



Self-expression in Language Autobiographies. The Language of Emotion and Its Implications for EFL Classes

Raluca GALIȚA^{1*}, Elena BONTA^{2*}

Received: 11 May 2021/ Accepted: 9 June 2021/ Published: 28 June 2021

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to enlarge the perspective offered by the studies concerned with the link between language learning and emotions. Based on the distinction between the conceptualization of emotions and the expression of emotions, the paper deals with the language of emotions in one type of non-literary discourse: the personal narrative - more exactly, the language autobiography. The basic idea it starts from is that the language autobiography is an important source of information about individual's experience with language(s) acquisition, displayed through thoughts, attitudes, intentions, or emotions. How are these emotions conceptualized? How are they expressed through language? What are the implications of the language of emotion for EFL classes? These are the questions that the paper tries to answer. The study uses both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data provided by the language autobiographies - written by 26 teachers of English - that reveal not only facts and concrete stories, but also the emotional side of the individuals' contact with language(s). The assumption that stays at the basis of our analysis is the following: if teachers become aware of the emotions, they passed through during their process of acquiring/learning a language, they could, in their turn, understand their learners' emotional involvement in the learning process (with its activating and deactivating effects) and thus, they will set into motion appropriate teaching techniques and teaching behaviour.

Key words: EFL classes; emotions ; language of emotions; linguistic autobiography; Self-expression

How to cite: Galița, R., Bonta, E. (2021). Self-expression in Language Autobiographies. The Language of Emotion and Its Implications for EFL Classes. *Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education and Didactics*, 25(1), 87-102. doi:10.29081/JIPED.2021.25.1.09

¹ Lecturer, PhD, "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Bacău, Romania, E-mail: galita.raluca@ub.ro

* Corresponding author

² Professor PhD, "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Bacău, Romania, E-mail: bonta.elena@ub.ro;
elenabonta@yahoo.com

* Corresponding author

1. Introduction

Emotions (and how we talk about them) represent an essential part of what makes us all human (Bednarek, 2008:16). They are a multi-component response to a challenge or an opportunity that is important to an individual's goals (Oatley et al., 2006:415) and can influence a person in deciding to study a foreign language, in choosing a particular attitude to it and whether to continue doing a task in a language classroom or not (Méndez Lopez & Pea Aguilar, 2013). Foreign language learning, either as a must (when it is included in school curricula) or as an individual's personal goal is influenced by a number of variables, among which the age of the learner, the learning environment, the exposure to language, the learner's prior linguistic knowledge, the learner's personality, the teaching strategies, the learner's self-confidence and self-image, the learner's feelings and emotions in the acquisition/learning contexts. Wierzbicka (1999) considers that both psychologists and anthropologists prefer to talk about *emotions* rather than *feelings*, because the first concept has an interpersonal, social basis (White, 1993, cited in Wierzbicka, 1999).

According to Kövecses (2014, p. 23), emotion represents "...a set of feelings and responses caused by a particular situation or, alternatively, as a set of feelings and responses producing some actions by a person who is in a state characterized by such feelings and responses." For Wierzbicka (1999:2), the English word *emotion* combines in its meaning a reference to "feeling", a reference to "thinking" and a reference to a person's body. Foolen (2012, p. 350) analyses the relationship between language and emotions and brings into attention the distinction between the *conceptualization of emotion* and the *expression of emotion*, as "...natural but different functions of language". Communicating emotions represents an important issue for analysis (Fussell, 2002), as it is a crucial activity, both perception and expression of emotions being connected with biographical, social, psychological and cultural factors (Pavlenko 2006; Wierzbicka, 1999, 2009; Wilson 2013).

2. Literature review

For the purpose of our study, we have taken into view two levels of analysis of the topic under research and brought into focus:

a) literature on the role of emotions in the process of learning which, in its turn, is subdivided into

➤ literature on the influence of emotions on the process of learning

Research in the field shows that authors were interested in the role of emotions on the learning process, motivation, performance and identity development (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007; Fried, 2011; Goetz & al, 2008; Lewis, 1993). Emotions were viewed as "obstacles to reason and knowing" but also as "ways of knowing one's self and the world" (Dirkx, 2008:7). There was also an interest in the influence of positive and negative emotions on the learners' learning motivation (Méndez Lopez & Aguilar, 2013), in the effects of emotion on academic achievement (Mega et al., 2014), in the relationship between emotional intelligence and foreign language learning (Pishghadam, 2009), the demotivating factors in EFL environment (Bekleyen, 2011), as well as in the predictive power of emotions in giving accounts of learners' performance (Mega et al., 2014).

➤ literature on particular aspects of the topic under discussion

Many of the authors insisted on particular emotions experienced by learners in the process of learning (language learning included): enjoyment, hope and pride (Mega et al., 2014); classroom anxiety (Korwitz et al., 1986, MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012); hope, frustration, anxiety (Marchand & Gutierrez, 2012); anxiety associated with EFL learners' achievement in learning a foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986); fear (Ellis, 1994); boredom in the classroom (Brookes, 2010); enjoyment and pride (Goetz et al., 2008); boredom, hopelessness, shame, and enjoyment

(Pishghadam et al. 2016); achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2006); fear, embarrassment, as a demotivation-triggering factor in learning and using a foreign language (Bonta, 2019).

b) literature on linguistic autobiographies

Linguistic autobiography, as a form of narrative writing (Agapova, 2007; Bonta, 2015; Bonta, 2019; Bonta & Galița, 2011; Burnett, 1991; Myahara, 2010; Pavlenko, 2007; Pellegrino, 1998; 2015; Posada & Garzón-Duarte, 2019, Tse, 2000), “explores the interweaving between language, thought and social practice” (Passeggi, 2011, cited in Posada & Garzón-Duarte, 2019: 164). Linguistic autobiographies shed light on individuals’ linguistic trajectories and can be viewed as “a huge reservoir of potentially rich and varied information” (Burnett, 1991:123) about individual’s experience with language(s) learning displayed through thoughts, attitudes, intentions, or emotions (Danielson, 1989; Benson, 2004).

Their study is part of the autobiographical research in education, with benefits for both learners and teachers. While learners develop their reflective abilities and critical thinking about their language repertoires on an affective level, they make sense of their learning experiences and become aware of their own resources and potential, teachers have the opportunity to understand learners’ emotional involvement and social behaviour when immersed in a L2 environment and apply appropriate teaching technique and behaviour in their classes (Bonta, 2015; Bonta & Galița, 2011).

3. Research questions

The research questions of our study were:

What emotions did learners experience during their foreign language(s) acquisition/learning and usage processes?

How were these emotions conceptualized?

How were they expressed through language?

What were their effects on language acquisition/ learning?

What are the implications of the learners’ language of emotion for EFL classes?

The study was based on the assumption that if teachers become aware of the emotions, they passed through during their process of acquiring/learning a language, they could, in their turn, understand their learners’ emotional involvement in the learning process (with its activating and deactivating effects) and thus, they will set into motion appropriate teaching techniques and teaching behaviour.

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

The participants to the study (n=26 - all females) were teachers of English from Bacău county, former learners of the Faculty of Letters, “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău. Their age ranged between 26 and 45 (mean = 36.9; SD = 5.51) and participation was on a voluntary basis, after they had been contacted via e-mail.

4.2. Research instruments

For our study, we used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data analysis of the linguistic autobiographies collected from the respondents. The analysis had in view Foolen’s (2012) theoretical framework of emotion analysis (based on the distinction between conceptualization and expression of emotions), as well as an adapted version of Pekrun’s (2007) taxonomy of academic emotions that are relevant for learners’ learning.

4.3. Data collection

In order to ensure validity of the study, we first had a meeting with participants. During this meeting, we introduced the concept of Linguistic Autobiography (LA), its structure, characteristics, content and benefits for both learners and teachers in the EFL teaching-learning process. We advised the respondents to look back to their foreign language learning experiences in school and out of school contexts and give accounts of their language learning stages, their own effort of learning, the teacher's role in the teaching-learning process, happy/sad learning experiences, helpful/hindering factors in the process of learning, as well as feelings they experienced along the process of acquiring/learning new languages.

4.4. Data processing

After securing the participants' verbal approval regarding data processing on a coded name basis, we

- collected the linguistic autobiographies, offered each of them a coded identification number (T1 - T26) and read them carefully
- extracted the passages that were based on conceptualizations and expressions of emotion (n = 257 instances)
- included the emotions in an adapted taxonomy established by Pekrun (2007), identifying categories of emotion and their (internal and external) stimuli
- we calculated the Mean (M) and Standard deviation (SD) values (for each type) and the effects (E) emotions had on the learning process: activating (A) or deactivating (D) ones
- we exemplified the typical emotion expressions that we identified

5. Results

While reading the linguistic autobiographies, we became aware of the fact that the learners' "meetings" with new languages were accompanied by various emotions, that began, got stronger or faded away, and they were clearly and openly stated by respondents. We applied *the control-value theory of achievement emotions* (Pekrun, Frenzel, Goetz, & Perry, 2007) and identified the different categories emotions belonged to, in terms of number and percentage. *Table 1* offers a synthesis of our outcomes.

Table 1. Categories of emotions

	Categories of emotion	No	%
257 instances	Epistemic emotions (EE)	108	42.02
	Achievement emotions (AE)	105	40.85
	Social emotions (SE)	24	9.33
	Language emotions (LE)	20	7.78

We then analysed each category, identifying the variety of emotions, the stimuli that triggered them, the Mean and Standard Deviation for each emotion, as well as the effect (A = activating; D= deactivating) the respective emotion had on the respondents (as reported in their narratives) (Tables 2-5).

Table 2. Epistemic emotions (EE)

Category of emotion	Descriptor	%	Stimulus	No	M (μ)	SD (σ)	E	
Epistemic emotions (EE)	triggered by cognitive processes	42.02						
surprise			(features of) the language	4	7	3	A	
			➤ own (good skills)	10				
delight				➤ language	6	6.6	2.05	A
				➤ own progress in language	7			
				➤ awareness of benefits	3			
				➤ opportunities for practice	9			
				➤ teaching techniques	8			
curiosity				➤ textbooks	2	2	0	A
				➤ new knowledge	2			
discouragement				➤ tasks	2	3.5	1.5	D/A
				➤ others' language use	6			
frustration				➤ language difficulty	6	5.4	1.62	D
				➤ individual skills	8			
				➤ teaching techniques	5			
				➤ receiving criticism/shameful experiences	3			
				➤ fewer opportunities to use the language	5			
fear				➤ level of knowledge	16	7.3	2.35	D
				➤ language difficulty	4			
				➤ personal traits (shyness)	2			
boredom				➤ inadequate tasks	2	1.5	0.5	D
			➤ classroom atmosphere	1				

Table 3. Achievement emotions (AE)

Category of emotion	Descriptor	%	Stimulus	No	M (μ)	SD (σ)	E	
Achievement emotions (AE)	success and failure in the process of learning	40.85					A/D	
enthusiasm				learning foreign languages	8	5.75	2.48	A
				good grades	2			
				language classes	5			
				language itself	8			
joy				contact with natives	5	2.75	1.78	A
				textbooks	1			
				opportunities for practice	4			
				teaching techniques	1			
hope				new opportunities for practice	1	5.5	4.5	A
				progress in language	10			

pride			own linguistic skills	6	4	2.16	A
			progress acknowledged	5			
			better than classmates	1			
gratitude			teachers	7	4	3	A
			others	1			
anxiety			poor-self confidence	5	8	3	D
			lack of ability	11			
shame			failure in language use	5	6.5	1.5	D/A
			poor self-image/esteem	8			D

Table 4. Social emotions (SE)

Category of emotion	Descriptor	%	Stimulus	No	M (μ)	SD (σ)	E
Social emotions (SE)	related to teachers and peers	9.33					
love			➤ teacher	7	4.5	2.5	A
			➤ peers	2			A
admiration			➤ teacher	8			A
contempt			➤ teacher	1			D
envy			➤ peers	2			A
anger			➤ teacher	4			D

Besides the *achievement emotions*, *epistemic emotions* and *social emotions*, the authors of the theory mentioned the fourth category: *topic emotions* (strictly linked to the topic of the lessons). For the sake of our study, we adapted the taxonomy and replaced the fourth category with that of *language emotions*. We were more interested in the emotions triggered by the experience with the foreign language(s) that respondents acquired/learned than in the emotions triggered by the topic of the lessons.

Table 5. Language emotions (LE)

Category of emotion	Descriptor	%	Stimulus	No	M (μ)	SD (σ)	Effect
Language emotions (LE)	related to the elements to be taught	7.78					
anxiety			➤ difficulty of grammar	5	3	2	D/A
			➤ large number of synonyms	1			A
enjoyment			➤ language power of expression	3	2.5	0.5	A
			➤ musicality of language	2			
delight			➤ pronunciation	7	5	2	A
			➤ simple grammar rules (compared to Romanian)	3			
dislike			➤ language (on the whole)	1	1.5	0.5	D
			➤ a particular language	2			

Within each category, we identified the variety of emotions (with their Mean and Standard deviation values) and the stimuli that triggered them. We identified the effect that each emotion

produced on the respondents (activating/deactivating effect), as part of our interest in the implications that the language of emotion could have for EFL classes.

Thus, in the category of *epistemic emotions* (triggered by cognitive processes), we identified the following:

- Number of instances = 108.
- The emotions with activating effects were represented (according to their descending number) by delight (n= 33); surprise (n=14) and curiosity (n=4). The most important factors that respondents were delighted by were opportunities for practice (n=9) and teaching techniques (n=8) – as elements directly linked to the external factors influencing the respondents' learning the language, as compared to internal factors (own progress in language (n= 6). Own good skills, as well as features of the language, surprised them positively and motivated them in their study, stirring their curiosity for new material and new encounters with the language.
- The most demotivating emotions were frustration (n=27); fear (n=22); discouragement (n=3) and boredom (n=3). Discouragement was mentioned as a result of the interaction with the others who were speaking the foreign language and who displayed better skills than the respondents (n= 8) or, as their trying to solve the tasks in the classroom (n= 2). Frustration was brought (in most cases) by the respondents' awareness regarding their individual skills in learning and producing the new language structures (n=8), as well as by the language difficulty (n=6). An important number of instances when frustration was mentioned, were connected with the process of teaching (teaching techniques =5; few opportunities to practise the language = 5) or the unpleasant/shameful experiences that respondents had in the classroom, while receiving excessive correction and criticism in front of their peers (n=3). Their fear was connected to their low level of knowledge (n=16), the difficulty of the language they had to study (n=4) and their personal traits – especially shyness (n=2) to talk in front of the others or to initiate talk in the foreign language. Boredom is strictly connected with the teaching methodology that was based on inadequate tasks, either too difficult or too easy for the learners' level of knowledge (n=2) and the unpleasant classroom atmosphere (n=1).

The analysis of the respondents' *achievement emotions* (related to success and failure in the process of learning) brought into light the following aspects:

- Number of instances = 105.
- The emotions with an activating effect included the enthusiasm brought by learning foreign languages in general (n=8) or learning a specific language (n=8), as well as by the language classes with their atmosphere and the teaching techniques (n=5) or the good grades the respondents obtained (n=2). Joy was especially brought by the contact with natives (n=4), a thing that represented good opportunities for practice (n=4) in activities/individual life outside classroom, but it was also linked with what teaching in formal context involved: the teaching techniques (n=1) and interesting textbooks (n=1). Respondents felt hopeful in what concerned their progress in language (despite difficulties that they had to encounter) (n=10) and new opportunities for practice – inside or outside classroom. Pride (n=12) was brought by own development of linguistic skills, moments in which they felt better than their peers in displaying either speaking or writing skills, but more than these, they were proud especially when progress was acknowledged by their interlocutors (outside the classroom) or by their teachers. They did not forget to mention their gratitude for teachers (n=7) and the other people (family, friends, acquaintances, partners in projects) who contributed to their success in language.

- The emotions that had a deactivating effect upon them were the anxiety they felt because of their poor self-confidence (n=5) or their lack of ability (n=11), alongside with shame brought by poor self-image/esteem (n=8) and failure in language use (n=5).

The analysis of the category of *social emotions* (related to teachers and peers) revealed the following:

- Number of instances = 24
- The emotions that had an activating effect upon respondents proved to be love and admiration (n=15) for the teachers of the respective foreign language, as well as love for the peers in the school context. An interesting thing to take into consideration is that data showed that envy (n=2), for example, directed towards peers can trigger an activating effect, motivating learners to study more and obtain the same results (even better ones) than the envied individuals.
- The emotions with deactivating effect upon respondents were anger (n=4), even contempt directed towards the teacher (because of his attitude towards teaching/learners or his teaching style /behaviour).

The analysis of the category of *language emotions* revealed the following:

- Number of instances = 20
- The emotions with activating effect included delight brought by pronunciation or simple grammar rules (as compared to Romanian) in the case of the English language (n=15) and enjoyment conveyed by the language power of expression and language musicality (n=5). Emotions such as anxiety triggered by grammar difficulties, instead of having entirely deactivating effects, had also activating ones, engaging learners in a permanent struggle on their way to success.
- The only pure deactivating effects were brought by learners` dislike of the language they had to study or the one they came into contact with in a particular context.

Table 6 summarizes the already identified data, presenting the type of effects brought by categories of emotions:

Table 6. Effects brought by emotions in language learning and usage

Type of effect	No of instances	Type of emotion
Activating	67	Achievement emotions
	53	Epistemic emotions
	19	Social emotions
	18	Language emotions
	173	
Deactivating	58	Epistemic emotions
	11	Achievement emotions
	3	Language emotions
	1	Social emotions
	84	

The data presented in Table 6 can be well corroborated with the data in Table 7 and Table 8, in which we divided the large group of identified emotions into two types: positive and negative ones. For each type, we established the specific emotions, the categories that emotions belong, the number of occurrences and the internal or external stimuli (IS = internal stimuli; ES = external stimuli) that triggered those emotions.

Table 7. Emotion types: positive emotions

Emotion type	Specific emotion	Emotion category	No	IS	Stimuli	ES	Stimuli
positive	delight	EE + LE + SE	52	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ own (improved) skills ➤ awareness of benefits brought by language learning 	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ opportunities for practice ➤ teaching techniques ➤ language itself
	enjoyment	AE + LE	39	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ good grades ➤ good skills 	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ language classes atmosphere ➤ out of school practice in language
	surprise + curiosity	EE	18	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ own good skills ➤ own progress in language 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ features of the language ➤ textbooks
	gratitude+ admiration	AE + SE	16	-	-	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ teachers + other facilitators
	pride	AE	12	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ progress in language 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ progress acknowledged by teachers/others
	hope	AE	11	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ability to make progress in language acquisition 	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ opportunities for practice
			148	49		99	

Table 8. Emotion types: negative emotions

Emotion type	Specific emotion	Emotion category	No	IE	Stimuli	ES	Stimuli
negative	fear/ anxiety	EE +AE +LE	44	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceived threat of failure poor self-confidence/poor self-esteem ➤ concern for their self-image 	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ teacher's criticism ➤ lack of encouragement from the teacher
	frustration / anger	EE + SE	31	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ low grades ➤ lack of knowledge 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> language difficulty lack of autonomy ➤ little practice

							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ peer reaction ➤ classroom atmosphere
	shame	AE	13	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ shameful experiences ➤ frequent failure in language use 	-	
	confusion	EE	8	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ lack of knowledge 	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ tasks assigned ➤ teaching techniques
	dislike	LE	3	-		3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ teacher's authoritarian attitude ➤ lack of autonomy
	boredom	EE	3	-		3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ teaching techniques ➤ inadequate teaching materials
	contempt/ envy	SE	2	-		2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ competition between learners
			104	58		46	

From Table 7 and Table 8 we can extract the following information:

- The number of external stimuli (ES = 99) that trigger positive emotions is higher than that of the internal stimuli (IS= 49); more exactly it is twice the number of the latter ones
- Positive emotions, such as delight and enjoyment in the study of the foreign language are especially triggered by external stimuli (ES = 71). An important place is occupied by stimuli with direct reference to the teacher's role in creating a classroom atmosphere, of using appropriate teaching techniques and offering learners opportunities for practising their receptive and productive skills. The language itself (with its phonetic qualities), along with interesting textbooks, produce surprise and curiosity, thus enhancing motivation. Out- of-school practice in language plays also an important role.

When teachers play their role well, they receive learners' gratitude and admiration (n=16), openly expressed in the narratives on their past language experience. More than this, learners express their being proud of themselves if teachers acknowledge their progress in language and encourage them to work more. Internal stimuli (IS=49) stir emotions such as delight (n=52), enjoyment (n=39), surprise (n=12), pride (n=7) and bring hope (n=10) to learners. Among these stimuli, an important place is occupied by the learners' own good skills, their progress in language competence and performance, as well as by their becoming aware of their own abilities and the benefits that language learning can bring to them and their future development as individuals.

Negative emotions, are based on internal stimuli (IS= 58) and external ones (n=46), with a slight difference in number. Fear and anxiety (n=44) are, in most cases, responses of internal stimuli such as perceived threat of failure and poor self-confidence or self-esteem. The emotion is enhanced by external stimuli connected with the teacher's style (excessive criticism for mistakes and lack of encouragement for learners). In consequence, respondents expressed frustration and anger (n=31) whenever they could not cope with challenges in learning, when they were exposed to little practice, worked in an inappropriate classroom atmosphere or were not given autonomy in their work. Shameful experiences and frequent failure in language use (as internal stimuli)

brought feelings of shame (n=13). Other negative emotions (dislike, boredom, contempt or envy were exclusively triggered by external stimuli (n=8) linked with teacher's authoritarian attitude, boring lessons, inappropriate teaching techniques or materials, as well as competition between learners in the classroom.

6. Discussion

The analysis of the 257 instances of emotion expressions that we identified, revealed the following: almost all of them could be included into three categories offered by Pekrun's taxonomy (2006): epistemic emotions, achievement emotions and social emotions. Part of them fitted into a category that we created: language emotions. Thus, 42.02% belonged to epistemic emotions (EE), 40.85% to achievement emotions (AE), 9.33% to the category of social emotions (SE), while 7.78% to that of language emotions (LE).

The analysis of the 26 linguistic autobiographies offered us material for the identification of the ways in which respondents conceptualized emotions, as well as of their linguistic expressions. Research on the issue of conceptualization of emotions is quite rich. We had in view Kövecses' study on emotions and used it as a basis for analysis. Dissatisfied with the way in which the emotion concepts were dealt with in literature on the topic, the author investigates a number of seven emotion concepts (anger, love, pride, fear, happiness, friendship and respect), in his attempt of offering their description from a cognitive linguistic perspective. For him, emotion concepts are "largely metaphorically and metonymically constituted and defined" (2014, p.16) and their representations are cognitive models, or conceptual frames. He offers examples of some of the most typical conceptual metaphors (2014, pp.16-17):

- Emotion is a fluid in a container (*filled* with emotion)
- Emotion is heat/fire (*burn* with emotion)
- Emotion is a natural force (be *overwhelmed* by an emotion)
- Emotion is a physical force (be *struck* by an emotion)
- Emotion is a social superior (be *governed/ruled* by an emotion)
- Emotion is an opponent (be *overcome* by an emotion)
- Emotion is a captive animal (*let go of* an emotion)
- Emotion is a force dislocating the self (be *beside oneself* with an emotion)
- Emotion is burden (be *weighed down* by an emotion)

In the linguistic autobiographies we analysed, we identified:

Emotion = a defeated opponent in a struggle

*We used to work with a very colourful book; we used to play games and sing songs and this helped me overcome the **fear** of speaking English. (T1)*

*At that moment, I felt no more **fear**; it was as if I was walking out of a deep forest and I could see the light. (T8)*

Emotion = a hidden enemy (Kövecses, 2014)

*I spent a week in England where I had the chance to speak English all the time; I forgot about my **shyness**. (T17)*

Emotion = an illness (Kövecses, 2014)

*I felt I was choking with **fear** any moment I had to utter something in the new language. (T2)*

Emotion = a starting point (Rakić, 2014)

*Every new sentence that I uttered, every new question that I asked were small victories for me. I started to feel **proud** of myself. (T6)*

Emotion = a companion

***Joy** accompanied me all the way on this journey to success in language learning. (T13)*

The linguistic expressions of emotions that respondents reported were based on

- Verbs of being and state: *be, feel*
 - I **felt** the difficulties of learning a foreign language. (T14)*
 - I often **felt** confused... (T5)*
 - I **was** disappointed with my grades. (T3)*
 - I **was** so happy and inquisitive during the English classes. (T4)*
- Verbs of feeling/emotion: *love; like, admire, hate*
 - I **loved** both of these new languages. (T9)*
 - What I **liked** most was its rhythm and pronunciation. (T12)*
 - I **admired** my teacher and I **loved** the way in which she was making our English classes the most beautiful moments of school routine. (T19)*
 - I fell in **love** with English due to the teacher. (T2)*
- Verbs with preposition: *refuse to, worry about*
 - As I was not confident in my speaking abilities in French, I simply **refused to** use it, although I understood almost all the words in the question. (T7)*
- Nouns: *love, affection, surprise, pride, anger, enthusiasm, anxiety*
 - English is and it will always be my **love**. (T21)*
 - I remember the feeling of **pride** when my knowledge was praised. (T4)*
- *** nouns with preposition: *appetite for, reluctance to, fear of*
 - I felt a certain **fear of** not making mistakes. (T7)*
- Adjectives: *happy, delighted, impressed, pleased, lucky, puzzled, sad, angry, anxious, disappointed, eager, anxious, terrified, proud, thankful*
 - I felt **lucky** to have many opportunities to learn new languages. (T3)*
 - Being **shy** and **nervous**, when my turn came, I forgot the poem and became voiceless. (T9)*
 - At first, I was **puzzled** as I could understand some of the words. (T3)*
- ***adjectives with prepositions: *eager to, confident about, comfortable with, afraid of, scared of, content with*
 - I was really **afraid of** making mistakes; I thought my colleagues will laugh...(T14)*
- Adverbs: *luckily, sadly; fortunately/ unfortunately*
 - Luckily**, I had the chance to talk to natives. (T25)*
 - Sadly**, the English classes at my elementary school were not as challenging ... (T23)*
- *** Intensifiers: *terribly; strongly; really; quite, pretty; rather, so*
 - I was **so** happy during the English classes! (T15)*
- *** Quantifiers: *much, many, a little, ever*
 - My heart was full of **much** joy as I was able to understand the questions. (T20)*
- Interjections: *Wow!*
 - I could finish the first book in English! What a feeling! **WOW!** (T18)*

The outcomes of our research confirmed many of the conclusions that researchers on the topic have already brought into light. Thus, embarked on the “journey” of language learning, learners experience a diversity of emotions that vary between individuals (as they involve

subjective experiences - Pekrun, 2014, p. 10) and across contexts (participative, interactional, situational, temporal). Emotional experiences play an important role in education – in general – and in the acquisition/learning of a foreign language – in particular. Achievement in language learning is particularly influenced by the positive emotions that learners experience, such as joy, enjoyment, delight, enthusiasm, pride or hope – that are related to an increase in learners' intrinsic motivation, sustained effort for learning and better results, as well as to self-regulation of learning (Pekrun et al., 2011, p. 45). Deactivating effects are brought by negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, frustration, dislike, shame or boredom. These emotions are linked to learners' low level of intrinsic motivation and academic performance.

There are cases in which negative emotions, such as anxiety, fear, envy and discouragement can become motivational factors once learners become aware of the negative effects these emotions trigger not only at the academic level, but at the individual one (self-image, self-esteem) and they transform them into springboards towards learning enhancement. As noticed from the analysis of linguistic autobiographies, learners' emotions were stirred by both internal and external stimuli. Most of the external stimuli (for both positive and negative emotions) were linked with the teacher, the teaching techniques and the materials used in the classroom, the classroom management and the teacher's attitude and behaviour.

Starting from Pekrun's idea (2007) that emotions have a predictive power in explaining learners' performance, we consider that it is necessary that teachers have access to information regarding learners' emotions, so that they could understand them and resort to adjustments in their teaching approaches, methods, strategies and techniques. The emphasis should be placed on the increase of positive emotions and their transformation into a driving force towards success in language learning. The outcomes of our research brought us the satisfaction of having chosen teachers, as participants to our study, as these findings may raise their awareness of the role emotions play in the acquisition and language learning. Pishagam (2009) openly mentions the role of the teacher with regard to learners' emotions and highlights two important directions for the teacher's duty: to promote learners' achievement and to establish a positive teacher-student relationship. The only reason for not having done this is that our research was designed to offer information just for the researcher – thus, being included in what Posada-Ortiz & Garzón-Duarte (2019, p.164) called “the recent tendency to use narratives and stories in order to comprehend the history of education” (as one possible type of research included in this approach: teachers' personal stories examined only by the researcher, being opposed to the second type: life of the teachers examined by the teachers and the researchers).

6. Conclusions

Identifying and understanding their learners' emotional involvement in the learning process (with its activating and deactivating effects) could help them set into motion:

- Modalities of identifying learners' emotions (through conversations with learners, through questionnaires or narratives)
- Appropriate teaching techniques
 - adapted to the learners' level of knowledge
 - based on interactive and dynamic activities
 - based on activities and tasks appropriate to learners' age, level of knowledge and interest
 - based on the use of authentic, interesting and appropriate materials
 - offering more opportunities for practice
 - emphasising the cooperation between students, rather than the competition between them
- Teaching and relational behaviour

- supporting learners; offering encouragement
- helping learners increase their self-confidence and self-esteem
- acknowledging learners' progress in language development
- offering autonomy in learning
- avoiding excessive criticism
- establishing a pleasant, friendly, cooperative classroom atmosphere

The starting point of all these teachers' actions/adjustments in their teaching, attitude and behaviour should be the follow-up of the teachers' reflective process upon –at least - two things:

- What motivated/demotivated me - as a language learner - in school and outside school context?
- How could I help my learners experience positive emotions while acquiring/learning English, so that they stay motivated and become successful in language learning?

We are, however, aware of certain limitations of our study. First, we have in view the fact that our respondents were all female teachers of English. It would have been interesting to identify the way in which male teachers had expressed their emotions stirred by their “meetings” with new languages, so that we could have also mentioned gender differences in expressions, if any. Second, the study would have brought more specific information related to the implications of the language of emotion for EFL classes if we had had a follow-up activity of the linguistic autobiography writing activity and we had asked the respondents to extract these implications for themselves.

References

- Agapova, O. (2007). Biographical learning in adult education. *Adult Education and Development*, 68, 45-59.
- Bednarek, M. (2008). Analyzing language and emotion. In M. Bednarek (Ed.), *Emotion talk across corpora*, 1–26. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bekleyen, N. (2011). Demotivating factors in the EFL environment. *Frontiers of Language and Teaching*, 2, 151-156.
- Benson, P. (2004). (Auto)biography and Learner Diversity. In P. Benson and D. Nunan (eds.), *Learners' Stories: Difference and Diversity in Language Learning* (pp.4-22). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bonta, E. (2015). *Understanding language Autobiographies*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
- Bonta, E., & Galița, R. (2011). Linguistic autobiographies or making sense of one's own language learning experience. Case study. *Philologia Journal*, 9 (1-10), 65-73.
- Bonta, E. (2019) Demotivation-triggering factors in learning and using a foreign language – an empirical study. *Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education and Didactics*, 23(2), 177-198.
- Brookes, G. (2010). Boredom in a writing class. *Journal of Teaching Writing*, 12(2), 145-160.
- Burnett, R. 1991. Accounts and Narratives. In B. Montgomery, S. Duck (eds): *Studying Interpersonal Interaction* (pp. 121-141). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Danielson, K. E. (1989). The autobiography as language reflection. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 29(4), 257-261.
- Dirkx, J. M (2008). The meaning and role of emotions in adult learning. *Adult Learning and the Emotional Self*, 120, 7-18.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Foolen, A. (2012). The relevance of emotion for language and linguistics. In A. Foolen, U. M. Lüdtke, T. P. Racine, & J. Zlatev (Eds.), *Moving ourselves, moving others: Motion and*

- emotion in intersubjectivity, consciousness and language* (pp. 349–369). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Fried, L. (2011). Teaching teachers about emotion regulation in the classroom. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(3), 1-11. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n3.1>
- Fussell, S. R. (ed.) (2002). The Verbal Communication of Emotion: Introduction and Overview. In *The Verbal Communication of Emotions: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 1-22. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Goetz, T., Frenzel, C. A., Hall, N. C. & Pekrun, R. (2008). Antecedents of academic emotions: Testing the internal/external frame of reference model for academic enjoyment. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33(1), 9-33.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B. & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>
- Kövecses, Z. (2014). Conceptualizing emotions. A revised cognitive linguistic perspective, *Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics* 50(1), 15–28.
- Lewis, M. (1993). Self-conscious emotions: Embarrassment, pride, shame, and guilt. In M. Lewis & J. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 563-573). New York: Guilford Press.
- Lindquist, K.A., Gendron, M., & Satpute, A. B. (2018). Language and emotion: Putting words into feelings and feelings into words. In Feldman Barrett, L. M. Lewis and J.M. Haviland-Jones (Eds), *Handbook of Emotions*, 4th edition, Guilford Press.
- MacIntyre, P. D. & Gregersen, T. (2012). Affect: The role of language anxiety and other emotions in language learning. In S. Mercer, S. Ryan, & M. Williams (Eds.), *Language learning psychology: Research, theory and pedagogy*, 103-118. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Marchand, G.C & A.P. Gutierrez (2012). The role of emotion in the learning process: Comparisons between online and face-to-face learning settings. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 15(3), 150-160.
- Mega, C., L. Ronconi, and Rossana De Beni (2014). What Makes a Good Student? How Emotions, Self-Regulated Learning, and Motivation Contribute to Academic Achievement, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 106(1), 121–131.
- Méndez Lopez, M. G. & Pea Aguilar, A. P. (2013). Emotions as learning enhancers of foreign language learning motivation. *Profile*, 15(1), 109-124. <http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/prf/v15n1/v15n1a08.pdf>
- Myahara, M. (2010). Researching Identity and Language learning: Taking a Narrative Approach. *Language Research Bulletin*, 25, 1-15.
- Oatley, K., Keltner, D., & Jenkins, J. M. (2006). *Understanding emotions* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Pavlenko, A. (ed.). 2006. *Bilingual minds: Emotional experience, expression, and representation*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Pavlenko, A. (2007). Autobiographic Narratives as Data in Applied Linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 28(2), 163-188.
- Pekrun, R. (2006). The control-value theory of achievement emotions: Assumptions, corollaries, and implications for educational research and practice. *Educational Psychology Review*, 18, 315–341. doi:10.1007/s10648-006-9029-9
- Pekrun, R., Frenzel, A. C., Goetz, T. & Perry, R. P. (2007). The control-value theory of achievement emotions: An integrative approach to emotions in education. In P. A. Schutz & R. Pekrun (Eds.), *Emotion in education* (pp. 13-36). San Diego, CA: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Pekrun, R. (2014). *Emotions and learning*. France: Gonnet Imprimeur.
- Pekrun, R., Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A. (2009). Achievement goals and achievement emotions: Testing a model of their joint relations with academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101, 115– 135. doi:10.1037/a0013383.

- Pekrun, R., Goetz, T., Frenzel, A. C., Barchfeld, P., & Perry, R. P. (2011). Measuring emotions in learners' learning and performance: The Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ). *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 36, 36–48. doi:10.1016/j.cedpsych.2010.10.002.
- Pellegrino, V. A. (1998/2015). Student Perspectives on Language Learning in a Study Abroad Context, *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, Retrieved from http://www.frontiersjournal.com/issues/vol4/vol4-04_Pelligrino.htm.
- Pérez- García, E. María Jesús Sánchez (2019). Emotions as a linguistic category: Perception and expression of emotions by Spanish EFL learners, *Language Culture and Curriculum*, Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333823660_Emotions_as_a_linguistic_category_Perception_and_expression_of_emotions_by_Spanish_EFL_learners.
- Pishghadam, R. (2009). A quantitative analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence and foreign language learning. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 6(1), 31–41.
- Pishghadam, R., Zabetipour, M. & Aminzade, A. (2016). Examining the gender identity of language teachers using a masculinity-femininity scale: A case from Iran. *Issues in Educational Research*, 26(3), 508-527.
- Posada, J. & E. Garzón-Duarte (2019). Autobiographies: A Tool to Depict English Language Learning Experiences. *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal*, 18, 161-180, DOI: 10.26817/16925777.447.
- Rakić, J. (2014). Emotion in motion: conceptualization of FEAR in English in terms of movement and location, *Philologist - Journal of Language, Literary and Cultural Studies*, 9, 63-79. <https://doisrpska.nub.rs/index.php/filolog/article/view/1343/1249>
- Schutz, P. A., & Pekrun, R. (Eds.). (2007). *Emotion in education*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Tse, L. (2000). Student perceptions of foreign language study: A qualitative analysis of foreign language autobiographies. *Modern Language Journal*, 84(1), 69-84.
- Wierzbicka, A. (1999). *Emotions across languages and cultures: Diversity and universals*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Wierzbicka, A. 2009. Language and metalanguage: Key issues in emotion research. *Emotion Review*, 1(1), 3-14.
- Wilson, R. J. (2013). 'Another language is another soul': individual differences in the presentation of self in a foreign language. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 13(3), 298-309.