

Reviewing Foreign Language Enjoyment with Foreign Language Learning

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Abstract. Over the last twenty years, there has been a surge in research on happy emotions, with Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) emerging as a popular area of study. By means of several studies, it has been found that FLE is closely related to foreign language (FL) learning (motivation, commitment, and FLE). This paper mainly focuses on FLE in foreign language learning. Concluding from the literature foreign language enjoyment can positively and significantly predict FLE, which is impacted in the process of altering FLE by several outside as well as inside factors. In addition, the paper concludes that, on the one hand, FLE can act as a mediator with other foreign language emotions to affect FLE. On the other hand, FLE is moderated by mediating factors in the way it affects FLE. In contrast, this paper concludes that most of the researches on foreign language emotions has been conducted in terms of the relationship between internal and external variables of individuals, but it lacks the examination of the environmental dimensions and learning environments. It is hoped that future research can explore English achievement (e.g. listening, reading, writing) in more details. Simultaneously integrating language teaching methodology and information technology to investigate the new learning styles on FLE and their impact on academic English learning.

Keywords: Foreign language enjoyment, foreign language learning, English language achievement, foreign language acquisition.

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, there has been a boom in positive emotion researches, among which Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) is the main research topic. FLE was first studied by Dewaele and MacIntyre, who conducted an empirical examination of both positive and anxiety-related foreign language emotions [1]. They defined FLE as the positive emotions that learners experience when they overcome learning challenges, finish academic tasks, and meet their psychological needs while learning a Foreign Language (FL) [1]. Based on the three-dimensional framework, FLE is a pleasant, highly stimulating, process-driven academic emotion. These days, researchers evaluate the emotional influence of emotions on academic success using the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) Scale and the FLE Scale. For further studies of FLE, these scales provide a convenient and useful measurement tool. The assessment has 21 items that are 5-point Likert scale items that relate to peers, teachers, and learning experiences [1]. The creation of the FLE Scale is a significant advancement in the research of pleasant emotion in FL, as it provides a reference scale for the measurement of FLE in the future.

The whole-person perspective argues that alongside their feelings, language learners should be aware of a variety of individual variations and factors that surround them, so this paper first explores the factors affecting FLE. Meanwhile, the study of second languages has led to the active introduction of positive psychology in recent years, sparking a surge of discussion, so this paper explores how FLE affects a variety of FL learning performances, such as learning engagement, motivation, and academic performance, etc. Second language academic performance can reflect the achievement of teaching goals and students' knowledge mastery, and the improvement of academic performance is the most important factor for students, teachers, and parents. Progress in academic achievement is the common goal of students, teachers and parents. Therefore, this paper mainly explores the relationship between FL achievement and FLE, and concludes how FLE affects FL achievement. In the end, concludes the shortcomings of FLE nowadays and puts forward the prospect.

2. Sources and Related Factors of FL Achievement

2.1. Sources of FLE

Many studies have used qualitative or mixed research methods to study the factors that trigger emotions, although the research results are different, in summary, emotions will be affected by individual internal factors (such as the learner's personal growth background, learning attitude, academic age) and the joint influence of individual external factors (such as learning environment, teacher behavior and peers) [2]. Some scholars also believe that FLE is an irrational emotional experience that needs to be considered in a specific FL environment. The generation and modification of pleasant emotions in foreign languages are very situational and closely relate to the situation.

In addition to the external environment, FLE can also be associated with various foreign language emotions, such as anxiety, boredom, burnout, curiosity, etc. For example, online education is growing in popularity in the post-epidemic period. Currently, studies use questionnaires to assess the relationship between students' levels of positive and negative emotion in FL classes in distance-learning classrooms, FLE and FLA are shown to be adversely linked in online English classes. Among the process of learning, FL learners are also related to directed motivational flow and engagement, personal factors, and personal growth background, with FLE being highly correlated with FL engagement.

To sum up, on the one hand, FLE, as an emotional experience produced by an individual, is associated with personal factors such as personal growth background, personal experience and various FL emotions, and on the other hand, from the highly situational characteristics of FLE, the source of its production cannot be separated from the external learning environment.

2.2. Overview of Factors Influencing FLE

To sum up, there are intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting FLE, and the intrinsic factors include learners' personal identity characteristics, psychological factors, and the ability to learn an FL and other aspects related to this. The factors influencing the FLE emotions are: age, gender, FL proficiency, perceived FL proficiency, multilingualism, attitude towards learning, and time spent learning the FL [3]. Specifically, according to the influence of gender, women are more likely to experience FLE in FL learning than men [4]. On the other hand, in different areas, such as urban and rural areas, factors affecting FLE in FL can also be different, which are including learning attitudes, emotional experiences, behaviour tendencies, and so on. The social milieu, school environment, and teachers are examples of external variables.

2.3. FLE and FLA

When reviewing literature on the relationship between FL achievement and FLE, there are many studies that put FLE and FLA together to examine the correlation on FLE [1, 3]. Multiple mediating functions can be played by FLA and FLE in influencing FLE. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the connection between FLE and FLA before looking at how FLE affects proficiency in FL [5].

In contrast to anxiety, FLE has a greater association with FL test scores. At the same time, the learners' FLE is negatively related to FLA. This implies that learners' anxiety levels decrease in proportion to their FLE [1]. When studying, FLE and FLA frequently go hand in hand. Consequently, improving learners' FLE experience appears to be a useful strategy for reducing learners' FLA. Nonetheless, the two feelings are not exactly inversely correlated, they are not diametrically opposed. FLA can fluctuate over time when learning styles or grades shift, and in some cases, FLE can develop into FLA. Enhancements might potentially result in FLE. Furthermore, there is sometimes a positive association between two feelings. Research findings demonstrated that the students' FLA and FLE levels display a complex and changeable relationship: the two can be significantly negatively correlated (such as low pleasure accompanied by high anxiety), or they can be significantly positively correlated (such as low pleasure accompanied by low anxiety), or they can not be significantly correlated [6]. Extrinsic variables, particularly those related to teachers, such as their use of the mother

tongue and classroom behaviour, are less strongly correlated with FLA and FLE [7]. Research has also shown that while ambient and external variables, including factors pertaining to instructors, are more directly associated to FLA, learners' personal characteristics, such as age, gender, foreign language competency, learning attitude, etc.—are more strongly related to their FLA and FLE [7].

In conclusion, in FL learning, FLE can co-exist with negative emotions such as FLA and FL boredom, but if educators can enhance learners' FLE in the teaching process, it will help to develop students' correct concepts of learning, so as to improve their learning emotion.

3. FLE and FL Learning

3.1. FLE and Learning Engagement

In the context of FL, learning engagement is a multifaceted concept that incorporates elements of behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and affective engagement. It includes all of the elements influencing students' attempts to acquire language, language skills, and associated information during the process of learning as well as the extent of their commitment [8]. According to the well-being theory, FLE is a central element and there is a dynamic interaction between learning inputs. On the one hand, as learning engagement increases, learners reach a state of "mind flow", which results in physical and mental pleasure. On the other hand, pleasurable experiences can eliminate negative emotions, thus enhancing motivation and learning engagement. Using cross-sectional investigations, several researchers have investigated the link between the two and discovered that either learning engagement has a positive predictive influence on FLE, or FLE significantly and favorably correlates with student participation in learning [9, 10]. In the process of learning, learning engagement in FL learning frequently occurs in tandem with FLE. The two have a reciprocal connection. The estimation probability approach was used to study the link between the two at the same time, the findings demonstrated a strong positive relationship between learner engagement and FLE [11].

According to research conducted by some scholars in China, learning engagement and FLE are positively correlated, meaning that students' self-efficacy increases with FLE [12]. In other words, the higher their FLE, the higher their self-efficacy, and when their self-efficacy increases, so does their learning engagement [12].

3.2. FLE and FL Motivation

Similar to FLE, FL learning effectiveness is influenced by FL learning motivation. The motivational propensity to encourage personal learning behaviour, direct it towards a specific academic objective, and sustain this behaviour is known as learning motivation. From a sociolinguistic approach, researchers have introduced instrumental motivation and integration motivation. While the latter emphasizes the target language's potential to improve communication, the former reflects a group of learners who are ready to interact and communicate with the language because of a passion for it. Motivation for learning is under the purview of psychology. Its primary outward expression is a passion for mastering a certain ability or expertise. Thus, learners will be more committed to learning an FL and developing a learning interest as long as they have the right learning motivation orientation, which will lead to positive feelings in FL [13]. However, FLE also has a favourable mediation influence on academic achievement and learning motivation. As a result, educators can create strategies to support students' learning interests in addition to concentrating on helping them feel good during the learning process. These strategies can include creating reward systems, creative teaching techniques, and other means of inducing FLE from the source.

4. FLE and FL Achievement

4.1. Relationship between FLE and FL Achievement

As the results of FL learning, students' self-evaluation scores, perceived scores, and actual scores are divided into FL scores. To summarize, FLE are going to predict FL achievement positively and strongly. At the same time, FLE is a strong and accurate predictor of FL accomplishments, in addition, FLE has a positive impact on academic achievement. What is more, sometimes FLE forecasts predicted rather than actual outcomes. Nevertheless, several studies have demonstrated that FLE has no direct effect on FL achievement, FLE may indirectly foresee FL achievement by forecasting projected motivation, which increases the use of FL [14].

FLE positively predicts FL achievement and FLA negatively predicts FL achievement, FLE is higher than FLA in both cases [15]. However, researchers from China found that whereas FLE positively predicted both self-assessed English achievement and genuine English achievement, FLA adversely predicted both in an experiment of Chinese high school second-year students. Furthermore, it was discovered that FLA was a better estimator than FLE [16].

Two academic hypotheses that explain how FL achievement is affected by FLE are the broaden-build theory as well as the control-value theory. To begin with, the broaden-build theory states that learners may enhance their quick "thinking-action" capacity, allowing them to concentrate more, as FLE can positively predict English accomplishment and FLE can deliver a good emotional experience. Simultaneously, learning investments lessen the effects of negative emotions like FLA and FL fatigue, encouraging students to actively overcome learning challenges and improving academic progress [17]. Furthermore, individuals can create positive emotions by controlling the learning process, which amplifies positive academic emotions. This sense of control and optimistic emotions related to academic encourages one another during the learning process, according to the control-value theory [18]. Learners with higher FLE tend to exhibit self-regulation over time and make an effort to retain their own sense of control over their FL acquisition, which helps them overcome the challenges of learning a language. They also are less likely to experience feelings of feeling powerless and burnout during the learning process [14]. Moreover, raising FL proficiency will increase FLE even more, creating a positive feedback loop that goes "FLE - cognitive improvement - resilience enhancement - achievement improvement" [19].

Finally, although FLE is a transient emotional feeling, for FL learners, long-term FLE can bring positive enhancement to learning. In a series of incremental stages, positive emotions may be built and grown to become a permanent positive attribute in an individual, which has long-term implications for their personal growth [14].

4.2. FLE Acts as an Intermediary to Influence FL Achievement

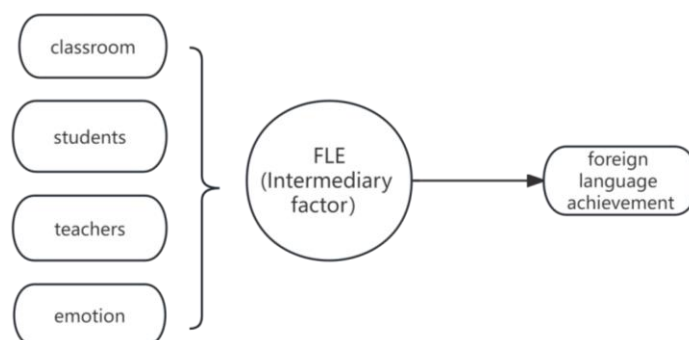


Figure 1. The intermediary role of FLE (Picture credit: original)

The effectiveness of a learner's FL acquisition is unable to be sufficiently explained by analyzing a single emotion alone because multiple FL emotions may interact with one another in parallel with the learner's FL acquisition process and because complex factors interact to affect the emotions themselves, as Figure 1 shows, the control-value hypothesis states that pleasant emotions have a

mediating effect on the various emotional components and will influence FL accomplishment in conjunction with other factors [20].

Firstly, the classroom environment and perseverance jointly predict second language mood, which in turn predicts English academic achievement through the multiple mediators of second language pleasure, anxiety, and boredom [6]. Among them, classroom environment and perseverance correspond to positive institutional organization and individual characteristics among the three pillars of positive psychology respectively, which interact and work together on second-language pleasantness. Additionally, academic emotions including enjoyment, anxiety, and burnout are found to mediate the association between academic self-assessment scores and test scores and emotional intelligence, according to studies on the relationship between emotion and FL accomplishment [21]. Among these, burnout has the strongest mediating effect, followed by enjoyment and anxiety. This suggests that there is a two-way relationship chain of "emotional regulation (emotional intelligence)-emotion-achievement" in the process of FL learning. These results indicate that students with high emotional intelligence are more adept at managing their emotions while learning, experience less anxiety when picking up a new language, experience less pressure to learn, feel less tired, become more excited about learning, make learning enjoyable, perform at their best academically, and ultimately grow in confidence in their capacity to learn. Studies have also shown that FLE, FLA, and FL boredom are connected, and that various instructors' activities (like using foreign languages in the classroom) as well as the learner's own variables (personal attitude toward foreign languages) will alter these aspects [22]. The mediating chain of "critical thinking ability→ FLE→ FL achievement" has been suggested for the first time in certain research based on the rational-emotion theory. The results show that critical thinking proficiency and FL accomplishment are partially mediated by FLE [23].

In conclusion, a range of conditions and the unique qualities of each student should be considered in the investigation of the influence of FLE on academic achievement. Furthermore, it is important to take into account mediating role of FLE. Moreover, FLE need to be taken into account while thinking about how to enhance students' academic performance through the classroom setting, instructor conduct, and student attitudes.

4.3. FLE is Moderated by Other Mediators Indirectly Affecting FL Achievement

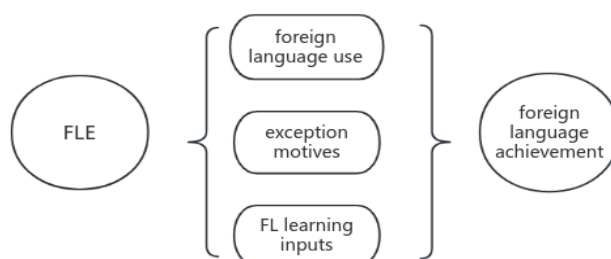


Figure 2. The intermediary role of other factors (Picture credit: original)

From Figure 2, it can be seen that numerous variables influence FLE, which in turn influences FL performance indirectly. There is a substantial correlation between FL learner engagement and academic accomplishment, indicating that high levels of learning engagement are positively connected with high academic performance. However, a number of academic emotions have been identified to influence FL learning engagement, of these, FLE can have a strong mediation impact. As a result, the benefits of happy feelings for FL learning investment may also extend to improved English performance.

Therefore, the benefits of happy emotions for FL learner engagement may also extend to improved English proficiency. Using structural equation modeling, some researchers in China have also looked at the relationship between FL achievement and FLE and have created a moderated mediation model that links "FLE" to "FL achievement" [14]. Through the mediation of expectation motivation and FL usage, respectively, it is found that FLE substantially and indirectly predicted accomplishment in speaking an FL in addition to significantly and directly anticipating performance in speaking a FL

[14]. There is currently a shortage of research on how FLE interferes with FL proficiency in FLE-English. In the future, the association between FLE and English performance is expected to expand with the addition of new factors, allowing studies to investigate other avenues for how FLE influences FL accomplishment.

4.4. Foreign Language Achievement Reverse Predicts FLE

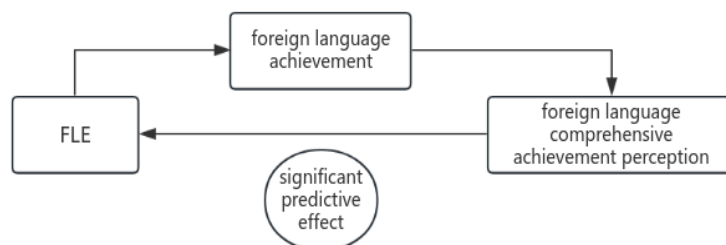


Figure 3. FL Achievement reverse predicts FLE (Picture credit: Original)

As Figure 3 shows, research has shown that complete second language accomplishment has a large predictive influence on both FLE and anxiety, in addition to the fact that FLE significantly predicts FL achievement [24].

By breaking down several language modules, such as audio-visual, hearing, and grammar, some Chinese academics have investigated the effects of FLE and anxiety on perceived results and actual results [24]. The findings demonstrated that the composite score views were predictive of FLE and anxiety when compared to the genuine composite scores. Additionally, both speaking and grammar score perceptions were important indicators of both emotions, whereas the reading score perceptions were a significant predictor of FLE [24]. These findings suggest that FL mood research needs to take into account the different characteristics of different language module types. Simultaneously, this finding provides more explanation of how people might generate distinct academic feelings by managing their FL ability and altering their expectations of FL achievement. Learning outcomes will also be impacted, either directly or indirectly, by certain emotions related to learning. This suggests that by enhancing students' perceptions of their educational achievement, educators can encourage positive psychological expectations for academic success. This will lead to a greater emphasis on second language acquisition, increased learning interest, and improved academic performance—all of which will facilitate the study of foreign language and start a positive feedback loop.

5. Conclusion

As a kind of positive emotion, FLE has different degrees of positive relationship to various aspects of FL learning, such as learning motivation, learning commitment, etc. In order to synthesis the evidence, this study primarily focuses on FL achievements and indicates that FLE positively and significantly predicts English language achievement. Additionally, in influencing FLE, a multitude of internal and external factors will impact FLE, which will have an indirect impact on FL proficiency. FLE influences FL proficiency either directly through other mediators or indirectly through other mediators. FLE does not only affect FL achievement, through various studies found that FLE is often accompanied by FLA, FL burnout, FL boredom and other emotions, parallel to FL achievement, so in the educational environment should be combined with a variety of factors to explore the impact on academic performance, with a view to enhancing the educators did not implement emotional interventions to make a concrete and feasible way to improve students' pleasure and mental health.

The link between outside and inside factors, such as the effects of intra-individual characteristics on English success, such as FLA, boredom, and linguistic interest, are the main focus of current research on FLE. In the meantime, extra-individual elements include partner relationships, classroom environment, unpredictability, and teacher traits. But it lacks the examination of the environmental dimension and the effects of some specific learning environments on FLE and FL achievement. Secondly, most of the existing research on FLE or other factors on FL learning focuses on offline.

Thus, information technology and language instruction can be combined in future research to examine how developing learning styles affect FLE and how that influences learning results. A more thorough examination of students' English performance, encompassing reading, writing, listening, and other areas where FLE influences FL advancement, might help them perform better in a more targeted manner.

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