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The relationship between incommensurable emotions and Willingness to Communicate in English as a Foreign Language: A multiple case study¹

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to investigate the link between Foreign Language Enjoyment, Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in Denisa and Anda, two high school learners of English as a Foreign Language in Romania.

Design/methodology/approach: Qualitative data were collected during a school semester including lesson observations, a written task and semi-structured interviews with the aim of obtaining retrodictive data (Dörnyei, 2014) in order to gain a better understanding of the nature and amount of fluctuation and change in participants' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English over time. The approach is strongly influenced by Dynamic System Theory and is based on the concept of constructed emotions (Feldman Barrett, 2017a, b).

Findings and Originality/value: The study revealed that WTC was related to the uniquely constructed emotions of Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and Foreign Language (Classroom) Anxiety (FLCA) (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) in dynamic, idiosyncratic ways, that took root during the first contact with English, extending into the present and the future. Learners' personality and their experiences inside and outside the English classroom shaped

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their emotions which had direct and indirect repercussions on their WTC. The paper concludes that case studies into and WTC offer a crucial complement to quantitative studies as they highlight the fact that emotions cannot be essentialized (Feldman Barrett, 2017a, b) and that their relationship with WTC can fluctuate sharply over the short term and develop over the longer term, depending on a range of interacting learner-internal and contextual variables. FLE and FLCA do remain useful concepts at a super-ordinate level.

Key words: Emotions, Foreign Language Enjoyment, Foreign Language Anxiety, Willingness to Communicate, English as a Foreign Language

Introduction

We are witnessing an explosion of interest in the role that emotions play in foreign language (FL) learning (Berdal-Masuy, 2019; Bigelow, 2019; Dewaele, 2019; Dewaele & Li, 2018; MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2019). Where researchers (and teachers) have long focused on learners' negative emotions and ways to combat them, a new understanding is emerging that fighting negative emotions does not guarantee the emergence of positive emotions. In fact, it seems that any emotion is better than the absence of emotion in language learning, as it would be indicative of disengagement and boredom. As Dewaele (2015) pointed out, competent FL teachers are able to whip up the emotions of their learners to an optimal level and then harness them so that learners dare to speak up in the FL. The right combination of emotions can boost learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in the FL (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018).

Before delving into specific learner emotions and their relationship with WTC, it is crucial to define what we understand by emotion. A fierce debate is raging among psychologists on the question whether emotions are universal or not. Ekman (1972) is at the basis of the view that there are six basic emotions (anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise and happiness) that are universal and recognized as such across the world. This view has been strongly criticized by those who argue that emotions are not universal entities but are constructed in the moment, depending on the context (Feldman Barrett, 2017a, b). Feldman Barrett (2017a) urges scientists to "abandon essentialism and study emotions in all their variety" (p. 16), adopting a brain-based, computational account. We adopt this view, as it echoes the view of the unique emotional multi-competence of bi- and multilinguals (Dewaele, 2016).

Feldman Barrett (2017b) sees emotions as domain non-specific constructions of the mind shaped in the course of socialisation. Emotions are mere instances that people construct based on their past emotional experiences and their predictions created in their brains. The predictions emerge from emotional information stored previously in the brain (e.g. the meaning and interpretation of physical experiences, facial expressions and gestures) that link physical sensations and feelings to what is going on in the surrounding world, and the display of emotions will vary between cultures but also within groups and even within individuals. Crucially, emotions do not have unique neural fingerprint (Feldman Barrett, 2017b, p. 40). The same person could express anger through shouting or through whispering, which means variability is the norm rather than the exception in emotion research (Feldman Barrett, 2017a, p. 16). People are thus the architects of their emotional experiences and perception (Feldman Barrett, 2017b, p. 42). Emotions need to be considered holistically, as dynamic “brain-body phenomena in context” (p. 16). Such a view dovetails seamlessly with Boiger and Mesquita’s (2012) argument that emotions are embedded in sociocultural interactions, are highly dynamic and interactive, and that language plays a central role in their construction. Indeed, some languages and cultures may highlight some expressions and experiences. The authors add a caveat, namely that the variability in the construction of emotions “does not preclude similarities in emotional experience across contexts” (p. 228).

The theory of constructed emotions echoes an earlier Dynamic System approach of the development of emotions in children (Fogel et al., 1992). The authors pointed out that “Emotion is a self-organising system constituted by the interaction of many components related to individuals in their social and physical context” (p. 129). A crucial point is that no single element plays a more important role than other: “One need not assume that each time enjoyment occurs it is elicited and maintained by a similar causal mechanism. There may be many starting points and many different types of interactions among the components that eventually coalesce into a stable positive emotion” (p. 129). There is a striking parallelism with Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s (1986) view that Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) does not emerge fully formed in the mind of the FL learner. It develops gradually among learners who have a tendency to be anxious in the situation of FL learning, through repeated experiences in the FL classroom, with multiple sources and coalesces into situation-specific FLCA (Horwitz, 2017). MacIntyre (2017) pointed out that the dynamic system approach in research on anxiety has come to the fore: “Anxiety is continuously interacting

with a number of other learner, situational and other factors including linguistic abilities, physiological reactions, self-related appraisals, pragmatics, interpersonal relationships, specific topics being discussed, type of setting in which people are interacting and so on” (p. 23).

One implication that can be drawn from the previously mentioned studies is that language learners experience a wide range of interacting positive and negative emotions in an infinite amount of colours and shades. Indeed, unique past experiences inside or outside the language class can shape learner emotions. To give an example, a learner who has been ridiculed for a foreign accent outside the class might bring the burning shame of the experience to class, and might therefore be less willing to speak up in class and experience more anxiety when being forced to do so in front of his/her peers and teacher. Inversely, a learner who has been complimented on his/her FL on the way to class might feel momentarily much more confident and be more willing to speak. An isolated language learning/use incident could have repercussions into the future as it might weaken or strengthen the engagement in the FL in the days, weeks or months to come. In other words, the emotions related to FL affect the learning process, which could be compared to tree rings that reflect the local climate conditions, such as rain and temperature. The present study proposes to investigate the unique fluctuations and change in the emotional patterns of two very good Romanian EFL students and the dynamic relationship with their WTC in English.

Literature review

Foreign Language Enjoyment and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) have argued in favour of a more holistic take on classroom emotions, looking not just at negative emotions but also at positive emotions. Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele (2018) proposed not just to look at FLCA, defined as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128) but also to include FL enjoyment (FLE), defined as an emotion that is less simple and evanescent than pleasure: “If pleasure can occur simply by performing an activity or completing an action, enjoyment takes on additional dimensions such as an intellectual focus, heightened attention, and optimal challenge” (p. 153).

Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) found that FLCA and FLE go hand in hand in FL learning. In reporting an enjoyable episode in their FL class, some of the learners described activities that could be viewed as negative, anxiety-provoking learning experiences but where FLE arose at some point neutralising the paralyzing effect of FLCA. The authors reject the idea that FLCA can be facilitative but defend a view of anxiety and enjoyment as complementary emotions that do not necessarily function in a see-saw fashion. In other words, one does not automatically decrease when the other increases. It is thus perfectly possible to experience high levels of FLE and FLCA simultaneously (Dewaele et al., 2016). As FLCA has a moderately negative effect on FL learning and performance, Oxford (2016) argues that teachers can adopt interventions drawn from Positive Psychology in order to increase anxious FL learners' emotional intelligence, sense of agency, hope and optimism. The positive emotion of enjoyment, as well as the more intense emotion of love, were found to be powerful motivators among four Romanian EFL learners (Pavelescu & Petrić, 2018). The multiple case study showed that love of English allowed learners to develop resilience and grit when classes were not particularly enjoyable and it pushed them to invest greater effort into the learning and use of English (Pavelescu & Petrić, 2018).

Dewaele and Dewaele (2017) used a pseudo-longitudinal design to see whether sources of FLE and FLCA changed over time among 189 British high school students. They found that the predictors of FLE and FLCA were indeed different between the three age groups. One notable trend was that the effect of the teacher-centred variables on FLE increased over time while the predictors of FLCA remained pretty stable. Focusing on a part of the same database, Dewaele and Dewaele (2019) investigated the stability of FLE and FLCA in the same FL across different teachers. The authors found that levels of FLE (but not FLCA) were significantly different for the 40 students who had two teachers for the same FL, suggesting that FLE is a more fleeting emotion than FLCA. Inspired by a dynamic system approach, Li, Dewaele and Jiang (2019) collected quantitative and qualitative data from 1307 Chinese EFL students and found different patterns of fluctuations and interactions between FLE and FLCA at three different levels of English proficiency.

Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) used the complete database of British high school students to investigate how teacher behavior and learner emotions affect Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in the FL. FLCA turned out to be the strongest negative predictor while teachers'

frequent use of the FL, students' positive attitude towards the FL and Social FLE were positive predictors of WTC.

The dynamic nature of FLE and FLCA was at the heart of the study by Boudreau et al. (2018). FLE and FLCA were found to fluctuate sharply, second by second, during speech production in French L2 by Anglo-Canadian learners. Interviews after the task performance revealed that the variation was sometimes linked to low-level linguistic obstacles (vocabulary gaps) or to higher-level issues such as a lack of interest in a particular topic. The relationship between FLE and FLCA thus varied widely, with moment-by-moment correlations ranging from negative to zero, to positive.

Willingness to Communicate in a FL

WTC was initially considered to be a trait-like predisposition that is constant across communication contexts (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998). In modern research, WTC is considered as a situational, multilayered construct, which emerges dynamically in a conversation situation (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The authors defined WTC as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons” (p. 547). MacIntyre (2007) redefined WTC as “the probability of initiating communication, given choice and opportunity” (p. 567), arguing that L2 communication is affected by conflicting or opposing processes, by the co-existence of approach and avoidance tendencies, of driving and restraining forces. Such moments in L2 communication are referred to by MacIntyre as conflicted moments or moments of ambivalence, when a learner feels both motivated, and such motivation propels the learner towards communication (approach or driving force), and inhibited by anxiety, and such anxiety restrains the learner's action (avoidance or restraining force).

MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) considered WTC inside and outside of the French FL class of 238 Anglo-Canadian secondary school learners. The authors found that language anxiety and volatility inside class lowered learners' WTC: they tended to abandon tasks and to remain silent. Learners who felt more competent had higher levels of WTC.

Cao (2011) adopted an “ecological perspective” to understand the role of context on WTC. Using a multiple case study approach, she observed 18 advanced Chinese and Korean EFL students in New Zealand during classroom interactions. These data were complemented by stimulated-recall interviews and data from the students' journals. She found that WTC was linked to “self-confidence, personality, emotion and perceived opportunity to communicate,

classroom environmental conditions such as topic, task, interlocutor, teacher and group size, together with linguistic factors” (p. 468). Some of these variables could interact and their effect on WTC was thus highly variable.

The complex effects of classroom context and learner emotions were found to determine the WTC of 381 Korean EFL learners in Joe, Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2017). WTC went up when learners’ basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) were satisfied and when the classroom climate was positive (teacher support and respect in the classroom) (p. 139). WTC was thus linked to a combination of contextual and individual variables.

Khajavy, MacIntyre and Barabadi (2017) researched the role of FL learners’ emotions (enjoyment and anxiety) and classroom environment on WTC of 1528 secondary school students of English in Iran. Using doubly latent multilevel analysis, the authors found that WTC was related to a positive classroom environment (teachers’ support, students’ cohesiveness, and task orientation) in which learners experienced more FLE and less FLCA.

Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) identified the predictors of WTC in French, German and Spanish FLs of 189 British secondary school students. The strongest predictor turned out to be FL classroom anxiety (negative predictor), frequency of FL use by the teacher, attitude towards the FL and social FL Enjoyment (positive predictors). The authors proposed to organise the independent variables affecting learner emotions and WTC in a set of expanding concentric circles moving from learner-internal variables at the centre and towards outer circles representing learner-external variables peers and teachers in the classroom, and beyond that attitudes toward the FL outside the classroom, and the more general historical and political context. The authors argued that such a conceptualisation would be particularly useful to visualise learners’ emotions and WTC, which are constantly fluctuating over different time spans and which are shaped differently by a constant pull and push of learner-internal and learner-external variables.

In a final study, Dewaele (2019) identified the predictors of WTC of 210 Spanish EFL learners. Multiple regression analyses revealed that FLCA was the strongest negative predictor of WTC, explaining a third of the variance. FLE and frequency of use of the FL by the teacher were positive predictors of WTC, explaining a final 15% of the variance.

The literature review suggests that just like emotions, WTC is highly dynamic, and is affected by a multitude of interacting independent variables. Because the range of potential predictors of WTC is so large, it is impossible to fit them all into a single quantitative research design.

We thus adopted a (short) longitudinal multiple case study, complemented by a retrodictive qualitative modeling approach (cf. Dörnyei, 2014) described as “a case-based research template with an explicit focus on context, temporal change, and multicausality. At its core, retrodiction is an approach to researching complex dynamic phenomena that starts from instances of what is and progresses backward to examine how that reality came about” (Hiver, 2017, p. 671). Such an approach is ideal to investigate the behaviour of dynamic systems of two learners that are not random but that are “often systematic enough to be subject to meaningful empirical research” (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 81).

The following research question was formulated:

How did two EFL learners’ learning experience and emotions shape their WTC over time?

Methodology

Participants

The participants were two teenage students, Denisa and Anda (pseudonyms), who were attending a state high school in Romania. In addition to regular classes in Romanian, this high school offers bilingual classes in four languages. The participants’ background information is shown in Table 1 below. Both Denisa and Anda were high-achieving EFL learners.

Table 1: *Participants’ background information*

Participant	Pseudonym	Age	Foreign Languages
1	Denisa	17	English, French, Korean
2	Anda	16	English, French

Data collection

The study employed various qualitative methods over a school semester in 2014: a written task in the form of language learning histories, repeated semi-structured interviews with the participating students, and lesson observations.

The written language learning history task

The language learning histories, written in English, provided valuable information. They provided “the insider’s view of the processes of language learning” (Pavlenko 2007: 164-165).

Interviews

Three semi-structured interviews with each participating learner were conducted. The main areas covered in the first interview were: the language learning history, feelings towards learning English, autonomy and contextual factors and motivation. The second and third interviews focused on the lesson observations, being conducted to gain a more in-depth understanding of the participants’ classroom behaviour and of their classroom learning experiences. The topics discussed in the second interview were mainly related to what had been observed in the classroom and the third interview explored issues related to future plans with English. All the interviews with the students were conducted in English, but the interviewees were told that they could use Romanian at any time during the interviews.

Lesson observations

Lesson observations were used because “for the majority of foreign language learners, the classroom is the primary site for learning” (Lamb, 2013, p. 38). The focus was on the participating students’ interactions with their classmates and English teachers.

Participants were recruited with the teachers’ help. Those who agreed to participate gave their e-mail addresses to the second author, and they received the written task by email. After completion, participants emailed the task to the second author and were invited to participate in interviews. The research design received ethical approval from the authors’ institution.

Results

Denisa’s emotions and WTC

A retrodictive perspective

Denisa’s WTC in English seemed to have been linked to different emotions that shifted over time, such as love, enjoyment and anxiety. Her most vivid memory of her English learning experiences was her first participation in the speaking component of the English Olympiad contest in 2013. She felt it went well despite her anxiety:

D: I was so nervous I would do something wrong that my body was shaking in fear. But in the end, everything went extremely well.

WTC and anxiety were also reflected in her account of her speaking experience at the Olympiad in 2014, where she had obtained the maximum score. She had chosen a topic from a piece of paper and had been given twenty minutes to prepare a speech and present it in front of the judges. Her anxiety seemed to have boosted her speaking performance:

D: Oh, I was... I was very, very nervous, but not as nervous as last year since I...now I had the experience of last year. I felt a bit more confident and, you know, I just tried to, to...amaze the jury. (...). So I tried to, you know, create a speech that is entertaining and not serious. And I managed to do that. I was very inspired at that moment. Um, I felt really great after finishing because I knew I did well.

Denisa's desire to take part in English competitions may have been influenced by the fact that her mom was an English teacher and that her aunt had participated in the English Olympiad when she had been a teenager. The English contests seem to have stimulated Denisa:

D: Whenever I'm learning, I'm in the process of learning, I feel like I'm in a competition with myself (...) but in the actual contest, I feel like I'm in competition with the other students since I'm very competitive and I...I really dislike when somebody is better than me at something.

Denisa's desire to outperform the competition was a powerful stimulus. She tried to intimidate the other competitors:

D: There were also a few students in the back, writing their speeches.
(...) And I was aware that they were listening to me because that's what I'd been doing as well when the others were, um, um telling their, their speech and I knew that I had to, to scare them off, honestly, so I did my best to (...) intimidate them.
[Laughs]. And I managed to do that.

Denisa reported that her WTC in Romanian L1 was relatively low:

D: (...) I'm a bit not that friendly. I'm a bit more shy. I don't really talk to strangers since I am quite afraid of them even (...) And I tend to avoid them unless I really need to talk to them.

In contrast, her WTC in English was much higher:

D: Although I am shy, I like to talk to foreigners. It's interesting to have this insight into other cultures (...) And the only way I can is by talking to them in English, so...

Denisa's enjoyment of using English with foreigners also appeared to be linked to her trips abroad with her grandmother and to her membership of an active Romanian-Korean cultural association:

D: We have guests from Korea (...) And we talk to them in English (...) So that's a great opportunity to test my English knowledge.

The present and future

Talking about the film *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Denisa stated that she could relate to the shy, introverted main character. Yet she behaved in an extraverted way in the English classroom:

D: I seem extraverted but only in my English class because I really love English (...) To be quite honest, I like English more than Romanian! (...) I feel so connected to it [English]. Perhaps I should have been born in Great Britain or something (...) And my mother would always say: "Oh, I think you were a British cat in your past life".

Denisa loved to express herself in English and was the most active speaker in her English classroom throughout the semester, speaking without hesitation, fluently and accurately. However, there were fluctuations in Denisa's WTC in English depending on the speaking activities that she found enjoyable at the beginning and end of the semester. She reported being nervous and lacking confidence in her speaking skills during the second interview. She complained about problems when expressing herself and not being able to talk freely. Interestingly, this did not appear in the classroom observations, where Denisa did not seem to experience any problem with speaking. She also felt rather reluctant and nervous initially during speaking activities for the Cambridge exam but home practice and private tutoring lessons to prepare for the exam helped her overcome her anxiety:

D: I like when we just talk, we just... about different topics in class. Just discuss. Like freely. Not, not when we have a certain, um, routine or so to speak to follow. Like in the Cambridge exam when you have to ask the question then you have to answer to the question and invite the other to answer to your question and stuff like that. Just chat. Like we're friends. (First interview)

Her WTC for practicing the speaking part of the Cambridge exam went up by the end of the semester:

D: Well, I think that I enjoy the fact that we also did speaking, like Cambridge speaking (...) Even though I hate, you know, picture exercises and stuff like that, I am aware that I need to exercise, so that's why I was happy that we worked in class. (Third interview)

WTC was also linked to particular activities. She greatly enjoyed watching the film *The Iron Lady*, and was eager to talk about it in class. Her WTC went down for activities that she found boring at times because they were not interactive enough.

Denisa imagined herself owning a small business or as the manager of a bigger business in Romania, and she saw English as playing an important role in her future career.

Anda's emotions and WTC

A retrodictive perspective

In addition to English, Anda also had French as a foreign language. She had been to the UK on a school trip the previous year. Although she had not been to other countries, she had enjoyed the trip so much that she looked forward to returning to the UK at some point in the future. Reflecting on the trip, she noted that it helped her overcome her insecurity when speaking English. Her WTC was rather low at the beginning of the trip and she realised that she had no choice but to be brave and jump in:

I don't really have the opportunity to speak, so I was a bit nervous (...) But when I got there and I only hear people talking in English, I was like: "I have to".

Anda had been involved for a while in computer-mediated interactions with foreign friends, with whom she sometimes communicated via Skype. These interactions seemed to have boosted her WTC in English:

A: I have a, my best friends are from USA, Mexico, UK, I have three in UK, ahm, the Netherlands, Italy, Australia and China. And it's a great opportunity to learn more about the culture and the people there, and everything (...) Their opinions help me see better the world (...) The way they think and.... Also, they have really nice accents. It seems interesting when you have a problem or anything, in English class mostly, you go to the friend in UK and: "Hey, can you help me?" We help each other and ... it's a great long, long-distance friendship.

Thinking back of her early days in learning English, Anda reported falling in love with the language as she started her first classes, and this passion grew over the years:

I began learning English in the 1st grade and during these 10 years I fell in love with it more and more. English became a massive part of my life and I wouldn't be able to live without it now.

The present and future

Anda reported that being an introverted and shy person hampered her WTC in English:

A: Learning English is, wouldn't be that hard for me if I wasn't that shy. I mean I never just get up and say "Wow, I can do it". No. I stand there, I know things, I have ideas, but I just can't... I need to overcome my insecurities and shyness and everything.

She experienced a crippling fear of looking foolish in front of her classmates and a paralyzing feeling of helplessness, which could drive her to tears. When asked about her short answers on topics that she liked and her low voice in classroom interactions, she mentioned shyness as one of the reasons:

A: I pretty speak in a low voice right now, but...[Laughs] First of all because I, I don't really speak as good as I want to and I don't know. I just...I am shy.

Anda's low WTC in class were also linked to her belief that her classmates did not care about what she had to say. Moreover, the noisy behaviour of her classmates also annoyed her:

A: It's quite annoying. I mean, you talk to, you try to express something and pay attention and everything and the others just don't care and disturb everyone.

Anda reported that her ideal English classroom would only have five or six active pupils. Despite her shyness and anxiety, Anda expressed a desire for more communication opportunities in English, such as oral presentations and group work. She also suggested that by arranging the desks differently her WTC might actually go up:

A: I'd put them in circles so that children have, could have more...So that they could be more cooperative and...

Moreover, Anda expressed a regret that pair work in the classroom had to be done individually at home:

A: There are many exercises of, on pairs (...) but we actually do them at home and it's not actually in pairs (...) And we never get to discuss them because everyone do it individually.

Anda struggled with emotional turmoil and frustration related to a perceived lack of communication competence. She described herself as being “a mess” when it came to speaking English although this did not apply to her writing:

A: It [speaking] kills me. I have, I have many ideas in my head, and I, I can write easily, but when I have to speak it's like all the words are dancing in my mouth and just doesn't....

She claimed that WTC was not linked to the choice of conversation topics:

A: Anything I guess it's OK. Like you must be able to talk about anything.

Anda's WTC appeared to be linked to her strong desire to go to university in the UK:

A: I really want to get to study in UK one day.

Discussion

The retrodictive analysis of the material collected from Denisa and Anda shows that their emotions of FLE and FLCA have both similarities and differences. They are linked in complex and idiosyncratic ways (cf. Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017; Li et al., 2019), and have had different effects on their WTC depending on the context and the time. Both participants traced the causes of their current classroom emotions and WTC in English to previous experiences with English, and especially episodes of authentic use of the language outside of school, either in face-to-face interactions with English speakers or in computer mediated interactions. Denisa felt more talkative in English than in Romanian because she enjoyed expressing herself in English. This was confirmed by her classroom behaviour. Her use of English seemed to allow her to come out of her shell. Her higher WTC in English could be attributed to the fact that she had used English frequently in face-to-face interactions when traveling and in her home town. She reported a stronger emotional connection with English than with Romanian. Despite being a highly proficient English learner, she experienced considerable anxiety when speaking English, especially during the English Olympiad contest. This anxiety was linked to high self-expectations and a strong desire to win the competition. Her anxiety was thus tempered by her competitive spirit and a strong sense of agency in language learning. To use Şimşek and Dörnyei's (2017) labels, Denisa could be described as an (anxious) “fighter”. Her heightened emotionality and investment in the FL learning process might have spurred her on. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) showed that FLE and FLCA can

co-exist in the FL learning process and that the private dimension of FLE is related to a sense of accomplishment. Denisa's anxiety during the English competitions had not drowned her FLE. The link between the private dimension of enjoyment and achievement was also revealed in Denisa's self-reports towards the end of the semester, when she stated that she had enjoyed participating in Cambridge speaking activities in class that semester.

Anda's WTC seems to have been lower in both languages, which she attributed to her personality: introverted, reserved, shy and withdrawn. She had only travelled abroad once and did not report using English in face-to-face interactions in her everyday life outside school. She did however enjoy less anxiety-provoking computer mediated communication with foreign friends. Anda also experienced anxiety when using English, but her anxiety seemed to be debilitating, generating feelings of frustration and helplessness. Her anxiety could have been linked to high levels of perfectionism which increased her fear of evaluation by peers and conversational partners when speaking English (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Dewaele, 2017). However, the context also plays a crucial role on emotions and WTC, as Anda reported experiencing less anxiety using English outside the classroom. Her trip to the UK boosted her WTC and helped her overcome her linguistic insecurities. This confirms Tóth's (2011) finding that speaking the target language in real-life situations is very different and less anxiety-producing than using it in the classroom. There may be less pressure to speak accurately in authentic interactions. To use Şimşek and Dörnyei's (2017) labels, Anda could be described as more of a "safe player" in the classroom and an emergent "fighter" outside the classroom.

The analyses confirmed the view that learner/user emotions are shaped in the course of (FL) socialisation (Feldman Barrett, 2017b), both inside and outside the FL class, and that these were directly or indirectly linked to WTC in English. Our two participants were the architects of their emotional experiences and perception in English, but their different personality and experiences with English meant that their enjoyment and anxiety had very different shades and flavours. Both referred to struggles, successes and occasional defeats. They mentioned significant events inside and outside the classroom, including contacts in English with foreign friends, that had momentarily altered their enjoyment and anxiety in English, and could have had longer-term repercussions that affected their WTC in English. Interviews and classroom observations showed that infrequent participation in classroom interactions did not necessarily imply low WTC but rather a negative reaction to environmental stressors, lack of interest in

the topics, or the anticipation of negative reactions by peers to their opinions. Anda in particular experienced conflicted moments or moments of ambivalence (Macintyre, 2007). The effect of some of these factors faded over the semester, especially when they realised that certain topics were simply included as part of some future official test.

What the analyses showed is that these two participants' emotions and WTC were clearly linked in a highly dynamic system that had started developing well before the first data collection had happened. Past experience with English had shaped Denisa and Anda's emotions linked to English into unique constructions, which were continuously reshaped by more recent and current events, including future needs of English. Moreover, their very different personality profiles meant that they experienced some emotions more keenly and that their view of optimal emotional arousal was very different. The more extraverted Denisa loved the adrenalin of competition and public speaking while the more introverted Anda hated the noise and the perceived lack of attention of listeners. Both experienced anxiety and enjoyment but the causes were slightly different (cf. Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017; Li et al., 2019). Moreover, it seems that the experience of both emotions overlapped only to a certain extent. Both participants had a relatively high WTC in English yet here again the causes varied slightly and it did not necessarily translate into a similar quantity of language output. WTC seemed to be linked to events in the past as much as contextual factors in the present extending into the future, with important tests that required lots of practice and further potential stays in the UK.

Considering the participants' unique ontogenesis of emotions and their links with WTC fits perfectly with Feldman Barrett's (2017a, b) view of constructed emotions resulting from past emotional experiences and predictions linking physical sensations and feelings about classroom interactions and their use of English outside school. No single element played a dominant role in the construction of enjoyment and anxiety as they emerged slowly, sometimes triggered by unique events, then reinforced through repeated experiences with teachers and peers, before coalescing into situation-specific enjoyment and anxiety (Horwitz, 2017). The emotions were constructed through interactions and relationships with teachers, peers and English-speaking friends from various cultures (Boiger & Mesquita, 2012). MacIntyre's (2017) point about anxiety being part of a dynamic system and interacting continuously with various learner and situational variables, including linguistic proficiency, self-related appraisals, interpersonal relationships, conversation topics could be extended to

enjoyment and WTC. Because of short-term fluctuations in the system, as well as longer-term changes, the relationship between the variables, and the direction of the influence keeps evolving (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017). The study also confirms the view that WTC emerges dynamically in a conversation situation (Cao, 2011; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018, 2019; Joe et al., 2017; Khajavy, et al., 2017; MacIntyre et al., 1998, MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010).

Avoiding an essentialist view of emotions (Feldman Barrett, 2017a) means we need to be equally careful about the naming and the understanding of relatively fuzzy and complex concepts like FLE and FLCA that emerged from previous quantitative research (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Instruments can be designed to catch elusive emotional phenomena but because the number of items in such an instrument is finite and that contextual information is limited, participants are presented with forced choices that are simplifications of their rich and complex experience. Although open questions complementing closed questions allow to partly compensate for this limitation, there is a danger of assuming that the statistical dimension of enjoyment and anxiety that emerges from the statistical analyses is completely valid, reliable and encompasses the whole phenomenon. Researchers thus need to resist the temptation to essentialize emerging constructs. Also, by focusing on inter-individual variation in values for a particular statistical dimension, there is a danger of forgetting that qualitative differences cannot be captured in this way. The present study offers a good illustration of the need to complement quantitative research with detailed qualitative work.

Conclusion

This study has explored how the learning experience and emotions shaped the WTC of two Romanian EFL adolescent learners. Combining a retrodictive approach with interviews and classroom observations, we found that the construction of enjoyment and anxiety (cf. Feldman Barrett, 2017a, b) by the participants did not completely overlap. The emotions emerged and co-existed in different ways, fluctuated and changed in unique patterns over time, and had interacting and dynamic effects on the participants' WTC in English. FLCA combined with introversion and perfectionism weighed on the WTC of Anda in classroom contexts, but FLCA combined with enjoyment and brief moments of high stress in FL competitions boosted the WTC of the more extraverted Denisa.

To conclude, emotions like FL enjoyment and anxiety are useful concepts at a super-ordinate level. They could be compared to the concept of “soup”, described as a savoury liquid dish. One cook’s soup might be a thick, chunky chowder while another cook’s soup could be a strained, thin, clear stock or broth. The ingredients, preparation and taste may differ completely, as well as the nutritional value of the end product, yet nobody would deny that they are all manifestations of “soup” and that their ingestion could quench the thirst and satisfy the hunger of the eater, depending on how thirsty and famished that person is.

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