Levels of foreign language enjoyment, anxiety and boredom in emergency remote teaching and in in-person classes[1]

Jean-Marc Dewaele (Birkbeck, University of London) ORCID 0000-0001-8480-0977
Alfaf Albakistani (Birkbeck, University of London)
Iman Kamal Ahmed (Birkbeck, University of London)

Corresponding author:
Jean-Marc Dewaele, Birkbeck, University of London, j.dewaele@bbk.ac.uk

Abstract

The present mixed-method study focuses on levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE), foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and foreign language boredom (FLB) among 168 Arab and Kurdish English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in both in-person and emergency remote teaching (ERT) classes. Statistical analyses revealed that learners experienced significantly more FLE, more FLCA, and less FLB in in-person classes than in ERT classes. The qualitative data revealed a more nuanced picture about the things learners appreciated and disliked in both contexts. Sitting at home in front of their computer, many learners did feel more isolated, disengaged, distracted, and missed the interactions with peers and teacher. Yet, some participants felt that ERT did allow relationship-building, lessened their fear of making errors and pushed them to develop new coping strategies. The main sources of FLCA in ERT turned out to be issues with internet connection rather the anxiety of making errors in front of everybody. Boredom arose mostly from a lack of exciting social interactions and monotony in delivery which could induce disengagement. Some pedagogical implications are presented.

Keywords: foreign language enjoyment, foreign language classroom anxiety, foreign language boredom, emergency remote teaching, in-person teaching

Introduction

Reflecting on the emotional differences between the online 'emergency remote teaching' (ERT) that was abruptly introduced because of the Covid-19 pandemic and traditional in-class teaching, one participant in Resnik and Dewaele (2021: 18) quipped: 'It is simply 'less'. Less everything.'

The Covid-19 pandemic affected social interactions in unprecedented ways. Education moved online and everybody had to quickly adapt to the new situation. Hodges et al. (2020) coined the term 'emergency remote teaching' (ERT) to refer to this situation, reflecting 'a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances' (https://er.educause.edu/%20articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning). The abrupt switch to ERT, in addition to worries about personal health and that of loved ones, possibly also combined with feelings of grief for those who died, put heavy pressure on both teachers and learners (Fraschini and Tao, 2021; Resnik and

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Dewaele, 2021). This pressure may have been further compounded by the realisation that the switch to ERT could bring about a loss in learning (Engzell, Frey and Verhagen 2021).

The 'silver lining' of the pandemic and the resulting switch to ERT is that it provided researchers with an unexpected opportunity to expand previous research on the impact of teaching modality (in person vs. online) on learners' emotions. Marchand and Gutierrez (2012) had already established that learners in online classes had a different emotional experience than students in traditional classrooms, which in turn led them to develop different learning strategies. Online students, for example, experienced anger/frustration, boredom, and enjoyment but they developed better coping strategies, in particular an ability to overcome negative emotions. The authors (Marchand & Gutierrez, 2012: 156) concluded that 'student emotions play a key role in understanding student meaningful use of strategies to enhance learning of a difficult subject and that emotional adjustment can be largely predicted by domain-specific motivational beliefs. While we acknowledge the differences between established online classes and ERT, we also think that as ERT became an established fact of life during the pandemic, some of the characteristics of students in established online courses may have developed in students who found themselves abruptly in an ERT setting for an indeterminate amount of time.

The present study will focus more specifically on three learner emotions: foreign language enjoyment (FLE), foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and foreign language boredom (FLB) experienced by FL learners in in-person and ERT contexts (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Li, 2021, 2022).

Literature review
Learners' emotions in positive psychology
The recent explosion of interest in both positive and negative learner emotions can be traced back to MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) who introduced Positive Psychology to the field of applied linguistics (see Dewaele, 2022; Dewaele, Chen et al., 2019, Dewaele & Li, 2020; MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2019).

Fredrickson's (2004) 'broaden-and-build' theory proved to be particularly useful to understanding the positive and negative emotions that shape foreign language learning. The basic idea is that positive and negative emotions pull learners in opposite directions. Negative emotions narrow learners' thought-action repertoire (Fredrickson, 2003) which can restrict the language input and cause learners to clam up and remain silent. In contrast, positive emotions can neutralise the deleterious effects of negative emotions. These positive emotions such as 'joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love—although phenomenologically distinct, all share the ability to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources' (Fredrickson 2003: 219). This suggests that positive emotions have both instantaneous and long-term consequences for individuals: they can help foster long-term success and fulfillment. Moreover, positive emotions allow learners to develop socially and individually, enhance active participation and build resources that can be used in the future (Fredrickson 2006).

Foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA)
Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 2016) were inspired by Fredrickson (2004) and Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory (1990) in developing the concept of FLE. FLE is more than superficial pleasure and is only possible when learners are intensely focused and fully

engaged. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) defined FLE as "a complex emotion, capturing interacting dimensions of challenge and perceived ability that can reflect the human drive for success in the face of difficult tasks" (p. 216).

FLCA is defined as 'a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process' (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986: 128). Horwitz (2017: 41) attributed FLCA to learners' 'distress at their inability to be themselves and to connect authentically with other people through the limitation of the new language'.

Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) used an online survey to obtain quantitative and qualitative data from 1746 multilingual FL learners based in various countries with different proficiency levels and who were studying a variety of FLs. Statistical analyses revealed that participants who were older, who were more advanced learners in universities rather than in secondary schools, who were more multilingual, more advanced and more proficient in the FL had reported significantly higher levels of FLE and significantly lower levels of FLCA. Content analysis of descriptions of enjoyable episodes by participants showed that FLE linked to specific (autonomous) classroom activities, peer recognition, a realisation of progress, teacher recognition and teacher skills. Teachers were found to play an important role as the participants described teachers' attributes, such as being humorous and encouraging comments as boosting their FLE. FLE was also linked to positive feedback from peers. Researchers also found different sources of FLCA and FLE. While FLE is more strongly linked to teacher characteristics and behaviours in class (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017; Dewaele, et al., 2018, 2022; Dewaele, Franco Magdalena et al., 2019; Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2018, 2021; Elahi Shirvan & Talebzadeh, 2020; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019), FLCA is more associated with learner-internal variables such as personality traits (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019; Resnik & Dewaele, 2021).

Meta-analyses have shown that FLCA is negatively linked with learner performance and progress while FLE has a positive relationship, hence the importance of taking learner emotions into account (Botes et al., 2020, 2022a).

Foreign language boredom

Foreign language learning boredom (FLB) is the latest learner emotion to attract wide interest in SLA research (e. g., Dewaele & Li, 2020; Li, 2021, 2021, 2022; Li, Dewaele & Hu, 2020; Pawlak et al., 2020, 2022). Li et al. (2021; 12) defined FLB as 'a negative emotion with extremely low degree of activation/arousal that arises from ongoing activities (…) (that) are typically over-challenging or under-challenging'. FLB is linked to disengagement in terms of cognition, behaviours and motivation or forms of inactivity including distraction, incomprehension, unclear goals in the ongoing activities and other behaviours that show withdrawal or escaping. It is also associated with some negative states such as feeling disinterested, depressed, guilty, helpless, anxious, and dissatisfied (Li et al. 2021).

Li (2021) based the concept of FLB on Pekrun's (2006) Control-Value Theory which argues that learners experience distinct emotions which are intrinsically associated with achievement activities (e.g., studying) and outcomes (e.g., success and failure in exams) (Pekrun and Perry 2014). Learners' control-value appraisals shape their emotional reactions, which ultimately influence achievement by shaping learners' motivation, engagement, performance, and self-regulation (Pekrun and Perry 2014). Li (2021) found that Chinese EFL learners who felt more competent and in control experienced higher levels of engagement and lower boredom. The qualitative data showed that learners felt bored when they perceived themselves over- or under-challenged. Li (2022) and Li and Hu (2022) found a

strong negative correlation between FLE and FLB. Li (2022) also found that attitudes toward the FL and teacher friendliness were the strongest predictors of FLE and FLB among Chinese EFL students.

Learner emotion research in Emergency Remote Teaching contexts
Researchers have started to examine the sources of FL learners' emotions in in-person and ERT classes as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Li and Dewaele (2020) recruited 271 Chinese EFL learners to examine two predictors of FLB in an online course. FLB was found to be inversely related to the perceived meaningfulness of engaging in online courses and the degree of confidence felt based on achievement in tests. The higher level of FLB in the online course compared to the in-person course was linked to students' perception of online courses being overly time-consuming, meaningless, providing insufficient social presence and leading to low achievements.

Combining an online survey and interviews, Kohnke, Zou and Zhang (2021) examined the emotions, self-regulated strategies and perceived difficulties of 52 Chinese FL students in an ERT setting at Hong Kong University. The authors found that students enjoyed attending online classes, felt motivated to develop their L2 skills online. However, the obligation to commit to the assigned time and work as well as the lack of experience in ERT caused feelings of stress, doubt, and loneliness. Moreover, the absence of group work and social interaction were problematic which enabled learners to develop coping strategies in finding a convenient place to study and interacting with their peers.

Adopting a similar design, Resnik and Dewaele (2021) collected data from 510 college EFL students in the European context showed that in-person classes participants experienced both significantly more FLE and FLCA. Participants also reported feeling more bored in ERT classes because they were more teacher-centred and offered fewer opportunities to engage. They attributed their lower FLE to an absence of group solidarity, the absence of laughter, the superficiality of their relationships with teachers and peers. The lower FLCA was linked to the perceived greater anonymity of online classes, and the possibility of avoiding interaction by hiding. The authors conclude that 'disembodied classes have less emotional resonance (p. 21).

Pursuing this path, Resnik, Dewaele and Knechtelsdorfer (2022) explored differences in FLE and its three lower-order dimensions (FLE personal, FLE social and FLE teacher) in both ERT and in-person EFL classes. Participants were 437 university EFL learners. The quantitative data were complemented by in-depth interviews with 21 learners. FLE levels were found to be significantly lower in ERT classes that in in-person classes. The analysis of the FLE dimensions revealed that levels of FLE personal and FLE social decreased most in the ERT classes while FLE teacher remained relatively stable. Content analysis of 21 interviews showed that while the overall frequency of enjoyable aspects of in-person and online classes was similar, the sources of FLE differed: for in-person classes, participants mentioned interaction with teachers and peers, group solidarity, and a fun atmosphere as sources of enjoyment; in ERT classes, they mentioned the comfort and convenience of working from home and an increase in autonomy. They also said that they had been able to form a tight group in ERT classes and were grateful for teacher support. This suggested that while sources of FLE varied somewhat between the two contexts, collaboration with peers and teacher was felt to be possible in the ERT context as well as in the traditional classroom.

In a follow-up study using the same dataset, Resnik, Dewaele and Knechtelsdorfer (to appear) focused on FLCA. After confirming that there was a small, yet significant drop in

learners' overall FLCA in the ERT context, item-level statistical analyses revealed that participants in online classes were significantly less worried about peers being better than them, they experienced fewer physical symptoms of FLCA when called on in class and they were less worried about not being sufficiently well-prepared. However, they reported feeling more embarrassed to volunteer answers in online classes.

The interviews also revealed that participants talked more about the anxiety-provoking aspects of online classes than of in-person classes. The sources of FLCA in online classes differed from the ones in regular classes. Contributing to class discussions was mentioned most frequently as the cause of FLCA in in-person classes, while it came only third in online classes, where the use of technology was the main source of FLCA, followed by uncertainty about requirements for assignments and resulting grade. The authors conclude that ERT classes brought new sources of FLCA to the fore, relegating traditional sources of in-class FLCA in the background.

The finding that ERT might have an emotional 'silver lining' also emerged in the mixed-method study of Maican and Cocarada (2021) who investigated FLE and FLCA among 207 Romanian FL university students during the pandemic. Participants were found to appreciate online resources offered in their ERT classes, especially the Powerpoints uploaded by the teacher on the platform and the chat and discussion forum to communicate with peers and the teacher. On the other hand, they complained about tasks being more demanding in ERT and the physical separation from peers and teachers weighed on them. However, they also developed effective coping behaviours using online resources, which led to higher FLE. Lower-achieving students were found to report higher FLE. FLE was found to play a protective role.

Pawlak et al. (2022) carried out a qualitative study on the opinions of 34 teachers and 256 Iranian EFL students to find out whether class mode (online versus physical classes) or course type (content vs versus skills-based courses) had an effect on boredom. A majority of teachers and students reported that online classes were more boring than in-person classes. Students felt that content-based online courses were more boring due to their lecture-type nature. Students had ineffective coping strategies to deal with boredom in the online mode, such as playing games or disconnecting.

Adopting a longitudinal design, Fraschini and Tao (2021) investigated learner emotions (pride, FLE and FLCA) in an ERT setting over a period of four weeks. Participants were 117 *ab initio* Korean university students in Australia. The authors found that the relationships between the independent variables and academic achievement in the ERT setting were very similar to those in studies based on in-person classes. A strong influence was also found of the teacher on FLE, especially teacher friendliness.

Following a similar path, Sun and Zhang (2021) examined the emotional trajectory of 11 EFL students during ERT classes in a Chinese university. They found that students' emotions fluctuated from feeling both anxious at the start of the course, curious to steady and calm in the middle, then dominated by anxiety at the end. They missed the cooperation with peers during tasks and the established routines. The findings highlighted the bidirectionality of the impact of emotions, where students reported how their positive and negative emotions affected their learning.

Finally, Dewaele, Albakastani and Kamal Ahmed (2022), using the same database as in the present study, found that their 168 Arab and Kurdish EFL learners experienced significantly less flow in their ERT classes compared to their pre-pandemic in-person classes. While the proportion of time in flow in the In-person classes was linked to a range of independent variables, namely participants' age, proficiency, attitudes toward English,

attitudes toward the teacher, teacher frequency of use of English, flow in ERT classes was only linked to a single variable: attitude toward the teacher. The authors interpret this as evidence that in ERT classes students are not just physically and socially isolated but also mentally isolated.

What this literature review demonstrates is that learner emotions are linked to both learner-internal variables and learner-external variables which can interact in dynamic ways. ERT seems to dampen learner emotions but it has silver linings too. Very few comparative studies on in-person and ERT classes have included FLE, FLCA and FLB in the research design. There is also a need to gain a better understanding of learners' views and feelings about in-person and ERT classes. Finally, it is important to remember that ERT presents extra challenges for learners and teachers in parts of the world where electricity supply and internet connection can be patchy. Our focus on Kurdish and Arabic students thus adds a new dimension to existing research among more privileged learners.

Research questions
Based on the abovementioned literature, the current study aims to investigate the following research questions:
1. What are the levels of FLE, FLB and FLCA in in-person and ERT classes?
2. Are there differences in FLE, FLB and FLCA in in-person and ERT classes?
3. What are the things participants like and dislike about their in-person and ERT classes?
4.

Methodology
Design
The current study adopted a mixed-method approach using a convergent parallel design (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011). The quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently at the same stage, analysed separately, while the results were interpreted together. The qualitative results were used to explain and support the quantitative results.

Participants
Participants were 168 learners studying EFL in Arab countries and the Kurdistan region in Iraq. Close to two thirds of the sample were female (n = 111), less than a third were male (n = 53) and 4 participants did not provide their gender. The higher proportion of females is typical in online FL emotions studies (Dewaele, 2018). Participants were aged between 16 and 38 years (M = 20, SD = 3). Participants were classified into two groups; teenagers who were aged between 16 and 19 (50.6%), and the adult group, which included 85 participants aged between 21 and 38 (49.4%).

The majority of the respondents were studying at universities (n = 152), while a few were school students (n = 15). Most of the participants had studied English in their respective countries and had moved to online learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. English proficiency levels varied, with 5 participants describing themselves as beginners, 19 as low intermediates, 65 participants as intermediate, 56 as high intermediates, and 23 as advanced.
Participants were Moroccan (n = 58), Iraq (n = 53), Saudi (n = 46) with smaller numbers of twelve other nationalities. Most participants reported knowing two languages (n = 64), fewer spoke three (n = 49), four (n = 45) and five to seven languages (n = 10). Participants' L1 included Arabic (n = 93), Kurdish (n = 39), Amazigh (n =17), Turkmen (n = 6), English (n = 4), French (n = 3) and other languages.

The instruments

The data were collected by employing a web-based survey. The first section included demographic questions and a language profile as reported above. The participants were then asked to rate their FLE, FLCA and FLB, FLCA separately for their previous in-person and current ERT English classes. Three scales were utilised based on a 5-point Likert scale, varying between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The shortened and validated version of FLE-S by Botes et al. (2021) was used in this study which was originally developed by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). The scale contains three subdimensions including FLE teacher: e.g., 'My FL teacher is encouraging', FLE personal: e.g., 'I enjoy my FL class' and FLE social: 'There is a good atmosphere in my (virtual) FL classroom'. Reliability was calculated for the nine items using Cronbach's alpha which revealed high reliability in both contexts (Cronbach $\alpha = .823$, $N = 9$) for in-person and (Cronbach $\alpha = .884$, $N = 9$) for online classes.

The short form of the FLCA scale came next. It contains 8 items used by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) extracted from the original 33-item FLCAS (Horwitz et al. 1986). A recent psychometric analysis and validation study showed that these 8 items constitute a solid unidimensional scale (Botes et al., 2022). These items indicate physical symptoms of anxiety, lack of confidence and tension such as 'I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class'. The reliability of items was tested, reaching acceptable reliability for both in-person (Cronbach $\alpha = .700$, $N = 8$) and online contexts (Cronbach $\alpha = .787$, $N = 8$).

Following that, 8 items were extracted from Li et al. (2021), representing the subscale measuring the FL classroom boredom. It showed high internal consistency in in-person (Cronbach $\alpha = .910$, $N = 8$) as well as in ERT classes (Cronbach $\alpha = .939$, $N = 8$). The subscale includes items that express physiological symptoms of boredom such as yawning as well as cognitive aspects including distraction, disengagement, lack of concentration and focus (e.g., 'My mind begins to wander in the English class.')

The final section of the questionnaire asked participants to complete four open-ended questions that asked about what they liked and disliked about their in-person and ERT FL learning environments. Some responses were provided in Arabic which were then translated into English by the second and third author.

Procedure

The questionnaire was designed using Google forms. Snowball sampling was used: an open call was issued to Arab and Kurdish learners who were studying EFL in Arab countries during the pandemic, asking them to share the link with their friends and classmates. The online survey was accessible for three months (i.e., April to June 2021), and took between 15-20 minutes to complete. Anonymity of participants' responses was guaranteed and their consent was obtained at the start of the survey. The research design received ethical approval from the authors' institution.

Data analysis

Normality of the data for FLE, FLCA and FLB in both in-person and ERT classes was assessed by visual inspection of Normal Q-Q Plots (available from the authors on request).

The responses to the open questions were analysed using content analysis. Themes emerged based on interpretations of the qualitative data rather than through a prior list (Dörnyei, 2007). Four major themes emerged in the 141 responses about the positive aspects of in-person classes: 1) human interaction, 2) classroom environment, 3) positive emotions, and 4) other.

Three themes were found in the 124 responses about the positive aspects of the ERT context: 1) flexible learning context, 2) feeling confident and 3) other. The coding of the feedback on the negative aspects of both contexts revealed that among the 124 participants who provided a response, 38 mentioned that there is nothing that they disliked in in-person classes. The themes that emerged in the 68 responses about the negative aspects of in-person classes were: 1) time-consuming, 2) teaching quality, 3) negative emotions, and 4) others. Four themes emerged in the 128 responses about the negative aspects of ERT classes: 1) technical issues, 2) lack of human interaction, 3) negative emotions, and 4) others.

Inter-rater reliability was carried out to find out if there was agreement between the two raters' codes for positive and negative aspects of the two different learning environments. Thus, Cohen's κ was calculated for the four components. There was moderate agreement for the codes of positive aspects of in-person learning (κ = .777) while there were strong agreements for the codes of positive aspects of ERT context (κ =.814), negative aspects of in-person leaning, (κ =.880), and negative aspects of ERT context (κ =.876).

Results
Quantitative analysis
In order to answer the first research question, we calculated the means for the three emotions in both contexts. Participants reported much higher levels of positive emotion than negative emotions (see Figure 1).
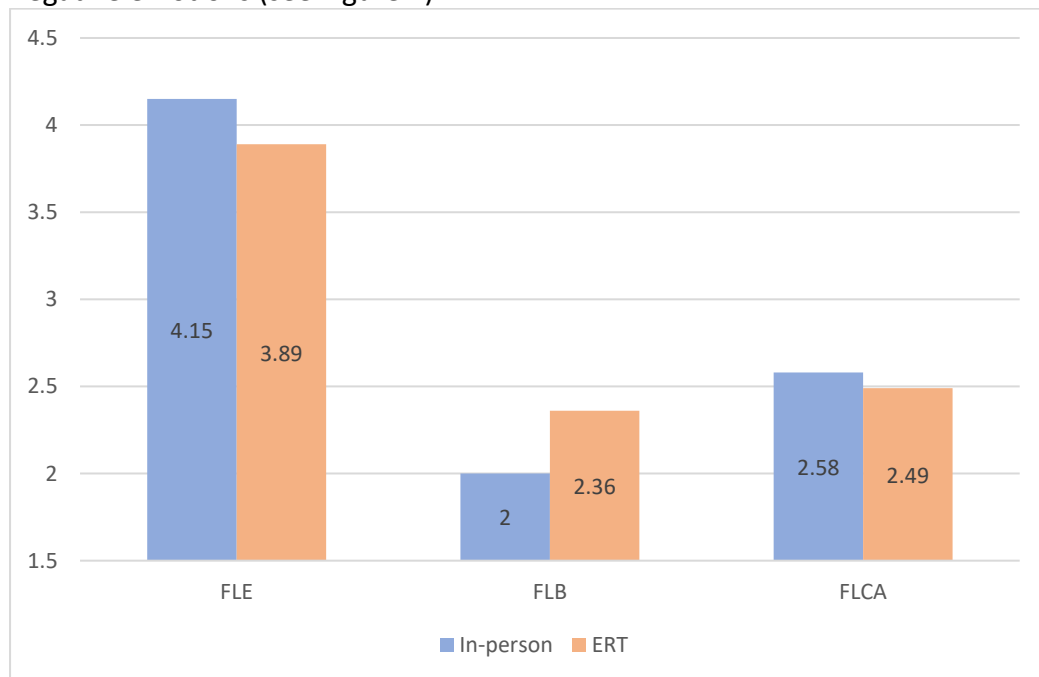

Figure 1. Mean levels of FLE, FLB and FLCA in In-person and ERT contexts

Paired-samples *t*-tests were conducted to answer the second research question, namely the differences between learners' FLE, FLB and FLCA in both learning contexts. FLE scores for in-person classes were found to be significantly higher than in ERT classes (t [167] = 5.132, $p <$ .001; Cohen's d = .349- an effect size ranging between small and medium (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). Participants' FLB scores were found to be significantly higher in ERT classes than in in-person classes (t [168] = -4.657, $p <$ .001; Cohen's d = .353 - an effect size ranging between small and medium. FLCA scores for in-person classes were found to be significantly higher than in ERT classes (t [167] = 2.062, $p <$ .041; Cohen's d = .112, a very small effect size.

Qualitative analysis
Table 1 presents the different themes that emerged in the feedback about what participants liked and disliked in both conditions. Positive views on in-person classes included the fact that they were felt to be socially more satisfying and more likely to generate positive emotions. However, a smaller number of participants pointed out that in-person classes were too time consuming, that teaching quality was not always satisfactory and that they could generate anxiety. Positive views on ERT classes included an appreciation of the flexibility of the medium and the feelings of confidence linked to the physical distance from peers and teacher. There were equal numbers of negative views on ERT, mostly linked to technical issues of connecting over internet but also a lack of social interaction and the negative emotions that this physical separation generated.

Table 1. Positive and negative themes in in-person and ERT contexts

Positive: in-person		Positive: ERT		Negative: in-person		Negative: ERT	
Theme	Freq	Theme	Freq	Theme	Freq	Theme	Freq
Interaction	67	Flexibility	89	Other	31	Technical issues	55
Classroom environment	32	Other	22	Negative emotions	22	Negative emotions	35
Positive emotions	32	Confidence	14	Time consuming	21	Lack interaction	25
Other	10			Teaching quality	12	Other	13
TOTAL	141		125		86		128

Positive views of in-person classes
Sixty-seven participants reported that they liked in-person classes because it allowed them to build relationships, exchange knowledge, discuss topics, and get supportive feedback. Nonverbal communication and body language were mentioned as reasons for preferring in-person classes. For example, Participant 11 mentioned: 'I like seeing the teacher's gestures and facial expressions.' Participant 112 explained:

> The first-hand unique interactions and building a human connection with the teacher and bond with him and my peers through the challenges that come with the curriculum that we were inspired to work together and collectively grow as people.

Most of the participants enjoyed in-person classes for their social interactions: 'class activities are always fun (a lot of interactions with the rest of the classmates)' (Participant 89) and that they can be '[li]ving the moment, feeling like you are truly learning, enjoying the class with my friends, telling jokes and watch everyone laughing' (Participant 149).

Thirty-two participants mentioned the classroom environment including the atmosphere, the degree of participation and attention and classroom activities as the reasons for preferring the in-person classrooms. Some classroom features were mentioned in many of the participants' reports, such as the mood, the atmosphere, the environment, the room energy, the vibes, and the physical presence, indicating the pleasantness of the face-to-face classroom environment. Learners described their positive emotional experiences in in-person classes: 'Engaging with the teacher and other students, more motivation, more fun and interesting situations.' (Participant 92). Also, their responses indicated that their FLE filled

them with hope about the future exam performance: 'I can enjoy my study, I can pass the exam easily.' (Participant 38).

Positive emotions stemmed from teachers' skills such as their practices, feedback, and personal characteristics. Participant 90, for example, mentioned: '[t]he creativity of our teacher, the way we do competitions, and the extra credits'; while others described teachers as 'supportive, kind, funny, smart' (Participant 114), while Participant 57 reported appreciating 'the way of teaching' (participant 57).

Other responses suggested that participants experienced fewer negative emotions such as anxiety and boredom in traditional classrooms. For example, Participant 61 reported that: 'I can speak without fear when I learn new vocabulary and speak without tension'. Moreover, participants repeatedly described classes as being 'more attentive and active - not feeling bored' (Participant 93) and as 'interactive and not boring' (Participant 155).

The category 'Other' included responses regarding appreciation of in-person classroom settings and realisation of progress in the FL learning.

Positive views of ERT classes
A common view amongst the participants was that they liked online learning due to its flexibility (*n* = 89) in terms of attendance, timesaving, feeling more convenience, accessibility of the learning materials, and delivery mode of classes. As Participant 14 put it:

> The things I like about online classes are attending classes using any device from anywhere, I don't have to get ready every day and go to the university, and having the books as the digital version.

For other participants, learning online improved their self-confidence as Participant 26 reported:

> It facilitates my participation in an English class. It helped me not to be afraid of anyone or worried about making mistakes, so online classes give me the courage to start speaking even without preparing. This indicates that I can develop my speaking skill better than in in-person classes.

For some participants, the ERT setting reduced their FLCA. Participant 74 described it thus: 'it's less anxiety-provoking, it is easier to participate through the raising hand option' while Participant 11 stated: 'I like that I'm not with a lot of people in one room because I have social anxiety and its more comfortable. I also focus better and can participate more.' Other participants felt that they 'can say anything without embarrassment', as they did not worry about 'making mistakes' (Participant 9), and there is 'almost no peer pressure' (Participant 146). Other things the participants liked were related to improving their digital literacy, teacher practices such as PowerPoint presentations, and general appreciation of FL learning or online learning.

Negative views of in-person classes
Learning in traditional FL classes was perceived as time-consuming by some participants when it comes to preparation, attendance and traveling to school:

Also, we have to come to the class before the due time and before the teacher comes. In addition, I have to wake up early than online classes because my home is away from my university about 30 minutes. (Participant 31).

There were also some negative comments about teaching approaches and practices implemented in in-person classes. These included the lack of feedback and the types of activities, and teachers' personalities. Furthermore, several participants (*n* = 22) mentioned anxious moments in in-person FL classes because they could not hide: 'When a teacher notices at any time that I am distracted, she lets me answer any question she asked, and when I don't answer correctly, I feel nervous and worried' (Participant 31).

Negative views of ERT classes
In their responses to this question, 55 participants indicated that technical issues were among the things they disliked most in online learning followed by negative emotional experiences (*n* = 35). Participants acknowledged the hurdles of learning online struggling with internet connection, absence of sound, lack of immediate feedback from teachers, indirect interaction with peers and teachers, and the absence of a pleasant atmosphere from in-person classes. Participant 141 stated:

> I dislike the fact that we always have connection issues in addition to the lack of good interaction between students and teachers, the vibe of studying is missing, you don't make memories and build relationships.

The participants explained how the online classes caused negative emotions: 'When I talk, I feel uncomfortable in addition I feel embarrassed' (Participant 10), 'it was due to 'fears of making errors when speaking in front of others' (Participant 162). Other participants complained that online classes were more boring: 'It causes laziness' (Participant 6), 'it isn't interesting' (Participant 35) and 'everything is draining and 10 times more exhausting' (Participant 77). Some learners perceived online classes as overly monotonous: '100% lesson (no jokes)' (Participant 2), 'no variation of activities' (Participant 94). The physical distance translated into a sense of psychological distance: 'There is this detachment from the class spirit. It's a bit boring' (Participant 95), while Participant 166 noted '…. the level of comfort makes it easier to get distracted by something more stimulating or feel drowsy and fall asleep.'. Other things participants disliked in ERT classes were teaching approaches in general, the extensive number of assignments, and reduced participation.

Discussion
The first research question focused on the levels of three learner emotions in in-person and ERT classes. For both contexts, participants reported high levels of FLE and low levels of FLCA and FLB, confirming a general pattern reported in the literature about positive emotions being higher than negative ones in FL classes (Dewaele & MacInctyre, 2014; Maican & Cocarada, 2021; Resnik & Dewaele, 2021). It confirms that positive and negative emotions can co-occur in both offline settings (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) and ERT contexts (Fraschini & Tao, 2021; Maican & Cocarada, 2021). However, this result needs to be interpreted with a certain degree of caution as the participants in the survey were self-selected and were more likely to be motivated FL students who enjoyed their classes and were willing to fill out a questionnaire on the topic.

The second research question focused on the differences between learners' FLE, FLBA and FLCA in in-person and ERT contexts. The significantly lower levels of FLE and FLCA and

higher levels of FLB in ERT classes compared with in-person settings reflect and expand the patterns reported in Kruk (2016), Resnik and Dewaele (2021) and Resnik et al. (2022, to appear). The lower levels of FLCA in the ERT classes could be attributed to the fact that FLE neutralised the deleterious effects of anxiety (Fredrickson 2006) more effectively in ERT contexts than in an in-person context. FLE may also have played a more central role in the coping strategies and behaviours that learners developed for online learning (MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer, 2020). The lower FLE and FLCA linked with a higher FLB in the ERT context gives further credence to the idea that participating in a FL class through a computer dulls the emotional resonance of the experience (Resnik & Dewaele, 2021; Resnik et al., 2022, to appear). Learners are less aroused and more prone to feeling bored (Li et al., 2021).

The qualitative material allowed us to investigate the causes of these differences in learner emotions. One of the striking findings was that the themes that emerged about things liked and disliked in both contexts differed somewhat, and their frequencies were quite different. The things participants liked about in-person classes coincided with previous research on the topic, namely group solidarity, a shared appreciation of the teacher and the FL, the joined involvement in exciting activities (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2018, 2022; Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2018, 2021; Elahi Shirvan & Talebzadeh, 2020; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019).

Participants remembered positively the energy and the atmosphere of in-person classes, and face-to-face participation which was missing in online classes due to the limitations of digital communication in the ERT settings. The lack of face-to-face interaction in ERT classes limited the richness of peers' and teachers' interactions, which form the very basis of FLE (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016). Moreover, physical distance reduced the chance to build relationships with other classmates and teachers, and participants regretted the lack of collaboration and joking. That said, some participants explained that ERT also allowed relationship-building, echoing a finding in Maican and Cocarada (2021) and Sun and Zhang (2020). ERT classes also allowed participants to be less fearful of making errors and boosting their confidence. However, the drop in FLCA could also be linked to the lack of interaction and hence fewer opportunities to speak English or be actively involved in anxiety-provoking activities.

The finding of higher levels of FLB in ERT classes than in in-person classes mirrors the patterns in Li and Dewaele (2020) and Pawlak et al. (2022). Participants reported that while sitting at home in front of their computer, they experienced disengagement, distraction, frustration because of unexpected technical problems that were outside of their control. They also regretted the lack of exciting social interactions. The online classes were thus often perceived as boring, lacking in humour and monotonous.

Considering our findings, we realise that our participants had learned to appreciate some of the positive aspects of ERT and that their experiences had raised their awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of in-class and ERT classes. They may have been developing some of the characteristics of the students of established online courses noted in Marchand and Gutierrez (2012) where students had chosen to study using the remote modality. There was evidence of the development of new coping strategies for ERT, including controlling one's FLCA and finding ways to boost FLE and ward off FLB. The tenuous electronic link with the classroom may have convinced students to adapt and to boost their self-efficacy in order to keep up the momentum in their FL learning journey.

These findings have some pedagogical implications. They highlight the importance of collaboration in tasks that ERT classes provide for FL learners. Teachers can create virtual

rooms for students so as to allow them a degree of autonomy in discussions. They can encourage students to interact to accomplish tasks, provide more student-centered activities in which learners can dominate discussions, participate freely, and provide feedback and invite feedback from peers in the class. The findings further indicate the necessity of creating a positive and pleasant atmosphere in online classes. Teachers need to find ways to eliminate monotony in their classes to keep their learners on their toes and to keep a smile on their face.

The present study has some limitations. Firstly, the cross-sectional design meant we only had a 'snapshot' of a dynamic situation as learners' emotions were likely to change over time, especially with the ERT context becoming more commonplace during the pandemic. Secondly, although the combination of closed items with Likert scales and open questions provided interesting data, conducting interviews would help to gain more in-depth explanations of the discrepancies in learners' emotional experiences within and across both contexts. Finally, the survey was undertaken when participants were involved in ERT so their assessments for in-person classes were based on memory. It is not impossible that these emotions linked to in-person classes were rated more positively as they preceded the crisis in which the students found themselves when completing the survey.

Conclusion

We started the introduction with a quote from a participant in Resnik and Dewaele (2021: 18) that compared to in-person classes, in terms of FLE and FLCA, ERT classes are 'less of everything'. The findings of the present study largely confirm this observation, as participants reported lower levels of FLE and FLCA and higher levels of FLB in ERT classes than in in-person classes but 'less' does not mean a complete absence. Levels of FLE were still high in ERT classes, and while there was more FLB in ERT classes, it was still low. The originality of the present study resides in the fact that participants expressed nuanced views about the things they liked and disliked in both contexts. While many reported that they felt lonely, disengaged and preoccupied in their ERT classes, they also observed that the ERT classes had redeeming qualities: they pushed some participants to develop coping strategies and increase their flexibility. The upside of the physical and emotional distance of the ERT context was a lower anxiety. There is no doubt, however, that participants preferred the excitement and the enjoyment linked to the vibrant atmosphere of in-person classes.

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