The Relationship Between Chinese EFL Learners' Foreign Language Writing Enjoyment and Writing Vocabulary Strategy

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Abstract—As an important aspect of second language learning, vocabulary has traditionally been the focus of foreign language writing instruction. However, since the introduction of positive psychology into the field of second language acquisition, research on learners' writing vocabulary strategies from this perspective has not been abundant. The purpose of the present study is to explore the relationship between high school students' foreign language writing enjoyment and writing vocabulary strategy. The results show that there is a significant positive relationship between senior high school students' foreign language writing enjoyment and their writing vocabulary strategy, and that two factors: teacher appreciation and personal enjoyment have significant predictive effects on their writing vocabulary strategy. This suggests that positive emotions of both teachers and learners themselves can help to improve learners' vocabulary application.

Index Terms—foreign language writing enjoyment, writing vocabulary strategy, teacher enjoyment, personal enjoyment

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with the concerted efforts of first-line teachers, students, and other language educators, the teaching focus of foreign language has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from traditional pure learners' academic performance to comprehensive consideration of both their grades and emotional experience, against which positive psychology in foreign language education thrives, significantly altering learners' emotional experience in the foreign language learning process. Since the introduction of positive psychology into second language acquisition in 2012, it has attracted widespread attention, and related studies have been in full swing, with enjoyment and anxiety emerging as research hotspots in recent years (Li, 2021), such as Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016), Lake (2013), Tahmouresi and Papi (2021), Li and Han (2022). Yet, most existing studies are about the interrelationship between different emotions, ignoring the relationship between emotions and other non-emotional aspects. Writing vocabulary strategy, a crucial component of foreign language writing, is just one that lacks due attention in the thriving emotion research. Therefore, this study will investigate the relationship between learners' foreign language writing enjoyment and their writing vocabulary strategy, and shed new light on foreign language writing instruction and research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Writing Vocabulary Strategy (WVS)

It is certainly no doubt that vocabulary plays an important role in learners' overall foreign language writing performance (Baba, 2009; Lee & Muncie, 2006; Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013). Laufer and Nation (1995) also commented that: "A well-written composition, among other things, makes effective use of vocabulary" (p. 307). Some people even hold the opinion that more vocabulary can lead to better writing performance, and it has been experimentally proved that the greatest difficulty learners encounter in their writing is just the lack of vocabulary (Leik & Carson, 1994). However, it does not necessarily assume that more vocabulary definitely results in better writing performance. By analyzing students' time-limited compositions, Liu (2003) concluded that vocabulary could only indirectly affect the quality of writing by increasing the length of their compositions, which could better serve to describe the topic, thus improving the quality of writing in other aspects. But he also pointed out that vocabulary size, especially productive vocabulary, in foreign language writing did not necessarily indicate the quality of writing.

Additionally, learners' decisions about words in writing depend on many factors, including their knowledge of the words' meanings and use (Nation, 2013), and enough practice (Webb, 2005). Also, the use of vocabulary is related to learners' identification and is also affected by their opportunities and desire to use those words (Nation, 2013). Brun-Mercer and Zimmerman (2015) required 9 advanced English learners to write essays, investigated their perceptions of vocabulary and vocabulary using strategy through a questionnaire, and interviewed them after completing their tasks. According to the results, all the participants recognized the importance of vocabulary in writing regardless of their performance. Time constraint was perceived as the obvious obstacle to vocabulary use in writing, and practice could facilitate better writing vocabulary performance.

In conclusion, most previous studies have only focused on learners' outcomes and few have paid attention to the learners' internal feelings and their emotions in the writing process.

B. Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and Foreign Language Writing Enjoyment (FLWE)

Learners experience a variety of different emotions during their foreign language learning processes, such as enjoyment, anxiety, boredom, and perseverance (Li, 2021), and enjoyment is one of the most frequently mentioned emotions. Enjoyment in the foreign language learning field can be defined as "positive emotions that language learners experience in the process of learning or using the target language either within the boundary of a specific instructional context or in authentic real-life situations" (Teimouri, 2017, p. 689). Recent emotion-related studies are mainly about the interrelationship between different emotions, especially the relationship between enjoyment and anxiety. Studies have shown that foreign language enjoyment is negatively related to foreign language classroom anxiety (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Dewaele & Ergün, 2020; Li & Han, 2022; Li et al., 2022). To make the study convenient, Dewaele et al. (2022) separated foreign language enjoyment into three factors: personal enjoyment, social enjoyment, and teacher appreciation. And 360 students from various educational backgrounds were involved in this study to investigate whether learner emotions could be intrinsically motivating or they were no more than diffuse action tendencies. The result showed that the level of personal enjoyment, social enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety could remain relatively stable over time, while the level of teacher appreciation, attitude as well as motivation decreased significantly. Personal enjoyment, social enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety could influence attitude and motivation indirectly. Significant interaction effects of teacher appreciation and time were also found for attitude and motivation. It could be concluded naturally that foreign language enjoyment could encourage motivation and thus become intrinsically motivating.

There are already abundant studies on learners' overall foreign language enjoyment, but few are about the domain-specific foreign language enjoyment, especially the enjoyment of writing. Zumbrunn et al. (2019) focused on the relationship between writing enjoyment, their perceptions of teacher writing enjoyment, self-regulation, and grades, and they found positive relationships among those elements. Zhang and Dong (2022) conducted a study about the relationship between motivational-regulation strategies and proximal/distal second-language writing achievement emotions. The data revealed that motivational regulation strategies were directly connected with both proximal and distal writing enjoyment. Dewaele and Li (2022) also pointed out that learners' overall English performance was significantly and positively related to various aspects, such as writing, vocabulary, grammar, and enjoyment, and was significantly and negatively related to classroom anxiety. Still, those limited numbers of enjoyment studies on writing are all about learners' writing enjoyment and other emotional factors, ignoring the non-emotional factors, such as learners' linguistic aspects, like vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.

To sum up, more research is needed to further understand the connection between learners' foreign language writing enjoyment and writing vocabulary strategy, and future studies should include different participant groups, like non-university students. Based on this, the present study takes senior high school students as participants to examine how their foreign language writing enjoyment and writing vocabulary strategy relate to one another.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions

(1) What are the levels of participants' FLWE and WVS?
(2) What are the relationships between participants' FLWE and their WVS?
(3) To what extent do participants' FLWE predict their WVS?

B. Participants

197 students from a senior high school in China's central region take part in the present study. They all come from the same county and have studied English for at least five years. Chinese is the native language of those participants.

C. Instruments

The questionnaire adopted in the present study includes two parts. The purpose of the first part is to collect participants' background information and the second part is used to examine participants' writing vocabulary strategy and foreign language writing enjoyment. A pre-test was conducted in other classes of the same high school prior to the formal distribution. The results indicate that the reliability and validity of the questionnaire can satisfy the statistical requirements. Therefore, this questionnaire can be employed in the present study.

(a). Questionnaire of Writing Vocabulary Strategy

The Writing Vocabulary Strategy Questionnaire is borrowed from Zhao's (2016) "Writing Vocabulary Strategy Questionnaire" and it contains 15 items responded to on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1(never) to 4 (often) or ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), with Q7 being reverse-coded. This questionnaire is mainly tailored to explore participants' writing vocabulary strategy in the foreign language writing process (for example, an item "I will try to use difficult words in writing.") and daily learning (for example, an item "I usually pay attention to

accumulating and storing the words, phrases, sentences and other materials needed for English writing"). The total score of this questionnaire is 64, with scores below 38.4 indicating a low level of writing vocabulary strategy, 38.4-51.2 indicating a moderate level of it, and above 51.2 indicating a high level of it. The overall reliability coefficient of this questionnaire is 0.857, and the value of every item's Cronbach's Alpha will be lower if it is deleted. In conclusion, the reliability coefficient of the overall questionnaire is higher than 0.7, and values of Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted will be lower than the overall reliability coefficient value, indicating good reliability. The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of this questionnaire is 0.859, indicating desirable validity.

(b). Questionnaire of Foreign Language Writing Enjoyment

The Foreign Language Writing Enjoyment Questionnaire employed in the present study is compiled on the basis of the questionnaires of Li et al.'s (2018) "Chinese Version of Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale", Zumbrunn et al.'s (2019) "Writing Enjoyment Scale" and Zhang and Dong's (2022) "Learner's English Writing Questionnaire". Some items are also deleted or modified to make them more fit the actual situation of Chinese foreign language learners. This questionnaire contains 11 items responded to on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree", with Q19 being reverse-coded. The questionnaire is divided into three dimensions, namely FLWE personal, FLWE social, and FLWE TA, like Dewaele et al. (2022), which is mainly geared towards investigating participants for the self-perceived levels of their favor on foreign language writing (for example, an item like "Writing is fun. I feel happy when I am writing"), their perception of the environment of writing class (for example, an item like "There is a good atmosphere in my classroom"), and the level of their perception of their teachers' enjoyment in writing class (for example, an item like "My teachers enjoy teaching writing to my class"). The total score of this questionnaire is 55. A total score of 33 or less indicates a low level of foreign language writing enjoyment, 33-44 indicates a medium level of it, and 44 or more indicates a high level of it. The overall reliability coefficient of this questionnaire is 0.883, and the value of each item's Cronbach's Alpha will be lower if it is deleted. At the factor level, the reliability coefficients for the three factors are 0.785, 0.866, and 0.842 respectively. In conclusion, the reliability coefficients of the three factors and the overall questionnaire are all very satisfactory, and values of Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted are lower than the overall reliability coefficient value, indicating that the internal consistency reliability is high. The results of KMO of this questionnaire is 0.889, indicating good validity.

D. Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire is distributed online to the participants of 4 classes with the help of Wenjuanxing (a platform used for distributing questionnaires, collecting, and analyzing data). A total of 197 students are recruited in the study, and 173 (87.8%) out of them provide complete and valid responses in each section of the questionnaire. To guarantee the quality of the completion of the questionnaire, the participants are involved in the study voluntarily and anonymously throughout the entire procedure. The other invalid questionnaires (accounting for 12.2%) are omitted.

Following the completion of these questionnaires, all data is processed by SPSS 26.0 and all options are assigned values before analysis. To answer the research questions mentioned above, descriptive statistics of the collected questionnaires are conducted with the help of SPSS 26.0. Then Pearson's correlation analysis follows to test the correlation. Finally, regression analysis is employed to explore the predictive effects of three factors of foreign language writing enjoyment on writing vocabulary strategy.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. WVS and FLWE of Senior High School Foreign Language Learners

It can be known from Table 1 that the average score of writing vocabulary strategy of senior high school English learners is 42.42, which means the participants share a middle level of it. The average score of foreign language writing enjoyment is 37.14, which is also in the middle level, indicating that the students' foreign language writing enjoyment is also in the middle levels, which is consistent with previous studies (Zhang & Dong, 2022). And the average score of each item is 2.83 in writing vocabulary strategy and 3.38 in foreign language writing enjoyment. It can be seen that the mean scores of item 6, item 7, and item 24 are below the average, which means that it is mainly these aspects that influence the learners' writing vocabulary strategy and foreign language writing enjoyment. Item 6 (I am accustomed to looking up the Chinese-English dictionaries in writing) and item 7 (I will apply the word learned from dictionaries to the composition directly without considering its context and co-text) are both related to the reference to dictionaries and indicate that students turn to dictionaries less often in the writing process and are unwilling to make too much effort to deliberate over the proper use of words they don't know, and ignore the collocations or the differences among other synonyms, which may lead to the opposite result. These situations can be classified as avoidance phenomenon. The avoidance phenomenon is that foreign language learners deliberately avoid some difficulties in the learning process or give up the use of certain rules or vocabulary to ensure the correctness of their language, which is rather common among Chinese English learners, especially in vocabulary learning (Ruan, 2000). Foreign language learners tend to give up consulting dictionaries to refer to some advanced or difficult words in their writing; rather they generally use the words they have already mastered or simpler synonyms of those advanced words and abandon using difficult words directly, which otherwise occupies students' limited cognitive energy in the writing process, mainly due to the huge

difference between Chinese and English. However, less reference to dictionaries means less involvement load is devoted to vocabulary learning, and less involvement load will contribute to worse learning results and shorter memory (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Therefore, this kind of behavior may cause the learners to lose more than they gain, which is detrimental to students' mastery of new words and expansion of their writing vocabulary size.

As for foreign language writing enjoyment, the only one of the 11 items that is below average is the item 24 (I tend to do better than teachers' requirements because I like writing), which indicates that most students finish what their teachers ask them to do in writing. They are satisfied with it, less often taking the initiative to do better, which may be due to the Chinese teachers' prestige. Teachers naturally are the incarnation of knowledge and authority in China, senior to students, and this "asymmetry" and "maturity gap" are the anthropological basis of the existence of education (Zou, 2015). Learners have reasons to believe their teachers' demands and perform according to them. Moreover, to effectively improve test scores, teachers will make teaching plans and adjust teaching methods according to their understanding of the tests (Wang, 2016), and what students need to do is just complete tasks according to teachers' requirements rather than beyond them. Therefore, to save their limited time and energy, most students will not take the initiative to complete tasks above teachers' requirements.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' WVS AND FLWE LEVEL FOR EACH ITEM

Item	Mean	SD	Item	Mean	SD	Item	Mean	SD
1	2.58	0.793	10	3.28	0.759	19	3.04	1.08
2	3.17	0.824	11	3.12	0.809	20	3.13	1.196
3	2.78	0.855	12	2.51	0.88	21	3.05	1.153
4	3.06	0.829	13	2.98	0.845	22	3.9	1.049
5	2.72	0.878	14	2.96	0.865	23	3.08	1.188
6	2.29	0.952	15	3.14	0.783	24	2.91	1.112
7	2.32	0.785	16	3.83	0.955	25	3.48	1.154
8	2.75	0.879	17	3.67	0.922	26	3.42	1.187
9	2.72	0.858	18	3.62	1.058			

B. Relationship Between High School English Learners' WVS and FLWE

(a). Factor Analysis

Next, a factor analysis is conducted on the foreign language writing enjoyment questionnaire, and the results showed that the KMO value of this questionnaire is 0.889, indicating that the validity of the questionnaire is good. To ensure the structure validity, AMOS 28.0 is used to measure it. According to the calculation, the model (X^2/df=2.103, GFI=0.930, RMSEA=0.080, CFI=0.964, NFI= 0.935, IFI=0.965) has a proper structure and fits the intention of the present study, so we can assume that teacher appreciation, personal enjoyment, and social enjoyment can act as the sources of learners' writing enjoyment.

(b). Correlation Analysis Between WVS and FLWE

According to the results in Table 2, there are significant positive correlations among students' writing vocabulary strategy and foreign language writing enjoyment and its three factors, which means that the higher levels of students' foreign language writing enjoyment make them more confident about their writing vocabulary strategy. Students' writing enjoyment affects their vocabulary strategy during the writing process, and higher levels of enjoyment are associated with lower levels of anxiety (Dewaele & Li, 2022), so students will experience less anxiety about using more difficult and non-repetitive vocabulary, which is likely to lead to higher scores. This result will in turn increase students' writing enjoyment and improve their learning motivation, which will further enhance their writing vocabulary strategy. This result is consistent with the study of Zhang and Dong (2022), in which they concluded that learners' writing enjoyment was related to their motivational-regulation strategy, which also impacted their choice of words in writing.

Table 2 also shows that there is a significant positive correlation among teacher appreciation, personal enjoyment, and social enjoyment, indicating that the teacher's behavior, mental state, and classroom environment all have significant impacts on learners' enjoyment in writing classrooms. Some learners also respond that if the teacher is approachable, enthusiastic about instruction, and devoted to writing teaching, they will be more willing to follow the teacher's instructions. In contrast, if the teacher acts reluctantly, learners' motivation will be dampened and the levels of their writing enjoyment and writing vocabulary strategy will also be reduced. This is consistent with the study of Zumbrunn et al. (2019), in which they found the social aspects of writing could foster writing enjoyment. This is, in fact, the emotional transmission (Frenzel et al., 2018; Han et al., 2022). Teachers' emotions and classmates' feelings can contribute to the changes of an individual's emotions and motivation. Therefore, teachers should try their best to show positive aspects during the writing classrooms, establish favorable group cooperation, and maintain a lively atmosphere in the classroom, which will help students to improve their writing strategy and obtain higher writing scores.

TABLE 2
CORRELATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS' WVS AND FLWE AND EACH FACTOR

	WVS	FLWE	FLWE TA	FLWE personal	FLWE social
WVS	1				
FLWE	.645**	1			
FLWE TA	.499**	.810**	1		
FLWE personal	.614**	.910**	.543**	1	
FLWE social	.511**	.841**	.695**	.621**	1

a. **: P<.01
b. *: P<.05

C. Predictive Effects of Participants' FLWE on WVS

According to Table 3, a significant regression model is found, suggesting that the values can reflect the foreign language writing enjoyment foreign language writing enjoyment's predictive effects on senior high school students' writing vocabulary strategy in an authentic way, and VIF values lower than 10 suggest that there is no danger of multicollinearity. Additionally, Table 3 also displays that the regression equation is significant (F=40.959, P<0.001). To put it another way, there are some variables that can significantly affect the dependent variable, specifically, writing vocabulary strategy. Among the three variables, FLWE personal can significantly affect writing vocabulary strategy (β=0.279>0, P<0.05), and so does FLWE TA (β=0.102>0, P<0.05). In brief, the present study finds that both teacher appreciation and personal enjoyment are significant positive predictors of writing vocabulary strategy, while social enjoyment has no predictive effect, which is different from the study of Shehadeh (2011) and Kim (2008) in which they found a fine classroom atmosphere was beneficial for learners' writing performance.

This kind of difference may be due to the fact that the participants of the present study are Chinese, diverse from other studies. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) also reported that Asian students scored lowest at FLE-Atmosphere, compared with FLE-Private and FLE-Teacher. For Chinese high school students, their writing processes, especially in tests and exams, are mainly performed by themselves, while collaborative writing is less common in Chinese high schools. As a result, social enjoyment has less influence on students' writing vocabulary strategy.

In conclusion, this study finds that teacher appreciation and personal enjoyment both have positive predictive effects on writing vocabulary strategy significantly, while social enjoyment has no significant predictive effect. Therefore, teachers should seize these two points in their writing teaching process to help students improve their vocabulary strategy and achieve better writing performance.

TABLE 3
REGRESSION ANALYSIS WITH THREE VARIABLES AS PREDICTORS OF WVS

Model	Unstandardized coefficients β	Std. Error	Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Significance	VIF
Constant	1.4	0.14		9.981	0	
FLWE TA	0.102	0.047	0.181	2.174**	0.031	2.014
FLWE personal	0.279	0.047	0.451	5.923**	0	1.693
FLWE social	0.046	0.039	0.105	1.182	0.239	2.312
R^2				0.421		
F				40.959		
P				<0.001		

a. Dependent variable: WVS

V. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the relationships between the foreign language writing enjoyment and the writing vocabulary strategy among students in a senior high school. From the data above, it can be learned that:

First, the levels of foreign language writing vocabulary strategy and foreign language writing enjoyment of senior high school students are both at the middle level, and there is a significant positive correlation between the writing vocabulary strategy and foreign language writing enjoyment. That means for senior high school learners, the higher their levels of foreign language writing enjoyment are, the higher their levels of writing vocabulary strategy are. Second, there is also a significant positive correlation between senior high school students' writing vocabulary strategy and the three factors of foreign language writing enjoyment. Third, teacher appreciation and personal enjoyment are significant predictors of writing vocabulary strategy while social enjoyment is not. Therefore, to better strengthen students' writing vocabulary strategy, teachers can help students to improve their personal enjoyment via various classroom activities, so it can become a strong driving force for students to achieve better writing performance. Besides, teachers should try to avoid showing negative emotions in classrooms and actively engage in classroom writing instruction to stimulate their interest in foreign language writing. Writing groups can also be established to create a harmonious English learning atmosphere. Through these strategies, students can improve their writing vocabulary strategy, achieve better writing

performance and attain high scores, which can in turn further improve their enjoyment of foreign language writing.

The study contributes to our understanding of the relationship between foreign language learning emotions and other non-emotional factors. However, there is still room for improvement in this study, which needs to be further optimized in future studies. Firstly, learners' writing enjoyment and writing vocabulary strategy are not static but changing constantly, so the present study's linear research methods are unable to highlight this changing process. Secondly, the sample size of this study is not big enough to accurately capture the true features of learners' language learning.

APPENDIX

Writing Vocabulary Strategy Questionnaire

1. I will try using difficult words in writing.
2. I will avoid using unfamiliar words in writing.
3. I will avoid using repeated words in writing.
4. I will use synonyms to replace words I don't know.
5. I will collect words, phrases and sentences patterns that may be useful in writing in daily learning.
6. I am accustomed to looking up the Chinese-English dictionaries in writing.
7. I will apply the word learned from dictionaries to the composition directly without considering its context and co-text (reverse-coded).
8. I will pay attention to the collocation of words.
9. I will pay attention to the context while using words.
10. Vocabulary is important for writing.
11. Writing can enhance my learning of vocabulary learned from reading.
12. I will replace and promote the use of words after writing.
13. Writing class is beneficial for enlarging my vocabulary size.
14. I will endeavor to master the listening, speaking, reading, and writing of words learned from classes.
15. My writing performance will be improved through teachers' modification of words of my compositions.

Foreign Language Writing Enjoyment Questionnaire

16. My teachers enjoy teaching writing to my class.
17. My teachers are excited about teaching writing.
18. My teachers care my writing.
19. I feel bad when I write (reverse-coded).
20. Writing is fun. I feel happy when I am writing.
21. I expect to write in English.
22. I am so happy about the progress I made in English writing.
23. I enjoy the challenge of writing in English.
24. I tend to do better than teachers' requirements because I like writing.
25. There is a good atmosphere in my class.
26. We form a tight group in writing class.

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