

INTRODUCTION

- Over the past century, research in the areas of psychology and second language acquisition (SLA) has been conducted but self-esteem and SLA have rarely been studied side-by-side
 - So, the aim of this research was to provide an understanding of the effect of self-esteem on SLA in higher level education
- This research has the potential to help language teachers better understand different students and their needs and would also allow them to improve their teaching methods in order to facilitate students whose language learning may be hindered by low confidence or low self-esteem.

DEFINITIONS

- SLA is the experience of learning another language after an individual's first or native language.
- Self-esteem is someone's attitude towards themselves which may in turn affect their thoughts, moods, and behaviors – it is an overall assessment of the self.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- The title of our research is:
 - Second Language Acquisition in Third Level Education: Does an individual's self-esteem affect their perceived ability to learn a second language?
- We also set out to answer the questions:
 - Is self-esteem a factor that affects students' perceptions of their ability to successfully acquire a second language?
 - How does self-esteem affect language learning anxiety?

METHODOLOGY

- Mixed- methods experimental approach
- Online questionnaire via Microsoft Forms
 1. General questions (demographic data)
 2. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
 3. Likert scale to determine Language Learning Anxiety
 4. Open-ended questions
- Microsoft excel and SPSS were used to organize and analyze data.
- Corpus linguistics conducted through Sketch Engine for the long- answer questions.

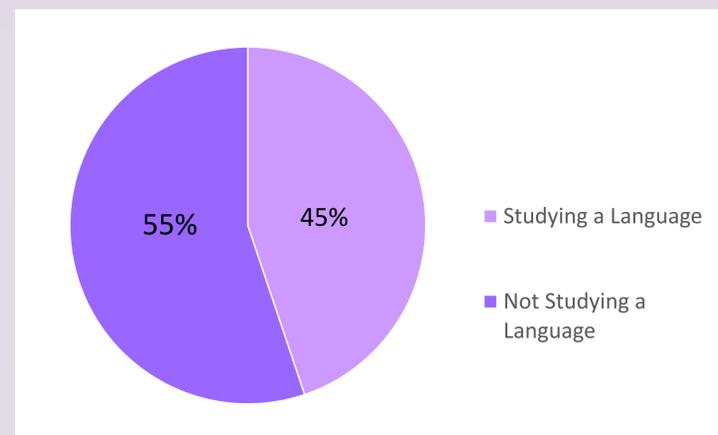


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PARTICIPANTS

- 29 second- and third-year students at UL
- All studying Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
- 19 females and 10 males
- Age range – 19-26 years
- 13 were studying a language at third level while 16 were not



RESULTS

- Self-esteem was rated on a scale of 0-30 (higher score = higher self-reported self-esteem)
 - Scores varied from 4-26
 - Mean - 15.8
 - Median - 16
 - Mode - 17
 - 11 low self-esteem participants and 18 high self-esteem participants
 - 62% of the 'high' self-esteem participants are studying a language at third level
 - 82% of the self-reported low self-esteem students are not studying a language.
- Language learning anxiety scores were rated on a scale of 0-12 (higher score = higher self-reported language learning anxiety)
 - Full range of scores
 - Mean - 3.7
 - Median - 2
 - Mode - 1
 - 22 participants with low language learning anxiety and 7 with high language learning anxiety
- Corpus linguistics analysis found that:
 - High self-esteem students used more positive words to describe their feelings towards language learning, e.g. "happiness", "joy" and "excitement"
 - Low self-esteem participants used more negative words to describe their language learning experiences - e.g. "stress", "annoyance", "anxiety" and "embarrassment" were all prominent.

CONCLUSIONS

- Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to learn a language at third language than people with low self-esteem.
- Students with high self-esteem have lower language learning anxiety than students with low self-esteem.
- There is a negative correlation between self-esteem and language learning anxiety scores.
- Students with high self-esteem have more positive associations with learning a second language.
- Students with high self-esteem perceive language learning as easier.