

*Boredom in the English language classroom:
An investigation of three language learners*

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Abstract

Although boredom is among the most frequently experienced emotions in the L2 classroom, so far it has not received due attention on the part of researchers and teachers (Chapman, 2013; Malkovsky, Merrifield, Goldberg, & Danckert, 2012; Merrifield & Danckert, 2014). Consequently, the present paper seeks to investigate the reasons for student boredom and changes in its levels during four naturally occurring English lessons. It is divided into two parts, the first one provides a definition of boredom, its causes and typology followed by research overview, while the second one discusses the authors' own study. Its participants were three students who scored the lowest, average and the highest on the English Classroom Boredom Scale. The data were gathered by a variety of research instruments (e.g., the English Classroom Boredom Scale, the English Classroom Boredom Grid, the Overall Assessment Scale) and analyzed quantitatively. The findings provided evidence that boredom reported by these individual students had changed both from one lesson to the next and within single classes. These fluctuations were related to such factors as language activities, organization of the lessons or their phases.

Keywords: boredom; boredom proneness; disengagement; complex dynamic systems

1. Introduction

Boredom can be referred to as a negative psychological experience resulting from a lack of activity or being disengaged from an involving activity (Fahlman, 2009; Macklem, 2015).¹ Bored individuals feel disappointed, dissatisfied, annoyed, apathetic and/or inattentive, and very often they are not motivated to do what they have planned before, including task performance (Danckert & Allman, 2005; Fisher, 1993). Boredom is described as an academic emotion for it pervades various learning contexts (Pekrun, Goetz, Daniels, Stupinsky, & Perry, 2010), however teachers usually ascribe it to student anxiety, depression, personality factors or mere laziness (Macklem, 2015) and thus neglect it.

Although well-recognized and researched in the fields of psychology, educational psychology and education, until recently boredom was an empirically underdeveloped and insufficiently understood topic in the L2 classroom (Chapman, 2013). The status of boredom as an underappreciated variable in the L2 learning process is what caused the authors of this paper to conduct a series of studies aimed at exploring its nature and influence on student behavior and work. They show that despite the fact that boredom is a silent emotion, that is, not directly contributing to classroom indiscipline (Fahlman, 2009), it may have serious implications for teaching effectiveness. The present paper is focused on one of these studies, which comparatively discusses three cases of marginally, moderately and highly bored EFL students with special regard to the context-dependent variables causing this experience. The presentation of obtained results is preceded by a brief review of boredom-related theoretical issues.

2. Literature review

2.1. Why are students bored?

There are a number of reasons for student boredom which have been signaled in the theories outlined below.

- The *under-stimulation model* (Larson & Richards, 1991) highlights boredom as resulting from a lack of challenging tasks and too much repetition, which is likely to culminate in the experience of under-arousal.
- The *forced-effort model* (Hill & Perkins, 1985) shows that students can be bored when being compelled to do complex tasks or when feeling anxious. To be more precise, boredom is also a result of investing mental energy in

¹ Boredom tends to be associated with anhedonia, that is, inability to derive pleasure from things and acts regarded by others as pleasurable (Goldberg, Eastwood, LaGuardia, & Danckert, 2011).

tasks which students find monotonous and therefore feel frustrated. This refers to situations when teacher control dominates self-directed learning, meaning that students are expected to smoothly follow teacher instructions and as a result, are given very little freedom of choice and decision.

- The *attentional theory of boredom proneness* (Cheyne, Carriere, & Smilek, 2006; Harris, 2000; LePera, 2011) posits that boredom is caused by a deficit in attention, which is connected with an individual difference in the ability to gain and sustain attentional control. In case a given task does not encourage sustained attention, it loses its meaning and the student's interest as well as motivation decrease to lead to the emergence of a negative emotion of boredom.
- The *control-value theory of achievement emotions* (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun et al., 2010; Tulis & Fulmer, 2013) shows boredom as emerging from and predicted by his or her appraisals of control and value attributed to a task at hand. Boredom can be experienced when an individual has the impression that he or she is unable to take control over his or her work and when he or she does not care about what he or she is supposed to do.
- The *emotion theory* (Eastwood, Frischen, Fenske, & Smilek, 2012) points out that the experience of boredom can be dependent on the extent to which the student is able to identify, understand and communicate his/her own emotions. The more aware he or she is of them and thus the less externally oriented he/she is, the more likely he or she will be to cope with boredom.

2.2. The two main faces of boredom

There can be distinguished two basic types of boredom, namely *trait* boredom and *state* boredom, the former being understood as a proclivity to experience this very emotion, the latter referring to particular contexts when the learning environment is perceived as not arousing sufficient interest or enthusiasm (Vogel-Walcutt, Fiorell, Carper, & Schatz, 2012).

Trait boredom, defined as boredom proneness, characterizes individuals who display increased susceptibility to negative emotions which are experienced by them much more frequently than positive affect (Barnett & Klitzing, 2006). When they find themselves in low arousal situations, it is difficult for them to hold anger and aggression (Dahlen, Martin, Ragan, & Kuhlman, 2004). Boredom proneness is usually ascribed to extraverted and impulsive individuals who are more likely to truant, suffer from eating disorders and abuse stimulants (Gordon, Wilkinson, McGown, & Jovanoska, 1997; Sommers & Vodanovich, 2000).

State boredom has been subject to a lot of research and it concerns the student's perception of his or her surroundings; if he or she finds them as not particularly

stimulating (for instance, the task is too easy or too difficult, teacher-provided instruction is unclear or superficial, the teacher leaves too little room for learner autonomy), the possible outcome may be boredom (Bench & Lench, 2013). The experience of disengagement is an indicator that the student needs to look for a new goal or activity, which would make him or her more involved, excited and/or satisfied. State boredom is a transient emotion that undergoes numerous dynamic and unpredictable fluctuations in response to how the student perceives a given task (Vogel-Walcutt et al., 2012).

2.3. Boredom in the L2 classroom from an empirical perspective

As has been mentioned above, so far there have been very few studies dealing with boredom experienced by L2 students. Speaking in more precise terms, there can be distinguished three studies which, though not directly aimed at investigating boredom, comment on some aspects of this negative emotion (Beermann & Cornjäger, 2011; Jean & Simard, 2011; Peacock, 1997). Finally, there are only six studies primarily concerned with the issue of boredom, one of which refers to the students of German as a foreign language (Chapman, 2013), whereas five others concern the EFL classroom (Kruk, 2016a, 2016b; Kruk & Zawodniak, 2017, 2018; Zawodniak, Kruk, & Chumas 2017).

Beermann and Cornjäger's (2011) research conducted on a group of German learners of French as a foreign language showed that their perceptions of French language instruction significantly and negatively correlated to boredom. Peacock's (1997) study highlighted the relationship between boredom and authentic materials which, in the opinion of the Korean EFL learners, were less engaging than non-authentic materials. Jean and Simard's (2011) study revealed that the Québécois learners of English and French as second languages as well as their teachers viewed grammar instruction as a disliked yet necessary part of the lesson. This led the researchers to point to terms 'boring' and 'effective' as, quite surprisingly, mutually inclusive and justifiably linked in the process of teaching grammar.

Chapman's (2013) study set out to examine the students' of German as a L2 and their teachers' beliefs about boredom in German class. Obtained results uncovered the importance of the subjects' feelings towards their teacher in predicting boredom. Chapman also analyzed bored students' behaviors which she classified into active (e.g., consulting one's planner, writing a list of things to do, reading ahead in the textbook) and passive (e.g., doodling and zoning out, playing with the cell phone).

Kruk's (2016a) study, investigating the dynamic nature of boredom perceived by the senior high school EFL students, revealed changes in the levels of boredom taking place during single classes and from one class to another alike. Kruk also suggested the reasons for the subjects' boredom, which comprised general

boredom proneness and difficult tasks. Another study conducted by Kruk (2016b) sought to examine the fluctuations of boredom, motivation and anxiety levels as experienced by the English Philology students in *Second Life*. The results showed that, similarly to motivation and as opposed to anxiety, boredom levels changed over time and that it had a lot in common with the respondents' enthusiastic attitude towards *Second Life* as a tool for both improving L2 competence and having fun. The focus of Kruk and Zawodniak's (2017) research was boredom experienced by the English Philology students during practical English classes. It indicated the increase in boredom level over time as well as a significant and positive correlation between general boredom proneness and practical English classes-related boredom proneness. As for the reasons for student boredom, it is worth mentioning the activities that did not match the subjects' L2 proficiency level, their repetitive character, the teacher and proposed forms of work. The study conducted by Zawodniak, Kruk and Chumas (2017) among the English Philology students encouraged its authors to opt for a more proactive teacher intervention synonymous with readiness to flexibly react to learner needs and problems. Zawodniak et al. (2017) pointed to the enhancement of self-regulated strategies, implementation of the dialogical approach and feedback provision as good deterrents to student boredom. Yet another present authors' research (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2018) was an extension of one of the aforementioned studies (Kruk & Zawodniak, 2017) in a sense that it was concentrated on the experience of boredom of no more than 15 out of 174 students. Apart from the causes of boredom in practical English classes and fluctuations in its levels, the researchers attempted to gain an insight into the subjects' ways of manifesting and coping with temporary states of disengagement, disinterest and disappointment as well as into possible differences between boredom experienced in practical English classes and other academic subjects. The results showed that the students more actively and innovatively dealt with out-of-school boredom than with its in-school counterpart. Besides, they claimed to have experienced more boredom in connection with theoretical subjects and electives than with practical English classes. All these five studies highlight boredom as a complex dynamic system (Larsen-Freeman, 2016) that is subject to numerous changes caused by other systems which shape the L2 classroom ecology.

3. Method

3.1. Aim of the study and research questions

The main aims of the study, which was exploratory in nature, were to investigate changes in the levels of boredom during English language lessons reported by

students who scored the lowest, average and the highest on the *English Classroom Boredom Scale* (ECBS) (for the description of the instrument see Section 3.4.) and instituting context-dependent variables causing them. The following are research questions of the present study:

1. How do levels of boredom reported by individual students change over the course of a single lesson and from one class to another?
2. Are there any differences in the levels of boredom between these students?
3. What factors are responsible for the changes in boredom levels reported by these three learners?

3.2. Participants

The study participants comprised three students selected from a class of 19 Polish senior high school learners in their second year of a 4-year program. The students had two English lessons a week. Before the study went underway, the subjects' boredom level was measured by means of the *English Classroom Boredom Scale* (for the description of the instrument see Section 3.4.). The lowest score² on the ECBS was obtained by Larry³ (78 points), the average score was achieved by Allan (98 points) and the highest one was attained by Hank (141 points). It should also be noted that the average group score equaled 104 points.

The participants of the study (i.e., Larry, Allan and Hank) were 17-year-old male students. Their mean time of their English instruction prior to the study was 10 years (Larry – 8, Allan – 11 and Hank – 11). On a 1-6 scale, they self-assessed their general English proficiency at: 2 (Larry), 3 (Allan) and 3 (Hank). In addition, for Larry doing long and complicated exercises were the most boring activities in English lessons and he recently felt bored during reading a long dialog. Allan found writing a lot in English classes particularly boring and he pointed to writing a letter as the most boring recent activity. Finally, Hank indicated listening exercises as the most boring activities and solving a set of similar tasks bored him the most recently.

3.3. Lessons

The study was conducted over the period of three weeks and it comprised four naturally occurring English lessons. All the students were taught by their regular English teacher. In addition, they were taught by means of the coursebooks *New Horizons 2* written by Paul Raudley, Daniela Simons and Małgorzata Wieruszewska and published by Oxford University Press in 2011.

² The average score is 99 and the average range 81-117: scores above 117 indicate that a person becomes bored easily - scores below 81 show that a person's boredom threshold is very high.

³ All participant names have been changed.

All the lessons were conducted in a similar manner and comprised five steps: (1) checking homework and a short revision of the material covered in the previous class; (2) teacher presentation and discussion of a new topic; (3) practicing the new material; (4) summing up the most important points of the lesson and (5) setting a new homework assignment. Table 1 offers a detailed description of the four lessons.

Table 1 Lessons, procedures and times

Lesson	Procedure	Time/minutes (approx.)
	<i>Topic: Revision</i>	
1	Organization + Checking homework assignment	1-10
	Grammar: prepositions of place (gap filling exercise)	11-20
	Grammar: whose or who's? (gap filling exercise) + imperative and prepositions of place (sentence completion)	21-30
	Grammar: translating sentences into English	31-40
	Grammar: prepositions of place and movement (gap filling exercise) + Conclusion	41-45
	<i>Topic: London's more expensive than Delhi</i>	
2	Organization + Revision and checking homework assignment	1-10
	Working with a dialog (listening and reading)	11-20
	Comprehension activity (sentence completion)	21-30
	Comparative adjectives (teacher explains the grammar issue, students write a short note)	31-35
	Grammar: completing sentences with the correct form of the given adjectives + Conclusion	36-45
	<i>Topic: Comparative adjectives</i>	
3	Organization + Revision and checking homework assignment	1-5
	Vocabulary: describing places (gap filling exercise)	6-15
	Vocabulary: writing opposites of given adjectives	16-20
	Grammar: comparing things – writing sentences	21-35
	Grammar: comparing things – rewriting sentences (using: not as...as)	36-40
	Conclusion	41-45
	<i>Topic: Can I try it on, please?</i>	
4	Organization + Revision and checking homework assignment	1-15
	Describing a picture (speaking activities)	16-20
	Working with a dialog (completing the dialog with given sentences; listening and checking the answers; reading the dialog in pairs)	21-30
	Superlative adjectives (teacher explains the grammar issue, students write a short note)	31-35
	Grammar: completing a short paragraph with the correct form of the given adjectives + Conclusion	36-45

3.4. Instruments

Data for the study was collected by means of a *background questionnaire*, the *English Classroom Boredom Scale*, the *English Classroom Boredom Grid*, the *Overall Assessment Scale*, and *lesson plans*:

- the *background questionnaire* was used to collect general background information about the participants (their age, years of studying English, self-assessment of English proficiency) and two open-ended questions (*What is the most boring activity for you when it comes to learning English in the classroom?* and *Write about at least one recent situation in*

- which you felt very bored during an English lesson.*); the background questionnaire was completed by the students before the study;
- the *English Classroom Boredom Scale* (ECBS) was used to assess the participants' level of boredom they usually experience in their English class (see Appendix); ECBS comprises 28 7-point Likert scale items; the participants noted their answers on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 - highly disagree to 7 - highly agree); the tool was a modified version of the *Boredom Proneness Scale* developed by Farmer and Sundberg (1986) which is used to assess proneness to boredom in general; the modifications included the change of general statements into ones that were specifically suited to the study participants' English classroom experience (e.g., "Time always seems to be passing slowly" → "Time always seems to be passing slowly in English classes" or "I am often trapped in situations where I have to do meaningless things" → "I often have to do repetitive or monotonous things in English classes"); Cronbach's alpha amounted to 0.76; ECBS was completed by the students prior to the study;
 - the *English Classroom Boredom Grid* (ECBG) required the students to indicate the level of their boredom four times in a lesson (i.e., in minutes 10, 20, 30 and 40) on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum); ECBG was completed by the learners during each lesson;
 - the *Overall Assessment Scale* (OAC) requested the subjects to assess each lesson; it was a modified version of the instrument used by Pawlak (2012); the instrument consisted of seven items (e.g., boring vs. interesting, unpleasant vs. pleasant, monotonous vs. absorbing); each item was scored on a scale of 1 (the most extreme negative response) to 7 (the most extreme positive response); a low score on the scale is indicative of high boredom; the internal consistency reliability of the instrument for the first lesson was established by calculating Cronbach's alpha which equaled 0.92; OAC was completed by the learners at the end of each lesson;
 - the *lesson plans* – their purpose was to provide information concerning the lessons (e.g., stages, modes of work, activities).

Given the study participants' English proficiency levels, the tools were prepared in their mother tongue (Polish) to eliminate the possibility of misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

3.5. Data analysis

The data collected by means of the above-mentioned instruments were analyzed quantitatively. In order to find out the participants' of the study general level of boredom in the English language classroom, the total of the scores they

gave each question on the *English Classroom Boredom Scale* was added up. Some of the items were key-reversed so that a high score on this measure would indicate a high level of boredom. As far as the data obtained by means of the *English Classroom Boredom Grid* is concerned, they were handled by Excel. The data points for each class were listed per subject. For each of the participants, the ECBG data were then entered into a graph. Three separate graphs were created – one for each student – showing different levels of boredom experienced by the learners during the lessons in question. In these graphs, time was indicated on the horizontal axis in steps of ten minutes. The vertical axis presented the three participants' level of boredom, according to ECBG. Next, the variations in the levels of boredom were related to the different parts of the lessons, modes of work, tasks and activities performed during them. Finally, the data gathered by means of the *Overall Assessment Scale* involved calculating means and standard deviations for each participant/lesson.

3.6. Results

Larry

As shown in Figure 1, Larry reported a steady level of boredom throughout the four English lessons. A bit higher and lower levels of boredom were only observed at the beginning of lessons 2 and 4 as well as lesson 2, respectively (see Figure 1). These higher and lower levels of boredom were linked with activities related to organization and checking homework assignments.⁴

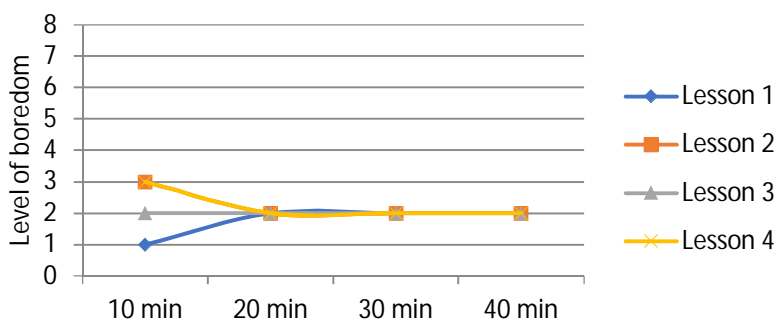


Figure 1 Changes in the levels of boredom during lessons for Larry

When it comes to the changes in the levels of boredom from one lesson to the next, they were assessed on the basis of the student's evaluations of the four classes. As can be seen in Table 2, the student's assessments of all the lessons

⁴ For the detailed description of the four lessons see Section 3.3 and Table 2.

were high since they never dropped below the value of 5.86. Nevertheless, Larry experienced some boredom in the lesson related to the revision of grammar (lesson 1). The learner felt most engaged in the class (4) devoted to practicing a variety of language skills (e.g., speaking, writing, grammar).

Table 2 Means and standard deviations for the students' overall evaluation of all lessons

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4
	Mean (SD)			
Larry	5.86 (0.69)	6.29 (0.49)	6.29 (0.49)	6.43 (0.53)
Allan	5.29 (0.76)	6.00 (0.00)	6.86 (0.38)	4.00 (0.00)
Hank	4.71 (1.80)	5.00 (1.15)	3.14 (1.07)	5.71 (1.98)

Allan

As can be seen in Figure 2, the levels of boredom reported by this learner underwent some changes in lessons 1, 2 and 4. In more specific terms, Allan experienced the highest levels of boredom at the beginning of lesson 2 (the part of the lesson devoted to organization, revision and checking homework), at the end of lesson 1 (the part of the class dedicated to prepositions of place and movement – gap filling exercise) and in the last 15 minutes of lesson 4 (the part of the lesson focused mainly on listening to the teacher explaining a grammar point, writing a short note and related grammar activity). Conversely, the lowest levels of boredom were reported by this learner at the start of lesson 4 (the part of the lesson devoted to organization, revision and checking homework) and the end of lesson 2 (the part of the lesson focused on completing sentences – a grammar exercise). A low and steady level of boredom was reported by Allan during the entire lesson 3 (the class concentrated on vocabulary and grammar activities).

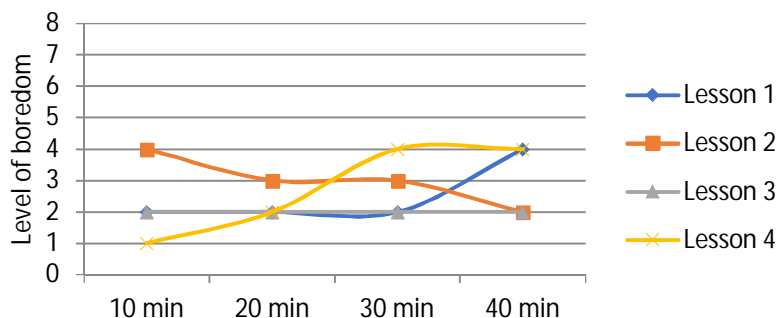


Figure 2 Changes in the levels of boredom during lessons for Allan

As can be seen in Table 2, the student's evaluation of the lessons varied. Allan was the most and the least bored in lesson 4 and 3, respectively. The

difference in the means between these two classes amounted to 2.86. When it comes to lesson 4, it was devoted to practicing a variety of language skills and a short grammar activity. Lesson 3, in its entirety, dealt with language subsystems, i.e., vocabulary and grammar (see Section 3.3. and Table 1).

Hank

Hank's levels of boredom varied considerably in each lesson. As for lesson 1, the lowest levels of boredom were reported by Hank in minutes 10 (2 points) and 30 (1 point). These parts of the lesson were devoted to organization and checking homework as well as grammar (see Table 1). The most boredom was experienced by Hank in minutes 20 (3 points) and 40 (7 points), i.e., during grammar activities. As Figure 3 demonstrates, Hank reported the least boredom (1 point) at the start of lesson 2 (organization, revision and checking homework) and then he gradually started to feel slightly more bored. The student declared most boredom at the end of the lesson, i.e., during the grammar activity (3 points). Hank experienced the highest levels of boredom throughout the entire lesson 3 (see Figure 3). This is visible in the fact that the lowest and highest levels of boredom reported by Hank in this very class equaled 5 and 7 points, respectively. More specifically, in lesson 3 the experience of boredom was the lowest in minutes 10 and 20 (the parts of the class involving organization and checking homework as well as grammar exercises) and the highest at the end of it (the part of the class which dealt with prepositions of place and movement – gap filling exercise). Finally, during lesson 4, the learner felt the most boredom at the beginning and end of this very class (organization and checking homework / solving a grammar activity) and he felt the least bored in the middle of it (working with a dialog, listening to the teacher explaining a grammar issue and writing a short note).

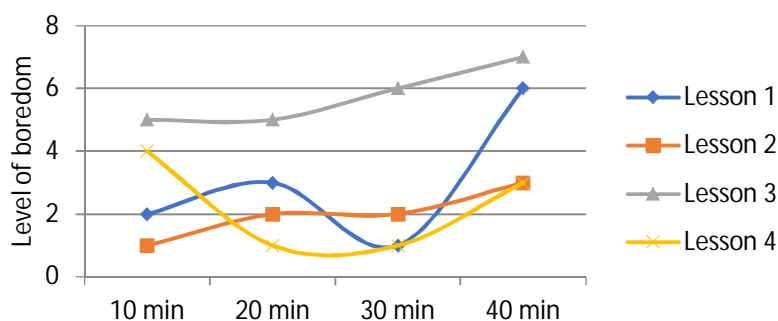


Figure 3 Changes in the levels of boredom during lessons for Hank

As regards Hanks's evaluation of the four lessons, it was the lowest for lesson 3, that is, the class was the most boring for Hank, and the highest for lesson 4 (see Table 2). The difference in the means between these lessons equaled 2.57.

4. Discussion

4.1. Research question 1

As regards levels of boredom over the course of a single lesson, it has to be noted that in each of the three cases there were some changes. Larry's levels of boredom remained relatively steady and low with the exception of the initial twenty minutes of the classes. Concerning the levels of boredom experienced by Allan and Hank, they fluctuated mildly in the former and dramatically in the latter.

As for the changes in boredom levels observed from one class to another, they were reported to be the highest in lessons 2 and 4, and the lowest in lesson 1 for Larry, while Allan was most bored at the beginning of lesson 2 and towards the end of lessons 1 and 4, and least bored at the initial part of lesson 4 and in the final part of lesson 2. As far as Hank's changes in the levels of boredom are concerned, they were the highest throughout lesson 3 and the lowest at the very start of lesson 2.

4.2. Research question 2

It has to be admitted that the patterns of boredom considerably differed in each of the three subjects. Larry was clearly the least bored subject and at the same time, his experience of boredom was steady as compared to that of Allan and Larry.

It has to be indicated that the level of boredom experienced in lesson 3 was steady, that is, equally low for Larry and Allan, whereas in the case of Hank it was much higher and more changeable. It is also noteworthy that the results obtained from the *English Classroom Boredom Grid* were compatible with the findings from the Overall Assessment Scale. Lastly, the least bored student's, Larry's, mean time of English instruction was shorter than Allan's and Hank's, and he assessed his general English proficiency lower than Allan and Hank assessed theirs.

4.3. Research question 3

There can be distinguished some factors likely to account for the changes in boredom levels experienced by the three subjects, their nature being both psychological and linguistic.

Concerning Larry, that is, the least bored student, it has to be noted that he was equally involved in the majority of activities of different types (e.g., grammar exercises, working with a dialog, translating sentences). The possible reason might be that he reached a higher degree of learner autonomy than his two classmates and thus understood that learning a language is a lifelong process that requires a lot of effort, time and patience even though one has to do

what he or she is not necessarily interested in (Benson, 2001). Apparently, Larry was more engaged with language, having a positive attitude towards it and focused attention, despite the fact that he did not like some of the activities (e.g., reading a long dialog) (Svalberg, 2009). Generally, Larry persevered in doing most tasks and in all likelihood, was determined to achieve his goals.

As for Allan and Hank, whose experience of boredom underwent more fluctuations than in the case of Larry, one might have the impression that they made fewer efforts to overcome a feeling of boredom. They seemed to follow their own preferences for particular activities and when exposed to disliked tasks (e.g., writing a short note for Allan and a sequence of routine grammar activities for Hank), their behaviors and reactions were simply indicative of disengagement. This may indicate that those two respondents' learning was not particularly self-regulated, thus lacking a strategic orientation towards encountered problems (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989).

It might be assumed that the subjects' boredom was also shaped by some personality factors including foreign language anxiety, inhibition or extraversion/introversion as well as by their motivation and learning styles like field dependence/independence, or ambiguity tolerance. Yet another reason for fluctuations in the levels of student boredom might be external factors and among them the respondents' tiredness or the class schedule details like the subjects taught before the English lesson. However, given the quantitative design of the present study and a very small number of respondents, these can be only speculative reflections. Finally, a common thread shared in the experience of all three students is that they felt least bored at the beginning of classes which can be explained by high expectations that they might have had and curiosity about what they would be encouraged to do. Nevertheless, it has to be asserted that in the case of Allan and Hank the initial enthusiasm did not translate into lower levels of boredom during the rest of classes, which might be associated with insufficiently developed and/or exploited meta-cognitive skills and self-determination.

5. Limitations of the study

The interpretation of the above-presented findings is limited by certain methodological constraints connected with the selection and use of research instruments. Consequently, the study drew in its entirety on the quantitative measurement of data, which did not contribute to its reliability. A recommendable direction for future studies could be the adoption of a mixed-methods approach enabling a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools that would lead to a cross-verification of obtained results, thus allowing potential researchers to look at boredom from a wider, both insider and outsider perspective. As for the qualitative dimension of research into boredom in the L2 classroom, interviews,

case studies, participant observation and think-aloud protocols might be a reasonable choice since it would result in the examination of possible relationships between this negative emotion and a variety of cognitive as well as affective learner variables. Finally, it has to be underlined that the limitation of the present study is also a small number of students under investigation. However, it does not have to be a disadvantage provided that case study procedures are undertaken so as to give an in-depth, close-to-the-data, descriptive picture of bored individuals.

6. Conclusions

Through the quantitative examination of three senior high school learners, the study has discovered noticeable changes in the levels of boredom experienced by two subjects and a tendency to keep its level steadily low by one student. It is also worthwhile to signal differences in the patterns of boredom displayed by the same two respondents over a length of all the lessons. It might be presumed that the subjects' boredom was caused by some internal and external factors indicated above and calling for the triangulation of data. It can be explicitly stated that in light of the present study, boredom emerges as one of the many complex dynamic, spatially and temporally situated systems that constitute L2 classroom learning and teaching practice. Undoubtedly, it is a system that deserves further reflection and mixed-methods investigation.

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Appendix

The English Classroom Boredom Scale (Polish version)

1. Z łatwością koncentruję się na wykonywanych czynnościach, kiedy uczę się języka angielskiego w szkole.
2. Kiedy uczę się angielskiego w szkole, często martwię się o inne sprawy.
3. Czas zawsze wolno płynie, kiedy jest angielski.
4. Często mam wrażenie, że nie mam co robić na lekcjach angielskiego.
5. Na lekcjach angielskiego często znajduję się w sytuacjach, w których muszę robić rzeczy, które nie mają znaczenia.
6. Kiedy nauczyciel angielskiego tłumaczy lekcje, nudzę się straszliwie.
7. Podczas lekcji często myślę o rzeczach niezwiązanych z angielskim.
8. Zwykle nie nudzę się na lekcjach angielskiego.
9. Wiele rzeczy, które muszę robić podczas lekcji angielskiego cechuje powtarzalność i monotonia.
10. Ucząc się angielskiego potrzebuję więcej stymulacji do działania niż większość moich kolegów z klasy.
11. Większość rzeczy, które robię podczas lekcji angielskiego sprawia mi wielką frajdę.
12. Rzadko ekscytuje mnie to co robię na lekcjach języka angielskiego.
13. Zazwyczaj potrafię znaleźć coś co mnie zainteresuje, jak uczę się angielskiego w klasie.
14. Podczas lekcji angielskiego przez większość czasu po prostu siedzę i nic nie robię.
15. Potrafię cierpliwie uczyć się angielskiego.
16. Nauka języka angielskiego często mnie nudzi.
17. Podczas lekcji angielskiego jestem niespokojny (np. jestem niecierpliwy, wiercę się, itp.).
18. Często mam nowe pomysły jak uczyć się angielskiego.
19. Trudno byłoby mi znaleźć jakieś ćwiczenie na lekcjach angielskiego, które byłoby dla mnie wystarczająco ekscytujące.
20. Chciałbym rozwiązywać bardziej wymagające zadania na lekcjach języka angielskiego.
21. Czuję, że przez większość czasu na lekcjach angielskiego pracuję poniżej moich zdolności.
22. Można o mnie powiedzieć, że na lekcjach angielskiego jestem osobą kreatywną i z wyobraźnią.
23. Mam tyle zainteresowań, że nie mam czasu, by zawsze uczyć się angielskiego.
24. Spośród moich kolegów z klasy jestem tą osobą, która wykonuje zadania najdłużej.
25. Na lekcjach angielskiego jestem raczej bierny.
26. Potrzebuję wielkiej zmiany i różnorodności, by czuć się naprawdę zadowolonym na angielskim.
27. Lekcje angielskiego są zawsze takie same. Robi się to nieciekawie.
28. Wcześniej (tj. w gimnazjum lub w niższych klasach) podczas lekcji angielskiego często znajdowałem się w monotonicznych i nużących sytuacjach.