

# AFFECTIVE VARIABLES IN THE (FOREIGN) LANGUAGE CLASS

KPH-Projektverantwortung: Pia Resnik

## Kurzfassung / Abstract

The aim of this project was to investigate Austrian (foreign) language (FL) learners' emotions holistically in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and German as a first language (L1) classroom at both the secondary and tertiary level. With a web survey, data were collected from 768 learners on their (foreign) language classroom enjoyment (Botes et al., 2021), (foreign) language classroom anxiety (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986), and their Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) (Petrides, 2009) to see to what extent these variables are linked in both contexts and across the different settings. Additionally, what other emotions these learners experience in both contexts was analysed and their possibly different self-perceptions in the different languages were investigated, too. To what extent learner emotions in the actual classroom impact learners' development of positive or negative self-perceptions in the target language was also analysed. The findings were presented at various (inter-)national conferences and published in international, peer-reviewed journals.

## Desiderat

- In EFL classes, learners experienced significantly higher levels of both enjoyment and anxiety than in their L1 classes. TEI was positively linked to (F)LE and negatively to (F)LCA.
- The analysis of the data gathered from open-ended questions showed that in L1 German classes, learners reported experiencing positive emotions by far less frequently than in English classes and students' explanations highlighted the main reasons (e.g., not feeling they learned something new, as well as different didactic approaches).
- Feeling like a different person in the different languages is a common experience among multilinguals and our study showed that 40% of the learners also reported feeling different when using EFL compared their L1 German. We furthermore investigated the role learner emotions and TEI play in explaining the changes identity among these learners. Mediation analyses revealed that learner emotions were full mediators in the model and predicted the emotional valence of learners' feeling different in the language. The findings thus highlight how important learner emotions experienced in the language class are for the development of a positive self in this language.

## Bisherige Disseminationen

Resnik, P., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2020). Trait emotional intelligence, positive and negative emotions in first and foreign language classes: A mixed-methods approach. *System*, 94, 1–15.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102324>

Resnik, P., Panicacci, A., & J.-M. Dewaele (2025). How Trait Emotional Intelligence and emotions shape learners' self-perceptions in the target language. *The Language Learning Journal*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2024.2447322>

2025:

English Teachers' Day, University College of Teacher Education Burgenland, Burgenland, Austria  
Plenary: Colouring the rainbow of learner emotions: The role of emotions in the foreign language classroom

2022:

ÖGSD Tagung "Beherzen oder behirnen? Zusammenspiel von Emotion und Kognition beim Lernen und Lehren von (Fremd-)Sprachen"

Plenary: Head and heart in education: the role of emotions in (foreign) language learning

Psychology of Language Learning 4, Cape Breton University, Canada; Talk (together with Jean-Marc Dewaele): Links between students' trait emotional intelligence, anxiety and enjoyment in (foreign) language classes

ISRE22 (International Society for Research on Emotion) Conference, Florida

Poster (together with Alex Panicacci): "I feel so God": the role of anxiety, enjoyment, and trait emotional intelligence in eliciting positive self-perceptions when learning a foreign language

2021:

International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) 2021, University of Groningen, Netherlands; Talk (together with Jean-Marc Dewaele): "It's very cool when you learn something new": Students' perceived enjoyment of German and English classes in the German-speaking world

EuroSLA 30 Conference, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain; Talk (together with Alex Panicacci and Jean-Marc Dewaele): "I feel so God": The effect of foreign language classroom anxiety and enjoyment on the self-perceptions of secondary- and tertiary-level learners of English

31/01 2020



Educational Linguistics Research Group Meeting, University of Vienna

Talk (together with Jean-Marc Dewaele): Trait emotional intelligence, anxiety and enjoyment in first and foreign language classes