

Learners' emotional response to a complex video-creation task

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Abstract. We are three teachers of business English in higher education who have developed a project for our second-year management students to co-create their own video document, exploring a business question. Our intention is to determine whether the complexity of our entire teaching sequence, and more specifically the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools for the co-creation of problem-solving content, allowed our learners to experience positive emotions, i.e. *enjoyment* – vs. *anxiety* – in the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and whether they perceived the *usefulness* of the project for their future personal or professional life. Our project took place over the second semester of the 2018-2019 academic year, after which the students answered a questionnaire in their mother tongue with both Likert-scale and open questions. The current paper uses a mixed-methods approach to analyse the results and report on the emotional effect of the teaching sequence on the students.

Keywords: SLA, CALL, emotions, enjoyment.

1. Introduction

Interest for the emotional aspects of language learning has been growing among researchers over the years (De Smet et al., 2018; Dewaele, Witney, Saito, & Dewaele, 2018). Two major concepts have been highlighted as being complementary in the learners' experience of SLA, i.e. 'anxiety' and 'enjoyment'. We made use of Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2014) Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) scale and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) scale to analyse the learners'

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emotional experiences. We also assessed their perceived usefulness (De Smet et al., 2018) of the whole project. Also, Romero's (2015) model suggests that the most complex but also engaging way of integrating technology in pedagogy consists in having the learners use ICT for the 'participative co-creation of knowledge' (our translation). To do so, the learners must be engaged in the understanding or solving of problems shared by the class, which is then considered as a learning community. The aim of this study is to determine whether, when faced with a complex, ICT-integrated task, our learners experienced a positive emotional relationship with the target language.

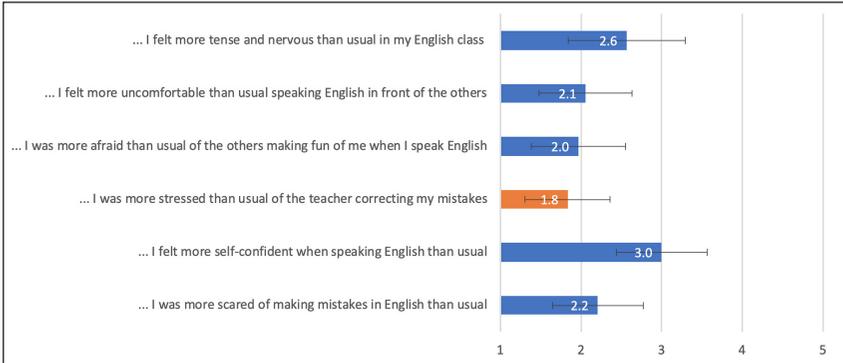
2. Methodology

The project took place throughout the second semester of the 2018-2019 academic year and involved 94 second-year management students aiming at a B2 level of proficiency in oral skills (CEFR, 2001, p. 27). The students were divided into four groups and taught by three different teachers. The majority of the work on the project was done in class, and the students were asked to work in groups of three or four on the creation of a video exploring a real-life business question of their choice. Each group then had the entire class reflect upon their question during a thirty-minute activity including their video. By the end of the semester, all the videos were compiled into a data bank, which the students were prompted to browse with a view of discussing a new question during their end-of-year oral examination. The learners were also asked to complete a questionnaire in French, reflecting upon their enjoyment, anxiety, and perceived usefulness of the tasks throughout their experience. The questionnaire submitted to the students at the end of the year contained nine sections of five-point Likert-scale questions – from 1, disagree, to 5, agree – and open questions, based on Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2014) FLE and FLCA scales. The questions on perceived usefulness were based on De Smet et al.'s (2018) questionnaires. The answers we received from 67 – out of 94 – students allowed us to conduct a mixed-methods analysis.

3. Results and discussion

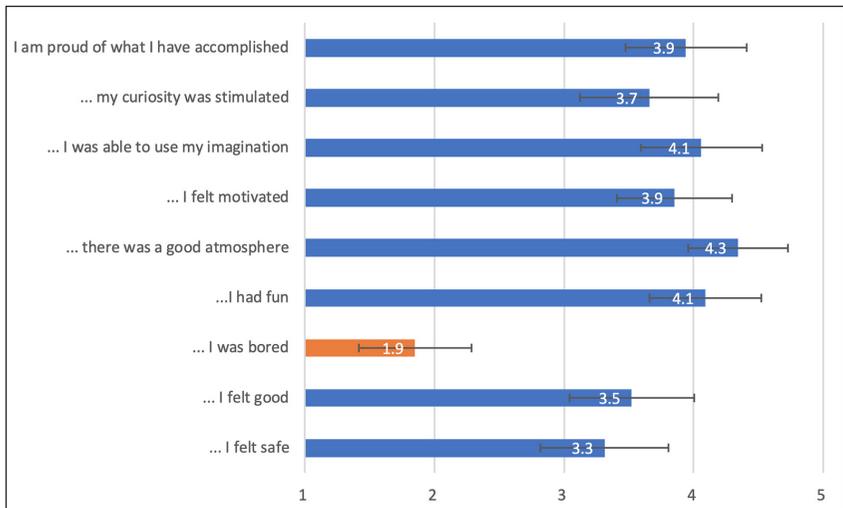
In this section, we will first address the Likert-scale questions quantitatively for each emotional item separately – i.e. *anxiety*, *enjoyment*, and *perception of use*. The graphs show the mean and standard deviation. Questions for which the expected answer is the opposite of the others are represented in orange. We will then further refine our analysis qualitatively by focussing on the open questions.

Figure 1. Anxiety – Mean and SD – “Throughout the project...”



As depicted in [Figure 1](#), the students' answers show that they did not feel any more tense, uncomfortable, or stressed than usual throughout the project. When asked whether they felt more self-confident expressing themselves in the target language, they answered neutrally. The whole project, however complex, does therefore not seem to have generated more anxiety than usual among the students.

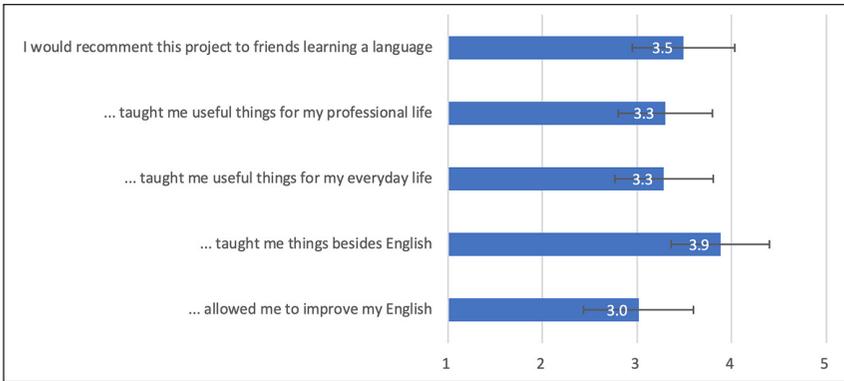
Figure 2. Enjoyment – Mean and SD – “Throughout the project...”



Enjoyment-related questions prompted clearly positive results – cf. [Figure 2](#) – with high scores in terms of atmosphere, how much fun the students had, and how much

they were able to use their imagination. They also quite agreed on the fact that they felt motivated, that their curiosity was stimulated, and that they felt good and safe throughout the project. The one question that referred to them being bored scored quite low on the Likert-scale. Our results show that, in the case of our project, the students felt both low anxiety (or at least no higher than usual), all the while feeling high levels of enjoyment.

Figure 3. Perceived usefulness – Mean and SD – “This project...”



The third variable showed positive but less prominent results than the other two – cf. Figure 3. The students considered that the project taught them things besides English, whether it be for their personal or professional life, and they would, on the whole, recommend it to friends learning a language. Nevertheless, they remain neutral on how much they improved their English. We will shed a brighter light on these results by analysing the open questions.

Table 1. Open questions, categorised by item and number of occurrences

What did you prefer?		What did you least like?		What did you learn?	
Creativity/originality/ freedom/imagination	30	Time	14	Video/editing/ shooting/technology	16
Video(s)/shooting/ editing	21	‘Nothing’	12	Communication / speaking/English/ non-verbal	10
Fun/enjoyment	16	Planning /beginning/ preparations/ portfolio	9	Topics	8
Group/interaction	12	Video/editing/ shooting	9	Group/ collaborating	4
Serious	5	Topic	2	Different	2

To analyse the open questions, we have tagged them with key words, which we later categorised into concepts using grounded theory (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013), and then counted the number of times they were mentioned. The main concept is identified in bold in Table 1 above, along with its associated keywords. Any concept that was mentioned only once is not represented.

Creativity and associated terms were mentioned 30 times as the thing the students preferred throughout the project. Many also mentioned how they were able to deal with a serious (5) topic in a fun (16) way, while enjoying a certain degree of freedom. Group work and interaction (12) were also highlighted as a plus, as well as ICT aspects such as shooting, editing, and the videos themselves (21).

The least liked items focussed on how time-consuming (14) the project was, which is confirmed by elements such as the portfolio, preparations, planning, and beginning (9). Some students disliked technical aspects like editing and shooting of their video (9). Finally, 12 students out of 64 did not mention anything they disliked.

The students considered they had learned about editing and shooting or videos and technology in general (16). Eight students also mentioned learning about the topics that were addressed in class, in their own group, or by the others. Language-wise, they mentioned learning about English, and more specifically speaking and non-verbal communication (10). The students have also improved their group work and collaboration (4) skills, while learning to work in a different (2) way.

These results corroborate and further detail the answers to the Likert questions. It seems the low anxiety and high enjoyment can be attributed to a good atmosphere, which allowed the students to use their creativity and learn about ICT and communication skills to learn about serious topics, in a fun way. The feedback received is also encouraging in terms of reaching the highest level of complexity and engagement via a 'participative co-creation of knowledge' while working with ICT (Romero, 2015), since the students highlight group work, collaboration, and ICT skills, in combination with their interests in the topics covered.

4. Conclusion

As mentioned, our main aim was to determine whether our learners experienced positive emotions, and whether they perceived the usefulness of the project for their future life. Results tend to show that the complexity of the task required from

the students did not create any more anxiety than usual. They felt a high level of enjoyment throughout the semester and, even though they did not feel strongly about the use of the project for their everyday life and their future careers, they considered they learned a variety of things from ICT skills, to communication and collaborating competences. Should we replicate this study, we would work with a control group, on a full-year project, which would allow us to integrate and be more explicit on linguistic objectives.

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