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ABSTRACT

In our interconnected world, continuous foreign language learning is indispensable for personal, professional, and social growth, transcending age barriers, especially for the elderly. However, language acquisition for older individuals presents unique challenges, such as brain maturation, native language interference, and social changes. These challenges necessitate tailored learning methods distinct from those used for younger learners. This research delves into the English language proficiency of Japanese lifelong learners engaged in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning at community centers in Machida and Yokohama, Japan. Utilizing a multi-method approach with 33 participants, the study illuminates learners' strategies in narrowing the gap between their language skills and identifies means to enhance their productive language capabilities. The findings reveal a "fair" level of competence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with slightly more proficient reading skills. Learners actively engage in language activities, benefiting from voluntary activities and local community group studies, fostering valuable connections and potential benefits for the "aging workforce" in countries like Japan. Embracing digital technology, learners exhibit a greater inclination towards open communication.

These findings bear implications for future works, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of language education and the significance of lifelong language learning in our globalized society. To enrich the language skills of lifelong learners, language teachers and tutors are recommended to incorporate relevant activities.

Keywords: Language skills, receptive skills, productive skills, lifelong learning, listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, writing skills.