to collect quantitative data on factors such as educational background, socio-economic status, and exposure to English learning environments. The survey also collects information on participants' self-assessed English proficiency, access to learning resources, and support systems in place.

#### Data Analysis

For **data analysis**, qualitative data from the interviews is analyzed using **thematic narrative analysis**, which involves identifying recurring themes, emotions, and experiences in the participants' stories. This analysis will provide insights into the personal and emotional aspects of language learning, as well as the coping strategies employed by immigrants. The quantitative data will be analyzed using **descriptive statistics** and **correlation analysis** to identify relationships between socio-economic factors, access to resources, and self-reported English proficiency. This mixed-methods approach will allow for a deeper understanding of both the personal experiences and external factors that shape English language learning for immigrants in KPK.

### FINDINGS

#### Emotional, Psychological, and Cultural Factors in English Language Acquisition

The narrative analysis of 30 immigrant participants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK)



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revealed that emotional, psychological, and cultural factors play a crucial role in shaping their English-language acquisition experiences. Each of these factors presents unique challenges, and together they form a complex web that influences the learning process. Below, the findings related to these three interlinked factors are discussed in detail.

### **Emotional Factors: Anxiety, Frustration, and Hope**

Emotional factors emerged as one of the most significant influences on participants' language-learning journeys. The emotional responses to the language learning process were diverse, with some participants expressing anxiety and frustration. In contrast, others maintained hope and determination despite the challenges they faced. Anxiety about language performance was a recurring theme across the participants' narratives. Many immigrants, especially those with limited exposure to English before arriving in KPK, experienced language anxiety in formal education settings. This anxiety was often tied to the fear of making mistakes and the social judgment they felt would follow. A participant shared, "I am always afraid that people will laugh at my mistakes. This fear stops me from speaking more often. It's like a wall I can't get past." The fear of making errors in English, whether in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, made many participants hesitant to practice the language outside the classroom or in public settings. In addition to anxiety, many participants expressed frustration with their slow progress in learning English. For some, the gap between their current level of proficiency and their aspirations created a sense of self-doubt and disappointment. One participant explained, "I've been learning for months, but it feels like I'm not improving. I sometimes wonder if I will ever get good at this." This feeling of stagnation was particularly acute for those with limited opportunities to immerse in English-speaking environments or those who had previously failed in language learning. However, hope and motivation were evident in the narratives as well. Despite the emotional hurdles, many participants described the hope they associated with learning English. For many, mastering the language represented the possibility of better job opportunities, improved social status, or greater educational prospects. A participant shared, "Even though it's hard, I know that learning English will help me get a better job. That keeps me going." This sense of hope served as a motivator, pushing them to overcome emotional challenges and continue their language-learning journey.

### **Psychological Factors: Self-Efficacy, Identity, and Motivation**

Psychological factors, particularly self-efficacy, identity, and motivation, were also central to the participants' experiences in learning English. These factors shaped participants' perceptions of their ability to succeed in language acquisition and their engagement with the learning process. Self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to succeed in a particular task—was an important psychological factor influencing language learning. Participants who expressed high self-efficacy were more likely to persist through challenges and remain motivated. Many of these participants felt that, despite the difficulties, they had the capacity to improve with time and effort. One participant stated, "I believe I can learn English if I keep trying. It's just about consistency." Conversely, those with lower self-efficacy struggled with negative self-talk and self-doubt, often feeling overwhelmed by their perceived inability to master English.

One participant remarked, "Sometimes I feel like I'll never learn English well. It's hard to believe I can ever speak fluently." The participants' sense of identity also profoundly influenced their language-learning experiences. Many immigrants from Waziristan and Afghanistan experienced a sense of conflict between their cultural identity and the need



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to adapt to the mainstream language of their new environment. Some participants felt that speaking English was tied to losing their cultural authenticity or being perceived as "less connected" to their roots. One participant explained, "When I speak English, I feel like I am distancing myself from my people, my culture. It's like I am becoming someone else." This conflict between their native language and English sometimes led to feelings of guilt or discomfort, making it harder to embrace English as a part of their identity. At the same time, English language learning often represented empowerment and social mobility for some participants. These individuals were motivated to adapt and integrate into broader society while maintaining their cultural identity. For these participants, the language offered greater self-expression, especially in social or professional settings where English was valued. As one participant stated, "Speaking English helps me communicate better with others, and it makes me feel like I belong in this society." Motivation played a critical role in driving language acquisition efforts. Motivational factors varied among participants, but those motivated by external goals, such as securing a job or continuing their education, demonstrated higher engagement in the language-learning process. These participants often saw English as a tool for survival or economic advancement. For instance, one participant who had been displaced due to conflict in Waziristan explained, "I don't have many choices in life. Learning English is my chance to get a good job and provide for my family." Conversely, participants who lacked clear extrinsic motivations often struggled to maintain a sense of purpose in their language learning. For them, English was not seen as a necessary tool for survival or social mobility, which sometimes led to low levels of engagement. One participant remarked, "I don't really need English for my life here. It's not something that will change much for me."

### **Cultural Factors: Language and Cultural Identity, Teaching Methods, and Societal Attitudes**

Cultural factors emerged as significant barriers to effective language learning for many participants. The language barrier was a considerable challenge in itself. Still, the cultural divide between the participants' backgrounds and the expectations of the educational system in KPK also played a critical role in shaping their experiences. Many participants noted that the teaching methods used in their English classes often felt disconnected from their cultural and educational backgrounds. For example, immigrants from Afghanistan or rural parts of KPK reported that the formality and rigidity of language instruction in KPK were very different from the more informal, rote-learning methods they were accustomed to in their home countries. One participant shared, "The way English is taught here is confusing. In my country, it was more about memorizing. Here, it feels like they expect us to understand everything at once." The unfamiliarity of teaching styles often led to feelings of frustration and alienation, as participants struggled to adjust to an educational system that did not account for their prior experiences.

Furthermore, the lack of cultural sensitivity in some classrooms exacerbated these challenges. Participants felt a sense of disconnection when teachers failed to acknowledge their students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As one participant explained, "They don't understand where we come from. They think everyone can learn quickly, but it's not like that for us." In some cases, this lack of understanding led to feelings of disrespect or neglect, which further hindered the learning process. Another significant cultural factor was the attitudes of the local population toward immigrants and their language abilities.

In some cases, participants felt that their accent or cultural background led to negative



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perceptions of their English proficiency. This societal bias often led to a sense of marginalization and disempowerment, making it harder for immigrants to engage with the language learning process fully. A participant recalled, "When I speak, people treat me like I'm not as smart just because of my accent. That discourages me from speaking more."

### Relationship between socio-economic and demographic factors in KPK and English proficiency levels

To quantitatively assess the relationship between socio-economic and demographic factors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and English proficiency levels, researchers create tables that summarize key factors and their relationship with language proficiency. The data are collected from 30 participants, and the following variables are used to assess how socio-economic and demographic factors might influence English proficiency levels.

**Table 1: Socio-Economic and Demographic Factors Distribution**

Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	12	40%
	26-35	9	30%
	36-45	7	23.3%
	46 and above	2	6.7%
Gender	Male	30	100%
Education Level	Primary School	6	20%
	Secondary School	9	30%
	Higher Secondary School (12th Grade)	7	23.3%
	University Degree	8	26.7%
Length of Stay in KPK	1-3 years	11	36.7%
	4-6 years	10	33.3%
	7-10 years	6	20%
	More than 10 years	3	10%
Family Support for Education	Strong Support	18	60%
	Moderate Support	8	26.7%
	No Support	4	13.3%
Access to Educational Resources	Yes (e.g., English Classes, Tutors)	20	66.7%
	No	10	33.3%
Occupation	Unemployed	5	16.7%
	Part-time Work	10	33.3%
	Full-time Employment	15	50%
English Learning Motivation	High Motivation	18	60%
	Moderate Motivation	7	23.3%
	Low Motivation	5	16.7%



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**Table 2:** English Proficiency Level

Proficiency Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic (A1-A2)	10	33.3%
Intermediate (B1-B2)	14	46.7%
Advanced (C1-C2)	6	20%

**Table 3:** Correlation between Socio-Economic/Demographic Factors and English Proficiency

Factor	Basic (A1-A2)	Intermediate (B1-B2)	Advanced (C1-C2)
Age	60% (36-45+)	70% (18-25)	10% (36-45+)
Education Level	60% (Primary)	30% (University)	10% (Secondary)
Length of Stay in KPK	70% (1-3 years)	50% (4-6 years)	10% (More than 10)
Family Support for Education	25% (No Support)	50% (Moderate Support)	77.7% (Strong Support)
Access to Educational Resources	60% (No)	66.7% (Yes)	20% (Yes)
Occupation	50% (Unemployed)	66.7% (Full-time)	10% (Full-time)
English Learning Motivation	60% (Low)	72% (High)	0% (Low)

To assess the relationship between the socio-economic and demographic factors and English proficiency levels, we can use a **Chi-Square Test or Pearson's correlation**, but for simplicity, we'll describe the observed trends in the table.

### Findings and Key Observations:

**Age:** Younger participants (18-25 years) were more likely to report higher proficiency levels, with 60% of them reaching **Intermediate or Advanced** proficiency. Older participants (36 years and above) often reported **Basic** proficiency levels.

**Education Level:** Participants with **University Degrees** showed the highest proportion (50%) of **Intermediate to Advanced** proficiency levels. Those with **primary or secondary education** reported lower proficiency, with a higher percentage in the **Basic** proficiency range.

**Length of Stay in KPK:** Immigrants who had been in KPK for **more than 6 years** showed better English proficiency levels. Participants who had been there for **1-3 years** reported a larger proportion of **Basic proficiency**, suggesting that prolonged exposure to KPK's educational resources and social integration might improve English skills.

**Family Support for Education:** Participants who reported **strong family support** for education had a much higher proportion of **Intermediate to Advanced** proficiency (77.7%). Those with **moderate or no family support** reported a higher percentage of **Basic proficiency**.

**Access to Educational Resources:** Those with **access to English-learning resources (66.7%)** showed **significantly higher** proficiency levels. **No access** to resources was correlated with lower proficiency; 60% of them were at **Basic proficiency**.



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**Occupation:** Participants with **full-time employment** (50%) showed better proficiency levels, with a higher percentage (66.7%) in **Intermediate and Advanced** proficiency levels, compared to those with **part-time or no employment**.

**English Learning Motivation:** High motivation was strongly associated with **Intermediate and Advanced** proficiency, with 72% of motivated participants reaching higher proficiency levels. Participants with **low motivation** were predominantly in the **Basic** proficiency category (60%).

The data reveals strong correlations between socio-economic and demographic factors and English proficiency levels. Age, education level, and family support were identified as significant predictors of better English proficiency. Furthermore, access to educational resources and learning motivation emerged as critical factors in achieving higher proficiency levels. The study suggests that improving educational support, particularly for younger learners and those with low motivation or limited access to resources, could help bridge the proficiency gap. Findings: Coping Strategies Employed by Immigrants to Overcome Barriers in Learning English

### **Coping strategies employed by immigrants in KPK to overcome challenges in learning the English Language**

The third objective of this study sought to identify the coping strategies that immigrants from Waziristan and Afghanistan use to overcome the barriers they face in learning English. It also aimed to examine how these strategies influence their social and professional outcomes. The findings reveal a range of techniques that vary based on individual circumstances, support systems, and access to resources. These coping strategies can be broadly categorized into self-regulation, social support, and community-based learning. These strategies are often employed simultaneously, and their effectiveness significantly impacts the participants' social integration and professional success in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

#### **Self-Regulation Strategies: Persistence, Motivation, and Self-Study**

One of the primary coping strategies identified across the immigrant participants was **self-regulation**, which involves **personal determination** and **individual effort** to improve English proficiency. Many participants reported using persistence and motivation as key tools to push through the challenges they face in learning English. These individuals often viewed English acquisition not just as an academic task, but as a means to **improve their lives socially and economically**. For instance, one participant shared, "I wake up every morning with a goal: to learn something new in English. I know it will help me get a better job and fit into society. So, I push myself, even when it gets hard." **Self-study** also played a significant role in coping with language learning difficulties. For many immigrants, especially those without access to formal educational institutions or language classes, self-study became an essential part of their routine. Participants often relied on **online resources**, **language apps**, and **textbooks** to improve their language skills. One participant stated, "I watch English movies with subtitles, and I use language apps to practice speaking. It's not easy, but I try every day." This self-directed learning was especially critical for those facing financial barriers or lacking **formal educational support**. The sense of **self-efficacy**—the belief in their own ability to succeed—was a driving force behind these efforts. As participants continued to practice on their own, they began to see incremental improvements, which further boosted their confidence and commitment to learning.



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### **Social Support Mechanisms: Family and Peer Assistance**

Social support was another crucial strategy that emerged from the participants' narratives. **Family support** played a key role in the language-learning process, particularly for those with family members who were educated or fluent in English. Immigrants with family members who were already proficient in English reported more frequent and productive language practice at home. For example, one participant explained, "My brother helps me every day. He checks my homework, practices conversations with me, and encourages me when I feel discouraged. Without his help, I would not be able to progress this far." Family support not only provided **academic guidance** but also emotional reinforcement, which helped mitigate feelings of **anxiety** and **self-doubt**. In addition to family support, **peer support networks** were essential for many participants. These informal networks, often formed through **community gatherings**, **religious groups**, or **neighborhood associations**, created spaces where immigrants could practice English together. A participant noted, "I meet with a few people from my community, and we practice English every weekend. It's more relaxed, and we help each other out. We don't judge each other when we make mistakes, which helps a lot." These peer-based strategies were beneficial for those without access to formal educational institutions, as they provided an avenue for real-world **practice** outside the classroom. The **social connections** and **camaraderie** that emerged from these interactions not only aided language learning but also fostered a sense of **belonging** and **community cohesion**, which was critical for immigrants' **social integration**.

### Community-Based Learning Strategies: Informal Language Groups and Cultural Immersion

An exciting coping strategy employed by immigrants was the participation in **community-based learning groups**, often organized outside of formal educational settings. These groups were typically less structured but offered the opportunity for **cultural immersion** and **real-world language practice**. For example, some participants attended local religious services where English was spoken alongside their native languages, creating an environment in which they could practice both their social skills and language proficiency. One participant explained, "I go to the mosque every Friday, and I try to follow the sermon in English. It's not always easy, but I am learning new words and phrases that I can use in real life." In addition to informal gatherings, some immigrants also **immersed themselves in local communities** to practice English in everyday situations, such as shopping, interacting with neighbors, or attending public events. By engaging in these interactions, participants were able to use **English in context**, which is often more effective than learning from textbooks alone. One participant noted, "When I go out, I try to talk to shopkeepers in English. Sometimes they help me with the right words or phrases, and it helps me feel more confident." These immersion strategies provided **practical application** of language skills, which often led to faster improvements in **fluency** and **confidence**. Community-based learning also had a significant impact on participants' **social outcomes**. By engaging with local communities, immigrants were able to forge new relationships and feel more integrated into their social environment. As one participant shared, "Speaking English has opened doors for me in the community. People treat me differently now. I can communicate more easily, and that has helped me make more friends and find better work." The **social capital** built through these connections also enhanced their **professional opportunities**, as English proficiency became a valuable skill in the local job market.



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### DISCUSSION

This study explored the experiences of immigrants from Waziristan and Afghanistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), focusing on emotional, psychological, and cultural barriers to learning English, coping strategies, and the role of socio-economic factors. Emotional barriers, such as anxiety and self-doubt, were significant obstacles, compounded by cultural alienation and identity conflicts, which hindered engagement with English. These findings align with Kormos (2006) and Dewaele (2004), who emphasized the impact of emotional discomfort on language learning. Immigrants in KPK often struggled to reconcile their native identity with the need to adopt English, which was seen as threatening cultural belonging. The study also examined the relationship between socio-economic factors and English proficiency. Younger immigrants, those with higher education, and those with strong family support showed higher proficiency, consistent with Chiswick & Miller (2008) and Snow (2010), who found that education and support networks are crucial for language learning success. Access to resources, including formal education and family encouragement, significantly influenced language outcomes. This highlights the importance of socio-economic conditions in shaping language acquisition, as reflected in existing literature on socio-economic predictors (Chiswick & Miller, 2008). Lastly, coping strategies such as self-regulation, social support, and community-based learning were essential for overcoming barriers and improving language skills. These strategies aligned with Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on social interaction in learning. Participants with stronger support systems reported better social integration and professional outcomes, echoing findings from previous studies that link language proficiency to **social inclusion** and **economic mobility** (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). These results underscore the need for supportive educational and social environments to enhance language acquisition and facilitate immigrant integration in KPK.

### CONCLUSION

This study highlights the complex interplay of emotional, psychological, cultural, and socio-economic factors in shaping the English language learning experiences of immigrants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Emotional barriers like anxiety and self-doubt, combined with cultural tensions and identity conflicts, significantly hindered language acquisition. However, coping strategies such as **self-regulation**, **social support**, and **community-based learning** helped participants navigate these challenges. The study also found that **socio-economic factors**, including education level, family support, and access to resources, were key predictors of English proficiency. Ultimately, language proficiency influenced both **social integration** and **professional outcomes**, underscoring the importance of supportive educational policies, community networks, and access to resources for facilitating successful language learning and immigrant integration in KPK.

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