

## I FEEL, THEN I LEARN: THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN ENGLISH LEARNING PROCESS

### SIENTO, LUEGO APRENDO: EL PAPEL DE LAS EMOCIONES EN EL PROCESO DE APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS

Original Research Article




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## Abstract

This article identifies the possible emotions that may be present in students during English learning process and determines the way in which these emotions influence said process. This, through qualitative research with a focus on grounded theory in which participant observation, a written survey and an interview are implemented as a tool for collecting information; the data analysis is carried out under the methods of narrative inquiry, discourse analysis and assertion development. As a result, it stands out that in the participating population there is a greater presence of motivation, curiosity and pride, although there is still fear and stress, since it is completely normal to experience positive and negative emotions at various moments of learning a second language. Among the conclusions, it is highlighted that negative emotions in the classroom affect the comprehension capacity and linguistic skills of learners, since their attention is interrupted by devastating thoughts that demotivate them and impede their learning.

**Keywords:** Role of Emotions, Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions, Learning Process, English, Second Language.

## Resumen

En este artículo se identifican las posibles emociones que pueden estar presentes en los estudiantes durante el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés y se determina la forma en que estas emociones influyen en dicho proceso. Esto, a través de una investigación cualitativa con enfoque en teoría fundamentada, que implementa la observación participante, una encuesta escrita y una entrevista como herramienta de recolección de información; el análisis de los datos se realiza bajo los métodos de indagación narrativa, análisis del discurso y desarrollo de aseveraciones. Como resultado, se destaca que en la población participante hay una mayor presencia de motivación, curiosidad y orgullo, aunque aún se mantiene el miedo y el estrés, ya que es completamente normal experimentar emociones positivas y negativas en diversos momentos del aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. Entre las conclusiones, se destaca que las emociones negativas en el aula afectan la capacidad de comprensión y las habilidades lingüísticas de los aprendices, ya que su atención se ve interrumpida por pensamientos devastadores que los desmotivan e impiden su aprendizaje.

**Palabras clave:** Rol de Emociones, Emociones Positivas, Emociones Negativas, Proceso de Aprendizaje, Inglés, Segunda Lengua.

## Introduction

First, we feel and then we learn. Emotions are bodily and psychological reactions to external or internal stimuli, they form the basis of the actions of the subjects and influence their behavior; therefore, each human action is born from emotion. In this sense, depending on the emotion in which one is, will be the type of action that can be carried out; in the case of students, their emotions are decisive when building their learning, even more so when they are learning a second language. In fact, just as positive or pleasant emotions allow the execution of actions that favor learning, negative emotions prevent them (McConnell, 2019), 'This, because "motivation speeds up the activities in the classroom, thus allowing better learning and generating better results in the evaluation of the same"' (Alvarez & Alvarez, 2016, p. 36).

Consequently, the teacher must be recognizing that "the student with high motivation, self-confidence, a good image of himself and a low level of anxiety, is accustomed to being in better conditions for success in second language acquisition" (Krashen, cited in Al Shehri, 2012, p. 8); which, in turn, strengthens his work as a bilingual educator.

Therefore, to know the emotions experienced in the classroom, twenty-four students in the initial process of learning English linked to the Language Center of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (UPN) are observed and twelve of them are surveyed regarding these emotions. On the other hand, in order to establish the effects of the emotions referred to in the surveys, an interview in this regard is applied to the three teachers in training who are completing their internship stage at this center and belong to the last semester of the Degree in Spanish and English from the UPN.

With what has been said up to this point, the following problem question is formulated:

- What are the emotions present in students during the English learning and what would be the role of these emotions in said process?

## Objectives

### General objective

- To identify the emotions present in students during the English learning process and the role of these emotions in said process.

- Specific objectives
- To delimit the emotions that could be present in students during English learning process through a survey and bibliographic research.
- To establish the effect of the emotions that would be present in students during English learning process through participant observation.
- To determine the way in which the emotions reported by students can influence the English learning process through an interview with teachers in training

## **Justification**

This research contributes to establish the role of emotions in this process and position affectivity as a motivating agent o

f learning, which leads to recognizing that “we are not rational beings, we are emotional beings that reason” (Quintero et al., 2021, p. 4); that is to say, beings that need the taste for learning to be able to do it; so allows us to delve into “the emotional competencies that teachers must have to provide the most appropriate affective feedback for their students” (Anzelin et al., 2020, p. 58); which benefits not only the participating population but also the Degree in Bilingual Education at Universidad El Bosque.

Taking into account that “affects have effects on thought and arise through representations that occur in words” (Freud, 1976, cited in Suarez & Moreno, 2020, p. 29), it is necessary to investigate emotions as individual and relational phenomena that provide energy to execute actions that allow both self-motivation and social interaction (Vygotsky, cited in Orbeta & Bonhomme, 2019); since, in this way, a greater disposition for learning is obtained from the student.

## **The role of possible emotions presents in the English learning process**

In the bilingual education classroom, it is possible to find a certain range of emotions that benefit or hinder the process of learning a second language; in the training context, the emotions experienced as pleasant are those that are considered

positive, while those that are experienced as unpleasant are considered negative; these emotions influence attention, motivation, and the use of strategies for self-regulation of learning (Pekrun, 2014). Therefore, the educator must promote significant positive emotions for the group and avoid generating negative emotions not only in the learners but also in himself, since positive and negative emotions can be classified as physiological and cognitive activation emotions or deactivation (Anzelin et al., 2020).

According to the value-control theory of achievement emotions, formulated by Pekrun (2006, cited in Anzelin et al., 2020), “if a student feels confident in mastering a material and perceives it as interesting, will tend to have positive emotions such as enjoyment; otherwise, emotions such as anger and frustration may emerge” (p. 50). Consequently, for the student to enjoy while learning a second language and not get frustrated, they must feel interested in the subject and find it easy to master it safely; however, for this, it is necessary, in turn, that the teacher has the capacity and ability to explain himself clearly and motivate in the group the curiosity to learn about the topics that are addressed.

In accordance, motivational theories are postulated, such as the Self-Determination Theory (STD, Orsini et al., 2016); which positions motivation as an influential element in the well-being of the subjects and in their academic success. According to this theory: the greater motivation, the greater internal regulation, which leads to self-determined behavior, pleasure and satisfaction. From this perspective, internal regulation is understood as an intrinsic motivation that triggers the impulse to carry out an activity “simply for the pleasure or satisfaction derived from it, without internal or external pressures” (Orsini et al., 2016, p. 2).

Therefore, the fact that the bilingual educator promotes motivation enables students to experience positive emotions that contribute to their learning process. In educational contexts, factors such as teacher’s support for student autonomy can provide motivation to the group; this support can be achieved through feedback comments.

Now, positive emotions are decisive elements to commit to completing a study program and persistently maintaining the achievement of a goal, hence student participation is affective and not merely cognitive (Nash et al., 2015). Among the positive emotions that can be presented in the classroom, joy, enthusiasm, confidence, enjoyment, pride, pleasure and satisfaction stand out; regarding the possible negative emotions that can take place during the learning process, boredom,

exhaustion, anguish, confusion, guilt, disappointment, impotence, insecurity, insufficiency, inadequacy, regret, fear, despair, frustration, skepticism, irritation, fury or anger, uncertainty, shame and anxiety (Anzelin et al., 2020). Indeed, there is evidence of a greater presence of negative emotions in students, which, in addition to affecting motivation levels, also affect “their thinking, flexibility in the use of information processing strategies, and academic performance” (Anzelin et al., 2020, p. 53).

In this regard, Timoštšuk et al. (2016), affirm that experiencing negative emotions in the classroom is inevitable, because these configure the process of adaptation to abstract and complex knowledge at various levels, so that, instead of avoiding these emotions, the teacher must understand them as part of learning within order to promote emotional regulation and effective coping strategies like the suggested in Nash et al. (2015). One of the most effective emotion regulation and coping strategies is emotional intelligence, understood by Goleman (1996), as the “ability to motivate ourselves, to persevere in efforts despite possible frustrations, to control impulses, to defer gratifications, to regulate our own moods, to prevent anxiety from interfering with our rational faculties and, finally, the ability to empathize and trust others” (p. 26).

However, considering that the population of interest of this article is made up of university students, it is assumed that their emotional intelligence is developed to the point of being able to manage their emotions and self-regulate them when learning a second language, because, as Tangen (2017) highlights, “emotional regulation must be adjusted over the years, as the complexity of emotions increases in terms of elements such as range, dialectic, and the degrees of manifestation and combination, both in students and teachers” (p. 67). Thus, the teacher who manages to recognize the student in his complexity and understand his level of consciousness, knows to what extent he can challenge him and promote his development in the learning process.

It is in this sense that it is necessary not only to identify the emotions present in the English classroom, but also to establish the role of these emotions and understand the way in which they can influence the learning process of this language; in this way, it is much more feasible for the teacher to be able to motivate students to voluntarily commit to their training, to learn to learn and to be protagonists of their own learning instead of being mere spectators who receive content to be evaluated and promoted to the next level.

## Method

This research is qualitative, seeks to understand the reality to be studied in the context in which it takes place instead of seeking to objectively generalize a measurable or quantifiable phenomenon (Sampieri et al, 2017), here, the role of emotions present in students in the context of learning a second language is identified and analyzed; does not formulate hypotheses from the beginning, but builds them as the information is collected and interpreted, so that the conclusions are inferred during the process and not at the end. Likewise, generalizable findings are not sought from numerical or statistical data, but rather the central question is inquired through a variety of techniques, since what is sought is to establish more descriptive than experimental findings through the triangulation of experiences, observations and/or perceptions of the researcher, with the observable behaviors of the participants, the theory consulted and the data collected (Sampieri et al, 2017).

Within the qualitative paradigm, the grounded theory approach is chosen, which allows “understanding human processes and building theories (...) is an analytical process of constant comparison of small data units” (Saldaña, 2011, p. 15). In this case, as methods to collect data, the written survey and the semi-structured interview are selected.

Participant observation is the first step in all research; since, through this, the problems and needs present in the population can be determined; observation is always participatory, even when the researcher is not a direct part of the activities of the subjects, the fact of witnessing them makes him or her a participant in the situation in question (Restrepo, 2016).

Survey is a technique implemented to collect information through the application of a questionnaire and “consists of a set of questions regarding one or more variables to be measured” (Sampieri et al, 2017, p. 217), in fact, these questions invite the respondent to rank some options according to their preferences; therefore, “it is advisable to ask only the questions necessary to obtain the desired information or measure the variable” (Sampieri et al, 2017, p. 222).

Interview is essentially “a formal dialogue oriented by a research problem (...) designing in advance the terms, contents and forms of registration of said dialogue” (Restrepo, 2016, p. 54). Accordingly, to formulate the pertinent questions for the

purposes of the study to be carried out, the target group must be known through informal talks, observation and constant accompaniment. For the purposes of this study, semi-structured interviews are designed.

## **Data analytic methods**

To analyze the data collected, the following three methods are chosen: narrative inquiry, discourse analysis and assertion development.

According to Saldaña (2011) “Narrative inquiry is a research genre inclusive of a variety of approaches, but they share the goal of transforming data from, by, and/or about participants into literary story formats - an approach colloquially labeled “creative nonfiction” (pp. 11-12); consequently this method “reconstructs the often ways in which we tend to share our stories into well-plotted artistic forms that use the conventions of fictional literature to present not only a more orderly interpretation of life but also an aesthetically rich one” (p. 12).

Considering that narrative research implies the construction of a discourse, discourse analysis is considered relevant to interpret the data collected, since this method “studies the conversation and the text in context” (Van Dick, 2000, p. 24). In this case, the discourse in context to be analyzed is that of the students during the English learning process, regarding the role of emotions in said process.

Finally, in the Assertion development Saldaña (2011), the assertions arise by adding the statements that can be confirmed by the data collected, therefore, they can be modified if necessary.

## **Observation instruments**

Observation is quite effective for qualitative research since, “through its presence the ethnographer can observe and record from a privileged position how things are done, who does them, when and where” (Restrepo, 2018, p. 56); which favors the understanding of the reality that is being investigated. In this case, what was observed is recorded in a field diary and additional information is collected through surveys.

Field diary is a record written by the teacher-researcher during his experience accompanying the students, in which, according to Restrepo (2016), “the idea is to



carefully record day by day everything that has been observed, everything that one has heard or what one has thought regarding the advanced study” (p. 46).

Survey “allows the obtaining of data on a wide variety of topics” (Sierra Bravo, 1994, cited in Casas et al., 2003, p. 528) and can be defined as:

A technique that uses a set of standardized research procedures through which a series of data is collected and analyzed from a sample of cases representative of a larger population or universe, which is intended to explore, describe, predict and/or explain a series of features (García, 1993, cited in Casas et al., 2003, p. 527).

In that sense, should be noted that “the information is collected in a standardized way through a questionnaire (same instructions for all subjects, identical formulation of the questions, etc.), which makes it possible to make comparisons intragroup” (Sierra Bravo, 1994, cited in Casas et al., 2003, p. 528).

So, for the purposes of this research, the population of interest are the twelve students in the process of learning a second language, who are surveyed regarding the emotions they experience during said process.

Table 1 shows the written survey applied.

**Table 1.** *Written survey design*

<b>* Please, select one or more answer options for each question *</b>	
<p><b>1. When learning English, have you felt:</b> a)</p> <p>Anxious</p> <p>b) Stressed</p> <p>c) Happy</p> <p>d) Motivated</p> <p>e) Confused</p> <p>f) Pressured</p> <p>g) Curious</p> <p>h) Other, _____ (which one?)</p>	<p><b>2. What emotion do you feel? during speaking exercises?</b></p> <p>a) Nerves</p> <p>b) Pride</p> <p>c) Sadness</p> <p>d) Fear</p> <p>e) Satisfaction</p> <p>f) Anxiety</p> <p>g) Confusion</p> <p>h) Other, _____ (which one?)</p>

<p><b>3. How do you feel during written evaluations?</b></p> <p>a) Confident  b) Scared  c) Calm  d) Motivated  e) Stressed  f) Other, _____ (which one?)</p>	<p><b>4. At what moments in learning English have you felt frustrated?</b></p> <p>a) Learning Vocabulary  b) Exercising the Ear  c) Practicing Pronunciation  d) Producing in Writing  e) Written Evaluations  f) Other, _____ (which one?)</p>
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Source: Own construction, 2024.

Considering the experience of the three UPN students like teachers in practical, a semi-structured interview is designed and applied to inquiry about the effect of negative emotions on first-semester bilingual education students during the process of learning English as a second language (see table 2).

**Table 2.** *Semi-structured interview design*

#	Guiding Question
1	How do you think anxiety influences the process of learning English as a second language?
2	What effects do you think stress can have during this process?
3	How can fear to difficult the process of learning English as a second language?
4	In what aspects of said learning do you think confusion is most present?
5	How can pressure influence this learning process?
6	What effects do you think can nerves have during learning English as a second language?

Source: Own construction, 2024.

After surveying the twelve participants and interviewing the three of them selected as a sample, the analysis of the collected information begins.

### Data Analysis Path

Data analysis “is a systematized process that seeks to identify, know and describe the components of a certain unit of information, which is ordered and synthesized to understand its meaning” (Ortega, 2024, para. 3). To analyze data qualitatively, it is necessary to “classify and/or codify the various elements of a message into categories, in order to adequately make its meaning appear. Generally, it describes

and categorizes common words, phrases and ideas from the qualitative data” (Ortega, 2024, para. 9).

In that sense, a constant comparative analysis is carried out “whose purpose is to generate knowledge about common patterns and themes within the human experience” (Ortega, 2024, para. 12), such as the case of learning a second language; “consists of the comparison of two or more processes, documents, data sets or other objects” (Ortega, 2024a, para. 3), such as survey responses or interview testimonies. Therefore, “it allows establishing relationships between two or more phenomena or sets of elements to obtain valid reasons to explain differences or similarities” (Ortega, 2024a, para. 1). Consequently, “the presentation of the results focuses on revealing the themes that have emerged from the data” (Ortega, 2024, para. 25).

This type of analysis “is used to study human phenomena for which the researcher assumes that their fundamental social processes explain something about human behavior and experience” (Ortega, 2024, para. 13). Accordingly, this study compares the responses of the observed, surveyed and interviewed students in order to understand the subjects’ experience of experiencing emotions in the bilingual classroom that may affect their learning processes.

Now, to carry out the constant comparative analysis in this research, a three-stage route is followed: Categorization, Interpretation and Conclusion. In the first stage, a matrix is designed to organize the responses to the surveys and semi-structured interviews, to find patterns, similarities, or contrasts between them, with participant observation and the referred theory in order to classify the data obtained into categories.

In the second stage, a qualitative interpretation is generated for each category. In the third stage, all the categories are interpreted in a general way to lead to a conclusion regarding the phenomenon studied, which provides an answer to the central question initially formulated.

### ***Stage 1. Categorization***

This research establishes two categories: Emotions present when learning English and Effects of the emotions experienced when learning English. The data that make up the first category come from the survey and the data in the second are from the interview.

Taking into account that the surveys administered to students include among their response options emotions that are considered positive or negative according to their effect on the process of learning English as a second language and inquiry specific moments of said process, the decision is made to classify the survey data into three analysis subcategories.

Table 3 describes the data included in each category according to the survey responses.

**Table 3.** *Analysis categories according to the survey responses*

Emotions present when learning English	Subcategory. ▶▶▶	Positive emotions when learning English	Negative emotions when learning English	Moments associated with negative emotions when learning English
	Data included. ▶▶▶	Motivation Curiosity Pride	Anxiety Stress	Oral expression Written Production Written evaluations

*Source: Own construction, 2024.*

Similarly, the responses to the interviews applied to the three UPN students, are classified in six subcategories (see table 4).

**Table 4.** *Analysis categories according to the semi-structured interviews responses*

Analysis category	Data or responses included
Anxiety influence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Anxiety affects students because they are generally worried about making mistakes, which distracts them and prevents them from learning."</li> <li>2. "Some students are anxious about the amount of new information they have to learn in English, it can overwhelm them a little and demotivate them."</li> <li>3. "I see that students feel anxious when, even if they try, they cannot communicate in English."</li> </ol>

<p><b>Stress effects</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "I have seen that they forget a lot of vocabulary and grammatical rules in oral and written exercises because of stress, which is why they often feel insecure."</li> <li>2. "Stress causes them to lose concentration and get lost in class."</li> <li>3. "They get stressed when they don't understand or can't think in English and that stress makes them bad-tempered."</li> </ol>
<p><b>Difficulties of Fear</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Fear prevents them from participating, speaking or asking questions in class."</li> <li>2. "They have told me that they are afraid of being judged by their peers, that is why they prefer to avoid speaking in English."</li> <li>3. "They feel afraid especially speaking English in public and it is because they perceive that they do not do it well."</li> </ol>
<p><b>Presence of Confusion</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "I have seen them confused, especially in grammar and pronunciation, since the rules of English are different from those of Spanish."</li> <li>2. "Confusion arises when reading or when they have to interpret certain instructions in English, which is why they have made several mistakes in exercises and evaluations."</li> <li>3. "They get confused in pronunciation, sometimes they say the words as they write them, they also confuse English expressions and proverbs"</li> </ol>
<p><b>Pressure influence</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "They feel pressure, above all, to obtain good grades and sometimes they demand that they meet the expectations of their families."</li> <li>2. "The pressure usually comes from being under scrutiny and evaluation, which for some is overwhelming."</li> <li>3. "They get pressured when they see that they cannot express themselves well in English and that they are not advancing compared to their peers."</li> </ol>
<p><b>Nerve effects</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Nerves block their minds during exams and oral activities."</li> <li>2. "Sometimes their nerves make them confuse English words and stutter when speaking in front of their classmates."</li> <li>3. "When they get nervous, they forget what they are going to say or write."</li> </ol>

*Source: Own construction, 2024.*

Once the data has been categorized, the interpretation stage can begin.

### ***Stage 2. Interpretation***

The survey carried out to the participants regarding the emotions they experience during the process of learning English as a second language, positions curiosity, motivation and pride as the emotions that predominate in the classroom, since more than half of the learners in this group agree with these answers. However, there are also those who report the presence of fear and stress, especially when they make oral presentations in front of their peers and when they are evaluated in writing; this is because written production is difficult because grammar is not one of their strengths.

By contrasting the answers to the first question of the survey with the theory referred to, it is evident that, as Alvarez and Alvarez (2016) highlight, curiosity to learn is linked to the satisfaction of practicing new knowledge and, therefore, these emotions are common but ephemeral in students. This is where motivation comes in, since, as Krashen (cited in Al Shehri, 2012) points out, a highly motivated student maintains his or her self-confidence and becomes accustomed to achieving his or her academic achievements with pride; this is directly related to the *value-control theory of achievement emotions* formulated by Pekrun (cited in Anzelin et al., 2020), which states that, when a student manages to master a topic, they perceive it as more interesting and enjoy it, contrary to what happens if they do not understand what is being explained.

Regarding the above, and taking into account the observation made in the classroom, the implementation of the STD (Orsini et al., 2016) is suggested, who state that motivation influences not only the well-being of students, but also their academic success, and highlight that, by strengthening internal regulation, an intrinsic motivation arises that triggers the impulses to perform an activity without having external pressures, such as that of peers or the teacher. In this sense, although the positive emotions of most learners contribute to the enjoyment of the process of learning English as a second language and in turn, can facilitate the teaching of this language (Nash et al., 2015), it was observed that the shyest or insecure students are increasingly segregated from the exercises that involve public speaking and avoid asking even when his face shows confusion.

Now, in terms of fear and stress, the negative emotions most marked by students in the second question of the survey, the theory referred to (McConnell, 2019; Nash et al., 2015; Goleman, 1996), states that when the learning process causes negative emotional states, these can lead to both demotivation and school dropout, as well as general psychological distress, as certain serious illnesses, such as depression, can be triggered in learners. In this regard, Timoštšuk et al. (2016) state that, when the student is adapting to the levels of knowledge acquired in the academy, it is normal for negative emotions to be experienced, since they are part of learning; but it's not normal to see the student fearful and stressed all the time. Therefore, it is necessary for students to implement emotional regulation strategies and effective coping styles such as those suggested by Goleman (1996).

The survey revealed that participants consider that both written evaluations and oral expression and written production are the moments that are most associated with negative emotions during the process of learning English as a second language; precisely, through participant observation, it was possible to witness the way in which the most confident and confident students were overwhelmed by making slight grammatical errors in evaluations and written productions, which was more intense when learners who normally feel anxious when being evaluated, did not reach their expectations or have the tools to refute or understand the grade obtained according to their academic performance.

The interviews focused on the effects and influence of negative emotions on the process of learning English as a second language, carried out with the three UPN students, reveal that initial level students have not only felt fearful and stressed, but also anxious, confused, pressured and nervous; these emotions affect their language skills and mental abilities to function in the classroom successfully.

When the three UPN students were asked about the influence of anxiety on English learning process (see table 4, question 1), student 1 (S1) revealed in his testimony: "Anxiety affects students because they are generally worried about making mistakes, which distracts them and prevents them from learning"; student 2 (S2), reports "Some students are anxious about the amount of new information they have to learn in English, it can overwhelm them a little and demotivate them"; and, student 3 (S3) states "I see that students feel anxious when, even if they try, they cannot communicate in English." In this sense, McConnell (2019) points out that anxiety generates dependence on positive affirmation and increases "trust in external guidance to recognize learning needs" (p. 116); this results in learners not

having the ability to recognize their failures at an academic level and, therefore, they do not know how to self-regulate at an emotional level.

As for the effects of stress, in the second question of the interview (see table 4), S1 attributed to stress the insecurity to it; in his words, “I have seen that they forget a lot of vocabulary and grammatical rules in oral and written exercises because of stress, which is why they often feel insecure”. For its part, S2 points out “stress causes them to lose concentration and get lost in class”. For S3, stress gives a bad mood, as he manifests “they get stressed when they don’t understand or can’t think in English and that stress makes them bad-tempered.” Accordingly, the theory reveals that, although stress “can be positive for maintaining a balance in the face of environmental challenges, when it is intense and prolonged over time it can have serious long-term consequences” (González, 2020, cited in Mesa & Palma, 2022, p. 1695); this is due to the fact that stress produces “anxiety, headaches, inattention, and decreased efficiency and effectiveness (...) [as well as] the presence of psychological exhaustion, depersonalization, and impairment of personal development” (Mesa & Palma, 2022, pp. 1693-1696).

Regarding the possible difficulties caused by fear (see table 4, question 3), the UPN students interviewed agree that first semester students feel afraid of criticism from their classmates and teachers. S1 confesses, “fear prevents them from participating, speaking or asking questions in class”; S2 indicates “they have told me that they are afraid of being judged by their peers, that is why they prefer to avoid speaking in English”; in the same vein, S3 reveals “they feel afraid especially speaking English in public and it is because they perceive that they do not do it well”.

Clearly, fear of failure and criticism are common emotions in both academic and social settings; as Roldán (2018) points out, “fear modifies the behavior of individuals, whether due to internal or external, real or fictitious causes” (p. 35); this is why they become paralyzed at times in front of their peers, either because of personal insecurity or the probability of receiving possible ridicule from others, whether or not this has happened before.

Among the main causes of fear in the English classroom are: “exposure to traumatic stimulation, repeated exposure to a sub-traumatic situation (sensitization), direct or indirect observation of people who show fear and the reception of information that provokes it” (Roldán, 2018, p. 35); therefore, there are situations that can cause fear in learners, such as being evaluated or speaking in public in another



language. However, “the more the language is mastered, the fear of practicing it decreases and positive feelings such as joy increase” (Roldán, 2018, p. 55).

When talking to students about the presence of confusion in the process of learning English as a second language, the fourth question of the interview (see table 4) shows that grammar, pronunciation and reading comprehension and expressions or sayings typical of the language, are the aspects that cause confusion; because as S1 points out “I have seen them confused, especially in grammar and pronunciation, since the rules of English are different from those of Spanish”. For his part, S2 states: “confusion arises when reading or when they have to interpret certain instructions in English, which is why they have made several mistakes in exercises and evaluations”; likewise, S3 highlights “they get confused in pronunciation, sometimes they say the words as they write them, they also confuse English expressions and proverbs”.

In this regard, McConnel (2019) highlights that frustration and confusion can promote “student dedication, which positively influences learning and achievement” (p. 120), as long as the respective precautions are taken, such as correct feedback, so that they do not fall into more serious or intense negative emotions. such as clinical depression or severe anxiety.

From the influence of the pressure on this learning process, the fifth question of the interview (see Table 4), reflects that the students feel pressured for being evaluated, because they want to cover external expectations or because they compare with their classmates. S1 affirms “they feel pressure, above all, to obtain good grades and sometimes they demand that they meet the expectations of their families”; S2 points out “the pressure usually comes from being under scrutiny and evaluation, which for some is overwhelming”; for its part, S3 confesses “they get pressured when they see that they cannot express themselves well in English and that they are not advancing compared to their peers”.

Consequently, the pressure can overflow learners, “no student should feel pressured to learn. In a pressure situation you can feel uncomfortable and blocked completely” (Broughton et al., 1980, cited in Barreras, 2004, p. 68); therefore, as teachers in training, we must “remember that students will learn more and better if they have a positive attitude towards what they are doing and if, really, they want to do it” (Williams, 1991, cited in Barreras, 2004, 2004, p. 68); that is, without succumbing to external pressures.

Finally, around the effects of the nerves, the last question of the interview (see Table 4) associates this emotion to locking or forgetting words; at this point, S1 highlights that “nerves block their minds during exams and oral activities”; S2 confesses “sometimes their nerves make them confuse English words and stutter when speaking in front of their classmates”; and S3 affirms “When they get nervous they forget what they are going to say or write”. In relation to this, McConnell (2019), establishes that “both positive and negative emotions affect the distribution of cognitive resources (...) [since] emotions require operational memory, thus reducing the resources available to learn the material” (p. 114); it is likely that it is for this reason, that learners refer that they forget some words, because “emotions influence the retention and memory recovery processes (...) and the attention is predisposed by emotional content” (McConnell, 2019, p. 115).

### ***Stage 3. Conclusion***

At the end of this research, the objectives set are answered; the first specific objective, through the responses to the applied surveys, reveals that the students mostly experience positive emotions, such as curiosity to learn, motivation to continue advancing and pride in meeting their academic goals; this contributes greatly to the learning process.

The second specific objective, through participant observation, showed that there is a minority of students who do not feel comfortable with their level of English and, therefore, avoid practicing the language in public, since they feel anxiety, stress, fear, confusion, pressure and nerves, especially when they must make oral presentations, when they are evaluated or when they need to communicate in writing in this language. Now, if those students strengthening grammar and practicing vocabulary and use of linguistic expressions to a greater extent, these negative emotions will tend to transform into curiosity, motivation, and pride; in this way, they will be able to reach the academic level of their peers and be able to train in a second language. This, in turn, is confirmed by the theory referred to in the interpretation stage.

The third specific objective, according to the interviews applied to the three UPN students, is determined that anxiety affects the learning of English because learners are worried about making mistakes, which influences persistence in studying. Additionally, it can lead to an irrational fear of criticism and avoidance of situations of oral practice of the language, which prevents their direct exposure to it and delays their opportunities to advance.

Stress can influence academic performance as it hinders the ability to understand and retain new information, which can cause mood changes and lead to demotivation. Fear, prevents students from knowing the language and decreases their opportunity to practice and improve their communication skills, since this emotion forces them to avoid practicing the language in public unless they are going to be evaluated; paradoxically, this leads to increasing the effects of fear.

Confusion is present transversally when learning a second language, whether in terms of grammar or oral expression and it is essential that its influence be recognized; since, if a student confuses the structures of the sentences, the verbal tenses or the order of the letters when writing a word, it will be very difficult for him to understand the exercises proposed by the teacher and communicate his ideas in English adequately.

Pressure can create a sense of frustration and incompetence if fail to meet external expectations, which, in turn, produces an environment of additional stress that hinders students' ability to learn effectively. Nerves affect the ability to remember information and express ideas clearly and coherently in English, which can lead learners to feel less confident in their language skills during classroom interactions.

According to McConnell (2019), students who experience positive emotions generally focus their attention “on broader and general aspects of the situation” (p. 115), on the other hand, those who feel negative emotions “focus on specific details” (p. 115); in that sense, by maintaining a global vision of the process of learning English as a second language, it is possible to learn without suffering from the obstacles that arise when training to teach English.

## **Results**

At the end of the research exercise generally aimed at identifying the most relevant emotions that could affect the process of learning English, the objectives initially raised. As for the first specific objective, aimed at delimiting which emotions could be present during this learning process in the participants a review of previous studies in this regard was carried out; which allowed to raise the possible presence of both joy, curiosity, motivation, pride, confidence, tranquility, as well as anxiety, stress, pressure, fear, confusion, frustration, grief and nerves. To contrast the theoretical information, a survey was carried out on the twelve students observed, which revealed that in the group there is a greater presence of motivation, curiosity

and pride, without this necessarily implying that there is no fear and stress, since it is completely normal to experience positive and negative emotions at various moments of said learning process.

As a second specific objective, it was proposed to establish the effect of the emotions that would be present in the students during said learning process. In this sense, through participant observation it was evident that when learners experience positive emotions in the classroom, it is more likely that they participate in class, carry out autonomous inquiries and put aside the fear of being judged; since, when they are having fun, they do not think about what they do not understand or what confuses them, but rather they are giving themselves the opportunity to enjoy the learning process.

Finally, the third specific objective, was achieved through interviews carried out with the three UPN students. Interview revealed that experiencing negative emotions in the classroom affects the comprehension capacity and linguistic skills of the learners, since their attention is interrupted by devastating thoughts that demotivate them by considering that they are not at the level of their peers and that they will not achieve meet the expectations of their family; this is why it is difficult for them to risk participating in activities that others enjoy, because by not understanding the basics of the language and avoiding practicing it due to their lack of emotional self-regulation, they are more likely to become demotivated and prefer to abandon their intention to learn English.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, given that positive and negative emotions consume cognitive resources and can affect or contribute to the learning process of English as a second language, it is necessary for students to be able to identify their emotions to find regulation strategies and coping styles that contribute to the moment of experiencing emotions that prevent one from functioning fully in the classroom, either due to excess encouragement or lack of motivation.

In this way, the general objective was achieved, aimed at identifying the emotions present in students during the process of learning English as a second language and the role of these emotions in said process and the question initially asked.

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