



## Foreign Language Enjoyment among Turkish EFL Learners

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### Abstract

Positive emotions are vital in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). However, while research on EFL learning mainly focuses on negative emotions, there has been growing interest in positive emotions under an interdisciplinary perspective with Positive Psychology. On the other hand, current research results are conflicting in terms of foreign language enjoyment (FLE), depending on the Broaden-and-Build Theory and the Control-Value Theory. Moreover, research is not conclusive in terms of the levels of FLE regarding gender, age, and proficiency in the target language. This study aims to find the levels of FLE among Turkish EFL learners and the differences between the levels of FLE in accordance with the variables of age, gender, and proficiency in the target language. A background questionnaire and the Foreign Language Learning Enjoyment Scale (FLLES) were administered to 609 EFL learners enrolled at state high schools, foreign language preparatory schools, and universities. The results showed that EFL learners experience a high level of FLE. It was also concluded that while the level of FLE significantly differs in accordance with EFL learners' age and proficiency levels, gender does not seem to be a significant variable that considerably relates to FLE.

**Keywords:** Descriptive research; English as a foreign language; foreign language enjoyment

### Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğrenen Türk Öğrenciler Arasında Yabancı Dil Hazzı

#### Özet

Pozitif duygular, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenme sürecinde önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Ancak, çalışmalar çoğunlukla yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenme üzerindeki olumsuz duygulara odaklanırken, Pozitif Psikoloji bağlamında ve disiplinlerarası bir perspektif altında olumlu duyguların araştırılmasına yönelik artan bir ilgi de mevcuttur. Diğer yandan Genişletme-İnşa Etme Kuramı ile Kontrol Değer Kuramına dayalı yabancı dil hazzı ile ilgili çalışmalar, yabancı dil hazzı bağlamında bir uzlaşma göstermemektedir. Ayrıca cinsiyet, yaş ve hedef dilde yeterlilik düzeyleri ile yabancı dil hazzı arasındaki farklılıklar açısından da çalışmalar henüz bir uzlaşma göstermemektedir. Mevcut çalışma; İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin yabancı dil hazzı düzeylerini ve yaş, cinsiyet ve yeterlilik düzeyi değişkenleri ile yabancı dil hazzı düzeyleri arasında farklılık olup olmadığını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada bir arka plan anketi ve Yabancı Dil Hazzı ölçeği 609 lise, üniversite hazırlık ve lisans programı öğrencilerine uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar; yabancı dil öğrencilerinin yüksek düzeyde yabancı dil hazzı deneyimlediklerini göstermektedir. Bulgular, ayrıca yabancı dil hazzı düzeyinin yaş ve hedef dilde yeterlilik değişkenlerine göre anlamlı ölçüde farklılaştığını ancak cinsiyetin yabancı dil hazzı açısından dikkate değer bir değişken olmadığını göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Betimsel araştırma; yabancı dil olarak İngilizce; yabancı dil hazzı

## 1. Introduction

Foreign language learning involves cognitive, social, and affective processes. However, research so far has mainly focused on the social and cognitive perspective of foreign language learning until 2015 (Dewaele, 2015), while research on positive emotions that are vital in foreign language learning (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015) has been scarce. In other words, emotions in the foreign language research context remained neglected (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), while the cognitive perspective of foreign language learning dominated the research context (Dewaele et al., 2019). From a narrower perspective, studies mainly focused on foreign language anxiety (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). The dramatic point was that the word *emotion* was confined to one particular emotion, *anxiety*, after a study by Horwitz et al. (1986) in the current literature.

On the other hand, positive emotions have appeared as a trendy research topic in the foreign language learning context due to the growing interest in positive psychology (De Smet et al., 2018). Positive psychology which proposes a balance between positive and negative emotions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) has gained popularity in the last two decades (Dewaele et al., 2019). This paradigm shift resulted in an interdisciplinary perspective regarding the role of positive emotions in the foreign language learning process (MacIntyre et al., 2019). This period included a relatively limited number of studies that focused on the relationship between positive emotions and language performance until 2014 (Dewaele, Chen, et al., 2019). However, the second period involved a considerable increase in research on recognizing positive psychology in foreign language learning. Under this perspective, *enjoyment* in the foreign language learning context has become one of the popular research topics in the foreign language learning context (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Below, a research synthesis is given after drawing a theoretical framework on FLE.

### 1.1. Theoretical Background

Before introducing the term, *enjoyment*, a general perspective of positive psychology should be drawn. Positive Psychology includes “experiencing and savoring pleasures, losing the self in engaging activities, and participating in meaningful activities” (Seligman et al., 2005, p. 414). It also involves hedonic happiness that is associated with eudaimonic happiness and subjective experiences (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In the scope of Positive Psychology, well-being relates to avoidance of pain, pleasure, and satisfaction (Ryff & Singer, 2008), and consists of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments (PERMA) (Seligman, 2002). Enjoyment is distinguished from pleasure since pleasure is considered as the people experience for homeostatic needs. *Enjoyment* is defined as “good feelings coming from breaking through homeostatic limits and stretching beyond oneself to accomplish something new or even unexpected, especially in the face of some difficult tasks” (Li et al., 2018, p. 184). For Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000, p. 46), enjoyment is “a sense of novelty and accomplishment”. In this perspective, FLE can be defined as a positive feeling that facilitates learning a new foreign language in the face of play and exploration tasks (Akkaş et al., 2022). Speaking more specifically, FLE is “a complex emotion, capturing interacting dimensions of the challenge and perceived ability that reflects the human drive for success in the face of difficult tasks” (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016, p. 216). In this sense, FLE is the joy experienced while learning a foreign language, positive evaluation of the situations the learner is engaged in, willingness to maintain positive experiences, and motivation to deal with future learning challenges (Mierzwa, 2018). From this point of view, FLE is a psychologically positive activation state that can lead learners into action that occurs within the main dimensions of *positive setting*, *positive private*, and *positive atmosphere*. These three main domains involve the feelings of fulfillment from the classroom, internal and personal satisfaction, and good relationships with teachers and peers (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016).

Certain hypotheses, models, and theories may relate to FLE. First, the Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that the learner has an affective filter that determines the amount of input to be processed by their mind (Krashen, 1982). Second, the Broaden-and-Build Theory proposes that positive emotions broaden individuals’ momentary thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources in a range from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2004). Third, the Self-esteem Model suggests that positive emotions are important for foreign language learning since learning a language requires maintaining the self-verification process (Dörnyei, 2005). Last, the Control-Value Theory proposes that FLE depends on the values with regard to positive and negative emotions (Piniel & Albert, 2018).

## 1.2. Previous Research

Research shows that foreign language learners experience moderate levels of enjoyment with a tendency for a gradual increase depending on various factors. For instance, Elahi Shirvan and Talebzadeh (2018) aimed to figure out the effect of conversational topics on the levels of FLE among seven female EFL learners. This case study concluded that there were changes in the amount of FLE experienced by the participants since they found some topics boring and did not enjoy their conversation. The researchers interpreted this as an indication of the dynamic construct of FLE which conversational topics could influence. Similarly, Elahi Shirvan et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study with EFL learners from an intermediate course and concluded that the level of FLE felt by the participants changed depending on the ecological factors. In another qualitative study, Resnik and Schallmoser (2019) found that the participants felt high levels of FLE and that there was an increase in FLE with e-Tandem language learning since they used the language authentically, communicated as cultural mediators out of their classroom contexts and got support and one-on-one feedback in their interactions.

Similar results were found in descriptive and correlational studies and those obtained from qualitative studies mentioned above. For example, Elahi Shirvan et al. (2021) conducted a correlational study to depict how FLE and grit grow over time with 437 learners studying English in private courses. The data collected via the FLE Scale and the Grit Scale showed that the participants experienced higher levels of FLE in time and that the growth was related to the rise in their grit. Nemati et al. (2020) found that EFL learners felt FLE at medium levels in another study. In a correlational study, Li (2020) focused on emotional intelligence, FLE, and achievement in the Chinese EFL context and found that the participants felt low to moderate levels of FLE, and all three constructs were significantly related to each other. Su (2022) focused on the relationship between FLE and foreign language anxiety (FLA) among 231 Chinese EFL undergraduates at intermediate and low proficiency levels. The study found that the participants experienced moderate levels of FLE.

Dewaele et al. (2022) also investigated the relationship between FLE and FLA among 592 learners of Turkish as a foreign language in Kazakhstan and found similar results. On the other hand, Elvira and Irene (2022) focused on FLE in relation to subjective happiness and reported high levels of FLE among Spanish EFL learners. Last, Dewaele, Albakistani, et al. (2022) examined enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom among 168 Arab and Kurdish EFL learners in a mixed-method study and found that the students had high levels of FLE both in face-to-face and remote teaching classes.

The results of a limited number of studies in the EFL context indicate that Turkish EFL learners have a high level of FLE. For instance, Yeşilçınar and Erdemir (2022) carried out a mixed-method study on FLE and FLA and concluded that the level of enjoyment was high among adult EFL learners and that they felt higher levels of social FLE than private FLE. In another mixed-method study, Özer and Altay (2021) found similar results on the relationship between FLE and FLA among adolescent EFL learners. Finally, another mixed-method study by Dewaele and Proietti Ergün (2020). They focused on FLE, FLA, motivation, and achievement among 110 Turkish students from an Italian immersion school. They noted that the participants experienced high levels of enjoyment both in English and Italian. In addition, Proietti Ergün and Ersöz Demirdağ (2022) found that trilingual and bilingual university students had high levels of enjoyment. On the other hand, Kaplan (2022) found that adult EFL learners had a moderate level of FLE.

The findings of a limited number of studies demonstrate that the relationships between FLE and certain variables are conflicting. For instance, while Dewaele et al. (2016) and Huang and Jiang (2022) found that female learners experienced higher levels of FLE, there were several studies that showed no significant difference regarding gender (Jiang & Dewaele, 2019; Mierzwa, 2018; Su, 2022). Regarding age, younger learners were found to experience lower levels of FLE when compared to adult learners (Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). No significant differences were found regarding the levels of target language proficiency (Dewaele, Magdalena, et al., 2019; Su, 2022). The study that focused on FLE in the Turkish EFL context concluded that the levels of FLE did not significantly differ in terms of gender, while more proficient learners had higher levels of FLE when compared to the students at lower levels of proficiency (Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022). It was also concluded that the students who studied in intensive language programs had higher levels of FLE than the ones who studied in other programs.

### 1.3. Overview of the Present Study

As previously mentioned, while positive emotions are vital in foreign language learning, research mainly focuses on the issues concerning cognition and negative emotions. However, research on positive emotions in the foreign language learning context has gained popularity due to the interdisciplinary perspective after growing interest in positive psychology that proposes a balance between positive and negative emotions. In this perspective, FLE which depends on the Broaden-and-Build Theory and the Control-Value Theory has become one of the popular research topics in the foreign language learning context. On the other hand, when the levels of FLE among foreign language learners are considered, results can be noticed as conflicting. In other words, while EFL learners have moderate levels of FLE according to the research results, there are studies concluding that FLE is experienced at moderate, medium, and low levels. The results of fairly limited studies in the Turkish EFL research contexts do now show a consensus regarding the levels of FLE. More importantly, research results are also conflicting when the relationship between certain variables and the levels of FLE is considered. For instance, research is not conclusive in terms of gender, age, and proficiency in the target language. With these concerns in mind, the current study aims to find the levels of FLE among Turkish EFL learners who study at high schools, language preparatory schools, and universities and the differences in the FLE levels in accordance with the variables, namely age, gender, and proficiency in the target language. For those purposes, the study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the level of foreign language enjoyment among English as a foreign language learners who study at high schools, language preparatory schools, and universities?
2. Do the levels of foreign language enjoyment differ in accordance with age, gender, and target language proficiency?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Context

This study followed a descriptive research design within the scope of the analytic approach and deductive objective since it seemed necessary to gain further insights into foreign language enjoyment among EFL learners and whether the FLE levels differ in accordance with certain variables such as age, gender, and target language proficiency. The descriptive research design seemed appropriate to fulfill the aims of the study stated above. Under this perspective, descriptive research refers to examining data with the preconceived research questions listed above. Since the nature of foreign language enjoyment is the main interest in the study, a scale was used from the participants' perspectives without any intervention within a natural context for data collection (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989).

### 2.2. Participants

The sample group in the study consisted of 609 EFL learners enrolled at state high schools, language preparatory schools, and universities in Turkey. The participants were 373 (61.2%) female and 236 (38.8%) male students. This distribution was the overall reflection of the general population of the mentioned schools. The mean score for their age was 18.1 within the range of 14 and 23 with a standard deviation value of 2.55. The group consisted of 239 (39.2%) high school, 193 (31.7%) language preparatory schools, and 177 (29.1%) university students. They were 137 (22.5%) beginner (A1), 131 (21.5%) elementary (A2), 124 (20.4%) intermediate (B1), 121 (19.9%) upper-intermediate (B2), 96 (15.8%) advanced (C1) level students in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standards. The weekly hours for their English classes were four hours for high school, 24 hours for language preparatory school, and 18 hours for university students ( $\bar{x}$ =14.4). It should be noted that the weekly hours were determined in accordance with the standard curriculum that was applied in state schools in the country. As a final note, the participants who studied at universities enrolled in the Department of English Language Teaching.

### 2.3. Tools

A background questionnaire was used to collect data on the participants' age, gender, target language proficiency, school type, grade, and weekly hours of English classes. Then, the Foreign Language Learning Enjoyment Scale (FLLES) developed by Aydın et al. (2023) was preferred for measuring the level of FLE. The FLLES consisted of 12 items with a 5-point Likert type (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree). The internal consistency based on Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found as .95. Regarding the validity of the scale, the values for % of variance were 61.67 explained by a single factor.

### 2.4. Procedure

After approval was obtained from the ethics committee, an online version of the research instruments was prepared and shared via Google Forms. A text was added to the ~~mentioned~~ form to inform the participants about the aims of the study. In addition, they were informed that participation in the research was voluntary and that the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses were ensured. Then, they were invited to participate in the study via posts shared in Google Classroom and social media environments. The form was kept online for 15 days.

### 2.5. Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data gathered. First, the numbers and frequencies for gender, target language proficiency, school type, grade, and weekly hours of English classes were calculated. Then, the mean score for age was computed. The reliability coefficient and % of variances were also computed for the FLLES. The reliability coefficient in Cronbach's alpha was .95. Regarding the validity of the scale, the value for % of variance was found to be 64.11 explained by a single factor. Then, regarding the variables in the background questionnaire, the numbers and frequencies for gender, school types, proficiency levels, and weekly hours for English classes were found. In addition, the mean scores were calculated for the participants' age and weekly hours. Next, the descriptive data regarding the items in the FLLES included frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviations. Finally, independent samples t-test was performed to explore the differences in the FLE levels in accordance with gender. In addition, ANOVA was used to see the differences in the FLE levels in terms of age and proficiency levels in the target language.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. The Levels of Foreign Language Enjoyment

The values in Table 1 show that Turkish EFL learners mainly experience a high level of FLE ( $\bar{x}$ =3.83,  $SD$ =.89). For instance, they mostly expressed that they felt happy regarding moving towards their goals when they learn a foreign language ( $\bar{x}$ =4.25). EFL learners stated that they enjoyed learning a foreign language in supportive environments ( $\bar{x}$ =4.09). In the general sense, they expressed that they enjoyed learning a foreign language ( $\bar{x}$ =4.08). The students also felt happy having time with their friends who know a foreign language ( $\bar{x}$ =4.01), learning the language communicatively ( $\bar{x}$ =3.92), and having quality time when learning it ( $\bar{x}$ =3.90). In addition, they found it exciting to learn new things in the target language ( $\bar{x}$ =3.87) and enjoyable to be in the environments where the language was learned ( $\bar{x}$ =3.87). Turkish EFL learners also believed that foreign language was a meaningful part of their lives ( $\bar{x}$ =3.67) and that they had much fun when they studied a foreign language ( $\bar{x}$ =3.49). On the other hand, they seemed undecided regarding feeling worthy ( $\bar{x}$ =3.45) and bored ( $\bar{x}$ =3.42) in their foreign language classes.

**Table 1.**

*Descriptives for foreign language enjoyment (n=609)*

Items		(1) Strongly disagree	(2) Disagree	(3) Undecided	(4) Agree	(5) Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
		%	N	%	N	%		
I feel I am moving towards my goals when I learn a foreign language.	%	4.3	3.9	12.5	31.2	48.1	4.25	1.06
	N	26	24	76	190	293		
I enjoy learning a foreign language in a supportive environment.	%	3.9	4.1	14.1	34.3	43.5	4.09	1.04
	N	24	25	86	209	265		
I enjoy learning a foreign language.	%	2.8	5.3	15.6	34.2	42.2	4.08	1.02
	N	17	32	95	208	259		
I enjoy having time with my friends who know a foreign language.	%	4.3	5.1	19.4	27.9	43.3	4.01	1.10
	N	26	31	118	170	264		
I enjoy learning a foreign language communicatively.	%	5.4	7.2	16.3	32.2	38.9	3.92	1.15
	N	33	44	99	196	237		
I have quality time when I learn a foreign language.	%	3.9	6.1	21.2	33.2	35.6	3.90	1.08
	N	24	37	129	202	217		
It makes me excited to face new things when studying a foreign language.	%	4.3	7.2	19.5	34.8	34.2	3.87	1.09
	N	26	44	119	212	208		
It is enjoyable to be in environments where a foreign language is learned.	%	4.9	7.4	19.5	31.9	36.3	3.87	1.13
	N	30	45	119	194	221		
Foreign language is a meaningful part of my life.	%	6.7	10.5	22.5	29.4	30.9	3.67	1.21
	N	41	64	137	179	188		
I have much fun when I study a foreign language.	%	6.1	12.6	29.1	30.4	21.8	3.49	1.14
	N	37	77	177	185	133		
I feel worthy in my foreign language classes.	%	7.9	12.8	28.1	28.6	22.7	3.45	1.19
	N	48	78	171	174	138		
I don't feel bored when I learn a foreign language.	%	7.2	8.9	34.3	33.7	15.9	3.42	1.08
	N	44	54	209	205	97		
Overall							3.83	.89

**3.2. Age and Foreign Language Enjoyment**

According to the values in Table 2, the FLE level significantly differs in accordance with age (p=.00). EFL learners aged 19 and 24 had higher levels of enjoyment regarding enjoying (p=.00) and having fun (p=.03) and having quality time while learning the language (p=.00) when compared to the ones aged 14 and 18. The participants in the same group found the language learning environment more enjoyable (p=.00), felt more excited to learn new things (p=.00), and more enjoyable in communicative environments (p=.00) than the ones at the age of 14 and 18. In addition, language learning was more meaningful in their lives (p=.00) for the students' ages 19 and 24. The participants in the same group felt less bored (p=.00), found language learning more enjoyable (p=.00), felt better regarding moving to their goals (p=.00), and felt better while having time with friends (p=.00). On the other hand, one item interrogated the level of feeling worthy in language classes did not show a significant difference regarding age (p=.08).

**Table 2.**  
*Age and foreign language enjoyment (Independent samples t-test)*

Items	Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
I enjoy learning a foreign language.	14-18	297	3.75	1.12	24.59	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.39	.79		
I have quality time when I learn a foreign language.	14-18	297	3.60	1.18	33.46	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.20	.88		
It is enjoyable to be in environments where a foreign language is learned.	14-18	297	3.48	1.24	49.44	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.24	.87		
I have much fun when I study a foreign language.	14-18	297	3.16	1.17	5.03	<b>.03</b>
	19-24	312	3.80	1.02		
It makes me excited to face new things when studying a foreign language.	14-18	297	3.51	1.17	33.72	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.22	.89		
I feel worthy in my foreign language classes.	14-18	297	3.20	1.23	3.10	.08
	19-24	312	3.70	1.11		
I enjoy learning a foreign language communicatively.	14-18	297	3.57	1.28	52.95	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.25	.89		
Foreign language is a meaningful part of my life.	14-18	297	3.28	1.23	14.00	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.04	1.07		
I don't feel bored when I learn a foreign language.	14-18	297	3.14	1.17	10.05	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	3.69	.92		
I enjoy learning a foreign language in a supportive environment.	14-18	297	3.81	1.17	24.89	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.36	.83		
I feel I am moving towards my goals when I learn a foreign language.	14-18	297	3.85	1.22	50.75	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.44	.78		
I enjoy having time with my friends who know a foreign language.	14-18	297	3.63	1.21	44.39	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.37	.85		
Total	14-18	297	3.50	.97	34.00	<b>.00</b>
	19-24	312	4.14	.66		

### 3.3. Gender and Foreign Language Enjoyment

The values in Table 3 indicate that the levels of FLE do not significantly differ regarding gender ( $p=.34$ ), while a limited number of items considerably relate to gender. When those items were considered, it was observed that female learners found foreign language learning more enjoyable ( $p=.04$ ), had more quality time ( $p=.02$ ), felt more excited when learning new things ( $p=.02$ ), and moving towards their goals ( $p=.00$ ) when compared to male students. On the other hand, gender was not a significant demographic factor that significantly related to enjoyment in terms of the learning environment ( $p=.08$ ), having fun ( $p=.40$ ), feeling worthy ( $p=.47$ ), and bored ( $p=.73$ ), communication ( $p=.23$ ), meaning ( $p=.75$ ), support ( $p=.28$ ), and being with friends ( $p=.33$ ).

**Table 3.**  
*Gender and foreign language enjoyment (Independent samples t-test)*

Items	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
I enjoy learning a foreign language.	Female	373	4.17	.97	4.47	<b>.04</b>
	Male	236	3.93	1.08		
I have quality time when I learn a foreign language.	Female	373	4.02	1.03	5.35	<b>.02</b>
	Male	236	3.72	1.12		
It is enjoyable to be in environments where a foreign language is learned.	Female	373	3.92	1.11	3.20	.08
	Male	236	3.79	1.17		
I have much fun when I study a foreign language.	Female	373	3.62	1.11	.71	.40
	Male	236	3.29	1.17		
	Female	373	3.94	1.05	5.98	<b>.02</b>

It makes me excited to face new things when studying a foreign language.	Male	236	3.78	1.16		
I feel worthy in my foreign language classes.	Female	373	3.52	1.18	.52	.47
	Male	236	3.35	1.22		
I enjoy learning a foreign language communicatively.	Female	373	3.93	1.13	1.48	.23
	Male	236	3.90	1.19		
Foreign language is a meaningful part of my life.	Female	373	3.73	1.20	.10	.75
	Male	236	3.58	1.22		
I don't feel bored when I learn a foreign language.	Female	373	3.54	1.05	.12	.73
	Male	236	3.23	1.11		
I enjoy learning a foreign language in a supportive environment.	Female	373	4.19	.98	1.17	.28
	Male	236	3.94	1.12		
I feel I am moving towards my goals when I learn a foreign language.	Female	373	4.32	.94	11.14	.00
	Male	236	3.89	1.18		
I enjoy having time with my friends who know a foreign language.	Female	373	4.12	1.08	.96	.33
	Male	236	3.83	1.11		
Total	Female	373	3.9182	.86	.92	.34
	Male	236	3.6861	.92		

### 3.4. Target Language Proficiency and Foreign Language Enjoyment

As shown in Appendix 1, the levels of FLE among EFL learners significantly change in accordance with the levels of target language proficiency ( $p=.00$ ). According to the values, more proficient EFL learners experienced higher levels of enjoyment ( $p=.00$ ) than less proficient learners did. The more proficient participants in the target language stated that they had more quality time ( $p=.00$ ), felt more enjoyable in learning environments ( $p=.00$ ), had more fun while studying ( $p=.00$ ), felt more excited when they learned new things ( $p=.00$ ) and felt worthier in the foreign language classes ( $p=.00$ ) than the students at lower levels of proficiency. The participants in the same group also believed that they felt more enjoyable in communication ( $p=.00$ ) and supportive environments ( $p=.00$ ), found foreign language more meaningful in their lives ( $p=.00$ ), felt less bored while learning a foreign language ( $p=.00$ ), felt better regarding moving towards their goals ( $p=.00$ ), and finally, had a more enjoyable time with their friends who knew a foreign language ( $p=.00$ ).

## 4. Conclusion and Discussion

According to the findings of this research which aimed to find the levels of FLE among EFL learners and examine whether the level of FLE differs in accordance with age, gender, and target language proficiency, two conclusions were drawn. The first conclusion is that EFL learners mainly experience a high level of FLE, while the level of FLE decreases to a moderate level in terms of feeling worthy and bored in foreign language classes. Second, while the level of FLE significantly differs in accordance with EFL learners' age and proficiency levels, gender does not seem to be a significant variable that considerably relates to FLE. Speaking more specifically, older learners have higher levels of FLE when compared to younger students. Furthermore, while the study concludes that the overall level of FLE does not change in terms of gender, female students feel happier and more excited regarding having quality time, learning new things, and moving towards their goals than male students. As a final variable, target language proficiency is a significant variable that considerably relates to FLE. Evidently, more proficient learners experience considerably higher levels of FLE than EFL learners at lower proficiency levels.

A summary of the results obtained from the study is provided below. First, the conclusions reached in the study show that FLE directly relates to well-being among EFL learners within the scope of PERMA proposed by Positive Psychology. From this perspective, it can be noted that the EFL learning process includes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments within the scope of FLE. In this sense, it can be stated that there is a strong connection between FLE and the elements of well-being. Second, the current study concludes that EFL learners experience a high level of FLE, as revealed in several other studies (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2022; Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2021; Özer & Altay, 2021; Proietti Ergün & Dewaele, 2021; Proietti Ergün & Ersöz Demirdağ, 2022; Resnik & Schallmoser, 2019; Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022). On the other hand, other studies reveal mostly moderate levels of FLE among



EFL learners (Kaplan, 2022; Nemati et al., 2020; Su, 2022). Third, this study finds that what the participants enjoy most is moving towards their goals through learning a foreign language, as previously found by Li et al. (2018) and Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000). In addition, a supportive environment and the presence of other foreign language learners contribute to FLE, as supported by the studies performed by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016). Furthermore, participants in the current study express having fun and quality time rather than getting bored while studying their foreign language. Similarly, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) put forward that learners wish to sustain such experiences when they positively evaluate their foreign language learning situations. The current study also concludes that EFL learners enjoy discovering new things while studying their foreign language. Correspondingly, Akkaş et al. (2022) argue that EFL learners get satisfied with exploration and novelty in the learning process. EFL learners also express feeling worthy and finding a meaning for learning their foreign language learning process. This conclusion shows that learners can verify themselves in their language learning journey, contributing to their FLE as suggested in the Self-esteem Model (Dörnyei, 2005). In addition, older EFL learners experience higher levels of FLE, as shown in several other prior studies (Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). The study also finds that gender is not a considerable variable as found by Jiang and Dewaele (2019), Mierzwa (2018), and Su (2022), while few other studies reveal a difference in favor of female EFL learners (Dewaele et al., 2016; Huang & Jiang, 2022). Finally, the current study reaches a similar conclusion to the one found by Yeşilçınar and Erdemir (2022) regarding proficiency level and FLE.

Within the scope of the findings reached in the study based on the levels of FLE and their relationships with age, gender, and proficiency level in the target language, several recommendations can be noted. First, EFL teachers should raise their awareness of the importance of FLE in the teaching process. Since the study concludes that the level of FLE decreases to a moderate level in terms of feeling worthy and bored in foreign language classes, teachers need to create good relationships with their students to feel worthy, and develop enjoyable tasks and activities to decrease the level of boredom among students. Teachers should also pay special attention to young and nonproficient learners with lower levels of FLE. Second, EFL teachers should combine linguistic skills and the elements of Positive Psychology (Mercer et al., 2018) to promote learners' language proficiency and well-being (Shao et al., 2013). In this sense, teachers should create close personal contact with students, focus on confidence-building activities, and design activities that can contribute to both linguistic skills and overall well-being. Third, EFL teachers should work collaboratively with school counselors and psychologists to develop collaborative programs and facilitate learners' language development. As a final recommendation, the use of the elements of positive psychology and the issues in relation to FLE should be integrated and implemented into the pre-service and in-service teaching programs (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020; Gabryś-Barker, 2021).

## 5. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Several limitations of the study can be noted. First, the scope of the study was confined to a descriptive research design that used the FLLES that was used to gather data on FLE. Second, the participants were restricted to 609 students enrolling at state high schools, language preparatory schools, and universities in Türkiye. The last limitation of the study was that the data reflected participants' perceived FLE. Thus, it should be noted that the data gathered were limited to EFL learners' self-reports and perceptions rather than their actual FLE levels. Further research focusing on FLE and certain variables is warranted, as studies mainly focus on perceptions. Thus, qualitative, experimental, and longitudinal studies should be performed to better understand FLE and its relationship with age, gender, and proficiency levels. In addition to the variables listed here, the relationships between FLE and some other variables such as grade, the amount of learning hours, learning environments, and teacher behaviors and attitudes should be investigated.

### Note on Ethical Issues

The author confirms that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country (Date of Confirmation: 01/05/2023).

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**Appendix 1.** Target language proficiency and foreign language enjoyment (ANOVA)

Items	Levels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
I enjoy learning a foreign language.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.66	1.13	29.94	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.71	1.15		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	4.01	.89		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.53	.63		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.70	.62		
I have quality time when I learn a foreign language.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.45	1.16	22.37	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.60	1.15		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.90	1.01		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.34	.80		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.44	.78		
It is enjoyable to be in environments where a foreign language is learned.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.50	1.19	21.35	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.47	1.24		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.82	1.09		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.33	.80		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.44	.84		
I have much fun when I study a foreign language.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.11	1.08	27.42	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.01	1.11		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.44	1.16		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	3.97	.93		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.17	.94		
It makes me excited to face new things when studying a foreign language.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.55	1.08	15.02	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.58	1.13		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.83	1.11		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.17	.96		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.43	.88		
I feel worthy in my foreign language classes.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.18	1.20	16.78	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.03	1.23		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.37	1.19		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	3.80	1.00		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.08	1.02		
I enjoy learning a foreign language communicatively.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.47	1.25	17.38	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.61	1.34		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.99	1.05		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.27	.82		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.45	.81		
	Beginner (A1)	137	3.07	1.28	28.84	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.31	1.17		

Foreign language is a meaningful part of my life.	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.73	1.14		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.11	.89		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.41	.95		
I don't feel bored when I learn a foreign language.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.12	1.15	13.54	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.11	1.13		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.44	1.06		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	3.70	.94		
	Advanced (C1)	96	3.92	.84		
I enjoy learning a foreign language in a supportive environment.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.85	1.16	7.79	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.85	1.17		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	4.14	.96		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.37	.82		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.36	.88		
I feel I am moving towards my goals when I learn a foreign language.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.78	1.22	10.11	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	4.04	1.19		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	4.15	1.05		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.35	.78		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.58	.69		
I enjoy having time with my friends who know a foreign language.	Beginner (A1)	137	3.61	1.22	15.77	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.75	1.22		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	4.01	1.04		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.31	.83		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.55	.79		
Total	Beginner (A1)	137	3.44	.98	29.53	.00
	Elementary (A2)	131	3.51	.96		
	Intermediate (B1)	124	3.82	.80		
	Upper-intermediate (B2)	121	4.19	.59		
	Advanced (C1)	96	4.38	.55		