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# **Foreign language anxiety and foreign language enjoyment:**

A study of older Finnish learners of English in non-formal education

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Master's Thesis

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This thesis examined Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) experienced by older Finnish learners of English in non-formal education. Specifically, the thesis aimed to find out how much FLA and FLE older learners experience, and what are the variables most associated with FLA and FLE. FLA is a well-studied concept in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and there has been an increasing interest in FLE recently. Previous studies have focused mainly on younger learners of Foreign Language (FL) while older learners have received notably less attention.

FLA is an emotion that causes negative physical and emotional arousal, having adverse effects to Foreign Language Learning (FLL) engagement and results. It can affect for example willingness to communicate and make learners avoidant. FLA is experienced by both beginners and advanced language learners, and it encompasses all areas of language learning, while being most prevalent in oral communication.

FLE has positive effects on language learning, increasing engagement and motivation, as well as having the potential to protect the learner from negative emotions. FLE includes not only a sense of accomplishment but is also characterized by, for example, optimal challenge. Both FLA and FLE can stem from the learner, but also from the learning environment, thus having personal and social causes.

This study had 112 participants who were over 50-year-olds learners of English coming from all over Finland. At the time of data collection, they partook in non-formal learning in their free time. The data was collected via an online survey consisting of background questions, Likert-scale questionnaires, and open-ended questions. This study used a mixed-method approach: the data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The findings of the present study showed that older learners of English in non-formal education experienced both emotions, but significantly more FLE than FLA. The emotions were in a moderate negative correlation. Majority of the participants reported to not have experienced situations that especially evoked FLA, while almost everyone had experienced situations that especially evoked FLE. The qualitative data offered intriguing descriptions of experiences from the participants' FL classes. Overall, the results of the present study indicated that FLL is fulfilling and important to this group of people. Limitations of the study included issues with collection of background information and the necessity to use translated versions of the questionnaires. In the future, more SLA studies could focus on older language learners. Also, it would be interesting to repeat this study on younger Finnish learners of English to see if age brought on more positive emotions.

**Key words:** foreign language anxiety, foreign language enjoyment

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## 1 Introduction

Emotions are one of the central aspects of individual learner differences in the field of *Second Language Acquisition* (SLA). Negative emotions, especially anxiety, have been a focal point in this context for decades. *Foreign Language Anxiety* (FLA) is a concept defined in 1986 by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope. FLA is the most studied emotion in SLA (MacIntyre 2017, 11). Whereas emotion research in SLA used to be anxiety-prevalent, positive emotion research has lately seen an increase, and *Foreign Language Enjoyment* (FLE) was introduced in 2014 by Dewaele and MacIntyre. This present study contributes to emerging research combining FLA and FLE. The focus of this study is on older Finnish learners of L2 English. Previous research has focused on younger learners, overlooking more mature learners. Studies combining FLA and FLE in a Finnish context have not been previously conducted.

SLA usually refers to learning or acquiring a language that is not the learner's mother tongue (L1), often in a country where the language is spoken. *Foreign Language Learning* (FLL), on the other hand, typically means learning a language in a country where that language is not a dominant language. The latter term is more suitable for the context of the present thesis even though English is a widely spoken language in Finland. However, previous research uses both terms, so the two terms are used interchangeably.

FLA signifies the negative arousal a learner of a *Foreign Language* (FL) may experience. FLA consist of both physical and mental manifestations, such as a racing heart, feelings of worry and fear, and doubts about the learner's own skills. FLA manifests in the same way as generalized anxiety but is more situation-specific, being specifically related to language learning. Even more precisely, it is conventionally seen as occurring in a classroom. Thus, the feelings of anxiety do not only stem from the learner but from the learning environment as well. FLA is especially prominent in oral communication but happens in all areas of language learning (MacIntyre 2017, 18-19). FLA can be very harmful to the learning process and make people avoidant, which makes it an important area of study in the field of SLA.

The roots of FLE, on the other hand, are in *Positive Psychology* (PP) which started to prosper in the traditionally disorder-oriented field of psychology in the 1990s. FLE is related to joy but takes on an additional dimension of, for example, optimal challenge (Boudreau, MacIntyre, and Dewaele 2018, 153). FLE is characterized by positive, enjoyable emotions that learning a language can evoke in the learner. Similarly to FLA, it can stem from the self,

the teacher, or other learners in the classroom. FLE may protect against negative emotions, enhance engagement with learning (Boudreau, MacIntyre, and Dewaele 2018, 152) and increase academic performance (Guo and Qiu 2022, 2), making it an area of research that is worth the attention it has recently been attaining.

The aim of this present study was to discover how much older learners of L2 English experience FLA and FLE and what kinds of situations especially evoke FLA and FLE in these learners. The precise research questions were as follows:

1. How much do older learners of L2 English experience a) FLA and b) FLE?
2. What are the variables that are the most associated with a) FLA and b) FLE?

This is a mixed-method study, utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. The participants filled questionnaires that firstly measured the amount of FLA and FLE they had experienced in their studies, and secondly asked them to describe situations that especially evoked FLA and FLE. The data was analysed statistically and by a content-analysis. The participants of the present study were over 50-year-olds, and they came from all over Finland. At the time of data collection, the participants took part in non-formal teaching of English at an adult education centre. Teaching and learning happening in an adult education centre falls under the category of *non-formal education*, which is voluntary, planned education that does not lead to formal qualifications.

The present study consists of six sections. After the introduction, section 2, Theoretical Background, offers theoretical information and presents relevant previous studies. Next, section 3, Material and Methods, presents and discusses the dataset of the thesis as well as the methods used to analyse it. After that, the findings of the study are presented in section 4, Results. That is followed by section 5, Discussion, which offers further analysis of the results as well as implications and limitations of the study. The thesis ends with section 6, Conclusion, which completes the study.

## 2 Theoretical Background

This theoretical section introduces FLA and FLE in more detail. The first subsection defines FLA, discusses causes and effects and presents earlier studies. The second subsection defines and discusses FLE in a similar manner. The section ends with a short conclusion of the topics discussed.

### 2.1 FLA

In the mid-1960s, researchers in the field of psychology started to show increasing interest in studying anxiety (Rachman 2013, 1). Anxiety is a negative emotion that is closely related to fear. However, unlike fear, anxiety may not have a clear source but is more of a formless phenomenon (Rachman 2013, 3). Anxiety is aptly described by Rachman (ibid.) as a: “tense unsettling anticipation of a threatening but formless event; a feeling of uneasy suspense”. Anxiety is very taxing and causes negative arousal, which makes the person experiencing it want to escape or otherwise erase the feeling (MacIntyre 2017, 12).

Emotions were not given much attention in SLA research before the role of anxiety in language learning started to gain interest in the 1970s (Chastain 1975, Kleinmann 1977). Scovel’s review of FLA research from 1978 was a turning point in the field, as he recognised the need for more precise measurements of anxiety to get more consistency into previously conflicting results. It turned out that researchers had taken the measures of anxiety from the field of psychology without properly considering anxiety’s unique nature in language learning (MacIntyre 2017, 12).

Language learning-related anxiety was properly defined by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope in 1986. They explained that differing from generalized anxiety, learning related anxiety belonged in the category of specific anxiety reactions (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 125). Anxiousness felt in relation to learning a language was named Foreign Language Anxiety. Another term that is sometimes used is *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety* (FLCA). While introducing FLA, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) used the concepts of *communication apprehension*, *test anxiety* and *fear of negative evaluation* as analogies to FLA. Communication apprehension refers to a fear or anxiety related to communicating with others, for instance public speaking (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 127). Test anxiety manifests in anticipating a test or while performing in a test. It stems from fear of failure and too high expectations (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 127-128). Fear of negative

evaluation, on the other hand, causes the person anxiety because they worry people might think poorly of them (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 128). Using these three analogies caused many to misinterpret FLA to consist of those three phenomena. However, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope deemed FLA to be a separate, unique occurrence. Establishing the situation-specificity of FLA allowed the field to prosper and focus on the causes and effects of anxiety (MacIntyre 2017, 16). Interestingly, Dewaele and Li (2020, 3) describe the time between roughly 1985 and 2010 as the “Anxiety-Prevailing Phase” due to emotion-related research in the field of SLA focusing so intensely on anxiety.

In their seminal article Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) also introduced a 33-item scale to measure FLA, called the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS). Subsequently the scale has been almost solely used in FLA studies to measure anxiety. Moreover, it has been abbreviated to a shorter version, the *Short-form Foreign Language Anxiety Scale*, S-FLCAS (MacIntyre 1992), which will be discussed more in section 3, Materials and Methods.

### 2.1.1 Causes and effects

MacIntyre (2017), who has conducted multiple studies in the field, has listed causes of FLA. The list included features that:

1. Stem from the *learner themselves*, like unrealistic learner beliefs, biased perceptions of proficiency and low self-esteem.
2. Stem from *other people*, like social causes, instructors who intimidate their students with harsh and/or embarrassing error correction in front of other students.
3. Stem from *their (perceived) lack of sufficient language skills*, like misunderstanding communication, using incorrect words, or having a poor-quality accent (MacIntyre 2017, 21).

Reasons behind experiencing FLA are varied, because the learner’s personality, perceived language skills, other people in the learning environment as well as the learner’s objective interpretations affect whether a learner is prone to feelings of FLA. Moreover, Luo (2013) wrote a review on studies on FLA and found more individual background variables that have been recognised to be associated with FLA, such as age, motivation, foreign language aptitude and language achievement (Luo 2013, 454).



Von Wörde interviewed anxious learners for a doctorate thesis. She presented similar findings as other studies in the field. She only had 15 participants, making the results ungeneralizable, while still interesting. Her results suggested that what had caused the learners' anxiety were variables such as the teacher, speaking activities, fear of negative evaluation, negative classroom experiences and inability to comprehend (Von Wörde 1998, 83). It is important to hear from the learners themselves, in their own words, what causes them anxiety in the FL class and that is why the present study used open-ended questions, as well, to complement the questionnaires.

Next, we will discuss the effects that FLA has. Communicating in a FL is undoubtedly demanding and involves risk taking. Anxious learners can feel that by making mistakes in FL, they are failing on a personal level or embarrassing themselves. Indeed, FLL is a field that is perhaps uniquely tied to "self-concept" and "self-expression" (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 128). By the same token, MacIntyre (2017, 20) claimed that according to diary studies, "language and the sense of self are so closely tied together that a threat to one is a threat to the other". FLA is not limited to learners whose FL competence is low, and while FLA is especially prominent in oral communication, it is not limited to speaking and listening skills, but encompasses reading and writing, as well (Horwitz 2000, Hilleson 1996).

All in all, FLA has academic, cognitive, and social effects. As for academic effects, FLA can make learners avoidant and make the learner miss classes or postpone doing their homework (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 126), and avoid answering questions and stay silent in class (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 130). Learners who experience FLA may feel that they need to understand everything about the language to communicate properly, that they are constantly evaluated or that they are failing in the learning process if they make mistakes (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 127). This can lead to overstudying or not studying at all (ibid.) Furthermore, FLA causes poorer achievement (MacIntyre 2017, 17). When it comes to cognitive effects, FLA can prevent a person from focusing on learning by making them highly aware of their negative emotional state and physical symptoms such as their voice trembling, hands sweating or pulse racing. Luo (2013, 451) aptly describes the cognitive effects as: "excessive self-evaluation, worry over potential failure, and concern over others' opinions". Social hindrances have mostly to do with the fact that anxious learners tend to communicate less frequently than more relaxed learners (MacIntyre 2017, 17), because communicating in a FL can make anxious learners feel self-conscious or even make them panic (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 128). Taking all this into consideration, FLA can certainly make

language learning feel less than pleasant. Luo (2013, 453) has claimed that FLA can make, at its worst, FLL learning “uncomfortable or even traumatic”. That is why it is an important area of study: it is crucial to identify learners that are prone to FLA and find ways to relieve it. That would improve not only learning results but the emotional states of individual learners, making learning more pleasant.

### 2.1.2 The anxious learner

Young (1990) studied the connection between anxiety and speaking FL from the students’ perspective. She distributed questionnaires to over 200 learners of Spanish. The results showed that learners would speak out in the class more willingly if they were not afraid of saying something wrong. They did not fear so much speaking *in class* but speaking *in front of* the class. It seems that exposure is the reason speaking activities cause language learners the most anxiety (Young 1990, 545). This can be connected to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and their analogy of fear of negative evaluation. Similarly, Lintunen and Skaffari (2014) studied 83 advanced learners of L2 English as public speakers, using journals written by the participants as material. They found that even advanced learners of English must invest a lot of effort when speaking the language (Lintunen and Skaffari 2014, 60) and that pronunciation and grammar caused the most concern for the advanced learners (Lintunen and Skaffari 2014, 57).

Female students have been found to be more anxious than their male peers by Cheng (2002), Zhao and Whitchurch (2011) and Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). In another study, Dewaele and MacIntyre found females to experience significantly more FLE while also experiencing more (mild) FLA (Dewaele et al. 2016). Some studies have had results that indicate older students to have higher levels of FLA than younger ones. For example, Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (1999, 227) had results indicating this in their study on factors associated with FLA, conducted on 210 foreign language students. On the contrary, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 253) got opposite results with a larger set of participants. They both used the FLCAS-scale to measure anxiety. It seems there are still some mixed results in the field of FLA.

It appears that not a lot of studies have been conducted on FLA in a Finnish context, but FLA has been a topic of theses. For example, Rautio (2022) from the University of Jyväskylä studied FLA experienced by 19 ninth grade students for her Bachelor’s Thesis and found the students to experience little FLA. However, all the participants attended the same school and had the same English teacher, which might have affected the results. Also, Rautio had used

her own abbreviated version of FLCAS instead of the validated S-FLCAS. Using a scale that is not fully validated poses a risk for the validity of the research (Botes et al. 2021), and that is why the present study utilizes scales that have been found valid and that have been used in previous studies.

What repeatedly comes up in FLA studies is that learners are highly sensitive to correction and feedback that they perceive as negative. The teachers can reduce the learners' anxiety by "positive error-correction attitude" (Young 1990, 539), which means offering sensitive and positive corrections and for example focusing on what the learner got right and avoiding feedback that causes "defensive reactions" (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 131). A very recent longitudinal study by Dewaele, Saito and Halimi (2022) investigated three teacher variables: FL use in class, predictability (routines) and frequency of joking and their association with FLA but found no significant connection. This they concluded to mean that teachers have limited methods they can use to alleviate FLA in their class (Dewaele, Saito and Halimi 2022, 14-15). On the other hand, they did find the three teacher variables had a positive relationship with *FLE* (Dewaele, Saito and Halimi 2022, 19). *FLE* is investigated in the next section.

## 2.2 FLE

This subsection offers a definition for FLE. After that, it presents and discusses previous studies, as well as the causes and effects of FLE. Because FLA and FLE are most often investigated together, as they are in the present study, references to FLA are also made and the two concepts are discussed together at the end of the section.

Diversity began to show in emotion-related studies in the field of SLA after PP started to lift its head, first in the field of psychology and then in SLA studies. PP is a name given to the phenomenon of more positive aspects of human life and psyche being taken into consideration in general psychology, which has traditionally focused more on aspects like disorders, pathologies, and abnormalities (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, 5). Starting from 2012, PP encouraged SLA researchers to likewise broaden their view beyond anxiety to positive emotions (Dewaele and Li 2020, 4). Positive emotions benefit learning by bringing out “play, creativity, curiosity and exploration” (Boudreau, MacIntyre, and Dewaele 2018, 151-152). *Enjoyment* is a positive emotion closely related to pleasure. Whereas pleasure can be obtained by for example, completing a task, enjoyment “takes on additional dimensions such as intellectual focus, heightened attention, and optimal challenge” (Boudreau, MacIntyre, and Dewaele 2018, 153).

Learning a language can intuitively have many enjoyable aspects to it, and Dewaele and MacIntyre claim that enjoyment stems from two main sources: “developing interpersonal relationships and making progress toward a goal” and that language learning involves both (Dewaele and MacIntyre 2014, 242). While introducing the concept of FLE, Dewaele and MacIntyre also developed a 21-item Likert-scale based measurement tool called the *Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale* (FLES), which has been widely used in FLE studies. Recently, a shorter version of the scale, S-FLES has been developed (Botes, Dewaele and Greiff 2021).

FLE is an important area of study because of its potential in making language learning more enjoyable and helping the learner perform better. FLE can potentially protect against negative emotions and enhance engagement with learning (Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele 2018, 152). Li and Wei (2021, 12) found that in their large sample of 954 learners, enjoyment predicted better L2 achievement. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016, 233) found FLE to have two sub-categories: firstly, social dimension that comes from other people in the FL classroom and secondly, private dimension that comes from the learner, for example when achieving

something difficult. Later, Botes, Dewaele, and Greiff (2021, 858) claimed FLE to have three factors: teacher appreciation, personal enjoyment, and social enjoyment.

Dewaele et al. (2018) investigated 189 high school students' attitudes towards their FL teacher. Their results showed that positive attitudes towards the teacher "had a significant effect on FLE" (Dewaele et al. 2018, 686). Interestingly, FLA was not affected by attitudes towards the teacher (ibid.). Variables that increased FLE were the frequency of FL use by the teacher and the amount of time spent speaking FL by the students themselves, whereas higher levels of teacher predictability (for example following routines) decreased FLE (Dewaele et al. 2018). Another study by Dewaele and Dewaele (2020) further advocates the important role of the teacher. They found that when students had two different teachers, their FLE was much higher with one of the teachers (Dewaele and Dewaele 2020, 55). Although this study only had 40 participants, based on all the studies presented here, it seems that FLE is more teacher dependent than FLA.

Most studies that have taken gender into consideration have found it not to be of significance in relation to the amount of FLE experienced. Nevertheless, some studies have found females to experience more FLE, while they also experience more FLA (Dewaele and MacIntyre 2014, 237, Dewaele et al. 2016, 59, Dewaele et al. 2018, 684). Bensalem found no significant differences between males and females among 487 Saudi students of English regarding their FLE or FLA.

Social aspects play an important role in boosting FLE. In addition to teacher, peers can have a significant effect on FLE. In their longitudinal study of 55 college students of English, Pan, and Zhang (2021, 8) found attitude towards teacher and class atmosphere to have a relation with FLE. Furthermore, for instance conversational topics (Shirvan and Talebzadeh 2017, 34) have been found to have an impact on FLE.

Because FLA and FLE are often used as counterparts in research, we will next briefly discuss them together. Dewaele and MacIntyre initially said they wanted to focus on enjoyment side-by-side with FLA, which was already well-studied (Dewaele and MacIntyre 2014, 242). It is considered advantageous to focus on both a negative and positive affect on research to get a fuller picture of the emotions experienced by FL learners. FLA and FLE have been found not to be two ends of the same continuum: an increase in one does not simply mean decrease in the other (Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele 2018, 165). Then again, for example Dewaele and Li (2020, 5) have found FLA and FLE to be "independent dimensions in moderate

negative correlation”. Bensalem’s (2021, 19) results showed a negative correlation between FLE and FLA. It seems that a consensus on the relationship between the two emotions is yet to be fully established.

To conclude, this theoretical section has introduced FLA and FLE. Many of the studies discussed in this section are recent, which emphasizes the current relevance of the topic in the field of SLA studies. The reasoning behind the present thesis was to have a glimpse into the negative and positive emotions that older learners of English experience. Language learning can be a life-long journey; therefore, it is important to study these emotions in students of all ages. It is relevant to identify learners who experience FLA (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, 128) to be able to possibly alleviate anxiety and the myriad negative consequences that FLA has on FLL. Likewise, bringing more FLE into English classes has the potential of not only protecting from negative emotions, but also improving results and engaging the students more. Thus, it is important to find out which are the variables behind these emotions, which the present study aims to do. This concludes the theory section, and the next section introduces the materials and methods.

### 3 Materials and Methods

This section introduces the materials and methods used in the present study. The first subsection introduces the target group and the questionnaires. The Materials section also discusses ethical questions, reliability of each questionnaire and presents the research questions. The second subsection explains how the results of the questionnaires were analysed and describes how the qualitative data were coded and analysed. For clarity, the Methods section is divided into two subsections, first of which discusses quantitative methods and the second of which discusses qualitative methods.

#### 3.1 Materials

The aim of this cross-sectional study is to examine FLA and FLE experienced by older Finnish learners of L2 English who participate in non-formal education at an adult education centre. The next subsection introduces the target group of the present study, and the following subsection introduces the questionnaires.

##### 3.1.1 Target group

The participants were over 50-year-old Finns who had taken part in voluntary non-formal education of English at the time of data collection. The participants partook in different kinds of language courses and the sample came from across Finland. The survey was sent to 40 of the 309 municipalities in the country. The final sample of 112 can be considered adequate for the purpose of this type of an MA Thesis (Dörnyei 2022, 65). Altogether seven participants were left out because they did not fit the target population.

The sample was collected during the Spring of 2022, and it was collected by snowball sampling (Dörnyei 2022, 64): e-mail requests were sent to English educators working in adult education centres, asking them to forward the surveys to their students. This method falls under the category of probability sampling, because it is left to chance which participants will become part of the study. Dörnyei (2022, 117) says that probability sampling allows to “hear the voices of language learners from groups who are typically absent from the research literature, such as older learners”. This sampling technique was selected to get a sufficient sample coming from across Finland.

A brief demographic questionnaire included three questions that inquired first language, age, and gender. These questions were asked to be able to leave out participants who did not fit the

target group. All but one participant reported their L1 to be Finnish. Table 1 shows the participants divided into two age groups: 50-70-year-olds and over 70-year-olds. Majority of the participants were in the former group. Distribution of genders can also be seen in Table 1. Most participants were female, and the rest were male. Regarding gender, an option was also offered to answer “other” or “I don’t want to say”, but none of the participants chose those answers.

**Table 1** Demographics of the participants

Aspect	Detail	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	Age group		
	50-70	71	63.4
	70+	41	36.6
Gender			
	Male	35	31.3
	Female	77	68.8
	Other	0	0.0
	Do not want to say	0	0.0
Total		112	100.0

### 3.1.2 Instruments

The survey was conducted using a survey- and report-tool Webpropol, which allowed using both Likert-scale and open-ended questions. Quantitative results are complemented by qualitative results: the participants answered a survey consisting of demographic questionnaire, the 8-item S-FLCAS, the 9-item S-FLES and two open-ended questions. An open-ended question means that the respondent is not given ready-made options but rather a blank space to fill in their own answer (Dörnyei 2022, 39). Open-ended questions can result in descriptive examples and widen the possible range of answers (ibid.). It is important to consider the learners’ own experiences described in their own words (MacIntyre 2017, 20) to get a fuller picture of the phenomenon.

The survey was piloted to make sure it was easy to comprehend and to find out how much time it took to fill out. A questionnaire should preferably take under 20 minutes to fill (Dörnyei 2022, 121). Piloting showed that filling these questionnaires took about ten minutes altogether. As for ethical issues, answers to the survey were anonymous and the collection of personal data was minimised to only what was necessary for the purpose of the study. The



data collected did not include any identifying items. Furthermore, a privacy notice was attached to inform the participants of the purpose of the survey, and how the data was to be utilized and disposed of after the study was complete. Dörnyei (2022, 76) explains that people are much more likely to respond a questionnaire if they know the purpose of it. Due to the participants' level of English skills, the whole survey had to be translated to Finnish, which was a language mastered by all participants. Although the scales utilized in the study have been widely used in different countries and translated, no ready-made translation in Finnish was available, so unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. This needs to be taken into consideration when evaluating the reliability of the results.

The original scale to measure FLA was a 33-item, 5-point Likert scale-based questionnaire called FLCAS, which was developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope in 1986 to measure FLA. The FLCAS is the most used scale in the field of FLA, and it has been used in numerous countries and translated to different languages (Luo 2013, 444). It has been “found to function across a variety of research contexts” (Botes et al. 2021, 3). The present study utilized the shorter S-FLCAS which has been derived from the original FLCAS by MacIntyre in 1992. The S-FLCAS was chosen for the present study instead of the original version, because it is a demanding task to get respondents to complete questionnaires (Dörnyei 2022, 73) and using a shorter scale ensures better completion rates. Also, a shorter scale is more convenient both to the participants and the researcher, especially when a study examines multiple variables (Botes, Dewaele, and Greiff 2021, 872). S-FLCAS has been found to be valid and reliable by Botes et al. (2021, 31) and it has recently been used by, for example, Boudreau, MacIntyre, and Dewaele (2018), Bensalem (2021) and Dewaele, Saito, and Halimi (2022).

**Table 2** Short-form Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (MacIntyre 1992)

1.	Even if I am well prepared for FL class, I feel anxious about it.
2.	I always feel that the other students speak the FL better than I do.
3.	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in FL class.
4.	I don't worry about making mistakes in FL class. (reverse coded)
5.	I feel confident when I speak in FL class. (reverse coded)
6.	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my FL class.
7.	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in FL class.
8.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my FL class.

Table 2 presents all eight items in S-FLCAS. All items are presented here because the scale is short and presenting the items makes discussing the results easier. As can be seen from the table, the S-FLCAS items describe manifestations of anxiousness that might take place in the language learning class.

The questionnaire was Likert-scale based, so the answers were given on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (1= Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree). High scores imply high levels of FLA. Items 4 and 5 are reverse-coded, which means that the scores must also be reversed when calculating the result of the questionnaire.

The original scale to measure FLE, on the other hand, was a 21-item Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES), which was developed in 2014 by Dewaele and MacIntyre for their pioneering studies on FLE. FLES was based on Ryan, Connell, and Plant’s interest-enjoyment scale from 1990 (Botes, Dewaele and Greiff, 2021, 859) and the items “refer to the enjoyment of learning, the atmosphere in the classroom, peers, and the teacher” (ibid.). The participants in the present study answered S-FLES, a 9-item questionnaire derived from the original version by Botes, Dewaele, and Greiff in 2021. S-FLES has been tested and deemed a valid and reliable tool to measure FLE (Botes, Dewaele, and Greiff 2021, 871-872). Despite it being recently developed, S-FLES has already been used in FLE studies, by for example Dewaele, Saito, and Halimi (2022).

**Table 3** Short-form Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (Botes, Dewaele, and Greiff, 2021)

1.	The teacher is encouraging.
2.	The teacher is friendly.
3.	The teacher is supportive.
4.	I enjoy it.
5.	I've learned interesting things.
6.	I am proud of my accomplishments.
7.	We form a tight group.
8.	We laugh a lot.
9.	We have common 'legends', such as running jokes.

Table 3 presents the nine items of S-FLE, divided into three subscales representing different areas of FLE. Botes, Dewaele, and Greiff (2021, 858) claimed FLE to have three factors: teacher appreciation, personal enjoyment, and social enjoyment, which the nine items in S-

FLES represent. Items 1, 2 and 3 measure teacher appreciation, items 4, 5 and 6 measure personal enjoyment and items 7, 8 and 9 measure social enjoyment. The questionnaire was Likert-scale based, so the answers were given on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (1= Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree). High scores imply high levels of FLE.

After the scale presented above, participants were asked open-ended questions requesting them to describe a situation in their English class when they felt especially anxious, and a situation when they especially felt learning enjoyment. To conclude, the 112 participants of the present study answered three demographic questions, an 8-item questionnaire measuring FLA (S-FLCAS) and a 9-item questionnaire measuring FLE (S-FLES). The questionnaires have been validated and used in previous studies, but it was noted that the present study used translations. In addition, two open-ended questions were answered. The next subsection presents the research questions.

### 3.1.3 Research questions

This subsection introduces the research questions of the present study. The study has two research questions:

1. How much do older learners of L2 English experience a) FLA and b) FLE?
2. What are the variables that are the most associated with a) FLA and b) FLE?

## 3.2 Methods of data analysis

The present study is a mixed-method study. It is considered beneficial to use more than one method to gain a wider perspective on the matter at hand (Dörnyei 2022, 110). Dewaele and Li described using a mixed-method approach as the left and right eyes of the researchers, offering a “binocular vision” (Dewaele and Li 2020, 8). This section presents the methods of data analysis and has been divided into two subsections describing the quantitative and qualitative methods separately. The section ends with a short conclusion.

### 3.2.1 Quantitative methods

The purpose of the quantitative data was to identify how much the participants experienced FLA and FLE and to be able to see if these phenomena correlated with each other. This first

subsection is focused on describing the methods of analysing the quantitative data of the study. The methods for analysing both FLA and FLE are discussed together.

Ultimately, 112 valid questionnaires were collected in WebPropol and analysed using Excel and SPSS 29.0. To begin, each participant received a number ranging from 1 to 112. Gender was coded so that males received number 1 and females received number 2. Age was coded as follows: participants were divided into two groups, 50-70-year-olds (or under 70-year-olds) and over 70-year-olds. The demographic information regarding age was initially imperfectly collected, so more specific age groups were not possible to form. More on this in subsection 5.4 Limitations.

Before further analysis, descriptive statistics were calculated with SPSS. Scores for FLA and FLE were calculated for each participant. In the FLA questionnaire the range of possible scores was 8-40 and in the FLE questionnaire the range of possible scores was 9-45. High scores indicated high levels of the emotion in question. However, to make the FLA and FLE scores comparable, the scales were scored on the Likert-scale from 1 to 5. Mean and standard deviation were also calculated to reveal the general levels of FLA and FLE. In S-FLCAS, items 4 and 5 were reverse-coded so before analysing the data, the results of these items were also reverse-coded. The data did not contain outliers because all the items in the questionnaires consisted of forced choices.

To answer the first research question, in other words, to find out if the participants experienced more FLA or FLE, a paired samples t-test was conducted in SPSS. A paired samples t-test was chosen because it is used to compare two sets of mean scores when the groups are not independent of each other, but the same group (Larson-Hall 2015, 270). Next, a Pearson correlative test was conducted to see if the scores for FLA and FLE were in a positive or negative correlation. After that, relationships between variables were investigated. An independent samples t-tests were conducted to find out if males or females experienced more FLA and FLE. An independent samples t-test is used when comparing means from two different groups (Larson-Hall 2015, 269), in this case the groups being males and females. The t-tests were performed concerning FLA and FLE separately. Lastly, independent samples t-tests were performed to find out if age group or gender determined the amount of FLA and FLE experienced.

### 3.2.2 Qualitative methods

The purpose of qualitative data was to gather information about the participants' experiences of FLA and FLE in their English classes to get a more deep and multifaceted understanding of the phenomena. This second subsection focuses on describing the methods of analysing the qualitative data of the study. The methods for analysing both FLA and FLE are discussed together.

The qualitative data consisted of open-ended answers to the questions inquiring episodes in the class that the participants felt had especially evoked FLA and FLE in them. Content analysis was used to analyse the answers. Dörnyei (2022, 99) recommends handling open-ended data from a questionnaire by firstly going through each response, finding distinct elements and secondly, forming categories based on these findings. The methods in this study followed these suggestions. In other words, the data was analysed by a content analysis. Each response was read closely and marked for distinctive themes or ideas that revealed the sources of the emotions and themes were formed based on the most reoccurring ideas. Eventually, based on these themes, eight categories for both FLA and FLE were formed. Six categories were formed based on the reoccurring, most typical sources of the emotions and two categories were added to encompass the rest of the responses. The additional categories were needed because some replied to never feel the emotion in question, and some responses did not fit the existing categories. The non-valid replies, consisting of for example just a dash, were left out.

The data regarding FLA and FLE was handled separately and responses to both questionnaires were manually coded into these categories: 1) personal failure/success, 2) teacher, 3) peers, 4) lack of skills/gaining skills, 5) specific classroom activities 6) poor/good preparation, 7) did not feel and 8) other. The responses were repeatedly checked against the codes and the coding was adjusted multiple times to ensure accuracy. Especially the responses concerning FLE sometimes included such long answers that they could belong to two or more categories, so categorising was not always straightforward. In these cases, the response was included in the category that most fit the contents of the response. As Dörnyei (2022, 84) recognises, handling open-ended data containing longer responses is necessarily always somewhat subjective, but using this type of content analysis, it is possible to “avoid the harmful effects of such rater subjectivity” (Dörnyei 2022, 99). Data extracts from the responses were picked as examples. The extracts were chosen based on them being illustrative

of the category they represented, concise and intriguing. This concludes the methods-section; the next section offers the results of the analysis.

## 4 Results

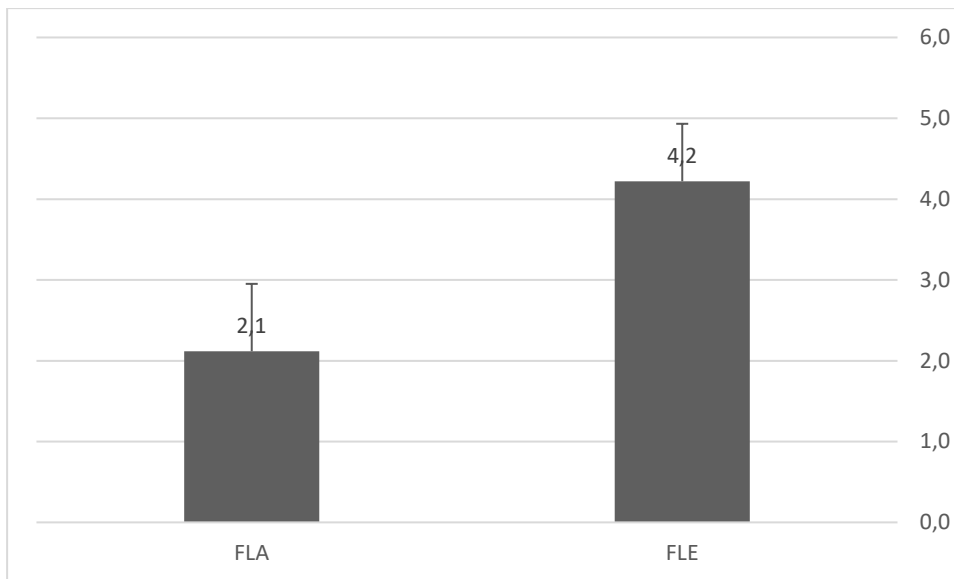
This section introduces the results of the present study. The results are divided into two subsections: the first subsection offers quantitative results, and the second subsection offers qualitative results. For clarity, the qualitative results for FLA and FLE are introduced separately, in their own subsections. The section ends with a brief conclusion.

### 4.1 Quantitative results

This subsection introduces the quantitative results regarding FLA and FLE together. The subsection first introduces the most central results considering the first research question and progresses into more secondary results. The results are discussed further in section 5, Discussions.

First, scores for FLA and FLE were calculated for each participant. In the FLA questionnaire the range of possible scores on Likert-scale was 1-5. The resulting scores ranged from 1 to 3.88. No-one scored the maximum in FLA and one participant scored the lowest possible score of 1. Mean score was 2.1 (sd = 0.83), which indicates low levels of anxiety in this group. In the FLE questionnaire the range of possible scores on Likert-scale was naturally also 1-5. The resulting scores ranged from 2.78 to 5. Five participants scored the maximum in FLE. The lowest score in FLE was 2.78 which was far from the lowest possible score of 1. The mean score was 4.2 (sd = 0.71), which indicates high levels of FLE in this group. Standard deviations indicated that mean scores were relatively close to the mean. There was a modest difference between the standard deviations, FLA showing a little more variety in the mean scores than FLE.

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the mean scores and standard deviations of FLA and FLE in the whole group. As can be seen from the table, the participants experienced both emotions, but a lot more FLE than FLA. To confirm, a paired t-test was performed. Results of the paired t-test showed that the participants indeed reported significantly more enjoyment than anxiety ( $df = 111$ ,  $t = 24.2$ ,  $p = <0.001$ ,  $d = 0.9$ ).



**Figure 1** Comparison of means and standard deviations of Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Enjoyment

Independent samples t-tests were performed to find out if gender or age group affected the amount of FLA or FLE. The results of the t-tests showed that males and females had no statistically significant differences in their mean scores (FLA  $df = 110$ ,  $t = 1.002$ ,  $p = 0.320$ , FLE  $df = 110$ ,  $t = -1.726$ ,  $p = 0.087$ ). Similarly, age group did not affect the mean scores on a significant level (FLA  $df = 110$ ,  $t = 1.174$ ,  $p = 0.243$ , FLE  $df = 110$ ,  $t = 0.689$ ,  $p = 0.492$ ). Next, the results of S-FLCAS and S-FLES are presented in more detail.

**Table 4** Means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum scores per item in Short-form Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (S-FLCAS)

S-FLCAS item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
1. Even if I am well prepared for FL class, I feel anxious about it.	1.6	0.8	1	5
2. I always feel that the other students speak the FL better than I do.	2.4	1.1	1	5
3. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in FL class.	1.8	0.8	1	5
4. I don't worry about making mistakes in FL class. (reverse coded)	2.2	1.2	1	5
5. I feel confident when I speak in FL class. (reverse coded)	3.1	1.0	1	5
6. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my FL class.	2.1	0.8	1	5
7. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in FL class.	2.0	1.0	1	5
8. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my FL class.	1.8	0.8	1	5

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree



Table 4 shows the items in S-FLCAS with the whole sample's mean and standard deviation for each item. Additionally, the table shows minimum and maximum score for each item. As can be seen from the table, the most agreed statement in the scale was "I feel confident when I speak in FL class" ( $M = 3.1$ ,  $sd = 1$ ), but because it was a reverse-coded item, the results mean the opposite: feeling insecure when speaking in class. The second most agreed statement was "I always feel that the other students speak the FL better than I do" ( $M = 2.4$ ,  $sd = 1.1$ ). However, the standard deviation of this item was relatively high, indicating diversity amongst the participants' replies. Interestingly, the two most agreed statements both had to do with speaking the FL. By contrast, the statement with the least agreement was "Even if I am well prepared for FL class, I feel anxious about it" ( $M = 1.6$ ,  $sd = 0.8$ ). Furthermore, table 4 shows that for each item, both ends of the Likert-scale had been utilised by the participants.

**Table 5** Means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum scores per item in Short-form Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (S-FLES)

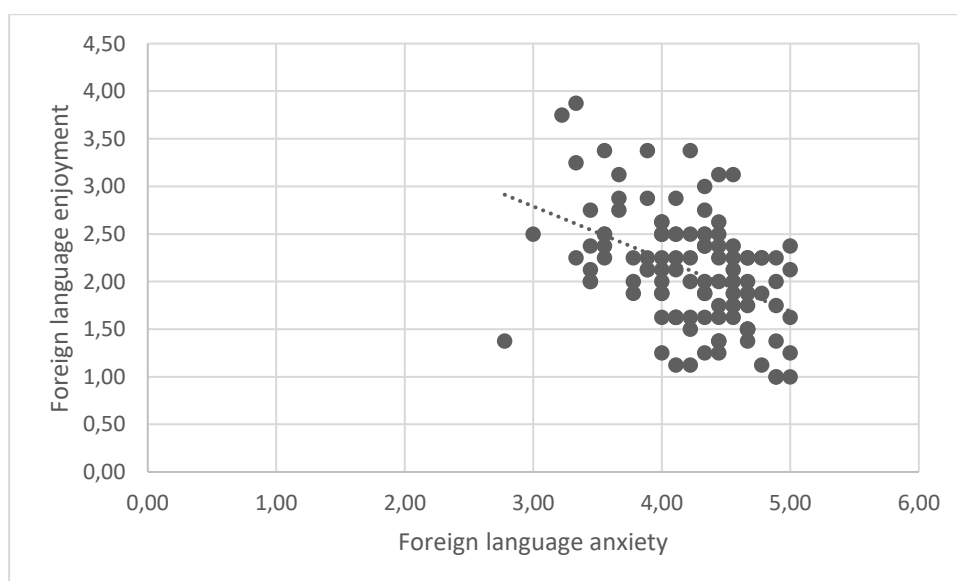
S-FLES item	Mean	SD	Min	Max
1. The teacher is encouraging.	4.6	0.6	1	5
2. The teacher is friendly.	4.8	0.4	4	5
3. The teacher is supportive.	4.6	0.6	3	5
4. I enjoy it.	4.5	0.7	2	5
5. I've learned interesting things.	4.5	0.6	2	5
6. I am proud of my accomplishments.	3.8	0.9	2	5
7. We form a tight group.	4.1	0.9	2	5
8. We laugh a lot.	4.0	0.9	2	5
9. We have common 'legends', such as running jokes.	3.2	1.0	1	5

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

Table 5 shows the items in S-FLES with the whole samples' mean and standard deviation for each item. Additionally, the table shows minimum and maximum score for each item. The results show that the most agreed upon statement in the scale was "The teacher is friendly" ( $M = 4.8$ ,  $sd = 0.4$ ). This item also had the lowest standard deviations, indicating that most of the participants did find their teacher friendly. The second most agreed upon statements were "The teacher is encouraging" ( $M = 4.6$ ,  $sd = 0.6$ ) and "The teacher is supportive" ( $M = 4.6$ ,  $sd = 0.6$ ). These items had the same mean score as well as the same standard deviation. Aspects related to the FL teacher seemed to induce the most enjoyment in the participants based on the S-FLES. The least agreement received statement: "We have common 'legends', such as

running jokes” ( $M = 3.2$ ,  $sd = 1$ ). It is noteworthy that while this item had the lowest mean score in the FLE scale, it was higher than the highest mean score in FLA scale. Table 5 shows also that each nine items in the scale had received the maximum score of 5, but only two items had received the lowest score of 1. The second item in the scale is significant also in the way that the minimum score is 4, which further emphasizes the amount of teacher appreciation the participants had felt.

Next, a Pearson correlative test was conducted to see if the scores for FLA and FLE were in a positive or negative correlation. The results of the Pearson correlative test showed that FLE and FLA were statistically significantly in a moderate negative correlation ( $n = 112$ ,  $r = -0.44$ ,  $p = <0.001$ ). Thus, this indicates that more of the other emotion does mean less of the other in this learner group, but the correlation is not strong. Figure 2 shows the mean scores for FLA and FLE in a scatterplot, and we can see from the figure that although the plots are not in a perfect line by any means, they are in a general downward trend. This means that if a person scores high on FLE, they are somewhat likely to score low on FLA.



**Figure 2** Correlation between the participants' Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Enjoyment scores.

To conclude, the quantitative results showed that the participants in this study had experienced significantly more FLE than FLA, and that speaking in class had caused the most anxiety according to S-FLCAS. According to S-FLES, teacher has caused the most FLE in the participants. The scores for FLA and FLE were in a moderate negative correlation. The

differences in mean scores between genders and age groups were found not to be statistically significant. This concludes the quantitative results, and the next section introduces qualitative results.

## 4.2 Qualitative results

The purpose of the qualitative part of the study was to gather further information about the sources of FLA and FLE, and to let the participants' own voices be heard. This subsection provides the qualitative results and answers the second research question. First, a brief general idea of the results is given, and then the detailed results for FLA and FLE are introduced separately.

The participants answered two open-ended questions, producing 2180 words altogether. Some participants described a single situation like the assignment requested, but some described a more general or a re-occurring phenomenon. Some provided a longer answer, mentioning more than one source for the emotion in question. A few responses described for example a funny occurrence or conversation in some detail. Participants also spontaneously drew links between anxiety and enjoyment and other emotions: embarrassment, frustration, confusion, awkwardness, fear, joy, and pleasure. Next, the results are examined in detail.

### 4.2.1 FLA

Participants answered the following question: "Describe a situation when you felt especially anxious in the class?". The question was mandatory, but some participants still left the item unanswered by writing for example just a dash. The qualitative part of the FLA questionnaire thus received 107 answers producing 1103 words. On average the responses were about 10 words in length ( $M = 10.3$  words). The responses were categorized into eight categories.

Table 6 introduces them in a descending order according to frequency.

**Table 6** Source of Foreign Language Anxiety divided into categories in a descending order based on frequency

Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>A.</b> No FLA	65	60.7
<b>B.</b> Personal failure	11	10.3
<b>C.</b> Specific classroom activities	8	7.5
<b>D.</b> Poor preparation	7	6.5
<b>E.</b> Lack of skills	5	4.7

Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
F. Other	5	4.7
G. Teacher	3	2.8
H. Peers	3	2.8
<b>Total</b>	107	100

FLA = Foreign Language Anxiety

The second research questions of the present study asked which variables were the most associated with a) FLA and b) FLE within this group of learners. Next, results to question 2 a) are provided. Most notably, as Table 6 shows, over half of the participants ( $n = 65$ , 60.7%) had *no FLA*, in other words, they had not felt or did not remember having felt anxiety at all in their English classes. Many of those who did not report ever feeling anxiety referred to learning being voluntary. Some described the atmosphere in class as being permissive and supporting, which had impacted their lack of anxiety. As can be seen from the table, the variables most associated with FLA were *personal failure*, *specific classroom activities* and *poor preparation*. *Teacher* and *peers* both explained only a small part of the anxiety.

To give voice to the participants themselves, the next part offers quotations from each of the eight categories and describes the replies in general. The items were in Finnish to ensure the participants understood the assignment and to make answering easier for them. Therefore, the examples are provided in Finnish and in their original form, without correcting for example spelling errors. The replies have also been translated and the translations follow the original replies as closely as possible.

#### A. No FLA

Majority of the replies were categorised here ( $n = 65$ , 60.7%). While many had simply written that they do not feel anxiety in class, example 1 illustrated why the classes had felt anxiety-free for the participant.

- (1) En ole koskaan tuntenut oloani tunnilla ahdistuneeksi. Jos en jotain sanaa tiedä, niin pyydän apua tai sanon suomeksi. Kukaan ei naura kenellekään väärän sanan käytöstä. Jos en ole osannut tai ehtinyt tehdä läksyjä, niin opettaja pyytää joltain muulta vastauksen. Reilu ja ystävällinen ilmapiiri. Menen aina mielelläni tunneille ja kesä-aikaan kun ei ole kurseja, niin kaipaakaan tuttua porukkaa.

‘I have never felt anxiety in class. If I don’t know a word, I ask for help or use Finnish. No-one laughs at anybody for using the wrong word. If I haven’t known how to or haven’t had the time to do homework, the

teacher asks for someone else to answer. A fair and friendly atmosphere. I am always glad to go to class and in summertime when there are no classes, I miss the familiar group.'

### **B. Personal failure**

Personal failure was the biggest category explaining anxiety ( $n = 11$ , 10.3%). For instance, making mistakes, not understanding something correctly and forgetting words were mentioned. The example below illustrates a typical answer in this category:

(2) En ymmärtänyt kuulemaani kysymystä ja vastasin täysin pieleen.

'I didn't understand the question and gave a totally wrong answer.'

### **C. Specific classroom activities**

Specific classroom activities ( $n = 8$ , 7.5%) were relatively frequently mentioned. Speaking aloud in class, conversing and grammar were recognized as anxiety-provoking. Example 3 describes a situation where the participant feels anxious about sharing personal matters, but feels pressure to do so:

(3) Silloin kun täytyy puhua henkilökohtaisista asioista, koska koen, että jo[r]ain täytyy sanoa.

'When I have to talk about personal matters, because I feel that I need to say something.'

### **D. Poor preparation**

Poor preparation has caused anxiety to some degree ( $n = 7$ , 6.5%). Having done the wrong homework, not having done it at all and having to speak about a topic which should be familiar but is not, was described as anxiety-provoking.

(4) Olin lukenut väärän läksyn, enkä osannut sanastoa.

'I had read the wrong homework and didn't know the vocabulary.'

### **E. Lack of skills**

Lack of skills ( $n = 5$ , 4.7%) was on the lower part of explaining variables. Not being able to express oneself or answer a question, or not having the skills to do homework were typical in this category.

(5) Mitään yhtä tiettyä tilannetta en muista, yleensä on ahdistavaa jos ei ymmärrä opettajan puhetta, tai ei osaa vastata kysymykseen.

‘I can’t remember a specific situation, usually it is anxiety-provoking if I can’t understand what the teacher says or if I can’t answer a question.’

#### **F. Other**

Replies not fitting any of the other categories were listed here (n = 5, 4.7%). Some participants did not feel anxiety but rather some other emotions. A few referred to things related to Covid-19’s effect on learning.

- (6) En juuri koe oloani ahdistuneeksi, joskus vähän hämmentyneeksi, jos en ole yhtään selvillä, mitä esim kysytään. Luotan kuitenkin siihen, että voin tarkentaa mitä minun pitäisi yrittää sanoa ja samoin luotan siihen, että voin ryhmässä olla oma itseni, opiskelija, joka on vasta oppimassa.

‘I don’t feel much anxiety, sometimes I feel a little confused if I have no idea what is for example being asked. However, I trust that I can specify what I’m supposed to try to say and likewise I trust that I can be myself in the group. A student that is still learning.’

#### **G. Teacher**

Not many (n = 3, 2.8%) identified the teacher as the source of anxiety, but a few participants felt that the teacher used too advanced vocabulary. One participant was not happy with the teacher's effort in general, as example 7 shows.

- (7) Kysyessään minulta mielipidettäni eräästä asiasta opettaja käytti muutamia sellaisia sanoja, jo[u]ta em[n]e olleet aiemmin opetelleet ja joita en ymmärtänyt.

‘While asking my opinion on a certain matter, the teacher used a few words that we had not learned previously and that I did not understand.’

#### **H. Peers**

Peers were not seen as a big source of anxiety (n = 3, 2.8%). Two participants mentioned the group in general and in example 8, one participant mentioned a single peer as anxiety-provoking.

- (8) Ryhmässä on hyvin tietäviä ja puheliaita ihmisiä, en aina saa suunvuoroa

‘There are skilled and talkative people in the group, I don’t always get a word in.’

#### 4.2.2 FLE

Participants answered the following question: “Describe a situation when you especially enjoyed the class?”. The qualitative part of the FLE questionnaire received 108 answers producing 1065 words; on average the responses were very much the same length as in FLA: about 10 words ( $M = 9.9$  words). The responses were categorized into eight categories. Table 7 introduces them in a descending order according to frequency.

**Table 7** Source of foreign language enjoyment divided into categories in a descending order based on frequency

Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I. Specific classroom activities	36	33.3
J. Personal success	20	18.5
K. Acquiring skills	15	13.9
L. Teacher	12	11.1
M. Peers	11	10.2
N. Other	10	9.3
O. Good preparation	2	1.9
P. No FLE	2	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>

FLE = Foreign Language Enjoyment

Next, results to research question 2 b) are provided. As Table FLE shows, the top variables explaining FLE in this group were *specific classroom activities*, *personal success* and *acquiring skills*. *Teacher* and *peers* were also mentioned quite frequently. Only 1.9% ( $n = 2$ ) reported they had no specific situations that had evoked FLE in class. Like in the previous subsection, the next part offers quotations from the participants and gives other examples from each category.

##### **I. Specific classroom activities**

About a third ( $n = 36$ , 33.3%) of the participants especially enjoyed specific classroom activities, of which conversing with peers and/or the teacher was mentioned most frequently ( $n = 23$ ). Other activities mentioned were for example working in groups or pairs, listening activities, and playing games. Some described a specific occurrence like in example 9, but some replied on a more general level.

(9) Kävimme läpi työelämään liittyviä termejä. Kiva oppia uutta.

‘We went through work-related terms. It is nice to learn something new.’

### **J. Personal success**

Personal success was a remarkable source of enjoyment (n = 20, 18.5%). The participants described situations such as understanding spoken English and getting an answer right in class or having done homework correctly.

(10) Useinkin pari-/ryhmäkeskustelussa tulee onnistumisen kokemuksia huomattessani, että osaan ilmaista ajatuksiani englanniksi ja vieläpä ymmärrävästi.

‘I often get feelings of accomplishment in pair-/group discussions, when I notice I can express my thoughts in English, and in an understandable fashion, no less.’

### **K. Acquiring skills**

Learning the English language, in other words, acquiring skills, was often (n = 15, 13.9%) mentioned as a source of FLE. Making progress, learning new expressions and especially the moments when the progress becomes noted were described as enjoyable.

(11) Kun huomaan oppineeni jonkun uuden asian. Onnistumisen ilo!

‘When I notice that I have learned something new. The joy of success!’

### **L. Teacher**

Teacher was mentioned approximately in every ten of the answers (n = 12, 11.1%). Teachers received a lot of praise, and example 12 goes to show that a FL teacher can increase enjoyment by being encouraging. Teachers also received praise for sharing stories, having a good sense of humour and being supportive.

(12) Opettajan kehaisu, niin lapselliselta kuin se kuulostaakin.

‘A compliment from the teacher, as childish as it sounds like.’

### **M. Peers**

Peers was mentioned almost as often as the teacher (n = 11, 10.2%) Sharing stories, funny moments, and having open and even deep discussions were a source of enjoyment.

(13) Nautin yleisesti hyvistä keskusteluista yhteisesti sopimistamme aiheista. Esille tulee aina erilaisia mielipiteitä ja näkökulmia. Lisäksi ryhmässämme vallitsee hyvä huumori.



‘I generally enjoy good conversations on topics that we have decided on together. Different opinions and views always come out. Additionally, there is good humour in our group.’

#### **N. Other**

Some answers were categorised as “other” (n = 10, 9.3%). More general replies, like in example 14, were listed in this category. Some were not able to point out a specific situation, while as in example 14, the general feeling was still positive.

(14) Jokainen tunti on yhtä mukava. En osaa eritellä.

‘Every class is pleasant. I can not specify.’

#### **O. Good preparation**

Only two (n = 2, 1.9%) replies described good preparation as a source of enjoyment. It seems that poor preparation is a relatively big influence on the amount of FLA, but good preparation is not often mentioned in connection to FLE. Then again, example 15 could also have been categorized under personal success, which goes to show that the lines of the categories are sometimes blurry.

(15) Kun olin valmistellut läksyni hyvin, ja osasin kertoa käsiteltävän aiheen omin sanoin.

‘When I had prepared my homework well and knew how to introduce the matter at hand in my own words.’

#### **P. No FLE**

Likewise, only two (n = 2, 1.9%) were categorized as not having felt enjoyment.

(16) Mieleen ei tule mitään erityistä tilannetta[.]

‘No specific situation comes to mind.’

Other sources of enjoyment that were mentioned were the importance of social relations that English classes provided. Many funny incidents were recalled. Because age was a central focus point of this study, it must be acknowledged that the age of the participants was referred to by themselves, as well. Some mentioned their memory functions and forgetting familiar words, which could be interpreted as related to aging. Memory came up regarding both FLA and FLE. For example, one participant wrote:

(17) Ei aina muisteta kenen vuoro on seuraavaksi vastata.  
Ikä tekee joskus tepposia.

‘We don’t always remember whose turn it is to answer next. Age sometimes does its tricks.’

Since example 17 was given as an answer to most enjoyable experience, it can be interpreted as being a humorous occurrence. Then again, a few felt it anxiety-provoking to forget words:

(18) Harmittaa kun huomaa unohtaneensa tuttuja sanoja

‘It gets to me when I notice I’ve forgotten familiar words.’

One participant in the over-70-year-old group reflected on their age and learning in this insightful manner:

(19) Tässä iässä pitää olla armollinen itselleen. Oppiminen ei ole enää helppoa.  
Kun tekee parhaansa, sen täytyy riittää, niin minä sen ajattelen. En ole ahdistunut enkä aio olla tulevaisuudessakaan.

‘At this age you must be compassionate with yourself. Learning is not easy anymore. When you do your best, it must be enough, that is what I think. I am not anxious and do not plan on being in the future, either.’

To conclude, this section has introduced the demographic, quantitative and qualitative results. Both the quantitative and qualitative results showed that the participants had experienced more FLE than FLA. The qualitative results revealed multiple variables that affected FLA and FLE. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses will be combined and discussed further in the next section.

## 5 Discussion

This section discusses the results presented in the previous section. The quantitative and qualitative results are discussed with the research questions and earlier studies in mind. First, the aim of the study is recapitulated, and general results are briefly described. After that, one subsection is dedicated to each research question. Limitations of the study are also acknowledged, and the section ends with a short reflection on possible future research.

The aim of the study was to find out how much older Finnish learners of L2 English in non-formal education experience FLA and FLE. Furthermore, the study intended to find out what kinds of variables most caused these emotions. To gather data, the study employed a demographic questionnaire and scales used in previous studies, namely the S-FLCAS and the S-FLES, accompanied by two open-ended questions inviting participant to describe situations when they especially felt anxiety or enjoyment.

As a sidenote it may be worth acknowledging that during the time of data collection, COVID-19, a coronavirus, was having an impact on society and the virus was also mentioned in a couple of answers (two in FLA and three in FLE, to be precise). Because of the virus, some teaching had to be carried out as distance-learning, which some participants had found taxing. On the other hand, FLL was also seen as a resource amidst the difficult situation caused by the virus. However, during the time of data collection, the epidemic had stalled, and all learners had apparently been present in the physical class, as well. Next, the research questions will be answered, each in their own subsection.

### 5.1 Amount of FLA and FLE

The first research question was as follows: How much do older learners of L2 English experience a) FLA and b) FLE? Additionally, the aim was to find out if FLA and FLE correlated. The quantitative part of the present study was designed to answer these questions. To answer the first research question: the participants experienced both emotions, but significantly more FLE than FLA. Put simply, the mean score for FLA was low ( $M = 2.1$ ) and the mean score for FLE was high ( $M = 4.2$ ). The standard deviations for FLA ( $sd = 0.83$ ) and FLE ( $sd = 0.71$ ) showed that there was not much difference in the variety of results between the emotions, but FLA showed a slightly broader spectrum in scores. Qualitative results support these conclusions in the way that most participants ( $n = 107, 60.7\%$ ) reported not to have experienced situations in their English classes that would have especially evoked anxiety

in them, or they reported more generally to never feel anxiety in class. It is possible that this is at least partly a result of the form of education. If the learners experienced immense amounts of FLA, they would likely tend to avoid situations where they are expected to learn a language. This was also brought up by the participants themselves in the open-ended replies: many referred to the voluntariness of learning. And as the other side of the coin, it can be assumed that these participants experience a lot of FLE because they have chosen to participate in voluntary English education in their free time. Only 1.9% of the sample claimed to *not* have felt FLE or not to remember a specific situation that especially evoked FLE, which can be interpreted to mean that 98.1% did feel FLE.

When it comes to correlation between the two emotions, the results showed a statistically significant moderate negative correlation ( $n = 112$ ,  $r = -0.44$ ,  $p = <0.001$ ). This means that the two emotions change in opposite directions: when a participant experiences high amounts of the other emotion, they are moderately likely to experience low amounts of the other. Similar results have been obtained by previous studies on younger students (Dewaele and MacIntyre 2014, Dewaele and Li 2020, Bensalem 2021). The results of the present study are valuable because they highlight that older learners seem to have similar experiences as younger learners, and thus they would likely benefit from similar efforts at reducing FLA and increasing FLE.

As a secondary notion, it was found that gender or age did not play a significant role in the amount of FLA or FLE. Females had experienced a little more FLE, but the difference was not statistically significant. Previous studies have had mixed results: some have found only minimal differences or no differences at all between genders (Dewaele and MacIntyre 2013, Bensalem 2021). Relatively many studies have found females to experience more FLA (Cheng 2002, Zhao and Whitchurch 2011, Dewaele and MacIntyre 2014), while females seem to experience also more FLE according to some studies (Dewaele et al. 2016, Dewaele et al. 2018). There was no statistical difference between FLA or FLE between 50-70-year-olds and over-70-year-olds. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 253) suggest that FLE tends to rise for older learners, and in their study, they found that participants in their forties had “significantly higher FLE scores than all younger groups” but after that the scores did not further increase (ibid.). Older learners scoring high in FLE showed in the present study as well: the amount of FLE experienced turned out to be remarkably high.

## 5.2 Variables associated with FLA and FLE

The second research question was as follows: What are the variables that are most associated with a) FLA and b) FLE? Results of the S-FLCAS and S-FLES are discussed together with the qualitative results. The two qualitative questions invited participants to share instances in class that had especially brought them anxiety and enjoyment. They were a mandatory part of the questionnaires and thus elicited a lot of responses, providing intriguing illustrations of the varying experiences of the participants. For clarity purposes, this subsection follows the same structure as the Results-section, discussing FLA and FLE separately.

### 5.2.1 FLA

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope used test anxiety, communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation as analogies to FLA. Overall, these dimensions can be seen in the result of the present study. Only test anxiety was not seen in the results: tests are seldom used in the context of adult-education centre teaching. To answer the second research question, the variables most associated with a) FLA were personal failure ( $n = 11$ , 10.3%), specific classroom activities ( $n = 8$ , 7.5%) and poor preparation ( $n = 7$ , 6.5%). Perhaps the most noticeable result must be pointed out: it turned out that most participants ( $n = 65$ , 60.7%) claimed to not have experienced, or not to remember situations that especially evoked FLA. Next, the most frequent variables explaining FLA in the present study are discussed.

*Personal failure* was the largest category of variables causing FLA. Participants described situations where they had forgotten familiar words, made mistakes, or had understood something incorrectly. *Specific classroom activities* that had caused FLA also included mostly activities that required speaking the L2. Speaking is generally found anxiety-provoking (for example Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986, Von Wörde 1998, Lintunen and Skaffari 2014). This came up also in the Peers-category: one participant had felt that the skilled and talkative people in the group prevent her from speaking as much. MacIntyre (2017, 21) has listed social causes as one of the causes of FLA. However, peers and teachers were seldom directly mentioned in the open-ended replies of the present study. Then again, this is not surprising in the light of previous studies because it has been demonstrated, for example, that attitude towards the teacher does little on the amount of FLA experienced by learners (Dewaele et al. 2018, Pan and Zhang 2021). The *poor preparation-category* can also be seen as belonging under the wider umbrella-term of fear of negative evaluation. The open-ended replies

described not having prepared properly and as a result, experiencing anxiety because of being exposed as not having satisfactory language skills. MacIntyre (2017, 21) has also listed “perceived lack of sufficient language skills” as one of the causes of FLA.

What was noteworthy in the S-FCLAS scale is that the two most agreed upon statements had, again, to do with speaking; more precisely feeling insecure while speaking ( $M = 3.1$ ) and feeling that others speak the FL better ( $M = 2.4$ ). As Young (1990, 545) claimed, it is not so much about the speaking itself, but fear of exposure that causes language learners the most anxiety. This idea is supported also by the open-ended responses of the present study, because speaking had undoubtedly caused the participants FLA; especially because they had said something incorrectly *in front of their peers and teacher*. At the same time many mentioned conversations with a pair or in a group or conversing in general ( $n = 19$ ) to be the most *enjoyable* aspect of their language learning. Perhaps when speaking works out as intended and the learner does not judge themselves too harshly, speaking the FL can be enjoyable instead of anxiety-provoking. Indeed, it must be acknowledged that in addition to the open-ended data regarding FLE, also the data for FLA seemed to, in part, highlight that attending English classes in their free time was fulfilling and even an important part of their lives for some participants. This reinforces the general results of the present study.

### 5.2.2 FLE

Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016, 233) concluded that FLE has two dimensions: social and private, whereas Botes, Dewaele and Greiff (2021, 858) have found FLE to have three factors: teacher appreciation, personal enjoyment, and social enjoyment. If we look at the results of the present study, all three dimensions were present, often inside the same reply. Even though for example personal success can be interpreted as representing personal enjoyment, the replies often described successes occurring in social context. To answer research question 2 b), the variables most associated with FLE were specific classroom activities ( $n = 36, 33.3\%$ ), personal success ( $n = 20, 18.5\%$ ) and acquiring skills ( $n = 15, 13.9\%$ ). These largest categories are discussed next.

Speaking was the biggest source of FLE for these participants. This is supported by the findings of previous studies that have shown the amount of time speaking FL by the learners themselves increases FLE (Dewaele et al. 2018). The most frequently mentioned *specific classroom activity* in the present study was conversing, and pair and group work were enjoyable to many. Correspondingly, *personal success* was frequently experienced in context

of conversations with others. *Acquiring skills*, on the other hand, can be seen as solely private enjoyment. Many enjoyed simply learning something new, while some enjoyed learning something specific, such as pronunciation.

When it comes to the results of S-FLES, they looked very different from those of S-FLCAS: with a glance it is obvious that the scores were much higher. The most agreed upon statements had to do with the teacher being friendly ( $M = 4.8$ ,  $sd = 0.4$ ), encouraging ( $M = 4.6$ ,  $sd = 0.6$ ) and supportive ( $M = 4.6$ ,  $sd = 0.6$ ). The former item also had the lowest standard deviation. Concerning the three factors of FLE (Botes, Dewaele and Greiff, 2021), the S-FLES showed that teacher appreciation was the biggest source of FLE and second most FLE stemmed from personal enjoyment, while the least FLE stemmed from peers. However, all these dimensions received high scores. Even the lowest scoring item in the whole scale had the mean of 3.2, while also having the highest variation ( $sd = 1.0$ ).

Previous studies (Dewaele et al. 2018, Dewaele and Dewaele 2020) have found that teacher influences FLE and it seems like these participants have had mostly positive experiences with their teachers. In the present study, 11,1% ( $n = 12$ ) of the participants had written about their teacher when inquired about an episode that especially evoked FLE. The participants had mentioned things like the teacher taking part in conversations, being helpful, creating a good atmosphere and being thorough in teaching grammar. The overall results seem to imply what previous studies have found as well: teacher may have only limited power to reduce FLA, but they have a lot of control over the FLE experienced by the FL learners (Dewaele, Saito and Halimi 2022). An encouraging, funny, supportive teacher seems to increase enjoyment in these participants. Additionally, specific classroom activities were mentioned as especially enjoyable by 33.3% ( $n = 36$ ) of the participants. Naturally the teachers are bound by guidelines, but they still have power to choose what kinds of classroom activities to utilize in class, which increases their influence in increasing FLE. Many of the participants in the present study had enjoyed conversations and pair- or groupwork. Earlier studies have found conversational topics to have an impact on FLE (Shirvan and Talebzadeh 2017, 34). What is more, because majority of previous studies have concentrated on younger learners, the results of the present study imply that the teachers' noticeable role in FLE may be typical for both younger and older learners.

One interesting aspect was humour, which was mentioned by the participants in their descriptions of enjoyable moments in class. The participants appreciated humour coming

from the teacher, as well as “good humour” amongst the whole class, and some described funny occurrences as their particularly enjoyable moments. This is supported by previous studies, because for example, Dewaele, Saito and Halimi (2022) have found teacher’s joking to play a role in FLE, and Pan and Zhang (2021) have suggested that class atmosphere has an impact on FLE. Participants in the present study had described the atmosphere in their English class as, for example “fair and friendly”.

What was interesting about the overall qualitative results was that in the top two of the most mentioned categories was specific classroom activities and personal failure/success for both FLA and FLE. A conclusion can be drawn that these aspects of SLA cause a lot of emotions in learners, at least in this context. All in all, these results imply that older learners do not experience a lot of anxiety in their L2 class. However, speaking in front of the class and some class activities are anxiety-provoking to some older learners of English.

The participants of this study had experienced a lot of FLE and many class activities were seen as enjoyable, especially conversing. Many participants referred to their age in the open-ended replies. Their more mature age was seen both as a nuisance and an asset in their FLL. There was an understanding that learning is not easy anymore, and on the other hand, being still able to learn elicited enjoyment. The next subsection discusses the limitations of the present study, followed by a brief note on possible future research.

### **5.3 Limitations**

This subsection discusses the limitations of the present study. First, there was an inevitable self-selection bias, because as Dewaele (2016, 48-49) says, those who answer a questionnaire about language learning are more likely to be satisfied language learners. This is difficult to control when administering an online questionnaire. An online questionnaire and snowball-sampling has other benefits when compared to, say, collecting responses from the same class of learners (Larson-Hall 2015, 61). This way the respondents came from a variety of classes and have different teachers and peers. However, this study uses volunteers as participants, which adds to the positive bias, making the results not fully representative of the population of older L2 English learners studying English in their free time, because it excludes for example people who would never participate in a survey (ibid.)

The questionnaires had to be translated to Finnish, and that may impact the reliability of the results. However, translations have been used in many other studies as well. The original



English versions of the items could have been included in the questionnaires. Furthermore, dividing the qualitative results into categories was not always straight-forward and other interpretations could have been made.

The biggest limitation of the study has to do with collecting the demographic data. First, English language skills could have been inquired to make the results more comparable to previous studies. While trying to limit the demographic questions to what was necessary, this potentially relevant information was left out. What is more, there were problems in gathering information about the ages of the participants. The questionnaire accidentally had options worded for example 50-55-year-olds and 55-to-60-year-olds which made it possible for, for example, a 55-year-old participant to choose either of those groups. Because of this error, it was ultimately impossible to form reliable age groups that would have been more specific than under- and over 70-year-olds.

These limitations make it difficult to generalize the results, and this study is best seen as a part of emerging studies on positive emotion research in SLA, as well as FLA and FLE of older adults. On the other hand, this study has nevertheless offered valuable information about the emotions of a unique group of language learners.

## 6 Conclusion

This Master's Thesis has investigated the amount of FLA and FLE that older learners of L2 English studying in adult education centres in Finland experience. Furthermore, the Thesis aimed to find what kinds of variables had especially caused these emotions. The study employed a mixed-method approach, using scales that have been found reliable and used in previous studies and complemented them with open-ended questions.

The results showed that the participants had experienced significantly more FLE ( $M = 4.2$ ) than FLA ( $M = 21.$ ) and the results were in a negative correlation. The open-ended results provided interesting examples of situations that had especially caused FLA and FLE. The replies of the open-ended questions were divided into eight categories developed for each emotion. The replies showed that most participants had not experienced situations that would have especially caused them FLA. Variables that had most caused FLA were personal failure, specific classroom activities and poor preparation. It seemed that failure and fear of negative evaluations were quite prevalent in these learners. The variables behind FLE were diverse. Most FLE had stemmed from specific classroom activities, personal success and acquiring new skills. It turned out that speaking in class had caused a lot of both FLA and FLE. Learning new language skills was enjoyable to many, and many had found their peers good company and class atmosphere supporting. As for practical implications, the results implied what previous studies have shown as well: that the teacher may not have a lot of power to reduce FLA but has more influence to induce FLE. Being supportive, using humour and taking part in conversations seemed to increase FLE in the present study.

This study was not without limitations, but all in all the results still offered valuable information. The results indicate that learning L2 English in their spare time seems to induce a lot of FLE in older learners of English. Many had described the classes as important to them. Some felt that learning a language in a more mature age called for some compassion, because learning might be more challenging. Indeed, age was seen both as an asset as well as a hindrance. Moreover, performing well in class and learning something new were understandably enjoyable to many. This stands to show that providing opportunities to learn L2 English for learners of over 50-years of age can even improve their quality of life. In the future, it would be interesting to repeat this study on younger learners to see how age affects the results and if age brought on more positive emotions toward FLL. Moreover, more SLA

and emotion studies could focus on older language learners, because FLL has no age limit, and it is worth investigating in learners of all ages.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Privacy notice for participants

Kuvaus henkilötietojen käsittelystä tieteellisessä tutkimuksessa/Tietosuojasetus EU (679/2016) 12-14, 30 artikla

#### TIETOSUOJAILMOITUS TUTKIMUKSESTA TUTKIMUKSEEN OSALLISTUVALLE Kevät 2022

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Kyselyyn osallistuminen kestää n. 5-10 minuuttia.

#### 1. TUTKIMUS

Pro Gradu-tutkielma Turun Yliopistossa, aihe: "Personality, learning anxiety and learning enjoyment in adult learners of L2 English".

#### 2. TUTKIMUKSESTA VASTAAVAT TAHOT

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Kiitos osallistumisesta!

## **Appendix 2 Short-form Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, S-FLCAS (MacIntyre 1992) and Finnish translation**

In the foreign language class:

1. Even if I am well prepared for FL class, I feel anxious about it
2. I always feel that the other students speak the FL better than I do
3. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in FL class
4. I don't worry about making mistakes in FL class (reverse coded)
5. I feel confident when I speak in FL class (reverse coded)
6. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my FL class
7. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in FL class
8. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my FL class

Vieraan kielen oppitunnilla:

1. Vaikka olisin valmistautunut oppituntiin hyvin, se tuntuu ahdistavalta
2. Minusta tuntuu aina, että muut oppilaat puhuvat opetettavaa kieltä paremmin kuin minä
3. Tunnen sydämeni lyönnit, kun on tulossa minun vuoroni puhua
4. En ole huolissani virheiden tekemisestä
5. Tunnen oloni itsevarmaksi kun puhun opetettavaa kieltä
6. Tulen hermostuneeksi ja hämmentyneeksi kun puhun opetettavaa kieltä
7. Alan panikoida, kun minun täytyy puhua opetettavaa kieltä valmistautumatta
8. Minua nolottaa vastata kysymykseen vapaaehtoisesti

### **Appendix 3 Short-Form Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale, S-FLES (Botes, Dewaele and Greiff 2021) and Finnish translation**

In the foreign language class:

1. The teacher is encouraging
2. The teacher is friendly
3. The teacher is supportive
4. I enjoy it
5. I've learned interesting things
6. I am proud of my accomplishments
7. We form a tight group
8. We laugh a lot
9. We have common 'legends,' such as running jokes

Vieraan kielen oppitunneilla:

1. Opettaja on rohkaiseva
2. Opettaja on ystävällinen
3. Opettaja on kannustava
4. Nautin oppitunneista
5. Olen oppinut mielenkiintoisia asioita
6. Olen ylpeä saavutuksistani
7. Muodostamme tiiviin porukan
8. Nauramme paljon
9. Meillä on yhteisiä juttuja, kuten vakiintuneita vitsejä

## Appendix 6 Open-ended questions in Finnish and English

1. Kerro yhdestä tilanteesta, jolloin koit olosi erityisen ahdistuneeksi oppitunnilla.

*Describe a situation when you felt especially anxious in class.*

2. Kerro yhdestä tilanteesta, jolloin erityisesti nautit oppitunnista.

*Describe a situation when you especially enjoyed the class.*

## Appendix 7 Finnish Summary

### Johdanto

Yksi kielen oppimisen tutkijoiden mielenkiinnon kohteista on yksilölliset erot oppijoiden välillä. Merkittävimpiä oppimiseen vaikuttavia tekijöitä on oppijoiden kokemat opiskeluun liittyvät tunteet, ja tutkimus niihin liittyen on lisääntymään päin. Erityisesti negatiiviset tunteet ovat olleet suurennuslasin alla, vaikkakin myös positiivisetkin tunteet ovat saaneet enenevässä määrin huomiota viime vuosikymmenen aikana.

Tämän pro gradu- tutkielman tavoitteena oli selvittää kuinka paljon englantia vieraana kielenä opiskelevat, ikääntyneet suomalaiset kokevat vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta (*Foreign Language Anxiety, FLA*) ja vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää nautintoa (*Foreign Language Enjoyment, FLE*). Lisäksi tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, minkälaiset oppimiseen liittyvät tekijät aiheuttivat oppijoille erityisen paljon ahdistusta ja nautintoa. Tässä tutkimuksessa ikääntyneiksi aikuisiksi määriteltiin yli 50-vuotiaat. Tutkimukseen osallistuneet opiskelivat aineiston keräämiseen aikaan, keväällä 2022, kansalaisopistoissa ympäri Suomen. Kansalaisopistoissa opiskelu perustuu vapaaehtoisuuteen ja tapahtuu oppijoiden vapaa-ajalla.

Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvällä ahdistuksella on havaittu olevan negatiivisia vaikutuksia oppimistuloksiin. Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvä ahdistus näyttäytyy fyysisinä ja psyykkisinä reaktioina, jotka muistuttavat yleisen ahdistuneisuuden oireita. Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvä nautinto puolestaan näyttäytyy oppimiseen liittyvänä ilona sekä sitoutumisena. Se lisää oppijan hyvinvointia ja parantaa oppimistuloksia (Boudreau, MacIntyre ja Dewaele 2018, 152).

Tutkimuskysymykset joihin tämä pro gradu- tutkielma pyrki vastaamaan, olivat seuraavanlaiset:

1. Kuinka paljon vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää a) ahdistusta ja b) nautintoa ikääntyneet suomenkieliset englanninoppijat kokevat?
2. Mitkä ovat taustatekijöitä, jotka erityisesti aiheuttavat vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää a) ahdistusta ja b) nautintoa näille oppijoille?

Tässä tutkimuksessa käytettiin sekä kvantitatiivisia että kvalitatiivisia tutkimusmenetelmiä, jotta saatiin mahdollisimman kattava katsaus aiheeseen. Näin menetellen oli mahdollista myös täydentää numeraalisia tuloksia oppijoiden omin sanoin kertomilla kokemuksilla.

### **Teoreettinen viitekehys**

#### *Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvä ahdistus*

Ahdistus on negatiivinen tunne joka liittyy läheisesti pelkoon. Ahdistuksen tunteella ei välttämättä ole selvää lähdettä, vaan se on pikemminkin hahmoton ilmiö (Rachman 2013, 3). Oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta alettiin tutkia jo 1970-luvulla, mutta virallisesti sen määritteli ja nimesi Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope vuonna 1986. He antoivat sille nimeksi *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety* (FLCA tai FLA). He päättelivät sen olevan yleisestä ahdistuneisuudesta erillinen ilmiö, joka liittyi nimenomaan kielen oppimiseen. Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope (1986) kehittivät myös työkalun vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvän ahdistuksen määrän mittaamiseen. Se oli nimeltään *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS). Se oli 33-kohtainen kysely, joka pohjautui Likert-asteikkoon. Myöhemmin kyselystä on tehty lyhyempi, kahdeksan kohdan versio nimeltään *Short-form Foreign Language Anxiety Scale* (S-FLCAS) (Dewaele ja MacIntyre 2014).

Vieraan kielen opiskelu on eittämättä haastavaa ja esimerkiksi virheiden tekeminen voi tuntua kovin henkilökohtaiselta. Vieraan kielen oppiminen on kenties uniikilla tavalla sidottu itseilmaisuuksiin ja käsitykseen itsestä (Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope 1986, 128). Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvä ahdistus voi estää oppijaa keskittymästä oppimiseen, koska ahdistus saa kiinnittämään liiaksi huomiota emotionaaliseen tilaan tai fyysisiin oireisiin, kuten äänen pärinänsä tai nopeaan sykkeeseen. Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta esiintyy kaikilla kielen oppimisen osa-alueilla, mutta etenkin se korostuu vierasta kieltä puhuttaessa (MacIntyre 2017, 18-19).

Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvällä ahdistuksella on tutkimusten mukaan taustallaan tekijöitä, jotka liittyvät sekä oppijaan itseensä että muihin ihmisiin oppimisympäristössä, kuin myös oppijan kokemukseen riittämättömästä kielitaidosta (MacIntyre 2017, 21).

Ahdistuksella on akateemisia, kognitiivisia ja sosiaalisia seurauksia; esimerkiksi huonompaa suoriutumista (MacIntyre 2017, 17), muiden mielipiteistä murehtimista (Luo 2013, 451) ja kommunikoinnin välttämistä (Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope 1986, 128). On tärkeää selvittää minkälaiset oppijat kokevat oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta ja minkälaisissa tilanteissa (ibid.),

jotta ahdistusta voitaisiin pyrkiä lievittämään ja siten parantaa sekä oppijoiden omaa oloa, että heidän oppimistuloksiaan.

### *Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvä nautinto*

Tunteisiin ei vieraan kielen tutkimuksessa juurikaan kiinnitetty huomiota ennen kuin ahdistuksen vaikutuksista kiinnostuttiin. Paljon myöhemmin, positiivisen psykologian innoittamana, alettiin pikkuhiljaa kiinnostua myös positiivisten tunteiden vaikutuksesta kielen oppimiseen (Dewaele ja Li 2020, 4). Vuonna 2014 Dewaele ja MacIntyre esittelivät vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvän nautinnon (*Foreign Language Enjoyment, FLE*) käsitteen.

Nautinnon tunne liittyy läheisesti mielihyvän tunteeseen mutta on kuitenkin siitä erillinen. Mielihyvää voi saada esimerkiksi suorittamalla jonkin tehtävän, kun taas nautinnossa on lisäksi muitakin piireitä, kuten optimaalisen tasoinen haaste ja lisääntynyt keskittyminen (Boudreau, MacIntyre ja Dewaele 2018, 153). Dewaelen ja MacIntyren mukaan nautinnon lähteenä on myös ihmisten välisten suhteiden kehittäminen sekä päämäärien tavoittelussa edistyminen, ja heidän mukaansa nämä molemmat korostuvat kielen oppimisessa (Dewaele ja MacIntyre 2014, 242). Dewaele ja MacIntyre kehittivät myös 21-kohtaisen Likertin asteikkoon pohjautuvan kyselyn jolla mitataan vieraan kielen oppimisen aiheuttaman nautinnon määrää (*Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale, FLES*). Siitä tehtiin myöhemmin lyhyempi yhdeksän kohdan versio (*Short form Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale, S-FLES*) (Botes, Dewaele ja Greiff 2021).

Vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää nautintoa on tutkittu pääasiallisesti yhdessä vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvän ahdistuksen kanssa. Tutkimuksissa on tunnistettu esimerkiksi opettajan tärkeä roolin nautinnon lisäämisessä oppitunneilla (Dewaele ja Dewaele 2020). On myös huomattu, että nautinnon tunne voi suojata vieraan kielen oppijaa negatiivisilta tunteilta ja lisätä oppimiseen sitoutumista (Boudreau, MacIntyre ja Dewaele 2018, 152), sekä parantaa oppimistuloksia (Li ja Wei 2021, 12). Positiivisten sosiaalisten tekijöiden, kuten suopean suhtautumisen opettajaan (Dewaele et al. 2018, 686) ja luokan hyvän ilmapiirin (Pan ja Zhang 2021, 8) on havaittu lisäävän vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää nautintoa.

Kiteytettynä, vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta on tutkittu runsaasti, jo 1970-luvulta lähtien, kun taas vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvän nautintoa vasta 2010-luvulta lähtien. Nautinnon tutkimisen määrä tässä kontekstissa on lisääntynyt vasta viime vuosina. Aiemmat tutkimukset ovat kuitenkin keskittyneet nuorempiin, lähinnä peruskoulu- ja

yliopistotasolla opiskeleviin ihmisiin. Vanhempi väestö on jäänyt tässä kontekstissa käytännössä huomiotta. Lisäksi vieraan kielen oppimiseen ja nautintoon liittyvää tutkimusta ei ole juurikaan tehty Suomessa aiemmin.

### **Aineisto ja menetelmät**

Tämän tutkimuksen aineistona käytettiin oppijoiden vastauksia kahteen kyselyyn (S-FLCAS ja S-FLES), joita molempia täydensi avoimet kysymykset. Sekä S-FLCAS että S-FLES ovat tutkimuksissa todettu luotettaviksi mittareiksi (Botes et al. 2021, 31 ja Botes, Dewaele ja Greiff 2021, 871-872). Avoimet kysymykset kehottivat osallistujia kuvailemaan yhtä tilannetta, jossa he erityisesti kokivat vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta tai nautintoa. Tämän tutkimuksen kohderyhmä olivat yli 50-vuotiaat suomalaiset, jotka osallistuvat kansalaisopiston tarjoamille englannin kielen kursseille. Otanta tuli eri puolilta Suomea: kyselylomakkeet lähetettiin neljäänkymmeneen kuntaan (Suomessa on 309 kuntaa). Tutkimuksen kohderyhmän rajallinen englannin kielen taito vaikutti kuitenkin siten, että kaikki kyselyt oli käännettävä suomen kielelle, mikä pitää huomioida tuloksia tarkastellessa. Kyselyt pilotoitiin ja tutkimukseen osallistujia informoitiin tutkimuksen tarkoituksesta sekä henkilötietojen käsittelystä. Osallistujilta kerättiin vain tietoja, jotka olivat välttämättömiä tutkimuksen toteuttamiselle. Jotta saataisiin laajempi käsitys tutkittavasta aiheesta, pidetään useamman kuin yhden tutkimusmenetelmän käyttöä hyödyllisenä (Dörnyei 2022, 110), ja niinpä tutkimuksessa käytettiin sekä kvantitatiivisia että kvalitatiivisia menetelmiä.

Kvantitatiivisen datan tarkoitus oli kertoa kuinka paljon osallistujat kokivat vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta ja nautintoa. Lisäksi haluttiin selvittää, korreloivatko nämä tunteet keskenään. Data analysoitiin käyttäen apuna Exceliä ja SPSS 29.0: a. Kaikille osallistujille annettiin numero välillä 1-112. Sukupuoli ja ikäryhmä koodattiin numeroilla 1 ja 2. Jokaisen osallistujan vieraan kielen kyselyihin pohjautuvan ahdistuksen ja nautinnon määrä laskettiin. Korkeat tulokset indikoivat molemmissa kyselyissä suurta määrää tunnetta. Parittaista t-testiä käytettiin selvittämään kumpaa tunnetta koettiin enemmän. Pearsonin korrelaatiokerroin laskettiin, jotta saatiin selville korreloiko osallistujien kokonaispistemäärä negatiivisesti tai positiivisesti. Lisäksi kahden riippuvan otoksen t-testejä käytettiin, kun haluttiin lisäksi selvittää onko sukupuolella tai ikäryhmällä vaikutusta kokonaispisteisiin.

Kvalitatiivisen datan tarkoitus oli kerätä tarkempaa tietoa osallistujien kokemasta vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvästä ahdistuksesta ja nautinnosta, sekä saada oppijoiden oma ääni kuuluviin. Vastausten analysoinnissa käytettiin laadullista sisällönanalyysia. Tässä



tutkimuksessa toimittiin kuten Dörnyei (2022, 99) neuvoo: ensin käytiin vastaukset läpi ja etsittiin erityisiä, toistuvia piirteitä. Sen jälkeen vastaukset ryhmiteltiin kategorioihin näiden havaintojen perusteella. Näin muodostettiin molempien tunteiden kohdalla yhteensä kahdeksan kategoriaa.

### **Tulokset ja pohdintaa**

Lopullinen otos sisälsi 112 osallistujaa. Yhteensä seitsemän osallistujaa jätettiin pois, koska he eivät sopineet kohderyhmään. Tämän kokoisen otoksen voidaan katsoa olevan riittävä tämänkaltaiseen tutkimukseen (Dörnyei 2022, 65). Osallistujista 77 (68.8%) ilmoitti sukupuolensa olevan nainen ja 35 (31.3%) ilmoitti sukupuolekseen mies.

Vastausvaihtoehdoksi annettiin myös “muu” ja “en halua sanoa”, mutta kukaan osallistujista ei valinnut näitä vaihtoehtoja. Lisäksi osallistujat jaettiin ikäryhmiin: alle 70-vuotiaisiin (n = 71, 63.4%) ja yli 70-vuotiaisiin (n = 41, 36.6%).

Seuraavana vastataan ensimmäiseen tutkimuskysymykseen; kuinka paljon vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää a) ahdistusta ja b) nautintoa ikääntyneet suomenkieliset englanninopiskelijat kokevat? Kaikkien osallistujien tulosten keskiarvo oli 2.1 (sd = 0.83) ahdistuksen osalta ja 4.2 (sd = 0.71) nautinnon osalta. Parittainen t-testi todisti, että osallistujat olivat kokeneet huomattavasti korkeampia määriä nautintoa kuin ahdistusta. Ahdistuksen määrä oli itse asiassa hyvin alhainen, minkä voidaan ajatella johtuvan ainakin osittain opiskelun vapaaehtoisuudesta. Toisaalta, koska osallistujat ovat päättäneet opiskella vapaa-ajallaan, he oletettavasti myös nauttivat opinnoistaan. Pearsonin korrelaatiokerroin osoitti, että vieraan kielen opiskelusta ahdistumisen ja nauttimisen kokemukset korreloivat negatiivisesti ja tulos oli tilastollisesti merkittävä (n = 112, r = -0.44, p = <0.001). Tämä indikoi, että korkeat pistemäärät toisen tunteen kokemisessa tarkoittavat matalia pistemääriä toisen tunteen kokemisessa, vaikkakaan korrelaatio ei ollut suuri.

Toissijaisena mielenkiinnon kohteena oli korrelatiivisten tulosten kohdalla se, kokevatko miehet tai naiset taikka jompikumpi ikäryhmä enemmän ahdistusta tai nautintoa vieraan kielen opinnoissaan. Aiemmissä tutkimuksissa tulokset ovat olleet ristiriitaisia. Joidenkin mukaan naiset kokevat enemmän ahdistusta (Cheng 2002, Dewaele ja MacIntyre 2014) ja myös nautintoa opinnoissaan (Dewaele et al. 2016), mutta toisten mukaan sukupuolten välillä ei ole havaittu merkittäviä eroja (Bensalem 2021). Vanhempia opiskelijoita ei juurikaan ole tutkittu, mutta (Dewaele ja MacIntyre 2014. 253) havaitsi, että opinnoista nauttimisen määrä näytti kasvavan 40-vuotiaaksi saakka, jonka jälkeen tulokset tasoittuivat. Tämän tutkimuksen

tuloksissa ei havaittu tilastollisesti merkittäviä eroja miesten ja naisten (FLA:  $df = 110$ ,  $t = 1.002$ ,  $p = 0.320$ , FLE:  $df = 110$ ,  $t = -1.726$ ,  $p = 0.087$ ) tai ikäryhmien (FLA:  $df = 110$ ,  $t = 1.174$ ,  $p = 0.243$  ja FLE:  $df = 110$ ,  $t = 0.689$ ,  $p = 0.492$ ) välillä.

Kvalitatiiviset tulokset puolestaan kertoivat kiinnostavalla tavalla lisää oppijoiden kokemuksista. Osallistujat tuottivat avoimilla vastauksillaan yhteensä 2180 sanaa. Jotkut kuvailivat yhtä tilannetta, kuten pyydettiin, mutta toiset olivat kirjoittaneet pidemmin ja saattoivat kertoa enemmän kuin yhden taustatekijän kokemalleen tunteelle. Osallistujat kuvasivat myös muita tunteitaan, kuten nolostusta, turhautumista, iloa ja mielihyvää.

Vastaukset jaoteltiin kahdeksaan kategoriaan. Kategoriat vastausten määrän perusteella suurimmasta pienimpään ovat ahdistuksen osalta: 1) en ole kokenut kyseistä tunnetta ( $n = 107$ , 60,7%), 2) henkilökohtainen epäonnistuminen (10,3%), 3) tietty aktiviteetti oppitunnilla (7,5%), 4) huono valmistautuminen (6,5%), 5) taitojen puute (4,7%), 6) muu syy (4,7%), 7) opettaja (2,8%) ja 8) luokkakaverit (2,8%). Nautinnon osalta kategorioiden järjestys oli seuraava: 1) tietty aktiviteetti oppitunnilla ( $n = 108$ , 33,3%), 2) henkilökohtainen onnistuminen (18,5%), 3) taitojen karttuminen (13,9%), 4) opettaja (11,1%), 5) luokkakaverit (10,2%), 6) muu syy (9,3%), 7) hyvä valmistautuminen (1,9%) ja 8) en ole kokenut kyseistä tunnetta (1,9%).

Seuraavana vastataan toiseen tutkimuskysymykseen; mitkä ovat taustatekijöitä, jotka erityisesti aiheuttavat vieraan kielen oppimiseen liittyvää a) ahdistusta ja b) nautintoa näille oppijoille? Oppijoiden kirjalliset kokemukset osoittivat, että suurin osa ei ollut tuntenut, tai ei muistanut tunteneensa lainkaan ahdistusta englannin kielen oppitunneilla. Asiat jotka olivat eniten aiheuttaneet ahdistusta, olivat epäonnistuminen, tietyt aktiviteetit ja huono valmistautuminen. Luokan edessä ääneen puhuminen oli monelle ahdistusta tuottavaa, erityisesti, jos omassa puheessa oli virheitä. Tämän suuntaisia tuloksia on saatu myös aiemmissa tutkimuksissa (esimerkiksi Young 1990). Oppijoille aiheutti ahdistusta myös huono valmistautuminen, jonka voidaan nähdä epäonnistumisen lisäksi myös linkittyvän pelkoon siitä, että muut arvioivat itseä negatiivisesti (Horwitz, Horwitz ja Cope 1986).

Ahdistukseen liittyen osallistujat olivat kuvanneet kokemuksiaan esimerkiksi näin:

- (1) En ole koskaan tuntenut oloani tunnilla ahdistuneeksi. Jos en jotain sanaa tiedä, niin pyydän apua tai sanon suomeksi. Kukaan ei naura kenellekään väärän sanan käytöstä. Jos en ole osannut tai ehtinyt tehdä läksyjä, niin opettaja pyytää joltain muulta vastauksen. Reilu ja ystävällinen ilmapiiri.

Menen aina mielelläni tunneille ja kesä-aikaan kun ei ole kursseja, niin kaipaann tuttua porukkaa. (en ole kokenut kyseistä tunnetta)

- (2) En juuri koe oloani ahdistuneeksi, joskus vähän hämmentyneeksi, jos en ole yhtään selvillä, mitä esim kysytään. Luotan kuitenkin siihen, että voin tarkentaa mitä minun pitäisi yrittää sanoa ja samoin luotan siihen, että voin ryhmässä olla oma itseni, opiskelija, joka on vasta oppimassa. (muu syy)
- (3) Ryhmässä on hyvin tietäviä ja puheliaita ihmisiä, en aina saa suunvuoroa (luokkakaverit)

Eniten nautintoa oppijoille oli aiheuttaneet tietyt aktiviteetit, onnistumiset ja taitojen karttuminen. Vaikka puhuminen luokassa oli aiheuttanut osalle osallistujille ahdistusta, oli keskustelut myös monelle nautinnon lähde. Aiempi tutkimus onkin havainnut, että suurempi määrä oppilaiden itse tuottamaa vieraan kielen puhetta lisäsi myös nautinnon määrää (Dewaele et al. 2018). Myös pari- ja ryhmätyö oli ollut monen mieleen. Nämä voidaan nähdä sosiaalisina nautinnon lähteinä (Dewaele ja MacIntyre 2016, 233). Henkilökohtainen onnistuminen ja taitojen karttuminen oli ilahduttanut monia, mitkä puolestaan kuvastavat henkilökohtaisen nautinnon lähteitä (ibid.). Nautintoon liittyviä kokemuksiaan osallistujat olivat kuvanneet muun muassa näin:

- (4) Useinkin pari-/ryhmäkeskustelussa tulee onnistumisen kokemuksia huomattessani, että osaan ilmaista ajatuksiani englanniksi ja vieläpä ymmärrävästi. (henkilökohtainen onnistuminen)
- (5) Nautin yleisesti hyvistä keskusteluista yhteisesti sopimistamme aiheista. Esille tulee aina erilaisia mielipiteitä ja näkökulmia. Lisäksi ryhmässämme vallitsee hyvä huumori. (luokkakaverit)
- (6) Kun olin valmistellut läksyni hyvin, ja osasin kertoa käsiteltävän aiheen omin sanoin. (hyvä valmistautuminen)

Eräs huomattava asia nousi esiin tuloksista: opettajan vaikutus vieraan kielen opiskelusta nauttimiseen. Ahdistukseen opettajalla ei aiemmankaan tutkimuksen perusteella ole samanlaista vaikutusta (Dewaele, Saito and Halimi 2022, 14-15). Opettaja oli monen (11,1%) osallistujan mielestä ollut innostava, avulias ja ottanut ilahduttavasti osaa keskusteluihin. Huumori vaikutti olevan myös tekijä, joka lisäsi oppimisesta nauttimista.

Kaikkiaan avointen kysymysten vastauksissa painottuivat luokassa käytettävät aktiviteetit ja henkilökohtainen suoritus; onnistuminen tai epäonnistuminen. Näiden asioiden voi päätellä tuottavan ikääntyneissä oppijoissa paljon tunteita. Tulosten mukaan ikääntyneet englannin kielen oppijat eivät kokeneet paljoa oppimiseen liittyvää ahdistusta, mutta silti erityisesti luokan edessä puhumisen suhteellisen moni koko ahdistavana. Oppimiseen liittyä nautintoa

ikäntyneet oppijat olivat kokeneet huomattavan paljon, ja opintojen koettiin olevan jopa hyvin merkityksellisiä. Muun muassa keskustelut, huumori, opettaja ja uuden oppiminen oli koettu nautintoa lisäävänä.

Tämän tutkimuksen tuloksia vahvistaa myös aiempi tutkimus: opettajalla vaikuttaa olevan suuri vaikutus koettuun vieraan kielen opinnoista nauttimiseen. Moni koki luokkakaverit hyväksi seuraksi ja luokassa vallitsevasta huumorista ja ilmapiiristä nautittiin. Osallistujien ikään viittasivat myös osallistujat itse. Jotkut toivat esiin, ettei oppiminen ole enää helppoa, ja siksi pitää olla itseään kohtaan myötätuntoinen. Kaiken kaikkiaan tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat, että opinnoissa pärjääminen ja uuden oppiminen on nautintoa tuottavaa myös ikääntyneille oppijoille. Tulosten perusteella olisi hedelmällistä tarjota jatkossakin myös ikääntyneille oppijoille mahdollisuuksia vieraan kielen oppimiseen.