Sveučilište u Zagrebu

Filozofski fakultet

Odsjek za anglistku

Katedra za metodiku

Affective Profiles of Vocational School EFL Learners

Diplomski rad

Student: Tamara Kolar

Mentor: dr. sc. Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović, red. prof.

Zagreb, lipanj 2014.

University of Zagreb

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English

TEFL Section

AFFECTIVE PROFILES OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS

Graduation Thesis

Student: Tamara Kolar

Supervisor: Professor Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović, Ph.D.

Zagreb, June 2014

Examining Committee:

Assistant Professor Renata Geld, Ph.D.

Professor Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović, Ph.D.

Stela Letica Krevelj, M.A.

Table of Contents

Abstract

Individual differences (IDs) research belongs to a field of language study that deals with cognitive and affective variables which determine each person's characteristics. In this paper the focus will be strictly on affective variables: language anxiety, motivation and attitudes. Firstly, we will define these concepts and describe important findings and theories concerning each of them. This theoretical groundwork clarifies the importance of these concepts in shaping affective profiles of every language learner. The study that we conducted was aimed at describing affective profiles of vocational school EFL learners. The sample included 117 learners from a smaller urban/rural school, attending three and four-year vocational programs. The participants' filled out a questionnaire measuring their motivation, attitudes and language anxiety regarding English language learning. The results show relatively high motivation, positive attitudes toward English language and low language anxiety. Some relevant correlations between certain affective profile elements are also presented, suggesting important interrelationships and interconnectedness between them. In the end, we offer some suggestions for further research, which might be based on the present research study.

Keywords: individual differences, affective profile, motivation, attitudes, language anxiety

Affective Profiles of Vocational School EFL Learners

1. Individual differences

In order to understand human nature and its characteristics, psychology has always been trying to describe our mind in general, but also to distinguish all of its specific and unique differences, explains Dörnyei (2005). As he suggests, each of us possesses unique characteristics which represent our individual differences (p.1). IDs are related to social sciences in the way that they explain human behavior, which tends to change and vary, but IDs are as important in the field of education (Dörnyei, 2005). Dörnyei points out that the main issue is to apply these variables in the field of L2 study. Additionally, he also wanted to connect the research on IDs to the field of applied linguistics, which could, in his opinion, explain some crucial second language acquisition (SLA) processes.

So, ever since 1960s the study of L2 focused on IDs, dealing with issues of motivation and language aptitude (Dörnyei, 2005). Further on, this field of research started to expand and get more closely involved with other elements that explained students' success in learning a language (e.g., language learning strategies). In order to fully and more easily understand the concept of IDs, its categories or fields had to be established; Dörnyei (2005) mentions some possible categories offered by different researchers. For instance, *The International Society for the Study of Individual Differences* includes the following concepts in the list of IDs: temperament, intelligence, attitudes and abilities, while Cooper (2002) lists abilities, personality, mood and motivation (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.7). Dörnyei (2005) notices that IDs in general cover some basic variables, while others are "optional" (p.7). Therefore, for the sake of better understanding the concept of IDs, Dörnyei chose personality, ability/aptitude and motivation as main variables of the foreign language learner profile, together with personality and learning strategies. However, among "other Learner

Characteristics" he lists anxiety, self-esteem, creativity and willingness to communicate (WTC) and learner beliefs (Dörnyei, 2005, p.8)

Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) divided IDs into cognitive (intelligence, language aptitude, strategies) and affective (attitudes, motivation and anxiety). Cognitive variables in a given formal context help transmitting the subject material, while affective variables cause a student's reaction, writes Mihaljević Djigunović (1998). According to Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) affective variables are specific characteristics which have emotional basis and which determine how one reacts in a given situation and context. As Mihaljević Djigunović (1998) mentions, the study of affective variables was influenced by the belief that cognitive variables are not the only ones that have impact on the learning process. In fact, Stern (1983) claims that affective variables might even have a more influential role than cognitive variables. Moreover, Schumann (1976) points out that affective factors are those that impact cognitive factors, which could not exist without affective variables (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 1998).

2. Affective variables

Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) discuss how ID variables can affect L2 learning. They focused on attitudes, motivation, language anxiety and self-confidence in order to see how these are related to language learning. Therefore, they used Gardner's socio-educational model (Figure 1), that is, its revised version. They pointed out that social and cultural background prevail in every part of the model (p. 7). First of all, there are antecedent factors (biological and experiential), which should be considered in any research of IDs (factors such as age or gender). Based on the representation of the model, Gardner and MacIntyre explain relations and connections between variables. Attitudes have impact on motivation, while motivation affects language anxiety (negative correlation), and there are correlations between

anxiety and motivation with learning strategies as well. In addition to that, language

acquisition contexts can be formal and informal. All the variables, except attitudes, influence

learning in the formal context. Other variables have indirect connection to informal context,

while motivation is directly linked to it. There are linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes,

which are directly influenced by formal and informal contexts. In other words, teacher,

syllabus etc. will all determine what is acquired and what a student's behavior will be like.

Finally, linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes affect IDs variables.
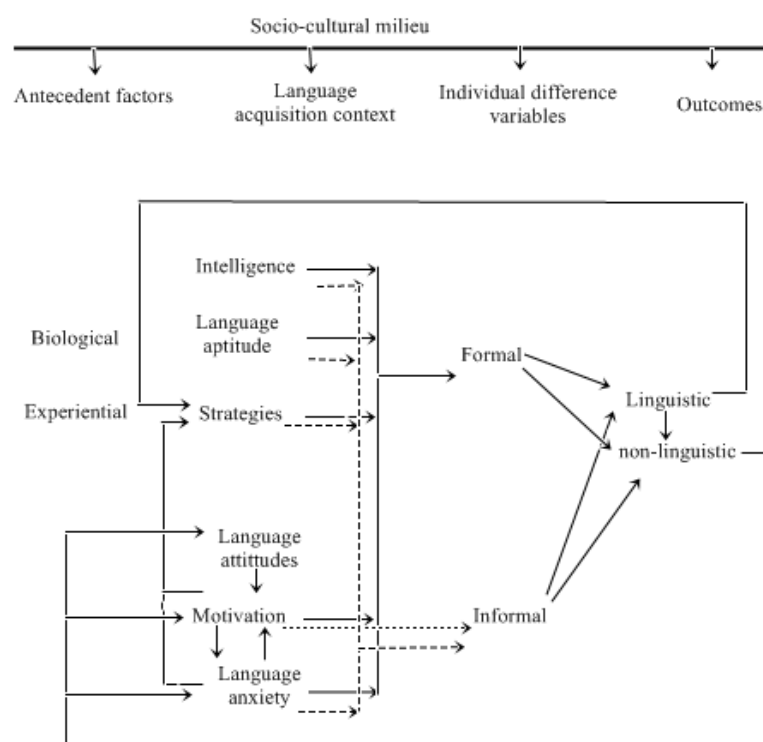
Figure 1. Representation of the Socio-Educational model (R. C. Gardner and P. D. MacIntyre, 1993, p. 8)

One of the research studies in the field of affective profiles of Croatian learners of

English was conducted by Mihaljević Djigunović (2007). The participants were primary and

secondary school EFL learners (2, 137 participants). The aim was to determine the connection

between affective variables and communicative competence in English, and importance of affective characteristics in predicting achievement in language classes.

The results showed highly positive affective profiles. As far as gender is concerned, a more positive profile was noticed with female students. Also, learners in city schools had a more positive affective profile than those from rural areas, probably because those from urban parts had more opportunities to encounter English, which lead to greater motivation, explains Mihaljević Djigunović. Secondary schools were categorized into 3 groups: grammar schools; catering/economics/medical and electrical engineering/vocational-art etc. In addition to that, the results showed that the most positive profiles were found among grammar school learners and the least positive with the learners from catering/economics/medical schools. Another factor that was connected to the positive affective profile was the use of the Internet. It was concluded that secondary school students often used the Internet, which motivated their language learning and lowered language anxiety. Another conclusion was that affective profiles can reliably be used to predict success of Croatian English learners. Finally, in the open question part, the students pointed out positive and negative sides of English language classes. Some of the aspects they liked were the communicative approach to teaching, possibility of expressing one's opinions, interesting and cooperative activities, etc., whereas negative sides were traditional teaching methods, not enough communicative tasks, a lot of grammar tests. As far as the syllabus is concerned, the students mentioned that cultural parts were interesting, but uninteresting parts were boring detailed texts, and grammar drills. Concerning teaching materials, there was no criticism, and both primary and secondary school learners welcome the use of extra teaching materials. Another relevant element that had either positive or negative impact on learners was the teacher. It was showed that primary school learners focus more on teachers' personality, while secondary school students regard teachers' teaching competence as more relevant. (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2007, p.124).

2.1 Motivation and attitudes

2.1.1 Motivation

Motivation is, explains Dörnyei (2005), the driving force of the L2 learning process. It has to exist before learning starts in order to stimulate the learner, but it also has to continue over time to enable the learner to keep up with the learning process. Motivation is known to be closely connected with other factors in second language acquisition, showing different correlations among them. For example, learners with great ability might not have enough motivation and therefore, their language learning process will not be successful and they might not reach their full potential in acquiring a new language.

Dörnyei (2005) divides the research of the second language motivation into three periods: the social psychological, the cognitive-situated and process-oriented periods. The most influential researcher in the social psychological period was Robert Gardner, who based his findings on the research of English and French communities in Canada. Since different communities coexist, their culture together with their languages, interconnect. Thus, Gardner and Lambert (1972) believed that motivation is the most important factor in learning a language of another community since it can help these communities in establishing communication and getting connected (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.67). They pointed out that in the context of foreign language learning there are various elements that might have impact on the process of language acquisition. Attitudes toward language, cultural stereotypes and geopolitical factors all have influence on the learning of a foreign language, which makes it different from any other subject in school.

Gardner (2001) offered the socio-educational model of second language acquisition in order to show the interconnectedness of IDs and achievement (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.68). In this model, Gardner explains integrative motivation, which consists of three parts: integrativeness (interest in and attitude to a language and the L2 community), attitudes toward

the learning situation (toward the teacher and the language class) and motivation (attitudes to learning L2). Even though this theory has been used and accepted by L2 researchers, there is a different interpretation which differs from the original. It is because of a somewhat confusing use of the concept *integrative* (it is used at three different levels – integrative motivation, integrativeness and integrative motive/motivation). Dörnyei (2005) finds it difficult to explain whether the author of the model was talking about the overall L2 motivation, integrative motivation or motivation which is a part of integrative motivation (p.69). That is why another interpretation of the original theory focuses only on two dimensions of motivation: *an interpersonal/affective* and *a practical/utilitarian dimension.* The first dimension refers to integrative orientation or integrative motivation, while the second is instrumental orientation/motivation, which is connected to certain practical outcomes of knowing the language.

Another main figure from the social psychological period was Richard Clément. Together with other researchers, he was mostly interested in the concept of self-confidence but related to the field of motivation research. Self-confidence is explained as one's self-assurance about achieving one's desired outcomes and fulfilling task objectives successfully (Dörnyei, 2005, p.73). Clément (1980) believed that the contact between two communities that live together influence linguistic self-confidence, which can have great impact on learning this other community's language; hence it makes the concept socially influenced (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.73)

Further on, the Cognitive-Situated period was characterized by important findings from the field of psychology and those were mainly focused on cognitive concepts. Motivational psychologists believed that motivation is significantly influenced by people's previous successes and opinions about their own weaknesses and capabilities (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 74). One of the most important theories in motivational psychology is *self-determination*

theory, developed by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002), which deals with intrinsic and extrinsic motives (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.76). Kim Noels together with her colleagues Pelletier and Vallerand carried out research related to self-determination theory (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.76). Based on their findings Noels (2001) concluded that integrative orientation is connected to self-determined forms of motivation (intrinsic motivation) and instrumental orientation to external regulation. After that, Noels (2003) divided the concept of motivation into three distinct parts: intrinsic reasons (determine if language learning offers some challenge, if it is interesting to get involved with), extrinsic reasons (instrumental orientation, internal and external motives), integrative reasons (contact with the L2 group) (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 77)

The next important motivation theory from this period is *attribution theory.* As Weiner (1992) explains, our attitudes toward our future activities will be based on whatever we believe the cause was of our prior successful or unsuccessful performance (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 79). Ushioda based her findings on attribution theory (1996, 1998, 2001) and came to the conclusion that positive motivation is based on two "attributional patterns": positive results are attributed to internal factors and personal ability, while negative ones are the result of some kind of non-permanent weakness which can easily be dealt with (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 80).

Since the L2 learning process is in itself very complex, researchers have been using tasks, as Dörnyei (2005) explains, to make the research more easily comprehensible by making the tasks the fundamental parts in the process of L2 learning (p.80). Thus, Dörnyei introduced a *dynamic task processing system* to explain that a range of different motivation related attitudes are actually influenced by a task itself (p. 80). The dynamic task processing system includes three levels: *task execution* (learner's learning behavior), *appraisal* (accomplishing the goal while taking into account external factors that influence the learner,

processing the input from the outside world) and *action control* (regulating the learning process).

The final stage of motivation research is the process-oriented period starting from the 1990s. Dörnyei mentions how it is crucial to take into consideration that motivation itself is dynamic and that is why it is important to use a process-oriented approach, which explains the relationship between motivation and learner's behavior in the classroom (Dörnyei, 2005). Taking the dynamics of the motivation concept into account, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) introduced a new model of L2 motivation (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.84). They divided it into three phases: *Preactional stage* – motivation is generated to determine certain goals, *actional stage* – learner needs to remain undisturbed, so their motivation needs to be kept throughout the learning process or classroom activities, postactional stage – in this phase one looks back to the previous experience and analyzes the process that might influence any future activities.

Generally speaking, motivation has always been seen in a positive light as stimulation in foreign language learning. However, Dörnyei (2001) notices that practical experience from the classroom shows also the opposite - there are negative stimuli coming from the surroundings, as well (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.90). Ushioda (2003) says that demotivation appears when the learner's motivation is being greatly and negatively influenced by external factors. It is often the case that motivation of a group transforms into various negative attitudes and behaviors in the classroom (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.90).

In their research study, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) suggest expanding the motivation construct. They based their work on Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model and they wanted to study how motivational factors from the model relate to other variables

from the field of psychology. They introduce two different constructs: *motivational behavior* and *motivational antecedents*.

Motivational behavior refers to the behavior that others can notice, while motivational antecedents are variables which only individuals can notice in themselves. Therefore, motivational antecedents are those variables that cannot be observed from the outside by anyone else because they work on the cognitive and affective level of an individual (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Motivational antecedents are *expectancy, self-efficacy, valence, causal attributions* and *goal setting*. Expectancy, together with self-efficacy, is important for the forming of motivational behavior. People tend to have certain expectations about events and in this way they connect it to positive outcomes that might come as a result of a certain behavior (possible rewards), claims Bandura (1991). So, motivation increases with greater expectancy about the result of a certain behavior (as cited in Tremblay & Gardner, 1995, p. 507). Closely related to expectancy is self-efficacy, suggests Bandura (1989). It refers to a learner's own attitude that he or she is capable of accomplishing a certain goal. Valence is seen as willingness to performing the task and interest in it (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995, p. 508). In other words, learners must see the importance of their performance, or otherwise their motivation level would decrease, state Oxford and Shearin (1994, p.508). As for causal attributions, there are internal (e.g., ability and effort) and external attributions (e.g., luck, task difficulty). Therefore, ability attributions are related to self-efficacy, claims Bandura (1991). Increased level of self-efficacy is related to connection between one's success and ability, while decreased level of self-efficacy points out to connection between one's failure and incapability (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995, p. 508). Further on, goal setting is related to goal setting theory, as introduced by Locke & Latham (1990), which explains that those who are determined to reach a specific, demanding goal would do better than those who have easier goals; hence, people who are working toward a specific goal would keep on working on a task

for a longer period of time (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Tremblay and Gardner offered two measures (Goal Specificity and Goal Frequency), so they could see if more specific goals have any connection with high motivation. Goal Specificity refers to students' precise goals, and Frequency to the degree of determining their objectives, and these two measures both correlate in the construct of Goal Salience.

2.1.2 Attitudes

Attitude is defined as one's personal impressions or beliefs about anything including people or concepts (*Merriam-Webster: Online Dictionary and Thesaurus*). In the field of language learning, attitudes are the basis of motivation, and since they belong to the socio-psychological field, attitudes tend to change according to the whole socio-cultural context, writes Mihaljević Djigunović (1998, p. 21). According to Rajecki (1990) there are three elements of attitude: affective, behavioral and cognitive (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 1998). The affective part refers to our evaluation of subject by deciding whether it is positive or negative. The behavioral aspect is the intention of taking action or not, while the cognitive part refers to all the information concerning the subject matter, which determines our opinions about it. It is possible that one has negative attitudes to language learning, which causes lack of motivation. However, if there is some intervention on the cognitive level, we are able to influence the change of emotions at the affective level. If a student with negative attitudes is given the right information about using the right learning strategies or about improving motivation, there could be some change in attitudes at an affective and, also, behavioral level. As Rajecki (1990) explains, there is a relationship among these components of attitude because one will lead to changes in the next one, and so on (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 1998, pp. 21-22).

Mihaljević Djigunović (1998) points out that recently there has been more interest in dealing with students' attitudes toward learning. It is because of the awareness about the importance of students' attitudes and also because there are few findings concerning the nature of attitudes. For example, Mihaljević (1991) mentions that it has already been proven that if a learner's attitudes to or beliefs about learning do not match the approaches in class, due to this "conflict of interest", the learner will face difficulty in maintaining motivation (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 1998, p. 22).

In their research on attitudes and motivation Lambert and Gardner (1972) differentiate three categories of attitudes, which actually refer to students' motivation. First, there are attitudes to the community and the people whose language is being acquired, and these attitudes are formed before the learning process begins. The second group includes attitudes toward the language learning class, toward learning the language and the teacher, formed during the process of learning. Finally, the last category refers to general attitudes and interest in foreign language learning (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 1998, p. 22).

As far as measurement of the mentioned variables (motivation and attitudes) is concerned, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) point out the efforts by Gardner, Smythe and others to construct a systematic and trustworthy instrument. In 1981 Gardner and Smythe showed the results from the beginning version of *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (AMTB). In the end, the final AMTB was developed to measure several concepts: *Motivation* (desire, motivational intensity, attitude toward learning the language), *Integrativeness* (includes three measures – attitudes toward the target language group, interest in foreign languages, integrative orientation), *Attitudes toward the learning situation* (evaluation of the language teacher, evaluation of the language course), *Language anxiety* (language class anxiety, language use anxiety) and *other attributes* (instrumental orientation, parental encouragement, orientation index. Furthermore, it is shown that the instrument measures motivation and

behavior influenced by it. So, it improves the legitimacy of the instrument in foretelling the results of the learning process, Dörnyei (2005) points out (p. 73).

One of the research studies concerning motivation in Croatian learners of English was made by Miščančuk (2010). She wanted to find out how much the students of two Croatian universities were motivated for learning English and what the cause of the lack of motivation was. One of the factors relevant for students' motivation are the points that students' are given when they attend classes, which in the end enables passing the exam and affects the final grade. It is all a part of extrinsic motivation, points out Miščančuk. However, if the students do not show interest in acquiring a new language and working on it, even if they attend classes, it implies the lack of intrinsic motivation. It is important to recognize the cause of the lack of motivation in order to help students to become more motivated and involved in language classes.

Final results of the research showed a high level of motivation (points 4 and 5 on the Likert scale were chosen by 64.09% students), and 8.53% chose either point 1 or 2. In the second part of the questionnaire, the participants had to choose the cause of their lack of motivation .The largest percentage of students chose 'uninteresting topics', 'uninteresting working methods', and also, interestingly, some believed the syllabus is too easy. The latter reason is mostly the case with computer sciences students, because they do not find the language too difficult, since English is prevalent in this field of work. Few students chose uninteresting textbooks and materials as the reason of low motivation, which is connected to the importance of the use of either general or vocational language (for specific purposes).

2.2 Anxiety

Anxiety, one of the affective variables, is known to significantly affect any language learning process. As Arnold and Brown (1999) explain, anxiety is the most influential

variable by which the learning process is most likely to be impeded (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 198). Dörnyei notices that anxiety is a complex construct and it often raises some questions on its nature and what it really represents: an emotion, a part of the motivation construct or a personality trait. He mentions two basic anxiety categorizations. Firstly, there is *beneficial/facilitating anxiety* (it positively influences performance), as opposed to *inhibitory/debilitating anxiety* (it negatively influences performance). The second category is *trait vs. state anxiety*. On the one hand, trait anxiety is one's permanent characteristic, or in other words, one tends to become anxious in various situations. State anxiety, on the other hand, means becoming anxious in a particular situation, on a certain occasion. Foreign language learning is in itself a process which provokes anxiety, as many theorists such as Curran (1976) and Stevick (1980) have observed, write Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). Guiora claims that it is a matter of displeasing implications at a psychological level (as cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 125).

Concerning positive or negative effects of anxiety, Eysenck (1979) describes consequences of anxiety in cognitive processes as being likely to be detrimental to the value of achievement, while an individual's performance is affected by the issue of having divided attention (as cited in MacIntyre, 1995, pp. 91-92). Eysenck (1979) actually suggests that learners affected by anxiety will show more effort in order to counteract the higher level of cognitive difficulty (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 92). MacIntyre points out that Eysenck's idea is a good explanation of how anxiety and ability affect task performance and is close to the explanation offered by Yerkes-Dodson Law (Figure 2), explained in Smith, Sarason & Sarason (1982). It shows the relation between anxiety and performance. If a task is not difficult, anxiety does not have much negative influence, or the performance itself might even become better. But if the task difficulty grows, anxiety has negative influence (as cited in MacIntyre, 1995, p.92).
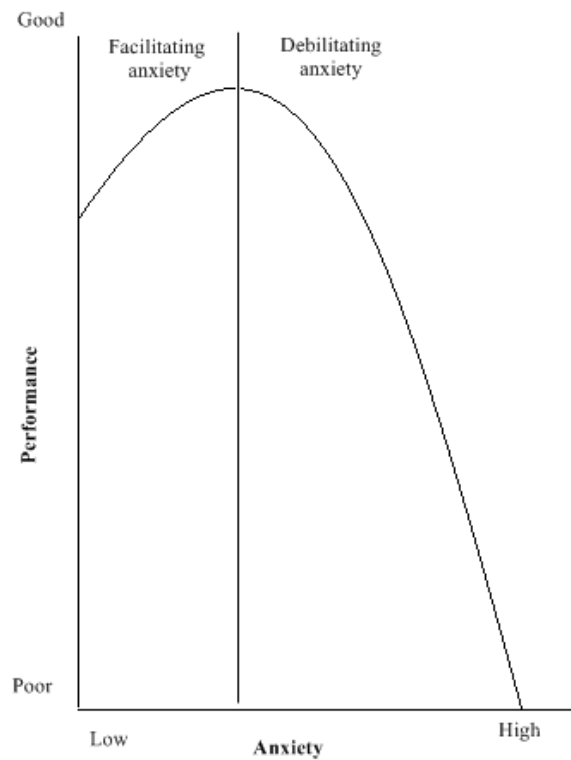
Figure 2. 'U' relation between anxiety and performance (P. D. MacIntyre, 1995, p. 92)

Leary, (1990) and Levitt (1980) point out the recursive or cyclical nature of correlation between anxiety, cognition and behavior (as cited in MacIntyre, 1995 p.92). This means that if a person has to perform a task in the class, he or she starts feeling anxious, whereby cognitive performance is negatively influenced, which again leads to worse performance, affecting self-perception in a bad way, which again causes problems in performance (Figure 3).
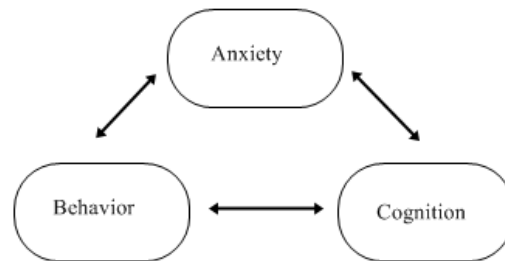
Figure 3. Recursive relations between anxiety, cognition and behavior (P. D. MacIntyre, 1995, p. 93)

The basis of this explanation is a distinction between state and trait anxiety, state anxiety representing instantaneous reaction, and trait anxiety, as Spielberger (1983) explains, a general tendency toward anxiety (as cited in MacIntyre, 1995, p.93).

Taking into consideration anxiety which appears in specific situations, Horwitz et al. (1986) focused on anxiety in the language learning context. Therefore, they introduced the concept of *foreign language anxiety.* In order to measure foreign language anxiety, an instrument called FLCAS (Foreign language classroom anxiety scale) was used (Dörnyei, 2005, p.199). Horowitz (2001) pointed out that foreign language anxiety was an independent construct, which exists on its own without being influenced by other factors such as communication apprehension (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 199). MacIntyre (1999, 2001) also supported this view, explaining in his research that language anxiety is its own right, non-related to other types or anxiety in general (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 200).

The question of how language anxiety develops was tackled by Gardner and MacIntyre (1993). Their idea is that state anxiety, if repeated over time, might eventually impede learning of the language in the future. In other words, multiple negative experiences, build up to permanent language anxiety. However, there are two opposing sides in explaining

the development and appearance of language anxiety. On the one hand, there is the opinion

that at the beginning of learning a foreign language, language anxiety is at the lowest level

because nothing negative has happened yet. A research study that supports and proved this

claim was carried out by Chapelle and Roberts (1986). On the other hand, some believe that

language anxiety becomes less prominent with more competence gained. For instance,

Gardner, Smythe and Brunet (1977) proved that greatest anxiety could be noticed at the very

beginning of the language course (as cited in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, p.6)

2.2.1 Listening anxiety

Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) explains the concept of language anxiety by dividing it

into three categories: *listening anxiety, reading anxiety and writing anxiety.* Listening anxiety

refers to reception anxiety, which Wheelees (1975) describes as a fear about not being able to

fully understand, or adapt to messages or information sent from others (as cited in Mihaljević

Djigunović, 2002). Some researchers such as Daniels and Whitman (1970) and Roberts

(1986) connect this type of anxiety to low ability of recalling information during the listening

process. Roberts even claims that a low level of excitement can have beneficial effect on

listening, while too much or too little of it has a negative effect (as cited in Mihaljević

Djigunović, 2002). There are a few explanations of listening anxiety. It can be seen as anxiety

in a situation when one encounters new information, believe Wheeless and Scott (1976), or as

anxiety about processing of information. The third explanation is that listening anxiety is

common among people who do not possess enough prior knowledge to analyze information,

so the anxiety about not understanding the received message (as cited in Mihaljević

Djigunović, 2002). Preiss et al. (1995) in one of their research studies observed that anxiety

was determined by different factors such as situation, speakers, topics or the surroundings.

They established that the level of anxiety was connected to the complexity of the message and

the ability to process the information, and that anxiety appears when one cannot understand an

input because they have difficulty with adapting or accepting it. Wheeless et al (1997) point out the affective, cognitive and behavioral level of the message reception process. So, frustration stems from difficulties with processing and reception of information (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Generally speaking, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) points out that individuals who experience reception anxiety use up some of their cognitive ability on anxiety, which leads to problems with processing the information, which again causes anxiety, and so on.

2.2.2 Reading anxiety

Saito et al. (1999) noticed that reading in a foreign language can also cause anxiety (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). They explain two reasons why this occurs. Firstly, anxiety can appear due to the different way of writing letters and due to the new system of writing (e.g. sometimes letters and sounds do not match). Secondly, one has to be familiar with particular cultural aspects of the foreign language in order to be fully capable to understand a text (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). Mihaljević Djigunović points out that until recently there has not been much research dedicated to this type of anxiety. Berg (1993) found that anxiety in beginners classes was caused by reading in a foreign language (in French), and with advanced students reading anxiety came from insufficient knowledge at a cultural level. Saito et al. (1999) did a research study with students whose native language was English and who learned three languages (French, Russian and Japanese). It was shown that anxiety changed with different foreign languages and it was caused by different system of writing and the perception of reading difficulty in that language (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). There is no definite agreement on whether reading anxiety is a cause or consequence of difficulties in reading in the native language. On the one hand, some claim that general language anxiety leads to reading difficulties. Sparks and Ganschow (1991) found that students with an increased level of general language anxiety had more issues with reading

comprehension. On the other hand, reading anxiety is likely to be caused by objective difficulties with understanding a text. This theory is supported by Saito et al. (1999), who believe that reading anxiety interferes in the process of decoding and comprehension of meaning (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

2.2.3 Writing anxiety

This type of anxiety has always been noticed by teachers in classrooms but those observations were not systematic and also behavior of students can be easily misinterpreted, states Mihaljević Djigunović (2002). For this reason, many worked on research of the phenomenon and providing the right instrument to measure it. Daly and Miller (1975), who are particularly important in this area, introduced the instrument SLWAT (*Second Language Writing Apprehension Test*). They noticed that learners with writing anxiety usually avoid situations in which they are required to perform in a written form, they do not hand in homework on time, etc., (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). It was also shown by Miller and Daly (1975) that anxious learners use a less complex and expressive writing style. They also came to the conclusion that students with greater writing apprehension write less, they describe their previous experience in writing in a foreign language more negatively than the less anxious students (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002). It is crucial, Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) emphasizes, that in order to help students to overcome writing apprehension, they have to be taught certain strategies, and not forced to write, which could only backfire, Brooks and Platz (1968) noticed the same about communication apprehension (as cited in Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002).

2.2.4 Sources of anxiety

It is worthwhile to mention three performance anxieties (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p.127), or sources of language anxiety, as Mihaljević Djigunović (2002) calls them.

These include *communication apprehension*, *test anxiety* and *fear of negative evaluation*. Communication apprehension implies a kind of anxiety in the situations where one must interact with others. It refers to problems that appear when a person has to speak in public or even in small groups. This anxiety stems from one's belief that he or she will not be able to express himself/herself and will not be able to comprehend other speakers (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986 p.127). In addition, it is pointed out by McCroskey (1977) that communication apprehension relies greatly on interpersonal interactions (as cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 127). Test anxiety appears in situations when a learner is afraid to fail, explain Gordon and Sarason (1955) and Sarason (1980) (as cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p.127). Students expect too much from themselves, or strive only for excellent results, which puts great pressure on them. Watson and Friend (1986) describe fear of negative evaluation as a worry caused by negative thoughts about what others will think about us and our performance (as cited in Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 128) in any situation from test writing to using language in the classroom. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) believe that foreign language anxiety is not only a construct made up of these anxieties that are simply used in the context of foreign language learning. Instead they describe foreign language anxiety as a construct involving one's self- awareness and different emotions regarding the language classroom, which implies the particularity of the language learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 128).

2.2.5 Managing language anxiety

The key of coping with language anxiety is first of all, as Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) point out, that the teacher has to be aware of the fact that language anxiety can greatly influence a student's performance and take this into consideration before concluding that a student lacks ability or is not motivated. Therefore, in order to help students affected by anxiety teachers should either teach them how to successfully deal with anxiety in a particular

situation, or they can try and make the learning environment relaxing and pleasant, stress

Horwitz et al. (1986). In addition, they say that it is important to emphasize that the effects of

anxiety are not only limited to the school context and that the anxiety can have long-term

effects on an individual. Because of that, one might be influenced by anxiety in the choices of

attending certain classes and even choosing one's future job (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope,

1986).

Foss and Reitzel (1988) used Spitzberg and Cupach's (1984) relational model of

communication competence to offer practical strategies to manage language anxiety. It is

important to point out that foreign language anxiety is not the same as communication anxiety

in general (Foss & Reitzel, 1988), but it is a concept, as Horwitz et al. (1986) say, that is

comprised of different attitudes and emotions, affected by the specific nature of the language

learning process (as cited in Foss & Reitzel, 1988, p. 438). The relational competence model

was constructed by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984). They say that competence is not an

essential part of the individual, but rather one's opinion about oneself and others (as cited in

Foss & Reitzel, 1988, p. 441). For Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) it is crucial to take into

consideration the relationship between the speakers in a communicative situation. In other

words, an interlocutor is judged as competent by others interacting in the same conversation.

The model focuses on the entire communicative situation, or on a context in which interaction

occurs, making it relevant for the study of anxiety in a foreign language class. This is why

Foss and Reitzel (1988) chose this model as a basis for suggesting strategies to deal with

anxiety in the classroom. The relational model of competence consists of five levels:

motivation, knowledge, skills, criteria outcomes and context. Motivation is seen by Spitzberg

and Cupach (1984) as a way of reacting in or withdrawing from communication situation (as

cited in Foss & Reitzel, 1988, p. 442). It refers to one's choice to voluntarily participate or not

in a communication situation. A learner's opinions and attitudes toward the L2 culture might

also have great impact on motivation. As Dodd (1982) explains, people who learn a foreign language often decide to have a negative attitude toward the L2 culture or language, it seems as if one defies or refuses to learn the language all due to culture shock (as cited in Foss & Reitzel, 1988, p. 443). Knowledge, the second part of the relational model, refers to knowing in what way to communicate in a certain context. For a learner, this refers to the acquisition of a foreign language, a process which is often accompanied with anxiety in dealing with the second language. Skills are connected to the knowledge previously mentioned. They refer to skills to use the language to communicate, regardless of motivation or theoretical knowledge. Further on, Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) suggested a few outcomes that determine communication competence: communication satisfaction (how pleased a person is with communication), relational trust (mutual positive feelings between interlocutors), interpersonal attraction (a person seems more pleasant when others find it easier to talk to them). The last part of the model is context. It refers to both objective and subjective opinions about the surroundings. However, Spitzberg and Cupach (1984, p. 444) point out that a learner's own perceptions about the context seem to prevail over the general context, i.e. the culture of the foreign language. It means that eventually, with experience, a person's attitudes toward the culture are likely to change. Based on these components of the relational model, Foss and Reitzel (1988) offered several strategies for dealing with anxiety. For each of the five mentioned parts, they suggest practical solutions, exercises and activities which might help in coping with language anxiety in the classroom. For example, regarding motivation they offer rational *emotive therapy* and *anxiety graph*, for dealing with outcomes they suggest keeping *daily journals* and regarding context their idea is to work with *case studies* or do a *cultural artifact exercise.*

Concerning language anxiety research in Croatia, in one of her research studies Mihaljević Djigunović (2005) wanted to determine the correlation between language anxiety

and other variables such as trait anxiety, communication apprehension, language use anxiety, willingness to communicate, second language achievement and self-assessment of second language skill. The results showed important correlations between language use anxiety, communication apprehension (positive correlation) and trait anxiety (negative correlation). Positive and unexpected correlations were found between language use anxiety and both English achievement and self-assessment. The correlation between trait and language use anxiety was negative, which cannot be easily explained. The author connects this with another unexpected correlation: positive correlation between achievement and language use anxiety. In other words, successful English students are likely to control their language use and observe their own understanding of language, so they actually have big expectations about their own performance, which might make them more anxious while using a language (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2002, p. 208).

The results of the study also showed that the students are quite competent in assessing their own skills. For example, correlation between English achievement and self-assessment was significant at 0.01 level, just like correlation between language use anxiety and self-assessment. It showed that the hypothesis that learners with increased language use anxiety will likely have low self-assessment could be rejected. Finally, the correlation between language use anxiety and willingness to communicate was not significant. In fact, the results did not confirm the hypothesis that people with language use anxiety would not be willing to communicate. The author finds an explanation for this finding in positive connection between language use anxiety and communication apprehension, seen as either a cause or consequence of unwillingness to communicate.

3. The study

3.1 Aim

The aim of this study was to analyze affective profiles of Croatian vocational school EFL learners. This study shows the students' self-assessment of their motivation to learn English and their self- assessment of English language competence in comparison to other students in class. In addition, the study aimed at discovering what, in the learners' opinion, achieving success in English learning really depends on. Moreover, the study shows if the students think English is difficult to learn or not. Finally, the research will offer insights into the learners' attitudes to English classes, what they like and dislike, and what causes the most problems in their English learning.

3.2 Sample

There were 117 vocational school participants in total. Sixty - five of them were attending three-year programs (motor vehicle driver, auto mechanic, and mechanic streams) and 52 were in four-year program (economics stream). The sample included 44 female learners and 73 male learners. The learners were attending the first, second or third grade. In this study, however, we did not analyze the results according to the program duration (or grade), or compare the programs, but we looked at the overall sample. All the participants come from a smaller town where they attend school, or from nearby villages, so this is a non-urban, rural area.

3.3 Procedure

The instrument that was used was a two-part questionnaire[1]. At the very beginning the participants had to state their gender and English language grade from the end of the previous

---

[1] Mihaljević Djigunović, J. (2007) Croatian EFL learners' affective profile, aspirations and attitudes to English classes. *Metodika*, *14*, 115-126.

school year (the first grade students had to write the final grade from the eighth grade in primary school). The first part included four sections. The first section included 14 statements referring to motivation, foreign language anxiety and attitudes. The participants had to determine their level of agreement with the statements, choosing a point on a five-point Likert scale (point 5 - always true, point 1 - not true at all). In the second section, the participants had to rank (1 - most important, 5 - the least important) five elements, which they regard as important in affecting the success in learning a foreign language. The third section was self-assessment of motivation to learn English (on a scale from 1 to 5, point 5 being the highest motivation). Finally, in the fourth section of the first part, the learners had to assess their knowledge of English compared to other students in the language class (*less than others, equal, more than others*). The second part of the questionnaire contained three open questions concerning their attitudes to English language classes. The students had to write what they liked and disliked the most in their English language classes and what the most difficult element was for them to learn in English. The initial question in this part was whether English is difficult to learn (*yes* or *no*). The survey was conducted during English classes, and the questionnaire was in Croatian.

3.4 Results and discussion

The descriptive analysis shows mean values for each of the 14 statements (see Appendix) from the first part (Table 1).

Table 1

Mean values on the learners' affective profile statements

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
s1	117	1	5	3.79	1.216
s2	117	1	5	1.69	1.070
s3	117	1	5	4.08	1.001

s4	117	1	5	3.79	1.121
s5	117	1	5	3.50	1.557
s6	117	1	5	1.92	1.084
s7	117	1	5	2.19	1.319
s8	117	1	5	3.57	1.255
s9	117	1	5	3.32	1.407
s10	117	1	5	2.14	1.245
s11	117	1	5	2.86	1.370
s12	117	1	5	2.21	1.195
s13	117	1	5	2.43	1.341
s14	117	1	5	2.23	1.241
Valid N	117				

The highest mean value was found for the third statement (4.08), and the lowest for the second (1.69). These 14 statements describe learners' attitudes to English language, attitudes to English classes, attitudes to English language culture/native speakers, attitudes to English language learning, self-perception concerning language learning, language anxiety and motivation,

Statement 13 (*I am afraid of verbal examination in English classes)* describes language anxiety, that is, speaking anxiety. It implies the fear of being exposed in English language classes while performing a speaking activity (e.g., oral exam). It causes the feeling of embarrassment due to possible failure and negative evaluation from the class or the teacher. The mean value 2.43 shows that language anxiety is relatively low in this sample of students. If we look at the connection between this item and item number 3 (learners' assessment of their own motivation), we notice a moderate negative correlation (R = -.334), significant at the 0.001 level. So, it shows that those with higher language anxiety will most likely describe their motivation to learn English as being somewhat low.

Items 1 (*I like English language)* and 11 (*In my spare time, I like to deal with English language)* refer to attitudes to English language. The mean values show average and a little above average levels of agreement (3.79 for item 1 and 2.86 for item 11). This suggests that attitudes to English are relatively positive and overall average, not extremely negative or positive. The correlation between scores on these two statements (R = .406, significant at 0.01 level) is strong and positive, which is expected; those who like English will probably gladly get involved with English and English related activities in everyday life and in their free time.

Attitudes to the language class can be seen through item 6 (I *find English language classes incredibly boring),* but also through item 14 (*The textbooks we use to learn English are bad*) because the material used in class may influence students' attitudes to the whole learning context, in this case language class. The mean value for item 6 is low (M = 1.92) and for item 14 is somewhat higher (M = 2.23). These two statements show lower below average levels of agreement, which means that attitudes are actually fairly positive. So, the participants believe English classes are quite interesting, and textbooks are seen as not being too bad. The explanation for this may lie in the fact that the teacher makes the classes so interesting and fun, that the students might even overlook possible negative sides of their English textbooks or not pay attention to the textbooks at all.

Further on, there are two items that are connected to learners' attitudes toward the English language culture and speakers of English. In other words, this can be seen as a representation of participants' integrative motivation. Statements 4 (*I am interested in people who speak English)* and 5 (*I am interested in movies and pop-music in English*) demonstrate the students' attitudes to English speaking people and their culture. The mean values are 3.79 for statement 4 and 3.5 for statement 5. So, the attitudes toward the English culture and English native speakers are positive and average. Both items show strong positive correlations with question related to self-assessment of motivation, and correlation between each other:

correlation between item 4 and motivation is .590 (significant at 0.01 level), and between item 5 and motivation is .459 (significant at 0.01 level), while correlation between statements 4 and 5 is also strong (R = .649).

As far as the learners' attitudes to learning English and self-perception is concerned, the mean values for statements 8 (*I easily learn English)* and 12 (*While learning English, I often fail)* show that the students generally have positive outlook about their English learning experience. Additionally, statements 7 (*I do not have an ear for languages, I am hopeless at learning a language*), 9 (*I need more will and make more of an effort to be more successful)* and 10 (*No matter how much I study, I cannot achieve better results*) also point out to the learners' English learning experience (attitudes to language learning), and to their self-perception as language learners. The mean values are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Mean values on terms concerning attitudes to language learning and learners' self-perception

statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
8	117	1	5	3.57	1.255
9	117	1	5	3.32	1.407
12	117	1	5	2.21	1.195
7	117	1	5	2.19	1.319
10	117	1	5	2.14	1.245
Valid N	117				

Statement 7 could be a relevant indicator of the learners' self-confidence, which is in this sample quite high. Item 9 points to the learners' self- awareness about whether they need

to work harder in order to become more successful in learning English. In our sample, the mean value shows a slightly above average level of agreement. In other words, the students are mostly aware that they need to apply themselves more in language learning, if they want to be more successful. Similarly to this, statement 10 indicates the learners' self-perception and self-confidence about achieving better results. It can be noticed that the students expressed a low level of agreement with this statement. Thus, they either believe they are studying enough and they are accordingly achieving good results, or they are actually aware that they are not trying enough and the results objectively show that.

Both items 7 and 9 are significantly correlated with item 12. Correlation between 7 and 12 (R = .587), as expected, indicates a strong positive relationship: the more learners believe they are not good at language learning (low self-confidence), the more problems they will come across in language learning. However, from this relationship we cannot know whether a learner's self-perception is objective (due to their actual lack of competence in language learning) or rather the result of low self-confidence, which impedes language learning. Further on, correlation between 9 and 12 (R = .394) is moderate, indicating that those who are less successful in learning a language, seem to be aware of the fact that they need to work harder to achieve better results.

Finally, statement 2 (*The knowledge of English is useless to me)* represents instrumental motivation, concerning the learners' opinion about the concrete use of English and awareness about actual benefits from knowing it. In this case the mean value (M = 1.69) is very low, meaning that the participants are highly aware of the fact that knowing English is extremely important to them. Table 3 shows strong positive correlations between this item and items 6, 7 and 10. The conclusion is that those who are not motivated to learn English because they find it useless, will most probably have more negative attitudes to English

language classes (item 6) and their self-perception will lead to more negative attitudes toward

their own capabilities (items 7 and 10).

Table 3

Correlations between items 2, 6, 7, 10

	statement	2	6	7	10
2	Pearson Correlation	1	,663[**]	,603[**]	,420[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000

The item with the highest mean value in this sample (M = 4.08) was the one

concerning the learners' parents' beliefs about knowing English (statement 3 – *My parents*

believe it is important for me to know English). In other words, the learners' parents are

highly aware of the importance of English language, and it could be the source of the

students' motivation to learn English. Moderate to strong correlations are shown between this

item and items 1, 4 and 5 concerning attitudes to English language and attitudes to the English

language culture and English speakers (Table 4). It could be concluded that parents'

awareness of the importance of English and their positive attitudes might have influenced and

stimulated the learners to start liking English in general, and to get interested in its culture and

the speakers. The correlation between items 3 and 2 (*The knowledge of English is useless to*

me) is, not surprisingly, negative: the more parents regard English as very important, the less

likely the students will believe knowing English is useless. However, this correlation is rather

weak (R = -.235), meaning that parents' opinions will not have a very strong influence on

determining the learners' beliefs about actual usefulness of knowing English. This may be due

to the fact that these students, since they are attending a vocational school, have already

determined what is important for their future job, and they might be aware about whether they will make good use of English or it is completely unnecessary to them.

Table 4

Correlations between items 3 and items 1, 2, 4 and 5

Statement	1	2	4	5
3 Pearson correlation	.382	-.235	.414	.379
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000

In the second section of part one of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to rank (1 being the most important, 5 being the least important) five elements based on their influence on success in English language learning. The elements were: *teacher's quality, learner's motivation, foreign language difficulty, learner's talent, textbook quality.* There were 86 valid and 31 missing responses. We believe the students, in spite of detailed explanations and guidelines on how to fill in the questionnaire, did not fully comprehend the method of doing this task. Thus, there are 26.5% missing responses in this task.

As the most important factor, putting it in the first place, that determines the success in English learning, the participants chose the quality of the teacher (38.4%) followed by the learner's motivation (Figure 4). The last place or the least important (fifth place) was the quality of the textbook chosen by 58.1% of the learners (Figure 5).

The most important element in achieving succes in English language learning
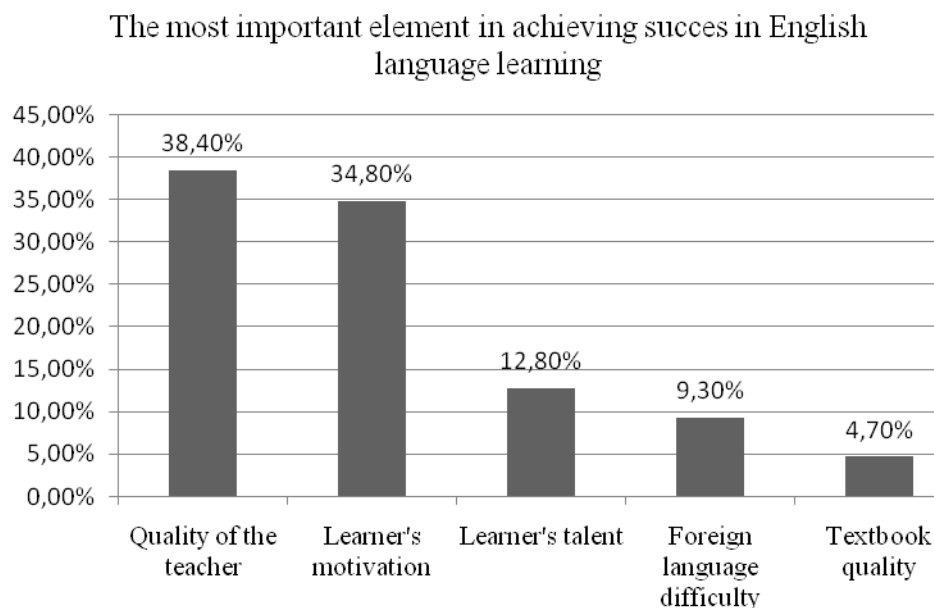
Figure 4. Elements selected as the most important for success in learning English

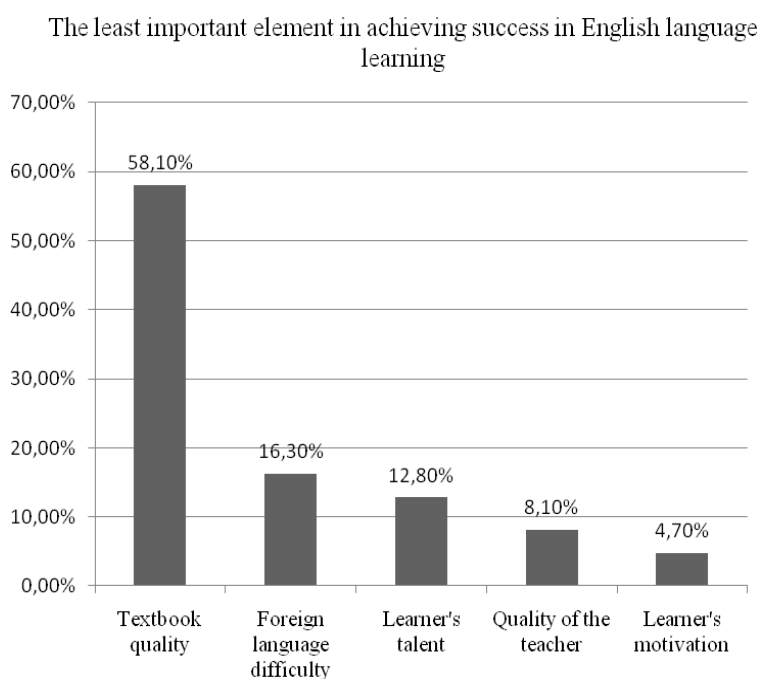The least important element in achieving success in English language learning

Figure 5. Elements selected as the least important for success in learning English

The third item reveals the participants' motivation: *Estimate your motivation to learn English on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high).* The mean value was 3.68, which is relatively high. For the male participants the mean value was 3.58 and for female participants 3.86, i.e. only slightly higher. The percentages of all the given points are presented in Figure 6.
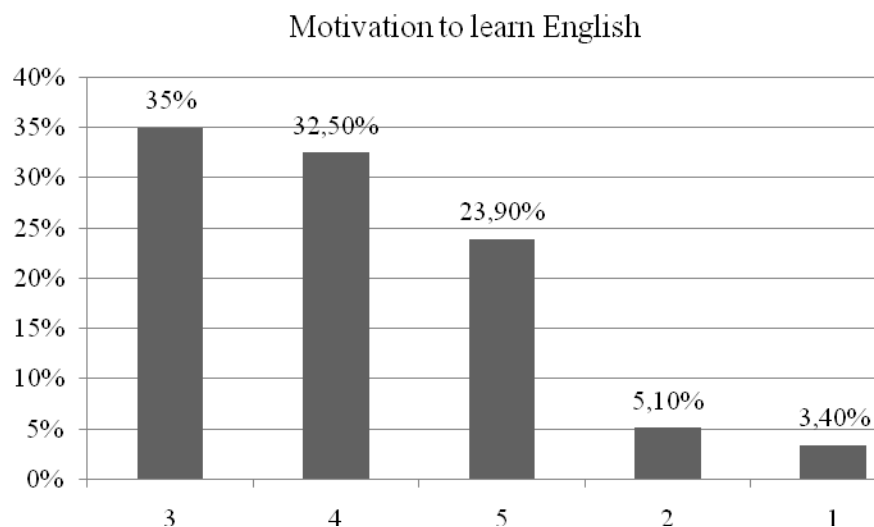
Figure 6. Self-assessment of motivation level

The last question in the first part of the questionnaire was self-assessment of English knowledge as compared to the rest of the students in the class: *Estimate your own knowledge of English compared to the rest of the class (less, equal or more).* More than a half of participants (58.1%) believe their knowledge of English language is equal to the rest of the class. If we look at the female and male participants separately, more female participants believe their knowledge is equal to the rest of the class (61.4%), while 56.2% male learners believe their knowledge to be equal (Table 5). In the whole sample 23.9% assessed their knowledge as being greater than everyone else's and 17.9% believe they have less knowledge than the rest of the class (Figure 7).

Table 5

English knowledge estimation, comparison between male and female students

	Male	Female
less	16.4%	20.5%

equal	56.2%	61.4%
more	27.4%	18.2%

Your knowledge of English compared to others from in class
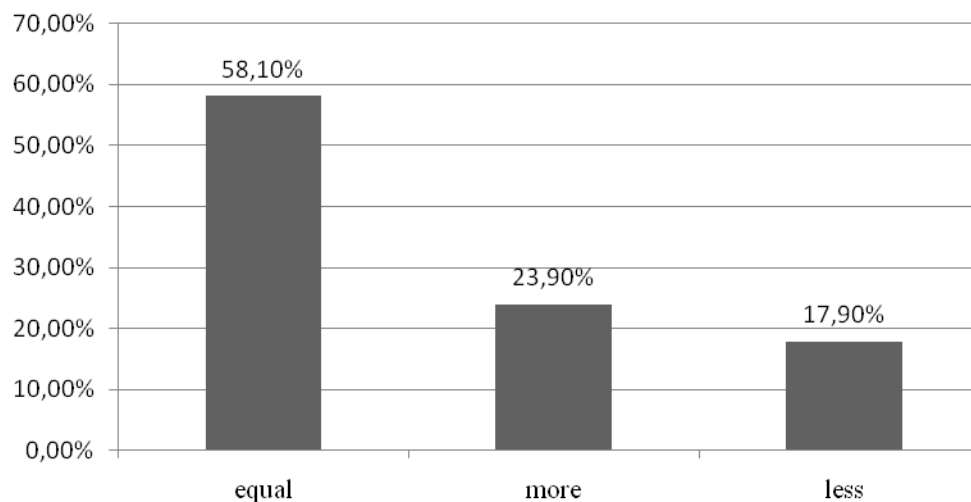
Figure 7. Self-assessment of knowledge of English, as compared to the entire class.

Concerning the attitudes to English language, more specifically its difficulty (Part 2, first question - *Is English difficult to learn?),* 76.9% participants answered *No*, it is not difficult to learn, while 23.1% answered *Yes* (Figure 8). A considerable difference was found between the male and female learners: English was considered not difficult to learn by 81.8% female and by 74% male students, while 18.2% female and 26% male participants said English is difficult to learn.
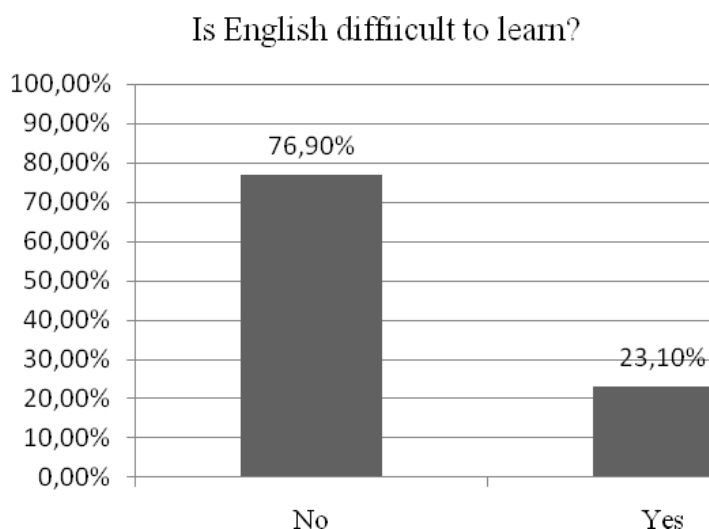
Figure 8. Difficulty of English language (whole sample).

Finally, we would like to point to some correlations between the students' English

grades and the factors that define their affective profiles. First of all, there are strong positive

correlations (Table 6) between English grades, levels of motivation and several affective

profile factors. Mostly, the correlations show that with better grades, the students' motivation

and interest in English culture (statements 4 and 5) are higher, and their attitudes to language

learning (statement 8) and attitudes to English language (statements 1 and 11) become more

positive.

Table 6

Correlations between the learners' English grades, motivation and affective profile factors

		grade	Statement 1	4	5	8	11	Motivation
grade	Pearson	1	.546	.497	.448	.630	.490	.557
	Correlation	107	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		107	107	107	107	107	107
	N							

Strong negative correlations were found between English grades and the learners' language anxiety, attitudes to learning English and their self-perception (Table 7). It shows that as the grades are higher, language anxiety is lower (statement 13). Consequently, this self-esteem (decreased language anxiety) might be the reason why the learners' self-perception is more positive with better grades (statement 7) and attitude to learning English less negative (statement 12).

Table 7. *Correlations between the learners' English grades and affective profile factors*

		grade	Statement 7	12	13
grade	Pearson Correlation	1	-.423	-.446	-.493
	Sig. (2-tailed)	107	.000	.000	.000
	N		107	107	107

In the final part of the questionnaire the participants were asked to briefly describe what they like and dislike in their English classes and to state what is it that they find the most difficult in learning English. Since these were open ended questions, we will include some of the most common learners' answers.

The first open ended question referred to what the students find most difficult in learning English: *What is the most difficult for you to master in English?* The most common answers were *grammar* and *verb tenses*. The majority of the students wrote that they disliked learning grammar, elements such as verb tenses and verbs (irregular verbs). Another element that seems to be problematic is learning new words, so *acquiring new vocabulary,* which may consist of difficult items to learn. Few students mentioned that *retelling* and *reading* a text, or

even *speaking in class* is what causes problems for them. Also, some learners point out problems with *spelling* and *pronunciation*. Pronunciation might be the source of their speaking anxiety, since they might get worried about not being able to speak as well as they would like to and about being judged by the classmates or the teacher. Nine participants actually did not answer the question, while four said *everything is difficult*, and seven said *everything is easy* (*nothing is difficult*). Some of the possible reasons for this might be insufficient prior knowledge, or some students might even believe they are simply not talented for languages.

In the following question the participants were asked to write about favorite aspects in their language classes: *What do you like the most in English classes?* Thirteen students simply wrote that they like *everything*, while seven stated they *do not like anything*, and 11 did not answer. However, a great number of the learners wrote that what they liked the most is their teacher. They point out the teacher's behavior and positive attitude toward them and the way they work in class (e.g., *group work, mutual cooperation*). The teacher is described as communicative, fun, but also very helpful because they adapted the classroom activities for those who need more help with the language. Generally speaking, they like the teacher's way of approaching the lessons and making them more relatable to everyone. The learners enjoy talking to the teacher in class, listening to stories to which they can all relate and participating in class discussions. The teacher's method of work seems to be very stimulating for the learners because in this way lessons seem to be easier and less challenging. So, consequently, the participants mention as their favorite part of their English classes learning about new things and cultures through games and fun activities. Some participants mention that they actually like the way in which the teacher grades them (they are given 'pluses' and 'minuses' for a certain task done in class). It is motivating and less stressful, because in this way they can get better grades without overwhelming pressure. A few students also wrote that they

prefer doing audio tasks in class (recordings from the CD player) because it is a preparation for their *matura state exams.*

The last question was meant to show what the participants did not like in their English classes: *What do you dislike the most in English classes (What would you like to change)?* Eighteen students did not answer, while a considerable number said they would not change anything. Once again, similar to the answers in the first question, many students pointed out that they disliked grammar and that there is too much of grammar (*boring grammar).* Additionally, the reason for dissatisfaction was too many tests and too much work in general (*the program/syllabus is too difficult, the syllabus is not connected to the vocational program*). However, the answers to this question showed that there is not one common, prevailing answer, which would show overall attitude among all the students (like in the first open-type question). The lack of suggestions about what to change in class or saying that nothing should be changed might mean that the students rather talk about the positive aspects of their English language classes, and not about the negative sides. In other words, the positive experiences are easier to describe and remember. Finally, it might even mean that the students are indifferent about the class, that is, they have learnt to deal with the situation in class as it is, and do not have any opinions or ideas about improving their classroom experience.

4. Conclusions and suggestions for further study

Analyzing the results from this research study, we have come to conclusions that help us describe affective profiles of vocational school EFL learners. First of all, we have seen that language anxiety is relatively low, which implies that the students in our sample seem to be quite self-confident about their language speaking abilities in English classes. Their attitudes are mostly described as positive: positive attitudes to learning English, to English language itself and to English culture (movies, music) and English speakers. Generally speaking, quite

positive attitudes to language classes, along with relatively high motivation to learn English, seem to be connected to the positive and influential role of the teacher. In our sample, the participants often mention their English teacher and the teacher's attitudes toward them in a positive way. They are highly aware of the fact that the teacher is very important in making the class and the topics more interesting and easier to learn. This is why the learners become more motivated in English classes – they are encouraged by their teacher. Therefore, it is not surprising that the students chose the quality of the teacher and learners' motivation as the most influential factors that determine greater achievement in English. English is regarded as being easy to learn by the vast majority of the students. It may be due to the fact they use it in everyday life and they are constantly surrounded by English through media, the Internet, video games, etc. In estimating their knowledge of English, it was shown that most of the learners believe their knowledge is the same as that of the rest of the class, while there is actually a considerable percentage (23.9%) of those who believe their knowledge is better than the other students'. We believe this percentage shows a relatively positive self-perception of language learners, and also high self-confidence in this sample of English learners. Motivation to learn English is shown to be quite high. It might not be only due to the fact that the learners like English in general and find it easy to learn, but because they are highly aware that today it is crucial to know English and that the language will be useful in their future (e.g. better career opportunities).

Finally, we would like to point out that this research study may serve as a good basis for further research in this field of IDs. For example, a possible follow-up study might focus on determining more specifically the reasons for motivation and demotivation among individuals to learn English. Also, examining certain types of language anxiety should be included in the research, in order to determine exactly in which situations participants experience language anxiety. Comparing affective profiles of vocational and grammar school

EFL learners would make an interesting comparative study. Additionally, we believe it would be interesting to compare vocational school learners with regard to the location – and carry out a comparative study of affective profiles of learners from urban and rural vocational schools. Lastly, in a possible follow-up study, it would be interesting to incorporate the factors of the teacher's experiences. It would be interesting to compare, for example, the teachers' motivation for working with vocational and grammar school learners, since the focus of the present study was strictly on experiences and affective profiles of vocational school learners.

To conclude, focusing on IDs, or more specifically, on affective profiles, is a vast and important part of language learning research. It provides insight into language learning processes and processes that shape each individual's affective and cognitive profiles. Hopefully, this research study has presented some interesting results concerning affective profiles of vocational school EFL learners. Even though the sample was not very big and the school in question is a small urban school, we believe the findings are significant and will provide a good foundation for further study of affective profiles of vocational school learners.

References

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Gardner, R.C. & MacIntyre, P.D. (1993). A student's contribution to second-language learning.Part II:Affective variables. *Language Teaching, 26,* (1)*,* 1-11

Foss, K.A. & Reitzel, A.C. (1988). A Relational Model for Managing Second Language Anxiety. *TESOL Quarterly ,22* (3), 437-454. Retrieved from JSTOR database

Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz M.B., & Cope J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 70* (2), 125-132. Retrieved from JSTOR database

MacIntyre, P.D. (1995). How does Anxiety Affect Second Language Learning? A Reply to Sparks and Ganschow. *The Modern Language Journal, 79,* (1), 90-99. Retrieved from JSTOR database

Attitude. (2014). In *Merriam-Webster: online dictionary and thesaurus.* Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attitude

Mihaljević Djigunović, J. (1998). *Uloga afektivnih faktora u učenju stranoga jezika.* Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu

Mihaljević Djigunović, J. (2002). *Strah od stranoga jezika: kako nastaje, kako se očituje i kako ga se osloboditi.* Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak.

Mihaljević Djigunović, J. (2007). Croatian EFL Learners' Affective Profile, Aspirations and Attitudes to English classes. *Metodika, 8* (1), 115-126. Retrieved from Hrčak Portal znanstvenih časopisa Republike Hrvatske

Miščančuk, M. (2010). Motivacija studenata za učenje engleskog jezika. *Zbornik radova Međimurskog veleučilišta u Čakovcu, 1* (2), 57-62. Retrieved from Hrčak Portal znanstvenih časopisa Republike Hrvatske

Mihaljević Djigunović, J. (2006). Beyond Language Anxiety. *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabiensia* (49), 201-212

Tremblay, P.F. & Gardner, R.C. (1995). Expanding the Motivation Construct in Language

    Learning. *The Modern Language Journal, 79,* (4), 505-518. Retrieved from JSTOR

    database

Appendix

UPITNIK O UČENJU ENGLESKOG JEZIKA

Spol:

Ocjena iz engleskog jezika na kraju prošle školske godine:

I DIO

1. Molimo te da pažljivo pročitaš sljedeće tvrdnje u vezi s učenjem engleskog jezika i zaokružiš odgovarajući broj (od 1 do 5) prema tome koliko se svaka tvrdnja odnosi na tebe**.** *Ovdje nema točnih i netočnih odgovora!*

neistinito, uopće nije tako 1	uglavnom neistinito, često nije tako 2	nisam siguran, ne mogu se odlučiti 3	uglavnom istinito, često je tako 4	istinito, uvijek je tako 5

1. Jako mi se sviđa engleski jezik. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Znanje engleskog jezika za mene je beskorisno. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Moji roditelji smatraju važnim da znam engleski jezik. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Zanimaju me ljudi koji govore engleski jezik. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Zanimaju me filmovi i pop glazba na engleskom jeziku. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Sati engleskog jezika neizmjerno su mi dosadni. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Nemam osjećaj za jezik, beznadni sam slučaj za učenje jezika. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Lako učim engleski jezik. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Trebalo bi mi više truda i volje da budem uspješniji/uspješnija. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Kolikogod učio/učila, ne mogu postići bolje rezultate. 1 2 3 4 5
11. U svoje slobodno vrijeme rado se bavim engleskim jezikom. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Tijekom učenja engleskog jezika često doživim neuspjeh. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Na satima engleskog jezika bojim se usmenog odgovaranja. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Udžbenici po kojima učimo engleski loši su. 1 2 3 4 5

2. O čemu, po tvom mišljenju, najviše ovisi uspjeh u učenju stranog jezika u školi (označi važnost ponuđenih odgovora brojkom od 1 do 5: 1 = najvažniji, 5 = najmanje važan).

__ kvaliteti nastavnika
__ motivaciji učenika
__ težini stranog jezika
__ talentu učenika
__ kvaliteti udžbenika

3. Procijeni svoju motivaciju za učenje engleskog jezika na skali od 1 do 5.

niska 1 2 3 4 5 visoka

4. Procijeni svoje znanje engleskog jezika u odnosu na većinu učenika u svom razredu.

manje od njih   jednako   veće od njih

II DIO

U ovom dijelu upitniku zanima nas zašto voliš ili ne voliš učiti engleski jezik te što misliš o učenju stranih jezika.

Ovdje nema točnih i netočnih odgovora! Zanima nas isključivo tvoje osobno mišljenje.

1. Da li ti je engleski jezik težak za učenje?   DA   NE

 2. Što ti je najteže svladati u engleskom jeziku?

3. Što ti se najviše sviđa na satima engleskog jezika?

4. Što ti se najviše ne sviđa na satima engleskog jezika? (Što bi ti promijenio/promijenila u nastavi engleskog jezika?)

Sažetak

Područje istraživanja jezika koje se bavi proučavanjem kognitivnih i afektivnih faktora jest područje individualnih razlika. Ovaj rad se bavi afektivnim varijablama: strah od jezika, motivacija i stavovi. Prije svega smo definirali ove pojmove zbog stjecanja teorijskog uvida u ovo područje individualnih razlika Naše istraživanje je provedeno na uzorku od 117 učenika strukovne škole. Ispitanici su ispunili upitnik koji mjeri afektivne elemente poput straha od jezika, samo-percepcije učenika, motivacije, stavova prema satovima engleskog. Rezultati pokazuju dobru motivaciju i pozitivne stavove, te nisku razinu straha od jezika. Također su prikazane značajne korelacije između određenih elemenata afektivnih profila. Na kraju smo ponudili ideje za daljna istraživanja afektivnih profila, koja bi se mogla temeljiti na ovome istraživanju.

Ključne riječi: individualne razlike, afektivni profil, motivacija, stavovi, strah od jezika