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Emotions in Language Learning: Understanding Foreign Language Enjoyment and Anxiety in Higher Education

The significant role of emotions in learning was reemphasized during school and university closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, upon returning to campus, cognitive learning outcomes have reclaimed a dominating position in the university curriculum, while affective learning appears to have been disregarded. The present study contributes to the discussion on the significance of social-emotional learning in higher education. Therefore, the primary objective of this inquiry is to trace the perceived levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) in order to understand factors which contribute to their emergence. The research sample comprises 108 Polish university students majoring in English and enrolled in a bachelor's programme. The findings demonstrate that language enjoyment is more prevalent among participants than language anxiety. The causes of language enjoyment are associated with teacher-student and peer-peer interactions as well as the classroom atmosphere, while language anxiety is reported to be linked to the fear of negative evaluation of students' academic performance, test anxiety, and communication apprehension. These results



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suggest that English Department students are not exempt from experiencing language classroom anxiety, and engaging in practical English classes may be a source of a range of positive and negative emotions.

Keywords: emotions, foreign language learning, enjoyment, anxiety, higher education

Słowa kluczowe: emocje, nauka języka obcego, przyjemność, lęk, szkolnictwo wyższe

1. Introductory remarks

The role of emotions in second language learning was widely considered to have been neglected by scholars (Aragão, 2011; Dewaele, Li, 2020; Pekrun et al., 2002). Only since the 1970s have researchers started to acknowledge a connection between emotions and the quality of language learning and performance (e.g. Chastain, 1975; Swain, 1977; Swain, Burnaby, 1976). Until then, affective factors had been considered the “converse of cognitive variables” (Scovel, 1978: 129). They were seen as having an insignificant impact on learning due to the fact that they were unrelated to cognition. Scovel, on the other hand, recognised that cognitive learning is shaped by positive and negative emotions. Following on from this proposition, he viewed anxiety as a strongly contributing factor that has both a facilitating and debilitating effect on language learning. It is to be noted that at approximately the same time, Krashen (1982) proposed the Affective Filter Hypothesis, enumerating motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety as affective factors that generate success in the foreign language classroom. During the following years, most studies focused exclusively on the effects of anxiety, disregarding the impact of emotions such as enjoyment and satisfaction (see e.g. MacIntyre, Gardner, 1991, 1994; Phillips, 1992, among others). However, with the emergence of positive psychology, the scope of academic interest began to expand to include positive emotions as well. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of studies of emotion in the field of SLA (see e.g. Barrios, Acosta-Manzano, 2022; Bielak, 2022; Boudreau et al., 2018; Fang, Tang, 2021; Su, 2022, among many others).

Consequently, Dewaele and Li (2020) distinguish three phases of emotion study in SLA. The first phase, referred to as the Emotion Avoidance Phase, covers the period spanning from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s. During this phase, the research emphasis was put almost exclusively on cognitive factors, while emotions in SLA were regarded as ‘illogical’. The second phase, labelled the Anxiety-Prevailing Phase, transpired between the middle of the 1980s and the early 2010s and arose from the recognition of

the intertwined relationship between emotions and cognition and stressed the central role of emotions in language learning. Moreover, sole emphasis was placed on the negative emotion of anxiety. The final phase began in the early 2010s and has been designated as the Positive and Negative Emotions Phase. This period is characterised by a growing interest in the psychology of SLA, which, in turn, contributed to an increasing awareness of both positive and negative emotions involved in the process of language learning.

Currently, there is widespread recognition that language learning evokes a spectrum of both negative and positive emotions (Shao et al., 2019). Positive emotions, apart from contributing to cognitive learning, are considered to greatly enhance overall happiness, well-being, as well as the personal growth and intellectual development of learners (Fredrickson, 2001). Furthermore, positive attributes such as empathy, courage, and high self-esteem can aid in overcoming learning obstacles, leading to improved outcomes in language learning. In second language acquisition, which entails a long-term process demanding constant effort, motivation, and resilience, these positive emotions seem to be of primary importance (MacIntyre et al., 2019). In contrast, negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and embarrassment can hinder the language learning progress (Horwitz et al., 1986). Language learners who experience high levels of anxiety may encounter challenges in recalling vocabulary, articulating their thoughts, and engaging in communicative activities. For example, Pekrun et al. (2002) observed that positive emotions such as enjoyment correlate with high academic performance, whereas unpleasant emotions, such as test anxiety, may predict low academic achievement.

Lately, the importance of emotions in learning has received renewed attention due to the deteriorating impact that school and university closures triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic had on students' social-emotional learning (see e.g., Hamilton, Gross, 2021; Kohls et al., 2021; Visser, 2021; Wang et al., 2023; Yorke et al., 2021, for a review). It is also worth noting that upon returning to campus, cognitive learning outcomes again reclaimed their dominant place in the university curriculum, while affective learning appears to remain overlooked. Recent studies conducted at Polish universities concluded that students not only recognise their social learning needs but also identify their emotional needs with a high degree of precision (see e.g. Łodej, Łodej, 2021, 2023; Osmoła, 2023, for a reference)¹. When these

¹ This paper is based on the master's thesis by Agnieszka Osmoła titled „The levels of foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety in English major students in Poland: Replication research”, written under the supervision of Dr. Monika Łodej and defended in 2023 at the Institute of Linguistics and Literary Studies of Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce.

needs are addressed, students report gains in knowledge, along with high levels of motivation and self-efficacy. This leads to overall satisfaction with the academic experience, which, in practise, translates to a more favourable evaluation of the course and instructor and can inform students' further educational choices. Therefore, delving deeper into students' emotions is crucial for better comprehending their role in foreign language classroom in higher education, particularly among students in English Departments, where the attitude towards learning a target language is presumed to entail predominantly positive emotions.

2. Foreign Language Enjoyment

Over the past few decades, the concept of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) has evolved significantly, transforming into a pivotal factor in emotional learning research (Shirvan et al., 2020). Moreover, its positive impact on foreign language proficiency has been described in numerous studies (Zhang et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding and fostering language enjoyment among foreign language learners has become an important research goal in the field of Second Language Acquisition. Overall, enjoyment is characterised as a complex emotion that reflects the human desire for success when confronted with difficult tasks (Dewaele, MacIntyre, 2016). Consequently, learning enjoyment is the feeling of satisfaction that arises when a learner has a favourable perception of the learning materials and feels confident in their ability to effectively engage with and accomplish given tasks (Mierzwa, 2019a). Hence, foreign language enjoyment (FLE) is defined as "the feeling of excitement and/or a spontaneous joy derived from participation in a novel and challenging foreign language activity that arouses learners' curiosity and generates interest" (Mierzwa, 2019a: 172).

Studies have revealed a correlation between high levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and a number of positive learning outcomes. For instance, an investigation conducted by Dewaele and MacIntyre in 2016 concluded that students with higher levels of FLE exhibited lower levels of foreign language anxiety. Moreover, a 2018 study by Khajavy et al. indicated that high levels of FLE are associated with an increased eagerness to communicate in a foreign language. Yet another study found that students who reported higher levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) achieved better academic performance (Jin, Zhang, 2021). Additionally, research carried out by Zhang et al. (2020) revealed that high levels of FLE positively contributed to individuals' views of their self-perceived foreign language

proficiency. In addition, foreign language enjoyment has been proven to be a motivating factor for learners to delve deeper into the language and has a positive influence on their capacity to persist and overcome challenges in the long term (Zhang et al., 2020). These findings suggest that having higher levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) in the foreign language classroom may have multiple positive effects. Among these are the reduction of language anxiety, the enhancement of communication willingness, and the improvement of academic performance.

One of the significant benefits attributed to FLE is its capacity to boost learners' motivation and active participation in the learning process (Méndez-López, Aguilar, 2013; Zhang et al., 2020). This is due to the fact that individuals who derive higher levels of enjoyment from language learning are more likely to engage actively in class activities and take an active role in their own learning. In the same vein, a study conducted by Wang (2022) revealed that students who experience high levels of FLE are "more likely to take part in classroom tasks, exercises, and activities" (6). Since motivation is considered to play a critical role in foreign language learning (Krashen, 1982), having high levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) can help learners feel more inspired and determined to actively participate in the learning process. This, in turn, can result in improved academic performance and learning outcomes. Therefore, by creating a positive and enjoyable learning environment, instructors can help students develop a greater sense of FLE, leading to improved engagement, participation, and performance in the foreign language classroom (Zhang et al., 2020).

Research has also demonstrated that foreign language enjoyment may be influenced by demographic factors such as age, gender, or multilingualism (see e.g. Botes et al., 2022). However, the correlation between these factors and foreign language enjoyment is not uniformly consistent. The age factor, for example, was evident in a study where older students demonstrated a tendency to have higher levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) compared to their younger counterparts (Dewaele, MacIntyre, 2014). Interestingly, a different study undertaken by Mierzwa in 2018 did not confirm those findings. In a similar vein, concerning gender and foreign language enjoyment, one research study showed that female learners exhibited higher levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) compared to male participants (Dewaele, MacIntyre, 2014). Conversely, a study by Mierzwa (2018) did not find a noteworthy difference between participants of opposite genders. Likewise, the relationship between multilingualism and FLE is inconsistent, with some studies showing that a higher level of multilingualism is associated with higher FLE (Dewaele, MacIntyre, 2014), while others have found no statistically significant relationship (Dewaele et al., 2018, as cited in Botes et al.,

2022). Thus, the link between multilingualism and FLE remains inconclusive and calls for additional investigation.

3. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) is considered to be a specific type of anxiety that is closely connected to achievement in foreign language learning within the language learning environment (Gardner, 1985). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) define FLCA as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (284). Thus, foreign language classroom anxiety is seen as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, attributing its association to both character traits, the socio-cultural milieu, and distinct situational variables such as the formality of the context, gender dynamics, and the identity of interlocutors (Dewaele, 2007). Furthermore, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) point out that factors such as early onset of target language acquisition, genuine and frequent use of the target language, and higher levels of learner education contribute to reduced levels of FLCA. On the other hand, high levels of FLCA are found to relate to poor academic achievement and to have a negative impact on cognitive processes such as information processing and accuracy of learning. As a result, students with high levels of FLCA may find it difficult to learn and communicate in the target language (MacIntyre, 1999).

Due to its impact on the learning process, anxiety experienced by individuals learning a foreign language has been a perplexing personal characteristic extensively researched since the 1970s (Piniel, Zólyomi, 2022). In 1986, Horwitz et al. made a significant contribution to the research on FLCA by creating the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The FLCAS is a self-report questionnaire aimed at measuring a learner’s degree of foreign language anxiety and ascertaining if this anxiety is exclusive to language learning (Oteir, Al-Otaibi, 2019). Following the development of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, research focusing on FLCA, with particular emphasis on its ramifications for learners’ academic achievement, emerged (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, Gardner, 1994; Williams, Andrade, 2008; Young, 1991, among others). A number of studies have consistently demonstrated a correlation between a high level of FLCA and low academic achievement. For instance, the investigation conducted by Horwitz (1986) revealed that students who report higher levels of FLCA at the end of the semester obtain lower grades compared to those who experience lower levels of FLCA. Similarly, in research carried out on American-Japanese

students (Aida, 1994), a negative relationship was observed between participants' levels of FLCA and their final grades. Furthermore, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) found that less anxious students memorise and recall vocabulary faster than those who are more anxious. Yet another study suggested that FLCA has a significant impact on students' perceived competence and hinders their communication in the classroom (Hashimoto, 2002). Additionally, based on Jackson's (2002) research, it became apparent that foreign language classroom anxiety is one of the factors that has a negative influence on students' willingness to participate in classroom discussions. In conclusion, the aforementioned studies collectively indicate that FLCA may negatively affect language learners in multiple ways, including their academic achievement, memory, perceived competence, communication abilities, and eagerness to actively engage in classroom activities.

In order to better understand FLCA among students, Horwitz (1986) conducted a categorization of its roots into three distinct subcategories: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Following this classification, individuals experiencing communication apprehension are those who typically face difficulties when speaking in a group setting. Therefore, they are prone to encounter more obstacles when communicating in a foreign language classroom. In such settings, they typically have limited control over the conversation, and their abilities are constantly being evaluated and scrutinized. The second cause identified by Horwitz (1986), test anxiety, is defined as a form of performance anxiety arising from a fear of not performing well in a given test. Students who suffer from test anxiety often set high expectations for themselves and feel that anything less than a flawless performance is a failure. In addition, susceptible students may experience both test anxiety and oral communication anxiety simultaneously during oral exams. The last subcategory, fear of negative evaluation, is a more general phenomenon than test anxiety since it is not restricted to exams but can manifest in any social or evaluative setting, such as job interviews or participating in a foreign language class. Further, Young (1991) proposed a subsequent classification that identifies six main sources of FLCA, these include personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language testing. While Horwitz's classification primarily focuses on specific anxiety triggers associated with communication and evaluation, Young's classification adopts a more extensive approach, encompassing a broader array of sources that contribute to foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA).

In conclusion, the body of research indicates that FLCA could potentially impede numerous aspects of language learners' educational performance,

including their memory, perceived skills, interest in participating in class activities, and overall academic achievement (e.g., Aida, 1994; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre, Gardner, 1994). Moreover, individuals experiencing high levels of anxiety are more likely to encounter obstacles when communicating in a foreign language classroom, manifesting a fear of negative evaluation in any social or evaluative setting (Horwitz, 1986). Additionally, FLCA has been shown to have a significant impact on language learners' motivation and willingness to communicate in the target language (Jackson, 2002). Consequently, high levels of FLCA are reported to lead to a decrease in motivation, resulting in a lack of engagement in language learning activities and an overall decrease in language proficiency. Given these findings, it is therefore of utmost importance to recognise that creating a classroom environment with minimal anxiety is a vital factor in achieving successful language learning outcomes (Burden, 2004).

4. Research aims and rationale

In research exploring emotions in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), only a small subset has specifically focused on higher education students. Moreover, within this relatively narrow context of inquiry, studies have been primarily concerned with language anxiety rather than enjoyment. The historical focus on language anxiety is commonly attributed to a number of factors. These include a prevailing research emphasis on the negative factors that hinder learning, the instructional implications associated with language anxiety, and the widespread occurrence of anxiety among language learners. Furthermore, due to the complex interplay between affective factors, the research on language anxiety and enjoyment has frequently been single-factorial rather than multifaceted or comprehensive, which is believed to provide a more precise and focused understanding of a specific emotional dimension within the language learning process. Additionally, only a small number of studies have explicitly targeted students within English Departments, as opposed to English language learners more broadly. The current scope of research in higher education concerning English language learning is represented by studies conducted with university students across a variety of cultural and educational contexts, including China (Jiang, Dewaele, 2019; Kun et al., 2020; Su, 2022; Zheng, Zhou, 2022), Japan (Williams, Andrade, 2008), Thailand (Chinpakdee, 2015), Tunisia (Bensalem, 2017, 2018), and Turkey (Dalkılıç, 2001).

Interestingly, Polish research on language anxiety and enjoyment has taken a somewhat distinct approach. Undoubtedly, in higher education,

the number of studies on language anxiety substantially outnumbers those on language enjoyment. This discrepancy aligns with a general trend of focusing on negative factors that hinder language acquisition. However, within the unique educational context of foreign language degree programmes, there has been growing interest in examining students from Foreign Language Departments who, as part of their major, study two foreign languages—choosing from English, German, or French—either as a second (L2) or third foreign (L3) language (see, e.g., Bawej, 2017; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2017; Póttorak, 2019, 2022). Studies that examine single-language anxiety in conjunction with related factors, such as pronunciation competence and language learning competence, include works by Pawlak (2011), Szyszka (2011), and Janaszek (2018). Unlike other research, the 2019 study by Mierzwa focuses solely on language learning enjoyment among students in the English Department. A study that looks precisely at the interplay between FLA and FLA in English Department students was published in 2022 by Bielak and appears to be the only published evidence on the correlation between English language learning enjoyment and anxiety so far. Therefore, the current research aims to delve into correlations between English language enjoyment and anxiety and their sources, as experienced by students majoring in English studies during their practical English coursework. This investigation aspires to extend the existing body of research by offering nuanced insights into these emotional dynamics within this specific academic setting. In doing so, it hopes to contribute to the further development of this direction of inquiry.

5. Method

A cross-sectional study was conducted in the Department of English at a mid-sized Polish university. Data were collected from participants using a pen-and-paper questionnaire, employing a convenience sampling technique. The aim was to assess Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) among Polish major students of English. In this investigation, a mixed-method approach was used, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data. The study utilised a concurrent nested design to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being explored, and both types of data were gathered simultaneously (Kroll, Neri, 2009). The first section of the questionnaire consisted of items for which responses were collected on a bipolar 5-point Likert scale, capturing quantitative data on the participants' perceived levels of FLE and FLCA. For purposes of using an interval scale, responses collected with the 5-point scale were

assigned values ranging from 1 to 5. The second section of the questionnaire featured open-ended questions for qualitative data collection.

5.1. Participants

The research sample comprised 108 students from a three-year bachelor's programme in English with a concentration in either TESOL or translation studies. Of these, 41 (38%) were first-year students, 35 (32.4%) were second-year students, and 32 (29.6%) were third-year students. The ratio of female to male students was 76 (70.4%) to 32 (29.6%). The age range of students was 18–25, which reflects a typical age bracket for undergraduate students. This demographic breakdown was representative of the wider student population at the Polish university, ensuring that the results of the study could be generalised to a larger group. The diversity in academic year and concentration areas of the participants allowed for a comprehensive assessment of FLE and FLCA across different stages of the programme and areas of specialisation.

5.2. Instruments

The questionnaire employed in the current study was adapted from a study conducted by Fang and Tang (2021) and was formulated based on two established instruments. The first was the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale), an instrument developed in 1986 by Horwitz et al. intended to assess foreign language anxiety in classroom settings. The second was the Chinese Version of the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (CFLES), a version adapted for Chinese learners, which was based on the original Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale devised by Dewaele and MacIntyre in 2014 and later adapted by Li et al. in 2018. The questionnaire employed by Fang and Tang comprised a total of 42 questions, including 11 from the CFLES and 31 from the FLCAS. Given the distinct characteristics of the Polish higher education system, modifications were deemed necessary for the current study. Reflecting these modifications, the final version of the questionnaire utilised in the present study was organised into six sections (see Appendix). Sections I and II sought demographic information, including respondents' gender and current year of enrollment in the Bachelor's programme in English. Section III comprised the modified survey of Fang and Tang (2021), consisting of 40 mandatory closed-ended questions on a 5-point Likert scale. Sections IV through VI were optional as they included open-ended

questions and served as substitutes for the interviews conducted in the initial study. Specifically, Sections IV and V prompted participants to recount their most enjoyable and anxious language-learning experiences and to describe the emotions they experienced during those specific instances. Lastly, Section VI solicited respondents' suggestions for ways instructors could foster a more positive learning environment for English language studies.

5.3. Study design and procedure

The study's design follows a conceptual replication, as outlined by Porte and McManus (2019), of Fang and Tang's 2021 investigation into the FLE and FLCA experienced by Chinese university students majoring in English. While both studies explore the levels of FLE and FLCA and their underlying causes among English major students, this research specifically focuses on Polish students. The aim is to determine the levels and sources of foreign language enjoyment and classroom anxiety, assess the correlation between these constructs, and gain insights into the emotional experiences of English major students in Poland. These findings are intended to offer practical implications for enhancing language learning environments and outcomes within the Polish context. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) perceived by Polish major students of English?
2. Is there a correlation between the levels of FLE and FLCA among Polish major students of English?

The questionnaire was administered to participants in a paper-and-pen format during their classes at Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce in the summer semester of 2022–2023. The students were given a designated time frame of approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey. Upon completion, participants submitted their responses directly to the investigator. Subsequently, the responses from these paper-based questionnaires were manually entered into Google Forms to establish a digital database, facilitating more streamlined data management and analysis.

5.4. Results

Descriptive statistics, and Pearson's R correlation coefficient test were used in this study to determine if there were observable differences between two

measures: foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA). Descriptive statistics were carried out to compute the means and standard deviations for both FLE and FLCA (as shown in Figure 1). This figure juxtaposes the mean scores for the overall levels of FLE and FLCA, including their respective standard deviations. On average, participants reported a moderate level of enjoyment (FLE) and a moderate level of classroom anxiety (FLCA). Specifically, the mean score for the overall level of FLE was 3.26 with a standard deviation of 0.95, in contrast to an FLCA mean of 2.89 with a standard deviation of 1.24. This shows that the perceived level of enjoyment is slightly higher than the level of anxiety. Furthermore, it is to be observed that the standard deviation for FLCA is larger than the standard deviation for FLE. The higher variability in anxiety scores compared to enjoyment scores might imply that while some participants experience high levels of classroom anxiety, others might experience very low levels.

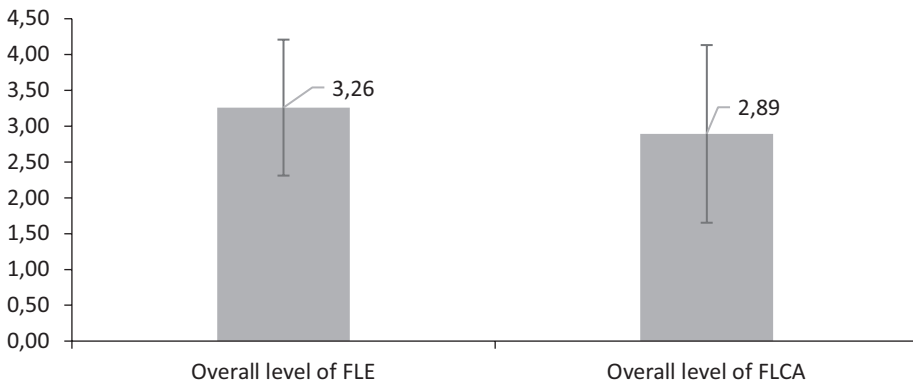


Figure 1. Comparison between means of Overall level of FLE and Overall level of FLCA with standard deviation

Next, Pearson's r correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the pair of variables and the strength of this association (see Table 1). The obtained Pearson's r value was -0.049 , with an associated p -value of $.0616$. Additionally, the computed mean difference between the overall level of FLE and the overall level of FLCA was found to be 0.367 . After Hopkins et al. (2009), the strength of positive and negative correlation is very weak for $r = 0.00-0.09$, weak for $r = 0.10-0.29$, moderate for $r = 0.30-0.49$, strong for $r = 0.50-0.69$, very strong for $r = 0.70-0.89$, and perfect for $r = 0.90-1.00$. According to the data gathered in this study, the relationship between the variables FLE and FLCA, as reflected by the Pearson's r value, demonstrates a very weak correlation that is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that in this sample, there is not a strong linear relationship

between the levels of foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety. The mean difference of 0.367 between the overall level of FLE and the overall level of FLCA indicates that there is a small difference between the average scores of the two measures. Interestingly, a negative Pearson's r value of -0.049 signifies an inverse relationship between the two variables. In practical terms, it means that if one variable increases, the other tends to decrease. On average, participants reported a slightly higher level of enjoyment compared to anxiety by a factor of 0.367. This suggests that participants in this sample tend to experience slightly more enjoyment than anxiety in the foreign language classroom setting, though the difference is not significant.

Table 1. Pearson's r , p value and mean difference for overall level of FLE and overall level of FLCA

	Pearson's r	p value	Mean difference
Correlation between Overall level of FLE and Overall level of FLCA	-0.049	.616	0.367

Following the quantitative data analysis, a qualitative examination of the perceived causes of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) was conducted. Students' comments were categorised based on the source of their positive and negative emotions, the behaviour or practice that triggered these emotions, and the total number of respondents who shared similar sentiments. Subsequently, systematic examination revealed five distinct categories within the FLCA measure: FLE-teacher, FLE-peers, FLE-atmosphere, FLE-personal, and FLE-miscellaneous (Table 2). Similarly, an analysis of anxiety-related responses identified four primary categories: FLCA-fear of negative evaluation, FLCA-test anxiety, FLCA-communication apprehension, and FLCA-miscellaneous (Table 3). Table 2 reports on the sources and sub-types of foreign language enjoyment and the number of occurrences in students' comments.

The data reveals that the teacher is the most dominant source of foreign language enjoyment (FLCE), accounting for 46% of the responses. Within this category, positive feedback from the teacher constitutes 15%, with features such as good grades ($n = 6$), verbal feedback ($n = 5$), and innovative feedback ($n = 3$). Another noticeable sub-category, teacher-student rapport, represents 10% of the responses. This encompasses sharing personal stories ($n = 4$), encouraging expression ($n = 3$), and fostering judgement-free communication ($n = 2$). Classroom activities have been highlighted as sources of enjoyment by 21% of respondents, with game play ($n = 8$) and delivering presentation ($n = 4$) being particularly significant. Concurrently, 23% of the

Table 2. Breakdown of FLCE categories: type, enjoyment source, subtype, and number of occurrences

Category type	General source of Foreign Language Enjoyment	Sub-type of Foreign Language Enjoyment if defined	Number of occurrences (n = 96)
FLE-teacher			44 (46%)
	Positive feedback experience		14 (15%)
		good grades	6
		verbal feedback	5
		innovative feedback	3
	Teacher-student rapport		10 (10%)
		sharing personal stories	4
		encouraging expression	3
		judgement-free communication	2
		relatable teacher mistakes	1
	Engaging classroom activities		20 (21%)
		game play	8
		drawing	3
film & story viewing		2	
delivering presentation		4	
collaborative teaching		3	
FLE-peers	Interaction with peer		22 (23%)
		group discussions	11
		teamwork	7
		peer feedback and support	3
		whole class activities	1
FLE- atmosphere	Positive classroom atmosphere	no further defined	16 (17%)
FLE-personal	Achievements and beliefs		10 (10%)
		course success	3
		class completion	3
		joy of learning	2
		perceived subject importance	2
FLE- miscellaneous			14
	Lack of enjoyable experiences	no further defined	7 (7%)
	Intrinsically enjoyable classes		3
	Cancelled classes		3
	Less demanding classes		1

satisfaction metrics are accounted for by peer interactions, mostly through group talks ($n = 11$) and collaborative activities ($n = 7$). Although not addressed further, the classroom environment accounts for 17% of FLCE instances. Personal achievements and beliefs form 10% of the enjoyment metrics, emphasising course success ($n = 3$) and the intrinsic joy of learning ($n = 2$). Rounding off the sources of FLE is a list of 14 instances of miscellaneous reasons, with 7 of them attributing their enjoyment to a lack of enjoyable experiences and other factors such as intrinsically enjoyable classes ($n = 3$) and cancelled classes ($n = 3$).

Table 3. Breakdown of FLCA categories: type, anxiety source, subtype, and number of occurrences

Category type	General source of foreign language classroom anxiety	Sub-type of foreign language classroom anxiety if defined	Number of occurrences (%) ($n = 94$)
FLCA- evaluation	Classroom evaluation concerns		22 (23%)
		lack of class preparedness	15
		peer criticism & ridicule	3
		public correction of mistakes by teacher	3
		public evaluation by teacher	1
FLCA-test anxiety	General test anxiety		17 (18%)
		time constraint concerns	4
		fear of failure	3
	Material-specific anxiety	inherent test-related anxiety	3
		grammar-focused tests	3
		contextless word writing	1
		phonetics-focused tests	1
		vocabulary-focused tests	1
speaking evaluations	1		
FLCA-communication apprehension			29 (31%)
	Public speaking	no further defined	16
	Teacher clarity issues		8
Unprepared answers	5		
FLCA- miscellaneous			26 (28%)
	Lack of anxiety exposure		12

Table 3 – cont.

	Classroom distractions	teacher's digressions	2
	Perception of teacher	negative attitude from teacher	2
	Persistent anxiety	anxiety in every class	2
	Academic responsibilities	writing essays	2
		homework review	1
		unsatisfactory teaching materials	1
		grade confrontation	1
		pairing with unfamiliar peers	1
		classroom chaos	1
	Self-doubt	feeling of "I can't do it"	1

Within the scope of foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), the data presented in Table 3 indicate that students attribute communication apprehension (31%) as the primary driver of their anxiety. This is characterised by fears associated with public speaking ($n = 16$) and concerns with teacher clarity ($n = 8$). Following this, in-class evaluations of student performance by teachers and peers emerge as a significant anxiety inducer, accounting for 23%. Within the evaluation category, concerns about lack of class preparedness ($n = 15$), peer criticism ($n = 3$) and public correction of students mistakes ($n = 3$) are seen as most prevalent. Test-related anxieties, on the other hand, account for 18% of the responses, including general test anxieties such as time constraints ($n = 4$) and fear of failure ($n = 3$), alongside material-specific anxieties such as grammar-focused tests ($n = 3$) or other skill-based tests. The closing category of miscellaneous anxieties is particularly diverse, ranging from a lack of anxiety exposure ($n = 12$) to specific academic responsibilities such as essay writing ($n = 2$) and thoughts of self-doubt ($n = 1$).

6. Discussion

The findings of the current study address the initial research question concerning levels of FLCA and FLE, demonstrating that English Department students experience higher levels of FLE compared to FLCA. This is consistent with the results from Dewaele and MacIntyre's 2014 study, Yang's (2021), and Fang and Tang's (2021). Conversely, the current findings contrast with Su's 2022 investigation of Chinese students, which reported higher levels of language anxiety than enjoyment. Interestingly, both our study and Su's

drew parallels when participants attributed their FLE to classroom activities, predominantly from the teacher-source category. Such findings open up the possibility that students' emotional experiences in the language learning environment may not be confined to the educational norms of their respective regions but could indeed be universal in nature. Additionally, the present research resonates with Bielak's (2022) observations, underscoring the significance of group work in enhancing foreign language enjoyment among Polish English majors. Importantly, our study further delineates that peer interactions, particularly group discussions, teamwork, and peer feedback and support, play a crucial role in fostering foreign language enjoyment.

With reference to the second research question, which sought a correlation between the levels of FLE and FLCA, the results indicated a negative correlation between these two factors. However, this correlation was not found to be statistically significant. This lack of a significant relationship between foreign language enjoyment and anxiety aligns with the findings presented by Yang (2021) and Fan and Tang (2021), with the distinction that in Yang's study the correlation was positive, suggesting a synchronous rise of both enjoyment and anxiety as interlinked emotions. On the other hand, Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2014) study confirmed a statistically significant correlation between enjoyment and anxiety that was positive in nature. Additionally, Bielak's study (2022) reported that correlations between FLA and FLE might differ depending on the task. For instance, the correlation between anxiety and enjoyment during a collaborative decision-making task was found to be very weak, while the same correlation measured during a monologue was of medium strength. This observation aligns with the current study, which identified interaction with peers as the second-strongest source of language enjoyment. Furthermore, the study highlighted communication apprehension – evidenced by public speaking, teacher-student verbal interactions, and speaking up in class unprepared – as a key source of foreign language anxiety.

Based on the aforementioned findings, potential teaching implications for the didactic work with English Department students might include enhancing peer interactions, tailoring classroom activities, and addressing language anxiety. Given that teacher positive feedback along with peer interactions, especially group discussions and teamwork, play a significant role in fostering foreign language enjoyment, teachers might consider integrating more collaborative tasks into the curriculum and offering more individual student-oriented feedback. Additionally, recognising the influence of specific classroom activities and teacher behaviours on students' language enjoyment could guide adaptations in teaching pedagogies to better address students' emotional learning needs. This can be achieved by improving

teacher-student rapport, for instance, by using personal storytelling, encouraging student expression, and promoting judgement-free communication.

At the other end of the emotional spectrum, communication apprehension, especially in scenarios such as public speaking, unprepared verbal interactions, and in-class evaluations, stands out as a primary source of foreign language anxiety. Given this, English Department teachers can implement strategies to gradually adapt students to such situations, possibly by incorporating more low-stakes speaking opportunities. With reference to evaluating students' performance in low-anxiety ways, these might include small group interactions or individual teacher-student communications. Interestingly, teacher-student rapport emerged as an overlapping category that can either contribute to language enjoyment or anxiety. On the one hand, teacher behaviours such as encouraging students to speak their minds in a respectful, judgement-free classroom atmosphere contribute to high levels of perceived language enjoyment. On the other hand, teacher-induced criticism and public correction and evaluation of students' language mistakes lead to increased feelings of language learning anxiety.

Finally, by understanding the complex interplay between enjoyment and anxiety in the language classroom, teachers might consider striving for a balanced approach. This balance could involve challenging students to push their linguistic boundaries while being mindful of not unintentionally raising classroom anxiety to debilitating levels. It is suggested that elevating levels of positive emotions and reducing negative ones could potentially enhance students' social-emotional well-being and overall satisfaction with their educational experience. Furthermore, the focus of this study might inspire subsequent discussions on the possibility of early identification and effective management of affective factors, with the hope of potentially reducing drop-out rates.

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Appendix

Feelings and emotions in practical English classes

(adapted from Fang and Tang, 2021)

I. What is your gender?

Male Female

II. Which year of your BA programme in English are you in?

1st 2nd 3rd

III. On a scale 1–5, rate how much you agree with these statements.

1 – Strongly Disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Neutral 4 – Agree 5 – Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I don't get bored in practical English classes.					
2. I enjoy practical English classes.					
3. I've learnt interesting things in practical English classes.					
4. In practical English classes, I feel proud of my accomplishments.					
5. The atmosphere in practical English classes is positive.					
6. Practical English classes are fun.					
7. The teachers of practical English are encouraging.					
8. The teachers of practical English are friendly.					
9. The teachers of practical English are supportive.					
10. We form discussion groups in practical English classes.					
11. I never feel fully confident when I speak in my practical English classes.					
12. I don't worry about making mistakes in practical English classes.					
13. When I know I'm going to be called on in practical English classes, I become nervous.					
14. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the practical English classes.					
15. Taking additional practical English classes would not bother me at all.					
16. During practical English classes, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.					

17. I keep thinking that my peers are better at English than I am.					
18. I am usually at ease when taking tests in my practical English classes.					
19. I start to panic when I have to speak in practical English classes without being prepared.					
20. I worry about the consequences of failing my practical English classes.					
21. I don't understand why some people get so upset over practical English classes.					
22. In my practical English classes, I can get so nervous that I forget the things I know.					
23. Volunteering answers (to give information without being asked) in practical English classes makes me feel embarrassed.					
24. When I don't understand corrections from the teachers of practical English, I become frustrated.					
25. Even if I am well-prepared for practical English classes, I feel anxious about them.					
26. I frequently consider skipping my practical English classes.					
27. I feel confident when I speak in practical English classes.					
28. I fear that my teachers of practical English will correct my every mistake in front of the class.					
29. The more I study for a practical English test, the more confused I get.					
30. I don't feel pressure to be well-prepared for my practical English classes.					
31. I always feel that my peers speak English better than I do.					
32. When I speak English in class, I am worried about what my peers will think of me.					
33. Practical English classes move so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.					
34. I feel more tense and nervous in my practical English classes than in my other classes.					
35. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my practical English classes.					
36. When I'm on my way to practical English classes, I feel very confident and relaxed.					
37. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the teachers of practical English classes say.					

38. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules one has to learn to speak English.					
39. I am afraid that my peers will laugh at me when I speak English.					
40. I get nervous when the teachers of practical English ask questions that I haven't prepared in advance.					

IV. Describe one of the most enjoyable experiences you have had during this year's practical English classes. How did this experience make you feel?

V. Describe one of the most anxious experiences you have had during this year's practical English classes. How did this experience make you feel?

VI. What can instructors of practical English do to enhance their students' positive feelings toward learning English?
