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Enhancing International Postgraduate Students' Foreign Language Enjoyment through Oral Corrective Feedback in Chinese Online Classes

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Abstract:
Although foreign language enjoyment (FLE) can foster foreign language (FL) learning, FLE resulting from effective pedagogical approaches remains understudied. This study explored whether oral corrective feedback (OCF) can stimulate fluctuations in FLE. The study examined whether foreign language achievement (FLA) improves because of OCF. Sixty-five international postgraduate students were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. A modified version of the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale was used to measure the FLE levels of learners of Chinese as a foreign language. Results revealed that participants' FLE and FLA in the experimental group increased compared with that of the control group. Semi-structured interview results suggested that teachers' explicit correction and recasts with metalinguistic feedback increased FLE in learners and facilitated their FLA. Finally, pedagogical implications for FL education and future research orientations were discussed.

Keywords:
foreign language enjoyment, oral corrective feedback, Chinese as a foreign language, foreign language achievement, positive psychology, boosting enjoyment

1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language (FL) is a complex process that inevitably involves experiencing mixed emotions, both positive and negative (Shirvan et al., 2021). Emotions influence FL learning (Dewaele et al., 2019; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Krashen, 1982; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2017). Unlike cognitive aspects, which have dominated the research in applied linguistics (Loewen & Sato, 2018; Sato & Loewen, 2018; Smith, 2017), affective variables have been disregarded as unscientific or implausible factors in the second language acquisition (SLA) domain from the 1960s to the 1980s (Prior, 2019). Therefore, scholars and educators have paid little attention to the impact of affective perspectives on FL learning (Dewaele & Li, 2020; Smith, 2017). According to Dewaele et al. (2019), emotions "have largely remained in the shadows in the past decades of applied linguistic research" (p. 1). Nevertheless, at present, "scholars are recognizing the essential role of emotional phenomena" (Mackenzie & Alba-Juez, 2019, p. 3).

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Although FL learners' affective variables have been considered in the SLA domain, researchers have focused mainly on negative emotions (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a; Patra et al., 2022). Extensive research has focused on the optimum approaches for mitigating second language (L2) learners' FL anxiety (Galante, 2018; Jin et al., 2021; Kralova et al., 2017). Motivated by positive psychology, some researchers have acknowledged for nearly a decade that enjoyment is as vital in FL learning as is anxiety (Aldosari et al., 2023; Jin & Zhang, 2021; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017; Mackenzie & Alba-Juez, 2019; Oxford, 2015, 2016; Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Positive emotions facilitate L2 or FL learning (De Smet & Mettewie, 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016; Fang & Tang, 2021; Fredrickson, 2001, 2006, 2013; Heydarnejad et al.,2022; Shirvan et al., 2021).

In addressing this research lacuna, the current study aims to incorporate the oral corrective feedback (OCF) technique into FL instructions to enhance learners' enjoyment. This technique has never been utilized before in positive psychology research. Primarily, the study aims to investigate whether OCF is a stronger predictor in enhancing FL enjoyment levels, whether foreign language enjoyment (FLE) caused by the OCF intervention may improve FL performance, and which OCF methods produce the most enjoyment.

2. Literature Review

2.1 FLE and FL teaching and learning

The role of positive emotions in FL teaching and learning had not been emphasized in previous research on emotions (Bown & White, 2010) until the seminal study of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) (also see De Smet & Mettewie, 2018). This study shifted the focus to what helps individuals, societies, and communities thrive by understanding and developing human strengths (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). With the emergence of Fredrickson's (2001, 2006, 2013) broaden-and-build theory, research on positive emotions has been more indispensable than that on negative emotions, mainly because positive emotions can aid in dispelling the prolonged effects of negative emotions and increase individual learners' resilience during hardships encountered when learning an FL (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012a, 2012b) asserted that positive emotions influence the ability of language learners to observe and absorb more information from the FL in the language classroom.

Positive psychology enriches the scope of SLA study and encourages scholars to view positive and negative emotions holistically (Dewaele et al., 2018; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). Research on positive emotions is dedicated to the success of L2/FL learners and their well-being (Reeve, 2018). Regarding well-being, Seligman (2011, 2018) proposed a five-dimensional theoretical model called the "PERMA," represented by five acronyms (P = positive emotion; E = engagement in activities; R = relationships with positive aspects; M = meaning through serving a task beyond an individual; A = accomplishment). Their combinations create the foundation of FL learners' well-being and may be the starting point for developing strategies to cultivate language learners' positive affective experiences. Instructional techniques and focusing on improving learners' achievement entail multiple dimensions of PERMA.

Positive emotions, such as learners' enjoyment, can be stimulated when learning a language and are conducive to FL learning (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Li et al., 2018; MacIntyre

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& Vincze, 2017; Shirvan et al., 2021). Li et al. (2018) defined enjoyment as "good feelings resulting from breaking through homeostatic limits and stretching beyond oneself to accomplish something new or even unexpected, especially in the face of some difficult tasks" (p. 4). Hence, enjoyment tends to initiate a sense of accomplishment and innovation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008) and is pivotal in preventing anxiety (Dewaele, 2007; Gkonou et al., 2017; Scovel, 1978). Based on Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory, FLE can broaden learners' horizons and empower them to absorb more when learning an FL. This theory has been highly influential over the past five years (Dewaele et al., 2018; Piniel & Albert, 2018; Shirvan & Taherian, 2021; Shirvan et al., 2021). Research on FLE has been developed as a cornerstone of positive psychology from the perspective of applied linguistics (Dewaele et al., 2019; Li, 2020).

Evidence indicates that enjoyment levels in FL learning are determined by several internal and external factors, including learners' age (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), sex (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016), geographical location (Wang & Jiang, 2021), learning motivation (Saito et al., 2018), self-assessment ability (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017), positive attitude toward FL and FL teachers, and teachers' frequent use of the target language in the FL class (Dewaele et al., 2018). Environmental factors, such as cultural attractions and good interpersonal relationships (Chen et al., 2021), strongly impact FLE. Therefore, research on FLE focuses on its possible role in FL learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016; Li et al., 2018; Ryan et al., 1990). According to the control-value theory, enjoyment may positively influence FL learners' achievement (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014; Piniel & Albert, 2018). In contrast to the negative correlation between FL anxiety and FL achievement that has been widely researched (Ganschow & Sparks, 1996; Gkonou et al., 2017; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a; Scovel, 1978), the positive influence of FLE on FL achievement in various contexts has begun to be investigated only recently (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Li et al., 2020; Saito et al., 2018).

In terms of emotions as predictors of FL achievement, the positive effects of enjoyment have been found to outweigh the negative effects of anxiety (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Fang & Tang, 2021). Positive emotions experienced by FL learners are different from negative emotions, rather than being their antithesis (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012a). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) argued that FL learners' positive emotions made the process of acquiring a new language more effective and fostered a secure and enjoyable psychological environment in the face of cultural barriers and unfamiliar language knowledge. Some scholars and educators have highlighted the relationship between positive emotions and FL teaching as well as learning. Prior studies (Chen et al., 2021; Li, 2020; Wang & Jiang, 2021; Zhang & Tsung, 2021) investigated the relationship between Chinese as a second language (CSL) learners' FLE levels and L2 achievement. However, international postgraduates in Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) are still undervalued. Moreover, few studies emphasize the importance of instructional strategies in enhancing enjoyment,which ismore practical and user-friendly for L2 learners and their teachers in a CFL classroom. Evidently, the impact of providing OCF to enhance FLE is an understudied topic.

2.2 OCF and FLE

While learning FL, learners may continually commit thousands of linguistic errors and require someone to correct those mistakes. Handling learners' linguistic errors is essential to teaching FL (Nassaji, 2016). Corrective feedback (CF) has long been regarded as a common ground for language teachers and learners

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(Schachter, 1991). OCF is a type of CF that occurs during communicative interaction and relates to "teachers' or peers' responses to learners' erroneous utterances" (Ha et al., 2021, p. 2); recently, it has received extensive academic attention in FL education. The OCF technique has evolved from form-focused instruction, which places greater emphasis on linguistic precision and interactional efficacy (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). It can draw the attention of L2 learners to various linguistic errors (Yang, 2016). Moreover, it helps these learners improve their linguistic accuracy (Ellis, 2009; Haifaa & Emma, 2014; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014) and increases their language learning motivation (Ellis, 2009). Regarding fostering learning motivation, numerous language educators are also aware of the significance of meaningful classroom interactions (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). From the learners' perspective, OCF is more likely to eliminate uncertainty over the appropriateness or accuracy of their utterances and enhance their understanding of teachers' or peers' hints and guidance. By presuming comparable effects for different OCF methods (Adams et al., 2011; Haifaa & Emma, 2014; Van de Guchte et al., 2015) or proofing one method of OCF in various pedagogical activities (Montazeri & Salimi, 2019; Sheen, 2006), many educators and researchers have begun conducting relevant studies on the efficacy of OCF to expand this technique's utility.

OCF is an instructional strategy closely related to learners' emotional states. Emotional factors may influence the effectiveness of OCF techniques (Lyster & Saito, 2010; Sheen, 2008). Learners' affective factors, such as anxiety, negatively impact their L2 or FL learning efficacy (Dewaele et al., 2008; Li, 2018; Rassaei, 2015; Sheen, 2008). Regarding FL anxiety in the language classroom, Lee (2016) argued that clarification requests increased learners' anxiety. Prior research has documented the negative impact of FL anxiety on OCF; however, the impact of OCF on FL learners' positive emotions, such as FLE, remains underexplored. Therefore, exploring the role of teachers' OCF on learners' FLE in FL learning is significant.

While many researchers have begun emphasizing the role of enjoyment in FL learning, less attention has been paid to enhancing FLE proficiency through different teaching techniques. Some researchers have lately started investigating the role of teachers' CF, such as multimodal CF in FLE. Bayat et al.'s (2020) study exploreda teacher's multimodal CF in relation to enjoyment-building capacity and learners' enjoyment experiences in a university English course through video recording, observing teacher–student interactions, and interviewing. Their results showed that the teacher's multimodal CF enhanced enjoyment by drawing learners' attention to oral errors, making them aware of the correct linguistic form, and putting a new premium on CF. As feedback from the teachers enhances FLE, it is imperative to focus on suitable teaching approaches that enhance individual learners' FLE. Evidence shows that OCF facilitates language teaching and learning (Ha et al., 2021; Li, 2010; Lyster et al., 2013; Sato & Loewen, 2018). However, to the best of my knowledge, no study has implemented the OCF intervention in a CFL context to investigate the relationship between learners' enjoyment enhancement and their FL achievement.

3. Research Questions

This study aims to address the following three research questions:

1.Do the FLE levels of CFL learners change before and after receiving oral CF?

2.Does the FLE level affect the foreign language achievement (FLA) of CFL learners following OCF? If

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yes, does FLE have a significant positive association with FLA?

3.What types of OCF methods contribute to CFL learners' enjoyment?

4. Methods

4.1 Participants

This study involved 65 CFL learners (6 males and 59 females) who were all first-year international postgraduate students at a public university in Hubei Province. They voluntarily participated in this study. Before participating, the participants had completed at least eight months of comprehensive online Chinese courses. In terms of Chinese learning, they are at the initial stage. Most were from South Asia (26, 19, and 14 were from Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, respectively), while a few were from South Africa (6 were from Zambia). These students held a Master's degree or Ph. D. in various disciplines, including Civil Engineering, Economics, and Medicine. Their ages varied from 26 to 33 years (M = 29. 82, SD = 1. 87). Apart from the students, one Chinese teacher participated in this study.

4.2 Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used to collect the research data (Ellis et al., 2001).

4.2.1 Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale

Recent research has successfully employed Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2014) Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES) and its Chinese version to evaluate L2 learners' enjoyment levels (Dewaele & Li, 2020; Jin & Zhang, 2021; Li et al., 2018; Wang & Jiang, 2021; Zhang & Tsung, 2021). For this study's questionnaire data collection, the author modified the FLES, which consists of 19 positive statements from the original FLES, to inquire whether participants enjoyed their FL classes. To conform to the specific teaching background of this survey, the term "FL" was substituted with "Chinese" in items 2, 6, 7, and 11 of the original FLES, and the scale was renamed the Chinese Language Enjoyment Scale (CLES). The initial CLES was pilot-tested with 29 international postgraduates in their first year from a single Chinese class to assess its reliability and validity; this sample differed from the present sample. In terms of age, sex, educational degree, nationality, and Chinese proficiency level, the 29 international students were comparable to this study's target participants.

In the pilot study, the alpha reliability for the 19-item CLES was 0. 842. In this study, both the pre-test and post-test results of CLES were highly reliable (experimental group: 0. 800 and 0. 775; control group: 0. 802 and 0. 827, respectively), demonstrating that the measuring instrument possessed a high degree of internal uniformity (DeVellis, 1991; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). It comprised two parts (Appendix A). The purpose of part one was to collect demographic information about international postgraduate students, including sex, age, nationality, major, level of education, and experience in learning Chinese. Part two comprised 19 declarative statements designed to elicit participants' responses. Based on the participants' FL learning experience, the CLES employed a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher CLES scores are correlated with higher enjoyment of Chinese language learning and vice versa.

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4.2.2 Foreign language achievement

An oral production task (OPT) was adopted to investigate participants' FLAin FL. Two different topics of similar difficulty were considered at the pre-and post-test stages. For this task, participants were requested to introduce their family " 介绍家庭 " and discuss their hobbies " 兴趣爱好 " in Chinese. Before the OCF intervention, the pre-test was conducted to determine the participants' beginning level of linguistic competence. The post-test was administered to compare the FLA of the two groups after Chinese online classes. First, the author shared the testing objective and form with all the participants before obtaining their oral consent to record their responses.The OPTs of all participants were recorded, assessed, and transcribed. For the OPT, five Chinese teachers with several years of experience as CFL teachers at public universities administered a comprehensive assessment of the FLA of international students using Likert-type scales with equal-appearing intervals (5 points: perfect; 4 points: excellent; 3 points: quite good; 2 points: not very good; and 1 point: poor). A similar assessment was originally used by Kralova et al. (2017). The five Chinese teachers' assessments were administered separately in five quiet classrooms.

4.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain first-hand materials and enhance the credibility and quality of the questionnaire items (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Some interviewees from the experimental group who were willing to continue participating in the semi-structured interview were selected. They were recruited from diverse backgrounds (ages, nationalities, and sex) to ensure sample diversity. The six recruited interviewees (one male and five female students) were from different countries: one from Vietnam, two from Cambodia, two from Laos, and one from Zambia. Their average age was 30. 33 (SD = 2. 251) years. However, the Chinese teacher was unavailable for interviews because of his tight work schedule. Each interview was recorded via social media software (e. g., WeChat) and transcribed. The six interviewees were inspired to recall and fully describe their positive emotional experiences while learning Chinese. Relevant questions focused primarily on whether receiving OCF for phonological, lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic errors was enjoyable and whether OCF facilitates Chinese language learning. To prompt participants to describe their enjoyable moments in the Chinese classes, the author formulated several protocol questions in semi-structured interviews, including the following:

1.Do you believe the OCF from your Chinese teachers enhances your enjoyment?

2.Can enjoyment boost your Chinese proficiency after receiving OCF?

3.What patterns of OCF on phonological, lexical, grammatical, or pragmatic errors can produce more enjoyable moments?

4.3 Procedure

The author initially invited two Chinese teachers and 75 postgraduate students who were in their first year at a public university in China's Hubei Province via the social networking software platforms of the renowned Chinese company,Tencent, such as WeChat and QQ groups. Although most responded positively and enthusiastically, only one novice teacher with approximately two years of Chinese teaching experience and

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65 international students eventually accepted the invitation. Afterward, the author sent an information letter to these potential participants, which included an explanation of the research purpose, a formal invitation, and an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity (Cohen et al., 2011). Additionally, all participants were notified that their responses to the CLES would be used exclusively for this research, and the data were unrelated to their course grades. Following informed consent, all student participants completed the CLES through an online survey platform.

After completing the CLES, the sample (N=65) was randomly divided into the experimental and control groups comprising 34 and 31 students, respectively. Both groups attended Chinese online classes for two weeks (two sessions per week, each lasting 45 min). Only participants in the experimental group received OCF from the Chinese teacher when they made errors. Before the first session, the teacher explained the objective of providing OCF to improve Chinese learning for the experimental group's participants. Moreover, various OCF methods were presented using specific examples. The key rationale for doing so was that OCF might promote language learning, provided that both teachers and learners understand the main purpose of OCF and how teachers respond to the errors made by the learners (Ellis, 2009; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). The teacher then discussed the fixed theme with participants in both groups. None of the students in the control group received the teacher's OCF when they made oral errors.

Semi-structured interviews were ultimately used to collect qualitative data. The interviews were conducted via Wechat in Chinese. Six interviews with members of the experimental group were recorded and then transcribed instantly. One week after the OCF intervention, they were each interviewed for 6 min separately. Before conducting individual interviews, the interviewees were provided with the interview questions in advance to enable them to reflect upon the questions and prepare well to recall their real sentiments regarding the Chinese classes.

This study was conducted in four phases:

Pre-test: The CLES was administered online, and international students' FLA was assessed in both the experimental and control groups.

Intervention: Chinese language practices were provided to both groups for 4 weeks (a total of 6hours). However, only the experimental group received the OCF intervention for 4 weeks.

Post-test: The CLES was administered online and FLA was assessed both in the experimental and control groups.

Semi-structured interview: Six students from different countries were recruited to participate online in a semi-structured interview.

4.4 Data analysis

Primary data were analyzed in three phases. Most quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 26. 0. In the first phase, descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean scores of the questionnaire data. Moreover, the Wilcoxon signed rank test was used to analyze differences in CFL learners' FLE levels in the experimental and control groups before and after providing OCF, and the Wilcoxon rank sum test (RQ1) was used to

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validate the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in both groups. Subsequently, a sequence of non-parametric tests was conducted.

The second phase examined whether the experimental group's FLA increased after the OCF intervention and analyzed the positive relationship between FLE and FLA (RQ2). In the third phase, the quantitative findings from six interviewees were subjected to thematic analysis, yielding unique insights into which types of OCF could result in greater enjoyment and whether teachers' OCF can enhance CFL learners' enjoyment in FL learning (RQ3). Three professors with a Ph. D. in Chinese education or linguistics reexamined these coded materials multiple times to ensure adequate categorization and no missed responses. Specifically, the author initially coded the interviewees' positive responses to the OCF provided by their Chinese teachers, line by line. Similar codes or those with identical properties were integrated into the same categories. After the termination of this procedure, the author consulted these three professors to address any discrepancies and then adjusted the categorization accordingly.

5. Results

5.1 RQ1: Changes in CFL learners' FLE level before and after OCF intervention

The study examined whether the FLE level of beginning-level CFL learners changed significantly over time for both experimental and control groups and whether the FLE levels changed more in the experimental group than in the control group after receiving the Chinese teacher's feedback (RQ1).

Table 1 presents the mean values of CFL learners' self-reported CLES on the pre-test and post-test for both experimental and control groups. Next, the means of their FLE levels on the pre-test and post-test were compared using the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed rank test, which indicated that the differences in CLES scores were statistically significant for the experimental group ($p = .000 < 0.05$) but not for the control group ($p = .277 > 0.05$).

Table 1. Chinese Language Enjoyment Scale scores on pre-test and post-test

Group		Mean	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-Tailed)
Experimental group (N = 34)	Pre-test	72.79	-4.529	0.000
	Post-test	78.44		
Control group (N = 31)	Pre-test	72.61	-1.088	0.277
	Post-test	73. 06		

As displayed in Table 2, the Wilcoxon rank sum test validates the difference in CLES scores between the two groups. The participants' scores in the experimental and control groups do not appear to change significantly in the pre-test ($p = .879 > 0.05$). In contrast, there is a noticeable change in the post-test ($p = .000$). As shown in Figure 1, mean comparisons demonstrate that the experimental group's pre-test FLE level is comparable to that of the control group in the pre-test, whereas the post-test scores differ. The experimental group's self-reported FLE levels changed considerably from pre-test to post-test, proving that the Chinese teacher's OCF yields higher enjoyment levels. Although there was a small change in FLE levels in the control group,

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who did not receive the OCF intervention, the fluctuations were insignificant.

Table 2. Chinese Language Enjoyment Scale differences between the experimental and control groups

	Pre-test				Post-test			
	U	W	Z	*p*	U	W	Z	*p*
Experimental group vs. control group	515.5	1011.5	-0.152	0.879	78	574	-5.917	0.000

Figure 1 . Differences in Chinese Language Enjoyment Scale scores for the experimental and control groups.

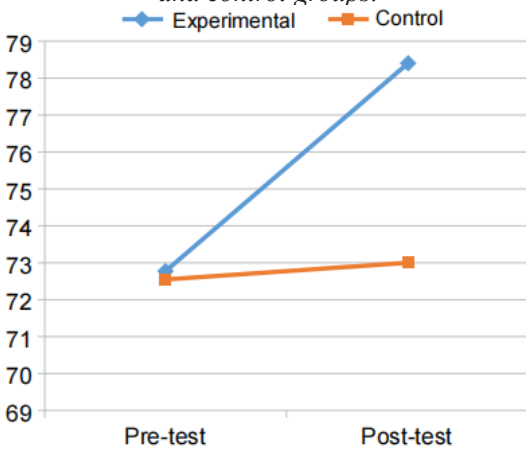
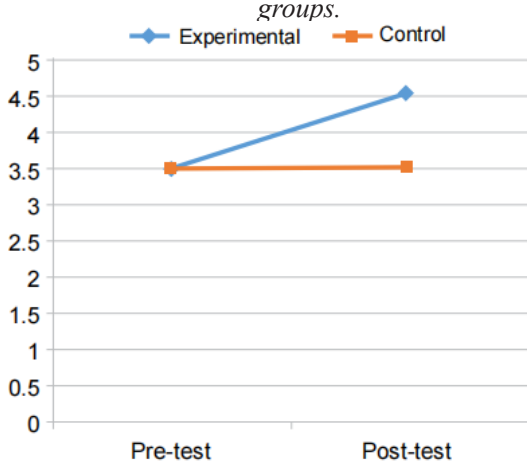


Figure 2. Differences in foreign language achievement scores for the experimental and control groups.



5.2 RQ2: Correlation between FLE and FLA Before and After OCF Intervention

Each rater assigned an FLA score to each participant. The Friedman Non-Parametric Test (α= 0. 05, df = 4) was utilized to conduct reliability analyses, and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Internal reliability of foreign language achievement rating

	Experimental group (N = 34)		Control group (N = 31)	
	Q	*p*	Q	*p*
Pre-test	42.324	0.128	31.759	0.379
Post-test	26.577	0.738	20.331	0.882

The p-values of the experimental and control groups were greater than 0. 05 in the pre- and post-test, indicating that the five raters' scores gained adequate internal consistency. Then, the average scores of both groups on the pre-test and post-test were calculated by the average of five ratings (Table 4).

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Table 4. Foreign language achievement scoring in the pre-test and post-test

Pre-test	Experimental group				
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5
	3.353	3.529	3.441	3.353	3.735
	Average score: 3.482				
	Control group				
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5
	3.516	3.484	3.419	3.581	3.516
	Average score: 3.503				
Post-test	Experimental group				
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5
	4.412	4.500	4.588	4.618	4.647
	Average score: 4.553				
	Control group				
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Rater 5
	3.613	3.581	3.548	3.452	3.419
	Average score: 3.523				

According to the Wilcoxon signed rank test, the FLA increased significantly in the experimental group (p =.000, z = -5. 113, N = 34), whereas it increased marginally in the control group (p =. 439, z = -0. 775, N = 31). As shown in Table 5, the Wilcoxon rank sum test indicates that for the pre-test, the change in the FLA for experimental and control groups was similar (p> 0. 05); however, for the post-test, the FLA in both groups changed significantly (p< 0. 05). Figure 2 compares the pre- and post-test mean FLA scores of the experimental and control groups. The mean of Chinese teachers' evaluations on the pre-test indicated an insignificant change, whereas the experimental group's post-test mean score increased considerably.

Table 5. Foreign language achievement differences between the experimental and control groups.

	Pre-test				Post-test			
	U	W	Z	*p*	U	W	Z	*p*
Experimental group vs. control group	471	967	-0.770	0.441	9.5	505.5	-6.907	0.000

The relationship between FLE and FLA in both the pre-test and post-test was explored using Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients. As shown in Table 6, during the post-test, a positive correlation of strong intensity ($0.7 < |r| \leq 0.9$) and a negative correlation within the low level ($0 < |r| \leq 0.3$) were found between the FLE questionnaire and FLA in the experimental and control groups, respectively. This finding indicates that the control group's FLE levels did not statistically correlate with their FLA in the post-test. The correlation analysis findings indicate that OCF intervention was an effective technique that positively influenced

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learners' FL performance.

Table 6. Correlations between foreign language enjoyment and foreign language achievement

Pre-test	Experimental group	Post-test	Experimental group
	-0.106		0.844
	Control group		Control group
	0.08		-0.089

5.3 RQ3: OCF affects CFL learners' positive emotions

Six CFL learners were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews, and they shared their perspectives after implementing OCF techniques. After scrutinizing and classifying these participants' responses, this study revealed that they agreed with the provision of OCF. The OCF provided by the Chinese teacher enhanced enjoyment when learning Chinese.

I like it when my Chinese teacher corrects my mistakes. I gladly accept more corrections from our teacher as it is the only way to improve my Chinese. My Chinese teacher is knowledgeable and usually encourages us to communicate with her. She is also constantly offering feedback comfortably. Regarding myself, my enjoyment increases when I receive oral corrective feedback. (International learner participant 3's interview, June 3, 2022)

My Chinese teacher once told me that accepting correction was necessary to learn Chinese well. Frankly, I can make great progress through corrective feedback and learn a lot in my Chinese learning, especially new sentence patterns or new words. (International learner participant 6's interview, June 1, 2022)

The teachers' corrections can be inspiring and make learning enjoyable. With teachers' feedback, we are confident enough to speak Chinese because our teachers immediately correct our mistakes when we make them. This enables teachers to build a good classroom environment and makes us feel engaged in the Chinese class. Such an online class makes us feel a sense of belonging and enjoy learning Chinese. (International learner participant 1's interview, June 1, 2022)

After receiving OCF for Chinese skills, some learners reported great progress. CFL learners more often emphasized specific domains, including pronunciation, vocabulary, pragmatics, grammar, listening, reading, and speaking. Regarding speaking and reading, CFL learners frequently mentioned that they could utilize vocabulary and sentence patterns more effectively to express sentences correctly after receiving feedback several times on diverse errors.

Reading an essay written in pinyin was challenging for me when I first began learning Chinese. I could only read one or two sentences slowly. Now I can speak Chinese with proper pronunciation and even attempt to experiment with vocabulary and sentence structures to express my feelings and thoughts. To improve my Chinese language competence in various aspects, including pronunciation, grammar, or pragmatics, my Chinese teachers were kind enough to frequently correct me when I made mistakes. With some achievements, I can continue studying Chinese in such an enjoyable manner. (International learner participant 1's interview,

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June 2, 2022)

My peers or teachers occasionally have difficulty comprehending my accent. Nonetheless, my Chinese speaking skills improved when they corrected my mispronunciation. I feel that I am confident in my pronunciation because of my peers' and teachers' feedback. (International learner participant 2's interview, June 5, 2022)

My Chinese skills are poor. After embracing the teachers' feedback, I felt excited and began to express myself in Chinese. I am proud when I express a whole sentence fluently and correctly without any mistakes. Also, I am grateful to my Chinese teachers for my great progress. (International learner participant 5's interview, June 5, 2022)

Although OCF is not the most effective teaching strategy for all learners, many CFL learners emphasized being fond of this technique and used it to correct their incorrect utterances. Given that four CFL learners felt they had no control over their tone when speaking or responding to certain questions in Chinese, OCF may be a useful technique to avoid repetitive errors.

I believe that oral corrective feedback can facilitate my learning of Chinese language, especially for tone. It is difficult for foreign language learners to learn tone because Chinese has a unique phonetic rule for it. After resolving the problem of tone through frequent feedback treatment, I will likely find the experience of learning Chinese to be more pleasant. (International learner participant 1's interview, June 1, 2022)

Speaking was challenging for me when I first began learning Chinese. I am not afraid to express myself in Chinese because of the frequent feedback on my mispronunciation and ungrammatical errors by my kind Chinese teacher. I am not afraid to express myself in Chinese mainly due to her. After learning Chinese for some time, many people complimented my Chinese proficiency. Surprisingly, each feedback from my Chinese teacher created enjoyment because we could memorize or consolidate the correct pronunciation and grammar, and further develop our Chinese proficiency within a short period. (International learner participant 4's interview, June 1, 2022)

When I had been learning Chinese for a few months, I discovered that I could read short texts freely based on pinyin and use some simple words to construct a correct sentence. I am pleased to find that pinyin is easy for me, thanks to corrections made by my Chinese teachers. To an extent, their feedback may resolve my pronunciation problems. (International learner participant 2's interview, June 5, 2022)

I distinctly recall that the first time I received feedback from my Chinese teacher was exciting and enjoyable because I was aware of their differences when I encountered the same mistakes againor believed I could avoid them. That is why I believed that the teacher's feedback could boost my enjoyment when learning Chinese. (International learner participant 3's interview, June 1, 2022)

Additionally, various OCF methods enhanced enjoyment, especially when provided directly. According to Lyster and Ranta's (1997) influential work, the teacher should provide the correct linguistic form and inform students of their errors. Regarding CFL learners' responses in this respect, explicit corrections were the most immediate and helpful, even though they interrupted their conversation. Importantly, students stated that explicit correction should be provided when linguistic errors cause misunderstanding.

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I was unfamiliar with all the grammar and pronunciation rules when I began learning Chinese. Whenever I make phonological or grammatical errors, I need my Chinese teachers to point them out and immediately correct them. Though my words are jumbled, I shall not be upset. Indeed, we can use this opportunity to review correct grammar and pronunciation with our teachers. (International learner participant 1's interview, June 3, 2022)

Regarding the preferred OCF method, two participants reported that metalinguistic feedback allowed them to understand the deeper reasons for some linguistic errors. They mentioned that their teachers provided them with some basic Chinese language knowledge.

Other people could not understand me when I said "我长得很长" (I am very long). One of the Chinese teachers with extensive teaching experience corrected this sentence by explaining that when describing the height of a person, we should say "我长得很高" (I am very tall). I am pleased I learned this idiomatic usage. (International learner participant 4's interview, June 5, 2022)

Other learners stated that using recasts during specific teaching tasks could not interrupt the natural flow of their conversation. Meanwhile, metalinguistic feedback provided elaborate explanations for their inaccurate utterance following recasting. Combining recasts and metalinguistic feedback may, therefore, be beneficial for beginners of Chinese.

As Chinese is one of the most complex languages, the proper way to learn it as a foreign language does not involve memorizing some words and grammatical rules but applying them in reality. However, we often make mistakes when speaking Chinese. In this regard, I hope our Chinese teachers will remain patient to help us correct our mistakes and provide detailed explanations. As you are aware, it is difficult for us to discover Chinese idiomatic usage on our own. (International learner participant 3's interview, June 6, 2022)

6 Discussion

Recent research has demonstrated the favorable benefits of FLE on FL learning and has advocated for additional studies on enhancing FLE. This study examined the efficacy of OCF intervention in a Chinese online class for boosting learners' FLE levels. The Wilcoxon rank sum test revealed no significant change in both experimental and control groups' FLE levels in the pre-test. CFL learners in experimental groups had higher FLE levels after the OCF intervention than those in control groups with no feedback in the post-test, indicating that teachers' OCF can improve CFL learners' FLE. Although the increase was not evident in the control group, CFL learners' FLE levels increased slightly after two weeks. This was probably because teachers created a harmonious teaching atmosphere and surpassed the traditional didactic techniques, such as role-play, reviewing movies, telling stories, and discussion, in the Chinese online classes. Another possible explanation is that participating in these activities may promote learners' sense of belonging and engagement among learners, thereby motivating their enjoyment in an online Chinese learning setting (Wang & Jiang, 2021; Zhang & Tsung, 2021). In this regard, earlier research on FLE has demonstrated some similarities (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Fang & Tang, 2021; Tong & Tsung, 2020). This also confirmed the findings of Jiang and Dewaele (2019) and Dewaele et al. (2018), who discovered that some innovative and meaningful teaching activities could increase learners' FLE. Further, a favorable classroom atmosphere can facilitate learners'

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FLE, especially when teachers are positive, supportive, and respectful toward learners. Moreover, teachers can enhance learners' positive emotions by encouraging increased engagement in various teaching activities (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014).

The findings also demonstrated that the experimental group's FLE significantly increased after the OCF intervention. Teachers' OCF enhanced learners' FLE levels. This finding corroborated Green's (1993) hypothesis that positive emotions are associated with effective teaching techniques. In other words, the OCF technique may be laid in FLE enhancement, dovetailing with Shirvan et al.'s (2021) findings. They discovered that teachers could assist learners with lower FLE levels in enhancing their enjoyable moments in a friendly manner by employing teaching techniques, such as CF. The findings suggest that CF delivered by teachers can be a helpful teaching approach for FLE enhancement, supporting studies on positive psychology that emphasize some important constructs: confirming the indispensable role of teachers in FL learning (Shirvan et al., 2021; Fang & Tang, 2021), highlighting students' enjoyable learning experiences associated with teachers' inspiring and sympathetic attitude toward their students by providing helpful feedback and a positive assessment (Li et al., 2018), and underscoring teachers' various non-traditional teaching activities and professional guidance in the L2 learning process related to students' FLE in online Chinese courses (Wang & Jiang, 2021).

The CFL learners in the experimental group in this study had a mean FLE score of 4. 128, which was significantly higher than that of the international students examined by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) and the Chinese EFL students examined by Fang and Tang (2021), Jin and Zhang (2021), and Li et al. (2018). Compared with the previous four studies wherein the majority of participants learned English as an FL, followed by French, Spanish, German, and other languages, the possible explanation for significantly higher FLE in this study may be that the Chinese language and culture itself may arouse learners' higher FLE levels, which is consistent with the findings of De Smet and Mettewie (2018), who discovered that different target languages could affect language learners' emotions in different ways. In contrast, Li (2020) revealed that numerous FL learners experienced minimal enjoyment in English learning. The mean scores of these learners' FLE (mean for each item: M = 3. 12) were much lower than those of international samples in both the experimental and control groups (where the mean scores for each item were M = 3. 831 and M = 3. 822, respectively). The current study reported these findings before using the instructional technique intervention. They coincided with the result that international participants experienced higher positive emotions than those reported by Chinese FL learners (MacIntyre et al., 2019). We must continue exploring deeper reasons why international students thrive in Chinese learning, even though the precise reasons for the considerable discrepancies may be multidimensional and complex. Indeed, many CFL learners are required to achieve good Chinese proficiency and obtain the corresponding HSK certificate in the first academic year. Thus, it would be more enjoyable if they had a strong motivation for learning Chinese and sufficient internal impetus to attain the final learning objectives.

Further comparison with other research on international student participants' Chinese learning reveals that the mean scores of this study's participants are slightly higher than those of CSL learners, as testified by Chen et al. (2021) and Zhang and Tsung (2021), whose studies reported mean scores of 4. 03 and 4. 04, respectively. Because of the outbreak of the pandemic, all international students in the present study may have learned Chinese by attending virtual online classes in their home countries, and this was confirmed by the findings

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of Wang and Jiang (2021), who stated that participants' geological location and learning context were strong predictors of FLE. The relatively virtual teaching environment may encourage a close bond between teachers and learners. Moreover, another possible explanation for the results could be that the CFL learners in this study were international postgraduate students with an average age of 29.8 years, confirming the findings of Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014); they found that FLE levels varied by age group, with older learners experiencing higher FLE levels.

The CFL learners in this study were all postgraduate students with academic pressure and clear learning objectives, dovetailing with the result that learners' motivation and emotions are intimately intertwined in the course of learning (Pavelescu, 2019). Therefore, on the basis of the results of Shirvan et al. (2021), we can conjecture that another explanation that may contribute to the enhancement of FLE could be their strong learning motivation. Similar to international students learning Chinese in Chen et al.'s (2021) and Wang and Jiang's (2021) studies on learners who had studied Chinese for less than six months and one year, respectively, CFL learners in this study who had learned Chinese for less than eight months also demonstrated high levels of FLE. As indicated in earlier studies (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019), learners at a lower level were most likely to experience more enjoyment. In terms of whether the predictive power of FLE affected language achievement among learners with lower proficiency levels, unlike Li et al.'s (2020) findings, which revealed an insignificant relationship between EFL learners' FLE levels and their language performance, this study's results demonstrated that there was a positive correlation between CFL learners' FLE and their FLA, suggesting that beginners' FLE seems to be capable of predicting language achievement. The effective OCF intervention could be the potential reason for discrepancies in this research results.

Some researchers have revealed strong positive correlations between FLE and FLA based on findings from the previous decade. In alignment with the findings of Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018), who revealed a significant positive relationship between FLE and FL performance, and Li et al. (2020), who found that learners with higher FLE levels performed better, correlation analyses in the current study found that CFL learners' FL performance was positively linked to their FLE levels in the Chinese online learning setting. This conclusion contradicts past research that revealed no significant correlation between learners' actual performance and FLE (Chen et al., 2021; Wang & Jiang, 2021) and showed that learners in the low-achievement group experienced the least FLE (Li et al., 2020). Compared with this study, prior research did not have access to a helpful teaching approach from the FL teachers. However, in this study, the OCF intervention was employed as an effective teaching approach in the experimental group participants' Chinese classes. CFL learners in the experimental group were provided with various OCF methods to aid in dealing with their linguistic errors, which established a solid foundation for boosting FLA. Even though learners were not provided with their preferred methods, these CFL learners' levels of FLE increased significantly, consistent with Shirvan et al. (2021). It can be hypothesized that FL learners with lower FLE levels could enhance their FLE levels with the support and feedback of their friendly teachers.

Unlike Lee's (2016) study, where clarification requests resulted in L2 learners' language anxiety, this study indicated that explicit corrections and recasts with metalinguistic feedback could bring more enjoyment. From the participants' responses, this study found that explicit correction was the most frequently mentioned type of OCF and the most desired to be provided for different types of linguistic errors in pronunciation, vo-

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cabulary, and grammar. These findings partly echo Ha et al. (2021), who found that students with elementary or intermediate proficiency levels had a positive attitude toward explicit correction. According to Roothooft and Breeze's (2016) study, students who received explicit corrections and metalinguistic feedback also experienced positive emotions, such as happiness or gratitude; however, this is inconsistent with the findings by Lee (2013), who indicated that adult ESL learners with advanced proficiency levels favored explicit correction. Rather than being embarrassed or frustrated when receiving corrections from their teachers directly, elementary-level learners in this study valued the opportunities to address their linguistic errors during teacher–learner interactions. Participants identified numerous potential explanations for this pattern. First, explicit correction seemed clear and immediate, as CFL learners knew they had obtained the correct form for their errors. Second, some learners could consolidate their knowledge of Chinese through their teachers' corrections. Unlike OCF in clarification requests, they effortlessly understood teachers' real intentions, which was enjoyable.

CFL learners' substantial preferences for recasts with metalinguistic feedback toward unfamiliar grammatical points or basic expressions are partly consistent with Papangkorn (2015) and Yang (2016). These findings echo the results of Kaivanpanah et al. (2015), which demonstrated that FL learners supported those two methods. All interviewees emphasized that OCF facilitates their Chinese learning and that they enjoy their teachers' OCF. This finding supported Ha et al.'s (2021) hypothesis that OCF may be helpful in FL learning. In addition, according to Dewaele and Mercer (2018), learners' perceptions and enjoyment would reinforce their focus and facilitate comprehensible input. This study revealed that FLE caused by teachers' OCF might enhance the FLA of beginning CFL learners and that explicit correction and recasting with metalinguistic feedback are regarded as effective methods for correcting phonological, lexical, and grammatical errors for CFL learners, indicating the positive impact of teachers' OCF on FL learning. The intervention technique may be strengthened and better regulated when the enjoyment of FL learners increasesbecause of their teachers' OCF. This indicates that learners' enjoyment generated by OCF facilitates the establishment and extraction of useful resources in FL learning and the active absorption of knowledge from teachers' provision of the OCF technique.

7 Conclusions

This study provides empirical evidence for the enjoyment of Chinese learning among adult CFL learners, namely international students. It builds on the FLE literature (Chen et al., 2021; Wang & Jiang, 2021; Zhang & Tsung, 2021). Prior studies have focused solely on diverse factor structures and have not considered particular teaching techniques that could bring about fluctuations capable of enhancing learners' enjoyment in FL learning. Unlike prior research,this study's key contribution involves verifying the positive correlation between CFL learners' FLE levels and their achievement in Chinese after providing OCF. The findings revealed that CFL learners in the experimental group had higher FLE levels after receiving OCF when compared with the control group and that the experimental group learners' Chinese performance was enhanced. Although the collected data should be refined and further validated, there is significant evidence that FLE-relevant aspects of OCF in Chinese education should be widely disseminated.

In light of our findings and consistent with Zhang and Tsung (2021), we propose that teachers should assist

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learners develop a sense of fulfillment and harmonious social bonds, such as teacher–student relationships, when FL learners are immersed in different cultural contexts or learning environments. Further, teachers-centered variables, such as providing OCF in a friendly manner, significantly contribute to FLE enhancement. FL teachers should be empowered with theoretical knowledge about the advantages of enjoyment and practical skills of OCF provision. When CFL learners produce FLE because of various OCF interventions, the effects of OCF could be strengthened, and the impact on learners' FLE levels could be enhanced and better regulated. These findings imply that OCF, as an effective pedagogical intervention, enhances positive emotions leading to increased enjoyment for FL learners. Taken together, this study's findings provide additional empirical evidence for Green's (1993) general guidelines for enhancing enjoyment in language learning. More specifically, Green (1993, p. 3) proposes Possible relationships between the reported enjoyableness and the perceived effectiveness of different kinds of activities and techniques in order to discover whether students agree with those of us who believe that positive affect and effective teaching do indeed go hand in hand.

Three main limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, all the participants were postgraduate students. It remains unclear whether OCF would directly affect FLE and FLA of undergraduates and postgraduates of various age groups. Second, all participants in this study were from underdeveloped countries in South Africa and South Asia. Thus, these learners were not likely to represent CFL learners worldwide, particularly those from developed countries. Third, almost all participants were female students who may be more inclined than male students to demonstrate positive emotions during FL learning (Dewaele et al., 2016; Wang & Jiang, 2021). This may leave space for male participants to experience fluctuations in enjoyment levels during the OCF intervention. Whether the teachers' OCF technique generates slighter or considerable results among male learners remains uncertain. Future research should increase the number of CFL learners with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds and expand the sample size to recruit more participants. It must also include a variety of interventions for L2 or FL learners with distinct factors to boost learners' enjoyment in the process of FL learning.

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