

Enjoyment, Anxiety, and Boredom in Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language: Their Predictive Roles in Academic Achievement

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คำสำคัญ: ความเพลิดเพลิน, ความวิตกกังวล, ความเบื่อหน่าย, ภาษาจีนในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ, ผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน

Abstract

Background and Objectives: Emotion research in L2 acquisition has shifted from solely focusing on foreign language anxiety (FLA) to exploring a range of emotions, including foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language boredom (FLB). Studies, mainly with L2 English learners, consistently show FLE positively and FLA/FLB negatively predicting academic achievement. However, research on the learning emotions of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) learners remains limited, particularly concerning emotions beyond anxiety among Thai learners. Thailand is a key context for CFL, and its trilingual university students are the main learning group. This gap in knowledge, especially regarding FLE and FLB, hinders effective teaching interventions. This research aims to investigate the status of the three core emotions (FLE, FLA, and FLB) among Thai trilingual CFL learners and their predictive effects on overall academic achievement in their Chinese Comprehensive course. The goal is to expand the research base and provide insights for improving CFL teaching effectiveness in Thailand.

Methods: Eighty Thai trilingual learners of CFL in their Advanced Chinese course were surveyed using adapted scales for FLE, FLA, and FLB. SPSS 23 and SPSSPRO were used for reliability, validity, descriptive, and correlation analysis. Stepwise linear regression assessed the emotions' predictive effect on the students' overall academic achievement.

Results: The learners reported relatively high enjoyment alongside moderate anxiety and boredom, with positive emotions generally outweighing negative ones. Enjoyment was mainly influenced by teachers, while anxiety was most evident in reading and writing tasks. Enjoyment showed a weak positive relationship with academic achievement, whereas anxiety had a moderate negative relationship and boredom a weak negative one. Enjoyment was weakly negatively related to both anxiety and boredom, while anxiety was moderately positively related to boredom. In terms of prediction, enjoyment had a small-to-moderate positive effect on achievement, anxiety had a moderate negative effect, and boredom showed no significant effect.

Application of this study: The findings validate the Control-Value and Broaden-and-Build theories, offering two key applications for teaching advanced Thai CFL learners. Teachers should enhance emotional support and foster a positive classroom climate through affective engagement, positive feedback, and interactive teaching to increase enjoyment and reduce anxiety and boredom. In addition, instructional design should aim to reduce anxiety in order to prevent boredom, through approaches such as sequencing learning activities, providing clear guidance, promoting collaborative learning, and incorporating varied activities. These should be implemented alongside the integration of emotion regulation and authentic assessment, which can help reduce test-related stress, maintain continuity in learning, and promote both language development and emotional well-being.

Conclusions: This research demonstrates that emotions play a significant role in the Chinese language learning achievement of Thai trilingual learners. The participants reported relatively high levels of FLE, while FLA and FLB remained at moderate levels. The findings indicate that enjoyment serves as a facilitating factor in language learning, whereas anxiety exerts a substantial negative influence on academic achievement and is associated with increased levels of boredom. These results reflect that positive and negative emotions do not operate independently but interact dynamically in shaping learners' language learning experiences. Therefore, Chinese language instruction should place greater emphasis on fostering an emotionally supportive learning environment that enhances enjoyment, reduces anxiety, and encourages active learner engagement. Such an approach can contribute not only to improved language achievement but also to the long-term emotional well-being of learners.

บทคัดย่อ

ที่มาและวัตถุประสงค์: งานวิจัยด้านอารมณ์ในการเรียนรู้ภาษาที่สอง (L2) ได้เปลี่ยนจากการมุ่งเน้นเฉพาะความวิตกกังวลทางภาษาต่างประเทศ (FLA) ไปสู่การศึกษาอารมณ์ที่หลากหลายยิ่งขึ้น ซึ่งรวมถึงความเพลิดเพลิน (FLE) และความเบื่อหน่าย (FLB) ในการเรียนภาษาต่างประเทศ ผลการวิจัยที่ผ่านมาซึ่งส่วนใหญ่ดำเนินการวิจัยในกลุ่มผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สอง ชี้ให้เห็นอย่างสอดคล้องว่า FLE มีบทบาทเชิงบวกต่อผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน ขณะที่ FLA และ FLB มีบทบาทเชิงลบ อย่างไรก็ตาม งานวิจัยด้านอารมณ์ในการเรียนภาษาจีนในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศ (CFL) ยังไม่อยู่จำกัด โดยเฉพาะการศึกษาอารมณ์ด้านอื่นนอกเหนือจากความวิตกกังวลในกลุ่มผู้เรียนชาวไทย ทั้งนี้ประเทศไทยมีบริบทสำคัญในการเรียนการสอนภาษาจีน และมีนักศึกษากลุ่มที่เรียนสามภาษาในระดับมหาวิทยาลัยเป็นกลุ่มผู้เรียนหลัก ช่องว่างทางองค์ความรู้ดังกล่าว โดยเฉพาะประเด็น FLE และ FLB ส่งผลต่อการพัฒนาการจัดการเรียนการสอนที่มีประสิทธิภาพ งานวิจัยนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระดับสภาวะของอารมณ์หลักทั้งสาม (FLE, FLA, FLB) ในกลุ่มผู้เรียนภาษาจีนชาวไทยที่สื่อสารได้สามภาษา ตลอดจนวิเคราะห์อิทธิพลเชิงพยากรณ์ของอารมณ์เหล่านี้ต่อผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนรวมในรายวิชาภาษาจีนแบบบูรณาการ เพื่อขยายฐานงานวิจัยและเสนอแนะเชิงลึกเพื่อเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพด้านการจัดการเรียนการสอนภาษาจีนในประเทศไทย

วิธีการศึกษา: กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือ ผู้เรียนชาวไทยที่สื่อสารได้สามภาษา จำนวน 80 คน ซึ่งกำลังศึกษาในรายวิชาภาษาจีนระดับสูง โดยใช้แบบสอบถามที่ปรับปรุงจากมาตรวัด FLE, FLA และ FLB วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยโปรแกรม SPSS 23 และ SPSSPRO เพื่อตรวจสอบค่าความเชื่อมั่น ความเที่ยงตรง สถิติเชิงพรรณนา และวิเคราะห์สหสัมพันธ์ นอกจากนี้ยังใช้การวิเคราะห์การถดถอยพหุคูณแบบขั้นตอน เพื่อประเมินอิทธิพลเชิงพยากรณ์ของอารมณ์ที่มีต่อผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนโดยรวมของนักศึกษา

ผลการศึกษา: ผู้เรียนมีความเพลิดเพลินในระดับค่อนข้างสูง ควบคู่ไปกับระดับความวิตกกังวลและความเบื่อหน่ายในระดับปานกลาง โดยอารมณ์เชิงบวกโดยรวมมีสูงกว่าอารมณ์เชิงลบ ความเพลิดเพลินได้รับอิทธิพลหลักจากผู้สอน ในขณะที่ความวิตกกังวลปรากฏชัดเจนที่สุดในกิจกรรมด้านการอ่านและการเขียน ผลการวิเคราะห์พบว่า ความเพลิดเพลินมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกในระดับต่ำกับผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน ขณะที่ความวิตกกังวลมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงลบในระดับปานกลาง และความเบื่อหน่ายมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงลบในระดับต่ำ นอกจากนี้ความเพลิดเพลินมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงลบในระดับต่ำกับทั้งความวิตกกังวลและความเบื่อหน่าย ส่วนความวิตกกังวลมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกในระดับปานกลางกับความเบื่อหน่าย ในด้านการพยากรณ์พบว่า ความเพลิดเพลินมีอิทธิพลเชิงบวกในระดับเล็กน้อยถึงปานกลางต่อผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน ขณะที่ความวิตกกังวลมีอิทธิพลเชิงลบในระดับปานกลาง ส่วนความเบื่อหน่ายไม่มีนัยยะสำคัญในการพยากรณ์

การประยุกต์ใช้: ผลการวิจัยนี้ได้ยืนยันในทฤษฎี Control-Value และ Broaden-and-Build และชี้ให้เห็นแนวทางสำคัญในการจัดการเรียนการสอนสำหรับผู้เรียน CFL ชาวไทยระดับสูงได้ใน 2 ประเด็นหลัก ผู้สอนควรส่งเสริมการสนับสนุนด้านอารมณ์และสร้างบรรยากาศเชิงบวกในชั้นเรียนผ่านการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ การให้ข้อมูลสะท้อนกลับเชิงบวก และการสอนแบบมีส่วนร่วม เพื่อเพิ่มความเพลิดเพลินและลดความวิตกกังวลและความเบื่อหน่าย นอกจากนี้ การออกแบบการเรียนการสอนควรลดความวิตกกังวลเพื่อป้องกันความเบื่อหน่าย อาทิ การจัดลำดับการเรียนรู้ การชี้แนะที่ชัดเจน การเรียนรู้แบบร่วมมือ และกิจกรรมที่หลากหลาย ควบคู่กับการบูรณาการกำกับอารมณ์และการประเมินผลตามสภาพจริง จะช่วยลดความเครียดจากการสอบ รักษาความต่อเนื่องในการเรียนรู้ และส่งเสริมพัฒนาการทั้งทางภาษาและสุขภาวะทางอารมณ์

บทสรุป: ผลการวิจัยนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่าอารมณ์มีบทบาทสำคัญต่อผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนภาษาจีนของผู้เรียนชาวไทยที่สื่อสารได้สามภาษา โดยผู้เรียนมีระดับความเพลิดเพลินในการเรียนค่อนข้างสูง ขณะที่ความวิตกกังวลและความเบื่อหน่ายอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ผลการศึกษาชี้ให้เห็นว่าความเพลิดเพลินเป็นปัจจัยส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ ในขณะที่ความวิตกกังวลเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญที่ส่งผลกระทบต่องานสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนอย่างชัดเจน ทั้งยังมีความเชื่อมโยงกับการเกิดความเบื่อหน่ายในการเรียนภาษาอีกด้วย ข้อค้นพบดังกล่าวสะท้อนว่าอารมณ์เชิงบวกและเชิงลบไม่ได้ทำงานแยกขาดจากกัน แต่มีปฏิสัมพันธ์ร่วมกันในการกำหนดประสบการณ์การเรียนรู้ของผู้เรียน การจัดการเรียนการสอนภาษาจีนจึงควรให้ความสำคัญกับการสร้างบรรยากาศการเรียนรู้ที่ส่งเสริมความเพลิดเพลิน ลดความวิตกกังวล และสนับสนุนการมีส่วนร่วมของผู้เรียน เพื่อพัฒนาทั้งผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางภาษาและสุขภาวะทางอารมณ์อย่างยั่งยืน

Introduction

In recent decades, influenced by emotion research in the fields of Positive Psychology and Educational Psychology, applied linguistics has increasingly recognized the importance of emotions in second language (L2) learning. A noticeable resurgence and shift have occurred in emotion research within the field of L2 acquisition, expanding the research focus

from solely foreign language anxiety (FLA) to a broader range of both positive and negative emotions, thereby initiating a research boom in foreign language emotions (FLE) (Dewaele & Li, 2020; Dewaele et al., 2019; Li & Han, 2022). Given that the goal of foreign language teaching is to enhance learners' language proficiency and academic achievement, and considering the vital role of foreign language emotions in L2 learning, the relationship between foreign language emotions and foreign language academic achievement has become one of the current key focuses in foreign language emotions research. Existing studies, primarily focusing on English L2 learners, have extensively investigated the predictive effect of foreign language emotions on foreign language achievement (Botes, Dewaele, & Greiff, 2020; Dong, 2021; Jin & Zhang, 2021; Dewaele et al., 2023; Li & Han, 2022; Li & Li, 2023). These studies have reached relatively consistent conclusions: FLE positively predicts foreign language achievement, while FLA and foreign language boredom (FLB) negatively predict it.

With China's rapid economic development and significantly increasing international influence, enthusiasm for learning Chinese worldwide has surged (Koh, Hoon, & Haji-Othman, 2021). Chinese has thus become one of the most important foreign languages globally. However, scholars have historically concentrated mainly on the anxiety experienced by international Chinese Foreign Language (CFL) learners and its impact on academic achievement (Qian, 1999; Zhang & Wang, 2002; Zhang & Yang, 2011; Xu, 2018), while studies on enjoyment and boredom have been comparatively rare (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2021). Thailand, being one of the first countries to integrate Chinese into its comprehensive education system (Li, 2015), now regards Chinese as its second-largest foreign language and stands as a typical example of a country with well-developed Chinese language education globally (Zhang & Wu, 2024). Given the pronounced cultural and regional specificity of FLE (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2021) and the varying influence of the target language on L2 learners' emotions (De Smet et al., 2018), research on the learning emotions of Thai CFL learners remains highly limited. This limited research also primarily focuses on FLA (Wu, 2011; Ning & Noparat, 2024; Lin, 2024), with very little coverage of FLE and FLB (Zhao, 2022). This gap inevitably hinders teachers' understanding of learners' emotions and their relationship with academic achievement, thus impeding efforts to enhance the quality and effectiveness of Chinese teaching in Thailand. Therefore, the learning emotions of Thai third-year university CFL students, who represent the main cohort systematically studying the language, and their relationship with academic achievement warrant close attention.

In light of the aforementioned research background, and considering that the Comprehensive Chinese course is a compulsory course where Chinese learners invest the most effort and which best reflects their overall Chinese proficiency, this study takes the learning emotions of Thai CFL university students in this course and their relationship with academic achievement as its research focus. Drawing primarily on the Broaden-and-Build Theory and Control-Value Theory, and employing a survey methodology, this research explores the current status of the three core learning emotions, namely FLE, FLA, and FLB, and their predictive effect on overall academic achievement. This endeavor will help to expand research on the learning emotions of Thai CFL learners, uncover their heterogeneous characteristics, deepen teachers' understanding of these emotions and their impact on achievement, and consequently offer valuable insights for implementing effective pedagogical interventions.

Research Objectives

This study aims to investigate the current levels of FLE, FLA and FLB among Thai trilingual learners of CFL in the Advanced Chinese Comprehensive Chinese course, examine the interrelationships among these three emotions, and determine their predictive effects on learners' overall academic achievement in the course.

Literature Review

1. Theories of Foreign Language Learning Emotions

The Broaden-and-Build Theory, proposed by Fredrickson (2003), is a foundational theory of Positive Psychology and serves as one of the theoretical underpinnings for emotion research in L2 learning. The theory posits that both positive and negative emotions universally exist. Positive emotions broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire, while negative emotions narrow both short-term and long-term resources. Furthermore, positive emotions can mitigate the negative effects of negative emotions. MacIntyre & Gregersen (2012) introduced this theory to the L2 academic community, highlighting that positive emotions facilitate L2 learners in absorbing and constructing linguistic resources, whereas negative emotions constrain the learners' thought-action repertoire.

The Control-Value Theory, another crucial theory in foreign language learning emotion research under the umbrella of Educational Psychology, was proposed by Pekrun (2006) and introduced into L2 education research around 2018 (Li, 2018). This theory defines academic emotions using a three-dimensional structure: valence (positive vs. negative), activation (high vs. low activation), and object focus (outcome-focused vs. process-focused). Additionally, the Control-Value Theory maintains that positive emotions promote learners' cognition, motivation, and behavior, thereby supporting academic achievement, while negative emotions exert a restrictive and debilitating effect.

Drawing on these two theoretical frameworks, the present study conceptualizes FLE, FLA and FLB as key academic emotions in CFL learning. It applies the Broaden-and-Build Theory to explain how positive emotions expand learners' engagement and resource development, and the Control-Value Theory to examine how different emotional dimensions influence learning outcomes. Together, these theories guide the investigation of both the relationships among emotions and their predictive effects on learners' academic achievement.

2. Predictive Effects of Foreign Language Learning Emotions on Academic Achievement

Regarding the predictive effect of FLA on academic achievement, despite inconsistencies in results across numerous prior empirical studies, the meta-analyses conducted successively by Teimouri et al. (2019), Zhang (2019), Botes, Dewaele, & Greiff (2020), and Dong (2021) all confirmed that FLA has a negative predictive effect on foreign language achievement, with a moderate negative correlation between the two. This suggests that the moderate negative predictive effect of FLA on academic achievement has become a fundamental consensus.

Concerning the predictive effect of FLE on academic achievement, existing research indicates that FLE positively predicts foreign language achievement (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Jin & Zhang, 2021; Li & Li, 2023; Saito et al., 2018). The meta-analysis by Botes et al. (2022) also confirmed that FLE significantly and positively predicts foreign language achievement. Li & Han (2022) further found that FLE can also positively predict foreign language achievement in an online learning environment. Furthermore, while Dewaele & Alfawzan (2018), using samples of London secondary school students and Saudi Arabian primary school students, found that the predictive power of FLE was higher than that of FLA, Li, Dewaele, & Jiang (2020), sampling Chinese Grade 11 students, found the opposite, with FLA exhibiting stronger predictive power than FLE. This indicates that the influence of learning emotions on academic achievement may differ across various learner groups, and there is no definitive conclusion regarding the relative strength of the predictive effects of FLE and FLA on academic achievement.

Compared to FLA and FLE, research on the relationship between FLB and academic achievement started relatively late and is limited in number. Li & Li (2023) found a weak correlation between boredom and academic achievement, whereas Li & Han (2022) found the negative correlation to be nearly moderate. Wang et al. (2024), using a meta-analytic

approach, discovered a moderate negative correlation between boredom and academic achievement. A study by Li & Han (2022) found that, in an online learning environment, all three foreign language emotions were significantly correlated with L2 achievement, but only FLA significantly negatively predicted L2 achievement when all three were included in the same model. Conversely, Li & Li (2023), sampling Chinese junior high school students, found that all three FLEs could individually and significantly predict L2 achievement. When combined, FLE exhibited the strongest and most lasting predictive power, followed by FLA, while FLB completely lost its predictive power. This not only suggests that the effects of different emotions on academic achievement are mutually constrained but also reiterates that the academic achievement effect of foreign language emotions may vary across different populations.

Relative to English as a foreign language, research on the relationship between learning emotions and academic achievement for CFL is still very limited, primarily focusing on the relationship between Chinese learning anxiety (CLA) and academic achievement. Qian (1999) and Zhang (2001) both concluded that there was no significant relationship between CLA and final Chinese grades for international students studying in China. However, Zhang & Wang (2002) and Zhang & Yang (2011) both found that CLA had some predictive effect on the total HSK score for international students. A recent study by Lin (2024) focusing on local Thai third-year undergraduates also discovered a strong linear negative correlation between CLA in the Comprehensive Chinese course and their overall academic achievement. Clearly, due to differences in research methods, participants, and the limited number of studies, a consistent conclusion regarding the relationship between CLA and academic achievement is currently difficult to reach.

Given the current state of research, there is a lack of studies focusing on FLE and FLB among CFL learners, as well as their predictive effects on academic achievement. Furthermore, scholars have called for attention to learners' emotional experiences across different courses, classroom segments, and tasks (Dewaele & Li, 2022). Considering that CFL university students represent the primary group systematically learning Chinese, and the Comprehensive Chinese course is a compulsory class where learners invest the most effort and which best reflects their overall Chinese proficiency, this study aims to investigate Thai CFL learners studying the Comprehensive Chinese course. The research intends to address the following three questions:

1. What are the current levels of enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom among Thai CFL learners in the Comprehensive Chinese course?
2. How are these three emotions interrelated?
3. How do these emotions predict learners' overall academic achievement?

Research Methods

1. Participants and Context

This study adopted a random sampling method to recruit 84 Chinese language students (after excluding students of Chinese descent whose mother tongue was Chinese or a Chinese dialect, as well as students whose mother tongue was a minority language) from the first-semester, third-year undergraduate cohort majoring in Chinese Language and Culture at a university in Northern Thailand. The final sample included 80 participants, whose first, second, and third languages were Thai, English, and Chinese, respectively. The sample comprised 7 males (8.75%) and 73 females (91.25%). The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 22 ($\bar{x}$ =20.96, SD =0.62). Regarding self-reported HSK proficiency, 41 participants identified as HSK Level 4 (51.3%), 25 as Level 5 (31.3%), 12 as Level 3 (15%), and 2 as Level 6 (2.5%). At the time of data collection, all participants were enrolled in the Advanced Chinese course, which was a compulsory course in their major. This course is a Comprehensive Chinese course, taught for 6 class hours per week, designed to enhance students integrated Chinese language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation.

2. Research Instruments

This study utilized the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale, the CLA scale, and the foreign language classroom boredom subscale. The context of the original items across all scales was restricted to the Advanced Chinese course. Participants indicated their degree of agreement with the respective items using a five-point Likert scale, where “5” represented “Strongly Agree” and “1” represented “Strongly Disagree.” The following criteria were set for interpreting the mean levels of learning emotions: 1.00–1.49 denotes “Low”; 1.50–2.49 denotes “Relatively Low”; 2.50–3.49 denotes “Moderate”; 3.50–4.49 denotes “Relatively High”; and 4.50–5.00 denotes “Very High.” Furthermore, to ensure the validity of all items, the translation (Chinese to Thai) of the study’s questionnaire was validated by three Thai Chinese language instructors with a doctoral degree. Specific details are as follows:

2.1 Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES): This study adopted the Chinese version of the foreign language enjoyment scale, developed and adapted by Li et al. (2018) based on the original FLES (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Its reliability and validity have been previously verified (Li & Han, 2022; Yu et al., 2024). The scale consists of 11 items across three factors: personal foreign language enjoyment, foreign language environment enjoyment, and foreign language teacher enjoyment. In this study, the overall reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .879$), subscale reliabilities (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .723, .740, .744$), and construct validity ($X^2/df=80.354/38$; CFI=.973; TLI=.962; RMSEA=.067) were satisfactory.

2.2 Chinese Learning Anxiety Scale (CLAS): This study employed the CLAS developed by Luo (2014), which comprises 16 items across four factors: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Across the three rounds of data in this study, the overall reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .938$), subscale reliabilities (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .795, .799, .825$), and construct validity ($X^2/df=53.783/18$; CFI=.965; TLI=.947; RMSEA=.075) were also satisfactory.

2.3 Foreign Language Classroom Boredom Subscale (FLCBS): This scale, used in the study, is a subscale of the FLLBS (Li et al., 2021) and consists of 8 items. Its reliability and validity have been previously verified (Li & Han, 2022). Across the three rounds of data in this study, the scale’s reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .859$) and construct validity ($X^2/df=34.903/12$; CFI=.981; TLI=.978; RMSEA=.076) were satisfactory.

3. Data Collection

The survey was administered one week before the final exams of the first semester of the 2025 academic year (November 18–22, 2025). The research activity received approval from the participants’ college and informed consent was obtained from every participant. Prior to answering the questionnaire, the researcher spent approximately 5 minutes introducing the content and response requirements, while also addressing students’ questions to ensure complete comprehension. All questionnaires were completed honestly and independently by the participants within 20 minutes in class, with the assistance of the respective instructors, using Google Forms.

The academic achievement measure used in this study was the 82-point performance-based component of the Advanced Chinese Comprehensive Chinese course. It comprised scores from dictation (10 points), quizzes (32 points), speaking (8 points), the final report (12 points), and the final examination (20 points). Attendance (5 points) and homework (13 points) were excluded because these components were based on attendance and timely submission, respectively, rather than on evaluated academic performance, and therefore did not meaningfully differentiate participants’ demonstrated Chinese language proficiency. The 82-point achievement score was jointly assessed by the course instructors using a unified scoring standard and incorporated evaluations of participants’ integrated Chinese language abilities, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. This performance-based score was therefore used as the indicator of course-related academic achievement in the present study.

4. Data Analysis

Percentages were used to report participants' demographic information. SPSS 23 was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire scales, and the SPSSPRO online statistical analysis platform was used to test the construct validity of the scales. Furthermore, SPSS 23 was employed for descriptive statistical analysis, correlational analysis, and stepwise linear regression analysis. The strength of the correlation was assessed using the grading parameters set by Cohen (1988): $0.0 < |r| < 0.09$ = No correlation; $0.1 < |r| < 0.3$ = Low correlation; $0.3 < |r| < 0.5$ = Moderate correlation; $0.5 < |r| < 1.0$ = Significant correlation.

Research Results

1. Overall Levels of Learning Emotions

To grasp the overall status and characteristics of self-assessed learning emotions among Thai CFL learners in the Comprehensive Chinese course, descriptive statistical analysis and normality tests were first conducted.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Learning Emotion Levels

Emotion	Dimension	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Min	Max	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
Enjoyment	Personal	3.23	3.48	20	55	-.25 (0.27)	-.53 (0.53)
	Environment	3.34					
	Teacher	3.88					
Anxiety	Listening	2.76	2.89	22	79	-.17 (0.27)	-.61 (0.53)
	Speaking	2.87					
	Reading	2.97					
	Writing	2.95					
Boredom		2.74	0.36	8	38	-.52 (0.27)	-.32 (0.53)

Table 1 indicates that the participants' overall Chinese learning enjoyment level was moderately high ($\bar{X}$ =3.48), while both anxiety ($\bar{X}$ =2.89) and boredom ($\bar{X}$ =2.74) levels were moderate. Overall, the participants' positive emotion level (enjoyment) was markedly higher than their negative emotion levels (anxiety and boredom), suggesting a generally positive affective attitude towards Chinese learning. Furthermore, the standard deviations, minimum, and maximum values suggest significant individual differences in participants' emotional experiences.

Upon classifying the enjoyment emotion into its three factors, the mean scores were as follows. Personal Chinese enjoyment ($\bar{X}$ =3.23), Chinese environment enjoyment ($\bar{X}$ =3.34), and Chinese teacher enjoyment ($\bar{X}$ =3.88). The results show that teacher enjoyment was the highest relatively, while personal enjoyment was the lowest. For anxiety emotion, the mean scores for the four communicative skills were 2.76, 2.87, 2.97, and 2.95, for listening, speaking, reading and, writing respectively. Anxiety for both reading and writing was higher relative to listening and speaking anxiety.

2. Correlation Between Learning Emotions and Overall Academic Achievement

Based on the normality test results (Table 1), Pearson correlation coefficient was used for correlational analysis.

Table 2 Correlation Matrix between Learning Emotions and Overall Academic Achievement

Variable	Enjoyment	Anxiety	Boredom	Overall Academic Achievement
Enjoyment	-	-	-	.272*
Anxiety	-.283**	-	-	-.398**
Boredom	-.296**	.348**	-	-.296**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2 reveals a significant linear correlation between the three academic emotions and overall academic achievement. Enjoyment showed a low positive correlation with achievement ($r = .272$, $p < .05$). Anxiety showed a moderate negative correlation with achievement ($r = -.398$, $p < .01$). Boredom showed a low negative correlation with achievement ($r = -.296$, $p < .01$). Regarding the relationships between the emotions: Enjoyment was negatively correlated with both anxiety ($r = -.283$, $p < .01$) and boredom ($r = -.296$, $p < .01$). Anxiety and boredom were moderately positively correlated ($r = .348$, $p < .01$).

3. Predictive Effects of Learning Emotions on Overall Academic Achievement

A stepwise linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive effects of the learning emotions on overall academic achievement.

Table 3 Joint Predictive Effects of Chinese Learning Enjoyment and Anxiety on Overall Academic Achievement

Regression Model		Fit Index			Coefficient		95% Confidence Interval	Collinearity Diagnostics	
Predictor Variable	Outcome Variable	R	R ²	F	β	t		Tolerance	VIF
Enjoyment	Overall Academic Achievement	.416	.173	11.087	.225	2.237*	[.703, 12.091]	.994	1.006
Anxiety		.473	.224	16.331	-.416	-4.041**	[-4.217, -12.405]	1.000	1.000

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. The excluded variable was Chinese Learning Boredom.

The regression model showed a satisfactory fit. Enjoyment exerted a small-to-moderate positive predictive effect on overall academic achievement ($\beta = .225$, $p < .05$). Anxiety exerted a moderate negative predictive effect on overall academic achievement ($\beta = -.416$, $p < .01$). Boredom was excluded from the model and showed no significant predictive effect on overall academic achievement. The VIF values (all less than 5) indicated a minimal risk of multicollinearity. Enjoyment and anxiety collectively accounted for 22.4% ($R^2 = .224$) of the variance in overall academic achievement. Anxiety ($\beta = -.416$) showed a stronger predictive effect than enjoyment ($\beta = .225$).

Discussion

1. The Status of Learning Emotions among Thai CFL learners in the Comprehensive Chinese Course

The findings that participants' positive emotions (enjoyment) dominate negative emotions (anxiety and boredom) and that the overall enjoyment level is moderately high, while anxiety and boredom are moderate, aligns with Li & Han (2022). This suggests a universal characteristic in the emotional experience of foreign language learners in formal settings, irrespective of the target language. This commonality likely stems from stabilizing factors in the classroom, such as clear goals and teacher-led interaction, which enhance learners' sense of security and motivation.

The results that participants' teacher enjoyment was the highest ($\bar{X}=3.88$) and personal enjoyment was the lowest ($\bar{X}=3.23$) is consistent with studies on English learners (Li et al., 2018; Cui & Meng, 2023; Wang, 2023). This indicates that the learners' positive emotions are primarily rooted in external support, namely the teacher's emotional support, feedback, and teaching style, highlighting the crucial role of emotional contagion and the affective classroom atmosphere created by the instructor. However, the low level of personal enjoyment, consistent with Wang (2023), suggests that university-level learners face intrinsic challenges such as self-regulated learning pressure, goal ambiguity, and achievement anxiety, which weaken personal emotional investment. This contrast with high school studies (Li et al., 2018; Cui & Meng, 2023) is likely due to the stronger autonomy of university students, where personal enjoyment depends more on self-efficacy and self-worth rather than the learning environment itself. This points to the homogeneity of the learner group as a potential moderator.

The finding that participants' reading and writing anxiety were higher than listening and speaking anxiety aligns with Lin's (2024) research on local Thai undergraduates. This reflects the psychological burden placed on learners by the normativity and complex character system of written Chinese, where tasks requiring accurate language output and structural control easily generate stress. This contrasts with Yang's (2010) finding among international students in China (higher listening/reading anxiety), likely due to differences in scale tools and sample characteristics. The divergence suggests that the learning context (non-immersion in Thailand vs. immersion in China) and participant characteristics (e.g., cultural background) are critical situational variables for explaining variations in FLA.

2. The Correlation and Predictive Effects Among Thai CFL Learners in the Comprehensive Chinese Course

With regard to the role of enjoyment and anxiety, the significant positive correlation of enjoyment and the significant negative correlation of anxiety with achievement are consistent with L2 emotion research (Li & Han, 2022), supporting Pekrun's (2006) Control-Value Theory: positive emotions enhance learning through cognitive and motivational gains, while negative emotions inhibit performance through cognitive interference and avoidance. Importantly, anxiety showed a stronger negative correlation ($r=-.398$) than enjoyment's positive correlation ($r=.272$). The regression analysis further confirmed that the negative predictive effect of anxiety ($\beta=-.416$) was stronger than the positive predictive effect of enjoyment ($\beta=.225$). This finding, which aligns with Li & Han (2022), is interpreted as the moderating effect of the exam-oriented teaching environment. Following Pekrun's (2006) framework, anxiety is a negative, high-arousal, outcome-focused emotion, while enjoyment is a positive, high-arousal, process-focused emotion. In an evaluation-driven context, anxiety, being tightly linked to the "outcome control" dimension, directly impacts test-based scores, whereas enjoyment's effect is more indirect, limited by the course's emphasis on summative assessment. Furthermore, the significant negative correlation of anxiety contradicts some studies on international students in China (Qian, 1999; Zhang, 2001), where no significant relationship was found. This is likely because international students in an immersive environment receive rich

linguistic input and social support, buffering the anxiety effect. Conversely, the local Thai learners in a non - Chinese context lack this situational support, leading to more persistent and impactful academic anxiety. This result supports the “Communication Anxiety-Achievement Decline” hypothesis of Foreign Language Anxiety Theory (Horwitz, 1986).

With respect to the role of boredom, the low negative correlation of boredom ($r = -.296$) is generally consistent with L2 boredom research (Li & Han, 2022; Li & Li, 2023; Wang et al., 2024). However, the regression analysis found that boredom had no significant predictive effect on academic achievement when modeled alongside enjoyment and anxiety. This finding differs from Li & Han (2022), who reported a small-to-moderate negative predictive effect of foreign language boredom on learning outcomes among Chinese EFL learners. This discrepancy may be attributed to differences in instructional contexts, as the present study was conducted in face-to-face settings, whereas Li & Han (2022) examined online learning. This suggests that boredom may influence performance through more complex, indirect pathways, such as reduced learning motivation and task value (Goetz et al., 2010; Tze et al., 2013). In L2 learning, the buffering effect of external motivation (e.g., exam pressure, teacher monitoring) may allow learners to temporarily overcome boredom, preventing a significant direct drop in grades. The non-significant prediction likely reflects a combined effect of emotional regulation and extrinsic drive.

In terms of interrelationships among emotions, the negative correlation between enjoyment and anxiety/boredom, and the moderate positive correlation between anxiety and boredom, align with previous L2 emotion literature (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Li et al., 2021). The negative link between positive and negative emotions confirms their oppositional yet dynamic relationship. The positive link between anxiety and boredom suggests that in situations of low learning investment and perceived loss of control, these two negative emotions can mutually reinforce into an “emotional fatigue” effect. The negative correlation between enjoyment and boredom also supports Fredrickson’s (2003) “undoing hypothesis” from the Broaden-and-Build Theory, where positive emotions effectively mitigate the cognitive interference of negative emotions.

This study confirms the meta-analytic findings of Botes, Dewaele, & Greiff (2020) and Botes et al. (2022): Enjoyment and anxiety are the most stable predictors of academic achievement across target languages. This universality reflects the core functional mechanism of emotions. However, the stronger predictive power of anxiety over enjoyment in this Thai CFL context suggests that the ecological factors, namely the exam-oriented teaching and evaluation model, moderate the relationship, amplifying the effect of outcome-oriented negative emotions while relatively diminishing the impact of process-oriented positive emotions.

Conclusion and Implications

1. Conclusion

This study systematically investigated the overall characteristics of three core academic emotions experienced by 80 Thai university undergraduate students in their Comprehensive Chinese course, and their relationships with overall academic achievement. The findings reveal that participants generally exhibited a moderately high level of enjoyment and moderate levels of anxiety and boredom, indicating that Thai CFL learners, on the whole, possess a positive attitude toward learning Chinese and are capable of maintaining good emotional balance in formal classroom settings. However, a closer look at the three dimensions of enjoyment shows that teacher enjoyment was the highest while personal enjoyment was the lowest. This suggests that learners’ positive emotions are primarily derived from external support, rather than from internal motivation or self-efficacy achievement experiences. This result highlights the core role of teacher

emotional support and the classroom affective atmosphere in shaping students' emotional experience in foreign language learning. On the dimension of anxiety, reading and writing anxiety were significantly higher than listening and speaking anxiety. This indicates that learners are more prone to tension and psychological pressure during tasks that involve written output and controlled grammatical structures. This finding highlights the unique challenges posed by the complexity of the Chinese writing system and its standardization requirements. Furthermore, it suggests that situational differences and learner group characteristics influence the intensity and type of anxiety experienced.

Regarding the relationship between learning emotions and academic achievement, the study found a significant positive correlation between enjoyment and achievement, and significant negative correlations for both anxiety and boredom. Crucially, the negative correlation strength of anxiety with achievement was higher than the positive correlation strength of enjoyment, indicating a more pronounced inhibitory effect of anxiety on academic achievement. Regression analysis further demonstrated that both enjoyment and anxiety significantly predicted overall academic achievement, while the predictive effect of boredom was not significant. The positive prediction of enjoyment suggests that positive emotions enhance learning motivation and cognitive engagement, thereby promoting performance. Conversely, the negative prediction of anxiety suggests that high levels of anxiety interfere with attentional focus and task persistence, thereby weakening academic outcomes. The stronger predictive power of anxiety over enjoyment reflects the heightened functionality of outcome-focused emotions in an exam-oriented teaching environment, where learners prioritize external evaluation (e.g., test scores) over intrinsic enjoyment in the learning process.

This study validates the core hypothesis of the Control-Value Theory: positive emotions facilitate learning engagement and achievement gains, while negative emotions inhibit academic achievement. Simultaneously, the finding that enjoyment and anxiety are the most stable predictors of achievement suggests the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural universality of this emotional mechanism. In other words, the roles these emotions play in shaping learning outcomes appear to be relatively consistent across different language learning contexts, indicating that their effects may extend beyond specific educational or cultural settings. The non-significant prediction of boredom indicates that its influence pathway may operate through indirect mechanisms such as motivation and engagement. Overall, this research elucidates the structural characteristics and functional mechanisms of foreign language learning emotions, providing empirical support for understanding the emotional dynamics and achievement outcomes of CFL learners.

2. Pedagogical Implications

Based on these findings, and to enhance Thai CFL learners' positive emotions while mitigating the negative impact of anxiety and boredom on learning performance, the following pedagogical suggestions are proposed:

Firstly, teachers should strengthen emotional support and create a positive classroom climate. As teacher enjoyment is the main source of learners' positive emotions, instructors should invest affectively, provide positive feedback, and employ interactive teaching methods to establish a safe, open, and inclusive learning environment. The emotional contagion of teachers can effectively enhance students' enjoyment while reducing anxiety and boredom. In addition, teachers should cultivate learners' self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation by encouraging goal setting, self-monitoring, and achievement reflection. Approaches such as stratified task evaluation and reflective journaling can help learners sustain positive emotional experiences and reinforce their sense of control and value in the learning process.

Secondly, instructional design should be optimized to reduce anxiety triggers and prevent boredom. Given the high level of reading and writing anxiety among learners, teachers should gradually enhance students' confidence in language production by lowering task difficulty, providing explicit models, and offering structured guidance. Incorporating cooperative

learning and peer support can further help alleviate anxiety. Moreover, classroom activities and task formats should remain diverse and challenging. By employing contextualized teaching, gamified learning, or cross-cultural thematic projects, instructors can enhance students' interest and task value recognition, thereby mitigating the occurrence of boredom.

Finally, emotional regulation training and assessment reform should be integrated into CFL instruction. Teachers are encouraged to include emotional awareness and regulation strategies, including mindfulness practice, positive self-talk, and cognitive reappraisal, into their teaching to strengthen learners' emotional resilience against anxiety and boredom. Furthermore, reforming the evaluation system by combining formative and process-oriented assessment with summative testing can reduce exam-related stress in exam-oriented contexts. This shift from "outcome" to "process" encourages continuous engagement and enjoyment in learning. In essence, CFL teaching should give equal emphasis to emotional identification and regulation alongside linguistic skill development. Building an emotion-supportive teaching ecology can promote both cognitive growth and affective well-being, ultimately improving learners' overall Chinese learning performance and psychological health.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample size and scope were relatively limited. The participants consisted of 80 Chinese majors from a single university in northern Thailand, which restricts the generalizability of the findings due to the homogeneity in region, grade level, and academic background. Secondly, the research relied primarily on self-reported questionnaires. Although this approach effectively captured learners' subjective emotional experiences, the data may have been influenced by social desirability effects and self-perception biases. Thirdly, the research design was cross-sectional, which limited the ability to capture the dynamic evolution of emotions over time.

Future research should address these limitations to deepen the understanding of learning emotions in CFL contexts. Firstly, expanding the sample size to include learners from different regions, grade levels, and cultural backgrounds would enhance the external validity of the findings and allow for cross-contextual comparisons of the emotion–achievement relationship. Secondly, adopting a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative interviews, classroom observations, and learning diaries could improve the reliability and interpretive depth of emotional data. Lastly, longitudinal tracking across different semesters or proficiency stages would help reveal the developmental trajectories of learning emotions over time.

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