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# Theorizing Affect in Foreign Language Learning: An Analysis of One Learner's Responses to a Communicative Portuguese Course

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In this study we explore a student's affective responses to classroom foreign language learning. In 2 meetings each week throughout an 8-week Portuguese course for beginners, the first author described her language learning experiences to the second author. Sessions were transcribed and then coded and analyzed. A theoretical model grounded in the learner's experiences was developed to understand the learner's affective responses to the language learning process, the events from which her affect sprang, and her affective trajectory over the 8 weeks. This study is a response to the need for methodological and epistemological diversity in second language acquisition research and contributes to studies that focus on the affective responses of the learner to the language learning experience. Implications for the role played by emotion in learners' classroom foreign language learning and the development of sociocultural competence in a second language are discussed.

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ALTHOUGH LEARNERS IN ONE FOREIGN language classroom are exposed to the same lessons, each individual may process lessons differently, resulting in very different language learning experiences. For example, in a study of learners' beliefs about the language learning process, some described their experience as "traveling to new places," whereas others described their experience as "undergoing a painful medical procedure" (Kramsch, 2003, p. 116). These vastly different interpretations of the language learning experience illustrate its uniqueness for each individual. Learner accounts, which tend to focus on the affective (emotional) responses of the learner to the language learning process, not only supply information about how different learners

appraise their experiences but also provide insight into where learners focus their attention during foreign language lessons.

With certain notable exceptions (Arnold, 1999; Ehrman, 1996; Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Stevick, 1996), *affect* and *emotion* are terms that have been in the shadows of discussions of classroom foreign language learning, where the primary focus has been on the development of knowledge and use of the new language. We believe that one reason for this is the neglect of emotion by psychologists during most of the 20th century. At the end of that century, Damasio (1999) wrote:

Emotion was not trusted in the laboratory. Emotion was too subjective, it was said. Emotion was too elusive and vague. Emotion was at the opposite end from reason, easily the finest human ability, and reason was presumed to be entirely independent from emotion. (p. 39)

Largely inspired by the work of Damasio and his colleagues, 21st-century psychologists have begun to research the relations among emotion, cognition, memory, and consciousness, and applied

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linguists have sought to understand the role of emotion in language learning.

According to J. Schumann (1998), affective appraisal of stimuli is at the core of cognition, and it drives our decision-making processes. He described two important roles of affect in learning: "emotional reactions influence the attention and effort devoted to learning, and . . . patterns of appraisal may underlie what has been considered motivation in SLA" (p. 8). A positive affective assessment of a stimulus encourages approach to similar stimuli in the future, whereas a negative affective assessment promotes avoidance. It is through experiencing the world and conducting an affective appraisal of these experiences that individuals develop their own unique preferences and aversions. Schumann cited research by Scherer (1984a) and Leventhal and Scherer (1987) that indicates that organisms exhibit preference or aversion to environmental stimuli based on whether the stimuli are novel, pleasant, enhancing of goals or needs, compatible with coping mechanisms, and supportive of self-image and social image.

Schumann (1998) suggested that two basic biological regulatory systems—homeostatic and sociostatic—are innate, survival-enhancing tendencies that lead to the formation of preferences and aversions. Homeostatic regulation provides the value system that guides early motor and somatosensory behavior in the environment. Sociostatic tendencies drive human organisms to seek out interaction with conspecifics. Sociostats are "the inherited drives for attachment and social affiliation, which are initially directed toward the infant's mother or caretaker and are gradually extended to others in the individual's network of social relations" (Schumann, p. 3). Extending the theory of sociostatic regulation to the language learning experience, Schumann suggested that interpersonal relations between students also affect a student's sense of well-being in a profound, survivalist sense. Situations that students interpret as threatening to their membership in a classroom community can adversely affect their desire to create and preserve social affiliations.

Although these researchers have provided a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of affect, few studies of classroom second language acquisition (SLA) have considered learners' preferences and aversions during their actual language learning experiences. One example of sociostatic regulation at work in adult second language learning can be seen in Bailey's (1983) research on competitiveness and anxiety. The language learning diary entries by students

collected by Bailey show they experienced anxiety when comparing themselves with others, and she found that such comparisons created images of failure.

Bailey (1983) also included her personal language learning diary in her study, in which she revealed many instances of her own anxiety due to a desire to appear successful in front of her peers. She wrote in her journal: "This fear of public failure seems to have been caused or at least aggravated by comparing myself with the other students (or with an idealized self-image), rather than by any fear of rebuke from the teacher" (p. 74). In addition to the anxiety that she associated with comparing herself to her peers, Bailey developed ill feelings toward those in the language class whom she perceived to be at a higher level of proficiency. She described how she sought out peers whom she perceived to be at her level as well as her negative reactions toward those with whom she felt competitive: "I was apparently very uncomfortable. . . . My feelings of inadequacy in comparing myself to the other students led me to seek out allies and react negatively to some students" (p. 75).

The importance of studying the emotional dimensions of foreign and second language learning was stressed by Dewaele (2005). He emphasized that a majority of cognitive psychologists agree that emotion is essential to human cognition (Harris, Gleason, & Aycıçeği, 2006; Panksepp, 1998). Research by Pavlenko and Dewaele (2004) investigated the role of emotion-related factors in language alternation by bilinguals. Their findings indicated a superior emotionality of the first language and the preference for using that language to express emotions. Now that the affective dimension is recognized as a crucial aspect of human mental and social life, the tendency to include emotional and affective responses in SLA research has increased. Dewaele contended that

Research on instructed SLA would benefit from an increased methodological and epistemological diversity and . . . a focus on affect and emotion among researchers might inspire authors of teaching materials and foreign language teachers to pay increased attention to the communication of emotion and the development of sociocultural competence in a L2. (p. 367)

Dewaele also saw the second language learner as "not only an object of scientific curiosity, but also a crucial witness of his or her own learning process" (p. 369).

The important role of emotion in language learning and language use thus has been

previously established through the work of J. Schumann, Pavlenko, Dewaele, and others. However, few studies have examined the first-person experiences of language learners or attempted to relate their experience of emotion to their individual successes and failures in language learning.<sup>1,2</sup> The study reported in this article is based on the testimony of one language learner who bears witness to her own learning process. It is an attempt to construct a theory that interprets her emotion as constituted by her changing experiences in the classroom over the 8-week trajectory of her course of study and by her personal struggles with a new foreign language.

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

As a review of the literature demonstrates, students of second/foreign languages have borne witness to their own learning process in a number of different ways. Personal narratives of second language learners, either in the form of the diary studies cited earlier or in the more structured form of learner memoirs, have recently received increased attention (Block, 2003; Kramsch, 2003; McGroarty, 1998; Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; J. Schumann, 1998; Young, 1999). In the 1970s and 1980s, diaries were kept by applied linguists who were themselves in the process of learning a language (Bailey, 1983; Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Schumann & Schumann, 1977). More recently, learner memoirs by nonlinguists have provided a rich source of data on the second language learning process (Davidson, 1994; Hoffman, 1989; Kaplan, 1993; Z. Liu, 1984; Mori, 1997; Rodriguez, 1982; Watson, 1995).

According to Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000):

In recent years narrative genre and personal narratives per se have gained increasing stature in psychology, sociology, sociolinguistics, and anthropology as legitimate and rich data sources for a variety of investigations including that of narrative construction of selves and realities. (p. 159)

Pavlenko (2001) further argued that the field of SLA can benefit from autobiographic narratives in which adult immigrants recount the stages of identity loss and recovery during their second language learning as they try to create identities as members of a new culture. These personal narratives "bring to the surface aspects of human activity, including SLA that cannot be captured in the more traditional approach to research" (p. 159). Goodson and Sikes (2001) also believed that the technical, scientific language used in many studies "is usually inadequate and inappropriate when it

comes to expressing human emotions which are, after all, at the heart of human perception and experience" (p. 2).

However, the narrative method is not without its critics. Some have questioned the relation between a narrative and the events it depicts. Carr (1997) noted that "any narrative account will present us with a distorted picture of the events it relates" (p. 7). He believes that narration is constitutive not only of action and experience but also of the self that acts and experiences. Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992) questioned the narrative "self," arguing that the sense of self is partly one's sense of who one is in relation to an audience. These authors have also questioned the presence of an interviewer in the creation of the oral narrative of an interviewee. Thus, many critics caution readers to question the contextual nature of narratives and the depiction of reality created by the narrator.

Partly in response to these criticisms of narrative and phenomenological research, researchers in sociology have developed procedures of what they have termed *grounded theory* (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Grounded theory emphasizes the meaning of experience for participants while allowing the researcher to generate or discover a theoretical framework within which social processes can be accurately described and fully explained.<sup>3</sup> Thus, theories or ideas about a social and psychological process such as language learning can become "grounded" in data from the field and, more specifically, in the actions, interactions, and social processes of learners.

Within grounded theory, one response to criticism of the role of the narrator in reporting on events is the systematic method of data collection and analysis described by Charmaz (2006). The researcher first asks participants to focus on their reactions to a particular process and, if possible, to identify specific steps in that process. These and other issues are described in interviews, after which participants' responses are openly coded. In open coding, a researcher segments the talk in the interview into several different categories of information. The researcher then looks within each category for several properties or subcategories that could allow him or her to construct a larger level of explanation.

The next stage in carrying out grounded theory research is axial coding, in which the researcher identifies a major category<sup>4</sup> and then (a) explores conditions that influence the category, (b) identifies actions or interactions that result from the major category, (c) identifies the conditions that influence the actions, and (d) delineates the

outcomes for this category. In the final stage—selective coding—the researcher blends the information from the first two stages into a larger narrative storyline. The result is a theory written by the researcher, which emerges with the help of written notes on the evolving observations made throughout the process of open, axial, and selective coding. These procedures were followed in the study that we describe in the rest of this article.

## METHOD

In the summer of 2005, Garrett, the first author, attended an intensive 8-week Brazilian Portuguese course at a university in the American Midwest. Like many of her peers in the course, she had received a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship to study Portuguese for the summer as well as throughout the following academic year. (Her primary reason for applying for the FLAS fellowship in the first place was because she was interested in tensions in French Guiana between the French- and creole-speaking Guianese and the large numbers of legal and illegal immigrants from Brazil.) The Portuguese summer course was intensive and was offered only to students who were already proficient in Spanish or other Romance languages. Although Garrett's Spanish skills were weak, she was accepted into the program based on her proficiency in French. (Garrett has a master's degree in French and had spent 7 years teaching the language at the secondary and postsecondary levels prior to this experience.)

The Portuguese course in which Garrett enrolled met for 2 hours in the morning and 2 more in the afternoon 5 days a week. The morning sessions were taught by an experienced male native speaker of Brazilian Portuguese, who had worked as an instructor in the program for over 15 years and had co-authored the program's required textbook. These sessions were primarily devoted to the introduction of new grammatical structures as well as to their contextualization in authentic language materials, including Brazilian songs, advertisements, and articles from magazines. The afternoon sessions, in contrast, were taught by a female nonnative-speaking teaching assistant and focused mainly on promoting language use and increased cultural awareness. Students watched movies, listened to guest speakers, and engaged in communicative activities that required them to use Portuguese.

Throughout the course, Garrett met with Young, the second author, twice each week to talk at length about her language learning

experiences and feelings. The meetings were generally short and informal in nature, with no predetermined agenda or set of questions. Garrett's accounts of her experiences were recorded on audiotape, resulting in a total of 6 hours of data. She then transcribed the tapes 3 weeks after the end of the program (except the tape for Week 3, which was inadvertently destroyed).

The analysis consisted of the repeated sorting, coding, and recoding of data that characterizes the grounded theory approach. The most salient feature of the transcripts was the richness of Garrett's affective responses to her learning experience. Using J. Schumann's (1998) definitions of affect in learning, affective appraisal of stimuli that appeared to be driving Garrett's learning decisions were coded. The 91 pages of transcripts were then coded for words and expressions that appeared to be related to emotional reactions and patterns of appraisal. Next, a list of affective responses was made and linked to the event that elicited the response. Examples of some words and phrases that indexed positive and negative affect are shown in Table 1.<sup>5</sup>

Subcategories of the topics that appeared to elicit the learner's affective reactions were then identified, confirmed by both authors, and coded. After several refinements of the subcategories that emerged from the transcripts, they were reassessed. Table 2 illustrates the four main topics that ultimately emerged from the transcripts as eliciting the most affective responses. They are (a) language awareness—Garrett's awareness of her own knowledge of Portuguese and her comparisons of the language with other languages she knew; (b) teacher voice—Garrett's own professional teacher's voice that appeared in the way she evaluated her instructors' teaching styles and course materials, as well as in her own learning strategies; (c) social relations—with other students in the class and with her instructors; and (d)

TABLE 1  
Examples of Terms in the Transcripts Indexing Affect

Positive Affect	Negative Affect
It's fantastic	... is annoying
... was nice!	I don't know if I can do this
I find ... interesting	I'm not very good at this yet
It was kind of cool	... was driving me nuts
that ...	
... that was exciting!	Difficult to process
I'm feeling more comfortable	... was extremely frustrating
... re-inspires me	... is weird

TABLE 2  
Topics That Elicited Affective Responses From the Learner

Topic	Examples	
Language Awareness	Self-evaluation of her comprehension and production of linguistic aspects of Portuguese	"I'm still not hearing everything, and I'm still not speaking with precision, I'm kind of mumbling through it."
	Comparisons of Portuguese with other languages	"It is kind of cool how Portuguese is like French, except that you drop some inner syllables."
Teacher Voice	Her response to her instructor's teaching style	"I felt like I was in the hands of a great instructor because I had a feeling he knew which words were hard for us."
	Her response to the course materials	"Story making was cute, playful and fun!"
	Her own learning strategies	"I was prepared because I studied 10–15 hours."
Social Relations	With her classmates	"Being more comfortable with other people in the class grounds you."
	With her instructor	"Everyone wants to be like the TA."
	Her self-image as a member of the class	"I'm seeing a difference between myself and others, and realizing I need to put more time into this."
Culture Learning	Her responses to cultural instruction and materials	"The cultural information is grounding the language, making it real."
	Her own place in the new culture	"I think my identity as a learner is starting to shift, and I think the cultural component of our lessons plays a big role in this."

culture learning—her responses to the Brazilian culture to which she was exposed.

Codes and categories were sorted, compared, and contrasted until saturated—that is, until further analysis produced no new codes or categories and when all of the data were accounted for in the core categories. Individual comments in each of the four topic areas were totaled to estimate which topics were most frequently mentioned as eliciting an affective response. In each comment, Garrett expressed either positive or negative affect, and the totals of positive and negative affective comments in each of the four categories are displayed in Figure 1.

## FINDINGS

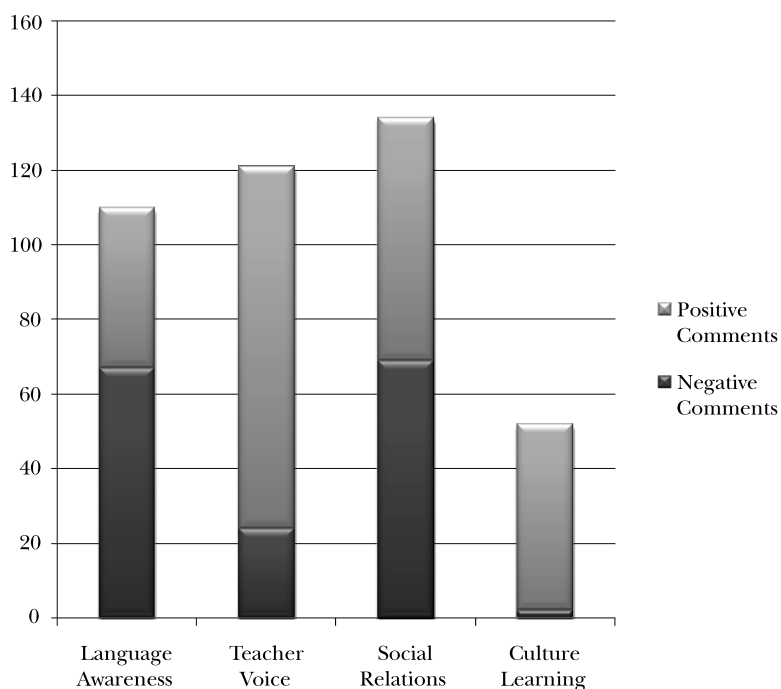
Quantitative analysis of Garrett's affective comments over the entire 8-week course (Figure 1) reveals that the majority of her remarks centered on social relations in the classroom (134 comments) or on assessment of the course with her professional teacher voice (121 comments). She paid slightly less attention to linguistic aspects of Portuguese (110 comments) and commented much less overall on the new culture to which she was exposed (52 comments). Although the topic

of culture received the least amount of overall attention, Figure 1 reveals that the comments made about it were predominately positive. In comparison, the other topic areas were more evenly divided between positive and negative comments.

When the aggregate of Garrett's affective comments are divided according to whether she expressed positive or negative affect, however, a slightly different pattern emerges. The highest number of positive affective responses to her experience had to do with her evaluation of the course with her teacher voice (97 positive comments) and with her affective responses to social relations in the course (65 positive comments). These were followed by her responses to the cultural aspects of the course (50 positive comments), with language awareness (43 positive comments) ranking last. The total number of positive comments was 255, and the proportions of positive comments in the four topic areas are displayed in Figure 2.

Counting negative affective comments over the 8-week course revealed a total of 69 negative comments about social relations and 67 negative comments about language awareness. The number of negative comments about the class made with the learner's teacher voice was

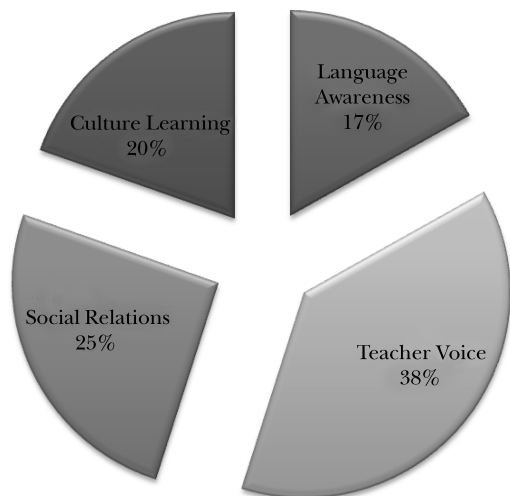
FIGURE 1  
Distribution of 417 Affective Comments by Topic



considerably lower (24 negative comments), with culture learning receiving only 2 negative comments. The total number of negative comments was 162, and the proportions of negative

comments across the four topic areas are displayed in Figure 3.

FIGURE 2  
Proportions of 255 Positive Affective Comments by Topic

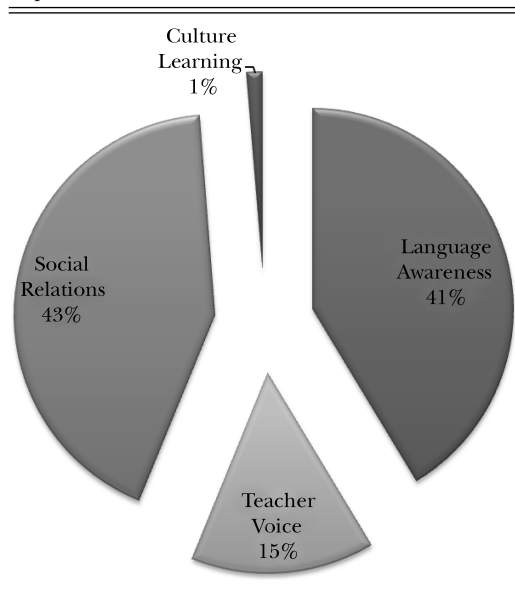


These quantitative results are aggregates of Garrett’s affective comments throughout the class. They do not, however, provide a representation of how her appraisal of different stimuli changed over the course of the 8 weeks. (This can only be done by analyzing her responses week by week.) Similarly, the numbers do not provide much insight into the kinds of stimuli that may have prompted her affective responses. The remainder of our analysis is therefore devoted to a week-by-week narrative of the learner’s affective responses to events in the four topic areas. Tables 3 and 4 show week-by-week representations of her positive and negative affective comments, and the following sections describe her responses in greater detail.

*Language Awareness*

At the beginning of her language learning experience, Garrett reported struggling with Portuguese phonetics. She experienced difficulty in discerning sounds and producing unfamiliar sounds that the instructor wanted the class to imitate. For example, in Week 1 she reported:

FIGURE 3  
Proportions of 162 Negative Affective Comments by Topic



I've seen this one word ten times yet I still could not understand how to say it, or remember it. I thought, "Why is this?" I'd hear him say it, and it wasn't matching what I was seeing written. It was a strange sound I could not recognize.

Garrett was also frustrated in Week 1 by her inability to ask for help using the target language. In fact, she felt, there were many things she did not understand about the language:

I wanted to ask how to say "How do you say something" and we didn't cover that until Day 2 and that was extremely frustrating. I felt extremely limited, that I had questions and couldn't ask them, but in the end, it was probably better just to listen to the spoken language for the first day.

Garrett reported feeling "more empowered" once she knew how to ask for the meaning of a word in Portuguese. In addition, she was excited about the novelty of the language learning experience, as demonstrated by comments such as "Eureka!" (when she discovered how to pronounce a word) and "I felt like that was a success" (once she realized she could understand the prosody of the language). She also expressed positive affect when she began to discover similarities between French and Portuguese, as can be seen in comments like "It is kind of cool how Portuguese is like French, except that you drop some inner syllables" and "Running into French cognates in Portuguese

inspires me." Even toward the end of Week 2, however, Garrett continued to criticize herself for not being able to discern certain syllables. Overall, her language awareness experience that week proved to be more negative than positive.

During Week 4, Garrett made more positive comments about language and language learning than she did in any other week. This is likely due to her success on an exam she took that week. She also remarked, however, that she feared she was simply memorizing words, rather than becoming capable of actually using the language to communicate. She did not express feelings of intimidation at encountering the written language or at being asked to reproduce it on the test. More specifically, she stated that she did not find grammatical information daunting:

Especially now that we've done past tense, preterit, conditional and future—which he just explained to us ten minutes before we left class today and it's on our final tomorrow. But it's easy. It's just the verb and different endings, so it's not so bad.

Despite her success on quizzes and tests, which helped to support her self-image as a successful learner, Garrett's oral communication had not yet been evaluated as of Week 4 and she did not feel that she was communicating successfully. She discounted improvements in her pronunciation and focused instead on her perceived lack of ability to communicate. The more she learned, the more she realized she did not know. Week 5 was the only week when Garrett reported feeling that she was starting to be able to communicate effectively (even though she said she still felt overwhelmed by grammatical rules).

Apparently, comparing Portuguese to other languages was important only right at the beginning of the course. It was not until Week 5 that Garrett mentioned contrasting French and Portuguese again: "Preterits and imperfects are not used the same in French as Portuguese. I find this interesting." Also in Week 5, Garrett still felt she was having difficulty discerning the different forms of the copula (*ser* and *estar* in Portuguese). She felt like she was starting to be able to communicate, although not nearly as well as she had hoped: "I'm still not hearing everything and I'm still not speaking with precision. I'm kind of mumbling through it." Once again, the number of negative comments exceeded positive comments in Week 5. Although Garrett felt she was becoming more skilled, her expectations of the level she wanted to reach were also increasing.

In Week 6, the numbers of positive and negative affective comments were equal. The class took

TABLE 3  
An Affective Trajectory: Weekly Sources of Positive Comments

	Language Awareness	Teacher Voice	Social Relations	Culture Learning
Week 1	French cognates, pronunciation, empowering vocabulary	Teacher's approach to teach phonetics, word association, humor, eye contact	Finding a group, relations with the professor	None
Week 2	The challenge of learning a new language	Learner strategies; colors, review sheets; teacher's ability to push us to our limit	Study group; group confession of how stressful this is	History and geography of Brazil; "cultural info compensates my lack of linguistic mastery"
Week 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Week 4	Grade on a quiz; confidence with testing ability	Correction, dictation exercises; story-making activity	More people contributing in class; variety of partners	None
Week 5	Final exam results	Fun activity after test; Anglophone gave a lecture in Portuguese	Developing my identity in group as "silly"	Anthropologist guest lecturer, history of soccer, movie
Week 6	Feeling well prepared for a quiz	Useful subjunctive review sheet, the conversation group	Conversation group, classmate's brother	Meeting a Brazilian, songs, carnival, <i>capoeira</i> , samba
Week 7	Interesting verbs, comparison to French	Sequence in which we learned verbs, grammar exercises	Everyone participates more in class, party at professor's house	NS professor's response to request to keep our class quieter
Week 8	Word order; successful communication	Professor pushes us to our limit, FOF, describing a traumatic event	Classmates more relaxed after party, relying on classmates for help	Feeling empowered due to cultural knowledge gained in course

*Note.* The audio tape for Week 3 was inadvertently destroyed. FOF = focus on form; NS = native speaker.

another quiz, and Garrett said that she felt much more comfortable with written evaluations like quizzes and tests because she thought she could be more successful at those. It is worth mentioning, however, that she still did not feel like a successful speaker. In Week 7, students learned present, future, and past subjunctives, but after Garrett missed a class, she began to feel she had fallen behind the other students and was becoming overwhelmed. Talking about these feelings consumed 24% of her total comments during this week. By Week 8, Garrett felt overstuffed with grammatical information—"I can't put the words together, because I'm scanning through my memory to find the words and verbs, and then trying to conjugate it in a sentence"—and this was affecting her ability to communicate:

Oh, I would be satisfied with achieving understanding with my interlocutor. Seriously, like the incident where the professor corrected me from asking R [a

classmate] if he was going to eat with his "hand" when I meant to say his "mom," (they sound similar in Portuguese). At least the professor understood what I was trying to say.

Ultimately, at the end of the 8-week program, Garrett still did not feel confident about her ability to communicate in Portuguese, and the total number of negative comments related to language awareness exceeded the positive.

#### *Teacher Voice*

Garrett's attention to events during her language learning experience was also influenced by her professional training and experience as a foreign language teacher. She commented on her instructors' teaching styles, the course materials, and her own learning strategies; she also made considerably more positive than negative comments in this area. Some of the most positive



TABLE 4  
An Affective Trajectory: Weekly Sources of Negative Comments

	Language Awareness	Teacher Voice	Social Relations	Culture Learning
Week 1	Lack of ability to recognize and produce phonemes	Criticism of NNS TA codeswitching	Awkwardness and competition with classmates due to lack of group cohesion	None
Week 2	Pronunciation	Not knowing the grading system	Competition and anxiety when speaking	None
Week 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Week 4	Memorizing words and not using the language because of the final exam	Criticism of activity that involves not telling the truth	Anxiety when speaking during the collective creation of a story activity in class	None
Week 5	Difficulty with the grammar	Study tactics for the final exam in Week 4	Fear of participating in the Thursday evening conversation group	None
Week 6	Subjunctive	Too much subject-specific vocabulary	Fear of self-image due to speaking poorly at conversation group	Fatigue due to <i>capoeira</i>
Week 7	Grammar: future and imperfect subjunctives and irregular verbs	None	Social anxiety about being behind others due to absence	None
Week 8	Grammar and ability to retrieve words from memory	Preparing lessons before class	Comparisons: jealousy of those who speak well	None

*Note.* The audio tape for Week 3 was inadvertently destroyed. NNS = nonnative speaker; TA = teaching assistant.

comments she made about the main instructor were at the beginning of the course:

I felt like I was in the hands of a great instructor because I had a feeling he knew which words were hard for us and would focus on these words and would say these words backwards so that we could focus on the syllables and pronounce them correctly. I feel like he is constantly scanning the class looking for visual cues of students having difficulties.

Overall, she said she thought this instructor had a gift for pushing students to their limits and making the course interesting. Her respect for the nonnative-speaking teaching assistant (TA), who taught the class in the afternoon, was initially not as high but increased with time. At first she was not fond of the TA's mixed use of Portuguese and English: "It's annoying that the TA stops speaking Portuguese to speak English, especially for Spanish cognates, which are easy to understand in Portuguese." By the end of the course, however, her opinion of the TA had changed completely. In Week 8, she commented on how the TA had become a positive example for the students, creating

a voice that she tried to emulate: "I think it's fantastic to have male and female Portuguese speaker models."

Overall, Garrett had positive responses to the lessons, particularly the instructor's way of breaking down the pronunciation of words into syllables and writing out dialogues on the board before asking students to memorize them. She also enjoyed collective story-making exercises, where all classmates participated in the creation of a short narrative. The instructor introduced upcoming grammatical structures and vocabulary by demonstrating their use in natural conversation before exposing students to written forms from the textbook. For example, the day before introducing color vocabulary in the book, the instructor brought in a collection of ties and commented on their colors and styles. This piqued students' curiosity and made it easier for them to process and recognize the sounds and meaning of the color words once they were presented in written form. Garrett appreciated this approach. She also appreciated the prompt return of quizzes and homework, which she felt validated the students' efforts.

However, Garrett's overall assessment of the course was that it covered far too much material to absorb in such a short amount of time. Two semesters of Portuguese in 8 weeks was truly an intensive language learning experience.

### Social Relations

The topic area that elicited the greatest number of affective responses from Garrett was her social relations with classmates and instructors. These relations also affected the image she formed of herself as a member of the classroom community. During Week 1, she felt very uncomfortable about not being able to speak with her classmates and not knowing more about who they were, why they were taking the class, or their prior experience with Portuguese: "It is weird to not have talked to anyone sitting in the same classroom as me." She also found herself constantly comparing her progress to theirs: "I'm seeing a difference between myself and others and realizing I need to put more time into this. I took a day off without studying and felt like others used this time to study, and now I am behind."

Garrett mentioned in Week 2 that she felt competitive toward and a little threatened by other students. She compared herself to them:

So, this kid is so far ahead of everyone else. We are barely forming incorrect basic sentences and he is speaking with complex, elaborate sentences. It's a little frustrating. However, it is interesting to watch how the instructor changes his language when he speaks with Student S.

In Week 3, she mentioned once again that she felt insecure and uncomfortable speaking in front of her peers:

I can tell when I work with partners that I sound awful. For example, with French, it's such a pretty language that I might wince or correct students when they grossly mispronounce a word. And when I work with partners in class, I get this same feeling that they're not enjoying hearing me speak.

Week 4 had the largest number of negative comments about social relations. During that week, the instructor had the students do a collaborative speaking activity in class. Together, contributing one line at a time, students created a narrative about a young couple having dinner at a restaurant when something happens. After a long awkward pause, Garrett was the first to try to break the silence and get the activity started, but she soon regretted succumbing to the pressure to participate:

I needed to complete the sentence I had started out loud, "Once upon a time, there was a young couple. . ." but I couldn't think of the word for *couple*, and I was really afraid, because, I kind of know the words at this point, it's just the precision that makes me uncomfortable, like I know it's *joven* [young] but I don't know if it's pronounced "hoven" like in Spanish . . . I realized that even if I was making a lot of mistakes, comprehension can be reached, and . . . it's a great exercise.

Despite feeling extremely anxious in this situation, Garrett ultimately found this exercise useful because she proved to herself that she could communicate effectively despite her limitations. Once the students did a collective task together in the target language, Garrett felt more comfortable contributing because she realized that even though their levels differed, everyone was struggling to communicate. She felt this created a stronger cohesion in the class. She switched from using the pronoun *I* as in the previous quote to the pronoun *we* in comments during the final 3 weeks of the course, which could be interpreted as a sign that she was beginning to feel more part of the group. The following are some examples of her use of *we*:

1. Referring to samba dance lessons: "*We* were all a little nervous to be doing this physical activity together" (emphasis added).
2. Referring to the *capoeira* martial art lesson: "So everybody was sore, and *we* kind of bonded through the pain of walking up and down the stairs together during *our* break" (emphasis added).
3. "*We*'re laughing a lot more in class and everyone is contributing more. I think this is because of the 'add your own answer' grammar exercise" (emphasis added).

Week 7 was hard for Garrett because she missed a day and felt that doing so put her "terribly behind." Due to the anxiety of feeling behind, she once again began comparing herself to others. By the end of the week, however, she had more or less recovered: "I feel like I've finally caught back up with the group. Tuesday I felt completely behind and distressed and felt like I couldn't participate, but today I feel like I am almost caught up."

At the end of Week 7, there was a social gathering at the instructor's house. Also invited to the party were all the guest speakers who had presented to the class. Garrett described the party as "very pleasant . . . and it was just fun. It was very bonding." Consequently, during this week, Garrett showed a high percentage of positive comments about relations with other students.

Finally, in Week 8, Garrett mentioned the interdependence she felt with a fellow student during her language learning experience:

I always sit next to him [Student R] and whenever I say something wrong he'll look at me, so I feel a bit like a team when he's there, I feel like he helps monitor me. And if I don't understand something he'll discreetly help me out with it . . . I don't know. This kid is so nice! We kind of look out for each other.

Although she made a number of positive comments concerning interpersonal relations with other students, Garrett still persisted in comparing herself to them. Even at the end of 8 weeks she commented, "I'm so jealous. Student S, she just speaks it, and it flows, and it's almost like she's a native speaker."

She also reevaluated her relations with the instructors throughout the class. For example, in the beginning she felt that the TA was not connected with the needs of students. However, by the end of the course she admired her, stating "everyone wants to be like the TA."

Interpersonal relations elicited more affective responses than any other topic, and they were highly significant in Garrett's evaluation of her language learning experience. In the beginning, she was very uncomfortable trying to speak a new foreign language in front of her classmates and felt like she was with strangers, unable to talk to anyone. She remained very aware of the language proficiency of her classmates and never stopped comparing herself to them. She devoted a large portion of her attention during the language learning experience to observing class dynamics and social relations. However, the topic that surprised her most was her change of perspective toward the importance of cultural instruction in language learning.

### *Culture Learning*

Although Garrett made no comments about culture during Week 1, this topic apparently became very important to her during Week 2. She commented on the interesting cultural information the class received on cannibalism and *tropicalismo*. She realized that cultural knowledge would allow her to communicate with a native speaker, even on occasions when her linguistic ability was deficient. Her comments reveal a shift in her assessment of culture as a linguistic tool:

The cultural information is grounding the language, making it real. Because at first I felt that I was only interested in the language, but the culture is making this more interesting. The culture is actually quite

useful although I was critical of it at first. If I ever meet a Brazilian I will actually have something to communicate with him . . . I mean, even if I'm speaking poorly, if it's an interesting topic we could connect through the topic which would give me more room for error with the language. I would be able to keep their attention longer.

Again in Week 5, Garrett mentioned the value of cultural instruction in her class. Specifically, she mentioned that she believed cultural knowledge could empower her to communicate with native speakers:

We're watching a movie about monkeys this afternoon, primates, and then we're having a biological anthropologist come in Wednesday to talk to us about her research in Brazil—*fun!* This is just the funnest little summer I'm having! This is a little sofa travel experience I'm having, traveling the world via my sofa. I feel like I'm going to Brazil without the effort.

When Young asked how she would feel about going to Brazil and speaking with native speakers, Garrett mentioned yet again how cultural instruction was empowering her and how she felt it would affect her ability to communicate with native speakers:

I'd want to talk to everyone about everything! Yes, this culture part has been just . . . like the dessert. It's a lot of fun. I don't think I could maintain my endurance for this without having the movies, and the songs, and the treats.

Week 6 had the highest number of positive comments about culture. Students took samba lessons in a dance hall one afternoon and had instruction in the Brazilian martial art of *capoeira* the following afternoon. In addition, they listened to and analyzed numerous authentic songs in the morning session. Garrett also attended an optional evening conversation group, *Bate Papo*. *Bate Papo* is open to all Portuguese native speakers in the community and was designed to help Portuguese language learners to experience authentic conversation and culture. In the excerpt below, Garrett explains why she found the group both socially rewarding and beneficial to her linguistic and cultural development:

[We three students] all decided to show up at 6:15 so that we could all go together since we were all kind of nervous about what to expect, and it was fun. We got to know each other a bit more in English as we were waiting for beer, and then, once we got our pitcher of beer we walked up to the group. We started speaking in Portuguese before we arrived, and it was a lot of fun.

Garrett then expressed her positive response to discovering the proper usage of a grammatical concept explained in class concerning the use of possessive articles. When speaking with a Brazilian woman,

I said to her, "Oh what a cute baby, I like her shirt." And I said in Portuguese, *gosto de sua camisa* and the woman looked at her own shirt. And my instructor, who was sitting next to me, said, that's why with the possessive articles you need to say *a camisa dele* 'I like his shirt,' instead of *sua*. . . . So, that was a great example to understand a lesson from class.

Interestingly, the music portion of the course elicited an extremely high number of positive affective comments:

We did a song, which was very exciting because I first heard this song over ten years ago . . . and I remember that I just loved, *loved* this song . . . . And, I didn't even know what language it was in then. I think I thought it was in Spanish. Certainly I didn't understand that it was Brazilian [Portuguese] . . . so when he explained what the lyrics meant, I got really excited, and I could understand most of it the first time listening to it, because it's very slow.

In the following quotation, Garrett describes in detail how her cultural training assisted her to better understand this song:

It's called *Ilê aiê* and it goes, *Ilê aiê, Como você é bonito de se ver. Ilê aiê, Que beleza mais bonita de se ter* and what it is, 'How you are so beautiful to see, you have the greatest beauty that one could have, your beauty transforms in me, or you.' . . . So, at first I thought he was singing about a woman that he found beautiful . . . then someone asked what the title meant, and he explained to us that it's a *bloco*, a group of people who get together and create a . . . march together in the . . . parade for carnival, and that it originates in Yoruba . . . and that the rhythm of this is a ritual used in Condomblé, which is the religion that we've been studying about, that came to Brazil, so it was all just very exciting to learn this.

Finally, Garrett concluded her comments in Week 8 by admitting that although she still felt linguistically deficient, she also felt culturally empowered to communicate:

Well, I think my identity as a learner is starting to shift, and I think the cultural component of our lessons plays a big role in this. It would be interesting to see what it would be like to learn a language without the culture to ground it. Because, I really feel like I'm becoming more knowledgeable about this culture and language, but . . . my language ability is still so bad!

## DISCUSSION

### *Understanding the Learner's Unique Experience*

As Kramsch (2003) remarked, each language student's learning experience is extremely subjective. An analysis of the events that elicited affective responses by this language learner revealed that she was constantly evaluating her learning experience from the perspective of a foreign language teacher—evaluating the teaching style, instructional materials, and her own learning strategies. The two unexpected categories to emerge from the analysis of the transcripts revealed the influence of the immediate community (the classroom) and the distant community (Brazilian culture) on Garrett's affective responses to her language learning experience. Although Garrett's perspective as a teacher as well as her attention to culture learning and social relations in the classroom were very important to her, the same would not necessarily be true of all language learners.<sup>6</sup> Rather, it is through understanding Garrett's specific preferences and aversions that the importance of emotion in any learner's encounter with a new language becomes clear. The following pages set forth the beginning of a constructivist theory of one learner's emotion in her classroom language learning, as grounded in the data. In particular, the two aspects of the experience that appeared to be most important to Garrett—her emotional responses to the Brazilian culture that she was meeting for the first time and her emotional responses to her classmates and her teachers—are discussed. The final section presents a brief discussion of how this learner's experience as a beginning language learner might influence or shape her future activities as a language teacher.

### *Emotion and Classroom Language Learning*

Before recording Garrett's responses to her 8-week Portuguese course, emotional responses to the course were not the presumed focus of the study. Previous longitudinal research on language learners such as Huebner (1983), G-q. Liu (2000), Schmidt (1983), and Schmidt and Frota (1986) focused not on emotion but on learners' development of linguistic ability or communicative competence in the target language. However, during the open coding process, the learner's expressions of positive or negative affect were by far the most frequent comments made. During axial coding, it was noted that those expressions of affect clustered mainly around four kinds of experiences.

For Garrett, then, emotional responses to the language learning experience (mostly in the classroom but occasionally outside of it) were the most salient features of her learning endeavor.

Surprisingly, the emotional states of language learners have received relatively little attention in the SLA literature. In a major textbook, Gass and Selinker (2008) devoted only a portion of one chapter (out of a total of 14) to affect and motivation. In a handbook of cognitive approaches to SLA, Doughty and Long (2003) chose not to dedicate a single chapter to the role of emotion in language acquisition. In contrast, cognitive scientists have paid increased attention to emotion in recent years, and neurobiological research by Leventhal and Scherer (1987), among others, points to the conclusion that cognition derives from emotionally colored perception. Nevertheless, the emotion of language learners is an issue that has remained in the background in our field. What this study has attempted to show—in weekly detail—is how one learner’s emotional responses were engendered by particular topics and experiences, how some of those responses were modified by new experiences, and how Garrett’s affective appraisals changed over time.

What emerged from the process of analysis is that emotion became the focus of Garrett’s attention in her acquisition of Portuguese. Garrett testified to her emotional assessments of the experience as either pleasant or unpleasant, which, in turn, prompted categorization of her comments into those that expressed positive or negative affect. One of the drawbacks of this binary distinction, however, is that it masks the multitude of different ways in which the learner experienced emotion. Her responses should not be interpreted as either happy or sad. To attempt to distinguish among this learner’s emotional responses to events, the system of stimulus evaluation checks devised by Scherer (1984a, 1984b) was used.<sup>7</sup> This system allowed the events that the learner evaluated to be categorized as either (a) novel, (b) intrinsically pleasant or unpleasant, or (c) enhancing or inhibiting progress to achieving her goals or needs. An additional possibility was for the learner to evaluate events in terms of (d) the degree of control she believed she had over the event or its consequences and (e) whether the event was consistent or inconsistent with her ideal self-concept as well as whether it conformed to the norms of her social group. The following examples illustrate how Scherer’s classification was used for categorizing stimulus appraisal.

As mentioned earlier, in Week 5 the learner expressed her delight at the *novelty* of a film about

wildlife in Brazil by saying it was the “funnest” summer she was having. On other occasions, she expressed frustration at repeating an activity that she had done previously, such as a dictation in Week 2, which she thought was a waste of time.

On several occasions, Garrett reported events that *enhanced progress toward her goal* of learning Portuguese. For example, in Week 1 she described refocusing her attention on spoken input from her teacher: “I was focusing on what was written and focusing on the pronunciation of the individual words . . . today was the first day I realized I needed to focus on the prosody, so I felt like that was a success—that I’ve switched from the need to focus on the individual words to focusing on the flow.” At other times, however, Garrett experienced an event that did not further her goals as stressful: “I feel I can hear things being done [spoken] differently than I’m saying them, but I can’t quite identify where the problem is.”

Garrett also often remarked on her *ability to cope* with an event. Sometimes she felt overwhelmed, as in Week 1: “We were supposed to memorize a page of Portuguese dialogue and I thought, ‘How can I memorize this when I don’t even know how to pronounce it?’” On other occasions, she expressed pleasure at the events she found she had managed well. At the end of her 8-week language program, for instance, Garrett reflected that “I really feel like I’m becoming more knowledgeable about this culture and language.”

*The learner’s self-image* was enhanced by some of her experiences. For instance, when she managed to talk more in class, she reported: “I’m starting to talk in class. It’s fun.” On other occasions, however, her ideal self-image was challenged: “I’ve just kind of been getting by. I haven’t been the stellar Portuguese student.” She also became aware of the image that she was projecting to other students in the class, especially in Week 5 after students received grades for their exam: “Everyone’s success is private. Or it could just be that people don’t talk to me about it because I’m such a bad speaker that they don’t want to embarrass me. I don’t know. In general I don’t talk to people about grades.” On still more occasions, Garrett felt she was projecting an image of a stellar student: “I can write this language like a star, and I can read it and understand it within the upper tier of my class.” On a few occasions, she experienced an event that went against *accepted social norms and beliefs*: “Student S would do irritating things like how he said that he thought Barcelona was an awful city to a bunch of Spanish speakers.”

This learner’s affective encoding of her experiences thus falls within Scherer’s (1984a, 1984b)

preference or aversion schemata. Events were coded with positive or negative affect according to whether they were novel, pleasant, enhancing of the learner's goals or needs, compatible with her coping mechanisms, or supportive of her self-image and social image. The events that elicited affective responses were categorized into four groups: (a) language awareness, (b) teacher voice, (c) cultural knowledge, and (d) social relations. In the following subsections we use the explanatory power of preference and aversion schemata to construct a theory that the sociostatic pressure of distant communities and immediate communities greatly influenced this learner's affective responses to her language learning experience.

#### *Understanding the Importance of Cultural Knowledge in Communication*

Garrett's interest in the structure of the Portuguese language was initially very high. It gradually decreased as the course wore on, except during the weeks of the exams, when classroom instruction focused more on grammar (her strength). She first acknowledged the importance of cultural knowledge in Week 2, expressing a new understanding that cultural instruction was grounding the language, making it real. She also reported feeling that she could communicate more effectively with a native speaker on a cultural topic because it would give her more room for language error. In Week 5, Garrett observed that cultural instruction helped keep her motivated to get through the intensive course. In Week 6, which had the most culturally rich instruction, she perceived the most progress in understanding Portuguese. As she told Young, "Things are coming better together."

Garrett described her excitement at being able to understand a song that she listened to in class. In addition to the slow tempo of the song, the lyrics told about cultural topics that the class had been studying. This cultural information enabled Garrett to use cultural context to fill in parts of the song that were incomprehensible to her. At first, she did not understand the words *Ilê aiê* in the song. Once told that the expression came from Yoruba and was the name of a *bloco*, she was in a position to better understand the meaning the singer intended to convey.

In addition to helping her understand lyrics to songs, cultural knowledge helped Garrett in conversations with more advanced speakers of Portuguese. For example, when the instructor hosted a party for the class, the vast majority of the

guests spoke exclusively in Portuguese. Although she could not understand all of the conversations, Garrett's familiarity with the topics people were discussing provided a tool other than linguistic ability that allowed her to negotiate meaning and communication effectively with proficient Portuguese speakers.

In the last week of the course, Garrett questioned whether learning 2 years of Portuguese in 8 weeks would have been possible without the cultural component to ground it. She appraised culture learning as positive not only because she found it novel and pleasant but also because she found it to be compatible with her coping mechanism because it enhanced her goal to be a successful speaker of Portuguese and because it was supportive of her self-image and social image. She felt she could better cope with her linguistic limitations with the help of culture learning. This culture learning helped her become a more successful communicator, thus enhancing her own social image as she tried to enter a Portuguese-speaking community. The culture learning component of her language learning experience met all five of Scherer's (1984a, 1984b) criteria for preferential environmental stimuli.

#### *Understanding the Importance of Social Relations in the Classroom*

J. Schumann (1998) suggested that we have an innate, survivalist desire to strengthen our affiliation with others and to improve our self-image with our conspecifics. Garrett's experience shows how sociostatic value develops in a language class. She described an improvement in her feeling of general well-being once she started to form a group in class during the first week: "I'm finding my little group of cool women who are in anthropology and I'm feeling more comfortable." In Week 2, she mentioned how working with other students helped her feel more successful: "I love working with other people because it quizzes you and gets you to think about [the material] differently." In addition to finding working with others beneficial for her success on a quiz, she mentioned that she felt that it affected her well-being: "Being more comfortable with other people in the class grounds you."

In Week 6, she described a positive experience with her classmates at a conversational group as "fun because we got to know each other a bit more." In Week 7, she described another social event, the party at her instructor's house, as "just fun. It was very bonding . . . It was just nice to sit and listen, and I contributed a little bit, and it

was just a very pleasant evening.” In the last week, she reported the bond forming between herself and another student because of the help he provided her in communicating in Portuguese. Interpersonal relations elicited many positive affective comments in her narrative and appeared to be a crucial part of her language learning experience.

It is apparent from the transcripts, however, that classroom relations also elicited many negative comments. Most of the negative comments had to do with Garrett’s fear of speaking in class or working with partners. She did not feel comfortable with her proficiency level and believed others to be at a higher level than her. Continually assessing herself at a lower proficiency level than her peers did not improve her self-image. In fact, it had an adverse affect on her sociostatic need to strengthen affiliations with others.

### *Implications for Teaching*

As Dewaele (2005) foresaw, focusing on the role of emotion in foreign language learning can inspire teachers to pay increased attention to the role played by emotion in learners’ classroom foreign language learning and to the development of their sociocultural competence in a second language. In this final section, we discuss Garrett’s reflections as a foreign language teacher on her experience as a learner and the implications that she drew for her future language teaching. Garrett’s affective appraisal of the events she experienced as a learner greatly influenced her future intentions regarding her own teaching.

Garrett’s analysis of her experience learning Portuguese directed her attention to the importance of affect, cultural instruction, and interpersonal relations in the language learning process. Beyond analyzing her own experience, reviewing studies of other personal narratives has led her to challenge her pedagogical training and the current practices regarding cultural instruction and interpersonal relations in the classroom.

In her teaching career prior to the experience studied in this report, Garrett had viewed cultural instruction as a fun activity to be done if time permitted. She had not appreciated its contribution to the learner’s strategic competence in communicating in the target language. Through her own language learning experience, however, Garrett experienced for herself how knowledge of the target culture can provide tools to achieve more effective communication, which, in turn, enables language learners to more fully participate in a community. In addition to making her feel more empowered in communication, cultural

instruction also appeared to be a key motivational factor in Garrett’s language learning experience.

This author also observed similarities between her affective responses to her language learning experience and that of others, especially regarding competition and anxiety in the immediate community of the classroom. Having previously studied Krashen’s (1981) Monitor Model and his hypothesis of the affective filter, Garrett had understood that her role as an instructor was principally to provide comprehensible input to her students and to avoid creating negative feelings among them. Her own learning experience, in contrast, confirmed J. Schumann’s (1998) observation that it is not only the teacher who influences the emotional state of the language learner but that interpersonal relations between students in the classroom also affect a student’s sense of well-being. Bailey (1983) also discussed competition and anxiety among students in the language classroom, which can be interpreted as the desire to establish the affiliative groups of conspecifics that J. Schumann described. Ultimately, Garrett’s own experience as a language learner confirmed these two theories and led her to realize that team-building and constructing identities for classroom peers as “conspecifics” rather than “the competition” provide important supports for learning.

Having been trained in the communicative approach to foreign language teaching, Garrett was used to teaching students simple phrases to repeat and encouraging them to speak in front of the class. Her own experience as a learner, however, indicated that this can create anxiety and competition among students. She now feels more reluctant to enforce a target-language-only policy in beginning courses because, in her own language learning experience, it took her a while to process the different patterns of sounds (and she continued to feel very anxious about speaking in the beginning, especially in front of peers). Now, Garrett strives to provide cooperative activities fostering positive affiliations among learners as well as to encourage students to get to know each other in a noncompetitive, friendly way.

With a new understanding of the importance of cultural instruction in fostering strategic competence, Garrett currently strives to include more cultural instruction in her lessons and is continually searching for ways to balance the linguistic goals of a curriculum with instruction in culture. In addition to addressing more of the cultural components included in the course textbook and including more authentic cultural artifacts, such as newspaper articles and songs, Garrett is currently exploring the use of supplemental cultural

instruction that students can explore on their own time online. She directs students to investigate the culture presented online and to reflect on their findings in a guided discussion on a weekly discussion forum in Blackboard. The intention of the discussion is not only to afford students an opportunity to reflect on the cultural information but also to create a third space where students can share personal information and strengthen their affiliations with others.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, work by Damasio (1994, 1999) led cognitive psychologists to realize that emotion has been neglected in theories of mind during the 20th century. Recent work by Pavlenko, J. Schumann, and others also has shown the theoretical importance of emotion in understanding bilingualism and foreign language learning. In this article, with the help of narrative analysis and grounded theory, their work has been extended to show one learner's emotional responses to foreign language learning in the classroom, the events that engendered emotion, and her affective trajectory over the 8-week course. A theory grounded in the experiences Garrett reported to explain her emotional responses to the language learning process has thus been constructed. In this learner's case, her affective responses in the foreign language classroom were grounded in the sociostatic pressure of distant (Brazilian) and immediate (classroom) communities.

In this study, the emotional responses of one beginning learner to her experiences in one foreign language classroom and the means by which her responses were recorded and analyzed have been described. The learner in question, as well as her specific experiences, is unique. No claim should be made that other learners respond in similar ways to similar experiences. What seems evident, however, is that the affective responses of foreign language learners and, in particular, their responses to events in the classroom are an underresearched area of SLA. Greater attention to affect in language learning is needed because of the emotional grounding of higher order cognitive and metacognitive processes such as attention, memory, planning, and hypothesis construction (Damasio, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Affective appraisal of language learning events by individual learners often results in approach or avoidance when similar events occur in the future and influences cognitive and other lower order processes. What has been proposed in this article

is one way to discover an individual learner's affective states and the trajectory of change in those states throughout the language learning process. The two positions argued for are the importance of affect in foreign language learning and the need to develop systematic ways of researching affect—positions that were framed eloquently by Nelson Goodman (1978, p. 81): "Feeling without understanding is blind, and understanding without feeling is empty."

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>One such study is by Kinginger (2008), in which she infers associations between assessments of the foreign language proficiency of 24 learners of French and their first-person accounts of their individual motives and experiences during study-abroad experiences in France.

<sup>2</sup>One affective aspect of language learning that has been studied at length is, of course, motivation. In this article, however, we follow Damasio (1999) in distinguishing among background emotions and feelings, motivational drive, and consciousness. Although motivation may well spring from emotions, in this article we have chosen not to go beyond emotion or to speculate on the relations between emotion and motivational drive. Those readers interested in making the connection are referred to a recent review of studies on motivation and student success by Dörnyei (2003).

<sup>3</sup>Although of recent origin, grounded theory has already developed in different directions depending on the training and epistemology of its practitioners. Objectivist grounded theory falls within a positivist epistemology in which the grounded theorist assumes that data represent facts about a knowable world. The objectivist researcher's task is to "discover" the theory that explains them. By contrast, in constructivist grounded theory, data and analysis are considered to arise from experiences shared by the participants, the researcher, and relevant others. Practitioners of constructivist grounded theory, including the authors of the present article,



“take a reflexive stance toward the research process and consider *how* their theories evolve” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 131). To date, there have been relatively few applications of grounded theory to describe and understand second language learning, of which Aveni (2005); Kalaja and Ferreira (2003); Kalaja, Paiva, and Ferreira (2008); and Yan and Horwitz (2008) are recent exemplars.

<sup>4</sup>A major category is one that emerges as most salient and/or frequent from open coding.

<sup>5</sup>Coding resulted in only two categories of affect, which we termed “positive” and “negative.” Later, in theory building, we recognized that the experiences that engendered learner affect could be more finely categorized according to Scherer’s (1984a, 1984b) stimulus evaluation checks, which we describe in the Discussion section of the article.

<sup>6</sup>The systematic procedures of grounded theory helped ensure that Garrett did not simply create a theory that was a self-fulfilling prophecy about her expectations and perceptions of language learning. In this study, the two authors conducted open coding and axial coding together and when a storyline began to emerge in which connections were made between Garrett’s classroom experiences and her affective responses, she often expressed surprise at connections that she had not perceived in advance of the analysis.

<sup>7</sup>In distinguishing between binary responses of “pleasant” or “unpleasant” and Scherer’s system of five stimulus evaluation checks, we follow Damasio’s (1999, pp. 71–79) distinction between sensations of pleasure and pain and the emotional reactions that the sensations engender.

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