

Exploring Affective Filter Levels in Spanish as a Foreign Language Course Among Tertiary Students

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ABSTRACT

The affective filter hypothesis is critical to comprehending how emotions impact language learning, yet limited research exists on its correlation to other languages, specifically to Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) students studying Spanish as a foreign language. This study was to investigate the affective filter levels of BSED students from different majors and examine how their perceptions of classroom-related factors influence their language learning experiences. Using a quantitative, descriptive-comparative design and proportional stratified sampling, data were collected via an adapted version of Robert C. Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), administered both online and in print. The results revealed that English and Values Education majors reported higher levels of affective filter, while Filipino majors exhibited lower levels, indicating that emotional barriers vary across different fields of specialization. Furthermore, there was strong agreement among students regarding the positive impact of classroom dynamics—such as teaching style, peer interaction, and the learning environment—on reducing emotional barriers and enhancing motivation. These findings emphasize the importance of teachers creating emotionally supportive learning environments that could help lower the affective filter and nurture better language learning outcomes. With these, further research involving more diverse student populations that focuses more on individual experiences and exploring additional foreign languages is recommended.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Spanish is rapidly emerging as a strategic choice in foreign language education due to its widespread use, linguistic accessibility, and growing economic relevance. As one of the most spoken languages globally, Spanish provides learners with access to diverse regions and cultures across multiple continents (Ardila, 2020). Moreover, its value extends beyond communication; proficiency in Spanish is increasingly linked to academic and professional advantages. For instance, second-language Spanish speakers

are projected to gain a 1.5% earnings bonus over their careers, reflecting the language's rising value in global labor markets (Parayno et al., 2023).

In addition to these practical benefits, learning Spanish contributes to the development of critical cognitive and social competencies. Specifically, it nurtures intercultural awareness, enhances memory and problem-solving abilities, and broadens learners' global perspectives (Al-Mutairi, 2024; Muñoz Flecher et al., 2024). However, despite these advantages, successful acquisition of a foreign language, including Spanish, relies not only on instructional quality and exposure but also significantly on affective factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. In this regard, Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis provides a valuable framework, suggesting that emotional variables act as a mental "filter" that can either facilitate or hinder language input and acquisition (Al-Mutairi, 2024; Bao & Liu, 2021; Liu, 2023). When the affective filter is low, learners are more likely to absorb and internalize language effectively; conversely, a high filter can create psychological barriers that obstruct learning (Kiruthiga, 2022; Wang, 2024).

Among these affective factors, motivation is widely recognized as a key predictor of second language learning success. Learners with strong motivation, whether intrinsic (driven by interest and enjoyment), instrumental (oriented toward practical goals), or integrative (seeking cultural connection), are more likely to persist and perform well (Bao & Liu, 2021; Chen, 2022; Liu, 2023). In the context of Spanish, motivational factors may be further influenced by the language's global presence, cultural richness, and professional utility. Therefore, teachers play a critical role in sustaining motivation by connecting language learning to students' personal aspirations, incorporating meaningful cultural content, and providing regular, constructive feedback.

Equally important is the role of self-confidence in language learning. Learners with high self-esteem are more likely to participate actively, take communicative risks, and engage with learning challenges (Namaziandost et al., 2024; Ramadan Elbaoui Shaddad & Jember, 2024). In contrast, those with low confidence may avoid speaking, fear making mistakes, or withdraw from class activities (Buscagan et al., 2023; Sanesi, 2023). This highlights that confidence is shaped by both internal beliefs and external reinforcement, underscoring the importance of supportive teaching practices, personalized encouragement, and opportunities for successful communication. Guale Parrales (2022) also reported that teacher interference in the learning process can evoke negative emotions in students, thereby affecting their learning outcomes. Similarly, a study by Buscagan et al. (2023) found that learners were particularly afraid of making mistakes during evaluations, which contributed to reduced self-confidence. These findings point to the crucial role of teacher behavior and feedback in shaping students' emotional responses to language learning. Further studies suggest that learners' attitudes toward the subject and their interactions with teachers significantly influence both their willingness to participate and their confidence in using the language (Guo & Liu, 2022).

Finally, anxiety—particularly language-related anxiety—is considered one of the most detrimental affective variables. Speaking anxiety and performance-related stress can significantly hinder language processing, reduce classroom participation, and

negatively affect achievement (Al-Mutairi, 2024; Jawed et al., 2024). Common sources include fear of making mistakes, negative evaluation, and limited vocabulary. Notably, in Spanish language classrooms—especially within higher education contexts—these anxieties may be heightened by peer comparison or diverse classroom dynamics. To address this, effective strategies include collaborative activities, positive reinforcement, culturally responsive instruction, and having a classroom culture where errors are viewed as natural and essential parts of the learning process (Bhanu & Kumar, 2023; Liu, 2023).

While existing literature robustly supports the role of affective factors in successful language acquisition, particularly motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety as outlined by Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, critical gaps persist in how these variables manifest in specific learner populations. In the Philippine context, researchers have documented persistent challenges among students learning Spanish as a foreign language (SFL), particularly in terms of low motivation and heightened anxiety. Students often view Spanish as lacking career relevance, leading to motivational deficits (Parayno et al., 2023; Lear & Reyes, 2023). Simultaneously, anxiety, especially that stemming from fear of negative evaluation and communicative breakdowns, is widely reported as a major barrier to performance (Fernandez, 2023; Buscagan et al., 2023). These affective barriers are further compounded by linguistic difficulties, including unfamiliar syntax, morphology, and phonological forms in Spanish (Lear & Reyes, 2023; Parayno et al., 2023).

Despite these findings, few studies provide quantitative evaluations of affective filter levels among clearly delineated learner populations. Although some reference teacher education students generally (Fernandez, 2023; Parayno et al., 2023), comparative data across BSED majors, such as English, Mathematics, or Science, remain unavailable. As such, the distinct affective profiles of learners across different BSED specializations in SFL settings have yet to be empirically examined.

Likewise, while many sources cite classroom-related strategies that can help lower the affective filter, such as constructive teacher feedback, inclusive and supportive classroom climates, collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, and appropriate technology use (Bao & Liu, 2021; Bhanu & Kumar, 2023; Jawed et al., 2024; Lear & Reyes, 2023; Sanesi, 2023), hardly any studies capture students' own perceptions of these influences. Since affective responses are subjective and often personal, it is important to empirically examine which factors learners themselves identify as most impactful, rather than relying solely on teacher or researcher-identified best practices. Given the gaps identified in the current literature, this study seeks to address these underexplored dimensions in the context of Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) learning at a state university. Here, the following questions were addressed:

1. What is the level of affective filter in the Spanish as a Foreign Language course among different majors in the BSED program at a state university?
2. What is the level of agreement among BSED students regarding classroom-related factors that influence the affective filter in the Spanish as a Foreign Language course?

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a descriptive-comparative design. Quantitative research was deemed appropriate as the study aimed to collect numerical data on learners' attitudes and motivation in learning Spanish as a foreign language and to statistically analyze group differences across various specializations in the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) program. The descriptive aspect allowed the researchers to systematically characterize the emotional and motivational attributes of pre-service teachers, while the comparative component facilitated the examination of statistically significant differences among students from different academic specializations. The overall process followed in conducting the quantitative-comparative research is illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Overview of the Study's Quantitative Descriptive-Comparative Research Process

The researchers conducted the study at a college within a state university in the Philippines that provides foreign language courses, specifically Spanish, to BSED students. The researchers used Slovin's formula to determine the appropriate sample size from a total population of 254 BSED students across six specialization areas:

English (52), Math (45), Science (42), Filipino (35), Values Education (40), and Social Sciences (40).

After obtaining the total sample size, proportional stratified sampling was used to ensure fair representation from each specialization area. The number of samples per group was calculated based on each subgroup's proportion within the total population, resulting in the following distribution: English (32), Math (27), Science (26), Filipino (22), Values Education (24), and Social Sciences (24). This method helped minimize selection bias and enhance the representativeness of the sample.

A structured survey was utilized to systematically measure emotional and pedagogical variables in alignment with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. The primary instrument was an adapted version of Robert C. Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), originally consisting of 20 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." While maintaining the original structure and intent of the AMTB, the survey was expanded to 30 items to better reflect the characteristics of the study population and the local cultural context. Items 1–20 assessed the affective filter levels in Spanish as a foreign language across BSED majors, while Items 21–30 measured students' agreement on classroom-related factors influencing the affective filter. The complete list of items is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey Items on Affective Filter and Classroom Factors in Spanish

Learning	
Item No.	Survey Statement
<i>Affective Filter Levels of BSED Students in Spanish as a Foreign Language</i>	
Item 1	Spanish is one of my favorite courses.
Item 2	I have a strong desire to know all aspects (culture, language, etc.) of Spanish.
Item 3	I would rather spend more time in Spanish class than in other subjects.
Item 4	Spanish is a very important part of the school program.
Item 5	I enjoy learning Spanish even outside the classroom.
Item 6	I plan to continue studying Spanish in the future.
Item 7	I feel proud to have improved my Spanish.
Item 8	I find Spanish useful in real-life situations.
Item 9	I want to be fluent in Spanish one day.
Item 10	I look forward to attending my Spanish class.
Item 11	I feel confident when asked to speak Spanish in class.
Item 12	I feel embarrassed to volunteer or answer in Spanish class.
Item 13	I feel calm when introducing myself in Spanish.
Item 14	I worry that other students might laugh at me when I speak Spanish.
Item 15	I get nervous when speaking in Spanish class.
Item 16	I feel relaxed while learning Spanish.
Item 17	I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking Spanish.
Item 18	I feel comfortable asking questions in Spanish class.
Item 19	I try to stay calm even if I don't understand everything in class.
Item 20	I believe I can improve in Spanish if I keep trying.
<i>Student Agreement on Classroom-Related Factors Influencing the Affective Filter</i>	
Item 21	My Spanish teacher teaches in an interesting and engaging way.
Item 22	My Spanish teacher inspires me to do better.
Item 23	My Spanish teacher makes learning Spanish fun.

Item No.	Survey Statement
Item 24	I feel supported by my Spanish teacher.
Item 25	I can ask my Spanish teacher for help when I don't understand something.
Item 26	My Spanish teacher explains things clearly.
Item 27	The atmosphere in our Spanish class helps me learn.
Item 28	I enjoy learning with my classmates in Spanish class.
Item 29	I feel safe to make mistakes in our Spanish class.
Item 30	I really like my Spanish teacher.

Moreover, the instrument underwent expert validation and reliability testing, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.943, which indicates excellent internal consistency based on the standard interpretation scale (≥ 0.9 – Excellent; 0.8–0.89 – Excellent; 0.7–0.79 – Acceptable; 0.6–0.69 – Questionable; 0.5–0.59 – Poor; < 0.5 – Unacceptable). We sent an email to Dr. Gardner requesting permission to use the instrument, only to discover later that he had passed away. Nevertheless, the researchers remain committed to properly citing and acknowledging his contributions.

Data collection followed a systematic process to ensure ethical compliance and effective distribution. A formal request letter was sent to the dean of the college to obtain permission to conduct the study among BSED students. To maximize accessibility, the survey was distributed in two formats: Google Forms for digital responses and printed questionnaires for students who preferred or required paper-based formats. Class representatives were tasked with distributing the surveys to six different sections of BSED students. A one-week period was allotted for completion.

Before distribution, the researchers provided detailed instructions to the class representatives to ensure consistent administration of the instrument and to reduce misunderstandings. This was necessary to preserve the reliability and validity of the responses. Upon conclusion of the data collection, responses from both formats were compiled using Microsoft Excel and then organized and cleaned for consistency and accuracy. The finalized dataset was submitted to a qualified statistician for analysis to ensure accurate interpretation in line with the study's objectives.

The organized dataset was analyzed using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the levels of learners' affective filters and their attitudes and motivation toward learning Spanish. To interpret these results meaningfully, the researchers adopted the scale range and interpretation from the study of Cabigon and Costales (2024), while modifying and developing their own descriptors, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Interpretation of the Level of Affective Filters and Level of Agreement

Scale Range	Interpretation	Description	
		Level of Affective Filter	Level of Agreement
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Learners experience significant emotional or psychological barriers to language learning.	Students strongly agree that classroom-related factors significantly influence the affective filter in the Spanish course.

Scale Range	Interpretation	Description	
		Level of Affective Filter	Level of Agreement
3.40 – 4.19	High	Learners face considerable affective challenges that may hinder their language acquisition.	Students generally agree that classroom-related factors impact the affective filter, though the influence may be less pronounced.
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	Learners experience some affective factors, but these do not overwhelmingly disrupt learning.	Students show moderate agreement, indicating some recognition of the influence of classroom-related factors' influence, with noticeable variability.
1.80 – 2.59	Low	Learners encounter minimal emotional barriers in the language learning process.	Students show limited agreement on the influence of classroom-related factors on the affective filter.
1.00 – 1.79	Very Low	Learners have very few or no affective hindrances, indicating a positive learning environment.	Students strongly disagree or are uncertain about the impact of classroom-related factors on the affective filter in the course.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This part of the study presents the results based on the research questions. It focuses on two main areas: the level of affective filter among BSED students learning Spanish, and their level of agreement with certain classroom-related factors—such as teacher support, peer interaction, and the classroom environment—that may influence their learning experience.

Affective Filter Levels of BSED Students in Spanish as a Foreign Language

Table 3 presents the overall level of affective filter among BSED student teachers across different majors in the Spanish as a Foreign Language course. All specializations reported a moderate level of affective filter, suggesting that students experience mild emotional or personal barriers that may influence their language learning. Besides, this consistency across groups reflects a shared experience of manageable affective challenges in the Spanish classroom.

Table 3. Overall Level of Affective Filter per Major

Specialization	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
English	3.1000	0.561	Moderate
Filipino	2.9045	0.477	Moderate
Math	2.9778	0.572	Moderate
Science	3.0327	0.571	Moderate
Social Studies	3.0333	0.718	Moderate
Values	3.0937	0.596	Moderate

The overall mean score of 3.0237 indicates a moderate affective filter among BSED students, meaning they do experience emotional challenges like anxiety, fluctuating motivation, and occasional dips in confidence. However, these aren't severe enough to seriously hinder their learning. The standard deviation of 0.5869 suggests some variation in how students perceive these emotional factors—most share similar experiences, though some may struggle more due to personal or academic factors.

Among the majors, English ($M = 3.1000$) and Values Education ($M = 3.0937$) students reported the highest affective filter levels, still moderate, but slightly above others. Their low agreement with items like *"I would rather spend more time in Spanish class than in other subjects"* (English: 2.23; Values: 2.33) hints at limited engagement. Confidence-related responses were also low, especially for *"I feel confident when asked to speak Spanish"* and *"I feel comfortable asking questions"*, with both groups scoring around 2.36 to 2.58. These consistent responses reflect feelings of anxiety and low confidence, explaining their relatively higher affective filters.

On the other hand, Filipino majors had the lowest affective filter score ($M = 2.9045$). They expressed strong emotional resilience, agreeing with statements like *"I try to stay calm even if I don't understand everything in class"* ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.158$) and *"I believe I can improve in Spanish if I keep trying"* ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.259$). These responses reflect a growth mindset and emotional stability, which likely help reduce stress and increase confidence in learning.

Meanwhile, Social Studies majors showed the widest range of responses ($SD = 0.7180$), pointing to more varied emotional experiences. While some reported low motivation (e.g., *"I plan to continue studying Spanish"*, $M = 2.04$), others showed high levels of optimism and self-belief (*"I believe I can improve if I keep trying"*, $M = 4.42$). This suggests that classroom dynamics or personal factors may have a stronger influence on this group, leading to a broader range of affective responses.

Student Agreement on Classroom-Related Factors Influencing the Affective Filter

Table 4 presents the overall level of agreement among BSED student teachers regarding classroom-related factors that influence their affective filter in the Spanish as a Foreign Language course. These include aspects such as teacher support, classroom environment, peer interaction, and instructional clarity. Most majors showed high levels of agreement, highlighting the importance of these factors in shaping students' emotional and learning experiences in the classroom.

Table 4. Overall Level of Agreement per Major

Specialization	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
English	3.4125	0.18088	High
Filipino	3.6045	0.20380	High
Math	3.2963	0.22325	Moderate
Science	3.7577	0.15101	High
Social Studies	3.9458	0.17373	High
Values	3.6875	0.20255	High

The results show a generally high level of agreement among BSED student teachers regarding classroom-related factors that influence their affective filter in learning Spanish. Across all majors, students recognized the importance of supportive classroom conditions—such as engaging teaching methods, teacher encouragement, and a safe learning environment—in reducing emotional barriers and promoting learning.

Social Studies majors reported the highest overall agreement ($M = 3.9458$), with consistently high to very high ratings across all items. Notably, they gave a very high rating ($M = 4.25$) to the statement “*I can ask my Spanish teacher for help when I don’t understand something*,” reflecting a strong sense of accessibility and teacher support. Science majors also demonstrated strong agreement ($M = 3.7577$), particularly appreciating their teacher’s clarity ($M = 3.96$) and the overall classroom atmosphere ($M = 3.73$).

Values and Filipino majors followed closely, with means of 3.6875 and 3.6045, respectively. Both groups showed high agreement across most items, though Filipino majors expressed slightly lower comfort in making mistakes ($M = 3.32$), suggesting some hesitancy in class participation. English majors had the lowest within the “high agreement” range ($M = 3.4125$), with more moderate responses to items like “*My Spanish teacher teaches in an interesting and engaging way*” ($M = 3.09$) and “*explains things clearly*” ($M = 3.25$), hinting at more neutral perceptions of teaching engagement.

In contrast, Math majors reported a moderate level of agreement overall ($M = 3.2963$), with relatively lower scores on teacher motivation ($M = 3.22$), peer learning enjoyment ($M = 3.30$), and willingness to make mistakes ($M = 3.07$). These findings suggest that while most student teachers positively recognize classroom-related factors that ease emotional barriers, some majors—particularly Social Studies and Science—may benefit more from supportive classroom dynamics, while others, like Math and English, may need more targeted instructional engagement and emotional support.

Discussion

In response to the first research question, which aimed to determine the emotional and motivational barriers that may influence language acquisition, the findings reveal that BSED student teachers across all majors experience a moderate level of affective filter in their Spanish as a Foreign Language course. This indicates that while students encounter emotional challenges—such as anxiety, low confidence, or fluctuating motivation—these are generally manageable and not severe enough to significantly hinder learning.

However, important distinctions emerge across majors. English and values education majors reported slightly higher affective filter levels, likely influenced by lower engagement and classroom confidence. Their limited inclination to participate actively or seek help may be shaped by disciplinary expectations or a more reserved interactional style. [Ding and Wang \(2024\)](#) note that teacher support alone is insufficient when students—especially those in analytical fields like English—do not locate the lessons intellectually stimulating. Without cognitive engagement, emotional support may not fully translate to motivation.

By contrast, Filipino majors showed the lowest affective filter level, characterized by strong emotional resilience and belief in personal improvement. These students likely benefit from the linguistic closeness between Filipino and Spanish, as well as collaborative learning environments. Such findings are consistent with [Inada \(2022\)](#), who noted that students working in supportive peer settings experience less anxiety and more sustained focus. In addition, [Kazemian \(2022\)](#) emphasized how cognates can reduce emotional and cognitive load, allowing students to make meaningful connections between known and new language forms.

Although both science and social studies majors are categorized under a moderate affective filter, they displayed diverging patterns. Science majors reported high agreement across classroom-related factors, such as clarity of instruction, teacher encouragement, and collaborative atmosphere. These results support [Cam et al. \(2022\)](#), whose study on structured pedagogical models showed that clear, engaging instruction enhances language confidence and reduces cognitive strain, particularly among students with systematic learning preferences. On the other hand, social studies majors showed the widest variation in affective filter responses, indicating that motivation and personal learning background significantly shape their experiences. This variation supports [Fatmawati et al. \(2023\)](#), who advocated for differentiated instruction to address diverse student needs in the classroom.

A notable finding is the consistent and strong agreement among social studies students regarding their ability to seek help from teachers, an element associated with lower anxiety and increased participation. This supports Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the importance of scaffolding and social interaction in fostering cognitive and emotional development. [Wibowo et al. \(2025\)](#) further stress that teacher responsiveness creates emotional safety, allowing learners to operate confidently within their Zone of Proximal Development.

The findings reveal an encouraging pattern in addressing the second research question, which explored the level of agreement among BSED student teachers regarding classroom-related factors that influence the affective filter. Across all specializations, students generally expressed strong agreement, indicating a shared recognition of the importance of supportive learning environments in reducing emotional barriers to learning Spanish.

Students across the board responded positively to classroom elements such as teacher encouragement, peer collaboration, instructional clarity, and an inviting classroom atmosphere. These factors are widely recognized in second language acquisition research as essential in lowering affective barriers and promoting successful language learning. Social studies majors stood out with the highest level of agreement, reflecting strong satisfaction with their classroom experiences. Their responses highlighted a notable appreciation for teacher accessibility and responsiveness, suggesting that feeling supported during moments of confusion plays a vital role in reducing anxiety and promoting active classroom participation.

Science majors also demonstrated a high level of agreement, especially valuing clear instruction and an engaging learning environment. These findings align with research

indicating that students who prefer logical and structured learning benefit greatly from environments that are both organized and emotionally supportive. As supported by [Cam et al. \(2022\)](#), structured classroom practices that include clear instructional delivery and meaningful peer interaction are instrumental in reducing cognitive and emotional barriers, particularly in language learning contexts.

Values and Filipino majors also expressed high levels of agreement with classroom-related factors. Their responses suggest that they locate their Spanish classrooms as both emotionally supportive and intellectually stimulating. However, Filipino majors showed some hesitation around making mistakes in class, which may point to lingering anxieties about public speaking or fear of negative evaluation. Addressing these concerns may further improve their comfort and engagement.

By contrast, English and math majors showed relatively lower levels of agreement. English majors appeared more neutral in their views on teaching engagement and clarity, possibly reflecting a disconnect between instructional style and their academic expectations. Math majors, while still acknowledging the role of classroom factors, were less enthusiastic about aspects like peer interaction and emotional safety, suggesting that these elements may not consistently align with their learning preferences or classroom experiences.

Hence, these findings highlight that while most BSED students benefit from supportive classroom environments, there are noticeable differences across disciplines in how these factors are perceived and internalized. This emphasizes the value of differentiated teaching strategies that respond to the unique emotional and cognitive needs of each group. Teachers may consider integrating more interactive, empathetic, and clearly structured approaches, particularly for math and English majors, to ensure that all students can fully engage and thrive in foreign language learning environments.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings highlight that the affective filter plays a significant role in the language learning experience of Bachelor of Secondary Education students in the Spanish as a Foreign Language course. While emotional barriers like anxiety, fluctuating motivation, and inconsistent confidence are present, they are generally moderate. This suggests that while students face emotional challenges, they are not overwhelming. A key takeaway is the strong agreement among students that classroom factors—particularly teacher support and the learning environment—help reduce these emotional barriers.

We conclude that a supportive classroom environment effectively addresses emotional challenges in language learning. Teachers who provide clear, engaging instruction and nurture a positive, encouraging atmosphere can help lower students' affective filter, facilitating better engagement with the language and improving proficiency. These findings underscore the importance of valuing an environment that meets both the emotional and academic needs of students. By tailoring teaching strategies and materials to the diverse needs of learners, teachers can reduce anxiety and boost motivation, which ultimately supports language acquisition.

Future research should expand the study to include a broader range of students from different backgrounds and explore other foreign languages to further clarify how emotional factors affect language learning. It would also be valuable to examine whether the impact of the affective filter differs across various language contexts or if unique emotional challenges emerge. Additionally, using qualitative methods like interviews or focus groups could provide further insights into students' personal experiences and emotional barriers.

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