Mapping the Antecedents of Foreign Language Enjoyment in Online Education: A Qualitative Diary Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The present study set out to chart the experience of Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and its antecedents in online education settings using the genealogy of emotion (Zembylas, 2002, 2008) as the theoretical framework. To fulfill this aim, e-learners in EFL classes were asked to keep emotion diaries for a semester-long period. The emotion diaries reporting the experience of FLE were then analyzed using Pekrun's (2014) taxonomy of emotions in connection to FLE including achievement-related FLE, epistemically-related FLE, topic-related FLE, and socially-related FLE. Analysis of results indicated that teachers, peers, and family members were the main sources of FLE in the social category. Additionally, achievement in exams and classroom tasks and activities, topics related to students' local cultural and social context, in conjunction with cognitively demanding tasks and questions that required learners to struggle over finding the answers were reported as other antecedents of enjoyment in online setting. It was discussed that Pekrun's model (2014) is a good fit for the analysis of the origin of single emotions like FLE as the previous data-driven analyses missed out on some of the main antecedents of FLE. Finally, the theoretical and practical implications were discussed especially for teachers.

KEYWORDS: Academic emotions; Emotion diary; Foreign language enjoyment; Online learning

1. Introduction

Enjoyment is defined as a sense of novelty or accomplishment experienced when individuals are capable of going beyond themselves to achieve something unexpected and is characterized by a high degree of engagement in an activity without noticing time and self (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). It pushes participants into action and hones their motivational level against upcoming difficulties (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). Foreign language enjoyment (FLE) is also related to positive emotions that learners experience when they are engaged in learning or using a foreign language (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2018). It positively affects aspects of second language acquisition including learners' motivation, willingness to communicate, and their ultimate learning achievements (Botes et al., 2022; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018).

FLE as one of the most frequent and salient emotions experienced by learners (Jiang & Dewaele, 2019; Piniel & Albert, 2018, Zhang, et al., 2021) has been given due attention in brick-and-mortar class contexts (e.g. Dewaele, 2022; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li, et al., 2018). However, its investigation in online EFL learning settings warrants more attention. Yet, the issue of FLE in remote education is of particular significance given that students may experience lower levels of FLE as a result of technological failure and lack of familiarity with different tools and resources (Bond & Bedenlier, 2019). Moreover, being physically distant from their peers and teachers, e-learners may experience more negative emotions than their

counterparts in in-person classroom settings. In the face of these difficulties in virtual learning, positive emotions and enjoyment are necessary components to keep participants on track (Zhang et al., 2021). In addition, FLE positively affects participants' engagement in online learning (Deng et al., 2022; Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023; Guo, 2021; Luo et al., 2023). Experiencing positive emotion of enjoyment can boost participants' motivation to participate in activities, have interactions with peers and instructors, and show persistence in their language learning journey (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023). In effect, FLE in cyber-based learning environments may counteract some of the negative effects arising from isolation and lack of interpersonal interaction and communication (Simamora, 2020).

The aim of the present study is to delve into EFL students' experience of FLE in online courses. Attention to the role of emotions in e-learning contexts is required to accomplish the goal of developing positive attitudes toward online education. Furthermore, as the interest in web-based pedagogical environments is likely to increase, such an analysis is crucial for creating learning environments which lead to higher student learning and performance. It will also provide faculty with greater awareness of the emotional components of web-based education in addition to corrective practices and measures they need to take in order to instigate positive emotional experiences and minimize the negative feelings associated with online learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Research on foreign language enjoyment

Research on the role of emotions in second language acquisition (SLA) has gained momentum over the past years. Yet, emotions have remained an under-researched area considering that the cognitive processes have dominated the field of SLA for decades (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). In fact, as Shao et al. (2019) asserted research on the role of emotions in SLA is still lagging behind the rapid embracement of emotions in psychology and education. Additionally, it has been primarily dominated by research on negative emotions and in particular foreign language anxiety (Daubney, et al., 2017). Nonetheless, as Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) put it, it's time to address the 'emotional deficit' in SLA research and to accommodate more positive emotions into our descriptions of learner psychology.

Previous literature demonstrates that positive emotions comprising enjoyment of learning, hope, pride, and relief have been reported with the same frequency (Pekrun, et al., 2002). By and large, positive feelings are described in relation to feelings of success, lack of anxiety, and enjoyment linked to academic accomplishments (Piniel & Albert, 2018). Enjoyment, in particular, has been linked to lower levels of anxiety, higher relative achievement position in the class, learner-internal variables such as proficiency levels and attitudes, and more foreign language use by the teacher (Dewaele et al., 2018). It is also related to the frequency of target language use and students' perception of self (Saito et al., 2018).

Zhang et al. (2021) identified three broad research strands in the literature on FLE in the context of SLA. First are studies which aim to measure FLE. Attempts in this regard include the development of the Foreign Language Enjoyment scale (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) encompassing enjoyment in relation to the learners' subjective experience, their teachers, and peers. Extensions of the same scale have been carried out by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016), Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018), and Dewaele, et al. (2019). In addition to the scales, idiosyncratic studies have been conducted which aim to depict the dynamics of learners' experience and their trajectories using multiple instruments including interviews, questionnaires, and journals. Examples of research in this category include Elahi Shirvan, et al. (2020); Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), and Jiang and Dewaele (2019).

The second strand of research concerns studies which seek to identify the effect of different teacher-related or learner-related variables on FLE. In particular, FLE has been reported to be mainly instigated by teacher-related factors including teachers' friendliness, use of jokes, their frequency of English use (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele, et al., 2019; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019). Teachers' personality traits including openness, extraversion, and agreeableness impacts students' FLE as well (Ahmadi-Azad, et al., 2020). With regard to students' variables, the literature also indicates that there is a positive correlation between learners' grit and FLE (Yang, 2021) as well as between ideal L2 self and FLE (Liu, et al., 2022). Learners' gender is also related to FLE with female students experiencing higher levels of FLE than their male counterparts (Liu, et al., 2022). Additionally, students with more favorable attitudes toward English and English teachers tend to experience higher levels of enjoyment (Dewaele, 2022).

The third line of research centers on the relationship between FLE and learners' performance. FLE has been shown to improve learners' ability to notice input and hence increases the likelihood of absorbing foreign language. Moreover, it makes learners resilient and hard in the face of difficulties (Pavelescu & Petric, 2018; Prior, 2019). Results from Yuan (2023) also indicated that participants experiencing higher levels of enjoyment tend to experience lower anxiety levels. That being said, it needs to be noted that the existing literature mainly concerns traditional classrooms where the active participation of the teacher and peers is taken for granted. Nonetheless, as Regan et al. (2012) argue, the emotional tone of online environments differs from that of traditional educational conditions. Considering the significance of enjoyment in online education, this study aims to explore the sources of FLE in online foreign language classrooms.

2.2. Emotions in the context of online education

Technology-based delivery modes of education have been criticized for lacking some of the emotional features of on-campus teaching including facial expressions and body language (Vrasidas & Zembylas 2003). With students being distant from instructors and peers, having trouble interacting with them, and being obliged to undergo the demands of self-directed learning (Hawkins et al. 2012), they reportedly experience more negative emotions in internet-based learning settings (Stephan, et al., 2019). Yet, some studies do report on students' positive emotional experiences.

In a pioneer study on learners' emotions in the context of an online distance learning program, Zembylas, et al. (2008) discovered that most of the positive emotions were directly linked to the advantages of distance learning including excitement for the flexibility of distance learning, the emotional nature of distance communication, the possibility of developing social relationships with instructors and peers along with satisfaction for fulfilling the course requirements. Hilliard et. al.'s (2020) findings from research on the emotional experience of distance learners undertaking an online, collaborative group project also indicated that satisfaction and relief were the most frequently reported positive emotions. The sources of emotions were also mainly related to the completion of projects or modules, participation and engagement from others, task progress, working and collaborating with others, performance in the project or module, self-belief, the task itself, guidance and support.

Other factors contributing to positive emotions in e-learning environments include higher levels of perceived achievement and learner satisfaction, systematically structured and motivational instructional content which is aligned with learning objectives, adoption of a variety of appropriate evaluation methods, and homework and class participation being considered a part of final grading (Lee & Chei, 2020). Effective teaching activities such as direct instruction, receiving feedback, and multimedia resources can also promote positive emotions in e-learners (Yates, 2020).

Considering the focus of this study, FLE in the context of online education, the research identifies 4 sources for students' FLE (Wang, et el., 2021). The sources include teachers' traits including their praise and verbal encouragement, as well as online interaction, private learning performance in the form of personal progress, and students' academic achievement. In a similar vein, Yuan (2023) classified sources of FLE in online settings as self-, teacher-, peer-, and internet-related factors. Examples of self-induced sources of enjoyment included answering the questions, understanding the teacher, finishing assignments, and achievements in class. Teacher-related factors included teachers' praise, encouragement, personality, way of teaching, and sharing experiences. Peers' cooperation, discussion, interactions, and good classroom atmosphere were sources of enjoyment from peers. Finally, ways of online learning, online tests, and the Internet stability were mentioned with reference to the Internet.

Using the Q methodology, Thumvichit (2022) explored EFL learners' subjective experience with regard to FLE. Using principal component analysis and varimax rotation, the author extracted common patterns from participants' responses to a set of statements. The results of the analysis pointed to 3 distinct viewpoints. The first focuses on teachers' characteristics and practices where teachers contribute meaningfully to students' learning through being accessible and friendly and providing them with opportunities to share their ideas. The second viewpoint concerns students' autonomy which refers to students' ability to use the online resources to support their own learning. The third one relates to the learners' social experiences which emphasized students' receiving support from their peers and working as a team.

In addition to the sources of FLE referred to above, teachers' competency in internet and communication technology, (Shao, et al, 2023), the amount of teacher and peer support available, students' satisfaction with and personal pride in the classroom, learning atmosphere, and their personal feelings (Apridayani & Waluyo, 2022) have been reported to affect students' experience of FLE.

2.3. Theoretical framework

This research draws on the notion of genealogy of emotions (Zembylas, 2002, 2008). This method provides a way of understanding emotions through examining how learners' emotional experiences are shaped and reformed during the process of learning in a particular social context. In fact, genealogies of emotion cast light on the way events, objects, and persons contribute to the realization of emotions. This implies that establishing genealogies of emotions entails looking into the historicity of emotions and tracing their origins and antecedents. Regarding the genealogies of FLE in online learning, it focuses on the analysis of learners' experiences of enjoyment associated with online learning, the historicity of FLE and the way it unfolds and changes over a semester-long period, as well as the factors giving rise to it as its antecedents.

This study is also informed by Pekrun's (2014) classification of academic emotions. This framework provides a taxonomy of emotions related to academic contexts including achievement emotions, epistemic emotions, topic emotions, and social emotions (Pekrun, 2014). Achievement emotions are associated with academic activities and success or failure pertinent to these activities. Examples include enjoyment of learning; hope and pride connected to success; and anxiety and shame associated with failure. Epistemic emotions concern cognitive challenges such as surprise about a new task; curiosity, confusion

and frustration at facing barriers; and delight at solving the problems. Topic emotions are emotions provoked by topics presented in lessons. They can be both positive and negative and can constitute empathy with the characters of the story, anxiety and disgust resulting from dealing with medical issues or enjoying a painting in an art class. Lastly, social emotions are linked to interaction with teachers and peers as well as group learning in the classroom. Examples are love, sympathy, compassion, admiration, contempt, envy, anger or social anxiety. In the present study attempt is made to examine how enjoyment as a single academic emotion can be linked to each situation, i.e. achievement, epistemic challenges, topics, and social situations. It is believed that in comparison to the data-driven approach taken by prior research (e.g. Wang, Yang, and Wang, 2021; Yuan, 2023) this framework presents a more comprehensive and complete picture of the FLE in online settings. Accordingly, the following research question is proposed and investigated throughout the current study:

What are the antecedents of FLE in online education settings?

3. Methodology

3.1. Setting and participants

This study was conducted in the context of a state university in Iran during the academic year 2021-2022 in a series of online EFL courses. The courses in which the study was carried out were mainly English courses offered to the EFL students including English grammar, Storytelling, Study Skills, Reading, and Speaking and Listening. At the beginning of the academic year, volunteered undergraduate students were recruited for this study. The purpose of the study was explained to them and they were asked to keep emotion diaries for every session of the courses they had taken and send them back to the researcher as the sessions ended. A total of 87 undergraduate students in English Literature and Translation Studies agreed to take part in the research project. They were 63 female and 24 male students with an average age of 24 (19- 29 years old). They were in the first or second year of remote learning and the platform for delivering the online courses was Adobe Connect where the course content was delivered synchronously. The participating students received credits for their cooperation in the study.

3.2. Instrument and procedure

Emotion diaries were selected as the means of data collection in the present study since they compensate for data loss, reduce memory bias (Wallbott & Scherer, 1989), and allow for the exploration of emotions and their origins at multiple points of time along with temporal variations and within-person changes (Becker, et al., 2015; Hilliard et al., 2020). This method was considered to be a good fit for constructing the genealogy of emotions. The emotion diary was adapted from Averill (1983), Oatley and Duncan (1994), and Zembylas (2002) and was developed in five sections.

The first question asked participants' demographic information including age and sex. The second question asked students about the types of emotion(s) they experienced during the episode of the online course. To do so, they could select from among 10 positive emotions including joy, enthusiasm, satisfaction, pride, love and affection, intimacy, relief, empathy, enjoyment, and comfort along with 11 negative emotions comprising disappointment, disgust, guilt, boredom, anger, anxiety, surprise, fear, sorrow, sadness, and powerlessness. The list of emotions was adapted from Pekrun, et al. (2002) with some emotions being added during the pilot testing of the questionnaire. Following, they specified those who caused the emotion including the respondent himself/herself, the instructor, peers and classmates, parents, or others. In the next questions, they noted the incident (what happened?) and the antecedents of emotion (what made you feel this way?) in an open-ended format.

The diary questionnaire was translated into Persian and pilot-tested with 10 students. Participants were required to record every event that was emotionally salient instantly after or during the online class and send it back to the instructor after the class for a whole educational semester. However, only those diaries which reported experiencing enjoyment were considered for the current study. The total number of diaries received over the course of one semester included a corpus of 528 diary entries out of which 126 were on enjoyment.

3.3. Data analysis

Content analysis was utilized to analyze the data obtained from the diary entries. First, the diary journals were read and summarized for individuals' reference to FLE and the incidents that caused the emotion. The summaries were coded using Pekrun's (2014) taxonomy of emotions in connection to FLE including achievement-related FLE, epistemically-related FLE, topic-related FLE, and socially-related FLE. Initially, the entries were read to familiarize ourselves with the data and notes of summaries were taken to get the initial ideas for coding. Next, we looked for the closest taxonomies which fit the initial codes. The coding phases were performed by two researchers working independently. Once the data were fit into taxonomies, the analysis was double-checked and the contradictory points were negotiated between the 2 raters until they reached the agreed-

upon analysis. further re-readings were done to ensure that all pieces of data had been incorporated into the analysis. Finally, segments of verbatim quotes were selected to illustrate the emergent themes.

4. Results

The results of diary analysis indicated that students experienced FLE in online settings mainly in relation to social dynamics and classroom atmosphere (74 tokens), followed by FLE as a result of achievements (63 instantiations), and topics raised in the EFL classes (33 examples). The least FLE also belonged to epistemic cognitive activities (28 instances).

4.1. Socially-related FLE

The sources of FLE in this category primarily came from teachers, peers, and family members respectively.

4.1.1. Teachers as sources of FLE

Most of the incidents of FLE were experienced by e-learners in connection to the social relations in which they were involved. First and foremost, the teachers acted as the main source of students' FLE. This emotion was specifically provoked by the teacher's quality of teaching including clear and easy-to-understand explanations, content mastery, pedagogical and technological knowledge and skills in conjunction with the use of technological tools and applications. One of the participants illustrated how he enjoyed the teacher's teaching practice along these lines. "*The teacher explains the lesson in a way that everyone can comprehend. Also, she plays videos for us which are extremely engaging and help substantiate the structures in our minds. I enjoy her teaching and the use of up-date resources*".

In addition, FLE was linked to teachers' rapport-building behavior including friendly acceptance of students, showing respect for them, seeking and welcoming their perspectives, perceiving their problems and striving to remedy those problems, and providing opportunities for students to compensate for their poor performance, lacks and inadequacies.

At the start of the semester, the instructor had a chit-chat with the students which created a good relationship with us. We thought she was by no means far away although we were in an online class and we felt she could perceive our struggles… The teacher is never conceited and always has modest behavior.

E-learners valued teachers' humane and friendly behavior in increasing their enjoyment where the distance between them and teachers was minimized by teachers' welcoming and approachable manner and emphasized that in a stress-free classroom environment, they did not need to worry about the score or teacher's reprimand allowing them to give their full attention to the class and enjoy learning new things.

In the speaking course, the class atmosphere is relaxed and intimate and we can talk without worrying about scores or anything. I don't feel humiliated in that class. The instructor and students are all welcoming and it gives me the feeling that I can succeed in this major.

Comments were also expressed in relation to the mood in which the teacher started the class where the same mood was carried over to the students during the class. Furthermore, students reported experiencing enjoyment when the teacher gave them hope for their future careers and professional lives.

The instructor discussed the prospects of this major with us. I enjoy it when teachers make connections with our future. It pushes me to think about my future more seriously and boosts me to continue with more determination and strength. It also drives me to keep working hard to accomplish my goals.

Teachers' humor and personalized stories which were intended to change the class tone and humanize the remote impersonal classes were also reported as additional sources of FLE. Moreover, FLE was enhanced when teachers gave recognition of students' progress or acknowledged their collaboration and active participation in class. "In class, the teacher noticed my correct response and thanked me for that. I take pleasure when the instructor is happy with me". Accordingly, teachers' expressing their satisfaction with students and complimenting their efforts were reported to instigate students' FLE. "*I was doing the grammar exercises and I felt improvement in myself. In fact, the teacher's compliments showed this. It promoted my participation in class and often I volunteered to do the activities with no fear and stress*".

4.1.2. Peers as sources of FLE

In addition to teachers, peers and classmates were also found to be sources of FLE in cases where they provided support and encouragement, especially in the face of problems and difficulties. This was of particular significance to the participants considering that while they were learning remotely from each other, the intimacy and warmth of their support could be felt

beyond the remote distance. Peers' positive comments on each other's performance, explanations, and sharing points as well as the stories they shared were of particular importance to e-learners' experience of FLE. Also, their collaboration in class activities and the resultant constructive competitiveness made the class atmosphere lively and vibrant which gave rise to FLE on the part of the students.

> The warmth and strength that my classmates give me motivate me to keep going. I'd like to save this energy so that I could have the power forever. I feel positive about their collaboration in class. The intimate atmosphere gives me hope and relief. This friendship is a turning point for me. I like their company.

4.1.3. Family as a source of FLE

Given that the virtual classes are held at home with family members' presence, they can be of great help or on the other hand, a hindrance to online learners. As a source of FLE, the family was referred to in cases where they were perceptive of students' conditions by keeping quiet while they were involved in online classes and exams.

> I was taking my exam online and all the family was quiet without a single word. I took my exam in peace and quiet and fortunately, it was a success. I'm glad my family values me and perceives my condition. It gives me great pleasure to be with them.

Another instance included a family member accompanying students while in class. Additionally, family's encouragement, respect, care, and pride in students' achievements and belief in their abilities were found to be associated with the experience of enjoyment.

> I was in the class when my dad came into the room and accompanied me for the class. The importance and value that my dad gives to me and my affairs really matter to me. I feel delighted when my family values my education and my field of study.

4.2. Achievement-related FLE

Enjoyment was experienced as a result of students' accomplishments in EFL classrooms either on particular occasions including their good performance on tests and exams, giving the right answers to the questions posed by the teacher, and having a good presentation, or in the overall language learning process.

> It was my first quiz online. I was totally stressed out. I was really worried about running out of time or losing internet access. I rushed through the exam and speeded it up. Luckily, I was able to make it. I was delighted.

Some participants reported enjoyment on the grounds that they felt progress and improvement in learning English and were able to gain mastery of diverse aspects of language such as speaking, pronunciation, reading, and grammar. More instances of achievement included the ability to concentrate, show diligence, and overcome anxiety and lack of confidence as the pre-requisite skills for learning.

> It was my first time giving the summary of "TED talks" in class. I was stressed out. To be honest, I'm afraid of my own voice being heard over the mic. I turned on the mic and started giving my summary. At that moment, I was just thinking that I could. I thought to myself, if I wanted to overcome stress, I had to start from somewhere. It went all well and my summary was done. It wasn't as hard as I had thought.

Understanding the lessons especially the ones being formerly hard to understand or the ones which included high levels of English proficiency such as stories and texts also stimulated students' enjoyment.

> The instructor said the lesson would not be easy and we needed to pay careful attention. However, I learned it while my classmates were still struggling with it. I realized that I would learn if I were attentive enough. I should just believe in myself.

Some also contended that they could have a relative standing among their peers by providing the right answer or volunteering to do the assigned tasks and exercises. "*The instructor asked a question the answer to which nobody knew. When I was able to answer the question, I felt proud of myself*". Along the same line, this quote from a different student illustrates how enjoyment comes from taking on challenging tasks. "*When the instructor checks the homework in class and reminds us of our issues, I feel double enjoyment as I learn the point even deeply*". Additionally, learning while multitasking in online classes was mentioned as an instance of achievement by one of the students. "*I had some guests to come over and I was preparing dinner while I was listening to the class. Although I was multitasking, I managed to learn the lesson*."

4.3. Topic-related FLE

This category of FLE was associated with the topics raised in online classes or general interest in English as a subject for learning. First, a multitude of students reported enjoyment coming from the local stories presented by their peers in the storytelling class. These stories were regarded as ties to the students' own culture and history through which they got familiar with distinguished people, locations, traditions, costumes, and legends of their country. Also, they alleviated students' hardships in life through both instigating positive feelings and making students' problems appear insignificant to them.

> With the many problems I have in my life and the overwhelming despair and anxiety stretching over my life, I receive full enjoyment of the local stories told in class. when I listen to the stories of the past people, I ponder over how they could survive all that hardship. Then, I feel less disappointed, and, although momentarily, I feel myself immersed in the story. I try to remind myself of the story during the day to make my problems appear small.

> Moreover, the stories were believed to raise students' interest and curiosity and were a drive for them to keep track of the class up to the end." *I had a good feeling. I felt proud of my country and the people. The topics aroused my curiosity and made me follow the class. Although the classes are online, I don't feel bored or digressed*". By the same token, students' narratives recounted in response to grammar questions and the opportunities for personalizing the lessons impacted their learning and the recall of the lessons and were considered as a further source of enjoyment in EFL classes. "*When my friends were talking about their past habits and states using the structure of "used to", we were amazed by how strange they were. It was all fun.*"

> In addition to the situation-specific topics pinpointed above, English was also viewed as an interesting subject of study by some students. Accordingly, students expressed FLE in relation to English movies, learning about foreign cultures and countries, as well as English literature and people's lifestyle, "*My interest in English causes me to attend the class with great enthusiasm and enjoy every moment of it. ...I suppose my interest makes the lessons more understandable to me*".

4.4. Epistemically-related FLE

Epistemically-related FLE included enjoyment experienced as a result of some cognitive challenges involved in solving a problem, understanding something, or arriving at the answer to a question. Although this category of enjoyment was experienced less frequently than the previous ones, the results obtained from diary analysis pointed to some instances where students had to struggle cognitively to understand a grammatical structure, answer the challenging questions raised by the teacher, understand a story by focusing on the main words, and make sense of the new lessons. One example includes a diary entry in which the student described the struggle she had with learning a structure.

> .   To me, the conditionals have been always tricky. I didn't learn them at school. However, today, I managed to learn them completely. I listened attentively and took notes. I also concentrated on details. I owe this to my instructor's clear explanations and the enthusiasm she gives us to follow the class."

> Often, students described the strategies they employed to get over the cognitively demanding situations. In one case, a student described how he managed to employ advance organizers to activate his background knowledge in order to comprehend the new lesson. "*I decided to pre-study the lessons. This relieved the burden and helped me understand the lesson better. I also boosted my confidence, so I could listen with more relief and concentration as the lesson was not unfamiliar anymore*". Another student noted that she watched the class archive to further reinforce her learning and when she noticed her progress and preparedness in class, she felt extreme enjoyment. Still, a further student talked about how he increased his concentration. "*I decided to keep track of the class and stay tuned. when I see myself part of the class and increase my participation, I feel I can pass the course with a better score*". Additionally, the cases where teachers challenged students' knowledge by raising demanding questions and involving them in competitive activities for bonus scores were referred to as one of the most frequent antecedents of FLE.

> We were doing the grammar exercises in class when the teacher raised a question and said she would consider a bonus score for the person who answered the question correctly. I had a strange feeling. Although English has been part of my life for a couple of years, I noticed that there were still a lot of things I didn't know.

> Although the instances of FLE reported in this category referred to enjoyment induced by being involved in some cognitive challenges, students reported on another set of antecedents which pointed to students' psychological barriers and challenges being resolved and consequently, freed their mental capacity for understanding the lessons. Examples of such incidents include students' stress being over when they had their presentations in class or after finishing their exams. "*I had my presentation the other week and the relief coming from this made me drown in the new lesson. It even helped me understand the lesson completely as my full concentration was on the new lesson*".

5. Discussion

This article drew on Pekrun's (2014) model of academic emotions to delineate FLE in online classrooms. The findings obtained from content analysis of students' diaries over a semester-long period indicated that the model can be considered a good fit for portraying the dynamics of not only academic emotions but also highlighting the antecedents of single emotions like FLE. It was demonstrated that teachers' attributes had the most impact on students' experience of FLE including their pedagogical, content, and technological knowledge, their rapport-building behavior, as well as their recognition and acknowledgment of students' progress. Peers' interaction, encouragement, and scaffolding along with parents' respect, care, and motivation were also found to induce FLE in remote education. Other sources of FLE included achievements on exams and classroom tasks and activities, local stories of students' place of residence which bound students to their cultures and traditions, as well as the personalized topics recounted by teachers and students alike which provided for personalization of the content and materials. Finally, cognitively demanding tasks which required students to strive to solve a problem or come up with the answer to a question were also reported to stimulate students' FLE.

The results of this analysis are in line with prior literature on face-to-face learning environments (Dewaele & MacIntyre 2019; Dewaele, et al. 2019; Jiang & Dewaele 2019; Li, et al., 2018) where teachers were found to meaningfully contribute to students' FLE if they are accessible and friendly and if they encourage students to ask questions and to speak without worrying about correct structure. likewise, teacher friendliness has been found to have a major role in students' FLE as was predicted by Dewaele et al. (2019). It was shown that as a result of teachers creating a friendly and non-threatening environment, students are more open to target language input and their capacity to absorb the input and to concentrate increases (Dewaele, 2011). In the Iranian context, too, teachers' personality traits such as openness and agreeableness were found to positively affect students' FLE (Ahmadi-Azad, et al., 2020)

In online educational contexts, similar to Yuan's (2023) findings, teacher's characteristics such as familiarity with the teaching platform and having mastery over it, friendliness, having online interactions with learners, joking, praise and encouragement, and their good personalities were found to positively impact students' FLE. In addition, teachers' use of relevant and interesting content such as videos created enjoyable learning experiences for e-learners. Accordingly, it highlights the significance as well as the difficulty of teachers' role in remote education. In other words, they bear more responsibility to create a welcoming atmosphere in the absence of face-to-face interactions and in-person social connections which makes students more prone to digression and lack of attention.

Similarly, the role of students' peers and the enjoyment taken from them was highlighted by our results. As was demonstrated by Li, et al. (2018), peers' engagement and collaboration can have a facilitative role in creating a warm classroom climate. The results in this part are also in line with those of Yuan (2023) where peers' collaboration to do the assignments, discussions on the lessons, interactions, and the good classroom atmosphere were reported to give rise to enjoyment. Positive emotions such as enjoyment are sociocultural artifacts that are constructed and regulated through social and interpersonal interactions (Gross & Barrett, 2011; Swain, 2013). In online collaborative learning environments, participants have been shown to exhibit high levels of enjoyment over the course of interactions with peers and FLE has been reported as an indispensable part of group work in online settings (Zhang, et al., 2021).

However, unlike the results in Thumvichit's study (2022), participants in this study provided no accounts of autonomous learning and the use of e-learning resources as a source of FLE in cyber-based learning. In a similar vein, and unlike Wang, et al.'s results (2021), our participants gave no account of the Internet interactions as a source of FLE. On the contrary, Internet connection was in most cases recounted as a source of negative emotions such as anxiety. The difference may reside in the access to reliable and stable Internet connections or students' lack of familiarity with or interest in the use of Internet-based resources. One further possible explanation may be that as students were asked to keep diaries of classroom events during which they felt particular emotions, their reports are bound to classroom contexts rather than out-of-class activities and events.

The study also highlighted the functions of emotions identified by MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) including enhancing attention and cognition, mitigating the effects of negative emotions, encouraging resilience, in addition to developing social connections and interactions. The findings also revealed that, as stated by the control-value theory (Pekrun et al. 2007), FLE can be experienced both in aroused states where students are involved in challenging tasks and in relaxed states when they are relieved and can enjoy stress-free situations. However, prior studies on the antecedents of FLE rarely report on the role of topics or epistemic challenges in the experience of enjoyment. Likewise, they rarely note how parents and family members can affect the experience of FLE in online classes. More often than not, they relate FLE to teachers, peers, and self as the main sources. Yet, as was stated earlier, reliance on Perkrun's taxonomy (2014) enabled us to describe FLE in relation to a wider spectrum of situations and events including cognitively demanding tasks and situations alongside engaging topics.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that fun and enjoyable experiences should be incorporated into any e-learning experience as it yields academic and psychological benefits and improves learners' cognitive abilities (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Theoretically,

the study offered some hints on how Pekrun's (2014) classification of academic emotions can be applied in understanding the multitude of conditions and experiences that shape a single emotion like FLE in online settings. Moreover, the employment of the genealogy of emotions (Zembylas, 2002, 2008) facilitated tracing the historicity of the emotion as it is tied to specific times and activities rather than providing an overall judgment of previously occurred activities and events as is often the case with the FLE scales. Practically, it provides the teachers with some guidance on the best practices and strategies that guarantee an enjoyable online learning experience. In particular, given that teachers constitute the main source of FLE even in the absence of face-to-face interactions, it is incumbent on teachers to adapt their pedagogical and personal characteristics to secure interconnectedness, and to optimize enjoyment in conditions where students are distant from each other. By the same token, changes can be made to ELT textbooks to ensure more enjoyable discussions and learning experiences.

Although illuminating, the study suffers from some limitations. The first limitation has to do with the nature of emotions themselves. As it was evident in the diaries, students' report of FLE was frequently mixed up with other positive emotions such as satisfaction, relief, happiness, hope, and pride. It seemed as though, participants themselves did not have clear-cut boundaries among the positive emotions in their minds. This makes finding the exact antecedents of FLE difficult, if not impossible. The second limitation concerns reliance on diaries as the only method of data collection. Future lines of research can back up diary analysis with video recordings of classroom events as well as interviews to obtain a deeper understanding of students' feelings. Also, further studies can be carried out on how other feelings unfold in the context of remote learning.

7. References

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