

Measuring Self-Perceptions of Oral Narrative Competencies and Anxiety in the EFL Context

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Abstract

Introduction. Due to a considerable lack in empirical efforts and appropriate instruments, and theoretically rooted in a cognitive-motivational perspective on academic personality development, the present study analyzes a questionnaire for measuring EFL learners' self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies and perceived anxiety concerning oral narrative classroom situations.

Method. In a sample of $N = 256$ German ninth-graders from 9 inner-city grammar schools this newly developed instrument was administered along with related self-belief and performance measures and, for the purpose of discriminant validation, also with matched measures in the native language German.

Results. Principal components analysis led to the formation of two subscales measuring perceived competency and anxiety. Both subscales provided psychometrically sufficient and valid data. Especially, structural equation modeling analyses evidenced the L2 self-perceptions of oral narrative competence and anxiety to be considerably stronger related to English than to German belief and performance variables. The relations between L2 and L1 constructs mainly turned out to draw a domain-specific pattern. Additional analyses of variance could verify significant gender differences in the anxiety scores indicating that female learners tended to report a higher degree of anxiety concerning oral narrative classroom situations. Furthermore, self-perceptions of narrative competencies could be clearly differentiated from the overall English self-concept variable.

Discussion. The results could confirm the multidimensional and task-specific feature of academic self-beliefs in the EFL context. Accordingly, both measurement scales might serve as research instruments for further analyses of EFL learners' cognitive-motivational orientations in a specific competence area of oral language use.

Keywords: Self-concept, anxiety, oral narrative competencies, English as a foreign language, gender differences, measurement scales, secondary educational track

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Medición de la auto-percepción de competencias narrativas orales y la ansiedad en el contexto EFL

Resumen

Introducción. Debido a una falta considerable en los esfuerzos empíricos e instrumentos apropiados y teóricamente arraigado en una perspectiva cognitivo-motivacional de la personalidad académica del logro, el estudio pretendió validar un cuestionario para la medición del aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, en cuanto a la auto-percepción de competencias narrativas orales, la ansiedad percibida en situaciones de expresión oral.

Método. Participaron un total de 256 alumnos de noveno grado de alemán de 9 centros urbanos. Este instrumento desarrollado recientemente se administró junto con otras pruebas de autoconfianza, rendimiento académico, con el propósito de realizar un análisis discriminante.

Resultados. Análisis de componentes principales dio lugar a la formación de dos subescalas que miden la competencia percibida y la ansiedad. Ambas subescalas han proporcionado un valor psicométrico suficiente. Especialmente, las estructuras de ecuación estructural del modelo, ha puesto de manifiesto que la auto-percepción de competencia oral en situaciones narrativas de la segunda lengua L2 y la relación con ansiedad pueden estar más fuertemente relacionados en el inglés de lo que se cree. Las relaciones entre L2 y L1 construidas, principalmente, volvieron a tener un dominio de relación específico. Análisis adicionales de varianza verificaron que el género puede diferenciar en las puntuaciones de ansiedad, indicando que los estudiantes de género femenino reportaron un alto nivel de ansiedad, en situaciones orales de interacción en el aula. Además, la auto-percepción en la narración oral en inglés, aparecía como diferencial de la otra lengua.

Discusión. Los resultados confirmaron la tarea multidimensional y específica de las auto-percepciones y creencias en el contexto de EFL. En consecuencia, las dos escalas de medida podrían servir como instrumentos de investigación para los análisis posteriores de los procesos cognitivo-motivacionales de los alumnos en contextos EFL, como orientaciones en un determinado campo de competencia lingüística oral.

Palabras clave: autoconcepto, ansiedad, competencias narrativas orales, inglés como lengua extranjera, generación de las diferencias, escalas de medición, seguimiento educativo.

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Introduction

In past decades, foreign language research had presented a considerable abundance of findings with regard to learner personality that elucidate the significance of motivational and emotional characteristics in foreign language learning. In particular, the learners' individual beliefs about the nature of language, language acquisition and language proficiency are assumed to crucially determine their motivational orientations and emotional responses (Barcelos, 2003; Buehl & Alexander, 2009; Dörnyei, 2005; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005). These beliefs will be mentally represented as domain-specific schemata and regulate foreign language learners' activities and behaviors.

For a long time, particular attention was paid to the integrative and instrumental motivation for acquiring English as a second (L2) or foreign language (EFL), respectively (Gardner, 2005, 2007; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). However, these social-educational studies could reflect the construct of the learner personality only aspectively, at best, and, with regard to its relevance for explaining individual differences in foreign language achievement, only to a limited degree. That way, L2 research had conceptually focused more on the question of "why" than on the question of "how", having largely ignored or not consistently exhausted the descriptive and explanatory potential of cognitive-motivational constructs. In the meantime, in a temporal overlap with this social-educational research line, and not least on the background of its intensively discussed need for differentiation and extension (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Gabillon, 2005; Oxford & Shearin, 1994), various approaches more closely grounded on distinct motivational concepts, and that, with the explicit intention of conceptually expanding and specifying previous research perspectives more precisely, also increasingly referred to cognitive-motivational constructs for the analysis of the L2 learners' personality.

As a theoretically and methodologically important contribution to refine the construct of L2 learners' motivation, several approaches considered it being multidimensional and multifaceted in nature. In particular, Clément's model of second language learning included a self-confidence variable which was thought to subsume various aspects of language anxiety and perceived language proficiency (Clément & Kruidenier, 1985). In several studies, this construct appeared to be well supported. However, its relations to foreign language proficiency were mostly low to moderate in magnitude and for a considerable part mediated by an affective and attitudinal motivation variable (Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997; Pae, 2008). Though theoretically closely associated and empirically represented by one common factor,

the use of a composite self-confidence variable could have masked processually relevant differences among constructs. Consequently, the study of Gardner, Masgoret & Tremblay (1999) analyzed both the self-perceptions of language proficiency and language use anxiety separately and revealed more differentiated findings.

Furthermore, Dörnyei (Dörnyei, 1998, 2009; Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998) suggested a comprehensive framework for the motivational self-system of L2 learners in which individual competence and control beliefs are assigned to operate as relevant cognitive-motivational variables. Following the volitional Rubikon model devised by Heckhausen, Kuhl, and Gollwitzer (Heckhausen, 1991) this approach hypothesizes the action-regulating role of successive motivational stages. They are substantially affected by the learners' retrospective, actual, and prospective self-perceptions. At all actional stages, their self-beliefs are assumed to play an important role to direct the process of language learning either favorably or unfavorably – as they, in particular, influence the learners' initial goal setting and intention formation, their subsequent intention enactment and executive behaviors as well as the final evaluation of outcomes. Basically comparable process models in which the motivational processes are configured as a sequence of action-related stages are also presented by Julkunen (2001), Riemer (2006) and Hiromori (2009).

As another reconceptualization of EFL learners' motivational orientations, Dörnyei (2009) had proposed to differentiate the self-construct into an ideal and an ought-to self. According to the discrepancy theory of Higgins (1987), the ideal self is assumed to focus on the learners' more distant perspectives on the personal value of language learning and thus will promote their individual learning approach – whereas the ought-to L2 self is assumed to focus on the learners' more proximal beliefs about desirable attributes and competencies to meet relevant learning requirements in a given educational setting and thus will seek to prevent negative outcomes. Although there was some empirical evidence for the motivational impact of the ideal self-component, the results appeared to be somewhat mixed and indicated the need for further exploration (Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Kormos & Csizér, 2008). Similarly, the empirical findings as more recently reported by Papi (2010) partly could lend some support to this approach.

From the perspective of self-determination theory (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991), the concept developed by Noels, on the other hand, primarily aims at clarifying the extrinsic versus intrinsic quality of L2 learner motivation whereby a decisive and responsible role for the development, support, and maintenance of self-regulated learning is ascribed to the educational setting. Only those settings will sustainably lead to an adequately motivated

and successful dealing with foreign language learning requirements that meet the learners' individual needs for competence, autonomy, and social relatedness. Empirical results lend support to this assumption. In particular, a higher degree of intrinsic motivation appeared to be associated with the more frequent use of elaborate learning strategies, higher degrees of self-confidence, and lower degrees of test anxiety (Bonney, Cortina, Smith-Darden & Fiori, 2008, McIntosh & Noels, 2004; Noels, Clément & Pelletier, 1999; Noels, Pelletier, Clément & Vallerand, 2003; Pae, 2008).

Finally, Williams and Burden (1997) had introduced a broadly conceived social constructivist approach for the detailed description and explanation of foreign learner motivation in which, at the level of individual factors, pertinent cognitive-motivational constructs are assigned crucial importance. These individual factors, such as learners' competence and control beliefs, are considered to be largely dependent on different proximal and distal context variables (such as instructional methods and the learning climate in the foreign language classroom as well as parental home and peer influences). Similar considerations can also be found in the L2 motivation model of Holder (2005) who also specifies the issue of achievement-related self-beliefs more precisely.

Directly and indirectly, these approaches to conceptualize the construct of learners' motivation in the L2 context all focus upon their individual competence and control beliefs (MacIntyre, MacMaster & Baker, 2001), whether these are motivational process variables or motivation-dependent consequences. Aside from some particular works (Hiromori, 2009; Holder, 2005), the structural and processual relevance of these variables for the L2 learners' motivation still needs empirical clarification. Altogether, consistent findings are still missing with regard to their structural and processual interrelations and their associations with relevant competence or proficiency variables (Faber, 2007).

Research on L2 learners' self-concept

In parallel, the issue of L2 motivation has also noticeably gained weight in the field of educational psychology. In the most current cognitive-motivational perspectives on academic learning, the formation and maintenance of L2 learners' motivation is substantially traced back to their (more cognitive) expectancies of own competence and control as well as on their (more instrumental or affective) task values (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). These academic self-beliefs are assumed to be of crucial importance for their learning behavior and their performance outcomes. In the process, academically beneficial expectancies and values lead, on a long-term basis, to rather more mastery-oriented behaviors; academically unfavorable expectancies lead to rather more helplessness-oriented behaviors.

tancies and values lead, on a long-term basis, to rather more failure-avoiding behaviors. Thus, various expectancy-value perspectives can be assigned to different cognitive-motivational constructs concerning the learners' perceptions of personal competence, control, and threat in a certain educational setting (Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser & Davis-Kean, 2006).

In particular, the competence and self-efficacy beliefs of L2 learners had been analyzed in detail. From the perspective of a multidimensional and multifaceted self-concept construct (Byrne, 1996; Marsh & O'Mara, 2008a) the domain-specific validity of academic self-concept measures could also be proven well for the perception of foreign language competencies, preferably in the EFL context. Across most different research sample characteristics and methodological designs, the L2 self-concept proved to be sufficiently distinguishable from the competence beliefs in other academic areas, including language subjects (Holder, 2005; Marsh, Kong & Hau, 2001; Möller, Strebblow, Pohlmann & Köller, 2006; Rost, Sparfeldt & Schilling, 2007). Furthermore, empirical findings could sufficiently separate L2 self-concept variables from other subject-specific facets of academic self-concept. They also could demonstrate them to correlate with various performance variables in a domain-specific manner (Marsh, Kong & Hau, 2001; Möller, Strebblow, Pohlmann & Köller, 2006; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 2000a; Rost, Sparfeldt & Schilling, 2007). As to that, there was clear evidence for distinguishing L2-related self-concept facets from related self-efficacy variables that represent the least aggregated, therefore the most concrete, level of task-specific competence and control beliefs (Bandura, 1997; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007). Nonetheless, a large part of previous L2 studies likewise had analyzed learners' academic self-perceptions in various aspects but used a rather wide array of construct conceptualization and operationalization modes. As these variables at least a posteriori may be interpreted as merely rough indicators of L2 learners' academic self-beliefs or self-concept, their relationships to relevant performance and proficiency measures turned out to be low to moderate in magnitude. Compared with the correlational findings of recent self-concept research (Möller, Pohlmann, Köller & Marsh, 2009), these results seemed to underestimate the relations between self and achievement variables – a fact that might be attributed to such methodological limitations as they may arise from biased study samples, lacking control of confounding variables, and the use of less differentiated composite scores or highly aggregated construct features (Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995).

Research on L2 learners' anxiety

Moreover, numerous studies had been able to prove substantial relations between L2 self-concepts and foreign anxiety variables. These findings could confirm once more the conceptual affinity and processual interdependence of both constructs, therefore also the domain-specific nature of foreign language anxiety (Faber, 2007; Goetz, Cronjaeger, Frenzel, Lüdtke & Hall, 2010; Marsh & Yeung, 1996; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Sparfeldt, Schilling, Rost, Stelzl & Peipert, 2005). In coping with foreign language demands, learners with low competence expectations commonly experience a higher degree of loss of control (Pekrun, 1992) and begin to foreseeably develop, with regard to the language learning critical to them, anxious worry and emotionality, which in turn can contribute to a longer-term stabilization of a sustainably unfavorable learning behavior (Horwitz, Tallon & Luo, 2010). L2 learners' perceived worry and emotionality related to foreign language learning could still be empirically separated from a general test anxiety variable (Horwitz, 2001). They only moderately correlated across different foreign languages and were associated with significantly lowered language outcomes (Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994, Ehrman, 1996; Gardner, 2007; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Rodriguez & Abreu, 2003; Sparfeldt, Schilling, Rost, Stelzl & Peipert, 2005). As predicted from a cognitive-motivational perspective, their relationships to subjective competence beliefs and general self-esteem characteristics appeared closer than to the actual performance scores (Bailey, Onwuegbuzie & Daley, 2000; Ehrman, 1996; Gardner, Masgoret & Tremblay, 1999; Kitano, 2001; MacIntyre, Noels & Clément, 1997; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan, 2002; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 1999, 2000b). Further research should advance in analyzing the motivational interplay of both the L2 self-concept and the foreign language anxiety variable in predicting the learners' engagement and proficiency level. As several studies dealing with the L2 learners' willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998; MacIntyre, MacMaster & Baker, 2001) could show, both constructs appeared to contribute to individually existing differences in everyday language use. However, the willingness to communicate in a foreign language could be substantially predicted by the learners' self-confidence and anxiety scores – indicating this construct to represent a causally subsequent composite which mediates the motivational consequences of competence and threat expectancies (Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1995). Further analyses should more strongly focus on the contribution of subject- or task-specific self and anxiety components to explain the learners' willingness to communicate, their learning engagement and their language proficiency.

Further differentiating L2 self-belief constructs

Altogether, it can be assumed that the relationships between self-concept, anxiety, and proficiency in the L2 context are not only formed in a domain- or subject-specific way but can, with respect to the corresponding foreign language, further be differentiated according to different task-specific components. Accordingly, the L2 self-concept construct could be differentiated with regard to distinct subcomponents referring to the perception of listening, speaking, reading, and writing performance (Holder, 2005; Laine, 1988; Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low, 1999; Mori, 2002; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009). As theoretically expected, similar results could be found with regard to L2 anxiety. Based upon the typical demands of foreign language instruction, L2 research had first and foremost examined the degree of emotional tension and fear of failure in L2-typical speech and communication situations (Brantmeier, 2005; Horwitz, 2001; Kim, 2009; McCroskey & Richmond, 1991; Subaşı, 2010; Williams & Andrade, 2008; Woodrow, 2006a; Young, 1986; Wilson, 2006) but could meanwhile also integrate the learners' fears of reading/writing or interpretation requirements into their analyses – and, thus, had also been able to empirically support this further differentiation of the construct (Cheng, 2002; Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert, 1999; Chiang, 2006; Cronjäger, 2007; Elkhafafi, 2005, Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2006, 2007; Park & Lee, 2005; Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999).

Self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies

With regard to this domain-specific and particularly more task-specific conceptualization of L2 learners' self-beliefs, certain research gaps still exist. For example, contrary to the curricular and practical relevance attributed to this field (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995; Gentile, 1996), no suitable instruments are available for the self-perceptions and anxiety of L2 learners concerning their oral narrative performance (Dörnyei, 2010). Besides a questionnaire for self-assessing oral narrative productions of younger schoolchildren in the L1 (Kaderavek, Gillam, Ukrainetz, Justice & Eisenberg, 2004) and the well-known FLOSEM matrix for estimating students' oral language skills (Padilla & Sung, 1999), all that can be found dealing with this issue is merely a self-efficacy scale with respect to the accomplishment of an oral (reproductive) narrative task that has been selectively implemented in the context of a communication strategy training (Rossiter, 2003). This fact must be all the more surprising as empirical findings almost point out that, in particular, the demands of oral language use are perceived by the learners as anxiety-generating and self-threatening moments in the EFL context (Awan, Azher, Anwar & Naz, 2010; Aydin, 2008; Brantmeyer, 2005; Dörnyei &

Kormos, 2000; Koch & Terrell, 1991; Mercer, 2011; Philipps, 1992; Tanveer, 2007).

Oral narrative competencies in the EFL context must be considered both an advancing language and social goal as well as an increasingly important medium of language instruction in the classroom. Producing appropriate oral narratives in the foreign language classroom requires a wide range of the learners' linguistic and non-linguistic skills (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995). In particular, they must have elementary language skills (such as pronunciation and vocabulary), conversational skills (such as cohesion and coherence), actional skills (such as expression of feeling and reporting relevant information), and strategic skills (such as self-monitoring and self-regulating behavior). In a narrow sense, EFL learners must intentionally use these competencies to produce successful oral narratives. In order to achieve an appropriate level of coherent storytelling, they need to actively leverage various linguistic, affective, cognitive and narrative tools – e.g. considering the causal sequence of the story told, offering adequate orientation clues to the audience, or evaluating the narrative content by means of affective markers as well as speaking fluently or pronouncing words correctly (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Padilla & Sung, 1999; Ruhm, 2009). Furthermore, the learners' oral narrative productions will be performed within a certain social setting and will therefore be publicly evaluated by the audience's attentiveness and feedback. Over time, EFL learners will experience their oral narratives being successful or failing and thus will develop specific self-beliefs. They will perceive themselves as more or less capable to tell stories, and they will evaluate the narrative situation as more or less threatening (Zeidner, 1998). Hence, EFL learners will gradually emerge self-relevant perceptions of their own narrative competencies and anxious expectancies – e.g. due to their individually existing worry to confound the causal ordering of narrative elements or their fear to pronounce incorrectly. These specific self-beliefs will, in turn, regulate their approach to narrative activities either in a more mastery-oriented or in a more failure-avoiding way. The knowledge of them will enable a certain EFL setting to individually tailor its educational feature to the motivational needs of both poor and good storytellers (Yazdanpanah, 2012).

Objectives of the present study

Due to this emphasized lack of appropriate empirical research on the issue of L2 learners' self-beliefs concerning their oral narrative competencies, the present study is a first attempt to develop and analyze a questionnaire for measuring the competence perceptions and anxieties concerning oral narrative situations in the EFL classroom. In the course of a broader

research project with regard to the characteristics and determinants of oral narrative competencies at the end of the secondary school level (Faber, 2009; Ruhm, 2009), the psychometric properties of this instrument should be clarified and its discriminant validity explored. For this purpose, as conceptually well established in the most current cognitive-motivational perspectives on academic learning, related self-concept measures (as a more cognitive expectancy component), task values (as a more affective component), and various achievement variables in the L2 were drawn on. To sufficiently clarify that with these measurements L2-specific (and not general academic achievement or language-related) construct operationalizations are actually existent, comparable self-concept and performance measures for the German subject were additionally considered. From this discriminant validation perspective, the subject-validity of the oral narrative competency and anxiety variables should be confirmed when their correlations with L2 constructs would turn out to be distinctly stronger than with the matched L1 constructs (Figure 1).

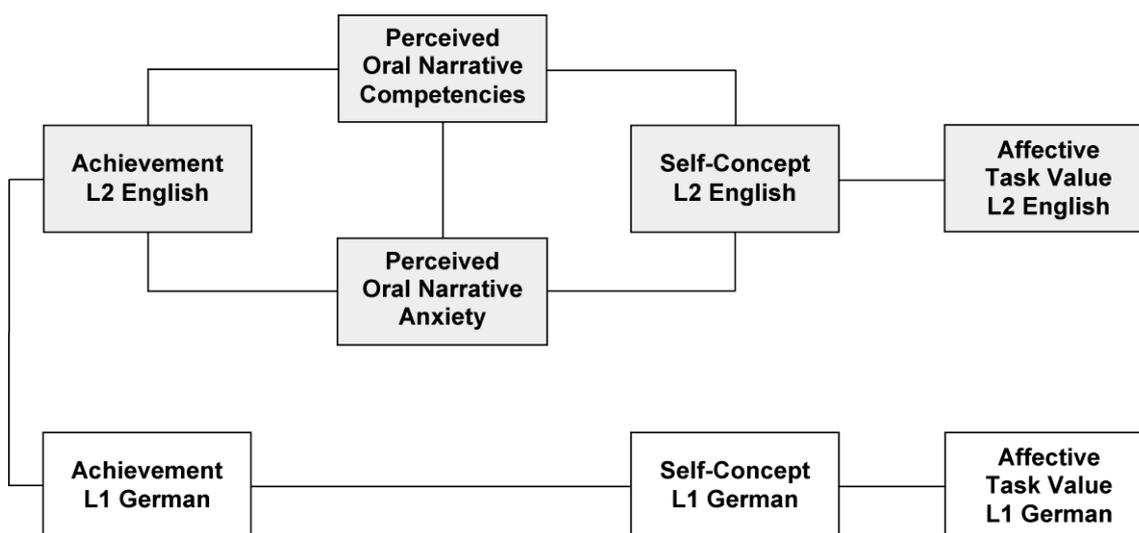


Figure 1. Validation framework: Theoretically predicted relations between L1 and L2 variables.

Additionally, the role of students' gender was considered. With regard to the L2 self-concept, relevant studies yielded inconsistent findings. Some studies could demonstrate significantly higher competence beliefs in favor of the girls (Dörnyei & Clément, 2001; Heinzmann, 2009; Henry, 2009; Schilling, Sparfeldt & Rost, 2006; Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002), whereas other studies reported no significant gender differences (Helmke, Schrader, Wagner, Nold & Schröder, 2008; Holder, 2005; Zaunbauer, Retelsdorf & Möller, 2009). Similarly, with regard to gender differences in language anxiety, some studies showed females to report higher levels of domain- or task-specific anxiety (Cheng, 2002; Chiang, 2006), other

studies did not (Cronjäger, 2007; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan, 2002; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Dailey, 2000b). However, an apparently existing gender difference does not mean that males in general will be less anxious but rather that they are more defensive and hesitant to admit personal threat (Hill & Sarason, 1966). As these findings refer to a wide range of learner samples and methodological approaches, they do not allow for predicting the magnitude and direction gender differences in secondary EFL learners' self-beliefs about oral narrative competencies. Therefore, the present study systematically analyzed this issue.

In particular, the present study addresses the following issues concerning the psychometric properties and the validation of the questionnaire:

- As both the subject-specific self-concept and the text anxiety variable appear to reflect substantially associated but empirically separable self-belief constructs, the formation of two distinguishable subscales is to be assumed.
- Accordingly, these two subscales are expected to reveal sufficiently consistent and reliable measures of competency and anxiety self-reports.
- Due to the empirically supported feature of subject-specific relations within the same construct the correlations between the sum scores of both subscales and L2 self-belief variables should be stronger in magnitude than with the matched L1 self-belief variables.
- Similarly, due to the empirically supported feature of differential relations among subject- and task-specific operationalizations within the same construct the sum scores of both subscales should stronger correlate with each other than with the L2 self-concept.
- Furthermore, due to the empirically supported feature of subject-specific relations between constructs the sum scores of both subscales should stronger correlate with L2 than with L1 achievement variables.
- Especially, within the L2 subject they should most strongly correlate with the the students' performance in oral language use than with other performance indicators.
- Overall, against the background of cognitive-motivational processing framework in academic areas the sum scores of both oral narrative subscales should be directly and significantly affected by the students' L2 (and not L1) achievement and, in turn, directly and significantly contribute to interindividually existing differences in the students' L2 (and not L1) self-concept – thus, indicating a clear subject-specific pattern of construct relations.
- And finally, gender differences in the sum scores of both subscales should be analyzed. In order to get most differentiated results, the analysis of possible differences between females' and males' self-perceptions should statistically control for related achievement differences.

Method

Participants

The study was conducted with a sample of $N = 256$ students (144 female, 112 male) from 20 ninth-grade grammar school classes of a large urban catchment. Their average age was 15.0 years ($SD = 0.5$), ranging from 14 to 16 years. Their participation was on a voluntary basis and only with explicit parental consent. The predominant majority of participating students ($N = 222$) declared themselves to be born in Germany. With respect to the English and German achievement measures, the students who were not born in Germany did not significantly differ from the other students (t-tests for independent samples: $p > .05$). The number of students stating English to be their family language was $n = 1$ (0.4%) which was negligibly small.

Procedure

The self-belief and some achievement data were gathered in the course of two class periods by two (advanced collegiate) test supervisors respectively who had been instructed in detail prior to the beginning of the test. This took place class for class and in the absence of the teaching staff. Additional competence data were collected by the teaching staff in charge with corresponding questionnaires for English and German.

Instruments

For the purpose of operationalizing the self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies and anxiety concerning oral narrative demands in the classroom, an 18-item questionnaire was developed which was supposed to reflect the typical demands of narrative classroom situations, and to contain corresponding statements with respect to the narrative process as regards content and linguistics. In particular, the competency items were phrased relating to the logical structuring of narrative content (items 4, 10), the availability of appropriate linguistic means (items 8, 9), the context-dependent certainty in narrative skills (items 1, 2, 6, 7), and the effect upon the audience (items 5, 13, 16). The anxiety items addressed the central component of worry (items 12, 14) and emotionality (items 3, 11, 15) as well as corresponding avoidance cognitions (items 17, 18) (Deffenbacher, 1980). The answers to the questionnaire items were given by marking a six-point Likert scale (ranging from “does not apply at all” to “applies in full”).

The academic self-concepts in English and German were gathered using 14 six-point

Likert items for each language. They addressed the extent of subjective competence expectations with regard to meeting academic demands. In the majority, these questionnaire items originate from pertinent time-tested scales, and they were presented here in the economical grid style format (Faber, 2007; Möller, Streblow, Pohlmann & Köller, 2006; Rost, Sparfeldt & Schilling, 2007). An exploratory factor analysis of the self-concept items (using principal components analysis with varimax rotation) confirmed a two-factor solution allowing for a clear distinction between both subject-related self-concept facets. It was possible to form two scales for the purpose of collecting academic self-concepts whose internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) amounted to $\alpha = .94$ for English and $\alpha = .92$ for German. High scale scores indicate positive perceptions and evaluations of the students' own subject-specific competence which also includes sufficient numbers of options of dealing with challenges and difficulties turning up in the process (Faber, 2009). The results of an additionally driven confirmatory factor analyses using three item parcels (Bandalos, 2002) showed an appropriate fit of the measurement model ($\chi^2/df = 1.211$, TLI = 1.00, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.029). The latent self-concept variables were correlated to a moderate extent ($r = .36$, $p \leq .001$).

The affective valence cognitions with regard to a certain subject were asked of the learners for English and (as corresponding control variables) for German and science. The overall 10 four-point Likert items address the individual extent of the affective value in each domain. The factor-analytical findings confirm a distinctly subject-specific pattern of factor loadings for these items as well (Faber, 2009). It was possible to form a scale for measuring the affective value in English whose six items can all be considered marker variables, and whose instrumental reliability with $\alpha = .71$ (Cronbach's alpha) is located in a range that is scarcely acceptable. Undoubtedly, there is still a need for optimization here. With respect to the other two subjects, only two control items each were used anyway which fulfill their purpose as provisional analysis scales. High scores indicate, by trend, a higher appreciation of the subject.

Different indicators were used as performance criterion variables. For the purpose of collecting data on the elementary linguistic competence in English, a specifically developed test for assessing basic language skills was used in the formal style of the C-test principle. After items that were too easy ($P \geq .90$) were excluded, its final version contained 26 blank words and showed a reliability of $\alpha = .84$ (Cronbach's alpha). Concerning relevant competence aspects, the respective teaching staff was asked to complete a questionnaire concerning the students' proficiency level in English and German. In terms of factor analysis, these subject-specific competence ratings could clearly be separated. Both factors could explain

overall nearly 80% of the entire trait variance. The internal reliabilities of the scales formed amounted for both subjects to $\alpha = .95$ (Cronbach's alpha). As additional performance information, the students' latest school report grades in both subjects were assessed. In agreement with studies of this kind that cannot identify seriously biased limitations in the accuracy of judgment of self-reported grades in comparable age groups (Möller, Streblov, Pohlmann & Köller, 2006), the grades and teacher ratings proved to correlate here in English to $r = .72$ and in German to $r = .77$ ($p \leq .001$).

Gender was included as a dummy variable (coding: male = 1, female = 2) in the analyses.

Data analysis

For the purpose of final scale formation the oral narrative competence and anxiety items were together subject of a principal components analysis (with varimax rotation). In order to analyze the relations of oral narrative competency and anxiety scores with L2 and L1 self-belief and achievement measures zero-order correlations as well as multiple regression analyses (controlling for empirical overlap among validation variables) were calculated. For further examination of the domain-specific validity of both the oral narrative competence and the corresponding anxiety scale, a multivariate analysis of their relations to all academic self-belief and performance measures was additionally conducted and examined using a structural equation modeling approach (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999; Byrne, 2010). With SEM method it was possible to calculate the covariations between all variables under statistical control of their empirical overlap, thus unraveling the complexity of their overall relationships. The overall fit of the model, hence the discrepancy between the theoretically assumed variable structure and the empirically received data, was tested by means of various fit parameters. Following conventional rules of thumb in structural equation modeling, a sufficient model fit should be achieved when the χ^2/df value is lower than 3, the TLI is higher than .90, the CFI is higher than .90, and the RMSEA is at least lower than .08 (Marsh, Balla & Hau, 1996). As measurement indicators, mostly the related scale items were used, but in the case of the English and German self-concept variables two item parcels were used (Bandalos, 2002). And finally, to clarify possible gender differences, and to explore potential nonlinear relations, a two-way ANOVA with the learners' gender and the teachers' competence ratings as factor variables for the oral narrative competence and anxiety scores as dependent variable was calculated.

Results

Scale formation

Due to the eigenvalues of principal components analysis ($e_1 = 7.83$, $e_2 = 1.78$, $e_3 = 1.08$, $e_4 = 0.82$), a two-factor solution was examined. The result confirmed a clear two-factor loading pattern consistently assigning the competence- and anxiety-related items to a factor of one's own (Table 1). This solution could explain 53.4% of the total variance. All items could be used as factorial marker variables (Fürntratt, 1969) in so far as their factor loadings turned out to be sufficiently high ($a \geq .40$) and could explain a significant portion of the respective communality ($a^2/h^2 \geq .50$). On the first factor all items concerning the self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies were loading high. This factor could explain 27.5% of the rotated variance. On the second factor all items concerning the anxious worry and emotionality against oral narrative situations in the classroom were loading high. This factor could explain 25.9% of the rotated variance. The part-whole corrected item-test correlations calculated all turned out to be adequate.

Table 1. Results of exploratory factor analysis and part-whole corrected item-test correlations (r_{it-i}) for the oral narrative competence and anxiety items (h^2 = communality, a = factor loading).

	When I am supposed to tell something in English ...	h^2	a_1	a_2	a^2/h^2	r_{it-i}
1	I cannot really find a beginning.	.453	-.516	.432	.588	.588
2	I immediately know what I want to say.	.412	.557	-.319	.753	.551
3	I feel quite uncomfortable that others are listening to me.	.659	-.285	.760	.876	.735
4	important details are not coming to my mind.	.473	-.558	.401	.658	.608
5	I am successful at having others listening to me with interest.	.539	.714	-.170	.946	.641
6	I rarely lose the thread.	.482	.682	-.126	.965	.605
7	I have to correct myself frequently.	.419	-.556	.333	.738	.586
8	it's easy for me to find the right words immediately.	.556	.721	-.192	.935	.661
9	I notice difficulties with the correct sentence construction.	.356	-.537	.261	.810	.528
10	I am able to bring details into the correct sequence.	.381	.602	-.138	.951	.529

11	I am always so nervous and excited.	.687	-.260	.787	.902	.759
12	I am worried that everyone ridicules me for my pronunciation.	.705	-.154	.825	.965	.740
13	I am able to speak quite inspiringly.	.557	.716	-.208	.920	.644
14	I feel as if everyone is just waiting for me to make a mistake.	.571	-.106	.748	.980	.633
15	I feel quite uncertain.	.744	-.423	.752	.760	.793
16	listeners have an easy time following me.	.533	.706	-.186	.935	.639
17	I don't like to but rather listen to others doing it.	.635	-.434	.668	.702	.712
18	I actually prefer to deal with English in writing instead of having to speak it.	.453	-.197	.643	.913	.590
		Eigenvalue	7.83	1.78		
		Percent of rotated variance	27.5	25.9		

Note. Item-test-correlations were calculated separately for each scale.

Therefore, the 18 items used could clearly be assigned to two subscales. Eleven items could be used to build the PONC scale for measuring the students' "perceived oral narrative competencies". Students with high scores perceived themselves to be sufficiently capable of conveying the respective narrative content in a consistent, linguistically adequate, and certain manner. Seven items could be used to build the WEOS scale for measuring the students' "worry and emotionality against oral narrative classroom situations". Students with high scores perceived these situations as rather threatening and expected failure to master them. Hence, they reported a higher degree of avoidance thoughts. For both scales, the internal consistencies were calculated with Cronbach's alpha, the split-half reliabilities corrected with the Spearman-Brown formula, and the standard measurement error was estimated. Overall, the respective values turned out to be rather adequate (Table 2).

As conceptually expected, the sum scores of both these scales did not measure constructs independent from each other. Rather, their sum scores, with $r = -.67$ ($p \leq .001$), turned out to be negatively correlated. Contrary to the PONC scale (standardized skewness $z = 0.03$, standardized kurtosis $z = 0.33$), the sum scores of the WEOS scale appeared to be not normally distributed and displayed a clear positive skew (standardized skewness $z = 2.09$, standardized kurtosis $z = -2.82$). Thus, by trend, relatively fewer students reported higher levels of anxiety which fundamentally corresponded to the theoretically expected distribution of this variable.

Table 2. Reliability coefficients and standard errors of the PONC and WEOS scale.

	Alpha	Split-Half	Standard Error
PONC scale			
Self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies	.88	.87	3.3
WEOS scale			
Worry and emotionality concerning oral narrative situations in the classroom	.90	.86	2.8

Table 3. Zero-order correlations between self-belief variables within and across subjects.

	AVL1G	AVSC	SCL2E	PONC	WEOS	AVL2E
SCL1G	.56***	-.24***	.38***	.33***	-.27***	.21***
AVL1G		-.18**	-.16**	-.08	.13*	-.01
AVSC			-.26***	-.12*	.13*	-.21***
SCL2E				.69***	-.59***	.62***
PONC					-.67***	.55***
WEOS						-.46***

Significance: *** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$

Note. SCL1G = Self-Concept in the L1 German, SCL2E = Self-Concept in the L2 English, AVL1G = Affective Value of the L1 German, AVL2E = Affective Value of the L2 English, AVSC = Affective Value of Science, PONC = Self-Perceptions of Oral Narrative Competencies, WEOS = Worry and Emotionality Concerning Oral Narrative Classroom Situations

Validation results

The intercorrelations initially calculated for all self-belief variables could widely support the domain-specific validity of all scales (Table 3). So the self-concept and affective value variables were clearly more closely related within the respective subject than between the subjects. At the same time, the relations between the self-perceptions of students' narrative competency and anxiety scores turned out to be much stronger with each other and with the L2 self-beliefs than with the L1 self-beliefs. A high self-concept in English appeared to be associated with a high affective value, a positive perception of one's own narrative competencies, and with low anxiety concerning narrative situations in the classroom. Hence, these results altogether could confirm the subject-specific self-concepts being empirically distinguishable to a sufficient degree.

Table 4. Zero-order correlations between oral narrative competence (PONC) and anxiety (WEOS) scores and gender, L1 and L2 cognitive-motivational and achievement variables.

	PONC	WEOS
Gender (1 = male, 2 = female)	-.05	.08
Self-Concept L2 English	.73***	-.59***
Self-Concept L1 German	.34***	-.27***
Affective Value L2 English	.57***	-.46***
Affective Value L1 German	-.11*	.13*
Affective Value Science	-.17**	.13*
Basic Competencies L2 English	.37***	-.33***
Competence Ratings L2 English	.48***	-.42***
Competence Ratings L1 German	.26***	-.24***
Latest Grade L2 English	.52***	-.44***
Latest Grade L1 German	.22***	-.20***

Significance: *** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$

Accordingly, the correlations between self-concept and performance measures revealed a clearly domain-specific pattern (Table 4). The self-concept in English, the self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies, and the amount of anxious worry and emotionality were clearly much more closely related to the performance in English than to the performance in German. The same held true vice versa for the self-concept in German. Overall positive self-concepts in English were associated with more favorable performance results and, at least by trend, with more extracurricular language contacts. The fact that the self-perceptions of the students' English narrative competencies and/or respective anxiety reactions correlated to a comparably lesser extent to the C-test results might be attributed to their written language character that could be rendered more precisely with additionally calculated regression analyses. Controlling for interrelations among variables, primarily the most recent school report grades in English essentially contributed to the empirical variance of perceived competence and anxiety scores (Table 5).

Table 5. Multiple regression results for self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies (PONC) and anxiety (WEOS) scores on various achievement predictors in L1 and L2: standardized beta-weights and adjusted squared regression coefficients (adj. R^2).

	PONC	WEOS
Basic Competencies L2 English	.089	-.155
Competence Ratings L2 English	.208*	-.097
Latest Grade L2 English	.401***	-.366***

Competence Ratings L1 German	-.102	.106
Latest Grade L1 German	.040	-.001
R	.555	.496
adj. R ²	.280	.216

Significance: ***p ≤ .001, *p ≤ .05

And within the foreign language competencies, it was the teachers' rating of oral language use that exclusively and substantially predicted the sum scores of the relevant scales. Especially this result could additionally corroborate the task-specific validity of both scales (Table 6).

Table 6. Multiple regressions results for oral narrative competence (PONC) and anxiety (WEOS) scores on different English competence ratings: standardized beta-weights and adjusted squared regression coefficients (adj. R²).

Competence Ratings L2 English	PONC	WEOS
Listening	.062	-.031
Pronunciation	-.126	.068
Reading Comrehension	.058	.164
Oral Language Use	.523***	-.646***
Spelling	-.026	.059
Grammar	.014	-.137
Composition	.039	.048
R	.540	.525
adj. R ²	.266	.250

Significance: ***p ≤ .001

Modeling overall construct relations

Due to the non-normal distribution of the anxiety outcomes, bootstrapped estimations of standard errors for all parameters were used in SEM analysis to obtain approximately unbiased significance values (Nevitt & Hancock, 2001; West, Finch & Curran, 1995). In all measurement models the standardized regression coefficients of manifest indicator variables turned out to reach sufficient values (Table 7). In contrast, as indicators of the affective value variables, only their manifest sum scores were used to ensure better comparability due to the very different item number of the English and German scales. The hypothesized model of construct relations (Figure 1) assumes the covariances among the English and German variables, respectively, to reach a considerably higher amount than between the English and German variables – thus predicting a domain-specific covariance pattern for both the English and

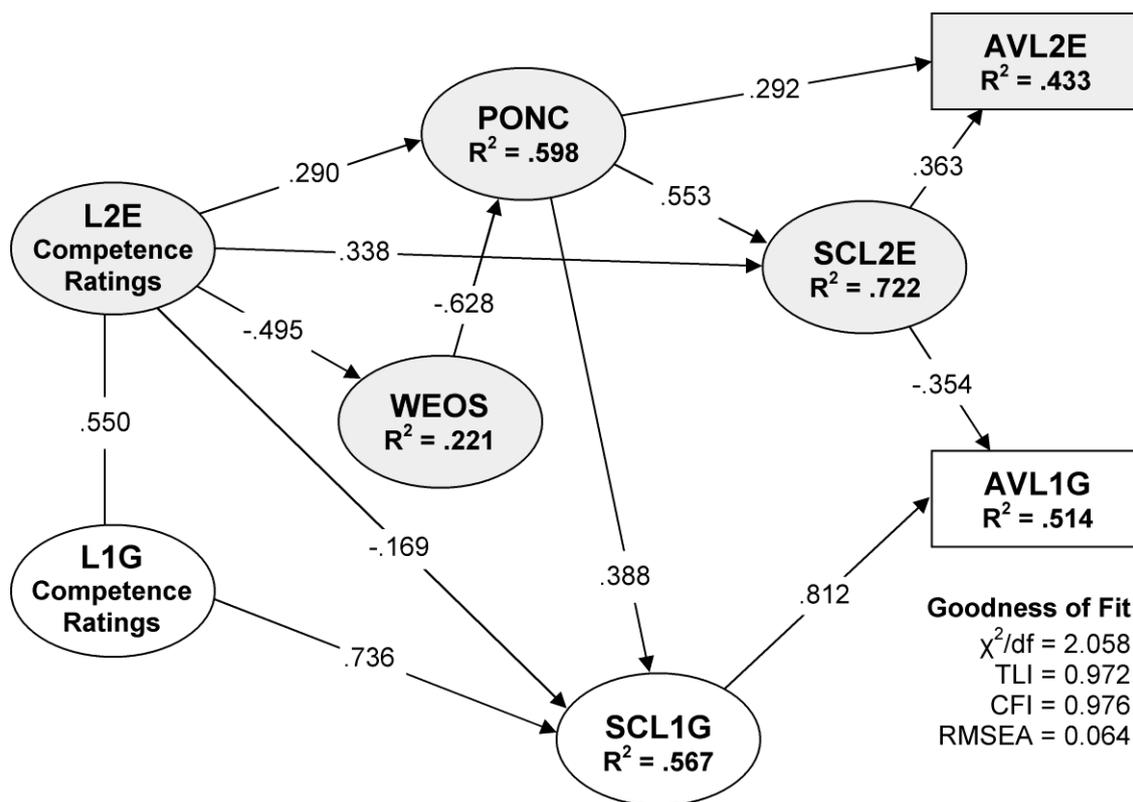
German latent variables.

Table 7. Standardized beta-weights for the measurement models of the L2 and L1 latent self-belief and competence variables.

L2 English Competence Ratings	L1 German Competence Ratings	L2 Self-Concept Oral Narrative Competence	L2 Anxiety Oral Narrative Situations	L2 English Self- Concept	L1 German Self- Concept
.805	.887	.635	.790	.909	.913
.814	.808	.603	.614	.955	.926
.853	.846	.646	.765		
.854	.781	.667	.654		
.843	.898	.612	.854		
.823	.885	.620	.804		
.895	.882	.707	.759		
		.568			
		.548			
		.686		Item Parcels	Item Parcels
		.683			
Items 1-7	Items 1-7	Items 1-11	Items 1-7	7 + 7 Items	7 + 7 Items

The SEM results of the structural model widely turned out as theoretically predicted: the relations between the latent variables were clearly domain-specific (Figure 2). Within each language domain, the self-belief and performance variables appeared to be much stronger associated than across both domains. Furthermore, the self-concept in each domain predicted directly the related affective value variable. The learners' self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies and their anxiety concerning narrative situations could be explained directly and substantially by the English competence ratings, and the self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies could be directly and substantially explained by their narrative anxiety scores. The self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies, in turn, could directly and substantially determine both the L2 self-concept and affective value variable. Interestingly, it was the anxiety variable which appeared to be directly and more strongly affected by L2 competencies than the self-perception variable. The only remarkable exception: between the self-perceptions of English narrative competencies and the self-concept in German there was a moderately positive and significant path coefficient. Thus, the perception of being able to render good English narrations partially favored competence perceptions in German as well. Additional post-hoc comparisons with a two-way ANOVA indicated that this effect primarily came about

through those students who had been attested a high performance level in English, and who, at the same time, assigned themselves a high level of narrative competencies. With respect to their self-concept in German, they significantly stood out from their classmates (Scheffé test: $p = .000$ between high and low, $p = .002$ between high and average performers in English). The self-perceptions of the students' oral narrative competencies and the anxiety concerning narrative situations in the classroom were explained directly and substantially by the performance ratings given by the teachers. They in turn were directly reflected in the self-concept and/or the affective value in English. The self-perceptions of the students' oral narrative competencies could be directly predicted from anxiety concerning narrative situations. The task-specific self-perceptions had a direct impact upon the domain-specific self-concept and affective task value variable, whereas the affective task value in English appeared to be most strongly influenced by the self-concept in English. However, with regard to the theoretically predicted relations between the L2 and L1 variables, another somewhat unexpected, seemingly paradoxical result referred to the significant negative relations between the English competence ratings and the German self-concept as well as to the significant negative relations between the English self-concept and the German affective value scale. L2 learners with relatively high proficiency scores tended to report slightly lowered self-concept scores in German, and vice versa. The same held for those learners with relatively high English self-concept scores who report clearly lowered affective value scores in German. Typically, these negative relations might have reflected internal (dimensional) comparison processes in so far as individual perceptions of high competencies in one domain lead to cognitive or affective reduced self-estimations in the other domain – thus producing a comparison-dependent contrasting effect on the formation of domain-specific self-concept components (Marsh, 1990). Taken altogether, 60% of the empirical variance for the PONC-scale, 72% for the English self-concept variable, and 43% for the English affective value variable could be explained. Overall, the model fit of this structural model turned out to be reasonable.



PONC = Self-Perceptions of Oral Narrative Competencies, WEOS = Worry and Emotionality Concerning Oral Narrative Situations in the EFL Classroom, SCL2E = Self-Concept in the L2 English, SCL1G = Self-Concept in the L1 German, AVL2E = Affective Value of the L2 English, AVL1G = Affective Value of the L1 German

Figure 2. Structural equation modeling results for the relations between L1 and L2 cognitive-motivational and teacher competence ratings. Only significant standardized beta-weights ($p \leq .05$) are reported.

Gender differences

For the extent of worry and emotionality concerning narrative situations in the classroom (Figure 3), ANOVA results yielded a statistically significant main effect of the gender variable ($F = 7.401$, $df = 1.204$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .038$). At the same performance level, it was the females who perceived themselves relatively unfavorably. Compared with the equally achieving males, they reported an extent of anxiety that was considerably stronger in the lower third of L2 performance, and relatively still too strong in the upper third. In a tendentially similar way, a corresponding gender effect was also apparent for the self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies. However it scarcely failed to reach statistical significance ($F = 3.779$, $df = 1.200$, $p = .053$, $\eta^2 = .019$).

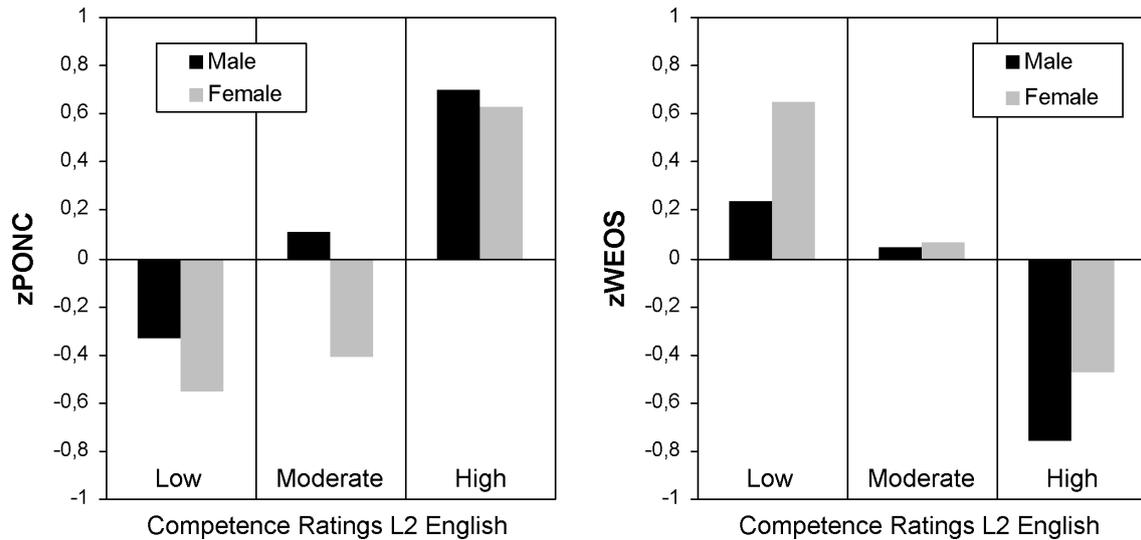


Figure 3. Achievement-dependent gender differences in self-perceptions of oral narrative competence (PONC) and anxiety concerning oral narrative classroom situations (WEOS).

Discussion and conclusions

The results of the present study could prove first and foremost prove the formation of two subscales for measuring self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies and anxiety in the EFL context at secondary school level – each displaying sufficient psychometric properties. With these subscales two instruments are available to assess relevant cognitive-motivational components of oral narrative competencies in the L2 English in a differentiated and psychometrically sound way with regard to content. Viewed in this light, these scales might contribute to partially reduce a methodical gap in a widely neglected field of L2 research.

The relations of both scales with relevant self-belief and achievement variables were domain- and task-specific in the way theoretically predicted. Both scales could be demonstrated to measure specific facets of L2 self-beliefs rather than general (e.g. language-related) self-beliefs. Conceptually, the validation results overall could confirm the multidimensional and multifaceted structure of academic self-beliefs in the EFL context (Marsh, 1992; Marsh & O'Mara, 2008a). In this respect, they could not only replicate but even extend the findings of relevant research on foreign language learners' self-concept (Holder, 2005; Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low, 1999; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009). Similarly, the validation results could contribute to further differentiate the language anxiety construct with respect to an empirically separable subcomponent concerning the learners' worry and emotionality against oral narrative classroom situations (Cheng, Horwitz & Schallert, 1999; Elkhafaifi, 2005; MacIntyre & Gardner,

1989, 1994). Altogether, the present findings lent empirical support for a more multifaceted and task-specific perspective on measuring and analyzing L2 self-belief constructs at the secondary school level (Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Williams & Burden, 1997). However, the present study could not analyze the relations of both scales with oral narrative competency measures and thus suffered from a lack of important validation references. Further follow-up studies will relieve this shortcoming. Further research should also examine the relations of both the self-perceptions and anxiety scale with other task-specific self-perceptions – also considering the self-efficacy construct and academic emotions (Ferla, Valcke & Cai, 2009; Goetz, Cronjaeger, Frenzel, Lüdtke & Hall, 2010; Hsieh & Kang, 2010). They should also answer the question to what extent these processes could sensibly be implemented already at lower school grades. Overall, both scales need to be evaluated by systematic replication studies. These studies should, in particular, analyze the scales' validity with respect to other cultural contexts, educational settings, and other native languages (Pappamihiel, 2001). Furthermore, with respect to the scales' construct validity the relation between the students' perceptions of oral narrative competencies and anxiety with their social, in particular speech-related, worries and anxieties should be investigated (Hofman & DiBartolo, 2000; Park & Lee, 2005). These analyses have not been concluded at this time; however, informative and revealing insights can be expected – which eventually might contribute, both linguistically and educationally, to a better understanding of the domain.

According to the internal/external frame of reference model of self-concept development (Marsh, 1990; Möller, Pohlmann, Köller & Marsh, 2009), the validation results could also evidence the impact of dimensional comparison effects across both language subjects under consideration. This theoretical framework explains the impact of social (external) and dimensional (internal) comparison processes on the formation of academic self-beliefs and assumes, in particular, the students' academic competence beliefs in a certain domain or subject being primarily affected by social comparison – that is, by perceiving their classmates mainly displaying worse, equal, or better outcomes. This social comparison shall lead to a substantially positive relationship between achievement and self-concept in a certain domain or subject. Moreover, students draw self-related conclusions from dimensional comparisons – that is, by perceiving their outcomes across various domains or subjects as equal or different. This dimensional comparison can be made upward to an intraindividually stronger subject and will then result in a relatively lower self-concept, or it can be made downward to an intraindividually weaker subject and will then result in a relatively higher self-concept. Hence, learners

with individually high competencies in one domain or subject will tend to underestimate their competencies in another domain or subject. Provided that the students really perceive their outcomes in various subjects as different (Rost, Sparfeldt, Dickhäuser & Schilling, 2005), this dimensional comparison shall lead to a substantially negative relationship between the achievement in a weaker subject and the self-concept in a stronger subject – and vice versa. However, those studies analyzing the relations between self-concept and achievement variables within the language domain mostly showed no significant path coefficients between self-concept and achievement across both languages (Dickhäuser, 2005; Möller, Streblov, Pohlmann & Köller, 2006; Pohlmann, 2005; Rost, Sparfeldt, Dickhäuser & Schilling, 2005). Though in another research context, significant negative path coefficients between achievement and self-concept in Chinese (as a native language) and English (as a foreign language) had been repeatedly reported, this result appeared to be very plausible in view of the fundamental differences between these two languages. Thus, the students' self-perceptions might have largely emphasized the very contrasting nature of classroom requirements and achievement outcomes (Marsh, Kong & Hau, 2001; Xu & Marsh, 2009). In the present study seemingly paradoxical relations between the English and German variables occurred not only on the more cognitive self-concept level but also on the more affective value level. A significant negative relation between the L2 competence and L1 self-concept variable could be demonstrated. The other way around no significant path coefficients could be found. A similar relation pattern could be found between the L2 self-concept and the L1 task value variable. Obviously, a higher performance level in English led to a somewhat lowered level in German self-perceptions, and a higher self-concept level in English led to a markedly lowered level in German task value. Thus, the foreign language constructs appeared to serve as a reference frame for the learners' self-beliefs in the L1. Thereby this finding contributed conceptually to extend the current research concerning the IE-model suggesting to consider the learners' competence beliefs and affective values more closely (Goetz, Frenzel, Hall & Pekrun, 2008; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Skaalvik & Valås, 1999), and it could differentiate and refine the model's scope with regard to the EFL context. Further research should clarify to which extent such contrasting effects might be dependent not only on comparative self-estimations but as well on intraindividually existing achievement differences between various subjects (Rost, Sparfeldt, Dickhäuser & Schilling, 2005). It should also strive for further analyses to explain the present finding that dimensional comparison effects could be substantiated only from L2 to L1 constructs. Interestingly, in a previous analysis of construct relations across both language subjects no dimensional comparison effects could be demonstrated (Fa-

ber, 2012). As this previous analysis did not include any specific facets of L2 self-perceptions, the present findings strongly indicate the cognitive-motivational relevance of oral competence beliefs in foreign language learning – and thus indicate the need for a more differentiated conceptualization of construct relations.

Furthermore, several other results also need further explanation: it has to be sounded out as to what extent the positive correlation between self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies and the self-concept in German, brought about in particular by the learners with an exceptionally high performance level in English. Here again, it must be questioned whether this relation might be explained by dimensional, therefore positively generalizing, comparison processes, or whether it reflects (at least for the subsample of highly achieving learners) the actual narrative competencies in both the L2 and L1 domain.

In the present study females displayed lower self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies and a higher degree of anxiety concerning oral narrative classroom situations as equally achieving males. Thus, they tended to rather underestimate their task-specific capabilities. This particular finding deserves further attention. In particular, it should be analyzed to which extent this defensive pattern of self-perception might be typically determined by gender-related stereotypes (Bornholt, Goodnow & Cooney, 1994; Stetsenko, Little, Gordeeva, Grasshoff & Oettingen, 2000) – which, among others, already manifest as differences in the active participation in class (Meece, Glienke & Askew, 2009; Sunderland, 1998). In order to further clarify this issue, relevant research in the field should attempt to examine additional task-specific self-perceptions in the L2 English. Methodologically, this particular finding also stresses the need for multivariate analyses of gender differences which should consider the gender-dependent processing of academic self-beliefs across various achievement levels (Möller & Pohlmann, 2010).

And not least, it has to be left to further research efforts to sound out the processual functioning of these subject- and task-specific self-belief variables in the context of respective motivational process models (Dörnyei, 2009, Hiromori, 2009; Woodrow, 2006b). The same holds true for the analysis of the constructs' causal ordering over time. This issue has so far been widely neglected in foreign language research (Herrmann, 1980; Ganschow, Javorshy, Sparks, Skinner, Anderson & Patton, 1994) – its further clarification can only be adequately achieved by means of prospective longitudinal studies (Marsh & O'Mara, 2008b).

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