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Boosting students' positive emotions about language learning

21 March 2020

Bush House, Lecture Theatre 1

King's College London, Strand Campus

30 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4BG

Programme:

9:30: Registration open & coffee

10:00-10:15: Welcome and Opening of Workshop

10:15-11:15: TALK & WORKSHOP: Liana Pavelescu (South Thames College, UK):
Zooming in on positive emotions in foreign language learning and teaching

11:15-11:45: TALK: Sharona Moskowitz (Birkbeck College, UK):
Is teacher happiness contagious? A study of the link between perceptions of
language
teacher happiness and student attitudes

11:45-12:45: Lunch break

12:45-13:45: TALK & WORKSHOP: Pia Resnik (University College of Teacher
Education, Vienna/Krems, Austria) & Christine Schallmoser (King's College London,
UK):

"It's pretty, pretty much crisis point." Discussing and developing ways to increase
students' interest in MFLs in the UK

13:45-14:45: TALK & WORKSHOP: Lucy Jenkins (University of Cardiff):
"Mentoring: inspiring our young learners to love languages"

14:45-15:00: Closing of Workshop

Abstracts:

Liana Pavelescu: *Zooming in on positive emotions in foreign language learning and teaching*

“Emotions are the heart of language learning and teaching” (Dewaele et al., 2019, p. 1). However, despite the importance of emotions in learning, classroom language learning often views emotional expression as a nonessential or unnecessary aspect, which leaves learners unable to express their emotions in the foreign language, vulnerable to emotion talk and thus unprepared for the real world (Pavlenko, 2005). Learners’ emotions still tend to be neglected in the foreign language classroom as learners are essentially viewed as rational beings, vessels to be filled with knowledge. This workshop aims to zoom in on positive emotions in language learning and teaching and to foreground and raise awareness of the emotional dimension of language learners and language learning. In order to have a more in-depth understanding of positive emotions, the concept of positive psychology will be discussed. Secondly, the broaden and build theory of emotions (Fredrickson, 2001; 2003; 2006) will be included. Thirdly, the use of the broaden and build theory in applied linguistics research will be explored. Since the focus will be on two positive emotions - love and enjoyment - the literature on love and enjoyment in language learning and teaching will be reviewed. Last but not least, implications of the reviewed literature for teaching practice will be highlighted.

Dewaele, J.-M., Chen, X., Padilla, A. M. & Lake, J. (2019). The Flowering of Positive Psychology in Foreign Language Teaching and Acquisition Research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 1-13.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218-226.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2003). The Value of Positive Emotions. *American Scientist*, 91(4), 330-335.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2006). The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions. In M.Csikszentmihalyi & I. Selega Csikszentmihalyi (Eds.), *A Life Worth Living. Contributions to Positive Psychology* (pp. 85-103). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pavlenko, A. (2005). *Emotions and Multilingualism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sharona Moskowitz: *Is teacher happiness contagious? A study of the link between perceptions of language teacher happiness and student attitudes*

This talk focuses on the importance of teacher-related variables, more precisely, perceived teacher happiness, in the foreign language classroom. It will draw on a study aimed to investigate the effects of English Foreign Language (EFL) student perception of teacher happiness and the ramifications of those perceptions on student feelings and attitudes. Using an online questionnaire, data were collected from 129 adult EFL students from across the world who were enrolled in formal English classes of intermediate to advanced level proficiency. Participants were asked about their perception of various aspects of their teachers’ happiness (using an adapted form of the Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle, Martin & Crossland, 1989)), and about their own attitudes and motivation to learn English (based on Gardner, 1985, 2010). Correlation and multiple regression analyses revealed that student perception of teacher happiness was significantly (and positively) linked with students’ overall attitude and motivation, as well as students’ attitude towards the teacher. Moreover, the perceived teacher happiness domain of satisfaction with personal achievements was a significant predictor of

both overall attitude and motivation and attitude towards the teacher. This is interpreted as an indication that positive emotional contagion can happen between teachers and students. The study demonstrates the indispensability of the teacher in the language learning process and the crucial role of teacher happiness in creating and maintaining positive attitudes and motivation of students. Practical approaches for increasing teacher happiness are discussed, including cognitive reappraisal strategies, making the best of less than ideal teaching situations, and the realistic acceptance of negative emotion as a precursor to teacher wellbeing.

- Argyle, M., M. Martin, and J. Crossland. 1989. "Happiness as a Function of Personality and Social Encounters." In *Recent Advances in Social Psychology: An International Perspective*, edited by J. P. Forgas and J. M. Innes, 189–203. Amsterdam: North-Holland: Elsevier.
- Gardner, R. C. 1985. *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R. C. 2010. *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition: The Socio-Educational Model*. New York: Peter Lang.

Pia Resnik & Christine Schallmoser: "It's pretty, pretty much crisis point." Discussing and developing ways to increase students' interest in MFLs in the UK

The relationship between affective variables in (foreign) language classes has been widely researched (see, e.g., Dewaele et al., 2019) and much knowledge has been gained on the role of negative and positive emotions in learning another language (e.g., Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016; Gkonou, Daubney, & Dewaele, 2017; Horwitz et al., 1986). In this workshop, we would like to draw on the extensive knowledge gained in the field and take a step forward by providing a platform to discuss and develop different practical modes of implementation in the actual classroom: together with Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) teachers, we would like to bridge the gap between research and teaching and consider ways of translating research findings into useful classroom practices which learners benefit from – a step much needed (Worton, 2019, personal conversation).

In order to broaden the understanding of current challenges in the take-up of modern languages, we will present the findings of in-depth interviews conducted with students and teachers at secondary level in the UK. These will serve as a basis to develop ideas on how to boost learners' love for languages and how to counteract their foreign language anxiety. Given the dropping student numbers in language classes in the UK and Brexit becoming a reality, discussing the underlying reasons for the decreasing interest in MFLs is crucial in order to evoke and/or increase excitement for languages other than English and to make students and parents aware of their importance.

- Dewaele, J.-M., Chen, X., Padilla, A.M., & Lake, J. (2019). The flowering of positive psychology in foreign language teaching and acquisition research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02128>
- Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4(2), 237-274.
- Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2016). Foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety. The right and left feet of the language learner. In P. D. MacIntyre, T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA* (pp. 215-236). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Gkonou, C., Daubney, M., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2017). *New insights into language anxiety: theory, research and educational implications*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125-132. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x

Lucy Jenkins: *Mentoring: inspiring our young learners to love languages*

Now in its fifth year, the MFL Student Mentoring Project brings together pupil mentees (aged 13-14) and university mentors for a period of 5-6 weeks, either in the form of face-to-face or e-mentoring. The project is less about building specific language skills than about fostering a mindset which questions social conventions and champions intercultural understanding and curiosity. Its aim is to challenge traditional content-driven language learning (with a transactional focus) and to replace it with an approach and engagement framework which promotes cultural and linguistic questioning. Mentor and mentees are encouraged to reflect upon wider questions of identity and citizenship which allow them to connect personally with languages, no matter their geographical mobility or agility.

Integrated within this experience are creative activities which require mentees to create and play. I will explore the underpinning approach to the creation of these activities, how they intersect with questions of global identity, and how they call upon mentors and mentees to re-think languages with the aim of generating positive emotions towards and for 'other' languages and cultures.