



A feel-good digital practice: Improving social emotional wellbeing through dialogue in Turkish tertiary context¹

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Abstract

The fundamental principle of positive psychology relies on the fact that becoming a happier person should be among the primary objectives of any educational activity. Adopting this basic tenet, this study aims to investigate whether a dialogic second language (L2) intervention on an interactive digital landscape can boost the social emotional wellbeing of young adult learners while helping them cope with the academic difficulties of acquiring a second language in the foundation year of an extremely competitive public university in Türkiye. An embedded experimental design was used to incorporate qualitative data within experimental research. Eighty-seven learners participated in this research and completed the Psychological Wellbeing Scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) both at the beginning and end of the 14-week study. The experimental group received a dialogic intervention involving the dialogic use of L2 in discussing critical and taboo social issues, conventionally avoided in mainstream English language teaching textbooks, conducted in internet-mediated dialogic space, namely, Google Classroom, in addition to regular L2 instruction. The dialogues were specially designed and revised according to the curricular requirements of the institution. To investigate learners' emotional regulation and wellbeing, 10 digital classroom dialogues with emotional reactions of the participants were collected and analyzed using inductive content analysis. Analysis of wellbeing scale data indicates statistically meaningful differences between the groups in favor of

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the experimental group with a medium effect size. Qualitative findings show personal growth through discussing socially relevant and critical issues, building self-efficacy through increased practice in the target language, and building a more positive outlook through increased foreign language enjoyment (FLE), among other aspects relevant in positive psychology. Pedagogical implications are also discussed in the study.

Keywords: dialogic education; second/foreign language acquisition; interactive digital landscape; dialogic intervention; positive psychology; emotional regulation; social emotional wellbeing

Introduction

The fundamental principle of positive psychology relies on the fact that becoming a happier person should be among the primary objectives of any educational activity. According to Barry et al. (2017) and Oxford (2020) becoming a happier person is not a coincidental phenomenon, on the contrary it necessitates an intentional focus on emotions not only as independent but also as dependent variables, which in turn implies the use of social-emotional strategies to regulate negative emotions and to alter one's mind about these kinds of demoralizing emotional states. However, the intentional concentration on one's emotional wellbeing may lead to challenging episodes in the classroom, both for teachers and students (Cowie et al., 2004; Oxford, 2020). Engaging in group discussions about critical, even taboo issues in learners' society can definitely stir up a lot of mixed emotions and cause such challenging episodes to emerge as learning opportunities to manage one's negative motions and reactions. This sort of emotional regulation and resilience are certainly among the educational aims of the dialogic intervention designed in this study. Besides emotional regulation, such collaborative L2 dialogues may help build a caring and close-knit community of L2 practice especially when such a dialogic intervention is conducted over an entire semester of 14 weeks or even a whole academic year of 28 weeks in tertiary context in Türkiye.

Theoretical Background

Building Blocks of Social-emotional Wellbeing in L2 Education

As a well-known and widely accepted archetype of social-emotional wellbeing, Seligman (2018) developed an influential model encompassing five basic elements, widely abbreviated as PERMA. These fundamental elements involve *positive emotions*, *engagement* and flow experiences, interpersonal *relationships*, *meaning* in the sense of serving a purpose beyond oneself and *achievement*. Boosting the integral components in this model would subsequently lead to increased social-emotional wellbeing. Previous research shows that positive psychological traits can be facilitated and fostered through positive education with an emphasis on overall wellbeing of learners, which has been associated with academic achievement, fewer risky behaviors, and better physical health in adulthood (Caprara et al., 2000; Durlak et al., 2011; Hoyt et al., 2012; Nidich et al., 2011; Wang et al., 1997).

Increasing foreign language enjoyment (henceforth, FLE) is another decisive factor for social emotional wellbeing as findings from research on FLE point to significant pedagogical and psychological implications (MacIntyre et al., 2019; Oxford, 2020). However, it is essential to underline the fact that FLE means a lot more than mere pleasure. It involves overcoming educational challenges, reaping the benefits of sustained hard work, the sense of fulfillment that results from achieving something difficult. Higher levels of FLE among L2 learners are

associated not only with better performance but also with increased wellbeing (Dewaele, 2022). In addition, FLE is known to be contagious in the classroom, L2 learners' enjoyment is carried over to their teachers who then become better suited to inspire their students (Oxford, 2020; Talebzadeh et al., 2020).

According to Dewaele (2022), there are various different ways to increase FLE and improve learners' wellbeing in the classroom. These include foreign language teachers actively seeking to arouse interest in the target language and culture and persuading learners that progress is possible and achievable. Another feasible gateway for wellbeing is designing optimally challenging classroom activities which provide students with a degree of autonomy and creative outlets. Various different acts of discreet social engineering can also be adopted to ensure students' bonding with their classmates. The resulting learning community can definitely help create a positive learning environment in which the five founding elements of aforementioned PERMA can easily be facilitated. This can definitely happen easily in a classroom environment where a community spirit, a sense of solidarity, hard work, verbal encouragement, mutual trust and laughter encourage learners to move forward and enjoy themselves, which can be supplemented by good performance in exams (Dewaele, 2022).

There is also further evidence from self-access learning practices similar to the digital platform in this study for the relationship between social-emotional wellbeing and L2 learning. In a study investigating retired people's perceptions, behaviors and emotions experienced when learning a foreign language, Matsumoto (2019) found that language learning can be a clearly rewarding experience for the participants, adding to their sense of meaning and fulfillment in their life. As indicated by Grosbois et al., since latest technologies have reshaped how languages are taught and learnt, educators now utilize technologies to enhance opportunities for language education to occur in various types of interactional environments.

The Role of Dialogic L2 Education in Social Emotional Wellbeing

Despite terminological differences, almost all accounts of dialogic education focus on common properties of classroom talk which entail respectful exchange of multiple perspectives belonging to various different voices in the classroom, harmonious relations among all involved parties, an increased amount of student engagement, open and joint inquiry as well as communal construction of knowledge (Haneda, 2017; Littleton & Mercer, 2013). Therefore, such a positive and collaborative environment in the classroom is bound to make a difference in at least several elements of Seligman's PERMA model of psychological wellbeing (2018). To illustrate, dialogic education openly fosters the improvement of learners' positive emotions through overcoming intellectual and creative challenges by actively participating in a collaborative dialogue among learners and the teacher. Such active participation in small group discussions may definitely increase the amount of learners' flow experiences in the classroom as student engagement is often boosted when they take part in collaborative and communicative activities that they are actually interested in. As for the development of interpersonal relationships and social connections in the PERMA model, although dialogic learning can cause initial frictions due to the multiplicity of voiced opinions in a class, overcoming such challenges can also help learners improve positive patterns of emotional and physical interaction with other members of their society in the long run. Ongoing constructive classroom dialogue and co-construction of knowledge may also make it easier for many learners to drive a stronger sense of meaning, a purpose beyond themselves from the classroom learning tasks. Since dialogic education might also increase the amount of genuine classroom interaction, it may lead to an eventual and inevitable improvement in L2 learners' productive proficiency, which results in the achievement of their short-term and long-term learning goals. All in all, a gradual rise in these psychological

constructs of PERMA model within the context of dialogic education can provide a learner with an overall boost in his social-emotional wellbeing.

The existing research involving the impacts of dialogic education on social-emotional wellbeing of students is another area of scarce inquiry in second language acquisition. Such inquiry can help teachers devise and adopt dialogic classroom practice to improve their students' overall state of wellbeing especially in challenging socio economic educational environments similar to the Turkish tertiary context in this study. Evidence on some of more general dialogue-based practices in education show that developments in instrumental learning, competences, and skills, definitely improve prosocial values such as solidarity and friendship, when boosted through egalitarian dialogue in interactive group work (Villardón-Gallego et al., 2018). Feelings of solidarity and friendship along with other prosocial behaviors can definitely improve interpersonal relationships and social connections, through which learners adopt positive patterns of emotional and physical interaction with their classmates. Working on interpersonal relationships is one of the essential elements of PERMA wellbeing model defined by Seligman (2018). Such supportive peer solidarity through egalitarian dialogue may also promote social inclusion, especially for students with disabilities (García-Carrión et al., 2018).

Even though effective implementation dialogic education still poses real challenges in actual classrooms, there is gradually surmounting evidence in favor of a dialogic pedagogy improving student learning outcomes in addition to social-emotional wellbeing (Davies et al., 2017; Howe & Mercer, 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2017). In an exploratory mixed-methods case study investigating the role of dialogic book reading strategies in the promotion of social-emotional skills of young elementary students in an after-school program in the United States, Fetting et al. (2018) found that the dialogic reading intervention led to an overall increase of ten per cent in the amount of student-facilitated problem-solving successes, turn-taking completions, and frequency of positive peer feedback, which contributed to the development of these young learners' social-emotional skills.

Despite the ample and recently accumulating research that explores the effects of dialogic education on L2 learners' language proficiency and overall higher order thinking capabilities (Dawes et al., 2000; Mannion & Mercer, 2016; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Mercer et al., 2019; Whitebread et al., 2013), the amount of previous research that investigates the effects of dialogic education on learners' social emotional wellbeing is quite limited, especially in tertiary context. There is also a current research gap regarding the exploration of digital dialogic practices in socio economically and academically challenging higher education contexts such as the one in this study. Thus, exploring the impact of dialogic learning on students' wellbeing in demanding educational environments may contribute to the limited body of evidence available that mostly indicates the positive effects of dialogic education on learners' individual difference variables (Davies et al., 2017; Howe & Mercer, 2017; León and Castro, 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

The research questions of the current study are as follows:

1. What are the impacts of dialogic learning on L2 learners' social-emotional wellbeing?
2. What are L2 learners' perceptions regarding the effects of dialogic learning on their emotional regulation as well as their overall state of social emotional wellbeing in tertiary education context?

Method

Context

The current research is conducted at the intensive English preparatory program of a highly competitive state university in Istanbul, Türkiye. The program involved 22 English lessons

every week for each proficiency level. Within the standards of Commission on the English Program Accreditation (CEA, 2024, July 17), the program adopts a goal-oriented approach so that all enrolled students can reach an English proficiency level which is linguistically and skills wise enough to follow the academic courses offered in their respective faculties following the foundation year.

The program provides a 14-week intensive English program and students are offered Main Course and Skills classes in the English program. The Main Course aims at teaching linguistic structures effectively through mainstream course books containing four language skills whereas the Skills Courses focus on the four skills of English. The weekly learning load included 20 face-to-face classroom hours while 2 hours were allocated to digital resources assigned to students on a weekly basis to be done asynchronously.

Research Design

The study adopts embedded experimental design since this approach allows the researcher to incorporate qualitative data within experimental research. The priority of this particular research model is essentially determined by the quantitative, experimental methodology while the qualitative dataset has a subservient role within that methodology (Creswell & Clark, 2011). According to Creswell et al., (2003) qualitative data is gathered during the intervention phase so as to be able to qualitatively inspect the process of the intervention besides the quantitative outcomes. In this study, a qualitative examination of the classroom dialogues sheds light on L2 learners' perceptions regarding the effects of dialogic learning on their emotional regulation as well as their overall state of social emotional wellbeing in tertiary education context.

Participants

All of the 87 participants in this interventionist study took an institutional placement test at the very beginning of the 2023–24 Academic Year and were consequently placed in four classes (two in the control group, two in experimental group) at A2+, B1 or B1+ levels defined as independent users of the English language by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth, CEFR) (CEFR, 2024, July 17) which indicates that these learners can comprehend the main arguments of clear standard input on familiar issues that they frequently come across at work, school, leisure time, etc. in addition to producing simple connected and cohesive texts on familiar topics which are often of personal interest to them. After the placement test, the participants were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups which were the existing sections of the classes institutionally assigned to the instructor, also the first writer of this study. All of the students in the experimental group volunteered to participate in the study whereas 19 students opted out of research in the control group which wasn't required to participate in the online discussions anyway. All the participants in the experimental group signed up to the digital classroom to cooperate during the online discussions over the course of the semester. The online dialogues weren't graded; however they weren't considered as extra workload by the participants who eagerly and actively took part in the virtual discussions. Pseudonyms are used to refer to the participants in this study.

Table 1 shows participant distribution in each group as well as their minimum, maximum and average ages and genders. A total of 34 participants were in the control group while the experimental group included 53 students. Class sizes were determined by the institution and only the volunteers participated in the study, which accounts for the uneven number of students in control and experimental groups. Their average age is nearly the same in both groups.

Table 2 demonstrates the educational backgrounds of the participants in this study. Since the research is conducted at a technical university which mostly has engineering, architecture or

Table 1. *Participant distribution, their ages and genders*

	Female	Male	Age min.	Age max.	Age average
Control group	13	21	17	23	18.2
Experimental group	22	31	17	22	18.4

Table 2. *Educational backgrounds of the control and experimental groups*

	N	STEAM Education	Private High School	Anatolian Public High School
Control group	34	19	5	10
Experimental group	53	27	3	23

science majors, the majority of the participants in both groups received Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (Perales & Aróstegui, 2021) education at high school.

Data Collection Instruments

The Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWB Scale) designed by Ryff & Keyes (1995) was selected due to its focus on both personal, social, and educational aspects of participants’ emotional wellbeing. With 18 items, this seven-point Likert scale includes six subscales: the Autonomy, the Environmental Mastery, the Personal Growth, the Positive Relations with Others, the Purpose in Life Subscale and the Self-Acceptance. Many researchers have lately used both the 42-item PWB Scale and the shortened 18-item version of the PWB Scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995) which is adopted in this research. These PWB Scales were used with American adults from a wide array of ages, including participants from lower SES backgrounds (Curhan et al., 2014). The 18-item PWB Scale was also used with college students of Latin origin (Gloria et al., 2009), Mexican Americans living in Chicago as well as African Americans living in New York (Ryff et al., 2003) since this scale reliably measures the above mentioned six aspects of wellbeing and happiness. It is also noteworthy to highlight that the PWB Scale is currently included in the measuring mobility toolkit of Stanford University (Stanford SPARQ tools, 2024), which are called SPARQ tools because they are digital toolkits that practitioners and educators can often use to spark psychological, behavioral, and societal change.

Figure 1 shows item 5 from self-acceptance subscale and item 6 from positive relations subscale while item 11 is from personal growth subscale.

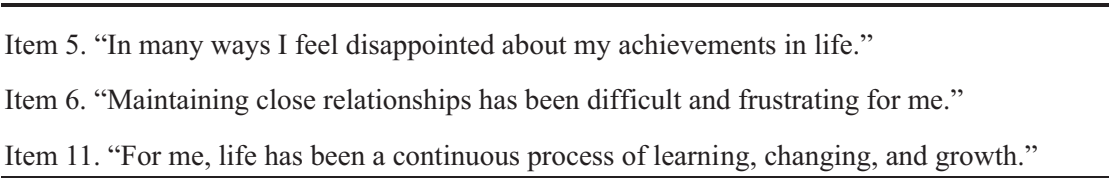


Figure 1. *Sample items from the PWB scale*

Intervention

During the entire semester, both the experimental and the control group followed the same overall teaching curriculum (Appendix A), which includes materials from *Roadmap B1 Coursebook* (Jones & Berlis, 2022), the reading material, *Making Connections Level 1* (Williams, 2013), while the listening and writing materials were compulsory teaching packs including *Essay Building Blocks* (Aydinalp & Cupery, 2022) and compiled listening texts from *Prism 1 Listening and Speaking* (Diamond-Bayir & Russell, 2017). Both groups had the same four instructors for their main course, listening and note taking, reading and academic writing classes. Appendix B contains a sample weekly teaching schedule with learning goals, linguistic aspects and skill-based practices. These constitute a common L2 learning trajectory for the control and experimental groups in this study.

In the first week of the study, learners in both groups completed the PWB scales (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). However, in the first week, the Experimental Group (EG) students first took part in a dialogic instruction workshop led by their instructor, also the first writer of this study. This face-to-face workshop included a presentation with the primary tenets of dialogic education and its goals and applications in L2 instruction. The learners also worked on written prompts which included three kinds of talk with example written dialogues and ground rules for exploratory talk worksheets (Mercer, 2008) while examining the simulating examples of disputational, cumulative and exploratory talk as well as Alexander's (2018) Dialogic Classroom Principles in groups. The aim was to familiarize students with the main principles of dialogic learning and encourage them to agree on the ground rules to ensure genuine and critical dialogic interactions. In the second week, this face-to-face workshop was followed by a discussion of the possible effects of dialogic education on L2 students' learning outcomes in Türkiye in a digital dialogue on Google Classroom which was initiated in the actual classroom and further elaborated on by all the participants at home. They didn't use any translation software as this rule was established by themselves during the workshop. They often used L1 as a scaffolding to gather their thoughts before writing their comments on the Google Classroom. They often collaborated in the use of L2 with regards to vocabulary retrieval and correct grammatical usage. The learning goal of the second week was to help the learners use their L2 while starting to implement different disputational, cumulative and exploratory talk strategies in a whole-class digital discussion about a current issue. Figure 2 illustrates an extract from the first digital dialogue in the second week.

In the third week, current news on the Israel and Palestine war were shared with visuals depicting mostly Turkish people's support for the Palestinians. Students had a digital dialogue on Google Classroom about Turkish people's reactions to the war with the teacher's highlighted suggestion to further share such visual and written resources as screenshots from social media, newspaper articles so as to defend their own stance. The topic of the fourth week was identity deconstruction. This mostly involved trying to deconstruct one's identity using childhood memories, important figures in life etc. During the initial introduction phase in class, the teacher created an ID card on the whiteboard, showing all the different personality traits and roles with which she closely identified. Then, the students asked her questions about how she had come to adopt those traits and roles in her life. Following this teacher modelling, they initiated a group discussion on Google Classroom about what were the significant parts of their cultural, ethnic, and political identities and how they had come to adopt those beliefs, who were the influential people or institutions in their life, who had helped them strengthen these beliefs. The learning goal of the third week was to encourage the learners to adopt the alternative strategy of identity deconstruction to better get to know one another using L2 while implementing problem solving and critical thinking skills in dialogic education. The following

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- Teacher Why or how can dialogic education improve L2 students' educational outcomes?
- Batu We can work in other country in the future.
- Öyktü How does dialogic education help with that, Batu?
- Batu Because it makes us more confident when talking to people.
- Talha Another point, thanks to dialogic education we can be more successful in social life and our career in the future.
- Berk How does it help your social life?
- Talha Students say their ideas in an argument, it makes English better so he/she can easily enter the dialogue in social life.
- Alperen Also in social life, talking with a stranger that speaks native language English will create an ear familiarity and it will help you.
- Teacher Definitely yes, but how about different kinds of talk? Which one is more beneficial for instance?
- Beren I think exploratory talk is more beneficial for us because we are learning something new.
-

Figure 2. *An extract from the first Google classroom dialogue about the possible effects of dialogic education and different kinds of talk on L2 learners*

nine weeks of the intervention were based on the same dialogic intervention structure with these topics for each communicative event:

5. Linguistic imperialism in the world
6. The rationale behind societal and educational rules
7. Religious prejudices in Turkish society
8. Causes of low motivation among university students
9. Causes of the economic crisis in Turkey
- 10–11. Comparing Ibo Dayi Kebab House and Big Chef's Restaurant
- 12–13. Effectiveness of Google Classroom dialogues throughout the fall semester

The last two dialogues lasted longer than the previous ones because of the participants' eagerness and active involvement in these particular communicative events on Google Classroom. Throughout the intervention, participants' collaboration and emotional support for one another increased visibly, which was also evidenced by their own utterances in all dialogues, especially when they commented on the effects of digital dialogues on their learning trajectory in L2. In the fourteenth week of the intervention, both groups completed wellbeing scales again.

Results

Data Analysis

For quantitative data analysis, excel spreadsheets were generated from Google forms that had been used to collect participants' responses for the aforementioned PWB scale. According to

May and Hittner (2010) the ordinary difference or gain score is frequently used in situations where a measure of change is desired, especially when the researcher has a pretest followed by some intervention, then a posttest. Since the experimental design followed the same procedure described by May and Hittner (2010), gain score analysis was conducted. The gain score g is given by $g = x_2 - x_1$ where x_1 is the pretest score, and x_2 is the posttest score (May & Hittner, 2010). This subtraction was conducted for all quantitative measures of the current research, namely pre and posttests of the PWB scale, resulting in wellbeing gain scores for both groups.

After the tests of normality were run using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25) program on the gain scores of PWB scales for both control and experimental groups, Independent Samples T tests were conducted in order to determine the statistical significance of the results.

As for the qualitative data analysis, inductive content analysis (Vears & Gillam, 2022) was conducted using the participants’ self-reported utterances in the ten Google Classroom dialogues regarding their perceptions into the effects of dialogic L2 education on their emotional regulation and social emotional wellbeing in the intervention. Inductive content analysis is a data-sensitive approach (Kyngäs, 2020) since the researcher first identifies open codes independently throughout the entire qualitative data set, then these open codes are merged with other open codes that has similar content to shape sub-concepts, subcategories and subthemes, which can further be combined into concepts, categories and themes. The basic six steps of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) which encompass familiarization with the data, generation of codes, combining codes into themes, reviewing themes, determining significance of themes and reporting of findings, were also followed.

In determining the open codes, the researcher actively sought cues for emotional resilience and regulation as well as signs of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life and competence in managing the environment to pinpoint the impacts of dialogic intervention on learners’ overall state of social emotional wellbeing. Students’ explicit utterances regarding these issues were color coded by both frequency and significance. Figure 3 shows a sample extract from the inductive coding process.

After conducting content analysis and determining the overarching themes, all of the parts and the supporting quotations were revisited by the researcher many times to assure reflexivity, defined as ‘thinking about how our thinking came to be, how pre-existing understanding is constantly revised in the light of new understandings, and how this, in turn, affects our research’ (Haynes, 2012, p.1). Reflexivity was also emphasized since two highly significant elements are embedded within reflexive research: reflection and interpretation according to Alvesson and Skoldburg (2000).

Open Codes	Subthemes	Themes
1. Online freedom on Google Classroom	1. Relishing freedom of speech on an online educational platform.	1. Creating a caring online community through freedom of speech
2. Power to express one's emotions, views		
3. Caring for others' feelings, opinions		
4. Using supportive language to show one's empathy with a classmate	2. Creating a caring online community	
5. Creating a sense of community		

Figure 3. An extract from inductive coding process

Findings

This section includes quantitative findings so as to investigate the impacts of dialogic learning on L2 learners’ social emotional wellbeing as well as qualitative findings to explore L2 learners’ perceptions regarding the effects of dialogic learning on their emotional regulation as well as social-emotional wellbeing.

Impact of Dialogic Learning on L2 Learners’ Social Emotional Wellbeing

Table 3 demonstrates the group statistics of wellbeing gain scores of both experimental and control groups in this study.

Table 3. Group statistics-wellbeing gain scores of experimental and control groups

	Teaching Method	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Wellbeing Gain Scores	1-Experimental	53	4.09	9.32	1.28
	0-Control	34	−1.65	9.58	1.64

Table 4 shows Independent Samples *T* Test results of these gain scores in the same groups. According to the findings in Table 3 and 4, participants in the experimental group ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 9.32$) reported significantly higher levels of social emotional wellbeing than the participants in the control group ($M = -1.65$, $SD = 9.58$), $t(1) = 2.77$, $p < .05$. The effect size, measured by Cohen’s d , is $d = 0.6$ indicating a medium effect.

Table 4. Independent samples test-wellbeing gain scores of experimental and control groups

Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
Equal variances assumed		.26	.60	2.77	85	.007	5.74	2.07	1.62 9.85

Learners’ Perceptions

The first research question of this study aims to find out whether a 14-week dialogic L2 intervention on highly interactive digital landscape can improve social emotional wellbeing of young adult learners who volunteered to participate in the experimental group. However, the second question tries to explore the personal insights of the young adult participants. These students had just come to Istanbul, a bustling metropolitan city, from small cities all

over Anatolia to start college at the time of the intervention. Thus, they were battling through challenging socio-economic conditions due to accommodation and transportation problems of this hectic metropolis. They were also experiencing the academic difficulties of acquiring a second language in their foundation year of an extremely competitive public university throughout the fall semester of 2023–2024 academic year during which this research was conducted.

A detailed inductive content analysis of the learners' utterances in the above-mentioned ten Google Classroom dialogues yielded the following seven themes:

1. Creating a caring online community through freedom of expression
2. Personal growth through discussing socially relevant and critical issues
3. Building self-efficacy through increased practice in the target language
4. Building a more positive outlook through increased foreign language enjoyment (FLE)
5. Recognizing the existence of negative emotions and devising dialogic coping mechanisms
6. Increased autonomy/Independent sense of self in the target language
7. Embracing educational changes and challenges

Creating a Caring Online Community Through Freedom of Expression

This section includes samples from participants' utterances compiled under each theme in this study. The learners asserted that Google Classroom provided a free digital atmosphere in which they could easily express their ideas and respond to each other as valuable members of a caring online community of learners:

I think Google Classroom dialogues are the most useful material this semester. It was nice to talk freely in a free atmosphere. Even though there was also a teacher in the classroom, I shared my thoughts freely. For example, I shared extreme ideas about politics and anything else that I liked. Everyone was respectful. (Oğuz)

At school, we used Google Classroom to improve our writing skills and our ability to read and understand other people's thoughts and now we respond to them in a sensitive way. (Aysun)

As repeatedly highlighted by the participants, freedom of expression, supportive and constructive feedback by their peers and teachers played a significant role as they reified themselves as active members of this online community of dialogic practice.

Personal Growth Through Discussing Socially Relevant and Critical Issues

The participants pointed out an array of different skills, such as their overall thinking capability in L2 and improvement of their writing and speaking skills in addition to vocabulary and grammar knowledge thanks to dealing with socially relevant and critical issues to which they can personally and socially relate.

We talked about many topics such as the economy, current events, wars, technology; thus, we can think in English a little more now. (Elif)

The fact that the dialogue topics are interesting creates a desire to participate in the lesson. I think reading our friends' ideas and reading your quick answers improved our vocabulary and grammar knowledge. It's always fun to use another resource instead of a book. It was nice to do this with competitions as well as Google Classroom. (Baran)

The collaborative choice of topics by all the stakeholders in the dialogic intervention seemed to increase participants' eagerness to get actively involved in the dialogues.

Building Self-efficacy Through Increased Practice in the Target Language

The students contended that dialogic practice provided them with an improved sense of self-confidence as they feel more and more assertive to initiate an L2 conversation and contribute fearlessly to an ongoing dialogue.

Learning new things in these dialogues produced personal self-confidence for me. Self-confidence affects your life positively. (Emirhan)

Dialogue makes people feel comfortable and safe. When people participate in using a second language dialogue, they see other learners, don't feel lonely, and then have confidence in themselves. In this situation, it is easier for them to learn languages. (Berra)

The participants seemed to be aware of the positive role of Google Classroom dialogues not only on their English self-efficacy but also on their overall sense of self-esteem in life.

Building a More Positive Outlook

The learners indicated that dialogic involvement increased their foreign language enjoyment, FLE, and the resulting positive outlook towards L2 classes boosted their eagerness to participate in classroom activities and their regular attendance.

I enjoyed discussing with my friends. Furthermore, it affects our writing and explaining skills positively when we are in an enjoyable and comfortable place. (Akif)

It was fun to talk with my friends, exchange ideas and sometimes joke about our ideas. The activity that improved my vocabulary, which I use in daily life the most, was the "identity card" activity. Also, my favorite and most enjoyable activity was the "İbo Dayı restaurant vs big chef restaurant" dialogue. (Irmak)

I think dialogues helped a lot. We wrote more articles, especially on topics that interested us more. This already shows that when the lessons are more enjoyable, more people will attend. We also had conversations about topics that were interesting to me in both a colloquial and educational manner. I think it improves your vocabulary the most. (Bilgehan)

Building a more positive outlook is a long lasting journey which can be enhanced by dialogic learning experiences as eloquently expressed by the participants.

Recognizing the Existence of Negative Emotions and Devising Dialogic Coping Mechanisms

The students asserted that such negative emotions as loneliness, shyness, depression, low self-confidence can be handled to a certain extent thanks to devising dialogic coping mechanisms in a caring community of peers.

People want to talk, write and hear because we are human and if we are lonely, we will not learn anything because of some psychological issues. What

are the issues? If people are alone, they lose their happiness because they can't share it with anybody. And it brings depression. Can a depressed person learn something? I think, no. What is the main effect of learning alone? It is being a person who doesn't have self-confidence. But if we learn together and care for our friends' ideas, we can discuss these ideas, and we can improve our dialog skills. We are not alone anymore. (Mehmet)

Dialogue makes people feel comfortable and safe. When people participate in using a second language dialogue, they see other learners, don't feel lonely, and then have confidence in themselves. In this situation, it is easier for them to learn languages. (Berra)

The participants elaborated on their chain of logic illustrating how heart-felt dialogues can help alleviate their negative feelings in a vibrant and highly collaborative community during the dialogic L2 intervention.

Increased Autonomy and an Independent Sense of Self in the Target Language

The learners highlighted a newly gained sense of independence in English since they had plenty of opportunities to converse with their classmates in real time in Google Classroom dialogues.

It definitely helped a lot. I didn't say my ideas in the past. Now I'm explaining it comfortably with no help. The reason is Google Classroom dialogue. Although I am not interested in some topics, I loved some topics. Instant dialogue with real users gave me a ready-made answer. It was both a resting activity at the end of the lesson and a learning activity. (Ceren)

Making dialogue with real and familiar users is efficient for us because we become independent. Google Classroom provides this. (Talha)

The facts that conversations happen in real time and L2 learners have to respond as quickly as possible are among the major learner concerns as indicated above. The increased capability for quick responses helped the participants increase their autonomy and eventually create a more whip-smart sense of self in their L2.

Embracing Educational Changes and Challenges

Some of the participants experienced instant communication on a digital platform as an educational activity for the first time in their education life, some others believed that their English proficiency was not adequate to discuss supposedly challenging topics such as politics, yet they learnt to embrace these educational chances and challenges throughout the intervention process. Some other learners also adapted to the dialogic digital platform through increased ambiguity and error tolerance in the SLA process.

First I thought Google Classroom texting didn't affect my speaking so much. Because speaking is about talking faster and speaking fluently, texting on Google Classroom wouldn't make a huge change on my speaking. However, discussing politics was a good idea for explaining skills even though our level wasn't enough to discuss these at the beginning. (Alperen)

I'm using Google Classroom dialogue for the first time for learning a language. For me, it's a good experience to write about topics. Especially

Donerci Ibo vs Bigchef. When we're arguing about it, everyone in the class joined and wrote their thoughts. Other topics are a little bit boring for me, but I was able to write my thoughts about the topics. (Miray)

After I used Google classroom, I started discussions on twitter. I think one problem is grammar mistakes. When I write on Google Classroom and Twitter, I don't care about grammar because I just focus on topics. (Furkan)

The quotations clearly document what kinds of initial concerns the participants had in the beginning of the dialogic intervention and how they managed to overcome these step by step. This personal development journey has the potential to become a relevant example for the other challenges in their lives.

All the themes encompass the participants' insights into the effects of dialogic learning on their emotional regulation as well as their overall state of social emotional wellbeing throughout the dialogic intervention. While the quantitative findings indicate a statistically meaningful increase in L2 students' social emotional wellbeing in favor of the experimental group, the qualitative results shed light on how this increase occurred: i.e. through facilitating and boosting personal growth, language self-efficacy, learner autonomy or embracing educational changes and challenges.

Discussion

The first research question of this study aims to find out whether a 14-week dialogic L2 intervention on a highly interactive digital landscape can improve social emotional wellbeing of young adult learners. The quantitative findings show that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group with a medium effect size. Thus, this study corroborates the positive effects of dialogic education on learners' individual difference variables, including social emotional wellbeing, which are also found in previous research (Davies et al., 2017; Howe & Mercer, 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

The current study was conducted in a socio economically and academically challenging tertiary context. Several other studies (Backhaus et al., 2020; Baik et al., 2019; Dopmeijer, 2021) highlight that a considerable number of learners in higher education are going through such wellbeing issues as psychological and emotional distress in addition to anxiety and depression. Anderson (2024) also indicates that high-performing individuals, such as the high achievers in this study, are prone to feelings of self-doubt, and worry. In this study, dialogic education was introduced as a feel-good digital practice that quantitatively improved the participants' sense of social emotional wellbeing and increased their emotional resilience especially in their foundation year as they tried hard to get used to completely new and demanding physical and academic surroundings. A straightforward pedagogical implication is that dialogic practice can be adopted to improve students' social emotional wellbeing in such harsh higher education contexts worldwide.

The second research question of this study explored learners' perceptions regarding the effects of dialogic education on their emotional regulation and overall state of wellbeing. The third theme from the qualitative data indicated that the participants built self-efficacy through increased practice in the target language on Google Classroom during the dialogic intervention. The fourth, sixth, seventh themes showed that they developed an independent sense of self in their L2 thanks to dialogic practice as they dealt with educational changes and challenges more effectively and started to enjoy their L2 learning journey more and more while contributing to the ongoing discussions. Previous research (Şan & Atay, 2024) also confirms the importance of building self-efficacy beliefs since the students with higher language self-efficacy tend to use

more motivational regulation strategies. In L2 research there is growing interest in positive psychology (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2016). As clearly expressed by Dewaele (2022), positive psychology researchers essentially recognize the fact that people keep experiencing difficulties and challenges in their lives, yet these trying experiences can be complemented with such constructs as wellbeing, hope, flow, courage, happiness, flourishing, optimism, creativity, grit, emotional resilience, strengths, positive emotions, health, emotional creativity, and laughter. In this study, increased FLE helped the participants adopt a more positive outlook in life as indicated in the fourth theme from the qualitative data. The learners also tackled educational difficulties through digital dialogue, which resulted in increased autonomy. A reasonable deduction is that dialogic classroom activities can endeavor to build on one or more of the above mentioned positive psychology constructs in order to boost learning outcomes in all subjects.

The first theme from qualitative findings indicates that the participants in this study managed to create a caring online community as they expressed their viewpoints and how they felt in the dialogic intervention process freely and continuously supported one another on the digital platform through verbal and written words of encouragement. This collaborative dialogue was also evident in León and Castro's study (2017) which investigated the effects of implementing collaborative learning focused on a dialogical approach on seventh graders' interaction and skills of building social awareness and citizenship in an EFL classroom at a public school in Bogotá, Colombia. The exploratory cycles in the pedagogical intervention of León and Castro's research (2017) involved intense dialogues between the students and the staff at their school as well as their own family members as they reflected upon roles, rights, and responsibilities both in their school and families and shared the experience and outcomes of the process in class. The findings of León and Castro's research (2017) indicate that discussing and reflecting on the rights and responsibilities that these learners have in their own contexts paved a new path towards conscientization which is defined as the process in which humans develop a deepening awareness of their reality which shapes their lives and then realize their own capability to transform this reality as cognizant individuals as opposed to passive recipients (Freire, 2002). In the current research, while the participants reflected on and discussed their own roles, rights and responsibilities too, especially in collective Google Classroom dialogues about cultural identity deconstruction, the rationale behind societal and education rules, religious prejudices in Turkish society, and possible causes of low motivation among university students, they also became active members of a caring online community of practice, evidenced in the first theme of the qualitative data. Both studies attest to the fact that dialogic practice can lead learners to form caring and democratic communities.

The second theme from the qualitative results demonstrate that the participants mentioned personal growth thanks to improvement of various different skills, such as their overall thinking capability in L2 and improvement of their productive linguistic skills thanks to dealing with socially relevant and critical issues as they could arouse their interest in online discussions. Dialogic education essentially encourages learners to think deeply and question ideas, to explore novel viewpoints, and to construct their own knowledge in dialogue with their peers as well as teachers (Alexander, 2008). Recent research has demonstrated a natural result of this increased dialogicality in classrooms which become more inclusive thanks to dialogic learning practices, because all students are encouraged to actively participate and assume a meaningful role in the discussions (Lyle, 2008; Mercer & Howe, 2012). This inclusive environment inevitably transforms classroom relationships in a good way, rearranging the traditional power relation between teachers and students (Teo, 2019). In the current study, this shifting power dynamic enabled the empowerment of student voices through synchronous

and asynchronous Google Classroom participation while egalitarian dialogue based on democratic values resulted in all-inclusive digital communities of practice, demonstrated by participants' utterances in the first and second themes from the qualitative data. As a result, the participants developed an increased sense of self-determination and independence and had a feeling of continued self-development thanks to constructing their own knowledge in these dialogues, leading to an increase in autonomy and personal growth sub-scales of the PWB Scale used in this study.

Evidence from the first theme of the qualitative findings shows that the participants received supportive and constructive feedback from their peers and teacher, which played a significant role as they reified themselves as active members of an online community of dialogic practice. This kind of prosocial behavior helped them maintain positive relations with their classmates and teachers, as highlighted in the positive relations with others subscale of the PWB scale. Villardón-Gallego et al. (2018) also conducted a study which examined the improvement of prosocial behaviors and positive psychological functioning of fourth grade elementary students as a result of dialogic literary gatherings based on egalitarian dialogue. Their findings indicated significantly increased levels of prosocial behavior, especially solidarity and friendship dimensions, in the dialogic literary gatherings. In the current study, the teacher-researcher also observed a similar increase in prosocial behavior in the experimental group as the learners were able to reflect together and get involved in collective reasoning in a whole classroom setting just like the dialogic literary gatherings in Villardón-Gallego et al.'s research (2018).

The fifth theme of the qualitative results highlights that the participants reported to develop dialogic coping mechanisms simply by observing and supporting their peers while going through similar tough times so as to cope with such negative emotions as loneliness, shyness, depression, low self-confidence. Aiming for a broad personal development through acknowledging negative emotions and promoting positive ones is another central tenet of positive psychology in education. An action research project undertaken by Higham and De Vynck (2019) aimed at promoting learners' broad personal development and creating an 'ethic of care' (Noddings, 1984) in the classroom thanks to dialogic education. The field researcher, De Vynck devoted over a year of tutor sessions in order to create an atmosphere based on ethic of care which involved gradually forming a culture of openness and mutual support. This kind of care helped students address present and future difficulties through dialogue. The two aspects of this action research were quite similar to the current study. Firstly, the learners from the independent middle school in Higham and De Vynck's study (2019) were negatively affected not only by pressures of poverty but also by high expectations in a very competitive climate, just like the young adult participants in this study. Secondly, the dialogic sessions in the action research were specially designed to aid students' communication skills around sensitive topics and the development of their agency through humane dialogue. Likewise, in the current study, one of the primary goals of the dialogic intervention was to encourage the students to securely discuss emotionally risky personal and moral topics which are not usually found in mainstream ESL curricula. In doing so, both studies tried to focus on the students' emotions, viewpoints, world knowledge and experience, which in turn can decrease the perception of right or wrong answers. This kind of ethic of care has probably fostered openness and honesty in peer-peer and student-teacher relationships and decreased fear of failure. The results of the action research indicate remarkable levels of emotional honesty and a rippling sense of care for others in the dialogue transcripts. Similarly, the creation of an intentional digital dialogic space around present and future challenges in students' every day and academic lives boosted their social and emotional wellbeing significantly in this study. In the Google Classroom dialogues, the participants also recognized the existence of negative emotions such as loneliness, shyness,

depression and low self-confidence and indicated that devising dialogic coping mechanisms in a caring online community of dialogic practice helped them to deal with these to a certain extent.

Conclusions

Social emotional wellbeing of young adult learners who have just started their tertiary education in a developing country is the primary focus in the current research. It is no wonder that these students were going through tough times at the time of the intervention as traditionally, Turkish teenagers leave their family home for the first time in their lives when they start studying at college. Moreover, the local institution is one of the most competitive ivy league public universities in Türkiye. The academic requirements at the school of foreign languages are quite demanding. An additional pressing issue is the ongoing economic crisis in the country, which has increased accommodation and food pricing to an outrageous level especially in Istanbul where this study was conducted. These severe contextual circumstances make it highly essential for any educational innovation to concentrate on increasing the wellbeing and emotional resilience of the students. Both the quantitative and the qualitative findings demonstrated an increase in the L2 learners' social emotional wellbeing with a medium effect size thanks to their perceived improvement in their personal growth through discussing socially relevant and critical issues, self-efficacy through increased practice in the target language, autonomy and an independent sense of self in the target language and a more positive outlook through increased foreign language enjoyment (FLE) in addition to recognizing the existence of negative emotions and devising dialogic coping mechanisms, embracing educational changes and challenges and creating a caring online community through freedom of expression. These improvements in learners' overall state of wellbeing prove that dialogic education conducted over an online platform is in fact a feel-good digital practice.

The limitations of the current research could be related to the dialogic education procedures that were adopted throughout the intervention. As the participants were encouraged to be actively engaged in sustained stretches of talk in digital dialogic space in their L2 and each of these sustained dialogues had an average of 80 participant comments, their existing language proficiency should be somewhere along the lines of A2+, B1 or B1+ levels defined as independent users of the English language by the CEFR (CEFR, 2024, July 17) which indicates that these learners can comprehend the main arguments of clear standard input on familiar issues that they frequently come across at work, school, leisure time, etc. in addition to producing simple connected and cohesive texts on familiar topics which are often of personal interest to them. Otherwise, they would probably switch back to their L1 especially when the discussion gets heated, and they feel an urgency to express their viewpoints in real time in an attempt to answer their classmates.

Another limitation of the study is related to the duration of the intervention. Even though 14 weeks add up to an entire academic semester in the particular tertiary education context of the study, conducting the intervention throughout the entire academic year which lasts 28 weeks would have yielded more reliable results, for the learners in the experimental group were really eager to keep initiating and participating in the digital dialogues on Google Classroom. However, due to institutional regulations, their classes and instructors were shuffled in the second semester, which made the first face to face initiation stage of the dialogic intervention impossible to sustain.

Finally, Price and Murnan (2004) claim that users of research need to be skeptical of the external validity of any single study, which could be a valid assertion as a general rule of thumb because repetition of a study with other participants in a different context can allow

for a more substantial ground for external validity of the original research results. That is why the intervention process and materials were identified and described in considerable detail to illustrate which dialogic procedures each week of the intervention actually entailed. Therefore, young and experienced researchers are especially invited to conduct same or similar dialogic studies using other participants and different instruments in diverse settings because this repetition can not only significantly contribute to the research literature but also may help accelerate the adoption and practical application of dialogic education in language classrooms.

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Appendices

A. Overall Teaching Curriculum

P2-F	Main Course & Listening & Speaking (10)		Reading (4)	Writing (6)
	Roadmap B1 & Compulsory Grammar Pack	Compulsory Listening & Note-taking Pack & Compulsory Speaking Pack	Making Connections 1	Compulsory Writing Pack
Week 1 Oct 2–6	Unit 1a&1b CGP: Present Simple & Present Continuous		Unit 1 Skills and Strategies 1: Finding the Meanings of Words	Chapter 1 Extending Sentences
Week 2 Oct 9–13	Unit 1c CGP: Going to vs Will		Unit 1 Skills and Strategies 2: Finding the Topic of a Paragraph	Chapter 1 Extending Sentences & Chapter 2 Conjunctions
Week 3 Oct 16–20	Unit 2 CGP : Used to vs Would		Unit 2 Skills and Strategies 3: Noticing Parts of Words	Chapter 3 Connecting Sentences
Week 4 Oct 23–27 AWT 1-1 st Draft	Unit 3a& 3c CGP: Present Perfect Simple, Past Simple vs Present Perfect Tense	CLP: Week 4	Unit 2 Skills and Strategies 4: Finding the Main Idea of a Paragraph + Compulsory Extra Reading 1	Chapter 4 Subordinators
Week 5 Oct 30– Nov 3 AWT 1-Final Draft	Unit 4 CGP: Defining Relative Clauses	CLP: Week 5 CSP: Week 5	Unit 3 Skills and Strategies 5: Collocations (Verb + Noun)	Chapter 5 Prepositional Phrases

(Continued)

(Continuation)

P2-F	Main Course & Listening & Speaking (10)		Reading (4)	Writing (6)
Week 6 Nov 6–10	Unit 5	CLP: Week 6	Unit 3 Skills and Strategies 6: Finding Supporting Details + Compulsory Extra Reading 2	Chapter 6 Cause Paragraph
Week 7 Nov 13–17 Cumulative Exam 1 (Nov 16)	Revision Unit 6a&6b CGP: Wish Clauses (Unreal Present)	Revision CSP: Week 7	Revision	Revision
Week 8 Nov 20–24 AWT 2-1 st Draft Counseling	Unit 8	CLP: Week 8	Unit 4 Skills and Strategies 7: Phrases	Chapter 6 Cause Paragraph
Week 9 Nov 27– Dec 1 AWT 2- Final Draft LPT 1	Unit 7	CLP: Week 9 CSP: Week 9	Unit 4 Skills and Strategies 8: Finding Contrasts + Compulsory Extra Reading 3	Chapter 6 Cause Paragraph
Week 10 Dec 4–8	CGP: Noun Clause CGP: Time Clauses	CLP: Week 10	Unit 5 Skills and Strategies 9: Finding the Meanings of Words	Chapter 7 Introduction to Essay Writing
Week 11 Dec 11–15 Cumulative Exam 2 (Dec 13)	Revision	Revision CSP: Week 11	Revision	Revision
Week 12 Dec 18–22	Unit 9a&9c CGP: Passive Voice	CLP: Week 12	Unit 5 Skills and Strategies 10: Finding Causes and Effects + Compulsory Extra Reading 4	Chapter 7 Introduction to Essay Writing

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P2-F	Main Course & Listening & Speaking (10)		Reading (4)	Writing (6)
Week 13 Dec 25–29	Unit 10b CGP: be used to & get used to	CLP: Week 13	Unit 7 Skills and Strategies 13: Collocations	Chapter 7 Introduction to Essay Writing
Week 14 Speaking Exam 1 (Jan 4,5) Jan 1–5	Revision Jan 1, Monday New Year Holiday	Revision	Revision	Revision
Week 15 Jan 8–12	Midyear Exam : Jan 8, Monday Make-up Exam: Jan 9, Tuesday			

B. Sample Weekly Teaching Schedule

Main Course	Reading	Academic Writing
At the completion of this week, students will be able to: - describe habits and routines - get to know someone - describe future plans and arrangements - make prediction about the future - understand a podcast	At the completion of this week, students will be able to: - find the meanings of words from the context, - find the topic of a paragraph, - skim and scan a text to get the gist and to identify specific information.	At the completion of this week, students will be able to: - identify subject, verb and object of sentences, - write a paragraph describing negative and positive sides of places, objects etc.
B1 Roadmap	Making Connections 1	Compulsory Writing Pack
Unit 1 1A Profiles - Reading and Vocabulary - Listening - Speaking 1B Life Maps - Vocabulary and Reading - Grammar - Speaking Compulsory Material: Compulsory Grammar Pack - Present Simple vs Present Continuous (p/1–5) Supplementary Materials: Please see Week 01 on our learning management system	Skills and Strategies 1: Finding the Meanings of Words (p. 2–3) MC1 Unit 1 Reading 1 “Borders on the Land, in the Ocean, and in the Air” / (p. 6–10) PPT MC1 Unit 1 Reading 1 Vocabulary Assignment: MC1 Unit 1 Reading 2 “Walls as Borders” (p. 13–17) MC1 Unit 1 Reading 2 Vocabulary	Chapter 1 Extending Sentences
Grammar Points: - Present Simple and Present Continuous - Be going to and present continuous - Will for prediction		