

## **Abstract**

The present thesis examines the differences in word processing and evaluation between monolingual German speakers and bilingual Czech-German speakers with respect to two emotional dimensions – valence (positive/pleasant vs negative/unpleasant) and arousal (high level of activation vs low level of activation). This is done on the basis of two psycholinguistic concepts which propose a connection between the level of perceived word emotionality and the context in which it was learned and used – the reduced emotional resonance in L2 and emotional context of learning hypotheses.

A psycholinguistic experiment was conducted with 16 German monolinguals and 19 Czech-German bilinguals. Participants from both groups were asked to rate a presented German word from the same list on a two-dimensional emotional scale, while at the same time they were being monitored by the fNIRS method for differences in brain activity in relevant cortical areas.

The measured ratings of valence did not significantly differ between the two groups, while the ratings of arousal were significantly higher in the bilingual group. The bilinguals did not differ from each other in the levels of arousal as a function of their age of learning German.

The findings were interpreted as broadly consistent with the assumptions of the two selected psycholinguistic hypotheses – the emotionality levels of bilingual participants signifying sufficiently emotional context of learning and use. However, because the neuroimaging data could not be used to confirm the behavioural data due to a technical error and because of the small number of participants, the generalisability of the present findings is limited.

**Key words:** bilingualism, emotional words, fNIRS, Czech, German, arousal, valence