

How enjoyment affects English acquisition and anxiety for university students: An analytical study

Shahzad Dilshad Khan¹, Lubna Ali Mohammed²,
Muhammad Mustafa³

Department of English, Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities, Lincoln University College (LUC), Kelantan, Malaysia^{1,3}

Department of TESL, Faculty of Social Science, Arts, and Humanities, Lincoln University College, Kelantan, Malaysia²

³Email: mmustafa@lincoln.edu.my

Abstract: One of the main aims of foreign language (FL) teaching is to prepare students to speak the target language. Therefore, teachers need to help students develop communication skills. However, this ability only sometimes leads to the foreign language anxiety (FLA). The study aims to analyze the counter-effect of enjoyment of a foreign language (FLE) on the relationship between anxiety and the acquisition of English as a foreign language among university students. A quantitative research method is used to identify the relationship between foreign languages and anxiety. The expected results shown negative impact of enjoyment of a foreign language on anxiety, a negative impact of acquiring a foreign language (AFL) on anxiety, and a positive relationship between FLE and efficiency. The expected findings posited that anxiety is a negative emotion in psychology as it destroys students' mental health to learn a foreign language. On the other hand, positive emotions contribute to student well-being and increase student motivation and the learning language process.

Keywords: foreign language learning; foreign language anxiety; acquisition of foreign language

I. INTRODUCTION

English has developed as a dominating language in today's globalised world, as a crucial medium of communication, education, and employment prospects. In nations where English is considered a foreign language (FL) (Saeed et al., 2018; Mohammed et al., 2022), such as Pakistan, learning English is critical for academic and professional success (Teimouri et al., 2019). However, many students suffer difficulties when learning a foreign language, such as worry and a lack of interest (Mohammed & Aljaberi, 2020; Mohammed et al., 2022).

Acquiring a foreign language, such as English, is frequently accompanied by several emotional elements that might impact the learning process and adjustment. Anxiety and stress are such elements (Al-Jaberi et al., 2019; Al-Jaberi et al., 2020; Aljaberi et al., 2021), and it refers to the unease, apprehension, or fear that language learners experience when using or studying the target language. Language anxiety may hinder students' language acquisition progress, undermine their self-esteem, and prevent successful communication in the target language (Malik et al., 2021). FLE is also an important component that can influence language learning outcomes. Learners who experience joy and satisfaction when learning a foreign language are more likely to participate actively, persevere, and acquire a positive attitude toward the language (Li et al., 2023; Musheer Abdulwahid et al., 2018; Mohammed et al., 2022). Enjoyment can reduce anxiety, boost motivation, and foster a welcoming learning environment, boosting the acquisition of foreign language (Ozdemir and Papi, 2021). According to De Houwer and Hughes (2020), models of learning and communication processes are only comprehensive when positive emotions, personal strengths, and varied learning institutions and contexts are clearly considered. According to a recent study, there is a need to investigate the impact of different emotions in diverse language circumstances and the interaction between these emotions and AFL (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020). This study aims to investigate the effect of FLE on the relationship between anxiety and the acquisition of English as a foreign language among Pakistani university students. The following are the primary objectives of this study:

- To explore the impact of enjoyment of the foreign language on anxiety
- To examine the relationship between anxiety and the acquisition of English as a foreign language among university students in Pakistan
- To assess the impact of enjoyment of the foreign language on the acquisition of English as a foreign language

By addressing these goals, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on language acquisition by emphasising the importance of enjoyment as a potential counter-effect to anxiety, thereby improving the process of acquiring English as a foreign language among university students in Pakistan.

For decades, attention has focused on the negative effects of foreign language learning on FLA, the most widely studied factor being fear. Since the 1980s, mainly since the seminal work of Horwitz, "language anxiety in the classroom has been defined as a set of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to language learning". Classes derived from uniqueness (Tanveer, 2007) argue that anxiety distracts people by reducing the effectiveness of cognitive processing. B. Disrupting factors such as fear of potential failure and fear of peer opinion can lead to lower AFL. With the advent of positive psychology in the FLA., the profession has seen a major shift from focusing solely on negative emotions to recognizing the role of positive emotions, known as FLE,

which refers to a state of joy in a person's life when learning a language FL (Dewaele et al., 2019).

Positive emotions contribute to a student's well-being. They increase student motivation, improve the language learning process, and develop the resilience needed to mitigate the damaging effects of negative emotions. Since the early days of the positive psychology movement, happiness has been the only positive emotion to receive widespread attention. Several studies report that happiness is one of the most common positive emotions (Cameron et al., 2020). The researcher also described "pleasure in a FL as a complex and stable emotion, distinct from the more superficial experience of pleasure. FLE. and A.F.L". are conceptualized as two distinct but related dimensions (Wu et al., 2021). They should not be viewed as a back-and-forth relationship, as an increase at one structural level does not necessarily imply a decrease at the other (Mavroudi et al., 2019).

AFL constructs were originally considered language-based (L1) personality traits. Personality traits are meant to be consistent across all contexts. Similarly, (Crusan and Ruecker, 2022) identified AFL as a trend of similar idiosyncrasies. No matter how different the communication environment is, people's communication tendency is the same. In the 1990s, researchers began to study AFL as part of the L2. The AFL construct refers to the ability to use the L2 to have a conversation with a specific person or with a specific person at a specific time (Xiang et al., 2022). Unlike the AFL L1, the AFL in Foreign Languages is considered more variable because L2 students have different communication abilities. Research shows that AFL varies among language learners. It is evolving phase time in different languages (Latif et al., 2023). Students have extracted the internal and external factors which are being controlled and may be beyond their control. The linguistic environment that students have exposed to influences the factors of communication and desire to communicate in the targeted languages.

The research will be based on following research questions:

- How does FLE influence anxiety levels among university students in Pakistan learning English as FL?
- What is the nature of the relationship between anxiety and the acquisition of English as a FL among university students in Pakistan, and to what extent does anxiety impact language learning outcomes?
- How does FLE affect the acquisition of English as FL among university students in Pakistan?

II. METHOD

This study is the primary quantitative study, and the data was collected through a survey form that was sent to the participants. The number of participants chosen for this study was about 100 university-going students in Peshawar attending the English literature class. The responses gathered from the participants were analyzed through SPSS analysis for an accurate outcome. The survey was conducted online as every student uses social media for their own purposes. The study found out through these results whether the students have a positive impact on learning a foreign language or they are having a negative influence like stress and anxiety while learning and studying English literature in their classes. The study also evaluated whether enjoyment has a much bigger influence than anxiety or if they lie in the same spot for the students. This investigation answers the call to examine useful (well-being) effects that may neutralize the effects of anxiety on AFL. The study on this topic is conducted so that scholars know

the outcomes of teaching students a foreign language, whether it has a good or bad effect on their mental health and learning.

Conceptual Framework

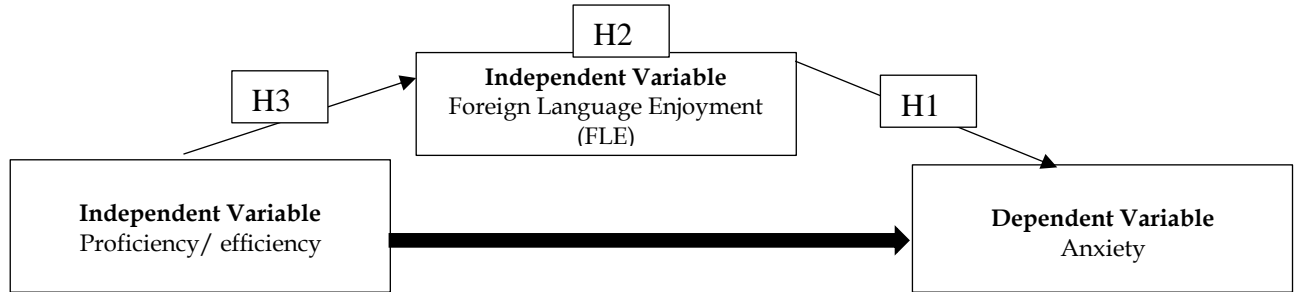


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows that independent variables consist of enjoyment and proficiency, while the dependent variable is anxiety. This demonstrates that the independent variables of enjoyment and proficiency in learning English depend upon anxiety. This study has analyzed to determine the independent variables over the dependent variable.

H1: FLE has a negative relationship with anxiety.

H2: Proficiency/efficiency has a negative relationship with anxiety.

H3: Positive relationship between efficiency and FLE

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to measure the degree of association between two or more variables. It is used to determine whether a relationship exists between variables and quantify its strength and direction.

Table 2 Correlations

		FLE Score	Anxiety Score	Efficiency Score
FLE Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.646**	.619**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	100	98	100
Anxiety Score	Pearson Correlation	-.646**	1	-.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	98	98	98
Efficiency Score	Pearson correlation	.619**	-.635**	1
	Sig. (2tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	100	98	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show the correlations among three variables: FLE Score, Anxiety Score, and Efficiency Score. The correlations are measured using Pearson correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1. A positive correlation means that as one variable increases, the other variable also tends to increase (Schober, 2018). A negative correlation means that the other variable tends to decrease as one variable increases. The correlations between the FLE Score, Anxiety Score, and Efficiency Score are displayed in the table.

Each variable's correlation with itself is represented by the diagonal of the correlation matrix, which is always 1. As a result, there is a one-to-one link between the FLE and FLE scores i.e., 1, the Anxiety and Anxiety scores, i.e., 1, and the Efficiency and Efficiency Scores, i.e., 1 (Table 1). The correlations between various variables are represented by the values off the diagonal.

The correlation is significant at 0.01 (2-tailed) when the notation gives the significant correlation coefficients **. The results show a strong negative correlation between the FLE Score and the Anxiety Score ($r = -.646, p .01$) (Table 1) and a significant positive correlation between the FLE Score and the Efficiency Score ($r = .619, p .01$) (Table 1). Similarly, to this, there is a strong negative correlation between the Anxiety Score and the FLE Score ($r = -.646, p .01$) (Table 1) and the Efficiency Score ($r = -.635, p .01$) (Table 1). This suggests that the FLE and Efficiency scores fall as the Anxiety scores rise. Finally, there is a strong negative correlation between the Efficiency Score and the Anxiety Score ($r = -.635, p .01$) (Table 1) and a significant positive correlation between the Efficiency Score and the FLE Score ($r = .619, p .01$) (Table 1). This shows when the Efficiency Score rises, the FLE Score rises, and the anxiety level falls. Overall, the findings show that the FLE, Anxiety, and Efficiency Score have strong correlations, indicating that these variables are connected.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis is a fundamental aspect of research methodology that is used to evaluate the consistency and stability of measurement instruments or tools.

Scale: All Variables

Table 2 Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	81	81.0
	Excluded ^a	19	19.0
	Total	100	100.0

a. Likewise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 3 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.832	41

The reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha shows a value of .832 (See Table 3), which is considered good. It indicates that the 41 items (See Table 3) in the scale are measuring a single construct with a high degree of internal consistency.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis can help researchers identify significant predictors, quantify the strength and direction of relationships, and make predictions about future outcomes.

Regression Analysis 1

According to the R Square value from the regression study, the model explains 41.7% of the variance in the anxiety score. The model's adjusted R Square value of 0.411 shows that it reasonably fits the data. The standard error of the estimate is 0.69447, meaning that there is an average difference of 0.69447 units of anxiety score between the observed and anticipated values. The $F(1, 96) = 68.799, p .001$, value in the ANOVA table indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that the FLE Score

strongly predicts the Anxiety Score. The intercept (Constant), which is 5.649 and statistically significant, is shown in the Coefficients table. The FLE Score has a coefficient of -0.795, meaning that the Anxiety Score decreases by 0.795 units for every one-unit increase in FLE Score. The FLE Score's standardized coefficient (Beta) is -0.646, which means it has a moderate impact on Anxiety Score. The statistically significant t-value for the FLE Score is -8.295 and it shows that the FLE Score strongly predicts the Anxiety Score (p .001). Overall, the results imply that the FLE Score is a significant predictor of the anxiety score and can be used to estimate an individual's anxiety score.

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.646 ^a	.417	.411	.69447

a. Predictors: (constant), FLE Score

Table 5 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.181	1	33.181	68.799	.000 ^b
	Residual	46.300	96	.482		
	Total	79.482	97			

a. Dependent Variable: Anxiety Score

b. Predictor: (Constant), FLE Score

Table 6 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.649	.360		15.687	.000
	FLE Score	-.795	.096	-.646	-8.295	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Anxiety Score

Regression Analysis 2

According to the R Square value and the regression analysis results, the model explains 38.3% of the variance in the Efficiency Score. The adjusted R square value of 0.377 indicates that the model reasonably fits the data. The Std. Error of the Estimate is 0.82176, which means that there is an average difference of 0.82176 units of Efficiency Score between the observed and anticipated values. According to the ANOVA table, $F(1, 98) = 60.874, p .001$, which shows that the regression model is statistically significant and that FLE Score strongly predicts Efficiency Score". The intercept (Constant), 0.271 and not statistically significant, is shown in the Coefficients table. The FLE Score coefficient is 0.880, meaning that the Efficiency Score rises by 0.880 units for every unit increase in FLE Score. The FLE Score's standardized coefficient (Beta), which is 0.619, indicates a moderate impact on the Efficiency Score. The statistically significant t-value for the FLE

Score is 7.802, which shows that it strongly predicts the Efficiency Score (p .001). Overall, these results imply that FLE Score is a significant efficiency score predictor and that it may be used to predict efficiency scores in people.

Table 7 Model Summary 2

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	.619 ^a	.383	.377	.82176

a. Predictors: (constant), FLE Score

Table 8 ANOVA^{a2}

Model		Sum of Squire	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.108	1	41.108	60.874	.000 ^b
	Residual	66.179	98	.675		
	Total	107.287	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Efficiency Score

b. Predictor: (Constant), FLE Score

Table 9 Coefficients^{a2}

Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.271	.425		.639	.525
	FLE Score	.880	.113	.619	7.802	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Efficiency Score

Regression Analysis 3

According to the regression analysis results, there is a significant negative correlation between the Anxiety Score and Efficiency Score (Beta=-.635, p.01), suggesting that efficiency scores decrease as anxiety levels rise. The Anxiety Score explains 40.3% of the variance in the Efficiency Score, according to the R-squared value of 0.403. According to the ANOVA results, the regression model is significant (p<.01). The coefficients table reveals that the intercept (Constant), which represents the expected efficiency score when the anxiety score is zero, has a value of 5.348. A rise in the Anxiety Score results in a 0.644-unit decrease in the Efficiency Score, according to the Anxiety Score coefficient of -0.644.

Table 10 Model Summary 3

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	.635 ^a	.403	.396	.71406

Predictors: (constant), Anxiety Score

Table 11 ANOVA^{a3}

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.988	1	32.988	64.698	.000 ^b
	Residual	48.948	96	.510		
	Total	81.936	97			

a) Dependent Variable: Efficiency Score

b) Predictor: (Constant), Anxiety Score

Table 11 ANOVA 3
 Coefficients^{a3}

Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.348	.229		23.311	.000
	Anxiety Score	-.644	.080	-.635	-8.044	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Efficiency Score

3.2 Discussion

The present study investigated the counter-effect of enjoyment of a foreign language on the relationship between anxiety and acquisition of English as a foreign language among university students. The study's hypothesis suggested a negative relationship between FLE and anxiety and the results also showed a negative relationship between FLE and anxiety. Therefore, the findings of this study accepted the hypothesis. Hypothesis 2 and 3 were also accepted, showing that proficiency/efficiency has a negative relationship with anxiety and a positive relationship between efficiency and FLE, respectively. Several studies have explored the relationships between FLE and FLA such as Dewaele and Botes et al., (2020; cf. Dewaele et al., 2018) explored the connection between FLE and foreign language anxiety (FLA) among adult learners in one research. In short, these findings add to our understanding of the intricate interplay of emotions, language learning, and anxiety. While more research is needed to validate these findings and understand the underlying mechanisms, they highlight the relevance of thinking about enjoyment as a potential mitigating factor for language acquisition anxiety. Furthermore, the findings support the idea that improved proficiency can reduce anxiety, highlighting the need for language education programs that promote both proficiency and good emotional experiences to maximize language acquisition outcomes.

IV. CONCLUSION

Students nowadays are trying to learn different languages to go abroad to study further or find a new job. English is international and commonly spoken language across the globe (Ilyosovna, 2020). Every university has a course on English literature for the students so that they can learn and apply it in their daily lives. The research is a primary quantitative study, and the participants were the students; this study conducted a survey where the questions were asked as to how the students of Peshawar, specifically the university students, find the English course. The survey was conducted online

through social media platforms to attract the target participants. The outcomes were that there is a negative relationship between enjoyment and anxiety. When the student enjoys the course, the anxiety decreases as there is much workload for the student, and the teachers also have high hopes for him. While on the other hand, anxiety and proficiency have a negative relationship with each other, as when anxiety increases, proficiency is decreased and vice versa and a positive relationship between efficiency and FLE. This shows that students enjoy taking FL classes but also stress over them to do their best. The results also showed a positive relationship between FLE and efficiency. This study helped evaluate whether the students enjoy this course or take stress in this subject.

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