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Jiang, Y. and Dewaele, Jean-Marc (2019) How unique is the foreign language classroom enjoyment and anxiety of Chinese EFL learners? *System* 82 , pp. 13-25. ISSN 0346-251X.

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How Unique is the Foreign Language Classroom Enjoyment and Anxiety of Chinese EFL Learners?

Abstract

Recent research has shown that Chinese foreign language learners' classroom emotions stand out from learners in the rest of the world. The present mixed-method study investigated to what extent foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) of 564 Chinese undergraduate EFL learners are different from learners outside China. While mean levels of FLE and FLCA were found to differ, most of the patterns between FLE and FLCA and a range of learner-internal and teacher-related variables were comparable to those identified in previous research, except for Chinese students' dislike of unpredictable behaviour by the teacher. Participants reported similar levels of FLE but higher levels of FLCA compared to the international sample in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), which could be attributed to the Chinese educational context. Multiple regression analyses revealed that FLE was predicted more strongly by teacher-related variables while FLCA was mostly predicted by learner-internal variables, confirming earlier research outside China. Qualitative analysis of learners' emotional experiences also revealed that FLE was more likely to have been triggered by the teacher while FLCA was more related to learners themselves. Pedagogical implications of the findings are provided for EFL teaching in Chinese universities.

Keywords:

Positive psychology; foreign language enjoyment; foreign language classroom anxiety; Chinese EFL learners; learner-internal variables; teacher-related variables

1. Introduction

Recent research on learners' positive and negative emotions in foreign language classrooms (Foreign Language Enjoyment and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety) has shown that they form complex dynamic relationships with learner-internal and learner-external variables and that they fluctuate both in the short-term (from second to second) and in the longer term (months, years) (Boudreau, MacIntyre & Dewaele, 2018; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Saito, Dewaele, Abe & In'nami, 2018). One of the intriguing findings is that levels of Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and Anxiety (FLCA) of Asian learners differ significantly from learners in the rest of the world (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre, Dewaele, Macmillan & Li, in press). It is thus crucial to investigate the uniqueness of the classroom emotions of Chinese FL learners and to understand how cultural factors such as the role of the teacher in the Chinese educational context could shape the interactions between learner-internal and learner-external variables on FLE and FLCA (Li, Jiang & Dewaele, 2018; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017).

The present study follows this very new avenue of research, identifying the sources of variation in Chinese EFL learners' FLE and FLCA. In particular, we examine the effects of a range of learner-internal and teacher-related variables on FLE and FLCA, which have been shown to have significant effects in studies based on international samples (Dewaele, Magdalena Franco & Saito, 2019; Dewaele, Witney, Saito & Dewaele, 2018). Moreover, we focus on participants' emotions in English Listening and Speaking classes at one university to control the effect of different

educational contexts, target languages, and instructional levels on FL learning emotions (De Smet et al., 2018). A convergent parallel design (cf. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) was adopted for this study. In addition to the numerical data, qualitative data were collected on participants' emotional experiences in EFL classroom.

2. Literature review

2.1 Focus on foreign language classroom anxiety

Anxiety is by far the most commonly studied emotion in the field of SLA research (MacIntyre, 2017). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) defined foreign language classroom anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). Horwitz (2017) emphasised that the concept of anxiety is multi-faceted that FL learners that who experience FLCA “have the trait of feeling state anxiety when participating in language learning and/or use” (p. 33). In a broader sense, MacIntyre (2017) argued that language anxiety “is influenced by internal physiological processes, cognitive and emotional states along with the demands of the situation and the presence of other people, among other things, considered over different timescales. Anxiety has both internal and social dimensions” (p. 28), suggesting that both learner-internal characteristics and language learning environment are relevant to anxiety.

Both learner-internal variables and learner-external variables had been found to be the sources of FLCA in past anxiety research. Factors related to learners include learners' personality traits such as low levels of trait emotional intelligence and high levels of perfectionism (Dewaele, 2017), low self-esteem (Young, 1991), low levels of language proficiency (Liu, 2006; Liu & Jackson, 2008), low levels of motivation (Teimouri, 2017), negative self-evaluation (Mak, 2011; Liu, 2006) and negative beliefs in their language abilities (Cheng, 2002). Factors related to teachers' instructional practices include teachers' intolerance (Aida, 1994), harsh manner in correcting student errors (Mak, 2011), being singled out to answer questions by the teacher or give presentation (Liu, 2006), inadequate wait time and not being allowed to use the first language (Mak, 2011). Another learner-external variable affecting FLCA is the reactions of peers to speech errors and the effects it could have on social standing (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017). Oxford (2017) presented a range of strategies that teachers can use to alleviate FLCA, including the use of humour to increase learners' flow experiences, agency, hope and optimism.

2.2 Focus on both foreign language classroom enjoyment and anxiety

There has been a shift away from an exclusive focus on negative emotions in SLA to a more holistic analysis of both negative and positive emotions in the past few years (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2018; Imai, 2010; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017). MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) introduced the concept of Positive Psychology (PosPsy) into SLA research, based on Fredrickson's (2003) “broaden and build” theory. Fredrickson (2003) proposed that positive emotions can “broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources” (p. 219). MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) pointed out that positive emotions in language learning are much more than pleasant feelings: learners in the grip of positive emotions are better able to notice things in their classroom environment and become more aware of language input which allows them to absorb more of the

foreign language. Moreover, positive emotions can also have longer-term effects outside the classroom because they can make students more resilient and hardier during difficult times (see also Prior, 2019).

Enjoyment is one of the most studied positive emotions in SLA research recently. Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele (2018) distinguished enjoyment from the more basic experience of pleasure: “If pleasure can occur simply by performing an activity or completing an action, enjoyment takes on additional dimensions such as an intellectual focus, heightened attention, and optimal challenge” (p. 153). Enjoyment is one of the most prevalent and salient positive emotions in foreign language learning experienced by language learners across different contexts (Pavelescu & Petric, 2018; Piniel & Albert, 2018). It is positively mediated by the interactions with the peers who are friendly, teachers who are supportive and encouraging, and a positive classroom environment where classroom activities are interesting and adequately challenging (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Pavelescu & Petric, 2018). Moreover, enjoyment in language learning is believed to help L2 learners better attend to, process and acquire a target language (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Saito et al., 2018). For example, both Khajavy, MacIntyre, and Barabadi (2018) and Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) found that enjoyment was an important factor in predicting increased willingness to communicate (WTC).

Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) developed a foreign language enjoyment scale consisting of 21 items reflecting positive emotions towards the learning experience, peers, and the teacher, which they combined with eight items indicating FLCA. They found a modest correlation between anxiety and enjoyment. More advanced students, who felt that they had better relative standing than their peers in the FL classes reported significantly higher levels of FLE and less FLCA. Asian participants reported the lowest levels of FLE and the highest levels of FLCA. Surprisingly, female participants reported both higher levels of FLE and FLCA than the males. Qualitative analysis of the feedback on the enjoyable episodes in the FL class showed that some specific and novel activities could arouse students’ interest and boost enjoyment. Good classroom environment can facilitate enjoyment. In particular, teachers who were positive, humorous, happy, well-organised, supportive, respectful of students were appreciated by their students. A follow-up study by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) used a Principal Components Analysis of the same dataset, and identified two sub-dimensions of FLE, namely social and private FLE. A social FLE reflected in shared legends, classroom laughter, and friendly relationships with teachers and peers. The private side of enjoyment is reflected in internal feelings such as pride, having fun, and a sense of achievement. These two dimensions work together and produce a cohesive feel.

A final study on the same database focused on the gender differences in FLE and FLCA at item-level (Dewaele, MacIntyre, Boudreau & Dewaele, 2016). They found that female participants reported having more enjoyment in the FL class (they agreed significantly more strongly that FL learning interesting was interesting, and they were significantly prouder of their FL performance than male participants). However, female participants also experienced more (mild) FLCA than male peers, especially a significantly stronger worry about making mistakes and feeling less confident in speaking the FL. The narrative analysis revealed specific causes for FLE such as good marks that boosted their pride and determination to excel in the FL class, how collaborative learning strengthens social bonds and how games in the FL class can be funny and interesting. The feedback confirmed that female participants felt that knowing a FL was “cool”, they experienced more fun, excitement, felt prouder and more creative than male peers. Overall, they

seemed more emotionally engaged and motivated in the FL learning. The authors avoided sweeping conclusions about the effect of gender on classroom emotions, pointing out that “gender differences might not be found on an inter-planetary level but rather on a detail-oriented, microscopic level” (p. 45).

To control contextual variables somewhat, Dewaele, Witney, Saito and Dewaele (2018) explored the effect of learner-internal and teacher-related variables on levels of FLE and FLCA of 189 secondary school pupils in London who were mostly learning French, German, or Spanish as a FL. Female pupils scored higher on both FLE and FLCA. It was striking that FLCA was less related to teacher and teacher practices than FLE. Lower levels of FLCA were linked to positive attitudes towards the FL, higher relative standing among peers and being more advanced in the FL. In contrast, higher levels of FLE were related to more positive attitudes towards the FL, the teacher, frequent use of the FL by the teacher, more time spent on speaking, a higher relative standing among peers and being more advanced in the FL. Female participants scored significantly higher on both FLE and FLCA.

Using a pseudo-longitudinal design, Dewaele and Dewaele (2017) investigated how FLE and FLCA of these pupils evolved among different age groups. The results showed little variation in FLCA and a slight increase in FLE among three age groups. However, the weak negative relationship between FLE and FLCA remained quite constant over time. The results also showed that the effect of the teacher grew over time on FLE but not on FLCA.

In a mixed-methods study based on feedback from 750 FL learners around the world through an online survey, Dewaele and MacIntyre (in press) confirmed that FLE and FLCA are separate dimensions and negatively correlated with new additional empirical evidence. Female participants scored higher than the males in FLCA only. Multiple regression analyses found that FLE was mostly predicted by teacher-related variables (attitudes towards the teacher, friendliness of the teacher, and joking by the teacher) while FLCA was predicted mainly by the learners' relative standing among the peers and personality trait Emotional Stability. The qualitative data also showed that the most frequent cause of the FLE experience was the teacher while FLE experiences were most frequently linked to the self.

In a quantitative study, Dewaele, Magdalena Franco and Saito (2019) identified the teacher characteristics that were linked to 210 Spanish EFL learners' levels of FLE and FLCA. Participants who had a L1 user of English as teacher reported more FLE and less FLCA than those with a FL user of English. The gender of the teacher was unrelated to both FLE and FLCA. Teacher's friendliness turned out to be the strongest positive predictor of FLE while teacher's foreign accent was a weaker negative predictor. Participants experienced more FLCA with younger teachers, very strict teachers and teachers who did not use the FL much in class.

Méndez and Fabela (2014) examined the effects of emotions on 18 Mexican EFL learners' language learning process in a qualitative study. They found that the effects of positive and negative emotions on the language learning process is mediated by motivation and the social and cultural context where learning takes place. Some language learners can use negative emotions as motivational fuel for subsequent development.

The first systematic investigation into the FLE of Chinese students was carried out by Li et al. (2018). The authors developed a Chinese Version of the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale and examined its psychometric properties. Participants were 2078 Chinese high school students. Further analysis revealed that students scored highest on the dimension FLE-Teacher, followed by

FLE-Private and FLE-Atmosphere. Qualitative data collected through open questions showed that besides the effect of teacher and peers, the individual experience of FLE is shaped by a large range of learner-internal and learner-external variables, much as it is the case elsewhere in the world.

A second study by the same authors adopted a Complex Dynamic Systems Theory approach to focus on the link between FLE, FLCA and EFL achievement of 1307 Chinese EFL students (Li, Dewaele & Jiang, 2019). FLCA and FLE were found to be unique predictors for self-perceived EFL proficiency at various achievement levels. Interestingly, the relationship was stronger at higher levels of achievement and weaker in the low achievement group. Analysis of qualitative data showed that low scores in English tests and fear of teacher criticism were major sources of FLCA, good test results, teacher praise, increased social standing in the group emerged as the main causes for FLE.

In a quantitative study into the emotional underpinnings of Gardner's Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery, MacIntyre, Dewaele, Macmillan and Li (in press) found significant differences in emotions and attitudes/motivation between 158 Chinese university FL students and 303 FL learners from around the world. Chinese participants reported lower levels of 10 positive emotions and higher levels of 10 negative emotions. They also had significantly lower values than the international sample on positive dimensions (Interest in Foreign Languages, Desire to learn, Attitudes toward learning the FL, Attitudes toward FL speakers, Integrative orientation, Instrumental orientation, FL Course Evaluation, Evaluation of FL Teacher) and significantly higher values on the negative dimensions (FL Use Anxiety and FLCA). The authors speculated that the differences could have specific educational and socio-cultural causes, as FL education in China is strongly exam oriented, and learners have fewer chances of direct interaction with members of the target culture.

In sum, the current literature suggests that both learner-internal and learner-external variables such as the peer group, the teacher, teaching practices and the resulting classroom environment might influence students' emotional experiences in the classroom and that of Chinese EFL learners.

3. Research questions

The following four research questions will be answered in the present study:

RQ1: What are the levels of FLE and FLCA of Chinese undergraduate EFL learners in English classes? What is the relationship between their FLE and FLCA?

RQ2: Are there differences in FLE and FLCA between male and female participants?

RQ3: To what extent do learner-internal variables and teacher-related variables predict participants' FLE and FLCA?

RQ4: What are the sources of FLE and FLCA according to the participants?

4. Method

4.1. Participants

Participants were 564 first-year undergraduate students (194 males, 370 females) from 26 English Listening and Speaking classes taught by six teachers (three male English L1 user teachers and three female Chinese FL user teachers) at a comprehensive university in Beijing, China. The average age of these participants was 18.6 years old ($SD = 0.72$). They had learnt English for at least six to nine years. They took two General English courses respectively for 2

hours per week: English Listening and Speaking Course and English Reading and Writing Course. Participants ranged from low intermediate, intermediate, and high intermediate in terms of their achievements in the English proficiency placement test upon entering the university (Table 1). All of the participants were non-English major students and studying different subjects at the university, such as liberal arts and humanities, social studies and management, economics and business, law and politics, science, and others.

Table 1
Participants' background information.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	194	34.4%
	Female	370	65.6%
English proficiency level	Low-intermediate	143	25.4%
	Intermediate	154	27.3%
	High-intermediate	267	47.3%

4.2. Instruments

The questionnaire started with a section asking about participants' sociobiographical information (i.e. age, gender, and subject background) and their attitudes towards English, ranging from "very unfavourable" to "very favourable" (Mean = 3.69, *SD* = 0.79). They were also asked to indicate their attitude towards the teacher (Mean = 4.22, *SD* = 0.68). Four items with 5-point Likert scales ranging from "not at all" to "very much so" asked participants' perception of their teacher, including how strict the teacher was (Mean = 2.24, *SD* = 0.86), how friendly (Mean = 3.64, *SD* = 0.54), how much the teacher joked (Mean = 3.41, *SD* = 0.68) and how unpredictable the teacher was (Mean = 2.75, *SD* = 0.76) in class. In addition to the sociobiographical and teacher-related items, participants completed the following measures:

4.2.1. Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale

Ten items were extracted from the foreign language enjoyment scale with 21 items initially (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). These items reflect both the social and private dimensions of FLE (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). All items were positively phrased. A scale analysis revealed high internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .889, *n* = 10).

4.2.2. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

A reduced scale with eight items reflected physical symptoms of anxiety, nervousness and lack of confidence were extracted from the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986). Two items were phrased to indicate low anxiety, and six were phrased to indicate high anxiety. The low anxiety items were reverse-coded so that high scores reflect high anxiety for all items on this measure. Internal reliability was good (Cronbach alpha = .867, *n* = 8).

4.2.3. Open-ended questions

The questionnaire finished with two open questions. Participants were asked to describe one positive episode of enjoyment and one negative episode of anxiety in the EFL class. The open-ended questions were formulated as follows: (1) "Please describe one of the most enjoyable learning experiences in your English Listening and Speaking class and how you felt about it." And (2) "Please describe one of the most anxious learning experiences in your English Listening and Speaking class and how you felt about it."

The translation and back-translation between English and Chinese were conducted by two experienced Chinese-English bilingual teachers. Before the formal data collection, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 15 participants, which led to the reformulation and changes of translations of some items (see the questionnaire in the Appendix).

4.3. Context and data collection procedure

Teaching in the English Listening and Speaking classes of this study is skill-oriented and communication-based. The teachers followed the same syllabus across language proficiency levels but enjoyed the freedom on how to use the textbook and organise activities in class. All the participants were required to take a standard speaking test testing their presentation and group discussion skills as part of the course assessment as well as part of an oral English proficiency test. Thus, the specific teaching aims of English Listening and Speaking course that term were to practice participants' presentation and discussion skills as well as their listening comprehension skills.

The questionnaires were collected in the traditional paper-and-pencil way in the classrooms through stratified random sampling in terms of participants' English proficiency level, which can avoid the self-selection bias of online survey (Dewaele, 2018). To reduce the anxiety-provoking impact of the speaking test on the 17th week, the questionnaires were collected at the end of 14th teaching session (16 teaching sessions in total) during the *Spring* term of the academic year 2016-2017 in June 2017. Before their participation in this study, the participants read an informed consent letter in which the purpose of the research was explained. They completed the questionnaires anonymously within 15-20 minutes. No names of their teachers were collected. A total of 645 copies of questionnaires were distributed, and 608 returned at a response rate of 94%. Forty-four cases with missing values were list-wise deleted, which left 564 participants in the database.

4.4. Data analysis

The data analysis was proceeded in two stages. In the first phase, the statistical analyses were used to identify the links between the learner-internal and teacher-related variables and classroom emotions. A close look at the distribution of FLE and FLCA and the calculation of Q-Q plots (Fig. 1 and 2) suggests that they follow a normal distribution reasonably well except the region below 2.5 for FLE. We thus opted for the more powerful parametric statistics to address RQ1 through RQ3. According to Plonsky and Oswald (2017), it is better to use multiple regression as an alternative to *t*-test and ANOVAs to capture individual differences typical of L2 data when the research is multivariate in nature. Thus, multiple regression analyses were run to see the effect of the independent variables on these two emotions.

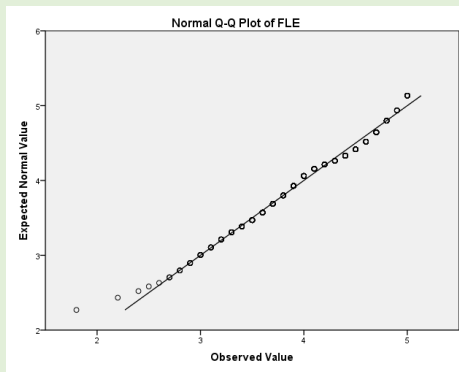


Fig. 1 Normal Q-Q Plot of FLE

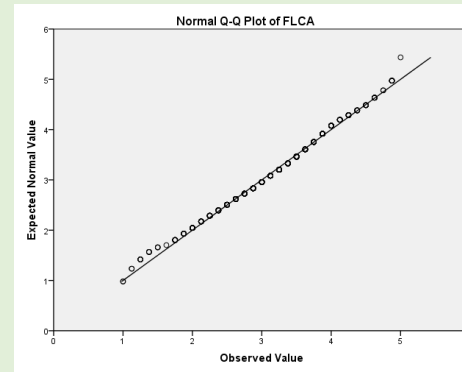


Fig. 2 Normal Q-Q Plot of FLCA

In the second phase, the qualitative data of the two open questions were analysed using NVivo 11 software. The majority of the participants responded to the questions in Chinese while only a few in English. Five hundred twenty-two participants (92.5% of the 564 participants) answered the first open question on enjoyment, producing 19610 Chinese characters and 489 English words, while 488 participants (86.5% of the 564 participants) answered the second open question on anxiety, producing 14634 Chinese characters and 271 English words. The data was coded by the first author taking a data-driven coding approach (Gibbs, 2007). To maximise intra-coder reliability, multiple coding rounds were conducted (Revész, 2012). The purpose of qualitative data is to provide the researcher with emergent themes that can be used to complement and validate the quantitative survey findings. Moreover, they add a valuable emic and context-based dimension to the statistical dimensions.

5. Results

5.1. Levels of FLE, FLCA and their relationship

Average scores on the 5-point scale were calculated for FLE (Mean = 3.94, $SD = 0.54$) and for FLCA (Mean = 3.14, $SD = 0.54$). A paired t -test revealed that participants reported significantly more enjoyment than anxiety in their English Listening and Speaking classes ($df = 563$, $t = 17.317$, $p < .0001$, Cohen's $d = 1.48$). According to the new field-specific benchmarks of d value in L2 research suggested by Plonsky and Oswald (2014, p. 889), it is a large effect size.

A Pearson correlation revealed a significant and negative relationship between FLE and FLCA ($r(563) = -.44$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .19$). The correlation coefficient between these two emotions is medium (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014, p. 889). With 19.3% overlapping variance, it seems that participants with higher scores on FLE tended to have lower scores on FLCA.

5.2. Gender differences in FLE and FLCA

Independent t -tests revealed that the gender differences were not significant for either FLE ($df = 562$, $t = -2.29$, $p = .57$) nor FLCA ($df = 562$, $t = 1.596$, $p = .43$) (Females FLE Mean = 3.98, $SD = 0.53$; Males FLE Mean = 3.87, $SD = 0.57$ and Females FLCA Mean = 3.20, $SD = 0.75$, Males FLCA Mean = 3.21, $SD = 0.73$).

5.3. The links between FLE, FLCA and learner-internal and teacher-related variables

First, we conducted a series of Pearson correlation analyses to explore the relationships between the independent variables and FLE, FLCA. The results summarised in Table 2 showed that

English proficiency level, relative standing among peers, attitudes towards English, attitudes towards the teacher, friendliness of teacher, and teacher's joking was significantly and positively correlated with FLE while strictness of teacher was significantly and negatively linked with FLE. However, there was no significant relationship between teacher's unpredictability and FLE. The results also revealed that English proficiency level, relative standing among peers, attitudes towards English, attitudes towards the teacher, friendliness of teacher and teacher's joking were significantly and negatively correlated with FLCA while strictness of teacher and teacher's unpredictability were significantly and positively related to FLCA.

Table 2

Correlations between independent variables, FLE and FLCA.

	Correlations with FLE		Correlations with FLCA	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Learner-internal variables</i>				
English proficiency level	.50	.000**	-.40	.000**
Relative standing among peers	.28	.000**	-.51	.000**
Attitudes towards English	.48	.000**	-.38	.000**
<i>Teacher-related variables</i>				
Attitudes towards the teacher	.65	.000**	-.30	.000**
Strictness of teacher	-.14	.001**	.10	.024*
Friendliness of teacher	.46	.000**	-.20	.000**
Teacher's joking	.36	.000**	-.21	.000**
Teacher's unpredictability	.01	.906	.14	.001**

Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ (all two-tailed tests).

To identify the best predictors of participants' FLE and FLCA, multiple stepwise linear regression analyses were performed. To avoid multicollinearity problems, only the independent variables that were linked significantly ($p < .05$) with the dependent variables were included in the regression model. Seven variables showing significant correlations with FLE in Table 2 were entered into the regression model for FLE as the predicted variable. A significant regression equation was found ($F(6, 554) = 110.6, p < .0001$, with a R^2 of .545, $R^2_{\text{Adjusted}} = .540$). According to the regression models summarized in Table 3, the most significant predictor of FLE was attitudes towards the teacher, followed by English language level, relative standing among peers, teacher's joking, teacher's friendliness, and attitudes toward English without any clear evidence of multicollinearity (i.e. variance inflation factors [VIF] < 1.691).

Table 3

Significant results of multiple regression analyses using seven variables as predictors of FLE.

Predicted variable	Predictor variables	Adjusted R^2	R^2 change	F	p
FLE	Attitudes towards the teacher	.402	.402	377.316	<.0001
	English proficiency level	.479	.077	258.108	<.0001
	Relative standing among peers	.501	.022	188.718	<.0001
	Teacher's joking	.518	.017	151.330	<.0001
	Teacher's friendliness	.531	.013	128.005	<.0001
	Attitudes towards English	.540	.009	110.564	<.0001

The second stepwise multiple regression analysis was calculated to predict FLCA based on eight variables showing significant correlations with it in Table 2. VIF values hover above 1, suggesting there are no multicollinearity problems. A significant regression model with four predictor variables was found ($F(4, 555) = 85.247, p < .0001$, with a R^2 of .381, $R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .376$). The regression results summarised in Table 4 showed that the strongest predictor was relative standing among peers, followed by English proficiency level, attitudes towards English, and attitudes towards the teacher.

Table 4

Significant results of multiple regression analyses using eight variables as predictors of FLCA.

Predicted variable	Predictor variables	Adjusted R^2	R^2 change	F	P
FLCA	Relative standing among peers	.262	.262	199.280	<.0001
	English proficiency level	.356	.094	155.428	<.0001
	Attitudes towards English	.373	.017	111.641	<.0001
	Attitudes towards the teacher	.376	.003	85.247	<.0001

5.4. Qualitative data: sources of FLE and FLCA according to participants' description

The themes of participants' most enjoyable or anxious experiences in the English class were diverse. Some participants described specific classroom activities, while others commented on the teacher, peers and their perceptions of their classroom experience in general. The coding approaches of Dewaele and MacIntyre (in press) and Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) were combined in this study. The emotion-related episodes were coded into the main category according to the persons directly caused first and then the specific sources under each category. We created three categories labelled "FLE/FLCA-self", "FLE/FLCA-teacher", and "FLE/FLCA-peer". FLE/FLCA-self means that participants themselves were the primary cause of the emotions. The second category was FLE/FLCA-teacher, where the teacher was mentioned as the direct source of enjoyment or anxiety. The third category was FLE/FLCA-peers, meaning that the emotions were directly caused by peers' particular behaviours or interaction with peers. The thematic categorisation of the qualitative data is complicated, as many descriptions touched upon multiple themes and could, therefore, have been categorised differently. Thus, there was some overlapping coding. Table 5 and 6 summarise the sources of these categories and the number of tokens under each source and in total. Due to limited space and the heterogeneous nature of the

sources, we selected some of the most typical responses to illustrate each category.

Table 5

Three categories of FLE and the number of tokens in the feedback of 522 participants on enjoyable episodes.

Category	FLE-self	FLE-teacher	FLE-peer
Source (the number of tokens)	Realisation of progress (17), good language performance (15), the pride of pushing one's limits (2)	Specific classroom activities (222), teacher skills (147), teaching content (81), good classroom atmosphere (46), teacher recognition and support (22), activities outside the classroom (8)	peer interaction (43), peer recognition (10), peer support (3)
In total	34	528	56

Table 5 shows that participants' FLE is mostly related to the teacher/teaching practices followed by the categories of FLE-peer and FLE-self. Among FLE-teacher, specific classroom activities are the most mentioned source of enjoyment. Participants mentioned classroom activities which are new, interesting and creative in the way of learning and lead to effective learning, such as watching a TED talk, role play, and finding the differences between two pictures. One participant reported how she enjoyed a creative classroom activity using the mobile phone to learn in class:

"The teacher asked us to use our mobile phones to find the classification of clothing on Amazon (...). It is a good way of learning English in a practical situation (...) It is more useful and fun than just memorising vocabulary from the textbook" (Participant 36, Female, 19 years old, intermediate level)

Among the category of FLE-peer, peer interaction was mentioned most frequently as the source of enjoyment. One participant commented on how peer interaction helped him to learn English.

"During peer interaction, I can exchange my ideas with different classmates. I can also learn about others' ideas, broaden my view, and learn some new vocabulary and different expressions from my peers." (Participant 17, male, 19 years old, intermediate)

Among the category of FLE-self, participants often felt enjoyable when they had good language performance in class. One participant described how she felt when she answered the teacher's question well.

"I almost answered a question without referring to notes. I cannot believe that I can speak English well." (Participant 10, female, 19 years old, high-intermediate)

Table 6

Three categories of FLCA and the number of tokens in the feedback of 488 participants on anxiety-provoking episodes.

Category	FLCA-self	FLCA-teacher	FLCA-peer
Source (the number of tokens)	Exams and quizzes (187), bad language performance (79), speaking in front of the class (65), speaking without preparation (47), fear of failure and negative evaluation (23), other self-related sources (29)	Specific challenging classroom activities (42), teacher questioning (19), teacher's unpredictability (7), teacher's disapproval (3), teacher's strictness (2), other teacher-related sources (16)	Peer pressure (19), peer interaction (2), peer discouragement (1)
In total	430	89	22

In contrast, FLCA is more related to the learner, followed by FLCA-teacher and FLCA-peer (see Table 6). Among the category of FLCA-self, exam and test was the most anxiety-provoking source. One participant described how nervous she felt during the exam and after the exam.

"The dictation part of the mid-term listening exam made me feel very nervous because I could not understand the listening material and thus wrote very little. This made me very disappointed with myself. Meanwhile, I worried very much about the score." (Participant 53, female, 19 years old, high-intermediate)

Among the category of FLCA-teacher, some specific challenging classroom activities were mentioned most by the participants. Twenty-three participants at the high-intermediate level taught by the same teacher mentioned that the teacher often named three to four students randomly to conduct a group discussion in front of the class. According to the syllabus, the students' performance will be scored as part of their course assessment. One participant described how she felt before the mock speaking test and during the test.

"Our teacher will pick students randomly to do a mock speaking test. (...) Then I often recited my self-introduction before the class every time and practised the speaking topics several days in advance. (...) I did my mock test in the third last week, and I could not express myself well." (Participant 9, female, 18 years old, high-intermediate)

Among the category of FLCA-peer, peer pressure is mentioned most among participants. One participant described how peers' good performance made her feel anxious and unconfident in group discussion.

"When we were practising group discussion, I got a difficult topic. The other two classmates of my group can express a lot in details but I can't. When it was my turn to speak, I was very nervous and unconfident." (Participant 50, female, 20 years old, high-intermediate)

A Pearson Chi-square analysis revealed that the frequency of the above categories is significantly different for FLE and FLCA ($Chi^2 = 663$, $df = 2$, $p < .0001$). FLCA-self (79%) occurred significantly more than FLE-self (5%) in frequency while FLE-teacher (84%) occurred significantly more often than FLCA-teacher (16%). FLE-peer (9%) appears slightly more

frequently than FLCA-peer (4%). In a word, triggers for FLE were more linked to the teacher and peers while triggers for FLCA originated more often in the self.

6. Discussion

The first research question examined levels of FLE and FLCA of Chinese EFL learners. Participants reported significantly more FLE than FLCA in their English classes. Feelings of enjoyment were more prevalent than anxiety among the participants, which echoes the findings of previous studies (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2018; Khajavy et al., 2018). The mean for the enjoyment of the present study (3.94) is slightly higher than the mean reported by the international sample of Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) which was 3.82, but the mean for anxiety (3.14) is much higher than the mean reported in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) which was 2.75. This further confirms that Chinese EFL learners are more anxious than language learners in other continents (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre et al., in press; Woodrow, 2006). This could be attributed to the tradition of language education and exam-oriented culture of learning in the Chinese educational context where EFL learners seldom have the chances to practice English (cf. Shi, 2008). Participants of this study also reported much higher levels of FLE than Chinese high school students (3.12) in Li et al. (2018). This suggests that Chinese university EFL learners in skill-oriented instructional context felt more FLE than Chinese high school students in an examination-oriented context. It might also be related to the differences in participants' language proficiency level, teacher skills and institutional environment.

A moderate negative correlation was found between participants' FLE and FLCA. This again confirms the argument that FLE and FLCA do not represent opposite ends on a single classroom emotion continuum (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). However, both dimensions shared 19% of variance in the present study, which is more than that in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) (13%), Dewaele et al. (2018) (3.8%), Dewaele and MacIntyre (in press) (7.8%), and Dewaele et al. (2019) (4%). This suggests that Chinese EFL students with higher FLE may tend to experience lower FLCA compared with participants in other studies. However, it is also possible for students to experience both high FLE and FLCA, or an absence of both.

The second research question dealt with the effects of gender on FLE and FLCA. No significant gender differences were found in either FLE or FLCA. This differed from the previous research where females reported both more FLE and FLCA than their male counterparts (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2016; Dewaele et al., 2018). However, the gender effects on FLCA is consistent with previous studies on Chinese EFL students (e.g. Liu, 2006).

The third research question examined how much learner-internal and teacher-related variables predicted variance in FLE and FLCA. Correlation analyses revealed that English proficiency level, relative standing among peers, and attitudes towards English were positively correlated with FLE and negatively correlated with FLCA. These results confirmed the findings of previous studies (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Saito et al., 2018). Attitudes towards the teacher, teacher's friendliness and teacher's joking were also found to be positively linked to learners' FLE and negatively linked to FLCA. This is consistent with Dewaele and MacIntyre (in press) and Dewaele et al. (2019), and only partially consistent with Dewaele et al. (2018) where attitudes towards the teacher were unrelated to learners' FLCA. Teacher's strictness is negatively linked with FLE and positively linked with FLCA but both with very small effect sizes. This is similar to the findings of Dewaele and MacIntyre (in press) and Dewaele et al. (2019). Teacher's unpredictability is

positively linked with participants' FLCA but is unrelated to FLE. This finding is the opposite from Dewaele et al. (2018) where a positive relationship was found between teacher's unpredictability and FLE but no relationship with FLCA. This suggests that cultural differences may exist in students' expectation on teacher practice in the FL classroom. Chinese EFL learners were used to the regular teaching routines in their previous learning experiences and often were afraid of unpredictability which may trigger uncertainty and anxiety in the foreign language classroom.

The multiple regression analyses revealed that FLE was best predicted by three teacher-related variables (attitudes towards the teacher, teacher's joking, and friendliness of teacher) (43.2%) and less predicted by three learner-internal variables (English proficiency level, relative standing among peers, and attitudes towards English) (13.8%) while FLCA was mostly predicted by learner-internal variables (relative standing among peers, English proficiency level, attitudes towards English) (37.3%) but only 0.3% predicted by attitudes towards the teacher. These findings reflect those of Dewaele et al. (2018), Dewaele et al. (2019), and Dewaele and MacIntyre (in press). Attitudes towards the teacher could be indicative of learners' appreciation of the teacher's character and teacher skills. For FLCA, personal assessment of relative standing among peers was the strongest predictor. This is consistent with Dewaele and MacIntyre (in press), Dewaele et al. (2019) and Dewaele and Dewaele (2017). Peer pressure is also the primary source of peer-related FLCA (17 out of 18 tokens) mentioned by the participants in the anxiety-provoking experience narration. This finding supports the observation of Yan and Horwitz (2008) that comparison with peers in class was a source of pressure and anxiety among Chinese EFL students.

The final research question dealt with the sources of FLE and FLCA in participants' enjoyable and anxiety-provoking experiences in the English classes. We can see that the statistical results were supported in the qualitative data. The distribution of categories was significantly different for FLE and FLCA. The teacher was mentioned as the cause of an FLE experience in almost three-quarters of the cases compared to only one-quarter where the teacher was mentioned as the cause of a FLCA experience. However, challenging classroom activities beyond students' language competence as part of language performance assessment were mentioned most by students. Some requirements of the unified syllabus at the institutional level indirectly caused anxious atmosphere in the classroom. In contrast, the sources of FLCA related to self were more frequently mentioned than for FLE. These findings corroborate the view that FLCA originates more from the learner while FLE is more context-dependent, linked to the behaviour of the teacher and peers and the interaction between all (Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele et al., 2019, Dewaele & MacIntyre, in press).

7. Limitations and pedagogical implications

Three limitations to this exploratory study should be acknowledged. First, the participants of this study were from a prestigious Chinese university with a relatively high English proficiency level. Thus, the findings reported here cannot be generalised to all Chinese undergraduate EFL learners. Future research could examine a sample of participants with a broader range of language proficiency levels. Second, this study only examined Chinese EFL learners' FLE and FLCA in the context of English Listening and Speaking classes. The future research could investigate their emotions in language classes where other skills are practiced (Pae, 2013; Piniel & Albert, 2018). Third, this study is a cross-sectional study with both quantitative and qualitative data which helped

identify the relationship between learner-internal and teacher-related variables and classroom emotions. However, we cannot establish causality. Lazarus (2003) criticised PosPsy's over-reliance on cross-sectional research designs that are not well-suited for demonstrating either causality or fluctuations in the process. More longitudinal research is thus needed on emotions in SLA (cf. Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2018; Saito et al., 2018).

Despite the limitations, the findings of this study have pedagogical implications for EFL teaching in Chinese universities. First, teachers should be friendly, humorous and supportive and try to organise novel and interesting classroom activities that match students' language levels and interests (Oxford, 2017; Dewaele et al., 2019). Teacher's skills and optimism combined with effective and stimulating teaching activities will help create a positive classroom atmosphere and boost students' FLE, which, in turn, will lead to better performance (cf. Li et al., 2019). Second, at an institutional level, teachers should not be burdened with overly strict guidelines and unified syllabus in language teaching that limits creativity. Decisions on curriculum and syllabus might have a significant impact on language teachers as well as learners (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). To create a positive and relaxing language learning environment, the institution should reduce the frequency of exams and give the teacher more freedom in language assessment as well. Third, the teachers who are L1 users of English working at Chinese universities should be aware of the cultural differences and familiarise themselves with the features of Chinese students and the Chinese culture of learning. Dewaele (2015) pleaded for teachers to do unpredictable, challenging and surprising things to make the classroom more enjoyable. However, too much unpredictability in Chinese classrooms might trigger acute FLCA, especially in the high-stake speaking activities in front of peers.

8. Conclusion

The present study has examined FLE and FLCA of Chinese EFL learners with the aim of establishing how different they are from FL learners in the rest of the world. It turns out that while some differences exist (teacher's unpredictability having negative rather than positive effects), the same patterns emerge. FLE and FLCA are negatively correlated but separate dimensions. Participants reported higher FLE than FLCA. However, no gender differences were found in either emotion. Just like in the rest of the world, Chinese students' FLE was more strongly predicted by teacher-related variables than by learner-internal variables while FLCA was mostly predicted by learner-internal variables. Chinese students do seem to suffer more from FLCA, which could be linked to the stressful educational context. A qualitative analysis of participants' emotional experiences in EFL classroom also confirmed previous research outside China that FLE was more related to the teacher while FLCA was more related to the learners.

To conclude, our findings suggest that the relationship between Chinese learners' FLE and FLCA, and the independent variables that predict them are not fundamentally unique in the world.

Word count: 6986

Acknowledgements

We want to thank the editor of System, Dr Xuesong Gao, and the two anonymous reviewers for their excellent comments on earlier versions of this manuscript. We are also grateful to our participants and their teachers for their participation in this study.

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Appendix: Classroom Emotion Questionnaire

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements according to your experience in this term's English Listening and Speaking classes?

Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Not sure/Agree/Strongly Agree.

Item	Chinese	English
<i>FLES</i>		
1	我不觉得无聊。	I don't get bored.
2	我喜欢本学期的英语听说课。	I enjoy this term's English Listening and Speaking class.
3	我在本学期的英语听说课上总体表现很好。	I performed well in this term's English Listening and Speaking class.
4	我为自己在英语听说课上所取得的成绩感到骄傲。	I feel proud of my accomplishments in this term's English Listening and Speaking class.
5	课堂氛围很积极。	It is a positive environment.
6	懂得一门外语（英语）很酷。	It is cool to know English as a foreign language.
7	英语听说课很有趣。	English Listening and Speaking class is fun.
8	听说课班上的同学们都很不错。	My peers in the English Listening and Speaking class are nice.
9	有良好的课堂氛围。	There is a good atmosphere.
10	我们在英语听说课上经常笑。	We laugh a lot in class.
<i>FLCAS</i>		
1	即使已经为听说课做好充分的准备，我还会感到焦虑。	Even if I am well prepared for the English Listening and Speaking class, I feel anxious about it.
2	我总觉得其他同学的英语说得比我好。	I always think that the other students speak English better than I do.
3	英语听说课上老师点到我的名字让我回答问题或者演讲时，我会感觉到紧张。	I can feel nervous when I'm going to be called on in English Listening and Speaking class.
4	英语听说课上我不担心犯错误。	I don't worry about making mistakes in English Listening and Speaking class. (reverse-coded)
5	英语听说课上，我讲英语时感到自信	I feel confident when I speak English in English Listening and Speaking class. (reverse-coded)
6	英语听说课上发言时，我感到紧张和困惑。	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English listening and speaking class.

- 7 英语听说课上，在没有准备而又不得不发言的情况下，我开始恐慌。 I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English Listening and Speaking class.
- 8 英语听说课上，主动回答问题让我觉得很尴尬。 It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English Listening and Speaking class.
-