

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE EMOTIONS AND  
MOTIVATION OF TERTIARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNERS IN AUSTRALIA**

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# ABSTRACT

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## AN EXPLORATION OF THE EMOTIONS AND MOTIVATION OF TERTIARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN AUSTRALIA

Andrew Ross

The network of emotions available to the human experience and their role in academic and linguistic achievement have, to date, been largely neglected as an area for investigation in the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2009) as well as within the realm of broader educational psychology (Schutz and Pekrun, 2007). Most research has centred on issues relating to anxiety and confidence, whereas consideration of a much broader spectrum of emotions offers a greater insight into the cognitive processes and identities of learners, and hence warrants fuller investigation. In particular, specific emotions such as pride, shame, guilt, hope, hopelessness, boredom, happiness, sadness, excitement, disappointment and enjoyment can be suggested to occupy vital position within one's psychological make-up and act as fundamentally important motivators (MacIntyre, Mackinnon and Clément, 2009). This study represents an investigation into the emotional experiences of university-level English language learners in Australia, and the relationship those emotional experiences have with the participants' motivation to learn English, with a particular emphasis on the Ideal L2 Self. The study adopts a mixed methods research approach, with semi-structured qualitative interviews utilized to delve into the emotions of the learners, and then a Structural Equation Modelling quantitative approach to investigate causal relationships between emotions and aspects of motivation. The quantitative aspect was driven by two separate survey instruments – one focusing on emotion, and one on motivation. The findings of the study suggest that the emotional experiences of learners are significant and diverse, and are a major part of their language learning experience. Further, there are significant causal relationships that exist between emotions and motivation, and the Ideal L2 Self concept of the learners. As such, there is a need for greater consideration and investigation of language learner emotions in future research, as well as in the situated classroom environment.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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- AMOS – Analysis of Moment Structures  
CFA – Confirmatory Factor Analysis  
DST – Dynamic Systems Theory  
EFA – Exploratory Factor Analysis  
EFL – English as a Foreign Language  
ESL – English as a Second Language  
FSM – Full Structural Model  
L2 – Second Language  
LLEQ – Language Learner Emotion Questionnaire  
LLMQ – Language Learner Motivation Questionnaire  
LRE – Life-Related Emotions  
MFQ – Motivational Factors Questionnaire  
SEM – Structural Equation Modeling  
SD – Standard Deviation  
SDT – Self-Discrepancy Theory  
SFM – Single Factor Model  
SLA – Second Language Acquisition  
SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences  
SRE – Study-Related Emotions  
WTC – Willingness to Communicate