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The flowering of positive psychology in foreign language teaching and acquisition research¹

Jean-Marc Dewaele¹

Xinjie Chen²

Amado M. Padilla²

J. Lake³

¹ Birkbeck, University of London

² Stanford University, U.S.

³ Fukuoka Jo Gakuin University, Japan

Corresponding Author:

Xinjie Chen, Ph.D.

Graduate School of Education, 520 Galvez Mall

Stanford, CA 94305-3001

xjchen96@stanford.edu

Abstract

The present contribution offers an overview of a new area of research in the field of foreign language acquisition which was triggered by the introduction of Positive Psychology (PP) (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). For many years the field of second and foreign language acquisition had been dominated by a cognitive perspective. Around the turn of the millennium researchers became increasingly interested in the role of emotions in foreign language learning and teaching, beyond established concepts like foreign language anxiety and constructs like motivation and attitudes towards the foreign language. As a result, a more nuanced understanding of the role of positive and negative learner and teacher emotions emerged, underpinned by solid empirical research using a wide range of epistemological and

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methodological approaches. PP interventions have been carried out in schools and universities to strengthen learners and teachers' experiences of flow, hope, courage, well-being, optimism, creativity, happiness, grit, resilience, strengths, and laughter with the aim of enhancing learners' linguistic progress. This paper distinguishes three periods in the field: the first one started with the contribution of MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), like a snowdrop after winter, and was followed by a colorful flurry of studies; increased activity from 2015 led to the high point of the second period, namely the publication of two influential edited volumes: MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer (2016) and Gabryś-Barker and Gałajda (2016); the third period started in 2018 and could be compared to a luxuriant English summer garden in full bloom.

Keywords: emotion; positive psychology; foreign/second language acquisition, enjoyment, language learners, language teachers

The flowering of positive psychology in foreign language teaching and acquisition research

Introduction

Emotions are the heart of language learning and teaching, and yet they have largely remained in the shadows in the past decades of applied linguistic research. Swain (2013) argued, “emotions are the elephants in the room – poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought” (p. 11). Applied linguists may have underestimated the relevance of emotions in the past decades because of the dominance of cognitive perspectives (Sharwood Smith, 2017) and the false belief that the study of emotion is somehow unscientific. The situation is changing rapidly. Mackenzie and Alba Juez (2019) see a “scholarly awakening to the world of emotion” and they label this emerging interdisciplinary field as “emotionology”. This view concurs with the one in Prior's (2019) position paper on

emotion in *The Modern Language Journal*. He argues that scholarly interest in the emotional dimensions of language learning, teaching, and use is booming and that it is about time to acknowledge the presence of the elephant in the room. The time has come to study it in new ways in order to “open up this increasingly crowded room and explore other spaces of language and emotional life” (2019). In their commentary on Prior’s (2019) position paper, Lantolf and Swain (2019) observe that interest in emotion theory and research is spreading across disciplinary boundaries. Research on learner and teacher emotions is also reaching into the political sphere by focusing on hegemonic power relations (Benesch, 2017, 2018). In his own commentary, Dewaele (2019) combined the elephant in the room metaphor with the adynaton “When pigs fly” (i.e., something that will never happen) to describe the current interest in emotion as the time of the flying elephants. It is important to point out that affect and emotion have figured more centrally in more teacher-oriented research since the turn of the century (Arnold, 1999).

Positive Psychology

The growing popularity of Positive Psychology (PP) in the last two decades has caused a powerful shift away from an exclusive focus on problems in general psychology. PP originated with a call in the second part of the 20th century to pay more serious attention to the positive side of life (Lopez & Snyder, 2009, p. 4), though “In one sense, PP is thousands of years old, dating back to the thoughts of ancient philosophers and religious leaders who discussed character, virtues, happiness and the good society” (Diener 2009, p. 7).

PP is the empirical study of how “normal” people live with the goal of helping them to thrive and flourish (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2011; Peterson, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

PP researchers do not deny the existence of problems, but complement them with “positive” topics such as flow, hope, courage, well-being, optimism, creativity, happiness, flourishing, grit, resilience, positive emotions, life longings, emotional creativity, strengths, wisdom, health, laughter (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). PP has had a unifying effect in the field as old agendas were put aside and psychologists from different backgrounds with common interests came together to focus on things that matter to “normal” people (Lopez & Gallagher, 2009, p. 4). Interdisciplinary is the key to this research as well as science-practice integration: “practitioners are always either implementing empirically supported protocols, or helping generate the empirical basis for new programs. In this way, we could ensure that PP interventions remain firmly in the realm of science rather than pseudoscience” (p. 6).

Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins (2009) carried out an 18-month long PP intervention after randomly assigning 347 Year 9 students to Language Arts classes that contained a PP curriculum and control group that did not have the PP curriculum. PP exercises included instructing students “to write down three good things that happened each day for a week” and “helping students identify character strengths in themselves and others, using strengths to overcome challenges, and applying strengths in new ways” (p. 301). Compared to the control group, the group who had the PP intervention reported more enjoyment and engagement in school “(curiosity, love of learning, creativity)”, mothers and teachers reported, “improved social skills (e.g., empathy, cooperation, assertiveness, self-control)” (p. 301). The researchers then instructed 100 members of staff of a school in Australia in the principles and skills of PP with the aim of raising the well-being of all students. The authors report, “the programme was enormously successful” (p. 304).

Seligman (2011) hypothesized that PERMA (positive emotion (P), engagement with activities that use one’s character strengths (E), developing positive interpersonal relationships (R), finding meaning by serving a cause beyond oneself (M), and recognizing

areas of accomplishment and achievement (A)) are the building blocks of well-being, which is the basis for flourishing. Individuals in such a state thrive, feel full of vitality and prosper both at an individual and a group level.

Positive Psychology in Applied Linguistics

The Initial Period (2012-2015)

The first paper to introduce PP to applied linguistics, was not surprisingly, co-authored by a prominent psychologist and an applied linguist with a strong interest in foreign language (FL) teaching (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). They refer to Fredrickson's (2001, 2003, 2006) "broaden and build" theory of emotions and its associated action tendencies. They report the five functions of positive emotions as follows:

First, positive emotions tend to broaden people's attention and thinking, leading to exploration and play, new experiences and new learning. Second, positive emotion helps to undo the lingering effects of negative emotional arousal. A related, third function of positive emotion is to promote resilience by triggering productive reactions to stressful events, such as improving cardiovascular recovery and making salient feelings of happiness and interest while under stress. Fourth, positive emotion promotes building personal resources, such as social bonds built by smiles, intellectual resources honed during creative play, and even when young animals practice self-preservation maneuvers during rough-and-tumble play. Fifth, positive emotions can be part of an upward spiral toward greater wellbeing in the future, essentially the vicious cycle in reverse (pp. 196-197).

Because emotions are semi-controllable, the authors argue that teachers have the potential to influence students' emotions by appealing to their imagination and to help them notice the gap between their current and future selves. Teachers also need to create a safe environment

where the influence of negative emotions is reduced. They propose the well-known technique of Systematic Desensitization, encouraging students to use their imagination to modify negative emotional schema: “to reduce the intensity of conditioned negative-narrowing emotional responses that individuals associate with language learning by replacing it with a relaxation response when confronted with the negatively conditioned stimulus” (p. 205). The aim is not so much the complete absence of negative emotions, but rather the harnessing of the power of positive emotions in order to create a balance. Indeed, joy, interest, contentment, pride and love allow students to learn better as they enhance their ability to notice things in the classroom environment and strengthen their awareness of language input. Being in a positive emotional state allows students to absorb the FL better and to erase the after effects of negative emotions. Finally, positive emotions help build students’ longer-term resiliency and hardiness to overcome future negative events.

MacIntyre and Mercer (2014) guest edited a special issue on PP in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research to show “the positioning of positive psychology within modern SLA” (p. 149). They refer to Lake (2013) who adapted and applied PP concepts in his study of Japanese learners’ positive self, positive English L2 self, self-efficacy, and intended effort. After considering the criticism aimed at PP, the authors argue that SLA researchers might have an advantage, as their field is more tolerant of various epistemological and methodological stances:

SLA research has developed an openness to different understandings of empirical studies such as those employing systematic, rigorous qualitative research. As a field, SLA has the ability to see language phenomena from more than a single perspective (MacIntyre, Noels, & Moore, 2010) (p. 161).

This increased openness is illustrated in the special issue. Among the contributions that focused on FL learners, Oxford and Cuéllar (2014) used Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model

to analyse the narratives of five university students learning Chinese in Mexico. The authors conclude that the students had been through a “journey in self-discovery, rich in positive emotions tied to experiences of engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment” (p. 173).

Answering similar questions, but adopting a quantitative approach, Chafee, Noels and McEown (2014) investigated how 100 Canadian university FL students managed to sustain their motivation and love of the FL in a negative learning environment. Resilience and positive reappraisals were found to be the key to enjoy a difficult language learning experience with a controlling teacher.

Singing was at the heart of the PP intervention of Murphey (2014). He reported how he taught his 155 Japanese students short English affirmation songlet-routines they would sing to others out of the classroom over a 4-year period. He found that “when we share important information we all can become more “well,” especially when that sharing involves us singing it together” (p. 225).

Spatial factors in the classroom can contribute to a positive atmosphere argued Falout (2014). More specifically, circular seating arrangements that increase proximity to the teacher can boost a sense of trust, empathy and belonging in the group of language learners as it creates “an all-includable social action zone for the whole class.

In a large-scale mixed-methods study, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) used an online questionnaire to collect quantitative and narrative data from 1,746 FL learners from all over the world about their FL Enjoyment (FLE) and FL Classroom Anxiety (FLCA). They established that these are essentially separate emotion dimensions. Levels of FLE were higher – and FLCA lower- among more advanced students and those who felt that they performed above the group average. Cultural background and age also had an effect on FLE and FLCA with North American participants and older learners reporting more FLE and less FLCA.

Qualitative analysis of the feedback on the most enjoyable episodes in the FL class revealed that specific classroom activities that involved some degree of autonomy were the most frequently mentioned sources of FLE. Supportive teachers that were positive, well organized, happy and who could be funny and respectful of students, boosted students' FLE.

In a study that included both FL learners and teachers, Gregersen, MacIntyre, Finegan, Talbot and Claman (2014) adopted a qualitative approach. The authors examined how emotional intelligence played a role on perceived growth in the attainment of L2 possible selves among 19 American university students and pre-service TESOL teachers in a series of PP interventions over a 3-week period. A focused analysis of two participants, one student and one pre-service TESOL teacher showed that they used emotional intelligence to deal with stressful situations and managed "to understand and integrate their experiences inside and outside the classroom as part of the language learning and teaching process" (p. 328).

The only study to focus exclusively on teachers was Gabryś-Barker (2014) who presented a qualitative study of 50 trainee EFL teachers' narratives and their perceptions of teacher enthusiasm and the positive impact it has through emotional contagion on teaching and learning success. She presents a list of verbal and non-verbal strategies that trainee teachers could adopt to overcome setbacks and become enthusiastic teachers.

The Middle Period (2015-2017)

The 2014 special issue was followed two years later by two edited books. The first one was entitled *Positive psychology in SLA* (MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2016) that could be described as a landmark in SLA research. The contributions focused on "what makes language learning meaningful and fulfilling" (Gregersen, MacIntyre & Mercer, 2016, p. 4). The second book by Gabryś-Barker and Gałajda (2016) was entitled *Positive*

psychology perspectives on foreign language learning and teaching. We will explore MacIntyre et al (2016) first.

Using Seligman's PERMA paradigm as a basis of her investigation, Oxford (2016a) lists the crucial attributes that can empower FL teachers and learners. The author focuses on the psychology for well-being for FL learners and presents strategies that can allow learners and teachers to achieve success while trying to understand why less successful students may struggle.

In the chapter that opens the theoretical part, Mercer (2016) focuses on empathy in FL teaching and learning, arguing that it plays a central role in interpersonal skills and social relationships in the classroom. Indeed, empathy fosters appreciation of foreign cultures and peers among learners, and it allows teachers to engineer positive group dynamics that create an optimal classroom atmosphere. Building on this Falout (2016) draws on PP to investigate learners past and imagined future selves in order to allow learners to reflect on their FL learning experience, to nurture positive emotion, to build greater engagement, adaptability and self-consistency.

The second part of the book contains a number of empirical chapters. In the first one, Gregersen, MacIntyre and Meza (2016) describe a successful PP intervention (including music, laughter, gratitude) with 5 learners over a 12-week period with the aim of stimulating emotional growth, measured through questionnaires and journals. Shifting from learners to teachers, Hiver (2016) looked at despair and hope of novice FL teachers. He argues that setting goals and forging pathways can foster agentic feelings that can help teachers attain a sense of control over their lives and help them to surmount obstacles.

In the third empirical chapter, Czimmermann and Piniel (2016) adopted a quantitative design in order to investigate 85 Hungarian FL learners' experiences of classroom and task-specific flow. They also considered moments of anti-flow (anxiety, boredom and apathy).

The key for obtaining flow experiences is providing learners with sufficient time to build concentrated engagement with motivating tasks that are difficult, but manageable and giving learners sufficient autonomy to execute them without teacher interference.

Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) used the metaphor of left and right feet to describe learners' FLE and FLCA in this mixed-method study that included a Principal Components Analysis of their 2014 dataset that allowed them to identify two sub-dimensions of FLE, namely social and private FLE. The former is reflected in classroom laughter, good rapport with teachers and peers while the latter reflected in private feelings of pride, fun, and achievement. These two FLE dimensions co-exist and produce a cohesive feeling. Analysis of the qualitative data showed that risk was inherent in enjoyable episodes, confirming findings from the previous chapter. In a separate further study on the same dataset, Dewaele, MacIntyre, Boudreau and Dewaele (2016) found that female participants reported both more FLE and FLCA, and they also reported higher level of proficiency in the FL. The authors argued that more emotion (whether positive or negative) reflects more overall engagement, which is the source of progress in the FL. Negative and positive emotions do not behave in a seesaw manner, where the absence of one automatically boosts the presence of the other. They are highly dynamic and fluctuate over different timescales. Considering the longer-term effects of negative and positive emotions on FL learning, it seems that progress is positively linked to positive emotions and negatively linked to negative emotions, but the absence of negative emotion is no guarantee for progress as it can reflect disengagement from the learning process (boredom).

In his chapter Lake (2016) used Structural Equation Modeling with data obtained from a group of 212 first-year Japanese female students in a private university in Japan. He found that characteristics at a global level, referencing the whole person, such as a positive

self-concept, are not necessarily directly linked to L2 proficiency, but rather to an intermediate domain level where positive L2 self and L2 self-efficacy are located.

Ibrahim (2016) contributed the sixth empirical chapter using a phenomenological approach to focus on enjoyment, motivational currents and long-term engagement of 7 FL learners. The main source of happiness in learning the L2 came from the transformational process of personal growth, including skills, image and identity.

The final empirical chapter Belnap, Bown, Dewey, Belnap and Steffen (2016) focused on boosting the perseverance of 52 American language students by increasing their self-efficacy and self-regulating abilities during an intensive Arabic program in Jordan where they faced communication challenges. Material was collected through journals, interviews and oral proficiency tests. Progress in proficiency was found to be positively linked to satisfaction with speaking Arabic.

The third part of the book focused on how researchers applied PP in differing FL classroom environments. In the first chapter Helgesen (2016) uses the tools linked to PERMA to increase Japanese EFL learners' well-being and engagement. Whereas Murphey (2016) tests the "well-becoming through the teaching/helping hypothesis" in which 65 Japanese university EFL learners had to help others in order to get them out of their self-focus. Fresacher (2016) gives an overview of PP activities she used in a Hungarian university EFL classroom with the aim of improving students' management communication skills.

Fonseca-Mora and Herrero Machancoses (2016) focus on the link between music and FL learning in the fourth chapter, arguing that music can contribute to creating a positive classroom atmosphere, boosting learner-internal characteristics such as motivation, verbal memory, self-regulation and language skills, but also learner-external variables such as social harmony.

The book editors, MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer (2016) conclude “Positive psychology has an added dimension of practice and applications that can further inform both the teaching and learner development sides of SLA” (p. 378).

The second edited book, by Gabryś-Barker and Gałajda (2016), added to the growing momentum of PP in the field of SLA. It contained contributions by some of the previously mentioned researchers such as MacIntyre (2016b), Oxford (2016b), Gregersen (2016), Mercer (2016) and a number of prominent Polish researchers. Contributors focus on the well-being and success of FL learners and teachers, highlighting the powerful effects of PP interventions, and take into account the role of institutions and individual FL classes.

Komorowska (2016) warns that PP is misrepresented in SLA and that telling unprepared FL learners that positive feelings are “the only path to greater proficiency” (p. 39) is a gross simplification of a much more complex reality. Piasecka (2016) presents evidence that reading L2 poetry can activate learners’ character strengths. Guz and Tetiurka (2016) report that teachers’ positive mindset can boost primary school FL learners’ engagement and positive emotions. Gabryś-Barker (2016) shows how pre-service teachers’ awareness of classroom climate can be sharpened and suggests ways to enhance it. Similarly, Mercer (2016) presents techniques to protect and support FL teachers’ well-being. Research into the sources of learner emotions has continued such as the study by Piechurska-Kuciel (2017) who found that higher levels of proficiency in the L2 (or L3) of her 77 Polish university learners of German and English was linked with higher levels of FLE, confirming earlier findings by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014).

Recent Developments (2018-)

MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer (2019) set out an ambitious agenda for PP in SLA research. Their first point is that PP can strengthen the field by encouraging researchers to acknowledge that there are interactions between positive and negative phenomena and that

equating the positive to “good/motivated/successful” and negative to “bad/unmotivated/unsuccessful” is simplistic as “language learners’ and teachers’ emotional and psychological experiences are complex and often conflicted” (p. 8). A second point is a resolute rejection of the deficit model in learners and teachers. Rather than obsessing about what FL learners and teachers lack, the authors argue that it would be more fruitful to look at strengths and opportunities - without denying that problems may exist. In line with this trend of promoting well-being, Chen and Padilla (2019) conducted a study in a group of U.S. college students examining the positive factors related to bilingual’s levels of flourishing that is considered a vital element in PP. Results revealed four important components (emotional, social, psychological and linguistic) that are central to well-being and which contribute to bilinguals’ flourishing. Although still preliminary these findings demonstrate the importance of bringing PP theories into SLA study and research.

MacIntyre et al’s (2019) third point is an acknowledgement that FL learning involves more than just a balancing of the positive and the negative at an individual level: “The complexity also extends to a perception of the learner as an individual who is set into a sociocultural context. Language learning and teaching are by their very nature intercultural experiences” (p. 8). In terms of epistemology, the authors argue in favor of “empirical and theoretical plurality” (p. 8), encouraging quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method research, preferably with scholars and practitioners joining forces. They call for “programmatic research on both the psycho-social and language development effects of PP Interventions” (p. 8).

As the field of PP in applied linguistics grows at a fast rate, it follows different, relatively independent avenues. One avenue is teacher psychology, the other is learner psychology. Following the first avenue, MacIntyre, Ross, Talbot, Mercer, Gregersen and Banga (2019) focused on the statistical relationships between 47 EFL teachers’ levels of

wellbeing, perceptions of stress, and personality profiles. The authors used the PERMA profiler questionnaire and a big five personality questionnaire, the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP). They found that Emotional Stability was most strongly correlated with the PERMA dimensions. The correlation was positive and particularly strong with positive emotions (35% of shared variance) and was negatively correlated with negative emotions (31% of shared variance). The PERMA wellbeing score correlated significantly with four of the five personality traits (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Intellect). Only Extraversion did not correlate with teacher wellbeing. Considering the most frequent chronic stressors in their professional life, participants listed heavy workload, financial stress and long hours. Financial difficulties also topped the list of life event stressors in the past year.

Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) has also emerged as a crucial variable for FL teacher, with the underlying question whether PP interventions might boost teachers' TEI and, by extension, FL teachers' self-efficacy (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009) and emotion-regulation skills in the classroom (Gregersen et al, 2014). The authors found that "the process of self-development is facilitated by using EI in effective ways" (p. 349). Dewaele and Mercer (2018) included TEI as one of their independent variables in the study of the variation in 513 EFL/ESL teachers' self-reported attitudes towards their students. Participants with higher levels of TEI reported more positive attitudes towards students and enjoyed lively students more. The authors pointed out that it is harder to be a good teacher with low levels of EI and that those with lower levels of TEI are more likely to change profession.

In a follow-up study on the same database, Dewaele, Gkonou and Mercer (2018) focused on variation in self-reported classroom behavior (classroom management, pedagogical skills, predictability and creativity). Participants with higher levels of TEI reported significantly better classroom management, pedagogical skills and higher levels of

creativity. Length of teaching experience had similar effects, possibly because teaching experience leads to increased TEI or because teachers with lower levels of TEI abandoned the profession earlier.

Dewaele (2018) re-used the same dataset to zoom in on the specific relationships between the previously listed dependent variables and four facets of TEI. The first two facets, well-being and sociability, turned out to be significantly positively correlated with most dependent variables while the third and fourth facet of TEI, emotionality and self-control were significantly correlated with fewer dependent variables.

In a final study on the same dataset, Dewaele (to appear a) considered the effect of TEI on teacher motivation. Teachers with high TEI were significantly more intrinsically motivated, had stronger identified regulation, and were less amotivated. Looking at the relationships between the four facets of TEI and motivation, a significant positive link emerged between well-being, emotionality, self-control, sociability and intrinsic motivation and a significant negative relationship between these facets and Amotivation.

The second avenue of research that has been expanding fast in the last two years are ways to alleviate FLCA and to stimulate learners' positive feelings, attitudes and motivation in the FL classroom. Jin and Dewaele (2018) considered the effect of learners' positive orientation, perceived teacher and student emotional support on FLCA of 144 Chinese EFL university students. Statistical analyses revealed that positive orientation was linked to significantly lower FLCA. However, while stronger perceived teacher support did not significantly lower levels of FLCA stronger emotional support from peers was linked to lower levels of FLCA.

Moskowitz and Dewaele (2019) studied the link between perceptions of language teacher happiness and self-reported attitudes and motivation of 129 adult EFL students from across the world. Statistical analyses revealed that students' perception of the happiness of

their teacher was significantly (and positively) linked with their overall attitude and motivation to study English, their positive feelings, as well as their attitude towards the teacher and the English language. Students with higher levels of positive feelings reported stronger overall attitudes and motivation to study English. The authors suggest that this is an indication that positive emotional contagion can happen between teachers and students.

Another strand of research has focused on the relationship between FLE and FLCA and its sources. Early studies on FLE and FLCA focused exclusively on the effect of learner-internal variables (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016). More recent work has also included learner-external variables in the research design in order to see which are better predictors of FLE and FLCA. Moreover, data were collected from single contexts (city or country) in order to have more homogeneity in the linguistic and cultural profiles of the participants and in the target languages. These latest studies pay particular attention to the dynamic interactions between a wide range of independent and dependent variables.

One such study was Dewaele, Witney, Saito and Dewaele (2018) who collected data on FLE and FLCA from 189 secondary school pupils in two schools in Greater London who had English as an L1 and were mostly studying French as a FL. A weak negative correlation was found between FLE and FLCA. Attitudes toward the teacher and teacher practices were found to have a much stronger effect on FLE than on FLCA. FLCA was linked to negative attitudes towards the FL, lower relative standing in the peer group and being less advanced in the FL. In contrast, FLE was strongly predicted by positive attitudes toward the FL, positive attitudes toward the teacher, frequent use of the FL by the teacher, a larger proportion of time spent on speaking during classes, a higher relative standing in the peer group and being more advanced in the FL.

In a follow-up study, Dewaele and Dewaele (2017) used a pseudo-longitudinal design to see whether levels of FLE and FLCA, and their predictors, remained stable during

secondary. A comparison of the 12–13 year olds, the 14–15 year olds and the 16–18 year olds revealed that FLCA remained unchanged while FLE increased over time. A different set of independent variables predicted FLE and FLCA in the three age groups. In the youngest group, FLE was predicted by relative standing in the group and FLCA by mastery of the FL. In the middle group, FLE was strongly predicted by attitude towards the FL, followed by attitude toward the teacher and teacher predictability (a negative predictor). FLCA was predicted by relative standing in the group and mastery of the FL. In the oldest group, FLE was very strongly predicted by single variable: attitude towards the teacher. FLCA was predicted by relative standing in the group (a negative predictor) and teacher predictability. It thus seems that limited changes in mean levels of FLE and the stability in FLCA hid the tug of war beneath the surface between various psychological and sociobiographical variables in shaping learners' FLE and FLCA.

In a final follow-up study, Dewaele and Dewaele (2019) investigated to what extent FLE and FLCA vary at a single point in time when facing two different teachers for the same FL. Participants were a subgroup extracted from the complete sample, namely 40 students who had one main teacher and a second teacher for the same FL. FLCA was found to be constant with both teachers, but students reported significantly higher FLE with the main teacher. This corresponded with significantly more positive attitudes toward the main teacher, more unpredictability and more frequent use of the FL in class by the main teacher, which are all predictors of FLE. An analysis of classroom-specific items linked to the teacher interventions to create a positive emotional atmosphere contributed to higher FLE scores. Items reflecting more stable personal and group characteristics varied much less between the two teachers. The authors conclude that FLE is a more fleeting classroom emotion while FLCA is more stable.

Four studies focused specifically on FLE and FLCA in the Chinese context. Li, Jiang and Dewaele (2018) developed a Chinese Version of the FLE Scale and collected data from 2078 Chinese high school students. Three factors emerged from a Principal Component Analysis: FLE-Private, FLE-Teacher, and FLE-Atmosphere. Scores were highest on FLE-Teacher, and gradually lower on FLE-Private and FLE-Atmosphere. Participants reported that the teacher, and to a lesser degree the peers, shaped their FLE.

In a second study, Li, Dewaele and Jiang (2019) investigated the relationship between FLE, FLCA and EFL achievement of 1307 Chinese EFL university students. A significant negative link emerged between FLCA and self-perceived EFL proficiency while FLE was significantly, positively, linked to self-perceived EFL proficiency. The strength of the relationship depended on the participants' proficiency level. FLE was a stronger positive predictor of self-perceived EFL proficiency than FLCA in the low proficiency group, where participants reported more anxiety and less enjoyment. In the medium and high proficiency groups, FLCA became a stronger predictor of self-perceived EFL proficiency. Participants reported that disappointing English test results and harsh criticism by the teacher inflated their FLCA while good test results, friendly words from the teacher, good social standing boosted their FLE.

In a third study, Jin and Jun Zhang (2018) reported similar patterns between FLE and FL achievement of 320 Chinese EFL high school students. A three-factor solution emerged from a factor analysis of an adapted FLE scale: Enjoyment of teacher support, Enjoyment of student support, and Enjoyment of FL learning. FLE exerted both direct and indirect effects on students' achievement scores. Enjoyment of FL learning had the strongest effect on FL achievement with enjoyment of teacher support and enjoyment of student support having an indirect effect.

In a fourth study, Jiang and Dewaele (2019) investigated to what extent levels and sources of FLE and FLCA of 564 Chinese university EFL learners differed from FL learners outside China. While mean levels of FLE were found to be quite similar, FLCA levels were higher than in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). Relationships between learner-internal, teacher-related variables and levels of FLE and FLCA were generally comparable to those identified outside China, with the exception of a positive relationship between Chinese students' FLE and teachers' predictable behavior.

The next study also focused on the uniqueness of the patterns of interaction of FLE and FLCA with learner-internal and learner-external variables among a previously unexplored group, 592 learners of Turkish as a FL in Kazakhstan (Dewaele, Özdemir, Karci, Uysal, Özdemir & Balta, 2019). Kazakh students' levels of FLE and FLCA in Turkish classes were found to be broadly similar to those reported in previous research. FLE in Turkish was found to be strongly predicted by attitude toward Turkish, followed by teacher-centered variables with little effect of learner-internal variables. The only slight difference with previous studies was that FLCA was weakly predicted by some learner-internal as well as teacher-centered variables.

The effect of the teacher on FLE and FLCA of 210 Spanish EFL students was the exclusive focus of Dewaele, Franco Magdalena and Saito (2019). Teacher characteristics were found to explain more than twice as much variance in FLE than in FLCA. The strongest predictor of FLE was teacher's friendliness while the teacher's strong foreign accent in English lowered students' FLE. Participants reported more FLCA with younger teachers, teachers who were overly strict, and teachers who used little English in class.

The influence of context and target language was also at the heart of the investigation of De Smet, Mettwie, Galand, Hiligsmann and Van Mensel (2018) on the FLE and FLCA of 896 Belgian francophone primary and secondary school pupils. The authors compared two

target languages (English and Dutch) in two different types of school in Francophone parts of Belgium, the first type was regular school where students were taught in French and where they had FL classes of Dutch and English, the second type was a school that had adopted Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and where some content classes were taught in Dutch or English. The authors found that CLIL pupils experienced significantly less FLCA than their non-CLIL peers but that levels of FLE were similar. English elicited significantly less FLCA and more FLE than Dutch, which suggests that the historical and political context, and more specifically inter-group relations between the Francophone and Dutch-speaking communities, as well as the type of school system, shaped FL learners' emotions.

In a study based on cross-sectional and longitudinal data from 108 Japanese EFL pupils, Saito, Dewaele, Abe and In'nami (2018) investigated to what extent FLE, FLCA and motivation affected the development of comprehensibility in English over a period of three months. A factor analysis unveiled a three-factor solution similar to that reported in Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) with FLCA, Social FLE and Private FLE. Levels of Private FLE (but not FLCA) were significantly positively correlated with English use both inside and outside of the English classroom and with pupils' total frequency of English conversations. Students with the biggest gains in comprehensibility in English reported significantly more Private FLE and less FLCA.

The following studies focused specifically on dynamic fluctuations and change in FLE and FLCA. Firstly, Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele (2018) adopted the idiodynamic approach to measure fluctuation in FLE and FLCA on a second-by-second basis for about a minute. Ten Anglo-Canadian students completed speaking tasks in French L2 after which they viewed the recording of their performance and reported their levels of FLE and FLCA. Subsequent interviews about the reasons for the fluctuations allowed the researchers to

understand local causes. Correlation analyses of the multiple FLE and FLCA values of each participant revealed that these veered from positive to negative and then to zero. High FLE momentarily coincided with low FLCA, but this relationship could shift completely a few seconds later. It confirmed the view that FLE and FLCA are independent dimensions. Participants explained in the interview that the fluctuations could be linked to difficulties in word searches, to momentary failure to control FLCA, to enjoyment or boredom in discussing a particular aspect of the task.

The second study by Dewaele and Pavelescu (2019) used a multiple case study design to investigate the relationship between FLE, FLCA and Willingness to Communicate in two high school EFL learners in Romania. Influenced by Dynamic System Theory, the authors combined lesson observations, a written task and semi-structured interviews to obtain retrodictive data that could shed light on fluctuations and change in participants' Willingness to Communicate in English over time. FLE and FLCA proved to be uniquely constructed emotions that started growing from the first contact with English, extending into the present and the future in dynamic, idiosyncratic ways. Learners' different position on the introversion-extraversion continuum and their unique English experiences inside and outside school shaped their FLE and FLCA which had direct and indirect effects on their WTC. This was a follow-up study of Pavelescu and Petric (2018) who carried out a qualitative study on experiences of enjoyment and love among four high school EFL learners in Romania. Two participants experienced strong and stable love towards English, while the other two participants reported enjoyment in their English language learning without being in love with English. The authors argued that love served as the fuel for the learning process, as it allowed learners to create effective coping mechanisms when some classes were not enjoyable and it helped them invest greater effort into the learning and the use of English in and out of the classroom. Chen, Vallerand and Padilla (2019) conducted an empirical study with 260 high

school L2 learners in Taiwan that aimed at exploring a process model linking passion and adaptive outcomes both *in* L2 as well as *outside* in one's life in general. Based on the Dualistic Model of Passion findings demonstrated that being passionate about L2 learning provided positive benefits for both the learning of an L2 as well as heightening the well-being of learner's in general.

Dewaele and Dewaele (2018) adopted a more traditional quantitative perspective to measure the effect of FLE and FLCA on WTC of 189 British secondary school pupils who were studying a FL in London. FLCA turned out to be the strongest negative predictor of WTC. Weaker positive predictors of WTC were frequent FL use by the teacher, a positive attitude toward the FL, social FLE and age. The authors concluded that teachers play a key role in boosting learners' WTC by generating a positive and supportive emotional classroom. Moreover, fostering linguistic and cultural interest in the FL can encourage learners to seize the opportunity to use the FL in front of their peers and teacher.

The same research questions guided Dewaele's (to appear b) study on the predictors of WTC of 210 Spanish EFL learners. Here also FLCA turned out to be the strongest (negative) predictor of WTC, explaining twice as much variance than FLE and teacher's frequency of use of the FL that were positive predictors of WTC.

Research has also explored to what extent FLE and FLCA are linked to performance in the FL. Dewaele and Alfawazan (2018) found that the positive effect of FLE on performance was stronger than the negative effect of FLCA in a group of 189 FL pupils in Greater London and a group of 152 Saudi EFL learners and users of English in Saudi Arabia. Feedback collected from the Saudi participants showed that causes of FLE were broadly similar to those reported in previous research and that less than optimal pedagogical practices such as unqualified teachers, humiliation and physical abuse lowered students' FLE and

heightened their FLCA. These emotions shaped participants' decisions to pursue or abandon the study of English.

Further research into the unique nature of FLE and FLCA explored the role of personality traits. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) collected data about FLE and FLCA from 750 FL learners from around the world. The authors found that FLCA was strongly predicted by the personality trait Emotional Stability and less so by Social Initiative. In contrast, FLE was strongly predicted by teacher-centered variables and less so by the personality trait Cultural Empathy. Considering the relative effect of personality traits on FLCA and FLE, it turned out that they predicted about a third of the variance in FLCA (a large effect size) but only a tenth of variance in FLE (a medium effect size). This can be used to further the argument that FLE and FLCA might be weakly correlated, but that they are definitely separate emotions (cf. Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016). Moreover, an analysis of participants' stories about episodes of FLE and FLCA in class confirmed the statistical findings: they attributed FLE most often to the teacher while FLCA was mostly frequently linked to themselves.

In the latest development to improve the psychometric properties of the FLE questionnaire, Botes, Dewaele, MacIntyre and Greiff (2019) used exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to re-analyze the dataset from Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). A five-factor solution emerged, explaining close to half of the variance, with a first factor (FLE) that the majority of the items loaded onto and which explained close to a third of the variance. The items loading onto the next four factors were Personal Enjoyment, Social Enjoyment, Scholarly Enjoyment and Teacher Appreciation. Botes et al (2019) concluded that FLE consists of a higher-order general FLE factor with four first-order factors.

Finally, Dewaele and MacIntyre (to appear) explored inter-individual variation in the frequency of experiencing positive flow and anti-flow by 232 Spanish FL learners from

around the world. Statistical analyses revealed that participants experienced significantly more flow than anti-flow. Percentage of time in a state of positive flow was positively linked to a higher degree of multilingualism, high relative standing in the group, and number of years of FL study. Older learners reported spending more time in positive flow. Participants reported the experience of flow states in the FL classroom as a feeling of complete involvement in an individual or collective task, intense focus and joy that made them lose their sense of time and place, spontaneous joy and bonding with other learners in the FL class.

Conclusion

Providing a comprehensive overview of a field in full expansion is as difficult as trying to document the flowering of a thousand flowers, bushes and fruit trees in a country park in spring sunshine, armed with a single camera. Inevitably, the views will be influenced by the photographer's knowledge of the lay out of the park and the actual journey through it. It will be further shaped by the photographer's predilection for certain spots, for certain colors, for certain contrasts between light and shade, for the presence or absence of water, of mist, of wildlife or other visitors in the pictures. It is safe to assume that no two photographers would return home with identical pictures from the same park on the same day. While some central features would undoubtedly figure in the resulting albums of both photographers, composition, lighting and perspective of pictures would be different. Moreover, because of restrictions on the maximum number of pictures, tough decisions would have to be made on what to include and what to leave out. An album with one thousand thumbnail pictures might be less attractive than one with fewer, but larger pictures. The commercial photo album promoting such a country park would not claim to be exhaustive, but would aim to raise awareness of its existence and maybe attract visitors to the

park. Similarly, the current overview, and special issue that it is part of, aim to raise the profile of this emerging field of PP in SLA in order to encourage teachers, students and researchers to take a look and maybe to join us in the joyful quest for a better understanding of the complex workings of learners' and teachers' mind and hearts.

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