# Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Enjoyment in English Learning Among Chinese Senior High School Students[*]

## Miaoqing Wang, Heechul Lee & Jaewoo Shim[**]
### (Jeonbuk National University)

**Wang, Miaoqing; Lee, Heechul & Shim, Jaewoo. (2023). Foreign language classroom anxiety and enjoyment in English learning among Chinese senior high school students.** *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 31(1), 113-141. The present mixed-method study examined foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and foreign language enjoyment (FLE) in English learning among Chinese senior high school students. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 210 students aged 17 to 18 in a province in southern China. The subjects also took a TOEFL Junior Speaking Simulation Test that measured their oral English proficiency. The results of the canonical and regression analysis as well as the qualitative method of narrative frames revealed that FLCA and FLE were correlated, with FLCA and FLE sharing 36.8% variances. Anxiety of English class (AEC), a sub-dimension of FLCA was negatively related to oral English proficiency, while FLE-private, a sub-dimension of FLE, was positively related. In addition, several themes about the causes, effects, and strategies in FLCA and FLE were identified. The qualitative research findings supported the findings from the quantitative research analysis. Some pedagogical implications were made based on the present study.

**Key Words:** FLCA, FLE, FL oral proficiency, Chinese EFL learners

# 1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the positive psychology (PosPsy) movement has received remarkable attention in SLA, evidenced by a growing number of articles, special issues, books, and conferences (Dewaele & Li, 2018). This movement has begun to move away from an exclusive focus on FLA (Foreign Language Anxiety) and advocated for a holistic view of emotions related to academic learning experienced both positively and negatively by FL learners (Jiang & Li 2017; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Among all the positive and negative emotions studied in this emerging research trend, foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and foreign language enjoyment (FLE) have been considered the most central experienced affective variables driving FL learning (Piniel & Albert, 2018).

Defined as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284), Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986) has been widely studied and recognized. The construct has been commonly measured by the 33-item, five-point Likert Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and covers three sub-dimensions: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. In contrast to FLCA, Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014, 2016) began their exploration by identifying Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) as a dimension independent of FLCA and conceptualizing it as "complex emotion, capturing interacting dimensions of challenge and perceived ability that reflect the human drive for success in the face of difficult tasks" (p. 216). They further developed the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale, based on 21-item Likert scale ratings, which has become the main instrument for measuring FLE subdivided into FLE-social and FLE-private.

Numerous previous studies have examined the relationship between FLCA and language learners' achievement (Zhang & Liu, 2013; Wang, 2017; Gkonou, 2014; Gopang et al., 2017; Horwitz, 2016; Liu, 2018a, 2018b), and the relationship between FLE and learners' achievement (Piniel & Albert, 2018; Jin & Zhang, 2018; Guo, 2021; Wei et al., 2019). In the recent development, some researchers attempted to understand the relationship among FLCA, FLE, and FL achievement simultaneously (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Yang, 2021; Dong et al., 2022; Su, 2022). For example, Dewaele & Alfawzan (2018) reported FLE influenced FL learning more than FLCA did. Some have also found that their subjects' FLCA and FLE were dynamically related and fluctuated overtime, influencing their language outcomes (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017; Elahi

& Taherian, 2021; Boudreau et al., 2018; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019; Li et al., 2020). In addition, many scholars have applied qualitative studies to investigate the causes of FLCA and FLE (Liu, 2018a,b; Li et al., 2020; Gopang et al., 2017; Guo, 2021; Yang, 2021; Dong et al., 2022).

Although some authors have also examined the interactions between FLCA and FLE (Jiang & Dewaele, 2019), they all used linear methods such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression methods to examine these relationships, which can hardly capture the complex relationships between FLCA, FLE and their sub-dimensions. Therefore, this study decided to use canonical correlation analysis (CCA), a multivariate technique that can simultaneously examine the associations between sub-divisions (Stevens, 1986; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Thompson, 1984) and also explains the shared variability between subscales within a given set of variables (Sherry & Henson, 2005) to better analyze the complex relationship.

In order to embellish and interpret quantitative results in more depth, several researchers have included qualitative research in the collection of articles after the quantitative phase. Thus, this study decided to adopt the methodology of narrative frames to obtain some qualitative data. According to Barkhuizen & Wette (2008), narrative frames provide participants with guidance and support for narrative structure and content and allow for the collection of a small corpus of narratives in a short period of time for making broader generalizations. Over the past decade, empirical narrative research has proliferated in TESOL (Xu, 2014; Xu & Liu, 2009).

To investigate the relationships between FLCA, FLE and FL proficiency in more meaningful ways, the following questions were formulated:

1. What is the canonical correlation relationship between FLCA and FLE among Chinese senior high school EFL students?
2. How much variance in the oral English proficiency of Chinese senior high school learners of English can be explained by the linear combination of the sub-dimensions of FLCA and FLE?
3. What are the causes, effects and strategies of Chinese senior high school EFL students' FLCA and FLE perceived by the subjects?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

Foreign Language Anxiety was defined as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language (L2) contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). Thus, students with anxiety may resist learning a foreign language because of the fear of performing poorly and may even have a mental block in FL learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). One instrument applied for measuring foreign language anxiety construct was the 33-item, Five-point Likert Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz et al.(1986). The instrument covered three dimensions of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The first sub-dimension of communication apprehension was described as a form of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety. In the foreign language context, communication apprehension stemmed from the self-awareness students experience during the communication process. Multiple studies have concluded that communication apprehension was a major source of anxiety (Al-Saraj, 2014; Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Horwitz et al., 1986; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Young, 1990). The second sub-dimension of fear of negative evaluation assessed learners' concerns about the views of others on their performance errors. In particular, Horwitz et al.(1986) claimed that students' fear of negative evaluation was due to the nature of the L2 classroom, where their performance was constantly being evaluated by the teacher and more fluent peers (Horwitz et al., 1986). The third dimension of test anxiety was defined as "the type of performance anxiety resulting from a fear of failure in an academic evaluation setting" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127), a type of anxiety specific to an exam situation. Some authors have also adapted these 33 items according to the different profiles of local students. For example, Zhao (2007) divided the original three-sub-dimension instrument into four-sub-dimension instrument including communication apprehension, test anxiety, anxiety of English class, and fear of negative evaluation.

To date, FLCA has been measured and investigated quantitatively and qualitatively in different SL/FL contexts. These studies have investigated the function of FLCA in terms of gender, age, and different language levels and found that foreign language anxiety had some negative influence on learning outcomes in four different aspects (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, and vocabulary learning). (Horwitz, 2016; Teimouri et al., 2019;

Horwitz, 2001; Liu, 2006; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Zhang & Liu, 2013; Gkonou, 2014; Luo, 2014; Wang, 2017; Wang & Zhao, 2020; Gopang et al., 2017; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Liu, 2018a, 2018b). Studies have also demonstrated that speaking was the most anxiety-provoking activity in language learning, sparking a series of investigations on the relationship between anxiety and oral proficiency. For example, Gkonou (2014) found a negative correlation between English speaking anxiety and self-perceived oral proficiency in 128 Greek university EFL students, using an adapted version of the FLCAS questionnaire. Zhang & Liu (2013) explored the effects of Chinese university students' speaking test anxiety and speaking strategy use on their speaking performance. The study involved 2000 university students who responded to the Oral English Test Anxiety Scale and the Oral Communication Strategies Inventory (OCSI) (speaking part). The result revealed that students' oral test anxiety had a negative effect on their performance (p< .01). Liu (2018b) conducted a mixed methods study of English speaking anxiety of 199 Chinese students aged 13 to 15 years and claimed that participants in general did not feel anxious when speaking English, but anxiety had a negative impact on students' performance in spoken English. In addition, she found that causes and effects of anxiety varied depending on their grade levels. Thus, it can be seen that FLCA has a significant impact on oral proficiency.

## 2.2. Foreign Language Enjoyment

Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) was initially introduced to the field of SLA by Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014). It was conceptualized as "complex emotion, capturing interacting dimensions of challenge and perceived ability that reflect the human drive for success in the face of difficult tasks" (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016, p. 216). To operationalize the concept of FLE, they developed the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale consisting of 21 Likert-type items, which converted into two constructs of FLE-social and FLE-private. FLE-social, one of the two constructs, was defined as the enjoyment resulting from "positive feelings, encouraging peers, nice teachers, and a supportive environment" (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016, p. 225), and the other construct, FLE-private, was defined as intra-personal enjoyment originated from "thoughts and feelings coalescing around a sense of accomplishment" (p. 228). In recent years, scholars from Germany (Resnik & Dewaele, 2021), Iran (Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2021), and China (Li et al., 2018; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019) have further explored the constructs of FLE through factor analysis and other

methods and developed more appropriate FLE scales for their students, proving that the FLE was a rich and multifaceted concept (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). In China, Li et al.(2018) found that FLE could be divided into three dimensions, including FLE-teacher, FLE-peer, and FLE-atmosphere, while Jin & Zhang (2018) adapted the original constructs into three dimensions of enjoyment of teacher support, enjoyment of student support, and enjoyment of foreign language learning.

In contrast to the well-researched FLCA, the study of FLE in foreign language learning is in its early stage (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Unlike FLCA, FLE was generally positively correlated with L2 learners' learning achievement (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Piniel & Albert, 2018; Dewaele et al., 2018; Jin & Zhang, 2018). Researchers have noted that FLE played a key role in the language learning process, as it aided FL learners in paying attention, processing information, and effectively acquiring the target language. The results of Guo's (2021) study showed that both FLE-Private and FLE-Social were positively related to English proficiency. Jin & Zhang (2018) studied Chinese high school seniors using their own three-dimensional FLE scale and concluded that learners' authentic affinity for foreign language learning was more important to their foreign language achievement than their enjoyment of social relationships in the classroom. Although FLE may also be related to a wide range of learner- and teacher-related variables, such as learner gender, age, multilingual ability, and teacher personality (Dewaele et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021), the literature on FLE and speaking is scarce (Bielak, 2022).

## 2.3. The Relationship between FLCA, FLE and FL Achievement/ Proficiency

The relationship between FLCA, FLE, and FL achievement/proficiency has just been investigated recently. Firstly, the relationship between FLE and FLCA has been extensively explored by scholars in several EFL contexts, with most studies finding a negative correlation between the two variables. For instance, Jiang & Dewaele (2019) found the shared variance of 19% between FLCA and FLE, Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) 13%, Dewaele & MacIntyre (2016) 7.8%, and Liu & Hong (2021) 27.9%. Specifically, Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014, 2016) described this phenomenon as a "right foot and left foot" relationship in FL learning, rather than two ends of the same dimension, which can sometimes co-occur. To better understand this phenomenon, Li et al. (2020) further

qualitatively explored and identified three different patterns of interactions between the two emotions: high FLE and high FLCA , decline in FLCA and increase in FLE, decline in FLE and increase in FLCA.

Furthermore, some research has also shown that both FLCA and FLE were significant predictors of FL achievement/proficiency, with FLE slightly outperforming the latter based on their Beta coefficients (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2018; Li & Wei, 2022; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Dong et al., 2022). Dewaele & Alfawzan (2018) started the investigation and claimed that both FLE and FLCA were significant predictors of FL achievement, the effect size was stronger for FLE ($\beta$=.12) compared to FLCA ($\beta$=-.09). Dong et al. (2022) also found that although FLE-private significantly positively predicted and FLCA caused by fear of negative evaluation negatively predicted self-rated FL levels, the predictive power of the former ($\beta$=.17) exceeded that of the latter ($\beta$=-.13). Nevertheless, the FLCA should still be considered important, and for FL learners, it is crucial to maintain an appropriate positive to negative ratio or emotional balance for FL learning, just as we need to walk on two feet (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

## 2.4. The Causes of FLCA and FLE

At the same time, to help learners reduce FLCA and increase FLE, a number of researchers have become interested in exploring the causes of these two variables. Furthermore, they have identified a range of contributors through qualitative questionnaires or interviews. The causes of FLCA included poor FL proficiency (Rabab'ah, 2003), inappropriate error correction (Young, 1991; Liu, 2018b), concerns of self-expression (Cohen & Norst, 1989), peer pressure (Bailey, 1983), student-teacher incompatibility (Gregersen et al., 2014; Liu & Hong, 2021), personality traits (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015). There was also a long list of potential causes of FLE, including personal goals (Elahi & Talebzadeh, 2020; Guo, 2021), peer interaction (Guo, 2021; Liu & Hong, 2021); trait emotional intelligence (Li & Xu, 2019), FL proficiency (Li et al., 2020a,b; Guo, 2021), teachers' professionalism (e.g., Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020; Guo, 2021; Wang et al., 2021), etc. In addition to the causes, the effects and the strategies during the FL learning process are also worthy of study.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1. Participants

The subjects of this study were 210 high school seniors aged 17 to 18 years, consisting of 94 males and 116 females. Although they came from three different high schools in Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province, China, they all attended the compulsory English courses which followed a strict English syllabus for teaching English in Chinese high schools and used the same English textbooks.

## 3.2. Raters

In addition to the student participants, two other raters participated in this study by scoring each student's TOEFL Junior Speaking test performance using the TOEFL Speaking test criteria. Rater #1 was a British male in his early 60s who had received a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Port Elizabeth in South Africa and was currently teaching in the English department of a Buddhist college in Thailand. Rater #2 was a Chinese female English teacher in her late 30s who received her B.A. and M.A. in English Literature from a university in the United States and is currently teaching English at a university in China. The Cronbach's alpha was .909, which indicated the high inter-rater reliability.

## 3.3. Instrument

For this study, students completed a quantitative questionnaire comprising of a 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and a 21-item Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES), all scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. They were also given a choice to select one narrative frame template over the other. One template was devoted to FLCA while the other template to FLE. And each template had seven statement starters. The questionnaires were translated into Chinese by the first author and back-translated into English by a university English teacher. In addition, participants could choose to answer the questions in English or Chinese.

### 3.3.1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

In the present study, the researchers adopted the 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) constructed by Zhao (2007), which was divided into four different dimensions: communication apprehension (e.g., I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class), test anxiety (e.g., I am usually at ease during tests in my English class), anxiety of English class (e.g., I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes), and fear of negative evaluation (e.g., I was afraid that the other students would laugh at me when I spoke English). Items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, 32 were coded reversely. Their Cronbach's alpha was .829 for communication apprehension, .742 for test anxiety, .816 for anxiety of English class, and .835 for fear of negative evaluation.

### 3.3.2. Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale

In the present study, the researchers adopted Dewaele & MacIntyre's (2014) 21-item foreign language enjoyment scale, which aimed to measure students' foreign language enjoyment on two sub-dimensions: FLE-social (e.g., It's cool to know a FL) and FLE-private (e.g., I enjoy my English class). Their Cronbach's alpha was .768 for FLE-social, and .924 for FLE-private.

### 3.3.3. Survey of Narrative Frames

Each of the two templates contained seven statement starters designed to guide students in a coherent narrative reflecting on the sources, effects and strategies of FLCA and FLE for individual learners.

### 3.3.4. The TOEFL Junior Speaking Simulation Test

The TOEFL Junior Speaking Simulation Test was conducted to measure the participants' oral proficiency in English. The test consisted of four tasks: reading aloud, describing pictures, answering questions (after listening and reading), and giving solutions and opinions. Based on the rubric, each task is worth 4 points each, with a total score of 16 points, which may be translated into Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scores.

# 4. Data Collection and Analysis

The study began last year with the completion of speaking tests in three high school classrooms in November 2021 and a questionnaire via the Internet in September 2022. Firstly, the teachers were trained and informed beforehand of the speaking test requirements. Therefore, during the field operation, the teachers administered the speaking test strictly according to the steps and requirements of the TOEFL Junior speaking test in November 2021. The students' answers would be recorded by a recorder separately within the allotted time. After the test, the teachers collected the audio recorder and passed it to the one of the researchers. Then, the researcher exported the audio files and gave them to the two raters for scoring. According to the rubric, students were given different scores from 0-16. As for the distribution of the questionnaire on FLCA and FLE, they were distributed with instructions on how the students should respond to the questions via the internet in September 2022. In addition, the narrative templates were distributed as well, via the link on the internet and students were instructed to fill in the blanks carefully as required. A total of 195 students volunteered completed the narrative templates: 92 subjects responding to anxiety and 103 responding to enjoyment.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 26.0 was used for analyzing quantitative data. Cronbach's alpha was used to check the internal consistency of each scale. Canonical correlation analysis (CCA) was conducted to investigate how a set of variables in FLCA was related to a set of variables in FLE. Then, multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate how much variance in students' oral English proficiency could be explained by sub-dimensions of FLCA and FLE. Finally, qualitative content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was conducted to further explore the causes, effects and strategies of students' FLCA and FLE by coding and categorizing themes, identifying relationships between themes and categories, on the other hand.

# 5. Results

## 5.1. Canonical Correlation Analysis of FLCA and FLE

In the CCA model, the foreign language enjoyment set included two variables of FLE-private and FLE-social and the foreign language classroom anxiety set included four

variables of communication apprehension (CA), test anxiety (TA), fear of negative evaluation (FNE), and anxiety of English class (AEC). Therefore, a total of two canonical functions were computed. The results of the canonical correlation analysis are presented in Table 1. Wilks's test of significance revealed that the two canonical correlations were significant (Wilks's (8) =0.574, p =0.000 ; Wilks's (3) =0.934, p = 0.003, respectively). The first function accounted for 38.6% of the total variance, and the second function was ignored for it accounted for 6.5% of the variance. Accordingly, the total redundancy was calculated according to the formula (the square root of PV value×canonical correlation coefficient) and the result was .368, indicating 36.8% of the total variance of the dependent variable set explained the independent variable set. In other words, there were 36.8% variances shared by both FLCA and FLE (See Figure 1).

Table 1. Wilks's test of significance, and variance explained by canonical variates of FLCA and FLE

|  | Wilks's Test | Sig. | Sq. Cor | Pct Var DEP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .574 | 0.000 | .386 | 87.999 |
| 2 | .934 | 0.003 | .065 | 42.953 |

Table 2 showed that the important variables in the independent variable variate were communication apprehension (-.892) and fear of negative evaluation (.684). In the dependent variable variate, FLE-private (.977) had the greatest influence on the canonical variate. In addition, based on the structure coefficients, all the independent and dependent variables were significant in the first function.

Table 2. Standardized canonical coefficient, structure coefficient of the first funcion

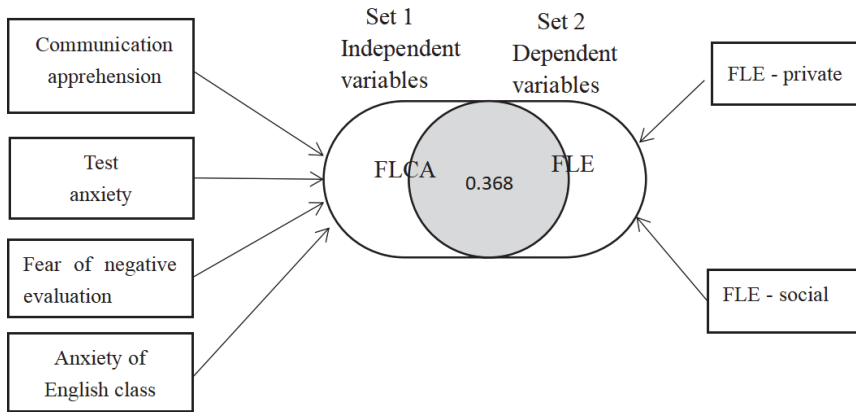|  | Dimensions | Standardized Coefficient | Structure coefficient |
|---|---|---|---|
| independent | CA | −.892 | −.919 |
| variables | TA | −.438 | −.842 |
|  | FNE | .684 | −.632 |
|  | AEC | −.305 | −.800 |
| Dependent | FLE–private | .977 | 1.000 |
| Variables | FLE–social | .039 | .601 |

Figure 1. The Total Redundancy

## 5.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed to examine how much variance in the oral proficiency of Chinese high school learners of English can be explained by the linear combination of the sub-dimensions of FLCA and FLE. As shown in Table 3, the regression model was statistically significant (F=24.163, p<.001), with the adjusted $R^2$ of .399, indicating that about 40% of the variance in oral English proficiency was explained by the independent variables. Among the independent variables in Table 4, FLE-private ($\beta$= .459, p<.001) was the most important variable followed by AEC ($\beta$= -.220, p<.005). However, The remaining variables were not statistically significant (p>.05). FLE-private was associated positively with the oral proficiency, while AEC was associated negatively.

Table 3. ANOVA[a]

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1Regression | 402.512 | 6 | 67.085 | 24.163 | .000[b] |
| Residual | 563.602 | 203 | 2.776 | | |
| Total | 966.114 | 209 | | | |

Table 4. Results of multiple Regression analyses

| Predictor Variables | B | Std Error | Beta | t | Sig | Tolerance | VIF | Ajust $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (constant) | 10.954 | 1.272 | | 8.613 | .000 | | | .399 |
| FLE-private | 1.301 | .222 | .459 | 5.861 | .000 | .469 | 2.134 | |
| FLE-social | -.025 | .255 | -.007 | -.098 | .922 | .625 | 1.600 | |
| CA | -.237 | .304 | -.092 | -.779 | .437 | .206 | 4.865 | |
| FNE | -.0071 | .310 | -.026 | -.230 | .819 | .217 | 4.601 | |
| TA | .158 | .260 | .057 | .606 | .545 | .327 | 3.055 | |
| AEC | -.708 | .351 | -.220 | -2.018 | .045 | .241 | 4.148 | |

Dependent variable : OP
Independent variable: FLE-private, FLE-social, CA (communication apprehension), FNE (fear of negative evaluation), TA (test anxiety),  AEC (anxiety of English class)

## 5.3. Themes Emerged on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

The list of themes around the causes, effects, and strategies of English Language Classroom Anxiety was reported in Table 5.

These themes about the causes of FLCA were indicated by the most frequently mentioned statements such as non-standard pronunciation, poor grammar, fear of being laughed at, fear of being punished by the teacher, harsh error correction and so on. Due to these causes of FLCA, the learners reported being panicked, fast heart beats, feel depressed and so on. Ways of coping with stress were suggested.

Table 5. Causes, effects, and strategies of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

| Causes | effects | strategies |
|---|---|---|
| Inadequate FL proficiency | Physical challenges: | Try to relax myself (35) |
| Non-standard pronunciation (23) | Being panicked (24) | Attend extracurricular training courses (32) |
| Poor grammar (19) | Fast heart beats fast and pounds (21) | Turn to teachers and friends for help (28) |
| Lack of fluency (15) | Make mistakes (17) | |
| Limited vocabulary (12) | Grades have slipped (13) | Immerse oneself in exercises (20) |
| The failure of understanding questions (11) | Not sleeping well (11) | Devote energy to other subjects (12) |
| | Hands sweat (9) | |
| | Lose temper (5) | |

| Causes | effects | strategies |
|---|---|---|
| **Psychological barriers** <br> Fear of being laughed at (14) <br> Low self-confidence (5) <br> Fear of making mistakes (4) <br> Not being sure of answers (8) <br> Don't like English (6) | **Mental challenges:** <br> Feel depressed (23) <br> Distracted and overthinking (15) <br> Get cranky (12) <br> Become sensitive (10) | Watch TV and listen to the music (10) |
| **Rigorous teacher-centered classroom management** <br> Fear of being punished by the teacher (23) <br> Harsh error correction (22) <br> Fear of Being criticized or scolded by the teacher (22) <br> Being asked to do more work (15) | | |
| **Poor academic background** <br> Not taking extracurricular classes (11) <br> Inappropriate curriculum (9) | | |
| **College Entrance Examination** <br> Be afraid of failing to go to a major university (6) | | |
| **Peer pressure** <br> Competitiveness among learners (5) | | |

## 5.4. Themes Emerged on Foreign Language Enjoyment

The list of themes around the causes, effects, and strategies of English Language Enjoyment was reported in Table 6.

These themes about the causes of FLE were indicated by the most frequently mentioned statements such as acquiring new knowledge, achieving native-like English pronunciation, getting good grades, stimulating classroom activities, positive classroom atmosphere, and so on. Due to these causes of FLE, learners reported that they became more focused, more hard working, more motivated, and so on. Ways to deal with enjoyment were suggested.

Table 6. Causes, Effects of Foreign Language Enjoyment

| Causes | effects | strategies |
|---|---|---|
| **FLE-self** | Become more focused (38) | Watch English dramas and |
| Acquire novel knowledge (26) | More hard working (32) | listening to English songs (35) |
| Achieve native-like English | More motivated (23) | Answer questions more |
| pronunciation (20) | More confident (20) | aggressively (28) |
| Get good grades (18) | More productive (15) | Read the original English |
| Like English (16) | Answer questions actively | books (23) |
| Can learn about western culture | (12) | Do the role-play during the |
| (13) | Listen carefully in class (12) | English class (21) |
| Can study Abroad (9) | | Communicate with people in |
| English being a useful tool (8) | | English (12) |
| **FLE-teacher** | | |
| Stimulating classroom activities (18) | | |
| Positive classroom atmosphere (17) | | |
| Interesting teaching content and | | |
| the teacher being nice and | | |
| humorous (13) | | |
| Supportive, responsible and often | | |
| praised students (9) | | |
| **FLE-peer** | | |
| Have good interaction with peers | | |
| in class (10) | | |
| Get support from peers (8) | | |

# 6. Discussions

Related to RQ1, the canonical correlation analysis showed that the relationship between FLCA and FLE among Chinese senior high school students was significantly correlated (total redundancy=.368). The total redundancy of the two sets indicated that 36.8 % of the total variance of FLE was explained by FLCA. In the past, other researchers reported that the shared variance between FLCA and FLE was high. For example, Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014), Jiang & Dewaele (2019), Botes & Greiff (2022), and Liu & Hong (2021) reported that their shared variance between the two constructs ranged from 13% to 27.9%. However, their report of shared variance was based on the simple Pearson correlation. The total redundancy calculated in this canonical analysis reflected more accurate variance between the independent variable set and the dependent variable set,

taking into account the multivariate nature of the data in the current study. Accordingly, the variance shared between the two sets may help us better understand the multivairate-based relationship between FLCA and FLE. Contrary to the traditional negative assessment of FLCA as an impediment to language learning, the statistically significant shared variance between FLCA and FLE suggests that FLCA is actually facilitative in learning English as FLCA induces FLE, as indicated by the relatively high variance shared(i.e., 36.8%). Qualitative findings in the current study confirms as well that FLE is likely to be stimulated by FLCA. For example, as for the ways of coping with stress (Table 6), when learners experience FLCA, they may use some of the positive strategies (i.e., trying to relax, seeking help from teachers and friends, watching TV, and listening to music) to overcome or cope with the imminent FLCA. The resultant state may be the enhanced levels of FLE. Among the FLCA set, communication apprehension (-.919) was the most important construct, consistent with previous claim that communication apprehension was one of the major sources of anxiety (Koch &Terrell, 1991; Aydin, 2008). In addition, FLE-private (.977) had the most decisive influence on the canonical variate, indicating absolute dominance in the overall FLE. This result supports the previous findings by Jin & Zhang (2018).

Concerning RQ2, the multiple regression analysis showed that FLE-private ($\beta$=.459, p<.001) and AEC ($\beta$=-.220, p<.005) were statistically significant variables in explaining the variance in oral English proficiency among Chinese senior high school students; FLE-private ($\beta$=.459, p<.001) was the most crucial construct in explaining the variance in the oral English proficiency. This result partially corroborated with the previous findings that claimed that FLE was related to successful English learning (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018 ; Dewaele et al. 2018; Dong et al., 2022; Dewaele et al., 2019; Bielak, 2022). This finding indicates that Foreign Language Enjoyment derived from personal achievement (e.g., the acquisition of native-like English pronunciation and novel knowledge) may contribute to oral English proficiency positively. The other independent variable of AEC (anxiety of English class) was negatively related to the oral English proficiency ($\beta$=-.220, p<.005). This result reflects what actually happens in traditional English classrooms associated with the emphasis on rote memory, grammar learning, intensive learning, isolated vocabulary acquisition, and competition with peers. Accordingly, the mere attendance in traditional English classes may cause significant levels of anxiety. This quantitative finding was also supported by a number of responses about classroom-related stresses identified through the narrative frames in this study. Some of these responses

included "being scolded, being asked to do a lot of homework, public error-corrections, poor grammar, limited vocabulary."

Related to RQ3, the qualitative analysis using the narrative frames produced some themes related to the causes, effects and strategies for each FLCA and FLE. The themes arrived at from the qualitative data fitted well with what other researchers had claimed (Ashraf, 2019; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Gopang et al., 2017; Liu, 2018a, 2018b; Guo, 2021; Dong et al., 2022; Su, 2022). However, a few new themes were also found in the current study:

The new themes from FLCA are as follows:

1. A significant amount of foreign language classroom anxiety may come from teacher-centered teaching in which their linguistic error correction may cause face-threatening situations.
2. Foreign language classroom anxiety may be provoked indirectly due to learners' concerns that their extracurricular courses may not be enough, compared to other friends' attendance in extracurricular activities presumed better.
3. Foreign language classroom anxiety may have negative effects on body, such as hands sweating, tummyache, loss of sleep and psychological difficulties such as "being negative", "being upset", and "being sensitive".

The new themes from FLE are as follows:

1. Foreign language enjoyment may come from the desires to achieve native-like English pronunciation.
2. Foreign language enjoyment may result from the effort to acquire novel knowledge.
3. Foreign language enjoyment may cause students to be motivated, productive, and enthusiastic about learning.

# 7. Conclusion and Implications

The present study using a mixed-method examined the relationship between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and their significance in explaining the variance in EFL learners' oral proficiency. The results showed that the two sets of FLCA and FLE were significantly correlated. In addition, FLE-private and AEC were both statistically significant variables in explaining the variance in oral English proficiency. FLE-private was positively related to oral English proficiency,

while AEC was negatively related to oral English proficiency. Finally, the data of the narrative frames identified the causes, effects, and strategies of FLCA and FLE. FLCA may result from the traditional teacher-centered curriculum and learners' concern that their English is not good enough, which may make them suffer physically and mentally. FLE comes from the "desires to achieve native-like English pronunciation", and the effort to "acquire novel knowledge", while these may lead to learners becoming motivated, productive, and enthusiastic about learning.

The results of this study has some implications for teaching English as a foreign language in China. Teachers can make some efforts in their English classroom activities to reduce FLCA and increase FLE:

1. FLCA can be facilitative because FLE may become induced so that it can offset the amount of FLCA over time. Accordingly, teachers may not be worried too much about learners' FLCA but may try to introduce more student-centered activities in which interactions between learners are encouraged and less time is devoted to error-corrections. Yet, teachers may be cautious about causing too much of foreign language anxiety because FLCA may have negative effects on learners. Some of teachers' behaviors in the classroom to reduce anxiety may include being polite and accessible in class as well as out of class, being sympathetic as learners travel through the entire process of learning English.

2. Teachers may attempt to highlight FLE by providing learners with the samples of speech by native or near-native speaker norms of the target language, using authentic materials such as video clips of interesting news stories, soap operas, speeches and so on; learners seem to appreciate their own progress in the areas of pronunciation and their acquisition of novel knowledge. In addition, learners may be given opportunities to self-assess their performance in terms of classroom objectives. In that way, learners may self-check their progress and feel self-efficacious, which can bring enjoyment in their learning.

3. Concerning parental pressure on English learning in China that parents force their children to take extracurricular courses in order to get better scores than others, at least in English classrooms in schools, teachers may promote collaboration over competition where learners in class are encouraged to work together in collaboration with their pair or group members to complete communicative tasks. For instance, with frequent application of communicative language teaching, learners may do a range of tasks: information gap, jigsaw gap, opinion gap, role

plays, and simulation games. By doing so, teachers may instill students with the importance of collaboration in English language learning and prevent the parental pressure  from bearing on them in classrooms.

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# Appendix A

The Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Strongly Disagree/ Disagree /Undecided/ Agree /Strongly Agree

1. I can be creative.

2. I can laugh off embarrassing mistakes in the English class.

3. I don't get bored.

4. I enjoy it.

5. I feel as though I'm a different person during the English class.

6. I learnt to express myself better in the English class.

7. I'm a worthy member of the English class.

8. I've learnt interesting things.

9. In class, I feel proud of my accomplishments.

10. It's a positive environment.

11. It's cool to know a FL.

12. It's fun.

13. Making errors is part of the learning process.

14. The peers are nice.

15. The teacher is encouraging.

16. The teacher is friendly.

17. The teacher is supportive.

18. There is a good atmosphere.

19. We form a tight group.

20. We have common "legends", such as running jokes.

21. We laugh a lot.

# Appendix B

The Foreign Language Classroomn Anxiety Scale
To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
Strongly Disagree/ Disagree /Undecided/ Agree /Strongly Agree

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.
6. During English classes, I find myself thinking about things that have noting to do with the course.
7. I keeping thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes.
12. In English class, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English classes.
14. It would not be nervous speaking in English with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
16. Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often feel like not going to my English class.
18. I feel confident when I speak in English class.
19. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class.
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.
24.I feel very self-concious about speaking English in front of other students.
25. English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.

28. When I'm on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of Engish.

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

## Appendix C

I have been learning English for_____years. Yet, I do feel anxious when I use English in the English class, because_____

_____.

One of the most specific event or episode in my EFL class that I really felt anxious was _____

_____.

At that time, _____

_____.

When feeling anxious, I am afraid that _____

_____.

In order to reduce anxiety, I _____

_____.

It would also be helpful if _____

_____.

Instructions: (1) Read the whole page BEFORE starting to write.

(2) Write a coherent narrative; i.e. link each idea to the next like you would in a story.

## Appendix D

I have been learning English for_____years. I feel enjoyable when I use English in the English class, because_____

_____.

One of the most specific event or episode in my EFL class that I really enjoyed was _____

_____

At that time, _____

_____.

The enjoyment of English class makes me _____

_____.

In order to keep enjoying English class, I_____

_____.

It would also be helpful if_____

_____.

Instructions: (1) Read the whole page BEFORE starting to write.

(2) Write a coherent narrative; i.e. link each idea to the next like you would in a story.

**Miaoqing Wang**
54896 전북 전주시 백제대로 567, 사대본관 323호
전북대학교 영어교육학과 박사수료
전화: 063-270-2728
이메일: lihai685@yahoo.com

**Heechul Lee**
54896 전북 전주시 백제대로 567, 사대본관 316호
전북대학교 영어교육과 교수
전화: 063-270-2719
이메일: hclee@jbnu.ac.kr

**Jaewoo Shim**
54896 전북 전주시 백제대로 567, 사대본관 317호
전북대학교 영어교육과 교수
전화: 063-270-2729
이메일: shimjw@jbnu.ac.kr