Emotional experiences beyond the classroom: Interactions with the social world

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Abstract

Research into the emotional experiences of language learners and their impact upon the language-learning process remains relatively undernourished within second language education. The research available focuses primarily on emotions experienced within the classroom, rather than in the daily lives of learners within various social contexts. This article contends that the focus placed upon emotions within the relatively structured environment of the formal classroom is problematic, particularly within an ESL environment, as the target language is more frequently experienced beyond the classroom. Drawing on data collected within Australia, the study explored the emotional experiences of a small cohort of eight university-level ESL learners experienced within their various social interactions beyond the classroom with a specific focus on the emotions of hope, enjoyment and frustration. Semi-structured interviews revealed that their emotional experiences beyond the classroom were particularly intense in comparison to emotional experiences within the formal language-learning classroom.

Keywords: emotions; enjoyment; hope; frustration; ESL

103

1. Introduction

Emotions have long featured in research interests across a variety of domains and scholars have targeted their fundamental role in the human experience (see Plutchik, 1962). Within applied linguistics and second language education the scholarly interest in the role and function of human emotions is more recent and comes as part of a shift toward considering the influence of a plethora of sociocognitive variables and antecedents in the development of target language proficiency. However, in comparison to many sociocognitive considerations in second language education, such as the various antecedents of motivated behavior, which have dominated the research agenda over the past decade, emotions have received scant attention (Dewaele, 2015). Commenting upon the state of affairs within second language education, Swain (2013, p. 205) contended that "emotions are the elephants in the room – poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought."

While it is important to acknowledge that emotions have been insufficiently studied, they have not been altogether ignored. Emotions have tended to be investigated under the header of "affective factors" as a part of other processes such as motivation or individual differences. Pavlenko (2013) draws attention to the fact that when emotions have been discussed in terms of language learning, the singular emotion of anxiety has been the primary focus, thus neglecting many others. Indeed, numerous contemporary studies have centralized the role of anxiety in language learning (see Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Gregersen, MacIntyre, & Meza, 2014; Mercer, 2006). In order to better understand the complexities of the emotional experiences of language learners, it is necessary to more fully engage with the lived experiences of language learners *beyond* the classroom. Shifting the contextual focus away from the formal classroom environment toward the dynamic complexity of life outside the classroom demands that researchers engage with a greater range of emotions in situations which have significance for individual language learners. To explore emotions in this manner is to look beyond the narrow implications created for the development of second language proficiency and, instead, to entertain the human experience as one which includes second language learning, but is not strictly limited to it.

2. Literature review

The term *emotion* has proven notoriously difficult to define. It was this difficulty that prompted Pavlenko (2005) to consider *emotion* from a range of different perspectives including states, representations, processes and/or relationships. The current study conceptualizes *emotion* in accordance with the definition proposed

by Reeve (2005, p. 294), who states that "emotions are short-lived, feeling-arousal-purposive-expressive phenomena that help us adapt to the opportunities and challenges we face during important life events." This definition explicitly mentions four different dimensions. Often emotions are described as an individual's own subjective experience of an event, and this is what the "feeling" aspect of the definition refers to. "Arousal" takes human physiological reactions that often occur simultaneously with specific emotions into account. The "purposive" element can be linked to the manner in which emotions are directed towards individual goals. The final element of "expressiveness" concerns how the emotion is communicated in context. It should be noted here, however, that MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) warn that in order to trigger an emotion, these elements need to work together, and not in isolation.

2.1. Emotions in second language education

When emotions have featured in the language education research literature, the focus has primarily been on the negative emotion of anxiety and its affective role in willingness to communicate within the classroom context, particularly since the work of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) resulted in the development of the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*. Subsequent research has tended to push other emotions, including enjoyment, hope and frustration to the periphery (Imai, 2010).

However, there has been a series of studies conducted reflecting a growing interest in emotions in second language education. In an example of early work linking emotions to second language learning, Schumann (1997) investigated the role of emotion through neurological and psychological exposure to stimulus material and the subsequent impact on second language acquisition. Further, in an edited volume, Arnold (1999) considered emotion (or affect) in light of issues such as memory, anxiety, self-esteem, reflective learning and learner autonomy, primarily within the classroom context.

Another trend facilitating a greater interest in the study and role of emotions is the ongoing interest in learner identity, with which emotions are closely linked. This movement was led largely by the work of Norton (2000), and has since been followed by numerous other studies interested in the role of language in identity construction. Notable studies include those of both Norton (2000) and Menard-Warwick (2009) with their focus on immigrant language learners as well as that of Miller (2011) whose work on the social construction of identity in qualitative interviews bears relevance to the methodological choices made in the current study. In the study of language learner identity, emotion plays a significant role in that the act of learning another language in

itself can trigger strong emotional experiences due to the connection between language, culture and identity (Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996).

Importantly, acting as a recent counter to the previous focus on the negative emotion of anxiety is a growing focus on discrete positive emotions, drawing on the positive psychology movement within mainstream psychology. This sees a move away from a focus on merely "affective factors." Within positive psychology, the work of Fredrickson (1998, 2001, 2003) has led the way, stating that emotions such as joy and happiness best represent the idea of positive emotions in that they carry with them a pleasant subjective feeling. In addition, Fredrickson (2001) stated that positive emotions are valuable as they represent not merely the absence of negativity, but have the power to promote health and well-being and the development of personal resources, a belief reflected in her "broaden-and-build" theory of positive emotions in which positive emotions are referred to as having the ability to broaden one's outlook and help one to cope with negative experiences.

The positive psychology movement has recently infiltrated second language education research. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) continued the interest in foreign language anxiety but coupled this with the positive emotion of enjoyment, one of the discrete emotions targeted in the current study. They found that learners experienced more enjoyment than anxiety and that enjoyment was more important and meaningful to them. This finding is supported by Campbell and Storch (2011), who found that for learners language-related enjoyment is critical to sustaining language study. More recently, Ross and Stracke (2016) investigated the emotion of pride and how it featured in the experiences of second language learners in the Australian context. They found that pride is integral in the experiences of language learners, but cannot only be understood as a positive emotion. These studies too, however, were focused on the classroom context. Another study by Gregersen, MacIntyre, Finegan, Talbot, and Claman (2014) investigated how emotional intelligence can be used to harness positive emotions in order to progress and succeed in language learning. The interest in positive psychology in second language acquisition continues and is exemplified by a recent edited volume by MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer (2016) dedicated to the topic.

The emotion of hope is relevant in second language learning and can be found in motivational theories such as Dörnyei's (2005, 2009a) L2 motivational self system, which relies heavily on the vision of a hoped-for, or desired, future self. The notion of "desire" (for the language and an identity associated with it), recently given attention in language education by Motha and Lin (2014), is also important here as it can be seen as very closely connected to "hope" in meaning and character. This is made clearer by Ahmed (2010, p. 31) who defined desire as "both what promises something, what gives us energy, and also what is lacking," which could be seen as synonymous with hope.

Frustration, the third target emotion in the current study, also has strong implications for language learners. This particular emotion has been broached in the literature to a small extent, in particular in relation to language use and the frustration that results from an inability to ask for teacher help (Dewaele, 2010), and the role of learning strategies and learning training in drawing attention to potential language frustrations encountered in the classroom (Stern, 1992). Furthermore, the role that frustration, among other emotions including anxiety, plays in language learners exhibiting silence in the classroom has been considered in the work of Granger (2004) from a psychoanalytical perspective, and this is certainly an area that warrants extrapolation to the environment beyond the classroom.

2.2. Emotions outside the classroom

Emotions outside the classroom have also been studied to some extent, but this focus is much more recent. One area of inquiry where powerful emotional experiences are likely to be regularly encountered is that of the study abroad context, although the focus within research on language and study abroad has been on identity negotiation rather than on specific emotions. Identity negotiation in study abroad situations involves many elements, but an important one is that of the *linguistic self-concept.* Ellis (2004, p. 543) defines this concept as the manner in which "learners perceive their ability as language learners and their progress in relation to the particular context in which they are learning." The emotions of language learners in foreign contexts are relevant here, as emotions are intertwined with self-concept and individual experience, and thus with the learners' sense of who they are as a person (Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2012). This was made clear in an example presented by Kinginger (2004, p. 219) of an American learner of French in France, who overcame "significant personal, social and material obstacles" in an endeavor to learn French, and these obstacles had a significant emotive element to them. More specifically, Pavlenko (2005) embarked on a detailed analysis of the role of emotions in the lives of bilinguals on vocal, semantic, discursive, and neuropsychological levels. The analysis highlighted how emotions are expressed and conveyed through language use, paying attention to how different emotions feature in bilinguals' lives. In another study, Dewaele (2010, p. 1) highlighted the idea that "sharing emotions, whether in face-to-face interactions or through written communications, is a crucial social activity" and in particular emphasized the difficulties inherent in communicating emotions, as well as the variety of ways in which they can actually be expressed. This emphasis on emotions beyond the classroom needs to become broader to encompass not only the communication of emotions, but also an awareness of the subjective emotional experiences of language

learners that lie beneath their language study, their communicative ability, and their lives in the target language context.

Finally, emotion research lends itself to a narrative approach, and this approach has provided other insights into emotions of language learners beyond the classroom. Block (2007) identifies L2 learner stories as an important element of identity research, and Pavlenko (2007) also states the key advantages of autobiographical narratives of having significant aesthetic and textual value and being an accessible and transformative means of collecting data. This approach can also be extremely valuable in terms of giving insight into the emotions that learners experience beyond the classroom, but Pavlenko (2007) also warns of the inherent challenges associated with analysis. Examples of the rich stories that emerge from autobiographical narratives can be seen in the stories of immigrants presented by Norton (2000), or in those of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers presented by Baynham and De Fina (2005). Such stories help us understand the lived experiences of language learners in a new cultural context, which have inevitably incorporated emotive elements, a notion that Swain (2013) further supports by stating that it is in narratives that learner stories and experiences reside, and in which the central role of emotion becomes evident.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants in the current study were eight university-level students studying on a pre-degree language program at an Australian institution. The sample was comprised of seven female students and one male student (mean age = 24.6). The eight participants were recruited through a general call for participants disseminated among the larger student cohort. As the participants were required to respond to English language interview questions, and would be required to talk in some detail reflectively about their own emotional experiences within Australia, interested participants were required to write an English email of application. Students were asked to write briefly about themselves and why they wanted to take part in an English language interview study concerning their language-learning experiences. From the 21 replies received, the most proficient and informative emails were selected, thus creating a final sample population of eight students. Demographic details of the eight students are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic information of eight study participants

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	First language
Alfredo	21	Male	Brazilian	Portuguese
Anna	30	Female	Chinese	Mandarin
Carla	27	Female	Chilean	Spanish
Cassie	21	Female	Chinese	Mandarin
Ellie	21	Female	Chinese	Mandarin
Emma	32	Female	Japanese	Japanese
Michelle	22	Female	Chinese	Mandarin
Ramira	23	Female	Spanish	Spanish

Note: All names shown are pseudonyms.

3.2. Instrument and procedure

The study utilized semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. Given our interest in exploring the subjective emotional experiences of the participants, this method of data collection offered the most practical opportunity to explore "the lived world from the perspective of the participants involved" (Richards, 2009, p. 187). The discursive exchanges within the interviews were conceptualized as "interactional narrative procedures of knowledge production" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 68), establishing the research interview as a form of social practice (Talmy, 2010, 2011). In other words, the discursive exchanges were not limited to casual conversation and categorization, but were also focused on participants remembering, projecting and collaboratively producing recollections of subjective emotional experiences for and with the researcher (Prior, 2015).

The interviews targeted a specific range of emotions including enjoyment, hope, frustration, happiness, embarrassment, pride, and boredom. Of course, the possible range of emotions to target is challengingly broad, so these emotions were selected from a list suggested by Dörnyei (2009b) of relevance to language learners, helping to limit the focus. The semi-structured interviews were then designed around these emotions in a bottom-up approach as well as providing an opportunity for others to be discussed when and if they arose.

Each participant took part in three individual interviews making a cumulative total of 24 interviews conducted across a period of 6 months (one interview per 2 months). The interviews were conducted by one of the researchers at a pre-arranged time on campus. All interviews were audio-visually recorded. The selection of three separate interviews was designed not only to cover a broad range of emotional experiences, but also to facilitate a positive relationship between the researchers and the participants. An overview of the three interviews and their focus is listed below.

- *Interview 1: 30-40 minutes in duration.* This interview was designed to clarify the aims and focus of the project, the kind of data we were interested in and the expectations we had of the participants, as well as to establish rapport. The data to be collected in this interview were related more to the language learning backgrounds and histories of the participants than to individual emotions. Participants were also invited to ask questions in this interview.
- *Interview 2: 50-90 minutes in duration.* This interview was more informal than the first meeting. The researchers utilized an interview guide which included a number of focused questions pertaining to the emotional experiences that the participant had encountered over the previous three month period (see sample questions from Interview 2 in Appendix). The guide was generally adhered to, but the interviews also followed the direction the respective participant responses took them.
- *Interview 3: 20-30 minutes in duration.* The third interview was designed as a follow-up to previous experiences discussed and for the possible documentation of new experiences encountered.

On our understanding that emotional experiences encourage reflection, throughout the process all participants were provided with an emotional experience notebook in which they were encouraged to document emotional experiences shortly after they had happened. Participants were requested to be descriptive and open in documenting how a particular experience made them feel. The researchers did not have access to the participants' notebooks, but encouraged their use and suggested that participants bring them along to the interviews to help them recall details of any experiences. These notebooks were referred back to during the interview process through prompt questions such as "Did you have any experiences you wrote about in your emotion notebook in the last few weeks?," and "Why did you feel this experience was an interesting one to write about in there?" In this way, the notebooks were useful in focusing the discussion and the personal recollections of each participant, although not all participants chose to use them to the same degree. In a previous study, Mercer (2006) adopted learner journals to record emotional experiences; however, her study focused on recording the emotional experiences of a group of advanced tertiary learners *within* the classroom.

Finally, the interviews in the study were conducted in accordance with some guiding research questions, and these are listed below:

- What experiences do the participants encounter with the targeted emotions in their English-using lives outside of the classroom?
- How do the participants describe these experiences?
- How do these experiences contribute to our understanding of language learning in ESL contexts?

3.3. Analysis

The data analysis began with interview transcription. The conversion of the interview data into more accessible units was carried out in accordance with Kvale's (1996) meaning interpretation approach. The first step necessitated the coding of the data, in which segments of transcribed text containing or presenting an idea or an emotion were assigned labels (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). An example of an interview excerpt and how it was coded can be seen in Table 2 which shows resultant themes. Following this, in Table 3, is a complete list of the codes created during the coding process. The example given is of one of the emotions forming the focus of the current paper, just to illustrate the coding process.

Table 2 Sample interview excerpt and coding

Transcribed excerpt from interview	Code
In Melbourne I had a beer with a friend and I bought two beers and I don't know what was the conversation but he gave me four beer so why? I required two but they gave me four so why maybe my accent was not good and was so frustrating.	Frustration Communication breakdown

Table 3 Complete list of the codes used in the data analysis

Codes of negative emotions
Frustration
Embarrassment
Disappointment
Sadness
Fear
Guilt
Hopelessness
Boredom
Codes of positive emotions
Enjoyment
Hope
Happiness
Excitement
Pride
Confidence
Other codes to emerge
Attitude to mistakes
Motivation
Demotivation
Opportunities for L2 use
Communication
Communication breakdown
L2 learning experience
Effort
Progress
Goals

The data were analyzed in relation to the most dominant emotions identified by each participant (in Table 2 example the dominant emotion was "frustration") as well as other potentially relevant aspects, such as "communication breakdown" in Table 2. Each researcher coded the data and then compared their final coding results to establish inter-coder reliability. Any discrepancies were discussed further and excluded when agreement could not be reached. Across each of the eight participants and the targeted emotions, the most frequently referenced positive emotional experiences situated around hope and enjoyment, while the most frequently referenced negative emotional experience situated around the emotion of frustration. Once the coding process was complete and the comments relating to each emotion had been collated, the meaning interpretation approach was adopted. The purpose of this approach is to "develop the meanings of the interviews, bringing the subjects' own understanding into the light as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher on the phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, p. 190). In order to achieve this, the researchers selected comments from the participants in relation to enjoyment, hope and frustration that were particularly salient and that provided the greatest insight into the participants' own lived emotional experiences beyond the classroom. Following this, we applied another layer of analysis through our own subjective interpretation, which was itself influenced and informed by the relationships and understanding we had developed with participants across the six month period involving three interviews.

To return to Talmy's (2011) notion of the research interview as social practice, the interview data were treated in accordance with this approach as the interviews themselves were not seen merely as locations from which to excavate data, but as a site to engage in meaningful social interaction around the topic. In addition, the data were co-constructed and had a specific focus on the *what* as well as the *how* from an analytical perspective. Perhaps most importantly, the data are presented as "*accounts* [original italics] of truths, facts attitudes, beliefs, mental states . . . co-constructed between interviewer and interviewee" (Talmy, 2011, p. 27).

5. Results

The interviews focused on a range of individual emotions and their place in participants' L2 lives beyond the classroom. As mentioned above, the data to be presented in the following subsections relates to the emotions of hope, enjoyment and frustration and establishes the clearest image of the out-of-class emotional experiences of the learners in the Australian ESL setting.

5.1. Hope

After speaking with the participants, it became clear that the emotion of hope is a special case in that although it is felt in the present, and can be felt both in the classroom context and the world beyond it, the actual future circumstance or outcome that is hoped for is most often rooted firmly in the world the learners inhabit beyond the classroom, not the formal learning context. Cassie made this apparent when she remarked,

> *it is my hope that I can speak very well and I can communicate with foreigners no problem.* (Interview 2)

A similar sentiment was expressed by Alfredo when stating,

> *I am hopeful. I'm looking for the day I can speak English no problems.* (Interview 3)

For both of these students, the hope they experienced in relation to their English language use in the future is intertwined with a desire to be able to use the language proficiently. Of course, this would be at least partly the result of language study, but the feeling of hope is not connected to the situated learning environment in any way, but to their potential future ability to be able to engage confidently and successfully in authentic communicative contexts "with foreigners."

Ramira also expressed her feelings in relation to hope. Her experience of hope was similar to Alfredo and Cassie in that it was directly linked with her own image of her future self:

> *Interviewer (I): So, we talked a bit about feeling lost and a bit hopeless, and of course the opposite of that is 'hope'. What are your feelings about that in your studies?*
> *Ramira (R): [laughter]*
> *I: I mean how . . . (cut off)*
> *R: I hope to improve my speaking and I hope to, I hope that I make the right decision to move to England [she was to move to England within the two months following our interviews] and hope to improve my level of English and trying to express myself not only in a social environment but I need to speak in a professional environment. For me this language is not only for travel.* (Interview 2)

Again, here there is no reference to the situated learning context at all, but there is strong reference to her future and the role that English will play. These comments display a strong connection with the notion of motivation. However, there is a subtle difference in that hope suggests a less concrete vision than presented by actual goals. For example, in hoping she has not made a poor decision

to move to England, Ramira is not expressing a goal and motivation cannot be inferred; rather, she hopes to avoid a future negative emotional experience, such as regret. In addition, Ramira highlights here the extent to which emotions are connected with every aspect of our lives. In the same short comment, she spoke of her hope for her English proficiency in varying contexts, and she also spoke of her hope that she had not made a bad personal decision to move to another place. Emotions are complex, and they are occurring at different levels in individuals such as Ramira at any given time.

5.2. Enjoyment

The emotion of enjoyment was another positive emotion talked about during the interviews. In contrast to other emotions, the essence of the emotion the participants were alluding to was often somewhat open to interpretation. Thus, as opposed to some other emotions where the emotion was referred to frequently by name, it was the researchers who, in many cases, interpreted the comments as being related to enjoyment.

Ellie talked about an experience that was of importance to her. Her comment exemplified those where the actual word *enjoyment* was not used, but the researchers aligned it with this emotion through their own interpretation building on their relationship with and understanding of the participant, and with the aid of facial clues and gestures indicating an enjoyable experience. Ellie's comment was a direct response to a question regarding her best language-learning experience:

> *In my sophomore year I went to America to join a summer club and we spent two weeks in LA and it was also a college. It was more relaxed than here [university level in Australia], and the teacher was nice. But the best thing was my mind opened that I can use English in a different culture like that, and I was amazed.* (Interview 2)

While "enjoyment" itself is not mentioned here explicitly, the comment does represent the emotion of enjoyment, and this was confirmed in subsequent comments on the same topic. Of added interest is that the comment refers to elements of both the situated learning environment (teacher/summer club/college) and the environment beyond the classroom in her reference to using English in a different culture. It is notable that her emphasis was placed on her mind "opening" when using English in a different culture, and this was with regard to the external environment, beyond the classroom. Thus, the power that this experience of using the language in a non-learning context can have over second language learners becomes visible.

Alfredo also referred to enjoyment when relating a positive L2-using experience during his time in Sydney:

So for me the best experience I have ever had was once when I was in the street and asking information you know and then I found an old guy and I asked him how to go to the museum and he went with me and we talked in English and he could understand everything I said and it was cool you know to see that my English was good enough to get the information and talk and have a fluent conversation. It was a great memory for me. (Interview 2)

Alfredo represents a particularly interesting case, as when the topic of the conversation was the classroom learning environment, he often appeared disengaged and bored, but when afforded the opportunity to talk about his L2 use outside of his class environment, he became animated and enthusiastic, and his determination to become a proficient user of the language was more obvious. Importantly, what Alfredo helps to make clear is that the L2 learner that exists *in* the classroom is not necessarily the same L2 learner that exists *outside* of it. The lives of language learners occur in these two domains in an ESL context and each domain can have significantly different effects.

This was reinforced in the remarks made by Anna. Anna is a mother, and although she was engaged in a university pathway EAP program, her enjoyment in L2 use came from her experiences outside of her learning context as well:

I: . . . when you're using English what do you enjoy the most? When do you feel best? Is it inside the class? Outside? Talking to strangers? Talking to neighbors? What is it that makes you feel the best using English?
Anna (A): I always enjoy when I have a chat, I mean in the mothers group when I can join them I can share the same topic with mothers about the kids and the kids' food and habits. Yes, that's the time I most enjoy. If I can't do that, I can't enjoy at all. (Interview 3)

Like Alfredo, this shows that the use of the L2 in her life in Australia carried much more weight for her in her lived experiences outside of the classroom. In addition, her own linguistic self-concept was highest when she was able to participate in this social context, and this in turn triggered positive emotions. She also mentions that her enjoyment would be absent if she was unable to engage in this activity, thus weakening her linguistic self-concept.

Finally, when responding to a question asking about what she enjoyed most in her language learning and use, Carla did not use the term *enjoy*, but referred instead to *happiness*. This illustrates that there is some interchangeability with perceptions of these two discrete emotions. Her comments can be seen in the following exchange:

I: Think about your English language study and learning, and try to tell me what you enjoy the most about your English use and your English study?
Carla (C): When I travel and use it of course. So I travel and I'm learning to speak in English because I have to communicate. I need to communicate with other people on my trip so this is, I feel really happy when I am travelling in English. (Interview 2)

Carla's response here came with almost no hesitation, which highlights again that in the domain of lived experience beyond the classroom, emotions carry significant weight for language learners and users. At times during the interviews, Carla's comments were interpreted as meaning that the emotions she felt inside the class were not as strongly felt due to students in the class all being "the same" in that they were all language students of about the same proficiency with the same goals in terms of successfully completing the course, which provided a safety net of sorts. Once that safety net is removed; that is, once she left the classroom, the depth of her emotional experiences increased as they became far less predictable.

With comments such as these in relation to enjoyment, the separation between emotions inside and outside of the classroom becomes clearer. The comments reveal that successful language use *outside* the classroom appears to correlate more strongly with the emotion of enjoyment than *inside*. Success does of course occur in both contexts, and likely results in increased learner motivation, but the enjoyment (and stronger motivation) comes from meeting a need outside of their formal language *learning* and more specifically related to its *use* in everyday social situations.

5.3. Frustration

The negative emotion of frustration was often experienced by the participants and most frequently beyond the classroom. Emma, a Japanese participant, explained that her feelings of frustration are far greater outside of class:

> *Emma (E): Yes almost every time [laughter] I feel frustration. I can't express my feelings and my thoughts exactly in English so I feel frustrated.*
> *I: And when this happens do you feel it more outside of the class or inside of the class? When do you feel more frustrated?*
> *E: I feel frustrated out of class more than in class because when I talk to some friends I have more things I want to say than in class so I feel frustrated out of class much more.* (Interview 3)

When pressed on what she meant by "more things I want to say," Emma explained that within the class environment she was restricted in what she could talk about by the activities, and the content of the lessons, in which she was often not that interested beyond the English skills she could practice. Outside class, however, she felt unable to successfully participate in daily social interactions and her frustration stemmed from this perceived inability.

Anna also spoke of her frustration in a perceived inability to successfully engage in L2 interaction in her everyday life, and provided the specific example of her neighbors:

I mean sometimes I feel I should learn more because I want to communicate with my neighbors but sometimes it really made me not happy and frustrated and you know sometimes I say "why did I even pay so much money to learn it but I am still not good enough?" (Interview 2)

It is clear that Anna has difficulty in attempting to engage in, or engaging in communicative interactions with her neighbors. These types of social scenarios in her daily life (as with the mother's group she mentioned earlier) were extremely important to her, and her own perceived success or failure in them were in turn the cause of the emotions she encountered along with the intensity with which they appeared.

A final comment worthy of reporting came from Ramira. As with the previous two examples, Ramira's frustration was rooted in a perceived lack of skill or proficiency combined with her belief that her English ability was not improving rapidly enough:

R: I feel so frustrated in social life because in class everybody's the same level as you so you try and you ask for help from the teacher and you know you are learning and you are in a safe environment but when you are in a social environment with people who are speaking English all the time like here with my Aussie friends it's complicated. Although they can help you and they are very good, you feel like a child you know.
I: Right. So you find this very frustrating?
R: Yes! I feel frustration a lot because it is hard to try and express something in English when your brain is always in Spanish, no? But you keep trying all the time and sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad but then I think "Oh my god I've spent a lot of time and money to improve my English but I can't," so every day I am trying but I can't so I feel very upset about that and sometimes very angry. I think "It's worth it? All this effort?" (Interview 3)

Although the sentiment expressed here correlates strongly with the comments of Emma and Anna, Ramira's description is perhaps even more powerful, and even invokes some additional emotions such as anger. During the interviews, Ramira spoke of her boredom in class and a resulting lack of motivation. However, there is also an important distinction stemming from the social context that exists beyond the classroom for the participants. For example, Ramira spoke of a sense of boredom and lack of motivation in class as it did not reflect the social reality in which she wished to utilize English the most and as a direct result of this she did not feel particularly frustrated. On the other hand, outside of class, her frustration intensified significantly as it was in this domain that her motivation was greatest. Although she found her language use in the social context outside the classroom the most frustrating, her overall motivation did not appear to diminish. Frustration remains highest where motivation is also highest.

6. Discussion

In relation to the research questions underpinning the study, the data have high-lighted the range of emotional experiences of hope, enjoyment and frustration the participants have encountered. The manner in which they described them was varied, and ranged from comparing their out-of-class experiences to the way they felt in class, to discussing their experiences in connection with what is most important to them as individuals. For example, the emotions Anna described were strongest when related to attending a mothers' group, while for Alfredo it was when he was able to communicate freely with local people. Ramira, on the other hand, described her emotional experiences in terms of the barriers to successful communication she felt in English, which was incredibly frustrating for her. The emotional experiences the participants recollected and described make a valuable contribution to our understanding of language learn-ing in ESL contexts as the language-use environment differs significantly inside and outside the classroom for learners. Therefore, it is necessary for educators to become more aware of the fact that particularly in ESL contexts the learner they interact with in the classroom is only one aspect of that learner, and that once outside the confines of the classroom the experience of interacting in and learning the language is significantly different. The interview data help to under-stand these two different elements of students' lives in ESL contexts and raise several implications for language teaching and learning.

The participants' insights and comments demonstrate that in an interna-tional ESL setting such as Australia, language learners have plentiful encounters and experiences with different individual emotions, particularly in relation to L2-based encounters outside of the classroom as they conduct their daily lives. The study builds on previous work in relation to language learner emotions in authentic L2 use beyond the classroom.

Firstly, as the interviews were quite extensive and detailed, they were able to take the shape of the autobiographical narratives that Pavlenko (2007) and Swain (2013) outlined as aiding in understanding the affective side of the learner. Further, although the focus of the current study was not on switching between languages as such, some of the comments of the participants did indi-cate that emotions can be heightened when thinking in one language and desir-ing to express oneself in another, which serves to support the work of Dewaele (2010) and Pavlenko (2005). The comments of Ramira demonstrate this when she spoke of her frustration and anger at not being able to convert her Spanish thinking to English communication.

The feelings of difference that Dewaele (2016) describes in bi- and multilin-guals are also evident in the results. For example, Alfredo just felt like a regular

student in the classroom among his language student peers, but when outside of the classroom, he was a different L2 user – one who was engaged, excited and determined to use the language for effective intercultural communicative encounters. However, this sense of "difference" is not entirely in line with that of Dewaele (2016) and Dewaele and Nakano (2013), who focused on the individual feeling like a different person when using the L1 compared to the L2. Instead, what emerged here is that language learners can feel like a different L2-using person in different contexts such as those inside and outside the classroom.

The data also highlighted the importance of the notion of linguistic self-concept as described by Ellis (2004). The learners' emotional experiences often appeared to work in harmony with their linguistic self-concept. In other words, when their linguistic self-concept was developed and the learners were able to perceive their ability and progress within their context of Australia in a favorable light, the subsequent emotions experienced were positive, and vice-versa. This is very much in keeping with the view of Benson et al. (2012) in the sense that the experiences of learners were inextricably linked to the participants' sense of themselves, that is their identities, and their lives in Australia.

Another aspect highlighted by the study was the manner in which the emotional experiences of learners affected their investment in the language learning enterprise. For example, Ramira's motivation to improve as an English user remained high, but over the six months of the study her investment in the process waned and she eventually returned to her home country. Thus, her frustration shifted her investment in her language learning. This was also evident in Alfredo, whose investment in his in-class language learning decreased, while his investment in improving his English use *outside* of class increased during his time in Australia. These are not isolated examples, but they are important as they point to the ways in which learner emotions can actually cause a change in investment in the language learning process.

7. Implications

There are several important implications to emerge from this study in relation to what can be done *inside* the classroom to, potentially, help language learners *outside* of it. The first aspect relates to authentic L2 interactions beyond the classroom. In many cases, while the language study of the participants in the classroom was of course important and necessary for them, it was not from that context that they reported the most intense emotional experiences, but rather from outside of the classroom in everyday daily encounters.

From these positive or negative out-of-class experiences, it would seem that more types of class-based or learning-based practice or simulation of authentic

interactions need to occur to assist students in further development of the communicative competence and confidence they need to gain the most from their daily lives in a foreign country. These types of activities could include projects such as engaging with the community in class research tasks where L2 use is essential, possibly in the form of an interview-based data collection task which could result in an in-class outcome of a presentation of findings.

A second aspect that warrants consideration is the hope, or desire, of learners such as Ramira to be able to communicate effectively in differing out-of-class contexts, such as social and professional ones. Again, there are possibilities here for application within the classroom. Workplace-based simulations are not new to language classrooms, but these could be strengthened by having learners participate in e-mail exchanges or on work-focused discussion forums. While these do not provide face-to-face interactions, they could serve to develop the confidence and tools necessary to manage such interactions when they occur.

A final perspective that was raised was travel, which represents another type of authentic communication for international students travelling around their new educational location, in this case Australia. Carla spoke of her feelings of happiness while she was travelling and using English. This could be incorporated into the classroom learning environment through projects requiring students to report back on specific interactive exchanges or communicative experiences they had on holiday experiences, and discussing how they could engage in these more effectively in the future.

While the implications outlined above are focused on what might be done *in* the class to enhance the emotional experiences of learners in their daily lives beyond the classroom, there are clear connections that can be drawn with potential future research studies. For example, if these tasks or activities were to be implemented, reflections of learners could be documented to understand the benefit of the tasks and how they might be improved. Studies in this area would make it possible to see more clearly the link between what is done in the class and how that impacts on the lived experiences of the L2 user outside of the class in ESL settings such as Australia. A clear recommendation emerging from our study is the need for studies to be designed that, first, help us to better understand what language learners experience outside of the classroom and, second, that establish a link between classroom-based learning and pedagogy and life beyond the classroom.

8. Conclusion

Although research into emotions continues to gather momentum within second language education, it remains primarily focused on the situated classroom context.

This is understandable in an EFL context, but in an ESL context such as Australia, the world that the learners inhabit beyond the classroom is a much bigger part of their L2 lives in that it is *there* every time they leave the class. The emotional experiences of language learners in their L2 learning experience invariably have a significant impact on their relationship with the language and the culture they are residing within. There is now a growing recognition of the impact of emotional well-being on students' academic success and an opportunity exists for language educators to now take up the challenge of tailoring their teaching and learning programs to consider the emotional experiences of learners beyond the situated classroom environment to make them more proficient users of the language and to aid them in experiencing more positive emotions than they do negative ones along the way.

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Appendix

Sample guiding interview questions for the emotion of 'enjoyment'

1. What have you enjoyed about your English use here in Australia? Can you tell me an example?
2. What social activities have you taken part in? Can you tell me about them? Were they enjoyable? What made these events enjoyable?
3. How do you feel about your life here in Australia? Can you tell me about your experiences?
4. When you enjoy something, what effect does it have on you? Can you give an example?
5. Do you enjoy studying at home and in other places to continue improving your English ability? If so, what do you do?

Note: These are sample questions only. While targeting the same emotions, the interviews all followed different paths and the majority of follow-up questions and deeper discussion formed organically as the interview was constructed together with the participant.