



BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Dewaele, Jean-Marc and Li, C. (2018) Editorial. [Editorial/Introduction]

Downloaded from: <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/25473/>

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/policies.html> or alternatively contact lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk.

Editorial

This is the first special issue devoted specifically to emotions in second language acquisition (SLA). Influenced by the positive psychology movement (Fredrickson, 2001), there has been a shift away from an exclusive focus on negative emotions in SLA to a more holistic analysis of both negative and positive emotions among learners (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). We are not claiming that nobody had considered positive emotions and affect in SLA before 2012, as indeed many researchers prepared the ground (e.g., Arnold, 1999; Broner & Tarone, 2001; Cook, 2000; Dewaele, 2005; Kramsch, 2006). Moreover, educational psychologists did point to the pivotal role of positive academic emotions that sustain motivation (Pekrun, 1988, 2014; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002a, 2002b).¹ However, none of the SLA studies created the kind of wave of interest in emotions in SLA that we are currently witnessing. It is possible that now the time is ripe, as the success of the biennial Psychology of Language Learning conferences illustrates, as well as the establishment of the new International Association of Psychology of Language Learning during the second conference in Finland in 2016.

The current issue shows a way forward, with increased emotional granularity (see e.g., Galmiche, 2017) and a variety of research methods (both quantitative and qualitative, including case studies). Although English figures in the language profiles of all the learners, it is not the only target language, as French and Dutch are also studied. The learners who contributed data to the research projects reported in this issue study/studied in four different continents and have

¹ Pekrun et al. (2002b) show in their literature search on the effect of emotions on learning and achievement (for the period 1974-2000) that anxiety is the most frequently researched emotion ($N = 1200$) but that a wide range of other negative emotions ($N = 195$) and positive emotions ($N = 119$) have been considered.

diverse first languages, including Canadian and British English, Arabic, French, Romanian, Mandarin and Hungarian. They range from primary and secondary school pupils to university students and adult learners.

The emotions are also considered over different time scales, ranging from seconds to months. What all authors have in common is the interest in the variety of sources of individual differences in emotions experienced by their participants, including effects of the context in which the target language is used (both inside and outside the classroom). The source of variation in emotion can thus range from the joy or frustration in not finding the right word in a specific task, to having a lovely or a harsh teacher, to having a more or less supportive peer-group, to having experienced the joy and/or anxiety of authentic communication in the target language outside the school. Learners' emotions are also linked to the more diffuse influence of the wider sociopolitical, historical and cultural context in which they live and which shapes their emotions and attitudes towards their languages.

All the authors point to the pedagogical implications of their findings. The first one is the importance of teachers' creating a positive classroom atmosphere, which resonates with Dewaele, Gkonou and Mercer (2018), who pointed out that teachers are like conductors, attuned to the dynamic interaction of their own emotions and that of their students, that is, members of their orchestra. Once the members of the orchestra reach the optimal emotional temperature, the role of the conductor is merely that of a discrete guide (Dewaele, 2015). The second pedagogical implication is that extracurricular (emotional) experiences in the target language can help boost learners'/users' investment in mastering the new language.

In the first paper of this special issue, Dewaele and Alfawzan focus on the combined effect of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) on foreign language (FL) performance in two very different contexts: two London-based secondary schools with 189 pupils studying mostly French as an FL and 152 current and former Saudi learners of English as a FL in Saudi Arabia. The quantitative data show similar patterns in the two contexts: FLE was found to have a slightly stronger positive effect on performance in the FL than FLCA.

FLE and FLCA are also at the heart of the second paper by De Smet, Mettwie, Galand, Hiligsmann and Van Mensel, based on quantitative data from 896 pupils in French-speaking Belgium. The study focuses on the comparison of two target languages (i.e., English and Dutch) in two educational contexts (CLIL, Content and Language Integrated Learning, and non-CLIL) at different instruction levels (i.e., primary and secondary education). Pupils reported significantly less FLCA in CLIL than in non-CLIL. The political-historical context played an important role with English FL learners experiencing significantly more FLE and less

FLCA in comparison to Dutch FL learners (Dutch being the official language of Flanders, often depicted in quite hostile terms in French-speaking Belgium). Differences also emerged between primary school pupils who reported more FLE and FLCA compared to pupils in secondary schools.

Our call for more work on FL pupils' emotions is also echoed in the third paper by Pavelescu and Petrić. The authors explore the positive FL learning emotions of four adolescent English FL students in Romania taking the sociocultural context into account. Using multiple qualitative methods to elicit data on participants' emotional experiences of learning English inside and outside school over a period of one semester, the researchers identified two major positive emotions, namely love and enjoyment. Love in particular is found to be the driving force in the learning process when there is a lack of enjoyment in certain classroom situations. The paper argues that language learners need to be seen as social beings and that their dynamic emotions are fluctuating within a particular sociocultural context.

In the following contribution, Ross and Rivers explore the positive and negative emotional experiences of eight university-level English second language (SL) learners (with Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese as L1) within an ESL environment in Australia, where the target language is more frequently experienced in social interactions than in the formal language-learning classroom. Semi-structured interviews highlighted the range of emotional experiences of hope, enjoyment and frustration the participants had encountered in their daily lives beyond the classroom, which affects their investment in English.

In their paper, Piniel and Albert come to similar conclusions following a different path. Following Pekrun's (2014) model of emotions in an academic context, the authors investigate the qualitative feedback from 166 Hungarian university students of English on emotions experienced while listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. Enjoyment and language anxiety are mentioned most frequently, and these emotions vary not only according to the specific skill but depend also on the year of study and the context of language use (i.e., in class or outside class). Crucially, students listed more positive feelings in connection with outside classroom language learning situations.

In the final paper, Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele use the idiodynamic approach to focus on the dynamic relationship between FLE and FLCA among 10 Anglo-Canadian university students with French L2. The analyses show that FLE and FLCA operate independently of each other on a second-per-second time scale, but they may interact in converging or diverging patterns in relation to specific events, or just move forward and follow unpredictable trajectories.

This special issue demonstrates that emotion has become a focus of innovative research in SLA. The studies feature a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches that are beginning to map out the role of emotions in language

learning and use. There is much more that can be done and researchers around the world are trying out new ways to study emotion in diverse contexts. We sincerely hope that the present issue will stimulate researchers' hearts and minds and encourage them to join in the fascinating search for answers on the mysterious dynamic relationships between elusive emotions and SLA. This area of research is not just academically rewarding as the pedagogical implications have the potential to challenge the established view of FL learning and teaching as emotionless, clinical, germ-free absorption and transmission of linguistic knowledge.

Jean-Marc Dewaele
Birkbeck College, University of London, UK
j.dewaele@bbk.ac.uk

Chengchen Li
College of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Xiamen University, China
lichengchen@stu.xmu.edu.cn

References

- Arnold, J. (Ed.). (1999). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Broner, M., & Tarone, E. (2001). Is it fun? Language play in a fifth grade Spanish immersion classroom. *Modern Language Journal*, *85*, 363-379.
- Cook, G. (2000). *Language play, language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dewaele, J.-M. (2005). Investigating the psychological and the emotional dimensions in instructed language learning: Obstacles and possibilities. *Modern Language Journal*, *89*, 367-380.
- Dewaele, J.-M. (2015). On emotions in foreign language learning and use. *The Language Teacher*, *39*(3), 13-15.
- Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *4*, 237-274.
- Dewaele, J.-M., Mercer, S., & Gkonou, C. (2018). Do ESL/EFL teachers' emotional intelligence, teaching experience, proficiency and gender, affect their classroom practice? In J. de Dios Martínez Agudo (Ed.), *Emotions in second language teaching* (pp. 125-141). Berlin: Springer.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, *56*, 218-226.

- Galmiche, D. (2017). Shame and SLA. *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 11, 25-53.
- Kramersch, C. (2006). Desire in language: The neglected dimension of language learning. In S. Duxa, A. Hu, & B. Schmenk (Eds.), *Grenzen überschreiten. Menschen, Sprachen, Kulturen. Festschrift für Inge Christine Schwerdtfeger zum 60. Geburtstag* (pp. 209-224). Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- MacIntyre, P., & Gregersen, T. (2012). Emotions that facilitate language learning: The positive-broadening power of the imagination. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 2, 193-213.
- MacIntyre, P., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Positive psychology in SLA*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- MacIntyre, P., & Mercer, S. (2014). Introducing positive psychology to SLA. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4, 153-172.
- Pekrun, R. (1988). *Emotion, Motivation und Persönlichkeit*. München/Weinheim: Psychologie Verlags Union.
- Pekrun, R. (2014). *Emotions and learning*. Geneva: UNESCO.
- Pekrun, R., Goetz, T., Titz, W., & Perry, R. P. (2002a). Academic emotions in students' self-regulated learning and achievement: A program of qualitative and quantitative research. *Educational Psychologist*, 37, 91-106.
- Pekrun, R., Goetz, T., Titz, W., & Perry, R. P. (2002b). Positive emotions in education. In E. Frydenberg (Ed.), *Beyond coping: Meeting goals, visions, and challenges* (pp. 149-174). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.