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The Interrelationship Between Foreign Language Enjoyment, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Beliefs about Language Learning

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Emotions are of great importance for second language (L2) learning and achievement (Dewaele & Li 2018). However, past research on L2 learning emotions has traditionally focused on negative emotions, especially language anxiety (Dewaele & Li 2018). The introduction of Positive Psychology in second language acquisition (SLA) research in 2012 (MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012) encouraged researchers to look beyond anxiety for a wide range of diverse L2 emotions. Positive and negative classroom emotions and their complex and dynamic interactions have been examined from various linguistic, educational and sociocultural contexts (Dewaele & Li 2018). However, little is known about the emotional experiences of the learners who learn Chinese as a foreign language. In addition, the relationship between emotion and cognitive individual differences is largely unaddressed in SLA literature. The present mixed-method study examines whether and to what extent learners' FLE and FLA are linked to their beliefs about language learning as well as a range of learner variables. A group of 107 British university students of Chinese as a Foreign Language completed the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (Horwitz 1988) and the short forms of the FLE scale (Botes et al., 2021) and the FLCAS scale (Horwitz et al., 1986), as well as the Self-perceived Linguistic Confidence Scale (SLCS, Pyun et al., 2014). Ten of them later participated in a one-to-one online semi-structured interview. Statistical analyses revealed that higher levels of FLE and lower levels of FLCA were linked to higher scores on learners' beliefs in their ability in learning Chinese well and their self-perceived linguistic confidence. Gender, course levels and study abroad experience had no effect on learners' levels of FLE and FLCA. The qualitative data revealed a more nuanced picture of learners' emotional experiences of learning Chinese. Their FLE mainly came from the sense of achievement, teachers' flexibility in teaching Chinese and peer students' emotional support. Their FLCA originated from the difficulty of Mandarin Chinese, peer pressure and their belief that aptitude is required to learn languages well.