

### *Are enjoyment, anxiety and attitudes/motivation different in English foreign language classes compared to LOTE classes?*

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#### Abstract

The current study focuses on the effect of the target language on learner emotions and attitudes/motivation. More specifically, it investigates whether the status and prestige of English results in more positive learner emotions and attitudes/motivation compared to less prestigious languages other than English (LOTE). Statistical analyses of a database of 360 students in an English-speaking university in Kuwait enrolled in English, German, Spanish and French as foreign language classes revealed that the LOTE learners (who also knew English) reported significantly more foreign language enjoyment (FLE), equal levels of foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and – surprisingly – lower levels of attitudes/motivation than their peers studying English. Due to confounding variables, it is impossible to establish the cause of the difference with certainty, but this outcome does show that a stronger motivation to study English does not necessarily translate into more enjoyment in class. In other words, while FLE and attitudes/motivation typically correlate, they are independent concepts.

*Keywords:* languages other than English; English as a foreign language; foreign language enjoyment; foreign language classroom anxiety; attitudes/motivation

## 1. Introduction

Fans of the fictional Detective Chief Inspector Endeavour Morse, created by Colin Dexter, know that he is a great fan of classical music and opera but that his love for music does not extend to modern music. A crucial point is that love for music does not necessarily imply equal appreciation of all genres of music. One could wonder whether similar preferences might exist in foreign language learning too. Might students feel more attracted to some languages than others? There is another fictional character, Raimund Gregorius, created by Pascal Mercier in his 2008 novel *Night Train to Lisbon*, a teacher of ancient languages, who uses French and German, but intensely dislikes Spanish – the language his ex-wife was a fluent speaker of. A chance meeting with a speaker of Portuguese makes him fall in love with the language and it becomes the driving force of the story. We know that attitudes towards languages depend on a combination of local sociohistorical and sociopolitical factors (Pavlenko, 2003), but also on very personal and unpredictable ones. Foreign language (FL) learners' attitudes towards their FLs are very much linked to the emotions they experience in class (De Smet et al., 2018; Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020b; Dewaele et al., 2018). It is very likely that learners who have very positive attitudes toward one specific FL will typically be experiencing more positive emotions in that class, compared to classes in which they are indifferent or hate the FL. Learners may also have a limited choice if certain FLs are compulsory.

Nobody would disagree with the fact that Morse and Gregorius – beside being fictional – are hardly representative of music and FL lovers around the world. Both happen to be European white middle-aged men, like their creators. Discussions about representativity of samples and the conclusions drawn from them have become more prominent since Henrich et al. (2010) argued that many social scientists seem unaware of the bias in their samples. These are often “drawn entirely from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies” (p. 2) to make broad generalizations about humanity in general. Andringa and Godfroid (2020) pointed out that biased sampling exists also in applied linguistics, which “may skew the knowledge that we, applied linguists, are building about second language learning and instruction” (p. 134). They exhort applied linguists “to broaden the scope of their research. . . . to step outside their comfort zone, to take note of language learning contexts outside the university . . . and to make applied linguistics less WEIRD and, with that, a bit more fair and inclusive” (p. 140).

Another potential bias that applied linguistics faces is the overwhelming focus on English. Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) explained that the “English-LOTE imbalance . . . generates a reductionist picture as it ignores a significant proportion of

the existing forms of language attainment worldwide" (p. 456). The authors explained that the international prestige of English means it gets world-wide institutionalized support for FL learning, in contrast with languages other than English (LOTEs) which may not share the same perceived prestige. FL learners (and their parents) may thus have more positive attitudes towards English, resulting in stronger motivation to learn English rather than a LOTE. FL self-guides for LOTEs could be weaker than for English, which could affect the motivation to study a LOTE. However, Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) also added that the motivation to study LOTEs rather than global English should not be construed as a handicap. The LOTEs benefit from two advantages: Firstly, they "are usually associated with a specific community that "owns" the L2, and the generation of positive attitudes toward this community may be facilitative to fostering the motivation to learn their language" (p. 465). The second advantage for LOTEs is that "unlike the 'default-like' nature of the universal desire to master global English, a high level of LOTE proficiency is normally associated with very specific and personalized reasons on the part of the learner" (p. 465).

Al-Hoorie (2017) makes a similar point as Andringa and Godfroid (2020) in warning against an overgeneralization of findings based on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners: "Because most available research is English biased, the available theories most likely reflect learning English rather than LOTEs. Paying more attention to LOTEs has the potential to deepen our understanding of the complexities involved in language learning motivation" (p. 7). We do not think that bias can be fully eliminated in applied linguistics but the first step is to show awareness about the issue and to expand the research horizon beyond the WEIRD and EFL learner populations. We will thus investigate the emotions and attitudes/motivation of Kuwaiti FL learners who were studying four Western languages, in order to find out whether those in the EFL classes differ from their peers doing LOTE classes.

## 2. Literature review

We decided to organize the literature in concentric circles, starting with a quick word on biases in the field before homing in on the most "basic" pair of learner emotions, namely foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) and foreign language enjoyment (FLE). We will define them, explain their operationalization and report the main sources of individual variation. After this, we will consider a number of studies that have linked motivation to learner emotions before focusing specifically on studies combining learner emotions and motivation where the target FL was an independent variable in the design.

## 2.1. Biases in FL learner emotion research

Research on FL learner emotions suffers less from the WEIRD and English bias than many other research domains. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the most common method used in research on FL learner emotion are online questionnaires, which allow researchers to reach “language learners from groups who are typically absent from the research literature, such as older learners, autonomous learners, language nerds (polyglots), learners with pathologies, or learners with unusual language combinations” (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2023, p. 117). In other words, the use of online questionnaire frees researchers from collecting data from students in their own research institutions, resulting in much more diverse samples. Secondly, research on emotions took hold in China and Iran (two non-WEIRD countries), where solid data were collected from large samples of Chinese and Iranian EFL learners (for an overview, see Dewaele, 2022).

## 2.2. Foreign language classroom anxiety and foreign language enjoyment

FLCA has been defined as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Horwitz (2017) argues that FLCA is caused by the inherent threat to the ego when formulating something (potentially clumsily) in the FL. The learner may fear coming across as blunt or inaccurate, which causes anxiety. She described this as “pink dress anxiety” (p. 45), namely, the acute realization of not fitting in and not being able to communicate confidently with peers and the teacher. The appearance of FLCA and the 33-item scale for measuring it (*Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* or FLCAS) heralded the start of a new phase in anxiety research, the so-called *specialized approach* (MacIntyre, 2017). An 8-item short version of the FLCAS was included in the research design of Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) and a psychometric validation followed in Botes et al. (2022b). A vast amount of research exists on the sources of FLCA. It has been found to be strongly linked with psychological dimensions such as general anxiety, neuroticism, perfectionism and grit (for an overview, see Dewaele, 2017; Li & Dewaele, 2021). Learner-internal variables including attitude towards the target language, proficiency, relative standing in the FL class and learner-external variables including teacher behavior were the strongest predictors of FLCA in a group of 564 Chinese EFL students.

Research into FLCA was enriched when positive emotions started to get included in the research designs. This development was the result of MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) introducing positive psychology into applied linguistics.

Researchers started including more different positive and negative FL learner emotions in their designs. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) thus created and operationalized the concept of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) using an approach parallel to the one taken previously in language anxiety research (Horwitz, 2017; MacIntyre, 2017). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) distinguished FLE from the more transient experience of pleasure. They argued that FLE is:

. . . a complex emotion, capturing interacting dimensions of challenge and perceived ability that reflect the human drive for success in the face of difficult tasks, pleasure is considered simply an agreeable feeling. On the one hand, enjoyment occurs when people not only meet their needs, but exceed them to accomplish something new or even unexpected; on the other hand, pleasure is a simpler feeling that something likable is happening. (pp. 216-217)

Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) also developed a 21-item FLE scale covering both social and personal constituents of FLE in the classroom. Data were collected through an online questionnaire from an international sample of 1,746 FL learners with a wide age range. The largest group were Europeans (86%), followed by smaller groups of Asians (13%), North Americans (8%), South Americans (5%) and Arabs (5%). A significant, moderate, negative correlation emerged with FLCA scale ( $r = -.36$ ), suggesting that both emotions are related but independent, as they share only 12.9% of variance. This finding was confirmed in subsequent research (for an overview, see the meta-analysis Botes et al., 2022a that reported an overall value of  $r = -.31$  for the 46 studies that investigated this relationship).

The obvious research question was whether the same sources affected both positive and negative emotions. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) found that participants knowing many languages, who felt highly proficient in their FL, above the average in their group, more highly educated, older, and female were more likely to report high levels of FLE. The opposite pattern emerged for FLCA with the exception of gender, with female participants also reporting higher levels of FLCA. Global-regional group membership was found to affect both emotions though the effect sizes were small:  $\eta^2 = .024$  for FLE and  $\eta^2 = .021$  for FLCA. North American participants enjoyed their FL most and suffered least from FLCA. Asian participants displayed the opposite pattern, with significantly more FLCA and less FLE. The differences in FLE and FLCA between the other groups were weaker. A thematic analysis of participants' descriptions of a highly enjoyable episode in a recent FL class revealed the importance of the social context and social cohesion in the group.

Principal component analysis of the original 2014 database in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) revealed one dimension for FLCA and two subdimensions for FLE, namely, a personal subdimension and a social subdimension. A re-analysis of

the same database in Botes et al. (2021) allowed the construction of a psychometrically solid nine-item FLE scale. Factor analysis revealed a three-factor hierarchical model, containing a higher-order FLE factor and three sub-dimensions: *learners' appreciation of their FL teacher*, *social FLE* and *learners' personal FLE*.

In a follow-up study on the range of independent variables linked to FLE and FLCA, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) collected data via an online questionnaire from another international sample ( $N = 750$ ). Geographic area of learners was unrelated to FLCA but did significantly affect FLE, though with a small effect size ( $\eta^2 = .032$ ). Australian and North American learners reported more FLE than Arab learners. Learner-external sources proved to be the strongest predictors of FLE ( $R^2 = .39$ ), more specifically a positive attitude towards a (friendly) teacher. In contrast, learner-internal variables predicted FLCA ( $R^2 = .43$ ); in descending order these were emotional stability, relative standing in the group and social initiative. Analysis of participants' descriptions of moments of intense anxiety and enjoyment showed that the learner-self was mentioned more frequently in FLCA episodes, whereas the teacher figured more prominently in enjoyable episodes. The effect of the teacher on FLE (but not on FLCA) also emerged in Dewaele et al.'s (2018) study of 186 British teenage learners of French, German and Spanish. A positive attitude towards the teacher was linked to significantly higher levels of FLE ( $\eta^2 = .267$ , a large effect size). An identical pattern emerged in Li's (2022) study on 868 Chinese EFL learners ( $r = .465$ ). Slightly weaker – but still significant – positive relationships emerged between FLE and teacher enthusiasm ( $r = .391$ ), teacher predictability ( $r = .320$ ), and teacher friendliness ( $r = .313$ ).

### 2.3. Attitudes/motivation and learner emotions

Gardner (1985) is a pioneering study on motivation in second language acquisition (SLA) which remains “relevant” (Dörnyei, 2019, p. xxi) for researchers who wish to investigate the effect of the classroom and school context, as well as the broader societal context on attitudes and motivation to learn an L2. He explained later that he wanted “to clarify the underlying process linking affective variables to language achievement” (Gardner, 2019, p. 6). He designed the 104-item *Attitudes/Motivation Test Battery* (AMTB), published in Gardner (2004), to measure “the student's affective reaction to the classroom environment, the cultural influences on the learner's reaction to acquiring attributes of the cultural community, anxiety reactions when called upon to use the language, and the effort, persistence and satisfaction associated with the process” (Gardner, 2019, p. 11).

MacIntyre and Vincze (2017) used the AMTB to investigate the link between the motivation dimensions and 19 positive and negative emotions among

183 Italian FL learners of German. The motivation variables were strongly connected with the positive emotions (amused, awe, grateful, hopeful, inspired, interest, joyful, love, proud, serene), with a median of  $r = .431$ ,  $p < .001$ . Much weaker relationships existed between learners' motivation and negative emotions (anxiety, sadness, stress, embarrassment, anger, contempt, disgust, guilt and hate), with a median of  $r = -.202$ ,  $p < .001$ <sup>1</sup>.

Continuing in the same vein, MacIntyre et al. (2019) looked into the relationships between AMTB dimensions and FL learner emotions experienced in the previous week (ten positive and ten negative emotions). Two samples of participants were combined. Firstly, the international sample ( $N = 750$ ) used in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) and, secondly, a newly collected sample of Chinese EFL learners in China ( $N = 157$ ). The statistical analyses showed strong positive correlations (all  $p < .001$ ) between positive AMTB scales and being inspired, attentive, enthusiastic, interested, excited, strong, and determined. This led to the conclusion that FL learners' emotions at one point in time are linked with their longer-term motivation to learn a FL.

Further research on the link between motivation and the emotions of 598 Chinese EFL learners by Zhang et al. (2020) showed that Gardner's instrumental and integrative motivation and FLE were significantly positively correlated ( $r = .303$  and  $r = .495$  respectively). Similarly, Pan and Zhang's (2023) longitudinal study into the emotions of 55 Chinese EFL learners revealed that high levels of FLE correlated with Dörnyei's (2009) measures of motivated behavior or intended effort. These included (in descending order): linguistic self-confidence ( $r = .65$ ), English learning attitudes ( $r = .58$ ), ought-to L2 self ( $r = .58$ ), ideal L2 self ( $r = .54$ ), cultural interest ( $r = .45$ ), family influences ( $r = .44$ ), and attitudes towards the target community ( $r = .33$ ). A negative relationship was found between FLCA and both the criterion measure ( $r = -.40$ ) and the ought-to L2 self ( $r = -.40$ ). Considering the effects of learner emotions and motivation on language learning, Saito et al. (2018) used a longitudinal design to observe how comprehensibility of English of 108 Japanese high school pupils improved over one term. Both private FLE and ideal L2 self significantly predicted the amount of FL practice with boosted comprehensibility (with  $R^2 = 7.5$  and  $R^2 = 2.7$  respectively). In contrast, FLCA was not significantly linked to their language development.

In two longitudinal studies using the same database of 360 Arab FL learners in a Kuwaiti university also used in the present study, Dewaele et al. (2022, 2023) examined the trajectories of learner emotions, attitude/motivation, and a number of independent variables over the course of one semester. Dewaele et al. (2023) established that both FLE and the subdimensions of FLE personal

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<sup>1</sup> We calculated this median value based on the data provided by the authors.

and FLE social remained stable but that FLE teacher declined. FLCA also remained stable. In contrast, values for attitude/motivation dropped significantly ( $p < .026$ ,  $eta^2 = .009$ ). Mixed effects modeling analyses showed that the three FLE dimensions had a medium positive effect on attitude/motivation, while FLCA had a medium negative effect: “(FLE personal [ $\beta = .271$ ], FLE Teacher [ $\beta = .169$ ], FLE social [ $\beta = .120$ ], and FLCA [ $\beta = -.111$ ])” (p. 37). The authors argued that high FLE counteracts the effects of flagging motivation linked to disenchantment with the teacher and the curriculum as well as a realization concerning the effort required to progress and excel in the FL. Further exploring the same dataset, Dewaele et al. (2022) investigated how specific teacher behaviors (as observed by learners) shaped FL learner emotions and motivation. Linear mixed modeling showed that FLE and attitude/motivation were linked to three teachers’ behaviors (frequency of joking, of using the FL in class and predictability) (all  $p < .001$ ). Teacher behaviors were unconnected with FLCA. Levels of FLE were found to drop significantly over time in classes where teachers joked infrequently and very infrequently (both  $p < .001$ , with  $d = 1.20$  and  $d = 1.32$  respectively).

Finally, Dewaele and Meftah (2023) used a pseudo-longitudinal design to investigate change in FLE, FLCA, FL Peace of Mind and motivation among 502 Moroccan EFL learners across three skill levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. They found that motivation remained unchanged but that the positive emotions increased significantly over time, while the negative emotions decreased. In a more granular follow-up study on the three FLE dimensions and eleven motivation scales, Dewaele and Meftah (2024) found non-linear increases in the three FLE dimensions and nine motivation scales across skill levels. The strongest increase was situated between beginner and intermediate levels.

#### 2.4. The relationship between the target language and learners’ emotions and attitudes/motivation

De Smet et al. (2018) investigated the effect of the target FL (English and Dutch) on learner emotions in two educational contexts (CLIL and non-CLIL)<sup>2</sup> in primary schools and secondary schools in francophone Belgium. The 896 participants reported significantly less FLCA ( $p < .0001$ , partial  $eta^2 = .015$ ) and more FLE ( $p < .0001$ , partial  $eta^2 = .090$ ) in EFL classes than in Dutch FL classes despite similarity in pedagogical approach. A further study on the same dataset, revealed that pupils’ language attitudes and motivation remained higher over time in CLIL programs and with English as the target FL compared to non-CLIL programs and

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<sup>2</sup> Content and Language Integrated Learning



Dutch as the target FL (De Smet et al., 2023). Pupils perceived English to be easier (partial  $\eta^2 = .037$ ) and more attractive (partial  $\eta^2 = .381$ ). The gap in perceived attractiveness of both languages widened between primary and secondary education. The learning of Dutch was most strongly linked to a feeling of lower task value (partial  $\eta^2 = .148$ ), followed by higher cost (partial  $\eta^2 = .061$ ), and a feeling that success was elusive (partial  $\eta^2 = .034$ ). The authors suggest that the more positive attitudes towards English reflect the superior prestige of the language compared to Dutch, the official language of the Flemish community disliked by many Belgian Francophones.

Investigating the effect of the FL on motivation and learner emotion, Dewaele and Proietti Ergün (2020a) collected data from 110 Turkish students in an Italian immersion school in Istanbul. The same items were presented for the Turkish L1 classes and the Italian FL classes. Participants turned out to be equally motivated in both classes but they reported being more anxious in the Italian FL classroom ( $p < .0001$ ,  $d = 1.189$ ), with marginally higher levels of FLE ( $p < .057$ ,  $d = .224$ ). Learners who enjoyed their Turkish L1 classes also enjoyed their Italian FL classes ( $r = .17$ ,  $p < .016$ ). In further research on the same dataset, Dewaele and Proietti Ergün (2020b) investigated differences between Italian and English as FLs. Levels of FLE and motivation were similar in both languages but levels of FLCA were higher in Italian than in English ( $p < .0001$ ,  $d = .76$ ). FLE and motivation were positively linked in Italian ( $r = .526$ ) and English ( $r = .612$ ), while FLCA was negatively correlated with FLE and motivation in both Italian ( $r = -.386$ ) and English ( $r = -.453$ ).

In a study that focused specifically on learners of LOTE versus EFL, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2022) used the large international database they had collected for their 2014 study. They found that the 825 LOTEs learners (who typically knew English already) reported significantly stronger FLE ( $p < .0001$ ,  $d = .179$ ), lower FLCA ( $p < .001$ ,  $d = .157$ ), and more time in flow ( $p < .004$ ,  $d = .145$ ) (i.e. very small effect sizes) than the 761 EFL learners. Overall, FLE among LOTEs learners was above the average for the “default” EFL learning. The LOTE participants were found to differ from the EFL learners in terms of their socio-biographical profile: they were older, not as educated, more multilingual, had been studying the LOTE for a shorter time and were less advanced. The authors conclude “that the global status of English does not imply that learners around the world automatically have a more positive emotional experience in English classes” (p. 173).

What the previous literature suggests is that the emotions and motivation of FL learners are linked to a large number of learner-internal and contextual variables, and that the target language itself may affect their intensity. The current study will focus on the effect of the target language category (LOTE versus EFL) on learner emotions and attitudes/motivation in a single, non-WEIRD cultural context of 360 university learners of LOTEs and English. We thus formulated three research questions:

1. Do LOTE learners experience similar levels of FLE (including its three sub-dimensions) as EFL learners?
2. Do LOTE learners experience similar levels of FLCA as EFL learners?
3. Do LOTE learners experience similar levels of Attitudes/Motivation (including its four sub-dimensions) as EFL learners?

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

Participants were a relatively homogenous group of 360 mostly Kuwaiti university students ( $N = 317$ ). Mean age was 20 ( $SD = 3.3$ ). A majority were women ( $N = 280$ ), with 75 men and 5 participants who did not report gender information. Most were studying English ( $N = 252$ ), with smaller group studying German ( $N = 43$ ), followed by Spanish ( $N = 41$ ) and French ( $N = 24$ ). All participants had Arabic as a first language (L1). Participants reported knowing an average of 2.71 languages ( $SD = .94$ , with a range from 2 to 7).

The socio-biographical profiles of the EFL and the LOTE groups differed significantly. Firstly, the gender distribution differed significantly (Pearson  $Ch^2 = 15.4$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with the proportion of female participants being much larger in the LOTE group than in the EFL group (98 out of 108, i.e., 90.7%- versus 182 out of 252, i.e., 72.2%)<sup>3</sup>. Secondly, the 252 EFL learners knew significantly fewer languages than the 108 LOTE learners ( $M = 2.42$ ,  $SD = .81$  versus 3.53,  $SD = .80$  respectively;  $t(358) = -11.95$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = .806$  – a large effect). Thirdly, the EFL learners were also significantly younger than the LOTE learners ( $M = 19.38$ ,  $SD = 3.36$  versus 21.03,  $SD = 2.63$ ) respectively;  $t(341) = -4.58$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 3.16$  – a very large effect).

#### 3.2. Institution

The Gulf University for Science and Technology is “grounded in Kuwait’s Islamic cultural setting,” with 90% of the student population being Kuwaiti.<sup>4</sup> It has an American-style accredited degree program and English is the medium of instruction. Acceptance depends on competence in English. Remedial courses are offered to those who need it. The language teachers use a “task-based approach to provide students with a command of modern languages and cultural competencies as well as critical thinking and communication skills that allow for interaction in

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<sup>3</sup> Five participants did not report their gender.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.higheredjobs.com/InstitutionProfile.cfm?ProfileID=15942>

real-life settings" ([https://www.gust.edu.kw/content/languages\\_0](https://www.gust.edu.kw/content/languages_0)). Teachers focus on the FL culture, grammar and use classroom-based communicative activities. Both LOTE and EFL are taught in a similar manner.

### 3.3. Data collection

Data were collected in the FL classes during the first semester of 2019. The online questionnaire was created with LimeSurvey. FL teachers were informed about the study and asked to encourage their students to participate. After ethics approval from the institution, a call for participation was sent to FL students. It guaranteed students' anonymity. Informed consent was obtained at the start of the survey. Participants filled out the same questionnaire four times during the semester.

### 3.4. Instruments and data analysis

The questionnaire was presented in English. It collected data on participants' socio-biographical and linguistic background. This was followed by items to measure FLE, FLCA and attitude/motivation.

FLE was measured with Botes et al.'s (2021) 9-item short FLE scale. It provided a total FLE score and scores for the three subdimensions: FLE personal (referring to the self); FLE social (referring to peers) and FLE teacher (teacher appreciation). Participants indicated their degree of agreement through a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree," 2 = "disagree," 3 = "undecided," 4 = "agree," 5 = "strongly agree"). Scale analyses revealed high internal consistency at every data collection point (see Table 1).

The 8-item short scale (S-FLCAS) with a 5-point Likert scale was developed and validated by Botes et al. (2022b) (previously used in Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). It measures FLCA which has a unidimensional structure. Items refer to symptoms of social anxiety, nervousness and lack of self-confidence. Reliability statistics were very good at every data collection point (see Table 1).

A slightly adapted version of Gardner's mini-AMTB was used. Each item corresponds to a scale in the full AMTB (Tennant & Gardner, 2004, p. 247). The two anxiety dimensions and parental encouragement were not included as they would overlap with FLCA or make little sense for older learners. The scores on the 7-point Likert scales were recalculated on a 5-point scale for the purpose of comparison. The original dimensions include "integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, motivation" (p. 247). References to "French" were replaced by "FL" and "L1 users of the language." The scale had solid internal consistency (see Table 1).

Internal consistency for the FLE, FLCA and Attitudes/Motivation strengthened over time (see Table 1). As the focus in the current study is not on diachronic change, as was the case in Dewaele et al. (2022, 2023), data were averaged out.

Table 1 Internal consistency of the dependent variables at Time 1, Time 2, Time 3 and Time 4 (Cronbach’s alpha values)

Time	FLE	FLCA	Attitude/motivation
T1	.81	.77	.87
T2	.89	.78	.93
T3	.91	.80	.95
T4	.93	.83	.95

A one-sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test revealed that the values for FLCA and attitude/motivation were normally distributed ( $D = .036, p = .20$  and  $D = .043, p = .17$ ). FLE scores were close enough to normal distribution ( $D = .048, p = .042$ )<sup>5</sup>. The QQ plot (quantile-quantile plot) showed that FLE was close enough to normal distribution (see Figure 1). Independent *t*-tests were used that are robust enough to deal with near-normal distribution (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021). Means and SDs for the dependent variables are presented in Table 2.

Pearson correlation analysis revealed that FLE and FLCA were non-significantly correlated ( $r = -.091, p = .085$ ). A significant negative correlation was found between attitude/motivation and FLCA ( $r = -.166, p < .002$ ), albeit with very small effect size. A highly significant positive relationship emerged between FLE and attitude/motivation ( $r = .513, p < .0001$ ).

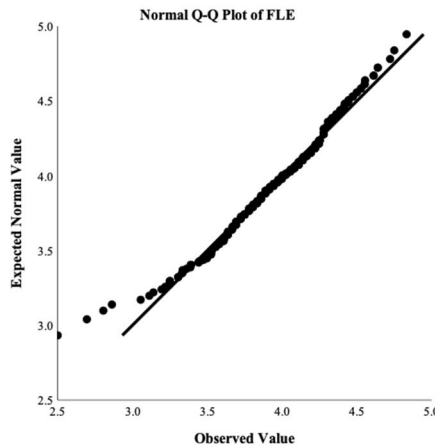


Figure 1 QQ plot for FLE

<sup>5</sup> Following the reviewer’s advice, we repeated our analyses with FLE scores that were transformed via log10 function. As this did not alter the results, we opted to keep the original scores.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation values for FLE, FLCA, attitude/motivation and their dimensions for the whole database ( $N = 360$ )

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
FLE	3.94	0.34
FLCA	2.74	0.35
Attitude/motivation	3.90	0.46
FLE personal	3.85	0.38
FLE teacher	4.23	0.44
FLE social	3.74	0.39
Integrative orientation	3.80	0.50
Motivation	4.01	0.51
Attitude language situation	3.95	0.50
Instrumental orientation	3.84	0.68

#### 4. Results

Independent-sample *t*-tests revealed that the 108 LOTE learners reported significantly higher levels of FLE (very small effect size), similar levels of FLCA and lower levels of Attitude/Motivation than the 252 EFL participants (small-to-medium effect size) (Cohen, 1988)<sup>6</sup> (see Table 3). Independent sample *t*-tests on the three dimensions of FLE revealed a very similar pattern, with the LOTE learners scoring higher than the EFL learners (with a small-to-medium effect size). The difference was the strongest for FLE teacher (see Table 3). A focus on the attitudes/motivation sub-dimensions revealed no difference between both groups for Integrativeness. The LOTE group scored significantly lower on motivation and instrumental orientation but scored significantly higher on attitudes toward the learning situation (all medium effect sizes) (see Table 3).

Table 3 Comparison between LOTE and EFL groups (independent-sample *t*-tests)

Variable	EFL ( <i>M</i> )	LOTE ( <i>M</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
FLE	3.89	4.05	-3.829	174.244	<.001 <sup>a</sup>	.337
FLCA	2.74	2.75	-0.342	358	ns <sup>a</sup>	.353
Attitudes/motivation	3.95	3.78	3.113	358	.002 <sup>a</sup>	.459
FLE personal	3.80	3.96	-3.797	358	<.001 <sup>a</sup>	.376
FLE teacher	4.19	4.32	-2.668	358	.008 <sup>a</sup>	.440
FLE social	3.69	3.86	-4.059	358	<.001 <sup>a</sup>	.383
Integrative orientation	3.81	3.79	0.26	358	ns <sup>b</sup>	.502
Motivation	4.07	3.89	3.094	358	.002 <sup>b</sup>	.508
Attitude learning situation	3.89	4.09	-3.743	227.637	<.001 <sup>b</sup>	.493
Instrumental orientation	4.04	3.37	9.027	174.258	<.001 <sup>b</sup>	.603

Note. <sup>a</sup> for  $p < .016$  and <sup>b</sup> for  $p < .012$  (Bonferroni corrected)

<sup>6</sup> Cohen (1988) argues that *d* values in the neighborhood of .20 indicate a small effect, .50 a medium effect, and .80 a large effect.

## 5. Discussion

The finding that LOTE learners reported significantly more enjoyment than EFL learners (albeit with a small effect size) confirms earlier research on frequency of flow in the classroom (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022). A closer look at the differences between the LOTE and the EFL groups for the three dimensions of FLE did not reveal striking disparities. The biggest difference between the two groups was for FLE teacher: the LOTE learners appreciated their teacher more than EFL learners. This might help explain the difference for general FLE. Teachers are instrumental in creating an environment where FLE can occur (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019; Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele et al., 2022; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019; Li, 2022). LOTE teachers stood out for doing a particularly good job in the eyes of their students. It could be argued that these teachers may have felt a need to make an extra effort to make their classes enjoyable as they were undoubtedly aware that students did not have the same pressing need to master French, Spanish and German to the same level as English, and it is probable that more students had chosen their LOTE class as an optional class. EFL teachers were in a more comfortable position as they knew that their classes were compulsory, that English was a working language of the university, and that nobody would doubt the importance and prestige of English, as well as the future benefits for mastering the language.

Levels of FLCA were similar in the groups of EFL and LOTE learners, which is not unexpected as FLCA has been shown to be more strongly related to learner-internal variables than to external variables (Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019; Li & Dewaele, 2021). This finding diverges from De Smet et al. (2018) where participants reported lower FLCA for English than for Dutch as FLs. The reason is probably that none of the FLs in the Kuwaiti context were associated with an “enemy” (cf. Pavlenko, 2003). The finding is also different from that in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2022), where the LOTE learners were found to report lower levels of FLCA (although the effect size was very small), which was attributed to their increased confidence in FL learning. It thus seems that despite being older and more multilingual, our Kuwaiti LOTE learners remained just as anxious as their EFL peers.

Considering the higher level of FLE for the LOTE group, one may have expected more positive values for attitudes/motivation too. Surprisingly, the LOTE group scored significantly *lower* than the EFL group. This difference is particularly striking because intergroup relations between Kuwaiti learners and English language users are not different from German, Spanish and French language users, a variable that can play a role, as De Smet et al. (2018, 2023) showed for the Belgian context. A closer look at the various dimensions of attitudes/motivation

reveals interesting differences between both groups. No difference emerged between them for integrative orientation, suggesting that LOTE learners were not keener to become part of the target language culture than the EFL learners, which counters the expectation expressed in Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) that LOTE learners who decide to study specific languages and cultures may be more strongly motivated to join those cultures than EFL learners. However, instrumental orientation was much stronger for the EFL group. In other words, the EFL learners were trying to get the best possible exam scores and they felt that good mastery of English would increase their job prospects. They also displayed the strongest motivation to progress in English. Only the dimension of attitude toward the learning situation followed the pattern of FLE, with higher scores for the LOTE group. The finding that LOTE learners did not have more positive attitudes/motivation towards the community that “owns” the language contradicts Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie’s (2017) speculation about LOTEs having this potential advantage. It does, however, confirm their second claim, namely, that while English is the default FL, the choice of a LOTE denotes a very personal and possibly quirky choice for FL lovers.

The positive relationship between FLE and attitudes/motivation which was reported in the methods section echoes previous research (Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020b; Dewaele et al., 2023; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017; Pan & Zhang, 2023; Zhang et al., 2020) but adds nuance as the variation in FLE and attitudes/motivation in the EFL and the LOTE groups was not isomorphous, suggesting that despite a positive correlation, FLE and attitudes/motivation are different in nature. A similar pattern emerged in Saito et al. (2018) where motivation and FLE were independent predictors of progress in comprehensibility among Japanese EFL pupils.

The current study suffers from some limitations related to confounding variables. Establishing the effect of LOTE is complicated by the fact that LOTE learners are a different type of FL learner (cf. Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2022). Our LOTE learners are older, more multilingual, and a greater proportion are female. These independent variables have been linked to more FLE and less FLCA (Dewaele, 2022; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). LOTE learners are more likely to be “language geeks” who enjoy being atypical, that is, learners with a strong “anti-ought-to self” (cf. Thompson, 2017; Thompson & Vásquez, 2015). A further limitation in the present quantitative study is that we can only guess about the causes for the differences in FLE and attitudes/motivation between both groups without the voices of participants. Finally, we acknowledge that the creation of a “LOTE” group was mainly based on statistical considerations, namely of having balanced sample sizes. Comparing the large EFL group with much smaller groups of FL learners of three other FLs would have generated low statistical power and

increased the occurrence of types 1 and 2 errors. The downside is that comparing a “basket” of three FLs with a single language might wrongly imply that these three FLs are interchangeable rather than being unique. Future research could use quota sampling to obtain similar numbers of EFL and learners of another FL. It could also expand the type of data collected, including interviews to explore the reasons why LOTE students decided to learn an additional FL and include multilingual LOTE learners who do not know any English. Further research in this field could also use mixed effects statistics which would require detailed data on participants’ proficiency in their different languages, their language use and learning history, and their teacher profiles.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study answered the call to pay more attention to non-WEIRD Foreign Language learner populations and learners of LOTEs (Andringa & Godfroid, 2020; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). Statistical analyses revealed that while LOTE learners were just as anxious in their classes as EFL learners, they reported experiencing more enjoyment but – surprisingly- also less positive attitudes/motivation than EFL learners. A more in-depth analysis revealed that LOTE learners appreciated their teacher more than their EFL peers. A complex picture emerged for the four attitudes/motivation dimensions. LOTE learners were less prepared to spend much time and effort in the FL learning and were less instrumentally oriented than the EFL learners, but they were more positive about the learning situation in the LOTE class. In other words, the LOTE was an additional language which learners typically considered fun to learn but not essential and probably not deserving as much effort as English.

We started the introduction referring to the fictional character of Detective Chief Inspector Morse who drives around Oxford in his dark red Jaguar Mark 2, humming a tune from *La Traviata* while trying to solve the mystery of the latest murder committed in the shadows of the gleaming spires of his beloved city. He is the perfect embodiment of the LOTE learners in the current study. His love for classical music makes him stand out from the crowd and hints both at his brilliant mind and at his low motivation to get involved in vulgar office politics to obtain promotion. We also mentioned the fictional character Raimund Gregorius who expresses disdain for foreign languages until coming across a speaker of Portuguese one morning, on a rainy bridge in Bern, who triggers an unexpected obsession for the language and the culture in him. He could be presented as a typical representation of LOTE learners. His erudition and knowledge of other languages could be compared to a heap of dry kindling waiting for a



spark to trigger an enduring linguistic passion. Similarly, LOTE learners may come across a fragment of a text, a song, a film, or a conversation with a user of a LOTE that will suddenly transform a merely enjoyable FL class into an all-encompassing passion deserving total commitment.

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