Research Article

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Unveiling the Dynamics: A Mixed-Methods Exploration of the Interplay Between Foreign Language Enjoyment, Risk-Taking, and Oral Corrective Feedback Preferences in English as a Foreign Language Classrooms

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Abstract

This exploratory mixed-methods study examined the relationships between foreign language enjoyment (FLE), risk-taking (RT), and oral corrective feedback (OCF) preferences among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Employing a triangulated research design, the study integrated quantitative data from a structured online questionnaire with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. The sample consisted of 523 Saudi students enrolled in a one-year preparatory program at a major public university in Saudi Arabia. The findings indicated a significant positive correlation between FLE and RT, which suggested that greater enjoyment in language learning was associated with increased willingness to engage in linguistic RT. The results also showed that the learners had moderate preferences for all types of OCF, with no single predominant method. Additionally, the study revealed that the learners' preferences for specific types of OCF significantly influenced both their enjoyment and RT behavior. Gender differences were observed not only in FLE and RT but also in the OCF preferences, with the female learners exhibiting a stronger inclination toward interactive and participatory feedback forms. Furthermore, the study underscored the significant impact of FLE on English language proficiency, thereby affirming that greater enjoyment correlated with higher exam scores. The study offers pedagogical recommendations derived from its findings aimed at improving both the experience and outcomes of language learning.

Keywords: *foreign language enjoyment (FLE), risk-taking (RT), oral corrective feedback (OCF), positive psychology, English language proficiency*

1. Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of language education, the multifaceted nature of language learning has become a focal point for educators, researchers, and learners alike. Among the many factors that influence language learning outcomes, the emotional and behavioral dimensions of the language learner play pivotal roles in shaping the dynamics of the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom (Bigelow, 2019; Dewaele, 2015, 2019; Dewaele & Li 2020; Pavlenko, 2013; Prior, 2019). Consequently, the influence of positive psychology on research involving EFL learning has been transformative in that it introduced a paradigm shift in terms of how educators and researchers approach language learning (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). Studies within

this framework (e.g., Pavelescu & Petrić, 2018; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2021; Saito et al., 2018; Wang & Marecki, 2021; Wang et al., 2023) have examined how positive emotions contribute to engaging and effective learning experiences. Foreign language enjoyment (FLE) encapsulates the joy and satisfaction learners experience in the process of language learning, which can lead to increased participation, cooperation, and a supportive learning environment (Ainley & Hidi, 2014; Demir & Okyar, 2021; Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele et al., 2020; Dewaele et al., 2022a; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019; Özer & Altay, 2021; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2017).

Investigating enjoyment in EFL classrooms, therefore, not only has the potential to improve classroom experiences and immediate learning outcomes but also contributes to the broader goals of education by fostering a positive attitude toward learning and personal development. Additionally, risk-taking (RT), which represents learners' willingness to attempt to use the language in ways that go beyond their current level of proficiency without fear of negative repercussions, is crucial in language learning environments as it encourages students to step out of their comfort zones, try new vocabulary or grammar structures, and participate in conversations or activities that they might find challenging (Beebe, 1983; Slavkov, 2023).

Fostering a culture of RT in the classroom can lead to a more supportive learning environment that encourages experimentation and learning from mistakes, which are vital for acquiring new linguistic skills and developing confidence (Dewaele, 2012; Karimi & Biria, 2017). To this end, addressing potential barriers to RT, such as fear of making mistakes or anxiety about negative evaluation, could be more effective when the role of FLE is understood. If enjoyment can mitigate these fears, promoting FLE could be a key strategy in encouraging RT (Arnold, 1999; Dewaele, 2015; Dewaele et al., 2018; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Li, 2022).

Furthermore, when students attempt to use a foreign language (FL) in new ways, they learn from their successes and from the corrections and feedback they receive when they make mistakes (Ellis, 2017; Gooch et al., 2016; Li, 2013, 2021; Li & Vuono, 2019; Lyster et al., 2013; Sheen, 2011). Oral corrective feedback (OCF) refers to teachers' responses to students' spoken errors during language learning activities (Li & Vuono, 2019; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Wiboolyasarin et al., 2023). Investigating the potential relationships between OCF preferences, FLE, and RT in EFL classrooms is therefore crucial because it can provide valuable insights into how different types of feedback affect learners' emotional and behavioral engagement with a foreign language. For example, positive and constructive feedback is likely to enhance students' enjoyment and satisfaction (Fong et al., 2016; Huang, 2022; Sallang & Ling, 2019) and encourage them to take linguistic risks and experiment with new expressions and complex structures. Thus, this exploration is crucial because understanding learners' preferences for different types of feedback can inform teaching practices that not only correct linguistic inaccuracies but also promote a positive learning atmosphere. Such an atmosphere encourages experimentation and making mistakes as natural parts of the learning process, thereby potentially increasing learners' overall enjoyment and, ultimately, the effectiveness of their language learning experiences.

This study explored the previously unexamined intersection of FLE, RT, and learners' preferences for different types of OCF. To the author's knowledge, these factors have only been separately investigated in the literature, with no existing study exploring their potential interrelations in EFL settings. The aim of this research was to bridge this gap by shedding light on how these emotional, behavioral, and pedagogical elements collectively influence learning outcomes in EFL classrooms. Five key research questions guided this investigation, as follows.

1. How does FLE relate to RT among Saudi EFL learners?
2. What types of OCF are preferred by the learners?
3. How do the learners' preferences for various types of OCF relate to their FLE and RT behaviors?
4. How does gender influence FLE, RT, and OCF preferences?
5. How do FLE, RT, and OCF preferences affect the learners' English language proficiency?

2. Literature Review

This section presents a comprehensive examination of the constructs that were investigated in this study, which were FLE, RT, and OCF preferences in the context of the EFL classroom.

2.1 Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE)

FLE is an emerging construct in the field of second language acquisition that refers to the feelings of pleasure and satisfaction experienced by learners while they engage in the process of learning an FL (Boudreau et al., 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). The importance of FLE in the language learning process cannot be overstated. Research has consistently shown that positive emotions like enjoyment are linked to an increased willingness to communicate (WTC), resilience in the face of learning challenges, and a more profound sense of satisfaction with the learning process (Bensalem et al., 2023; Demir & Okyar, 2021; Dewaele et al., 2022a; Jin, 2024; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Prior, 2019; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2024). In this vein, Dewaele et al. (2022a) pointed out that enjoyment, as part of the broader concept of positive psychology, can enhance the intrinsic motivation needed for long-term language learning (see also Lee & Lee, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). This research explored FLE among English learners through the lens of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow theory. The theory suggested that individuals experience a state of flow when they are fully immersed in an activity. Applying this to language learning, the more that learners are absorbed in the language learning process, the greater their FLE (see also Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). The theory outlined eight characteristics of the flow state, as follows.

1. Focused attention on the task at hand.
2. Clear goals and immediate feedback, which allow individuals to adjust their actions and maintain focus.
3. An altered sense of time, often experienced as time either slowing down or speeding up.
4. The experience is inherently satisfying and offers a deep sense of fulfillment.
5. The execution feels seamless and natural and requires minimal perceived effort.
6. An equilibrium between the demands of the task and the individual's capabilities.
7. The merging of action and awareness, where individuals become so absorbed in the task that self-consciousness fades.
8. A sense of personal control over the task or situation.

Through these characteristics, Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory (1990) provides a valuable framework for understanding the conditions under which FLE is most likely to occur. By identifying and fostering the conditions that are conducive to flow, educators can support learners in achieving greater enjoyment and success in their language learning endeavors (Dewaele et al., 2023).

Dewaele and colleagues (e.g., Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016; Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020; Dewaele et al., 2016; Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele et al., 2022a, 2022b; Dewaele et al., 2023) have contributed significantly to the understanding of FLE in various language learning contexts by exploring how different variables relate to FLE. These studies collectively highlighted the positive associations between FLE and factors such as learner attitudes toward the language and the teacher as well as the teacher's behavior. The relationship between FLE and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) is also a pivotal aspect of these studies, with findings often indicating a negative correlation between these two constructs. This suggests that as learners experience more enjoyment in the language learning process, their levels of anxiety tend to decrease.

However, research on FLE among Arab learners of English is relatively scarce. Nonetheless, some significant studies have begun to shed light on this area. One noteworthy contribution was made by Dewaele and Meftah (2024), who delved into the dynamics of FLE and motivation among 502 Moroccan learners. Their investigation revealed that FLE levels significantly varied across different language skill levels by particularly noting stronger correlations at the more advanced stages of learning. Around the same time, Dewaele et al. (2024) explored the dynamics of FLE, FLCA, and

foreign language boredom (FLB) among 168 Arab and Kurdish individuals learning EFL in both traditional in-person settings and emergency remote teaching (ERT) environments. The findings indicated that the students reported significantly higher levels of FLE and FLCA, along with lower levels of FLB, during in-person classes compared to ERT classes.

Further enriching our understanding, Kassem's (2021) exploration focused on the levels and origins of FLE among 120 Saudi English majors. Remarkably, this research not only identified high levels of FLE irrespective of gender but also discovered positive associations between FLE and key academic outcomes, such as achievement, autonomy, and self-efficacy. Finally, the work of Bensalem et al. (2023), which included 446 Saudi and Moroccan participants, elucidated that both students' grit (i.e. tenacity) and FLE significantly predicted learners' WTC. Intriguingly, the study found that FLE was a more significant predictor of WTC among the Saudi learners than grit, which highlighted cultural nuances in its impact. Together, these studies offer valuable insights into the multifaceted effects of FLE across various contexts by underlining its critical role in augmenting FL learning and performance among Arab learners of English.

2.2 Risk-taking in Language Learning

RT in language learning refers to learners' willingness to engage in learning tasks that they perceive as challenging due to the potential for making errors or being negatively evaluated (Beebe, 1983; Richards et al., 1992). This includes attempting to use new vocabulary, grammatical structures, or pronunciations despite uncertainty. Griffiths and Slavkov (2021) suggested that RT plays a vital role in communicative competence by enabling learners to step outside their comfort zones, experiment with the target language, and, as a result, enhance their language learning. RT is also associated with increased learner autonomy and self-confidence as learners who are willing to take risks are more likely to engage in class activities and seek out additional language learning opportunities outside the classroom (Cervantes, 2013; Dewaele, 2012; Ely, 1986).

Connecting this understanding of RT with theoretical frameworks that support language learning, Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a foundational concept in educational psychology that emphasizes the importance of challenging tasks that are just beyond a learner's current level of competence. Engaging in tasks within the ZPD encourages RT as learners work to bridge the gap between what they can do independently and what they can achieve with assistance. That is, in language learning, learners may take risks when they engage in tasks that push the boundaries of their language proficiency. To improve a learner's progression through the ZPD, it is recommended that educators consider three critical elements that enhance the learning experience.

1. The presence of an individual who possesses knowledge and skills that surpass those of the learner, known as a more knowledgeable other.
2. Engaging in social interactions with a proficient tutor, thereby enabling the learner to both observe and practice their developing skills.
3. The provision of scaffolding, which comprises supportive activities offered by the tutor or a more proficient peer, designed to guide and assist the learners as they navigate through the ZPD (see Vygotsky, 1978, for more details).

This study integrated the concept of ZPD into its investigation of RT because it offers a rich theoretical framework for understanding and enhancing the language learning process. By aligning instructional practices with the ZPD elements and encouraging learners to engage in RT behaviors, educators can foster a more dynamic and engaging learning environment that supports language learning.

When exploring RT within EFL classrooms, we can gain a nuanced understanding from studies that focused on different cultural contexts and learner attributes. The study by Wang and Lin (2015) stands out in this regard because it delved into the dynamics of RT among 35 Chinese EFL learners and revealed a positive correlation between RT and both fluency and accuracy in oral production.

Transitioning to the Iranian context, Karimi and Biria's (2017) research on the impact of RT on test performance among 120 participants provided further insights, particularly regarding gender differences. Their findings indicated that female EFL students were generally more risk averse, with RT levels significantly influencing the number of questions they answered on tests. High risk-takers, irrespective of gender, tended to leave fewer questions unanswered, which shed light on the practical implications of RT in assessment contexts.

Exploring the impact of RT on the EFL proficiency of Arab learners, two studies with Algerian English majors, Bouhenika (2015) and Bouchareb (2018), revealed that students inclined toward RT tended to achieve better oral fluency. To the author's knowledge, the only work on RT involving Saudi learners of EFL was conducted by Alfozan (2013), which revealed that low risk-takers prioritized achieving high grades, whereas high risk-takers focused on enhancing their English proficiency. Additionally, higher levels of anxiety were associated with lower levels of RT. Collectively, these studies underscored the critical importance of RT in EFL learning by advocating for pedagogical strategies that foster a supportive environment conducive to RT.

2.3 Oral Collective Feedback Preferences

In language learning, OCF refers to the responses that teachers provide to learners' speech mistakes (Ha et al., 2021). It plays a pivotal role in raising learners' awareness of linguistic discrepancies between their output and the target language's norm (Gass, 1997; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Pica, 1988; Sheen, 2011). The majority of the previous studies that explored the impact of OCF demonstrated its positive effects and necessity for the language development of FL learners (Ha et al., 2021; Li, 2010; Lyster et al., 2013; Nassaji, 2016).

Despite its benefits, however, OCF can sometimes be counterproductive, particularly if it leads to negative emotional responses among learners. As noted by Krashen (1982), anxiety and self-consciousness that result from error correction can hinder language learning by raising the affective filter, which refers to the emotional barrier that can block language input from being processed efficiently. This suggests that if OCF is not administered sensitively, it may discourage learners and lead to reduced confidence and motivation. Another criticism of OCF is that it can interrupt the flow of communication in the classroom. As Seedhouse (1997) argued, the interruption caused by OCF can shift the focus from meaning to form, which might hinder spontaneous language use (see also Yoshida, 2008; Zarei et al., 2020).

Lyster and Ranta's (1997) seminal work on OCF in French immersion classrooms identified the following six major types of feedback strategies that are employed by teachers to address learners' spoken errors.

1. Recasts. This method involves the teacher reformulating a student's error into the correct form without explicitly highlighting the mistake. It is a subtle way of providing feedback that shows the correct way to say something. For example, if a student says, "He go to school," the teacher might respond, "He goes to school," thus correcting the statement.
2. Explicit correction. This type of feedback is direct and clear. The teacher explicitly points out the error and provides the correct form. It leaves no ambiguity about what is wrong or how to correct it. For example, a student says, "She don't like apples," and the teacher responds, "The correct form is 'She doesn't like apples.'"
3. Metalinguistic clues. Metalinguistic clues involve the teacher providing comments, information, or questions that lead a learner to reflect on an error without explicitly providing the correct form. This encourages deeper cognitive processing. For example, a student might say, "Yesterday, I go to the park," and the teacher might respond, "Think about the tense we use for actions that happened in the past."
4. Elicitation. Elicitation occurs when the teacher prompts the learner to self-correct an error either by pausing to allow the learner to realize the mistake or by asking questions that guide the learner toward the correct form. For example, a student says, "Last night, I watch

TV," and the teacher asks, "Last night, you . . .?"

5. Repetition. In this method, the teacher repeats the student's erroneous utterance or part of it, often with a change in intonation or emphasis on the error, to prompt the learner to notice it and encourage self-correction. For example, a student says, "He like soccer," and the teacher repeats, "He like?"
6. Clarification requests. Clarification requests occur when the teacher indicates that a student's utterance is unclear or incorrect and asks the student to clarify. This prompts learners to rethink and correct their speech. For example, if a student says, "We was at the cinema last night," the teacher might respond, "Could you clarify what you mean by 'We was'?"

These strategies vary in terms of their directness and the degree to which they engage the learner in the correction process. Li (2021) categorized recasts and explicit corrections together because they offer the correct form directly to students (hence, they are labeled "direct corrections" in this study), which distinguishes them from the remaining four types, which are grouped as "prompts" that encourage students to self-correct. This study incorporated the OCF typologies established by Lyster and Ranta (1997) alongside Li's (2021) classification to gain deeper insights into the learners' preferences.

Research on OCF in language learning settings (e.g., Brown, 2009; Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster, 2004; Mackey et al., 2000; Papi et al., 2021; Seedhouse, 1997, 2004; Sheen, 2011; Soruç et al., 2024; Wiboolyasarin et al., 2022; Ye & Hu, 2024; Zare et al., 2022; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014) has shown that learners' preferences for certain types of feedback can vary significantly based on factors such as their proficiency level, the specific language skill being developed, and several individual variables. For instance, beginners might benefit more from explicit corrections due to their limited ability to notice and understand implicit feedback, whereas advanced learners might prefer more subtle feedback types, such as metalinguistic clues that challenge their linguistic competencies (Brown, 2009). Moreover, Lyster (2004) and Ellis et al. (2006) highlighted the effectiveness of explicit correction in promoting learner uptake, particularly for grammatical accuracy. Conversely, some learners may favor implicit feedback types, such as clarification requests, and perceive them as less intrusive and more supportive of a positive classroom atmosphere (Seedhouse, 1997, 2004). Further research by Mackey et al. (2000) suggested that the effectiveness of OCF depends on the extent to which it engages learners in processing corrective information, with interactive feedback types like elicitation and clarification requests potentially leading to higher levels of learner engagement and reflection.

Research on the preferences and effects of OCF among Arab EFL learners has highlighted varied preferences and impacts on language learning. Hassan and Yalcin Arslan (2018) found that Iraqi EFL learners had distinct preferences for immediate feedback and elicitation. Tesnim's (2019) study on Tunisian EFL learners examined the impact of explicit OCF on speaking skills and observed that immediate, explicit feedback from teachers significantly benefited learners' speaking abilities in terms of grammar, although it showed no impact on vocabulary, fluency, or pronunciation. In a similar vein, Alhaysony (2016) offered a nuanced exploration of Saudi EFL students' perceptions of OCF, in which preferences were noted for a variety of feedback types. Intriguingly, the study highlighted gender and proficiency level as variables that influenced OCF preferences, with females and higher proficiency learners showing a greater receptivity to OCF. Together, these studies underscored the intricate relationship between OCF and learner variables, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of how OCF can be optimized to support language learning outcomes.

3. Methods

This study adopted an exploratory mixed-methods research design to investigate the complex interplay between FLE, RT, and OCF preferences in EFL classrooms. This approach was deemed most suitable for this study because it allowed for the combination of quantitative data, which can highlight patterns and correlations within a large population, and qualitative data, which can provide

deep insights into the personal experiences and perceptions of the learners (Hashemi, 2012; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This dual approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation by leveraging both the breadth of quantitative analyses and the depth of qualitative insights.

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred during the second semester of the 2023-2024 academic year, subsequent to the dissemination of midterm examination scores, which were employed within the present study as an indicator of English language proficiency. The study began with the quantitative phase by using an online questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. Calls for participation were distributed through emails and text messages to the author's colleagues to urge them to forward the questionnaire link to their students. This approach broadened the study's reach across the academic community.

The questionnaire commenced with an informed consent form that assured the participants that all collected data would be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and accessed solely by the researcher. Before proceeding to the main questionnaire, the participants were required to acknowledge their understanding of their study participation and grant their consent by checking a designated box. A total of 523 students completed the questionnaire, all of whom were Saudi nationals enrolled in a one-year preparatory program at a major public university in Saudi Arabia and engaged in intensive EFL courses administered for 9 to 15 hours weekly. The first section of the questionnaire was dedicated to gathering the participants' demographic and background information, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic and Background Information

Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	223	42.64%
	Female	300	57.36%
Age	18-19	383	73.23%
	20-21	92	17.59%
	22-23	41	7.84%
	24-25	7	1.34%
First language	Arabic	514	98.28%
	Other	9	1.72%
Track of study	Administration and humanities	220	42.07%
	Science	303	57.93%
Current English course level	110	25	4.78%
	120	498	95.22%
Frequency of English usage outside the classroom	Rarely	341	65.20%
	Occasionally	143	27.34%
	Regularly	25	4.78%
	Very frequently	14	2.68%
Experience in English-speaking countries	No	451	86.23%
	Yes	72	13.77%

The students who were interested in participating in the subsequent qualitative phases, which included engaging in a semi-structured interview and maintaining a reflective journal, were invited to indicate their willingness by selecting the appropriate checkboxes and submitting their contact information at the end of the questionnaire.

3.2 Instruments

The online questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data and was segmented into four sections, as delineated below.

I. Demographic and background information. This initial section included eight items that collected basic information about the participants. This covered gender, age, first language, track of study, current English course level, English mid-term examination score, frequency of English usage outside of classroom settings, and experiences of living or traveling in English-speaking countries. The collection of this data was imperative for grasping the heterogeneous backgrounds of the learners and situating their responses within their unique learning contexts.

II. Foreign language enjoyment. Based on Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow theory, the second scale comprised eight items aimed at measuring facets of enjoyment in language learning. Each item evaluated a specific characteristic identified by the flow theory, including focus, goal clarity, time transformation, intrinsic reward, effortlessness, balance between challenges and skills, immersion, and sense of control. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was utilized to allow the participants to quantify the degree to which they experienced each characteristic of flow during their language learning endeavors.

III. Risk-taking in language learning. The third scale comprised six items designed to evaluate the ways the participants navigated the balance between challenge and support in their language learning. Specifically, it measured three principal components of Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD theory: the presence of a more knowledgeable other, engaging social interactions, and scaffolding. Each component was assessed using two items, and a 5-point Likert scale, extending from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," was employed to facilitate the evaluation of the learners' tendencies toward RT within supportive educational settings.

IV. Oral corrective feedback preferences. The fourth scale consisted of six items that solicited the learners' preferences for the six principal types of OCF, as categorized in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) taxonomy (recasts, explicit correction, metalinguistic clues, elicitation, repetition, and clarification requests). Utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," the participants indicated their agreement level with each feedback preference.

The questionnaire, initially devised and formulated in English, was subsequently translated into the participants' first language (L1), Arabic, to facilitate comprehension. To ascertain the accuracy of the translation, it underwent scrutiny by three experts in applied linguistics. Following their consultation, a back-translation process was employed to verify the precision of the translation and ensure that the original meanings were accurately conveyed.

Among the volunteers who expressed interest in participating in the qualitative phase of the study, a subset of 30 students (12 males and 18 females) was randomly selected for inclusion in the semi-structured interviews. This type of interview method was predicated on its proven effectiveness in facilitating an in-depth exploration of the learners' subjective experiences and perceptions while simultaneously ensuring adherence to a structured thematic framework throughout the data collection process (Wilson, 2014). The interview protocol was organized around three core thematic domains: FLE, RT, and OCF preferences. Within each domain, a series of open-ended questions was crafted to elicit comprehensive and reflective narratives from the participants. All interviews were conducted in Arabic to ensure clear communication and comprehension, and they varied in duration from 30 to 45 minutes.

Additionally, the aforementioned cohort of 30 participants was requested to compose a minimum of three journal entries, preferably with a two-week interval between each, to reflect on their experiences relevant to the study's thematic concerns. Employing reflective journals in research facilitates the capture of immediate, introspective insights, thereby fostering a detailed, participant-

driven examination of the language learning journey (Porto, 2007; Warden et al., 1995). The participants were afforded the flexibility to write in either Arabic or English, based on their preferences, and were provided with guidelines and prompts to aid their reflections. In total, 96 journal entries were collected, with approximately 4% written in English.

3.3 The Pilot Study

To establish the validity and reliability of the three scales used in this research, a small-scale pilot study was undertaken. First, three experts holding PhDs in applied linguistics and possessing more than 15 years of EFL teaching experience assessed the scales for content validity. They evaluated whether they sufficiently addressed the intended constructs and suggested a few revisions. After their approval was received, the revised scales were administered to 50 participants who closely matched the characteristics of the main study population, and they were asked to identify any issues they faced (as per Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009). The questionnaire was administered to this cohort on two occasions, separated by an interval of two weeks, to facilitate the assessment of the instrument's test-retest reliability. This assessment involved the computation of Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients (*r*) for the participants' responses across both questionnaire administrations. The analysis revealed that the Pearson's coefficients ranged from 0.797 (for the fourth item on the FLE scale) to 0.933 (for the first item on the OCF preferences scale), which, according to the criteria established by Cohen (2013), represented a strong correlation among the items. It is noteworthy that all identified coefficients attained statistical significance at the 0.01 level, thereby confirming the questionnaire's high test-retest reliability.

The questionnaire's internal consistency was examined through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficients. This assessment yielded alpha values of 0.942 for the FLE scale, 0.914 for the RT on the language learning scale, and 0.908 for the OCF preferences scale. Given that these values exceeded the threshold of 0.7, this established the questionnaire's internal consistency reliability, a conclusion that was corroborated by Harrison et al. (2020) and Pallant (2020).

3.4 Data Analysis

The quantitative dataset that was collected through the questionnaire was analyzed using appropriate statistical tests to address the five research questions posed in this study, as detailed in the following section. In parallel, the qualitative component encompassed the transcription and translation into English of 30 interview transcripts and 96 journal entries (each of which ranged from 39 to 81 words), all of which were then subjected to a detailed thematic analysis. This process entailed an exhaustive examination of the textual data, the development of initial coding schemes, and the aggregation of these codes into meaningful clusters to discern predominant themes. These themes were meticulously defined, refined, and systematically applied across the dataset. The findings were organized within a matrix, which enabled a thorough exploration of the thematic interconnections, as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). By employing a triangulation approach, the interpretations arising from this analysis were integrated with the quantitative results to validate the findings, ensure a comprehensive understanding of the data, and facilitate a nuanced interpretation of the research outcomes.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Research Question 1: The Relationship Between FLE and RT Among Saudi EFL Learners

To assess the strength and direction of the relationship between FLE and RT among the learners, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (*r*) was computed for the scores on items from both scales. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlations Between Scores on the FLE and RT Scales

Construct	RT 1	RT 2	RT 3	RT 4	RT 5	RT 6
FLE 1	0.651	0.637	0.641	0.628	0.645	0.658
FLE 2	0.645	0.642	0.644	0.632	0.683	0.646
FLE 3	0.645	0.622	0.667	0.646	0.658	0.655
FLE 4	0.642	0.652	0.642	0.667	0.620	0.629
FLE 5	0.643	0.679	0.638	0.633	0.672	0.670
FLE 6	0.649	0.640	0.638	0.652	0.626	0.654
FLE 7	0.669	0.608	0.614	0.640	0.676	0.636
FLE 8	0.666	0.650	0.633	0.607	0.624	0.625

All items showed high positive correlations, with coefficients ranging between 0.607 and 0.683. This suggested a strong relationship between the items on the FLE scale and those on the RT scale, in accordance with Cohen's (2013) guidelines. In addition, all *p* values fell below 0.001, which indicated that the correlations between the items on both scales were statistically significant. Notably, the correlation between the total scores on the FLE and RT scales was positive, strong, and significant (r = 0.919, p < 0.01), which suggested that greater FLE tended to be associated with an increased propensity for RT in learning, as illustrated in the scatter plot in Figure 1.

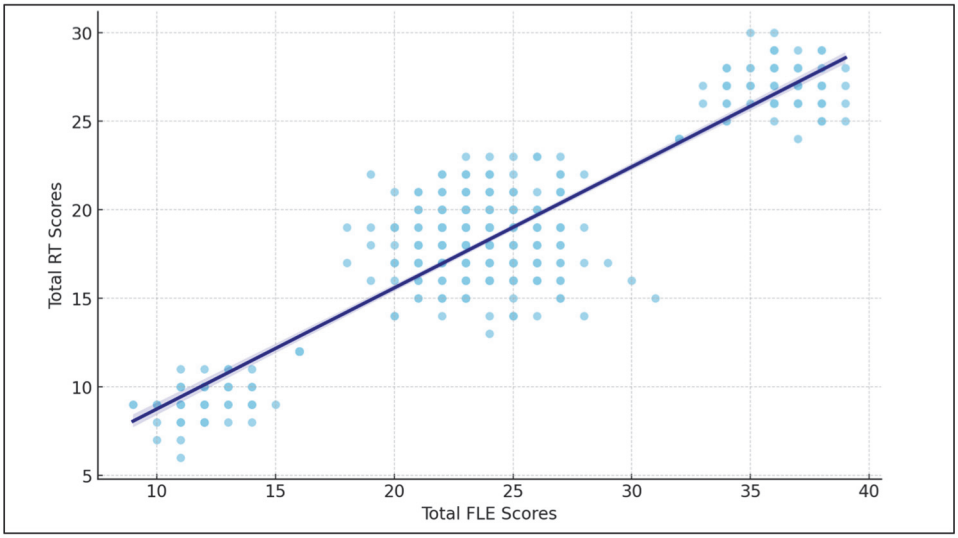

Figure 1. Correlations Between Scores on the FLE and RT Scales

This finding cannot be directly compared to prior research in the field because these two constructs have typically been investigated separately or alongside different variables in the existing literature. However, several scholars (e.g., Arnold, 2011; Dewaele et al., 2018; Dörnyei & Murphy, 2003; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Griffiths & Slavkov, 2021; Slavkov, 2023) have highlighted the importance of positive emotions in encouraging learners to engage in exploration and playful learning. It has been suggested that an emotionally supportive classroom environment fosters linguistic experimentation, which is a crucial aspect of language learning given the vulnerability of learners' self-images in FL settings, where apprehension based on a fear of embarrassment among peers can be daunting. As one interviewee elucidated:

When I feel comfortable and encouraged in class, I'm more likely to try using new words or phrases, even if I'm not sure I'll use them correctly. Our teacher always says it's okay to make mistakes because that's how we learn, and nobody makes fun of us when we slip up. This makes it easier for me to try things out and play around with the language without worrying too much about looking silly in front of everyone.

Additionally, there might be a reinforcing feedback loop in which enjoyment increases the willingness to take risks, and successful RT leads to further enjoyment. This cycle could enhance learning effectiveness and make the learning process more engaging. As one learner reflected in her journal:

When I like the lessons, I feel braver and more ready to try new things with the language. It's like the more fun I'm having, the more I want to challenge myself by saying harder things or using different words. I think it's because when I'm enjoying myself, I'm not as scared of messing up, and I'm more interested in just talking and learning along the way.

4.2 Research Question 2: Learners' Preferences for OCF Types

To identify the types of OCF preferred by the learners, descriptive statistics were computed for the items on the OCF preferences scale. The findings are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Scores on the OCF Preferences Scale

OCF Type	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Recasts	3.07	1.05	1	5
Explicit Correction	3.10	1.05	1	5
Metalinguistic Clues	3.07	1.07	1	5
Elicitation	3.04	1.06	1	5
Repetition	3.09	1.05	1	5
Clarification Requests	3.09	1.06	1	5
All Direct Corrections	3.09	0.955	1	5
All Prompts	3.07	0.912	1	5

Notably, all of the OCF types displayed similar mean scores of approximately 3, which indicated an overall moderate preference level. This uniformity suggested that the learners' preferences for different types of OCF were evenly distributed. The standard deviations were also comparable across the OCF types, which indicated consistent variability in the learner responses, as depicted in the bar chart shown in Figure 2.

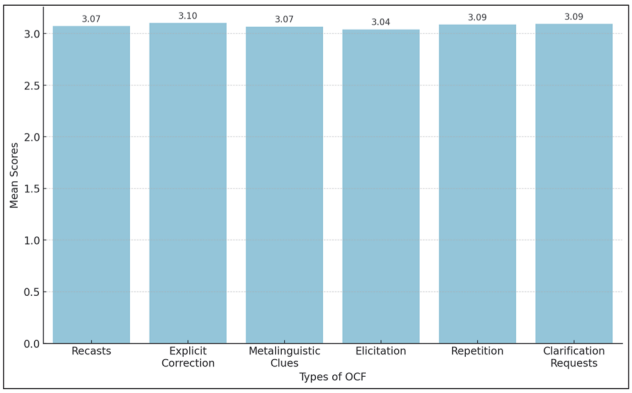

Figure 2. Mean Scores of the Various OCF Types

The qualitative data analysis provided nuanced interpretations of these findings. For instance, the excerpts shown below from the interviews with two students highlight their distinct preferences for explicit corrections and prompts.

> *I like it best when my teacher tells me directly what mistakes I made in class. It's like a bright light showing me what I did wrong and how to do it right. This makes me feel sure I can use English better next time. It's quick feedback that I remember well.*

> *I learn best when my teacher gives little tips in class. It makes me think more about the language without feeling pressured. Whether it's small hints or questions, this kind of help guides me gently without overwhelming me. It's like having a friend there to support me as I learn English.*

The absence of any specific OCF type emerging as a clear favorite or least favorite suggested that no single method of OCF dominated in terms of perceived effectiveness. This could have been due to a lack of strong evidence to support the superiority of one type over another. As highlighted in the literature review, researchers (e.g., Brown, 2009; Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster, 2004; Mackey et al., 2000; Papi et al., 2021; Seedhouse, 1997, 2004; Sheen, 2011; Soruç et al., 2024; Wiboolyasarin et al., 2022; Ye & Hu, 2024; Zare et al., 2022; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014) have attributed learners' diverse preferences for OCF to various factors, including their proficiency levels, the particular language skills under development, and a range of individual characteristics. For instance, some learners might prefer direct corrections because they provide specific, clear information, which reduces ambiguity and enhances understanding. Others might prefer prompts as they are less intrusive and maintain communication flow, which might be less intimidating and thus more conducive to taking risks. These results align with Alhaysony's (2016) study, which revealed that Saudi EFL students preferred varied types of OCF.

In contrast, research involving other Arab learners of EFL has highlighted different preferences for OCF types. For example, Tesnim (2019) noted that Tunisian EFL students showed a preference for explicit feedback, while Hassan and Yalcin Arslan (2018) found that Iraqi learners favored elicitation. These findings stand in contrast to those of Ammar and Spada (2006) and Long (2006), who identified specific OCF types like recasts or prompts as particularly effective. However, the current study revealed that learner preferences were multifaceted and might not align uniformly with specific feedback types renowned for their cognitive benefits. Consequently, educators are encouraged to adopt flexible OCF strategies that can accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of EFL learners.

4.3 Research Question 3: The Impact of OCF Preferences on FLE and RT

Linear regression analysis was employed to explore the extent to which the preferences for OCF predicted FLE and the propensity for RT. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results for the Impact of OCF Preferences on FLE and RT

Predictor Variable: OCF Preference	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t value	Significance (*p* value)	95% Confidence Interval	R^2 (Model fit)
Dependent Variable: FLE						0.878
Recasts	1.195	0.161	7.408	< 0.001	[0.878, 1.512]	
Explicit Correction	1.239	0.160	7.760	< 0.001	[0.925, 1.552]	
Metalinguistic Clues	1.561	0.152	10.266	< 0.001	[1.262, 1.860]	
Elicitation	0.973	0.160	6.081	< 0.001	[0.658, 1.287]	
Repetition	1.307	0.163	8.037	< 0.001	[0.987, 1.626]	
Clarification Requests	1.095	0.160	6.841	< 0.001	[0.780, 1.409]	
Dependent Variable: RT						0.861

Predictor Variable: OCF Preference	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t value	Significance (*p* value)	95% Confidence Interval	R^2 (Model fit)
Recasts	0.763	0.135	5.659	< 0.001	[0.498, 1.028]	
Explicit Correction	0.853	0.133	6.392	< 0.001	[0.591, 1.115]	
Metalinguistic Clues	0.953	0.127	7.500	< 0.001	[0.704, 1.203]	
Elicitation	0.985	0.134	7.366	< 0.001	[0.722, 1.247]	
Repetition	0.923	0.136	6.791	< 0.001	[0.656, 1.190]	
Clarification Requests	0.905	0.134	6.767	< 0.001	[0.642, 1.168]	

The results revealed that all types of OCF were statistically significant predictors of both FLE and RT, as indicated by *p* values < 0.001. The high R^2 values of 0.878 for FLE and 0.861 for RT indicated that 87.8% of the variance in FLE and 86.1% of the variance in RT could be explained by the learners' OCF preferences. These variance percentages suggested that the learners' OCF preferences played crucial roles in shaping their enjoyment and willingness to take risks in language learning. This relationship is depicted in the coefficient plot presented in Figure 3.

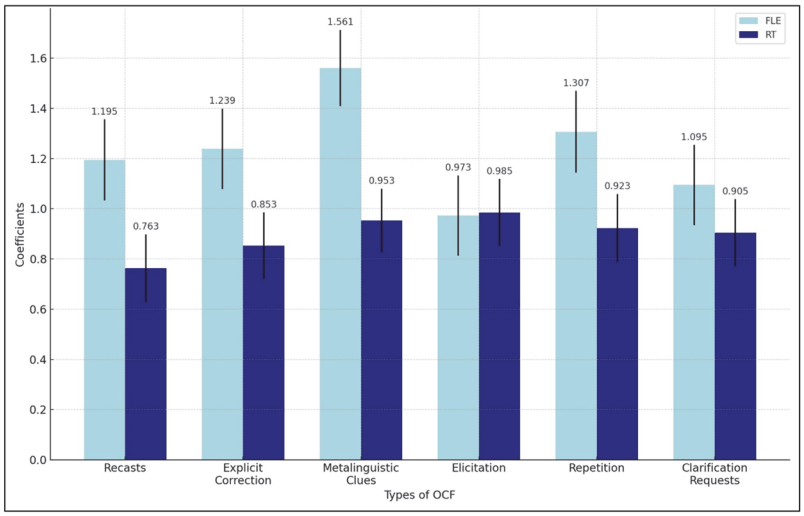

Figure 3. Impact of the OCF Preferences on FLE and RT

The positive coefficients across all OCF types indicated that feedback type and delivery could significantly influence the learners' sense of enjoyment and willingness to engage in RT behaviors. The literature suggests that feedback perceived as supportive and non-threatening can bolster FLE (Mackey et al., 2000; Zare et al., 2022; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014) and promote acceptance of RT opportunities by reducing fear of negative judgment (Seedhouse, 1997, 2004). Research by Ellis (2009) and Lyster et al. (2013) also supported the significance of contextual and individual factors in OCF effectiveness. The qualitative data from the learners' journal entries further corroborated this relationship, illustrating how feedback dynamics influenced learner experiences.

> *During our English conversation sessions, when my teacher corrected my pronunciation or grammar mistakes in an encouraging way, it actually made me feel more confident. It wasn't just about fixing errors; it was like getting a little boost of reassurance that I was on the right track. It clarified things I wasn't sure about and confirmed what I already knew. It made learning more fun because I could see I was getting better, and it made me feel supported in my learning journey.*

> *When my teacher gives helpful feedback in a friendly way, it encourages me to try harder in learning the*

language. It feels like having a backup plan; even if I make mistakes, I know it's normal, and I won't be criticized for it. This motivating environment makes me more willing to try new words or sentences that I might have been unsure about before. It feels good to know that trying new things is not only okay but also a good way to get better at learning English.

These findings underscored the importance of customizing OCF methods according to learner preferences to encourage them to engage more deeply with the learning process, which is crucial for their language development.

4.4 Research Question 4: Gender Differences in FLE, RT, and OCF Preferences

To investigate the effect of gender on FLE, RT, and OCF preferences, an independent samples t-test was employed. The findings are elaborated in Table 5 and visually presented in the bar chart depicted in Figure 4.

Table 5. Independent Samples T-test Results for Gender Differences in FLE, RT, and OCF Preferences

Variable	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value	Significance (*p* value)
FLE	Male	2.96	0.881	-2.57	0.011
	Female	3.16	0.862		
RT	Male	2.99	0.868	-3.07	0.002
	Female	3.22	0.856		
Recasts	Male	2.98	1.06	-1.80	0.073
	Female	3.14	1.04		
Explicit Correction	Male	3.03	1.06	-1.43	0.152
	Female	3.16	1.05		
Metalinguistic Clues	Male	2.98	1.11	-1.68	0.093
	Female	3.14	1.04		
Elicitation	Male	2.87	1.04	-3.23	0.001
	Female	3.17	1.06		
Repetition	Male	2.96	1.09	-2.33	0.020
	Female	3.18	1.02		
Clarification Requests	Male	2.96	1.09	-2.42	0.016
	Female	3.19	1.03		

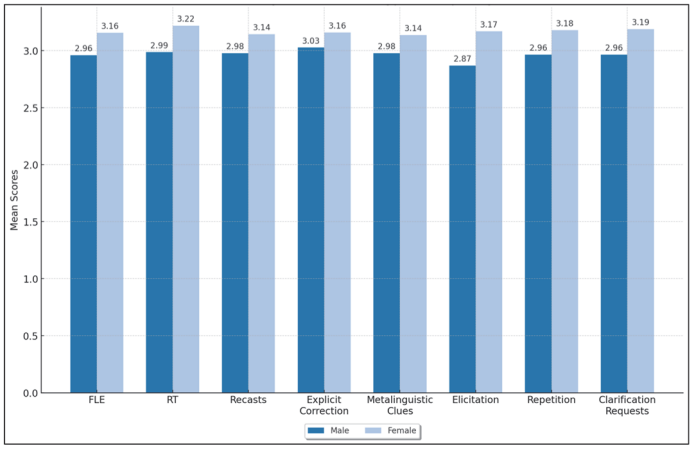

Figure 4. Gender Differences in FLE, RT, and OCF Preferences

Significant differences were observed between the male and female learners in terms of FLE and RT, with the females recording higher mean scores in both areas. This suggested a greater level of enjoyment and a heightened propensity to engage in RT behaviors in language learning among the female participants. This pattern aligns with several research streams in the language learning domain that highlighted that females generally demonstrated more enjoyment and readiness to partake in linguistically challenging activities, such as initiating conversations or experimenting with new grammatical structures (e.g., Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2016; Główka, 2014; Huang & Jiang, 2022; Wang & Jiang, 2022). Conversely, a few scholars have identified no significant gender-based differences in FLE or RT among EFL learners (e.g., Aydin & Denkci Akkaş, 2023; Fasihi & Biria, 2017; Guo, 2021; Kassem, 2021; Mierzwa, 2018). Additionally, the studies conducted by Karimi and Biria (2017) and Maubach and Morgan (2001) suggested that female EFL students tended to be more risk averse. The following interview response from a female learner provided insight into the possible reasons underlying the findings of the current study.

> *I've always thought learning languages is like going on an exciting journey. It's like discovering new places with every new phrase I learn. I believe it's because languages let us connect with people and cultures in really deep ways. I'm not scared to try new phrases or talk in new situations. It's all part of the fun for me.*

Females also showed significantly higher preferences for certain types of OCF—specifically elicitation, repetition, and clarification requests. This could indicate a preference among female learners for more interactive and participatory forms of feedback that allow for active involvement in the error correction process. Such engagement could facilitate deeper cognitive processing and enhance retention. This interpretation was supported by several journal entries from female students, such as the entry below.

> *I think feedback is really important for me when I'm learning a language. If I make a mistake, I want to know what I did wrong and how to make it right. That's why I like it when my teacher asks me questions to help me understand or says phrases again for me to listen to. It makes me feel more involved in learning and helps me remember things.*

Another plausible explanation, emerging from the qualitative data in this study, is that female students tend to prefer interactive feedback due to their heightened emotional sensitivity and a greater need for a supportive learning environment. Interactive feedback methods, such as prompts, encourage participation without directly confronting errors, which helps alleviate anxiety and build confidence. For instance, one participant noted, "I feel more comfortable when the teacher gives hints or asks me questions to help me realize my mistakes. It makes me think without feeling embarrassed about making errors, and I learn better this way." This approach has been shown to be particularly effective in improving oral accuracy, as demonstrated by Darabad (2013). While Wardana (2023) found that teacher feedback was positively received across genders, with males displaying slightly more favorable attitudes, Alhaysony (2016) revealed that Saudi female students were more receptive to corrective feedback. By implementing strategies that prioritize collaboration and dialogue, educators can better engage female learners, ultimately enhancing their participation and overall learning outcomes.

4.5 *Research Question 5: The Influence of FLE, RT, and OCF Preferences on English Language Proficiency*

Linear multiple regression analysis was used to assess how FLE, RT, and OCF preferences affected the learners' English language proficiency, as measured by their English mid-term examination scores. The results are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6. Regression Model Summary

R^2	0. 351
Adjusted R^2	0. 341
F-statistic	34.76
Significance (*p* value)	$p < 0.001$

The results indicated that 34.1% of the variance in the mid-term examination scores was explained by the model. Reaching statistical significance indicated that the model fit the data well.

Table 7. Regression Analysis Results for the Impact of FLE, RT, and OCF Preferences on English Mid-term Examination Scores

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t value	Significance (*p* value)	95% Confidence Interval
FLE	0.232	0.048	4.786	0.002	[0.137, 0.327]
RT	-0.067	0.058	-1.149	0.251	[-0.180, 0.047]
Recasts	0.273	0.170	1.602	0.110	[-0.062, 0.607]
Explicit Correction	0.082	0.170	0.481	0.631	[-0.252, 0.416]
Metalinguistic Clues	0.134	0.168	0.799	0.424	[-0.196, 0.464]
Elicitation	0.050	0.169	0.296	0.768	[-0.282, 0.382]
Repetition	-0.179	0.174	-1.031	0.303	[-0.521, 0.162]
Clarification Requests	0.201	0.169	1.190	0.234	[-0.131, 0.534]

FLE showed a significant positive impact on examination scores, which suggested that higher FLE correlated with enhanced English language proficiency. On the other hand, RT and OCF preferences did not show a statistically significant effect. This relationship is depicted in the coefficient plot presented in Figure 5.

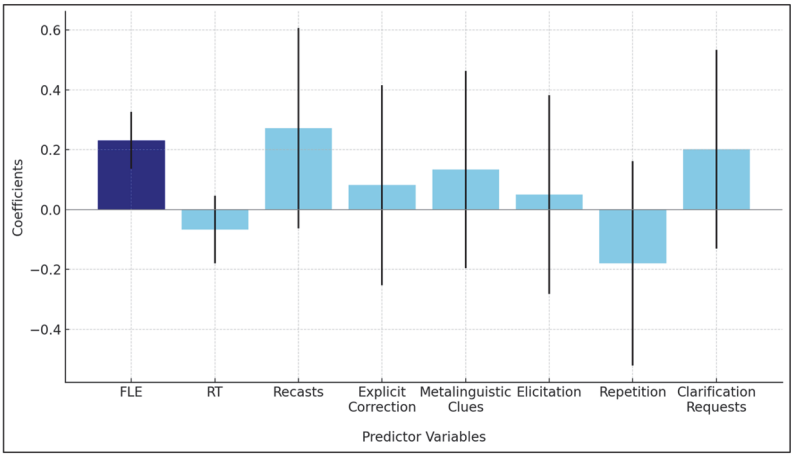

Figure 5. Impact of FLE, RT, and OCF Preferences on English Mid-term Examination Scores

Thus, the only significant predictor of examination scores among the variables was FLE, which underscores the critical role that enjoyment plays in determining success in language learning. Previous research (e.g., Jiang, 2023; Kassem, 2021) has consistently demonstrated that FLE is

positively correlated with EFL learning outcomes. When learners derive enjoyment from the language learning process, they are more inclined to engage with it actively and consistently. This heightened engagement leads to increased exposure and practice, both of which are fundamental to optimizing language proficiency, as evidenced by the following interview response and journal entry:

> *I've found that liking English helps me learn better.*
> *When I enjoy learning, I want to practice more and pay attention in class.*
> *It's made a big difference in how well I do in English.*
> *Enjoying learning English makes it easier for me to get better at it.*
> *When I have fun learning, I want to keep going and learn more.*
> *That's helped me do well in English.*

Additionally, the participants who reported elevated levels of FLE also indicated a greater willingness to seek out additional opportunities for language practice beyond the classroom. For example, one participant shared, "Because I enjoy learning English, I started watching English movies without subtitles and attempting to understand the dialogue. This practice has notably enhanced my listening and speaking skills." Similarly, another participant observed, "The more I enjoy my classes, the more I want to use English outside of them, whether through conversations with friends or by writing messages in English." This increased exposure, driven by enjoyment, directly contributes to language proficiency by providing learners with more authentic opportunities for practice and application.

These findings suggest that educators should prioritize fostering enjoyment within the learning environment, as this can directly contribute to enhanced language proficiency. By cultivating an enjoyable, engaging, and supportive atmosphere—through the use of interactive activities, gamified lessons, and the incorporation of culturally relevant content—educators can inspire students to take an active role in their language learning journeys. As one participant reflected, "Our teacher makes the lessons so enjoyable that I find myself looking forward to practicing English, even outside of class." This highlights the profound impact that FLE can have on sustaining learner engagement and encouraging a continued commitment to language learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

5. Conclusions and Pedagogical Recommendations

This study provided several valuable insights into key factors that can enhance language learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

This study provided several valuable insights into key factors that can enhance language learning outcomes in EFL classrooms. First, the study revealed a strong positive correlation between FLE and RT, which indicated that as the students experienced heightened levels of enjoyment in learning an FL, they were more inclined to engage in RT behaviors. This finding was consistent with the existing and stimulate their participation in more adventurous language learning endeavors.

Educators are advised to prioritize the creation of emotionally supportive classroom environments that foster enjoyment and alleviate concerns about embarrassment or negativity. To achieve this, educators can implement strategies such as integrating low-stakes speaking exercises, utilizing gamified learning tools, and offering positive reinforcement that emphasizes effort and RT, thereby helping students feel more comfortable experimenting with language use. By cultivating a classroom atmosphere where students feel secure to explore and take risks, teachers can enhance students' enjoyment of the learning process and stimulate their participation in more adventurous language learning endeavors.

Second, the study found that the learners exhibited moderate preferences for various types of OCF, with no single method standing out as a clear favorite or least favorite among the participants. Consequently, rather than relying solely on one form of feedback, teachers are encouraged to adopt a flexible approach that incorporates multiple OCF methods into their instruction. By offering a diverse range of feedback options, educators can better accommodate individual learner preferences and

create a more inclusive learning environment. In making these choices, teachers should take into account learners' proficiency levels, individual characteristics, and the specific language skills being targeted. For example, explicit corrections can be used to provide clear guidance for beginners, while recasts and metalinguistic prompts may be more appropriate for advanced learners who benefit from subtle cues that encourage self-correction. Similarly, in writing tasks, detailed corrections might be more effective, while in oral activities, repetition or clarification requests could gently steer learners toward correct language usage. This flexible and tailored approach not only enhances the effectiveness of feedback but also helps cultivate a more supportive and responsive learning environment for all students.

Third, the study revealed that the learners' preferences for various types of OCF significantly predicted both their FLE and propensity for RT. These findings underscored the pivotal role of OCF preferences in shaping learners' affective experiences and learning behaviors. By comprehending and accommodating learners' preferences for various types of feedback, teachers can cultivate a supportive learning environment that nurtures positive affective states and encourages RT. For example, teachers might survey their students at the beginning of a course to gauge their feedback preferences and then tailor their approach accordingly. In a classroom with diverse preferences, educators could rotate feedback methods—such as offering metalinguistic prompts during one session and using recasts in another—to ensure that all learners feel supported. Additionally, allowing students to choose the type of feedback they receive for specific tasks could empower them to take greater ownership of their learning, thereby enhancing their confidence and willingness to take risks. This alignment not only heightens learners' satisfaction and enjoyment but also facilitates deeper language learning by fostering active participation and experimentation.

Fourth, the study found significant gender differences in terms of FLE, RT, and OCF preferences among the students. The female participants exhibited greater enjoyment of language learning and a heightened tendency to engage in linguistic RT. They also showed a marked preference for interactive and participatory forms of feedback. These findings underscored the importance of adopting a balanced and inclusive approach to language instruction that considers the diverse preferences and behaviors of both male and female learners. For example, educators can implement differentiated instructional strategies by incorporating more interactive, participatory activities, such as group discussions and collaborative projects, which the female learners in this study preferred. For male learners, who may be more hesitant to take linguistic risks, teachers can provide targeted encouragement through scaffolded tasks that gradually increase in difficulty, combined with individualized positive reinforcement to build confidence. Additionally, incorporating competitive elements into activities could further motivate male students by encouraging them to participate more actively and take greater risks as they strive to achieve goals or outperform their peers.

Finally, the significant impact of FLE on the examination scores emphasized the importance of cultivating a positive and enjoyable learning atmosphere—one that encourages active participation and nurtures a genuine appreciation for the language. By integrating interactive and engaging activities and materials tailored to students' interests, educators can enhance FLE and, in turn, improve academic performance. For instance, educators might implement project-based learning that allows students to choose topics of personal relevance and collaborate on language tasks, thereby fostering both motivation and enjoyment. Additionally, incorporating multimedia resources such as documentaries, interactive websites, and storytelling that align with students' personal or cultural interests can make language learning more relevant and enjoyable. Moreover, it is imperative for educators to identify and address factors that may hinder students' enjoyment, such as anxiety and boredom. Strategies such as reflective journaling and alternating between activities to maintain student focus and alleviate stress can help mitigate these issues and create a more supportive learning environment. These approaches not only optimize the learning experience but also empower students to reach their full potential for success.

6. Limitations and Future Directions

While this study provided significant insights into the interplay between FLE, RT, and OCF preferences among EFL learners, several limitations should be discussed. First, the study was conducted with a sample of Saudi students enrolled in a preparatory program at a public university in Saudi Arabia. This specific context may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural and educational settings. Replicating this study in various contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Additionally, the research employed a cross-sectional design, which captured data at a single point in time. This approach does not allow for the examination of changes or developments in FLE, RT, or OCF preferences over time. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore how these variables evolve and influence each other throughout different stages of language learning.

Finally, the study did not extensively account for the potential influence of individual teacher characteristics and teaching styles on the students' FLE, RT, and OCF preferences. By incorporating into the analysis teacher variables, such as teaching experience, instructional methods, and personal rapport with students, future research can provide a more holistic understanding of the classroom dynamics that facilitate effective language learning.

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Appendix A. The Questionnaire

Dear Student,
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Your insights significantly help us to expand our comprehension of the varied backgrounds and experiences of individuals learning English as a foreign language.

I. Demographic and Background Information

Please select the responses that most accurately reflect your current situation.

1. Gender:
   1) Male
   2) Female
2. Age:
   1) 18-19
   2) 20-21
   3) 22-23
   4) 24-25
3. First language:
   1) Arabic
   2) Other

4. Track of study:
   1) Administration and Humanities
   2) Science
5. Current English course level:
   1) 110
   2) 120
6. How frequently do you use English outside the classroom?
   1) Rarely
   2) Occasionally
   3) Regularly
   4) Very frequently
7. Have you lived or traveled in an English-speaking country?
   1) No
   2) Yes
8. What was your score on the mid-term exam?
   _____

II. Foreign Language Enjoyment

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

1. I find myself fully focused on the learning tasks during my English classes.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree
2. I fully understand the goals of the tasks I perform during my English classes.
   1) Strongly disagree

2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

3. When engaged in English learning activities, I experience a sense of transformation where time seems to either speed up or slow down.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

4. I find learning English inherently rewarding, regardless of external rewards or grades.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

5. I find engaging in English learning tasks effortless and easy.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

6. I feel there is a balance in the English classroom between the challenge level of the learning tasks and my English language skills.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

7. I find myself fully immersed in English learning tasks and undisturbed by distractions.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

8. I feel in control of the tasks I perform in the English classroom.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

III. Risk-Taking in Language Learning

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

1. I am likely to try out new English language skills in the presence of my teacher.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

2. I am willing to take risks by using unfamiliar English structures under the guidance of a more advanced student.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

3. I am likely to try out new English language skills, about which I am not confident, during classroom practice sessions.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree

4. I am willing to experiment with unfamiliar linguistic structures during group activities in the English classroom.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree

5. I am likely to try out new English language skills with support from the teacher or a more competent peer.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree

6. When faced with a challenging English language task, I am willing to experiment with unfamiliar structures, provided I have scaffolding from the teacher or a more competent peer.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree

IV. Oral Corrective Feedback Preferences

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

1. I prefer it when the teacher reformulates my erroneous utterances without overtly pointing out the errors.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree

2. I prefer it when the teacher explicitly gives the correct forms or pronunciations after my errors.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree

3. I prefer it when the teacher gives me hints or clues related to the rules of grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary use to guide me in correcting my own errors.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree

4. I prefer it when the teacher uses questions or prompts to guide me toward discovering the correct forms independently.
   1) Strongly disagree
   2) Disagree
   3) Neutral
   4) Agree
   5) Strongly agree

5. I prefer it when the teacher repeats my incorrect statements to highlight the errors, prompting me to notice and correct them myself.

1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

6. I prefer it when the teacher asks me to clarify my erroneous statements to prompt self-correction.
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neutral
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

Your contribution to completing this questionnaire is greatly valued, and I sincerely appreciate your time and effort. If you are willing to participate in the subsequent stages of this study, please indicate so below:

☐ Please check this box if you would like to participate in a follow-up interview.

☐ Please check this box if you are interested in keeping a reflective journal.

If you opted to participate, please provide your name and cell phone number for communication purposes.

Name: _____
Cell phone number: _____

Appendix B. The Interview Guide

I. Foreign Language Enjoyment

1. Can you share an experience when you felt focused and fully immersed in a learning task during your English class? What aspects made that experience enjoyable for you?

2. How clear are the goals of the activities in the English classroom? Can you recall a specific instance when the goals were particularly clear or unclear to you? How did this affect your enjoyment of the activity?

3. Have you ever experienced a sense of time either speeding up or slowing down during an English learning activity? Can you describe that experience and how it affected your enjoyment of the task?

4. Reflecting on your English learning experiences, can you identify moments when the activity itself was rewarding, regardless of external factors like grades or praise? What aspects of the experience made it personally rewarding for you?

5. In your opinion, how would you characterize the level of effort with which you engage with learning tasks in the English classroom? Can you provide an example of a task that felt either particularly effortless or challenging?

6. Do you feel there is a balance between the challenge level of English learning tasks and your own English skills? Can you recall a specific task that felt particularly well-matched or mismatched to your abilities?

7. Can you recall a moment during an English learning activity when you felt fully immersed and undisturbed by distractions? Can you describe one such instance and what contributed to that sense of immersion?

8. How often do you feel a sense of control over your English learning tasks? Can you describe a situation when you felt particularly in control, and, conversely, a situation when you felt less in control? What factors influenced these feelings?

II. Risk-Taking in Language Learning

1. Can you share an experience when you took a risk in trying out a new language skill or structure in the presence of your teacher or a classmate who had a better understanding of English? How did their knowledge and skills influence your decision to take that risk?

2. Reflecting on classroom group activities, can you describe a situation when you took a risk by experimenting with new language skills or structures? What factors contributed to your willingness to take that risk?

3. Think about a challenging English-related task you recently encountered. How did the support provided by the teacher or a more competent peer influence your decision to take risks in trying out a new language skill or structure?

III. Oral Corrective Feedback Preferences

1. Can you recall an instance when the teacher provided a direct correction for an error in your spoken

English? How did you feel about the feedback, and did you find it beneficial for your learning?

2. Teachers sometimes offer hints or clues instead of direct explanations about errors, guiding students to understand their mistakes. Can you recall a time when your teacher used such metalinguistic clues to help you identify a mistake in your language use? How do you view the effectiveness of these subtle clues in enhancing your English language skills?

3. Have you experienced elicitation, when the teacher used questions or prompts to guide you toward discovering the correct form independently? How do you feel about these prompting strategies?

4. Have you ever been asked by the teacher to repeat or clarify an erroneous statement as a way to prompt self-correction? How comfortable are you with this approach?