

Emo-learning: Affect in language learning

Theoretical frame

Since Damasio's research in neuroscience (1995, 1999) emotions have played an increasingly prominent role in science, leading to the creation of a new field called "affective science" (Sander, 2015). After a long period of exclusion, affect is now firmly back in the scientific field and has resulted in fruitful and unexpected reflections across disciplinary boundaries for researchers daring to step out of their comfort zone and let themselves be challenged by different theoretical and practical insights. Language teaching, educational research, linguistics, psychology, neuroscience, the performing arts are all therefore brought together at this conference to challenge disciplinary boundaries.

In the field of psychology, emotions can be described generally or in great detail depending on whether one is adopting the categorical or dimensional approach (Botella, 2015). Depending on the objective, one or the other tool will be preferred.

In educational research, educators are questioning the link between emotions and cognition and seek to discover whether certain types of teaching, such as project-based learning or different creative approaches, could facilitate the integration of the dimensions and emotional dimensions in the learning process (Berdal-Masuy & Botella, 2013; Puozzo Capron, 2015).

In linguistics, the researchers propose "not psychological" vision of emotion and analyze the role played by language in the construction and management of emotion, the linguistically pre-constructed nature of emotion(s) being variable different languages (Plantin, 2011, 2015). Thus, lexical research on the linguistic expression of emotions in French as a foreign language has clear pedagogic implications (Cavalla, 2005, 2015). Similarly, advances in cognitive linguistics have been applied effectively to understand grammar in more nuanced and transparent ways (Suñer Muñoz, 2016).

Considering language as a tool for developing citizenship, the study of rhetorical skills provides techniques and practices to learn to control emotions and to exercise emotional intelligence (Ferry & Sans, 2015). In examining language use by particular speakers in given contexts sociolinguistics focuses on the socio-political context of learning the language of the Other (Baider & Cislaru, 2013; Mettewie, 2015).

This growing interest in research and education on emotions in learning is demonstrated by the rise, in the last three years, in the number of publications devoted to the link between emotions and language learning: *L'émotion et l'apprentissage des langues* (Puozzo Capron & Piccardo, 2013), *L'intime et l'apprendre. La question des langues vivantes* (Berchoud, 2013), *Affect(s)* (Décuré, 2014), *Apprentissage, enseignement et affects* (Baider, Cislaru & Coffey, 2015), *Affects et acquisition des langues* (Berdal-Masuy & Pairon, 2015).

Thus, in the specific field of language learning, work has been done on the role of emotions in multilingualism (Dewaele, 2010; Kramsch, 2009; Pavlenko, 2005), including the reflexivity arising from the distance between the familiar and the 'strange' (Coffey, 2015). Now that emotions are no longer considered separable from the cognitive domain (Swain, 2013) it becomes necessary to think about teaching approaches that simultaneously promote intertwining cognitive and emotional variables.

Arnold (1999) studies the intersectional regulation of affect in the language classroom, both from the perspectives of the learner and teacher and in the interaction between the two. Analysing processes of (self-)regulation of emotion also gives rise to a meta-reflection on how the subject experiences the learning, within both cognitive and emotional dimensions (Oxford, 2015).

Finally, the aspect of embodied learning, long neglected in the cognitive and linguistic approaches is reinstated with a broader, more holistic vision of language teaching and learning that fully takes into account the place of the body in language acquisition (Aden et al., 2010).

From this perspective, theatrical artists offer an "experiential" approach to the emotions, based on body and the voice. The work of actors, dancers, directors and musicians is to invoke emotion before and beyond words (Arragain, 2013). Focusing attention on sensory, pre-language experience in learning allows access to core emotions which are common to all and shared by all regardless of language (Pairot, 2015). This perceptual opening through the paying attention to the present moment and listening develops agency, where this is the ability to act or personal positioning in speech (Kramersch, 2008).

Objectives

This conference will bring together researchers, educationalists, teachers and practitioners from different backgrounds who are interested in the field of emotions in language learning. It offers the opportunity to present current research on emotions in languages and other disciplines such as neuroscience, psychology and pedagogy. Moreover, the conference will introduce tools and specific methods mentioned disciplines and to stimulate interdisciplinary dialogue.

Themes

Papers are invited that question the place and role of emotions in the teaching and learning of languages within the following four strands:

- **Language teaching.** What are the educational principles and concrete class practices that promote the emergence of attitudes and representations for easy entry into a foreign language and, secondly, that reduce the level of stress or anxiety in language learning?
- **Educational research.** What pedagogical approaches capable of stimulating the emotions to support teaching / learning (languages)?
- **Linguistics.** In which ways does the study of language as a code, as a discourse, or as a social practice support our understanding of the role of emotions in language learning?
- **Psychology** and / or neuroscience. How will the results of recent research on emotions contribute to a better understanding of the teaching-learning process?

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Scientific and organising committee

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The organising committee comprises members of the Modern Languages Institute at the Université de Louvain :

- Paula Lorente
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- Geneviève Mitsch
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Calendar

15 August 2016 : call for papers released

15 December 2016 : deadline for submission of proposals

15 February 2017 : proposal acceptances sent out

1 March 2017 : deadline for booking hotel rooms reserves for the conference (see practical information)

15 April 2017 : deadline for registration

5-7 July 2017 : the conference

15 September 2017: deadline for receipt of final texts for publication

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