Internal Factors – Academic Review

Big picture comments:

* I suggest you make the case much clearer for why you are studying foreign language academic achievement/learning specifically among those with visual impairments (as opposed to learning more broadly). Why is foreign language acquisition specifically a challenge specifically among those with visual impairments? Is this specific research or particular statistics to indicate there is a particular challenge here?
* All the relevant background information and theories (the sentences with citations) that you include in your findings/results section belong either in your introduction or discussion (or both, so long as you are not too repetitive). You have lots of great information there and it really should be in the introduction to set up the study and then in the discussion as you summarize your findings. Results sections should not have any citations – they should only include your findings and your summary of them.
* As I read through your results section (and the conclusions written in the discussions section), I’m not convinced that it’s really about foreign language difficulties among the visually impaired. In other words, the majority of the quotes don’t sound like they talk about the hardships associated with their disability. Perhaps students, in general, have a difficult time learning a foreign language (more so than other fields of study that they can learn in their native language).
  + For example, this quote: “Now I understand that if I pass the English course, my options for continuing to a Master's Degree are open. Without English, I can just throw away my BA, because I can't do anything else without it. I study English only because I need it, I would have preferred to just not deal with it!" Also, the quote that begins with: “"Once I start something, I always finish it, and do it perfectly…”
    - It’s not clear to me how these relate to visual impairment hardships… it can also be interpreted that learning a foreign language, and English specifically, is very difficult in general. Therefore, I suggest you make these connections very clear to your reader and make sure that the quotes you choose and interpretations you provide relate directly to the research question at hand.

More specific (yet important) comments:

* I suggest changing the title to be more specific to your study – something along the lines of, psychological factors involved in the acquisition of a foreign language among students with visual impairments.
* I suggest “psychological factors” (or something along that nature) instead of “internal factors” so that it’s more specific to your research question/findings.
* In your abstract: the first section, “introduction” is actually your research aim. Instead, you should start with a general introduction sentence and then state your research aim.
* I would make sure that your abstract follows the guidelines of the journal to which you are submitting – for example, the section “Implications for practitioners” is not standard.
* Your first sentence of your introduction “The present trend…” – I would not label it a “trend”; instead, I suggest you talk about the increase in rates of those with disabilities, and specifically those with visual impairments, attending institutions of higher education (and include a citation).
* In your first paragraph of your introduction, make it clear that you are talking about English proficiency in countries that are *not* English-speaking.
  + Make it clear why you are talking about English specifically, rather than foreign languages overall. In other words, do you think your findings would relate broadly to foreign language acquisition or is there something specific about English?
* You say there are two opposing views about the role of vision in language development, but you only provide empirical research for the lack of differences – are there empirical studies exhibiting differences? If so, I would find those studies and cite them.
* I suggest adding more recent citations in the paragraph beginning with, “These approaches to language acquisition also affect the attitudes…”
* It’s unclear how the study you mention about the choice of studies among people with physical disabilities ties into your topic – if you think it’s an important study to keep in, then I suggest you make the connection to your main research question more clear.
* I would bring up Bronfenbrenner’s theory already in the introduction – you discuss it as an organizing theory in the discussion and, if that’s the case, it should be brought up already in the introduction and then you can bring it up again in the discussion. This can help you organize your sub-sections as well (see next point).
* It would help the reader if you divide your introduction into subsections – right now you have one subsection, but I suggest you divide it further and include additional information. Some ideas:
  + Language development and acquisition (with a particular focus on those with visual impairments)
  + Personality and psychological factors involved in learning (with a particular focus on those with visual impairments, and a focus on language)

(\*A lot of the information on self-efficacy, locus of control, motivation that you include in the results section belongs in the introduction. I make a comment about this again later.)

* + Foreign language acquisition specifically (with a focus on those with visual impairments, tying in the points above)

\* This will require a re-organization of the order in which you present information in the introduction.\*

* Your introduction should *very clearly* set up your research question and its importance, and have a smooth lead-in to your results.
* Additional introduction suggestions:
  + Is there any research on the brain (particularly parts of the brain that have to do with vision and language development) that have been done that you can add? I think that can bolster the introduction and help to clarify why you are studying this topic specifically.
  + Is there any prior research about those with visual impairments and feelings of efficacy, locus of control and motivation? (or other psychological factors)
    - Anything about language and foreign language acquisition specifically as it relates to these factors?
* You bring up the “Affective Filter Hypothesis” in the introduction, but there isn’t enough information that makes it clear why you include it. If it’s important, I would provide more of an explanation – for example, which affective variables – and how they might relate to your population of interest. Additionally, if there is empirical research that uses this hypothesis and relates to your research question, I would add that as well.
* I would not include your own personal experience in the paper – “As English teachers in academic institutions in Israel…” – I suggest you delete this piece.
  + You should be citing research only and talking about where there is a gap in the literature and then how your research study will fill the gap.
* Your sentence about the goal of the study – I suggest you take out the specifics about Israel – in the method you can mention this study was done in Israel, but your study should be applicable to other countries as well. If you make the goal just surrounding Israel, it sounds less applicable to readers outside of Israel.
  + Your introduction section should end with your research goal. You can mention that it is a qualitative study, but the information included in the next paragraph describing your rationale for your choice of method belongs in the method section.
* In the method section: I strongly suggest you describe in further detail what you mean by “within-case” and “cross-case”.
  + Additionally, I suggest you include more information about the team who coded the interviews and more information about more specifics about how the coding was completed and how themes were chosen – right now it’s too vague (e.g., “build abstraction”).
* Procedure – I would not say the research was completed as part of a PhD study – it might make it seem less credible.
* What questions did you ask in the interviews? Were the interviews structured or semi-structured? Who carried them out? How long were the interviews? [In general, there needs to be more detailed information.]
  + This can be included in a “Procedures and Measures” subsection of the Method section.
* You should present your themes in the same order each time they are mentioned; for example, in the first paragraph of the results section, you say theme #2 is motivation but then you label “locus of control” as theme #2.
* I suggest you add more to the motivation theme.
* I suggest you include specific future research suggestions based on the limitations that you identify.