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Is it a good idea to continue your studies in the US?

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According to Statista.com, the United States was the leading host for international students worldwide in 2022, with approximately one million students enrolled during the academic year. Studying in the U.S. is a dream for many international students driven by the allure of high-quality education and wide scholarship opportunities. Seeking higher education and gaining knowledge from the universities in the US are attracting everyone with their first-class teaching system and prospects for the student's future. However, people are frightened to study in the U.S. because this country is known for expensive tuition fees and living costs for international students. So, is this a good idea to study at a university in the US even though tuition costs are expensive?

The main indisputable advantage is that the USA is one of the leading countries globally with the best quality of education. Local universities consistently rank high in global university assessments due to their commitment to quality education and rigorous academic standards. Institutions like Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and Stanford University topped the 2023 U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings. Furthermore, American degrees enjoy widespread recognition globally, reflecting the high standards of education, accurate academic curriculum, and a research-driven approach prevalent in U.S. universities.

Moreover, the opportunity to apply for scholarships enhances the appeal of studying in the U.S. Scholarships provide financial assistance to cover the costs of college or university education, making it more affordable for students. According to ScholarshipRoar.com, more than 1100 scholarships are available at USA universities for international students for the academic year 2024-2025. Scholarships come in two primary forms: merit-based and need-based. Merit-based scholarships may be awarded for high academic performance or athletic achievements, while need-based scholarships address students' financial needs. Importantly, scholarships represent "free money" as they do not require repayment.

On the other hand, tuition fees, living expenses, and the total cost of living in the United States make it one of the most financially challenging destinations for international students. The burden of student loans and the need to work part-time to cover basic expenses often significantly distract from the main goal of academic activity. In the article about the cost of study in the US by Laura Bridgestock, she mentioned that the average amount students spend throughout a degree is \$99,417. However, the U.S. offers work permits, enabling students to engage in on-campus employment opportunities and, under specific conditions, off-campus work. According to HSBC's report, 85% of students are working in paid employment while studying. In other words, even though tuition and living costs will be expensive, students can support themselves by working in universities.

In conclusion, the decision to continue studying in the US is a multifaceted choice with both advantages and disadvantages. American universities are world leaders in providing higher education because of the most renowned universities located in the US with diplomas recognized worldwide. Even though tuition fees and living costs are expensive, the country and universities provide scholarships and job opportunities to support international students in continuing their studies. Ultimately, studying in the USA depends on careful consideration of individual circumstances and comparing educational opportunities with financial obligations.

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Linguistic fatigue

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Learning a new language is an enriching adventure for people that opens doors to intercultural connections, and it offers cognitive expansion. However, this experience has its challenges for adult language learners. One of these obstacles, and one of the most difficult to overcome, is the spectrum of linguistic fatigue, which is a mental fatigue that usually overshadows the joy or happiness of linguistic discovery and learning. As adults navigate the complexities of language acquisition, the weight of the cognitive load, fear of making mistakes, and the demands of multitasking can make mastering this new language difficult. However, within this linguistic process lies the potential for innovative solutions that can illuminate the path forward and make this a more straightforward task. In this essay, we will explore the complexities of language fatigue in adult language learners, trying to solve this problem by understanding where it arises. Through this research, we aim to influence a new sense of enthusiasm or motivation in the language learning experience, offering a roadmap to overcome obstacles and rediscover passion in learning a new language.

Diving deeper into the challenge of language fatigue in adult language learners, it becomes evident that this phenomenon is not simply tiredness, as it also affects psychological and cognitive factors. Language fatigue manifests as mental exhaustion affecting the entire language learning experience. Adults' cognitive load in language acquisition is substantial, as they face new vocabulary and grammatical structures, cultural nuances, and unknown phonetics. For example, the fear of making mistakes creates a psychological barrier that hinders the natural progression of learning. Multitasking, a problem that we get in adulthood due to the need to work and do many tasks simultaneously, also adds complexity to this problem, diverting attention and diluting the focus necessary for effective language learning. Understanding the complexities of language fatigue requires searching for adult learners' cognitive and emotional roots since the problems and sources can vary individually for each person, concerning their lifestyle and background. By understanding the specific sources of each individual, we can develop specific solutions that address the challenges that people face and thus solve this fatigue.

The problem of linguistic fatigue can be solved using interactive platforms in adults; it is an effective strategy to mitigate linguistic fatigue in second language learners. This is because it reduces frustration and improves the effectiveness of learning based on a more dynamic experience as the basis of the solution and with instant feedback that allows for instant progress because, through these, a record of progress can be kept, which can also be used to correct errors or as a source of motivation to move forward, thus overcoming linguistic fatigue. These platforms, focusing on the individual student, seek to generate personalized content to the needs and objectives of each of these individuals, helping to maintain continuous motivation during this process. This practical and participatory approach helps avoid monotony and fatigue, transforming the education process into an attractive dynamic for those with less time and greater difficulties. Interactive platforms often incorporate a variety of multimedia resources, such as videos, audio recordings, and games, which offer a different learning experience. As an object of study, we find in CELAC, a program offered by the University of New Mexico, a dynamic source of learning that uses the CANVAS platform, in which you can access audiovisual files, digital content, share information, generate works with auto-grading based on results, among many others, which allows interaction between individuals, students, and teachers as well as them with the technology and tools offered therein.

The variety in learning and the alternation of activities can avoid monotony. Combining reading, writing, listening, speaking, and practical activities can help mitigate language fatigue and maintain interest in the language learning process. An interesting alternative to language fatigue is to use games, music, movies, or television programs in English to make learning more fun and less stressful, that is, incorporating fun into the activities, thus reducing difficulty concentrating and even discomfort physical conditions that may result. Some fun language learning activities that prevent language fatigue are playing Scrabble, reading recipes, watching movies, and playing trivia games in a foreign language. An example of how to learn with music is letrastraining.com, a resource in which learning a language is done with songs. This alternative could benefit the learning process of a new language. However, some disadvantages must be considered, such as the loss of academic objectives and the blurring of the main purpose since recreational activities may not have evaluation criteria as clear as traditional academic tasks, which could decrease the seriousness of the learning process. Additionally, if recreational activities are not carefully designed, they could contribute to the perception that language learning is not as rigorous as it should be, which could negatively affect the quality of the educational program.

In conclusion, the journey of learning a new language, while rich in the potential for intercultural connections and cognitive growth, is not without its formidable challenges for adult language learners. The pervasive issue of linguistic fatigue emerges as a significant obstacle, casting a shadow over the joy of linguistic discovery. As we delved into the complexities of language fatigue, it became clear that it extends beyond mere tiredness, impacting psychological and cognitive realms. The cognitive load faced by adults in the language acquisition process, coupled with the fear of making mistakes and the demands of multitasking, creates a challenging landscape for mastering a new language. However, within this challenge lies the potential for innovative solutions, particularly through the strategic integration of diverse technologies. By finding a balance between language exposure and production and incorporating various activities to prevent monotony, we can mitigate language fatigue and maintain interest in the language-learning process. Engaging alternatives, such as incorporating games, music, or movies in the learning process, promises to make the journey enjoyable and less stressful. We can inspire enthusiasm and motivation through targeted solutions and a multifaceted approach, offering a roadmap to overcome obstacles and reignite the passion for learning a new language.

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Summary-Response Essay based on "The Importance of Learning a Second Language" by Alix Anderson and Different Research Papers

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The first president of Czechoslovakia and prominent philosopher, Tomáš G. Masaryk, stated after World War I, "the more languages you know, the more human you are." Over time, this assertion remains relevant, as in the current era of unlimited technological advancements, growing global businesses, and complex international relations, one must reflect: how many of us genuinely strive to learn additional languages to broaden our human experience and understanding? In this essay, we will see that the arguments explored by Anderson (2011) are supported by various authors, but a significant limitation is identified regarding motivating the reader to engage in learning a second language. This limitation is intended to be addressed as a response to the important contributions of the mentioned authors.

Traveling abroad opens our eyes. It opens doors to better understanding different cultures, boosts career opportunities, and helps brain growth. Because of this, learning a new language can let you take on parts of a different culture. According to Gardner (2012), language plays a role in shaping an individual's identity, and learning a language involves embracing aspects of another culture as part of oneself. Gardner (2012) stresses that mastering a language isn't an overnight job—it's a decade-long commitment to be on par with native speakers. So, Anderson (2011) nails it when he talks about the need for motivation in learning a language—you're getting better communication skills, a sharper mind, and an appreciation for other cultures.

According to Anderson (2011), there are several benefits that arise from learning a second language. One of his most important arguments is that it facilitates people's adaptation to the world, and another interesting argument is the impact it has on the development of the human brain. In this regard, Beibei (2023) supports this claim through a study on the psychological impact that languages have on the human mind, providing evidence. The result of this study demonstrated that when the human mind experiences different languages, there is an impact on brain adaptation and the performance of certain executive functions (Beibei, p. 15, 2023). Both authors converge in their assessments regarding the contribution of learning a second language in relation to the two mentioned arguments. However, Anderson's approach is quite broad and fails to keep the reader engaged. This essay aims to promote the reader's interest in learning a second language. Imagine learning Japanese and then exploring life in Tokyo; your ability to adapt to a different linguistic environment would not only enrich your experience but also strengthen neural connections, thereby contributing to brain development.

On the other hand, Anderson (2011) mentioned that there is a relationship between the ability to be multilingual and opportunities in the workplace and economic life. According to the study "Multilingualism and Business Competitiveness," developed by the European Commission teams with linguistic diversity outperform those with members who share the same language and culture in economic performance. This study demonstrates that 11% of small and medium-sized exporting enterprises in Europe cannot exploit commercial opportunities due to issues with language skills. The ability to communicate in various languages is directly related to economic competitiveness, thus supporting Alix Anderson's claims about the benefits of multilingualism in the professional world.

In conclusion, the convergence of Anderson (2010) and Beibei's (2023) perspectives not only underscores the impact of second language acquisition on global adaptability and cognitive functions but also highlights its multifaceted benefits in navigating the complexities of our interconnected world. Also, the pursuit of multilingualism goes beyond the mere acquisition of words and phrases; it is a holistic endeavor that enriches personal experiences, fosters cultural appreciation, and enhances professional opportunities. As we navigate a world characterized by complexity and interconnectedness, Masaryk's timeless assertion serves as a compelling call to embrace linguistic diversity as an integral aspect of our shared humanity.

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Why does social media have a negative effect on young people's mental health?

Andrea Jacqueline Villazon Trigo&David Bencomo Balderrama&Alan Win Mbouloukoue Obami

Of the more than 5 billion people in the world who use the internet, almost 95% use social networks. Now, in the digital age, social media has become an integral part of the lives of young people, shaping their interactions, self-perception, and overall well-being. While these platforms offer connectivity and information sharing, there is a growing concern about the negative effects they may have on the mental health of the youth. This essay explores the causes and effects of the adverse impact of social media on the mental health of young individuals.

The social comparison, according to Verduyn, who writes an essay about social comparison on social media, reveals that people have a fundamental need for social connection and the need to share their private life while observing the lives of others. That's when social media appears, and people start to idealize a different version of people's lives, and the constant comparison begins, not only of lifestyle but also of personal image.

Young people may experience feelings of jealousy and diminished self-esteem as they compare their lives to others. The fact that they have the same things makes people suffer from anxiety and depression. When the comparison is physical, many studies show that anorexia is the most common psychological illness that young people can suffer nowadays.

Cyber-bullying, in agreement with Elizabeth Whittaker and Robin M. Kowalski, refers to digital communications through phones, tablets, laptops, and digital devices in social media. Similar to usual bullying, cyber-bullying requires hostile acts with the intention of making harassment and causing emotional distress to the victims. This usually happens with users who are victims due to the power imbalance and inequality of the cyber-bullying author.

According to a research study in JAMA PEDIATRICS, following the experience of the victims of cyberbullying, teenagers and adolescents may experience significant issues, such as increased depression, diminished self-esteem, low confidence, anxiety, and isolation. This negative effect affects the relationships of the victims with their families, friends, and classmates. They become more aggressive and dissociated, leading to lower grades, reduced attendance, and disciplinary issues at school and home.

According to the research of Akutaybi combating the fear of Missing Out (FOMO), it refers to the fear of missing some online content or an important event. And they feel that they do not have interactions with others. The constant fear of being excluded can be problematic, leading to anxiety, interrupted sleep, lack of concentration, and dependence on social media for gratification.

The nature of addiction and overuse of social media starts with spending more time on activities using digital devices as entertainment. This takes the attention of the users with personalization and algorithmic content. The feeling that users have with social validation in their personal profiles and the constant fear of losing the latest content or losing followers and likes.

In line with Daria J. Kuss, excessive social media use may lead to decreased social, personal, and physical interactions, reducing the productivity of usual activities and contributing to isolation and loneliness. This makes people avoid every human interaction, increasing depression and anxiety and causing sleep disturbance leading to hallucinations.

Negative content exposure, according to Fondazione Bruno Kessler, which works at the Center for Information and Communication Technology, states that social media can deeply influence your perception of reality and can affect your behavior by showing negative images and random content. The constant exposure to such content can contribute to heightened stress levels, anxiety disorders, and long-term mental health challenges. Fondazione also said that negative content can influence society.

The lack of personal connection in the digital era, according to the Child Mind Institute, states that teenagers connect more online than in person, making them feel socially isolated. This means teens are losing the ability to socialize, living in a world behind a screen.

The absence of genuine personal connections can contribute to feelings of loneliness and isolation, and young people now start to have anxiety and stress when they are surrounded by a lot of people. This can be more serious until they develop a mental illness.

While social media has undoubtedly transformed the way young people communicate and share information, the negative effects on mental health cannot be overlooked. It is crucial for individuals, parents, educators, and policymakers to acknowledge these challenges and work collaboratively to promote digital literacy, foster positive online behavior, and create a healthier online environment for the well-being of the youth. Only through a comprehensive understanding and proactive measures can we hope to mitigate the adverse effects of social media on the mental health of young individuals.

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Appendix
Essay Translated from Spanish
The Importance of Learning a Second Language by Alix Anderson

The world is becoming more and more connected with each passing year. The technology that creates these connections is growing rapidly. Thus, the importance of learning a secondary language is also increasing. The benefits of knowing more than one language are many. These benefits range from the ability to watch a foreign film without subtitles to the ability to find a good job and thrive in business using knowledge of foreign languages. Knowing a secondary language enhances social and cultural life because it helps establish a connection with other parts of the world, improves economic standing by adding to the curriculum vitae, and enhances the brain through mental practice and increased gray matter.

With the growth of technology that connects different parts of the world, the importance of knowing more than one language is heightened. This technology includes, of course, the internet, which instantly shares information across the globe to those who have access to it. This technology also includes travel. Cars, trains, planes, and ships can transport people from one end of the world to another in a matter of hours, something that many years ago required many months and was quite dangerous. According to the article "Reasons and benefits of learning a language" by Antonella Grandinetti: "Mats Linhom, Director of EF Spain, maintains that while each person has their personal motive, 'what is clear is that thanks to new technologies, the world is becoming smaller and mobility is greater and faster, so learning languages for many groups is becoming increasingly essential'" (Grandinetti). Thus, due to this technology, knowing a language (or more) becomes more necessary. The world is shrinking, and it is challenging to live as if nothing has changed.

This technology and this interconnected world only pose problems if people speak only their own language. In the article "The importance of speaking another language," Lord Dearing says: "For students restricted to a monocultural, monolingual education, there is a significant danger, as they will not be able to address the increasingly complex demands of our society" (Montúfar). Many people travel around the world for tourism, business, etc. It is advantageous to know the language of the country being visited because, in the words of Antonella Grandinetti, "One is able to relax more and interact with the environment. In this way, the possibility of discovering local stories and customs arises, which one would miss if not proficient in the language" (Grandinetti). In a global world, social life includes intercultural life. It is easier to understand culture with knowledge of the language because language is an integral part of culture and is the way we can fully experience it. This same article states that "natives find it interesting and sympathetic that one can express oneself in their language" (Grandinetti). With language, it is possible to create personal connections with people from around the world.

It is better to experience websites, newspapers, books, and movies in the language in which they are written because something is lost in translation, which is sometimes inaccurate and may not convey the same meaning (Grandinetti). That is, knowing a second language enhances the experience of reading and watching movies, and in this way, it improves the understanding of the culture expressed by these websites, newspapers, books, and movies. Thus, even in small situations, there are larger advantages to knowing a second language.

Another important benefit of learning a second language lies in the economic world. According to Grandinetti, "Knowing a foreign language is a standout difference in the curriculum vitae, as companies need qualified people who can continue negotiations with international allies" (Grandinetti). If employees can communicate with other companies worldwide, they can help grow the company. Thus, with knowledge of more than one language, it is easier to find a job. An international market provides more opportunities and more money for the company. Grandinetti says, "people who possess knowledge of at least one foreign language have more opportunities to advance in their professional careers" (Grandinetti). With the difficulty of finding a job in the world today, these extra opportunities are very advantageous.

Some research has shown that learning a second language has a positive effect on the human brain. The article "Learning a second language stimulates brain development" says, "Learning a second language helps develop a part of the brain responsible for verbal fluency, according to a study by British scientists" (Lora). Practicing a second language can improve our ability to speak the native language. This same article notes that other research conducted by experts from the University College of London shows that the brain of a bilingual person has more gray matter than the brain of a monolingual person (Lora). Also, since stimulation can change the structure of the brain, and learning new languages is a type of stimulation, learning can change brain structure (Lora).

Let's look at some of the benefits that scientists highlight as a result of learning a second language: Grandinetti's article shows some brain benefits that manifest in practice, as pointed out by Joaquín Fuster, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles: "With a second language, all cognitive functions improve, attention, perception, memory, intelligence, and language" (Grandinetti). Also, "Albert Costa, university professor and member of the Cognitive Neuroscience group at the Barcelona Science Park, acknowledged: 'People who speak two languages have a greater ability to focus their attention on what they consider important and disregard information that may interfere'" (Grandinetti). These improved skills also connect with economic advantages, as companies want someone with these skills even if they have no interest in the international market.

In summary, learning a second language provides many advantages in social and cultural life, economic situations, and brain development. The world has become more connected thanks to rapidly growing technology. Thus, knowing a second language allows people to communicate, and this communication is crucial in the global economy. The benefits extend even to the structure of the brain, enhancing the mental skills of the speaker. It would be advantageous to conduct more studies in the future on the connections between these social, cultural, economic, and physiological benefits. Also, because globalization will continue in the future, it is important to continue studies on the benefits of learning foreign languages.

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