



Emotional intelligence and ambiguity tolerance as future-oriented competences in foreign language learning

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Emotional intelligence and ambiguity tolerance as future-oriented competences in FLL

Foreign language learning today requires more than linguistic knowledge. Learners need to manage emotions, uncertainty, and complex communication.

Language learning often involves:

- unclear meanings
- unfamiliar structures
- fear of making mistakes
- unpredictable communication
- emotional pressure and anxiety



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Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, interpret, and manage emotions in a way that supports cognitive processes. It involves the accurate perception of emotions and the ability to generate emotional states that foster reflection, as well as the conscious regulation of emotions, which leads to the comprehensive emotional and intellectual development of the individual.

(Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004)



Facets of Trait Emotional Intelligence

1. Well-being

Self-esteem — successful and self-confident individuals

Trait happiness — cheerful individuals who are satisfied with their lives

Trait optimism — confident individuals who tend to “look on the bright side” of life

2. Self-control

Emotion regulation — individuals capable of controlling their emotions

Stress management — individuals capable of withstanding pressure and regulating stress

Impulse control — reflective individuals who are less likely to give in to their impulses

3. Emotionality

Emotion perception (*self and others*) — individuals who clearly understand their own feelings and the feelings of others

Emotion expression — individuals capable of communicating their feelings to others

Relationships — individuals capable of forming satisfying personal relationships

Trait empathy — individuals capable of taking another person’s perspective

(Petrides i in., 2018)



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Facets of Trait Emotional Intelligence

4. Sociability

Social awareness — individuals who build social networks effectively and have excellent social skills

Emotion management (*others*) — individuals capable of influencing other people's feelings

Assertiveness — direct, honest individuals who are ready to defend their rights

Independent facets*

Adaptability — flexible individuals who are ready to adjust to new conditions

Self-motivation — determined individuals who are unlikely to give up in the face of adversity

(Petrides i in., 2018)



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Ambiguity Tolerance

Ambiguity tolerance refers to how learners respond to unclear, incomplete, or uncertain information. In language learning, ambiguity often appears when learners do not have enough knowledge to fully understand a situation, message, or communicative context. It reflects their ability to process uncertainty without becoming discouraged or avoiding further learning.

(Hsu i in., 2005)



Literature Background: Emotional Intelligence and Ambiguity Tolerance in SLA

- ✓ Emotional intelligence supports L2 communication, emotion regulation, self-awareness, confidence, and empathy (Dewaele et al., 2008; Goleman, 1997; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020; Rastegar & Kermani, 2015)
- ✓ Higher emotional intelligence is associated with lower language anxiety and more effective use of learning strategies (Ożańska-Ponikwia et al., 2020; Rastegar & Kermani, 2015)
- ✓ Ambiguity tolerance is linked to reading comprehension, self-assessment, motivation, learning styles, and lower anxiety (El-Koumy, 2003; Lika, 2024; Oxford, 1992)
- ✓ Both emotional intelligence and ambiguity tolerance show positive links with foreign-language communication and learner engagement (Vahedi & Fatemi, 2015; Yang, 2022)



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Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Ambiguity Tolerance on SLA

Emotional intelligence and ambiguity tolerance support each other in foreign language learning.

Learners with higher emotional intelligence may be better able to regulate stress, anxiety, and emotional reactions during L2 communication. This emotional control can help them remain open to unclear meanings, unfamiliar structures, and uncertain communicative situations.

At the same time, higher ambiguity tolerance allows learners to accept uncertainty as a natural part of language learning. It may reduce anxiety, support creativity, and encourage more frequent use of the foreign language.

Together, these competences may strengthen:

- ✓ willingness to communicate
- ✓ persistence despite difficulties
- ✓ confidence in uncertain situations
- ✓ creative problem-solving
- ✓ learner autonomy and adaptation

(Dewaele & Ip, 2013; Ezzati & Farahian, 2016; Harrison & Voelker, 2008; Lika, 2024; Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2016; Petrides, 2009; Stoycheva, 2003)



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Future-Oriented Competences and Learner Agency

Foreign language learning prepares learners for uncertain, multilingual, and digitally mediated communication.

In this context, **emotional intelligence** and **ambiguity tolerance** support learner agency by helping students to:

- ✓ manage emotional pressure
- ✓ accept incomplete understanding
- ✓ reflect on their progress
- ✓ choose effective learning strategies
- ✓ continue despite mistakes
- ✓ take responsibility for communication

Together, EI and AT shift learners from passive language users to active, adaptive, and self-directed learners.



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Cognitive Resilience in the Future of Language Learning

Future-oriented education requires learners to adapt to uncertainty, digital learning environments, AI-mediated feedback, and complex communication.

In foreign language learning, **cognitive resilience** means the ability to:

- ✓ stay motivated when meaning is unclear
- ✓ treat mistakes as part of learning
- ✓ manage anxiety during communication
- ✓ adapt strategies when understanding breaks down
- ✓ remain active in complex and changing learning contexts

EI and AT help learners become flexible, resilient, and prepared for lifelong learning.



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Pedagogical Implications

Language teaching should support not only linguistic accuracy, but also learners' emotional and cognitive adaptability.

Teachers can develop EI and AT by:

- ✓ creating a positive emotional climate in the classroom
- ✓ treating mistakes and uncertainty as natural parts of communication
- ✓ using tasks based on incomplete context and meaning negotiation
- ✓ encouraging learners to guess, infer, and ask for clarification
- ✓ integrating authentic materials into reading, listening, speaking, and writing
- ✓ developing emotional, metacognitive, and social learning strategies

In this way, foreign language education can strengthen communication, engagement, learner autonomy, and readiness for future learning contexts.



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Conclusion

Emotional intelligence and ambiguity tolerance are key future-oriented competences in foreign language learning.

They help learners to:

- ✓ regulate emotions during communication
- ✓ cope with uncertainty and incomplete understanding
- ✓ remain engaged despite mistakes and difficulties
- ✓ adapt to new communicative and learning contexts
- ✓ develop greater autonomy and resilience

Both competences can be **developed and strengthened** through reflection, supportive classroom practices, authentic communication, and tasks involving uncertainty.

Foreign language learning should therefore be seen not only as linguistic development, but also as preparation for lifelong learning, flexible communication, and active participation in a changing world.



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Thank you for your attention

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