

# 学位論文の要約

論文題目 Cultivating Mindful Language Learners: Investigating Mindfulness and Meditation in University Foreign Language Education

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The substantial changes in higher education in recent years (EAHEA, 2023) have made it challenging for students to find a balance between their well-being and academic workload (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025). Together with the growing technological “information overload,” this has alarmingly increased students’ stress levels and worsened concentration capabilities (Misra & Stokols, 2012; Reynolds, 2013; Rivera et al., 2019). To address these issues, significant institutional reforms seem to be imperative (OECD, 2019; Laukkonen et al., 2020). As mindfulness has been shown to be effective in raising students’ academic achievement (Chiang & Sumell, 2019), prosocial behavior (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015), creativity (Lebuda et al., 2016), and psychological well-being (González-Martín et al., 2023), it has increasingly gained attention within pedagogical research as a holistic approach to education.

However, despite the various benefits of mindfulness in education, surprisingly little is known about its relationship with foreign language learning (and teaching). To fill this gap, this dissertation investigates the possible benefits of mindfulness in university foreign language classes. In addition, the aim is to contribute to the fields of mindfulness research and language teaching methodologies. The findings and ideas of the dissertation will hopefully improve students’ learning experience as well as their well-being. For this dissertation, the following research question (RQ) was developed:

*Can meditation improve foreign language courses at the university level,  
and if so, how?*

To refine and specify this overarching RQ, the following research objectives have been created to investigate a range of potential improvements in foreign language teaching:

- Examine the impact of meditation on academic achievement.
- Assess how meditation influences students' mood.
- Explore the effect of meditation on student motivation.
- Analyze the role of meditation in impacting students' mindfulness.
- Investigate students' perceptions of the classroom climate post-meditation.
- Understand students' perceptions of the meditation.
- Determine the influence of the frequency and length of the meditation period.
- Examine students' acceptance towards meditation in foreign language classes.
- Investigate the relationship between students' mindfulness and vocabulary retention.
- Offer practical strategies for language teachers on how to integrate mindfulness into their teaching.

These objectives build the structure of this thesis in order to understand the complex interaction between mindfulness and foreign language learning more thoroughly. Although each of the five studies in this dissertation addresses distinct sub-research questions, these objectives make it easier to combine the findings of the studies and draw broader conclusions. The dissertation unfolds over eight chapters:

Chapter 1 introduces current challenges in higher education and gives a short glimpse of the potential of mindfulness to tackle some of these problems. The chapter identifies a substantial research gap about the relationship of mindfulness with foreign language learning and teaching; it ends with the presentation of the research objectives and an overview of the purpose and scope of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth literature review. It presents a historical overview of meditation and mindfulness and then looks into their relationship with language learning. This exploration includes consciousness, awareness, attention, the self, and the role of motivation and investment in language learning. The chapter discusses both the benefits and critiques of mindfulness in education; it also gives an overview over the limits and limitations of

mindfulness in general. Further, mindfulness's impact on mood, stress, concentration, academic performance, and classroom climate, creativity, as well as its integration into teacher development programs is also explored. The chapter closes with an overview of the five empirical studies of this thesis.

Chapter 3 (Study 1) presents a quasi-experiment with 75 students over two semesters. The conducted study compared the impact of two meditation methods (guided and counting) on academic achievement and mindfulness, as well as students' perceptions of the meditations. The findings revealed that meditation, irrespective of the technique, significantly improved both test outcomes and mindfulness levels over time. Importantly, students perceived the meditations very positively, though the subjective experiences varied according to the meditation method.

Study 2 in Chapter 4 examines the effects of meditation within a single semester, which is a common duration for language courses at some universities. This quasi-experiment with 136 students used a cross-over design to evaluate how two meditation techniques (guided and counting) at different frequencies impact language learning. A unique aspect of this study was the post-summer break switch of the intervention methods, which enabled a more detailed comparison of the effects and frequencies of each meditation method. It was found that guided meditation had a more immediate effect within a single semester, while the counting method seemed to need more time to show significant benefits. Also, the intervention change in the following semester did not show any carry-over effects. Implications for how to incorporate meditation into different class structures are offered.

Chapter 5 (Study 3) builds upon the previous two chapters by combining the samples from Studies 1 and 2 with additional first-year students, resulting in a relatively huge cohort of 366. This quasi-experimental study went beyond evaluating the impact of meditation on students' mindfulness levels and their perception of the practices; it also examined their influence on mood, motivation, and classroom climate. Key findings from this study indicated that regular meditation at the beginning of the class led to better mood and higher overall mindfulness. Furthermore, meditation seemed to shift the focus towards intrinsic motivation and contribute

to a classroom climate where students can focus more easily. This study helps to better understand the impact of meditation on further important language learning factors.

Chapter 6 (Study 4) presents a mixed-methods study with 110 students to investigate students' acceptance of meditation exercises in the foreign language classroom and the key factors for acceptance. Besides quantitative data, *Qualitative Content Analysis* (Kuckartz, 2019) was used to analyze responses from open-ended questionnaires. Through triangulation, highly valid and reliable data could be gained. The findings revealed a very strong acceptance by students and found that concentration and relaxation are the primary factors for students' positive evaluation. Interestingly, the acceptance levels did not differ significantly between the meditation methods (guided and counting). Additionally, the study found a strong correlation between students' perceptions of the benefits of meditation and their willingness to continue practicing it. Further, it looked into the cultural nuances and their impact on acceptance. For example, students associated the Japanese term 瞑想 more with religious connotations compared to the English loanword メディテーション. Practical recommendations are offered for teachers interested in using meditation in their teaching.

Chapter 7 (Study 5) is an important first step in exploring the specific relationship between mindfulness and language learning. This quantitative study with 269 participants examined the direct connection between students' mindfulness levels and short-term vocabulary retention. The results revealed a positive correlation between higher mindfulness levels and improved vocabulary retention. A key finding was that different mindfulness facets influenced the recall of receptive (L1) and productive (L3) vocabulary differently. This suggests a distinct impact of mindfulness on these types of vocabulary knowledge. Interestingly, mindfulness seemed to be more strongly associated with productive vocabulary than with receptive vocabulary or grammatical gender accuracy. Further, specific mindfulness facets were found to correlate differently with vocabulary retention. For example, "Acting with Awareness" appeared to be the most important predictor for all test outcomes, and "Nonjudging" had a strong correlation

with productive vocabulary, whereas “Observing” showed a stronger correlation with receptive vocabulary. These findings imply that mindfulness affects various aspects of vocabulary learning differently, which may be useful for creating more targeted mindfulness exercises for language learning.

Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation by synthesizing all findings. It takes a look into the relationship between mindfulness and important constructs in language learning, e.g., motivation, foreign language anxiety (FLA), and willingness to communicate (WTC). A highlight of this chapter is the introduction of the originally developed framework: “Foreign Language Mindfulness.” This innovative framework focuses on the deliberate promotion of mindfulness in language learning and teaching. The key elements of the framework include *Mindfulness of Errors*, *Mindfulness of Gaps*, *Mindfulness of Language Emotional Responses*, and *Mindful Language Learning Management*. However, this chapter does not remain purely theoretical. It is also meant as a starting point for teachers who are interested in incorporating mindfulness into their actual teaching. It offers various examples and ideas that encourage the practical application of the “Foreign Language Mindfulness” framework. Thus, it hopes to make the incorporation of mindfulness in university classrooms as easy as possible and to motivate teachers to add mindfulness to their “holistic teaching toolkit.”