A Review on the Role of Moral Emotions in EFL Learning

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Abstract
Moral emotions are increasingly recognized as a crucial component of learning a second or foreign language. This paper presents an in-depth evaluation of the research on the subject, covering the numerous moral emotions that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students may experience, their effects on language learning results, and the individual and cultural variables that may contribute to these emotions. The review draws on various studies done in different countries and with different populations to highlight moral emotions that EFL learners frequently experience and that can have positive and negative effects on their motivation, engagement, and performance in English learning. These emotions include empathy, sympathy, guilt, shame, gratitude, and respect. The results revealed that cultural and individual elements, including teacher-student connections, learner beliefs and attitudes, and collectivistic cultural norms, significantly influence how moral emotions are formed in EFL learners. The results also highlight the importance of establishing reliable and valid tools for assessing moral emotions as a first step in understanding their function in EFL learning and creating efficient pedagogical strategies to encourage positive moral emotions. Finally, this review suggests a few areas for further research and highlights some implications of the findings for EFL teachers and academics.
Keywords: Moral Emotions, Learning a Second Language, Learning a Foreign Language, Students, EFL Learners

Introduction
When individuals believe that a moral rule or principle has been broken, whether by their conduct or through the behavior of others, they experience moral feelings. The potential influence that moral emotions may have on language learners' attitudes, behaviors, and intercultural competence is what makes this issue important and relevant. While second language acquisition research has extensively examined the emotions of language learners,

moral emotions, which are connected to moral principles and values, received far less attention. However, they influence language learners' attitudes, actions, and intercultural competence. To better understand the complex relationship between emotions and language learning and to guide the creation of more effective language teaching techniques, this review paper will examine the literature on the moral emotions of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

Several studies have examined the connection between moral emotions and intercultural competence and found that moral emotions, including empathy, respect, and openness, are crucial parts of intercultural competence (Calloway-Thomas et al., 2017). Researchers have also explored the connection between moral emotions and motivation. It has been found that honest feelings like guilt and shame may significantly impact language learners' drive to study the language (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Shohamy, 2022). Further investigations have examined how moral emotions affect the results of EFL learning. For instance, it was shown that gratitude was the determination of Korean EFL learners to study English, while feelings of guilt decreased the willingness of Japanese EFL learners to participate in classroom discussions (Wilang, 2022; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). Moreover, emotions such as guilt, shame, and gratitude, have been proven to impact how well Chinese EFL learners communicate morally (Yan & Li, 2021).

There is still controversy on the effects of these moral emotions and the variables that affect them, considering their substantial role in EFL learning. Japanese EFL learners often experience feelings of guilt and embarrassment when making grammatical errors in their written work, whereas Chinese EFL learners tend to demonstrate empathy and sympathy when reading narratives concerning intercultural challenges (McConachy, 2023). These findings show the complexity of the relationship between moral emotions and language learning outcomes.

A key area of inquiry in language acquisition and instruction research revolves around the examination of moral emotions as it holds the potential for advancing our understanding of the nuanced interaction between emotions and language acquisition, thereby informing the development of more productive language teaching methodologies. The results from such investigations have significant implications for language learners, as well as for scholars, educators, and policymakers.

The field of English for Speakers of Other Languages (EFL) education comprises a diverse range of students, each bringing their unique backgrounds, experiences, and characteristics to the process of learning a language. Gender stands out as a crucial influencer among these elements, influencing not only how individuals engage with language acquisition but also shaping their experiences and achievements within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Griffiths 2018; Kendall & Tannen, 2001).

Furthermore, Alavi et al (2017) explore the relationship between family functioning and trait emotional intelligence among youth, highlighting the importance of familial influences on emotional development. This emphasis on emotional intelligence and its connection to interpersonal dynamics aligns with the understanding that moral emotions, such as empathy,

compassion, and gratitude, play pivotal roles in shaping individuals' social interactions and ethical decision-making processes.

In the context of EFL learning, understanding and harnessing moral emotions are crucial not only for language acquisition but also for fostering positive interpersonal relationships and cultural sensitivity. Students with higher levels of emotional intelligence, influenced in part by family dynamics as discussed in Alavi et al.'s study, may exhibit greater empathy towards diverse cultural perspectives, leading to more successful language learning experiences in multicultural classrooms.

Lee et al (2021) study aimed to enhance overall educational experiences for language learners by considering emotional, pedagogical, and practical factors. They emphasize the importance of incorporating these elements into language teaching practices to create more engaging, authentic, and effective learning environments. Educators and researchers can develop comprehensive strategies that address various aspects of language education, ultimately benefiting language learners and improving teaching practices in this domain.

Moreover, by considering the interplay between emotional factors, motivation, assessment criteria Dai et al (2023), and educational outcomes, educators and researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how to support holistic learning experiences in diverse disciplines such as language learning and design.

Males and females frequently demonstrate distinct preferences for particular learning methods. For example, females tend to favor collaborative and communicative techniques Maesin et al (2009), which emphasize interaction and social participation in activities related to language learning, while according to Griffiths (2018), males, may lean towards competitive or individualistic learning styles, prioritizing task completion and achievement. Moreover, gender differences extend to the tactics employed by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in a language study. Research has shown that females often use metacognitive and social strategies, such as planning, monitoring, and seeking assistance on the other hand males may rely more on cognitive methods, such as memorizing and repetition (Griffiths, 2008). These gender-based disparities show the importance of tailoring instructional approaches to accommodate diverse student preferences within EFL classrooms.

The findings of Alavi et al.'s (2020) study can be connected to the broader context of moral emotions in EFL learning. Family functioning and attachment patterns can significantly shape individuals' emotional development, including their ability to empathize, express gratitude, and navigate feelings of guilt or shame—all of which are key components of moral emotions discussed in EFL learning contexts. Cultural differences highlighted in Alavi et al.'s (202) research also underscore the importance of considering diverse cultural perspectives when studying moral emotions in language learning environments.

The relevance of moral emotions in language learning intersects with the psychometric properties of the school climate scale (Rezaeisharif et al., 2022) where the crucial role of emotional and social factors in educational settings is acknowledged.
Beyond learning styles and tactics, gender influences interpersonal interactions within the classroom. Kendall and Tannen's 2001 study reveals diverse communication styles and

engagement patterns among male and female EFL learners. Males tend to dominate discussions and assert themselves more assertively, whereas females may adopt communication patterns that are more cooperative and collaborative (Kramsch, 2006). These gender dynamics can also impact students' perceptions of themselves and their peers, affecting motivation and sense of self-efficacy. For example, male students may perceive themselves as more adept or competent in particular language skills, such as grammar or pronunciation, which can result in varying degrees of self-assurance and engagement (Pavlenko & Driagina-Haskins, 2011). Addressing gender gaps in classroom participation and fostering an inclusive learning environment is crucial for ensuring equal opportunities for all EFL students.

This review paper aims to synthesize existing research on moral emotions among EFL learners, emphasizing their various manifestations, functions, and implications for language learning outcomes. The objectives include: (1) defining the categories of moral emotions investigated in EFL concepts and their conceptualizations; (2) examining the effects of moral emotions on EFL learners' motivation, engagement, and intercultural competence; (3) exploring the cultural and personal factors that influence EFL learners' moral emotions; and (4) proposing fields for further research on EFL learners' moral emotions.

Methodology

This study conducted a comprehensive search of online databases like Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, and PsycINFO using key phrases like "moral emotions," "language learners," "English as a foreign language," and "second language acquisition" spanning the years 2000 and 2023. The aim was to identify relevant studies on moral feelings among EFL learners. Inclusion criteria required studies to examine moral feelings among EFL learners, be presented in English, utilize quantitative or qualitative research designs, and undergo peer review.

A total of 50 papers were identified as meeting the inclusion criteria. These papers covered a range of topics, including the conceptualization and operationalization of moral emotions, their impact on language learning outcomes, the cultural and individual influences on moral emotions, and the development of measurement instruments for moral emotions among EFL learners. Theoretical frameworks varied across studies, with some drawing on theories such as social cognitive theory.. his review provides a comprehensive overview of the literature on moral emotions among EFL students, offering insights to inform the development of more efficient language teaching methods.

Findings

The function of moral emotions in EFL language learning environments has drawn growing interest from the field of second language acquisition (SLA) research (add references). This literature review explores how moral emotions influence various aspects of language acquisition, including motivation, intercultural competence, and language usage. Among the studies included, a recurring pattern emerges regarding the positive impact of certain moral emotions, such as empathy and appreciation, on language learning outcomes. For example, recent research indicates that empathy contributes to positive attitudes toward language acquisition and enhances cross-cultural communication skills. Conversely, the negative implications of moral emotions, such as guilt and shame, on language acquisition outcomes

are also highlighted. The feeling of shame and guilt can lead to low self-esteem and impede language learning progress (Ahadzadeh et al., 2018). Additionally, the research has emphasized the significance of cultural and individual factors, such as collectivistic cultural norms and the quality of teacher-student interactions, in shaping the moral emotions experienced by EFL learners.

The main findings of the studies included reviewed can be organized into the following themes:

Types of Moral Emotions

Moral emotions such as empathy, sympathy, guilt, shame, disgust, gratitude, and respect are found to be important to the experiences of EFL learners. Research indicated that these emotions impact many facets of language learning and teaching, cross-cultural interaction, and conflict resolution contributing significantly to an individual's moral growth (add references).

Based on the Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) proposed by Graham et al (2013) five main moral domains have been identified: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. These domains, deemed universal across cultures and evolutionarily adapted, form the basis for individuals' moral judgments and emotions.

Other Studies have explored the impact of moral emotions such as empathy, compassion, guilt, shame, disgust, gratitude, and respect, on EFL 'learners' language acquisition processes (add references). When people believe that their activities or the conduct of others have violated a moral standard or principle and have a negative impact on their reputation or sense of self, they experience shame, a self-conscious feeling (Muris & Meesters, 2014; Tangney, 1991). Emotions of shame, guilt, and a desire to conceal or escape from social settings are frequently present alongside feelings of shame. Shame has been examined concerning several moral development factors, including ethical behavior, moral reasoning, and intercultural competence (Mohammed, 2021; Killen & Smetana, 2013). Shame has been discovered to be significantly correlated with the motivation of EFL learners (Yang et al., 2021, for example).

Similarly, guilt is a self-conscious feeling people experience when they believe their actions hurt someone or breached a moral standard or ideal (Tangney, 1991). Guilt and shame are frequently present when someone feels guilty. The relationship between guilt and different facets of moral development, including ethical thinking, moral behavior, and intercultural competence, has been researched (Yang et al., 2021). However, guilt and shame might encourage learners to reflect on their errors and improve their language learning performance (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Empathy characterized by the ability to understand and share others' emotions, plays a crucial role in moral growth by fostering compassion and care (Tan, 2022; Hoffman, 2000). Research has examined empathy's influence on moral development, including ethical thinking and intercultural competence (Muller et al., 2022). As they enable students to comprehend and value other cultural viewpoints and values, empathy and sympathy have been proven to

facilitate the appreciation of diverse cultural viewpoints and values, thereby enhancing intercultural competence (Barrett et al., 2014).

When people believe that their activities or the conduct of others are against a moral rule or principle about holiness or purity, disgust is an honest feeling that is aroused (Rozin et al., 2008). Shame is a defense mechanism against possible danger or contamination and is frequently accompanied by sensations of repulsion. Shame has been investigated with some moral growth processes, such as moral behavior, moral thinking, and intergroup relations (Chapman & Anderson, 2013).

Gratitude and respect, when directed towards the target language and its speakers, have been shown to foster positive attitudes, increasing motivation (Amini & Amini, 2017) and engagement in language acquisition (Ni et al., 2015).

Impact on Language Learning
Research has demonstrated that moral emotions influence language learning outcomes both positively and negatively. In various circumstances, including classroom conversations, writing assignments, and language evaluations, researchers have examined how moral emotions affect learners' use of language (e.g., Mohammed, 2021; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007).

Cultural and Individual Factors
Studies have also examined how cultural and individual factors shape the moral emotions of EFL learners. For instance, a learner's experience and expression of moral emotions may alter depending on cultural norms and ethical beliefs (Shohamy, 2022), while individual differences such as personality traits and language proficiency impact moral emotions and language learning outcomes (Lu, 2010).

For example, Krettenauer and Jia's (2013) study examined how Chinese and Canadian teenagers' expectations of moral emotions varied across cultures. The study found that Chinese adolescents anticipated stronger moral emotions for themselves compared to Canadian teenagers, reflecting cultural variations in the importance placed on interpersonal harmony. The study recommends the importance of considering cultural differences when investigating the emotions and feelings of diverse groups.

A preliminary study by Koon et al (2023) contributed insights into psychological factors impacting education by exploring how cultural values, specifically using Hofstede's framework, influence Malaysian university students' attitudes toward help-seeking. They highlighted the intricate interplay between psychological factors, cultural contexts, and educational experiences, offering perspectives for educators and policymakers to create more effective and culturally sensitive learning environments that cater to students' emotional and cultural needs, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes and student well-being.

Measurement of Moral Emotions
Another significant aspect of moral emotions in ELF learners is the development and validation of measurement tools. various tests have been created to assess moral emotions across different language learning situations, including online and blended educational

settings. Instruments such as the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ) Zhang et al (2016), Moral Identity Scale (MIS) e.g., Yusoff et al (2022), Emotions Profile Index (EPI) e.g., Fiorentino et al (1970), Self-Conscious Emotions Questionnaire (SCEQ) (e.g., Thomas et al, 2020), and Test of Self-Conscious effect (TOSCA) e.g., Zaccari et al (2020) have been utilized to measure moral emotions and their impact on language learning outcomes. The widely utilized Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ) assesses people's moral intuitions in five areas: caring, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity. It arouses honest feelings, including compassion, rage, and contempt (Graham et al., 2011).

Rahimi et al (2016) share a common focus on understanding and improving aspects of language learning and assessment. contribute to enhancing language education practices, focusing on the broader assessment and validity considerations crucial for effective language learning and evaluation strategies. Integrating insights from such studies can lead to more comprehensive and informed approaches to language teaching, assessment, and curriculum development.

Ng et al (2020) focused on the practical aspect of language education by developing an ESL reading assessment tool tailored for preschoolers in a specific context, Malaysia by offering a tangible tool that can aid educators in assessing and improving language skills among young learners, bridging theory and practice in language education research and implementation.

Cai's work (2021) examined the connections between Chinese EFL students' perceptions of instructor rapport and their willingness to communicate (WTC). Structural equation modeling revealed a positive association between WTC, teacher receptivity, and teacher-student rapport, emphasizing the importance of positive teacher-student interactions in fostering WTC among EFL learners.

To measure an individual's moral identity researchers often employ the Moral Identity Scale (MIS), a self-report tool designed to measure the significance of morality within one's self-concept (Aquino & Reed, 2002). This scale includes various factors to evaluate people's feelings in various emotional contexts, such as guilt and shame. Similarly, the Emotions Profile Index (EPI) serves as a self-report instrument assessing individuals' emotional responses across diverse contexts, including moral situations (Seifert & Feliks, 2019; Fiorentino et al., 1970).

A self-report instrument called the Self-Conscious Emotions Questionnaire (SCEQ) is utilized to evaluate individuals' self-conscious emotions, including guilt, shame, pride, and humiliation. It contains things that evoke reactions to circumstances that might cause particular emotions to surface (Tangney et al., 2007). Similarly, the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) is a self-report measure designed to evaluate how individuals react to hypothetical situations that cause self-conscious feelings like guilt and shame. Concerning various events, participants are asked to assess how likely they are to experience certain emotions (Tangney et al., 1996).

This review study has stressed the significance of moral emotions in contexts of EFL language acquisition and the necessity of more research in this field. The results highlighted the importance of moral emotions on language learning outcomes, the cultural and individual

factors that affect moral emotions, and the need for a more specific method of evaluating individuals' moral emotions. By incorporating moral emotions into language teaching and learning, educators can cultivate more inclusive and empathetic language learning environments, thus nurturing the moral growth of EFL students. Educators must be aware of the cultural and individual factors influencing moral emotions among EFL learners and adapt their pedagogical approaches accordingly. They can also incorporate moral education into language instruction to encourage a learner's healthy moral growth. Moreover, to give a complete picture of students' language learning processes, the moral emotions of EFL learners should also be assessed as part of language evaluation methods.

Discussion

The findings of this review article stress how crucial it is to consider moral emotions while teaching and studying a language and to design learning settings that encourage healthy moral emotions and aid the emotional growth of EFL students. Language educators are encouraged to tailor activities and curricula to address earners' emotional needs, thereby promoting constructive emotional growth. By acknowledging and accommodating the myriad moral emotions experienced by EFL learners, teachers can create a more supportive and empathetic learning atmosphere. For instance, incorporating discussions on ethical principles or social challenges may enhance empathy and respect, while facilitating reflections on setbacks may encourage productive self-reflection and growth.

Moreover, the analysis emphasizes the necessity of integrating instruction to promote morally positive feelings in classrooms and aiding the emotional development of EFL students in teacher education programs. Educators can benefit from learning techniques for fostering a safe and respectful learning environment and encouraging the development of competencies in emotional regulation, which help students effectively control their emotions. By modeling emotionally intelligent behavior and fostering a culture of openness and compassion, teachers play a crucial role in shaping a conducive language learning environment.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of learners' language learning processes, this review recommends incorporating the assessment of EFL learners' moral emotions into language evaluation, and methodology. This may involve employing self-report questionnaires, observing classroom behavior, looking for moral emotion, or identifying moral emotion cues in students' language production. Adjusting instructional approaches to accommodate students' emotional needs and integrating moral emotions into language evaluation techniques can enhance both the learning experience and moral development of EFL students.

However, it's important to acknowledge limitations within this review study, such as the fact that it only included research using English as their primary language, potentially excluding pertinent studies with other languages. In addition, the evaluation only considered EFL students; hence, more investigation is required into the function of moral emotions in various instructional environments. Regardless of these drawbacks, the results of this review paper indicate that language students can foster a more inclusive and compassionate language learning group that supports students' emotional growth and improves their language

learning outcomes by recognizing and promoting positive moral emotions in language teaching and learning.

There have been many studies on moral emotions and their function in language teaching and learning, although other areas have received less attention. Most research has looked primarily at the influence of moral emotions on intercultural competence and has been concerned with teaching EFL. Future research should aim to address these limitations by conducting more inclusive investigations into the role of moral emotions in diverse language learning contexts. Furthermore, there is a need for broader exploration into how cultural variations in moral standards influence the experience and expression of moral emotions among EFL learners. Longitudinal studies could also shed light on the developmental trajectory of moral emotions in language learners and their impact on language acquisition outcomes over time.

In addition, future research avenues could explore the effectiveness of interventions aimed at fostering moral development and cultural competence among EFL learners, as well as employing interdisciplinary approaches drawing from psychology, philosophy, and linguistics to deepen our understanding of EFL learners' moral emotions. Overcoming these constraints will require a more comprehensive and inclusive review of the literature, encompassing studies published in multiple languages and focusing on a wider range of language learners. Ultimately, further investigation into the integration of moral education and language instruction is essential to promote the healthy moral growth of language learners.

Conclusion
An in-depth analysis of the literature on the moral emotions of EFL learners is provided in this review study. Empathy, compassion, guilt, shame, disgust, gratitude, and respect were recognized as important moral emotions felt by EFL learners, and their effects on language learning outcomes were investigated. In addition to discussing the implications of the findings for language teaching and learning, teacher education, evaluation, and material production, the review emphasized the significance of taking cultural and individual aspects into account while attempting to comprehend the moral emotions of EFL learners. The study underlines the necessity for language instructors to improve their knowledge of their students' moral emotions and adopt techniques to foster healthy moral growth. Combining moral and linguistic instruction offers a promising approach to fostering positive moral sentiments among language learners. Language educators may establish a learning environment that promotes positive moral sentiments by encouraging empathy, respect, and open-mindeness toward various cultures and language learners. The evaluation also recommends that instruction on moral emotions and their significance for language teaching and learning be included in teacher education and professional development programs.

This study makes a significant theoretical and contextual contribution to the existing body of knowledge in several key ways. Firstly, by providing an in-depth analysis of the moral emotions experienced by EFL learners, including empathy, compassion, guilt, shame, disgust, gratitude, and respect, the study sheds light on important emotional dimensions often overlooked in language learning research. Understanding the impact of these moral emotions on language learning outcomes enriches our comprehension of the complex interplay between affective factors and linguistic development. Moreover, by highlighting the influence

of cultural and individual differences on the experience and expression of moral emotions in language learning contexts, the study underscores the need for culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogical approaches.

Acknowledgment

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