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# An Investigation of the Relationship Between Iraqi EFL Learners' Conceptions of Feedback, Class-related Emotions, and L2 Achievement

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| Article Info | Abstract |
|---|---|
| | *The present study aimed to investigate the interrelationship among the learners' conceptions of feedback, academic emotions, and language achievement variables within the Iraqi EFL learning context. In so doing, a sample of 150 Iraqi EFL learners at an intermediate level of language proficiency participated to complete students' conception of feedback inventory and achievement emotions questionnaire. Their final examination scores were also included as an index for their L2 achievement. To analyze the data, first, the descriptive statistics were checked, and second, Pearson correlation coefficient test was used to explore the association among the  variables. The results revealed that there were positive correlations between comments for improvement and positive emotions, with higher level of enjoyment, hope, and pride being related to higher extent of agreement with comments for improvement. On the contrary, negative emotions showed to be negatively associated with perceived comments for improvement with higher levels of anger, anxiety, hopelessness, and boredom being related to lower consideration of comments for improvement. Besides, negative emotions demonstrated to be positively correlated to negative feedback and negatively correlated with interpersonal feedback, while positive emotions were positively related to interpersonal feedback and negatively associated with negative feedback.* |

# 1.Introduction

Hattie and Timperly (2007) have defined feedback as "information offered by an agent concerning the aspects of the individual's performance or understanding (p. 120). Thus, teachers, peers, parents, and textbooks can be considered as the main agents in this process. More importantly, feedback is not always received from the external factors as it can also arise internally (Butler & Winne, 1995).

Feedback aims to bridge the gap between the present knowledge and the future understanding of the matter (Sadler, 1989). In this regard, Ramaprasad (1983) explains that "information on the gap when used to change the gap (most probably to shorten the gap) alternate into feedback" (p. 5). Accordingly, the gap can be reduced through the application of some affective and cognitive strategies such as monitoring the students' final results, offering additional information, giving tips, or showing different solutions to reach the best outcome. Besides, it is important to note that feedback is comprised of various levels such as the task level, the process level, the self-regulation level, and the self-level. The extent to which feedback can be instrumental in filling the gap varies between these levels. In fact, feedback on task, process, and self-regulation can positively impact the students' performance, while the self-oriented feedback cannot be that influential as it lacks the task-oriented information (Hattie & Timperly, 2007).

Overall, students' conceptions of feedback can play a significant role in Second Language (L2) learning as the provision of formative feedback cannot necessarily result in changing the learners' mindset (Hattie, 1999). Instead, it seems that beliefs about self-regulation and prior performance can affect the students' interpretation and the use of feedback (Bandura, 1986; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). To illustrate, depending on one's

extent of self-efficacy, the learners might differ in their response to negative or positive feedback; however, the students with higher self-efficacy are expected to cope better, while the ones with lower levels of it might be more critical of negative feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In this regard, the learners' affective reactions towards the feedback seem to be another influential factor.

## Statement of the Problem

First of all, the concept of feedback seems to be relatively new in the field of education and it demands more investigation to be publically perceived. Secondly, the students require corrective and reliable feedbacks so as to become more aware of the gaps to solve their problems. In so doing, experienced and patient teachers can play a significant role in giving instructions and making corrections passionately. Thirdly, agents of feedback (teachers, peers, parents, & textbooks) should be well-trained so as not to provide negative feedback which might result in fossilization of the students. Fourth, since feedback seems to be a necessity in the process of language learning and teaching, not only the teachers but also the learners should become aware of the impact of feedback either on their learning or teaching process. To be more specific, as most language learners encounter some weaknesses in their learning process, they are likely to resort to some external agents, more preferably to their teachers; however, they may receive different types of feedback. Hence, having sufficient knowledge of the proper type of feedback in a given situation seems to be another determining factor.

Giving and receiving feedback is a common practice in educational settings while performance feedback has been noted to affect students' performance on a task (e.g., Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Lipnevich & Smith, 2018; Shute, 2008). More importantly, feedback can elicit a wide range of both positive and negative emotions, which have also been reported to impact students' academic outcomes (e.g., Goetz et al., 2018 as cited in Lipnevich et al., 2021; Goetz & Hall, 2013, 2020; Zeidner, 2007 as cited in Lipnevich et al., 2021). Overall, prior literature suggests that differential feedback may lead to the experience of various emotions in learners (Lipnevich & Smith, 2009; Peterson et al.,

2015; Vogl & Pekrun, 2016), yet the exact links among specific types of feedback and emotions require to be further examined (Lipnevich et al., 2021).

**Significance of the Study**

The concept of feedback sounds to be fundamental in the area of L2 learning, yet it has not received due attention except by the experts in the area of language education. The present study is noteworthy on the premise that it has the potential to improve the learning process by making language learners aware of the importance of feedback. Moreover, feedback can be constructive as it can provide learners with the required information on their performance. Nonetheless, there is a common misconception which ascribes feedback merely to error correction. The current study is significant as it gives equal attention to language teachers for praising the learners' effective use of language and the role of positive feedback, as well as highlighting the role of negative feedback while examining its relation with positive and negative emotions along with L2 achievement. Above all, many learners take feedback as one of the most crucial elements and the building block of their learning experience.

Moreover, the present study is valuable since it underlines the constructive role of feedback in redirecting and refocusing either the teacher's or the learner's attention towards their ultimate goals by linking effort and activity to the outcome. In this vein, the feedback will build upon the output of the activity, the process of the activity, and the students' management of their learning or self-regulation. In addition, the study can open new horizons for teachers, learners, and practitioners in the area of language teaching to become much more conscious of the impact of feedback on other potential variables.

**Purpose of the Study**

The present study intends to shed light on the relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' conceptions of feedback, their achievement emotions, and L2 achievement. To this end, first, the relationship between the learners' positive class-related emotions (enjoyment, hope, & pride) and negative class-related emotions (anger, anxiety, boredom, hopelessness, & shame) with L2 achievement was assessed. Second, the relationships between the

students' conceptions of feedback (comments for improvement, interpersonal feedback, & negative feedback) and their positive and negative class-related emotions were investigated (enjoyment, hope, pride, anger, anxiety, boredom, hopelessness, & shame). Finally, the association between the learners' conceptions of feedback (comments for improvement, interpersonal feedback, & negative feedback) and their L2 performance was checked.

## 2. Review of the Related Literature

**Theoretical Frameworks of Emotions**

Pekrun's (2006) control-value theory of achievement emotions has been used as the theoretical framework for the investigation of positive and negative emotions. This theory combines four common contemporary theories of emotion. To be more specific, grounded primarily in the appraisal theories of emotion, it advances the seminal work of Lazarus' (1999) revised model of stress, coping, and adaptation. In addition, this theory is congruent with contemporary interpretation of the developmental maturation progression of Erikson and Erikson (1997) psychosocial stages, Piaget's psychosocial stages, and Reed's (2009) dynamic process of self-transcendence that posits that accumulating experiences progressively builds the cognitive and psychosocial maturity of the individual to create the emotional foundation upon which all life experiences are appraised

**Contemporary Theories of Emotions**

Paradigms that underpin four current theories on emotions contain the same five components of subjective feelings (monitoring), action tendency (motivation), appraisal (meaning-making), motor activity (communication), and physiological (support) (Shuman & Sherer, 2014). First, basic emotions theories posit that emotions are discreet and are used as a survival strategy for the human evolution (Plutchik, 2001). In this case, appraisal theories posit that antecedent to, and the driving force for emotions are, personal appraisals which lead to physiological arousal, as well as motivation, and communication which may impact academic performance (Lazarus, 1968). The most widely applied appraisal theory to educational research is Lazarus's revised model of stress, coping, and adaptation (1999) which comprises the meta-emotion of well-being as a consequence of learning. Izard

(2007) has analyzed the basic and appraisal theories regarding the existence of emotion schemas and has concluded that learning emotions have a cultural component that may influence the research results in emotion studies.

**Model of Stress, Coping, and Adaptation**

Lazarus revised model of stress, coping, and adaptation (1999) as well as the theoretical framework of Pekrun's (2006) control-value theory of achievement emotions are presented for the better comprehension of the role of diverse types of emotions. Lazarus's (1999) model is an appraisal theory that posits a person's well-being is the outcome of one's cognitive, affective, physical, and psychosocial states which results from one's person-environment relationship. In Figure 2, situational events (whether in the real world or the academic setting) are appraised through an interactive balance of preceding or causal antecedents resulting in immediate outcomes of physiological arousal culminating into emotional responses that influence performance (academic, sports, music, and work). Long-term outcomes include progression along the learning process (cognitive and psychosocial skills), physical health, and psychological well-being (Lazarus, 1999).

Additionally, the person-environment relationship is a complex balance between one's personal values, the sense of control and perception of threats, and demands regarding academic events (within the on-site classroom or online classroom during the learning process or during evaluations like tests) (Wang e al., 2021). Students invoke an appraisal process to determine if one's resources meet the environmental demands and threats, and if there are benefits that justify the effort. Every academic situational event is evaluated through this dynamic and repetitive appraisal process which is mediated and moderated by one's coping strategies (problem-focused and emotion-focused) and social support system (emotional, tangible, and/or informational) (Cao, 2006). The result is an immediate emotional response (emotion spectrum) manifesting behavioral action with resulting outcome (positive or negative). Over time, one's cognitive learning/development, affective state, psychosocial relationship culminates into one's sense of well-being within the environment (Cao & Philp, 2006). Too many threatening and overwhelming events can destabilize one's environment relationship to the point where one's cognitive learning and

development, physical health, and psychosocial skills deteriorate into maladaptive states or psychopathology (Wang e al., 2021).
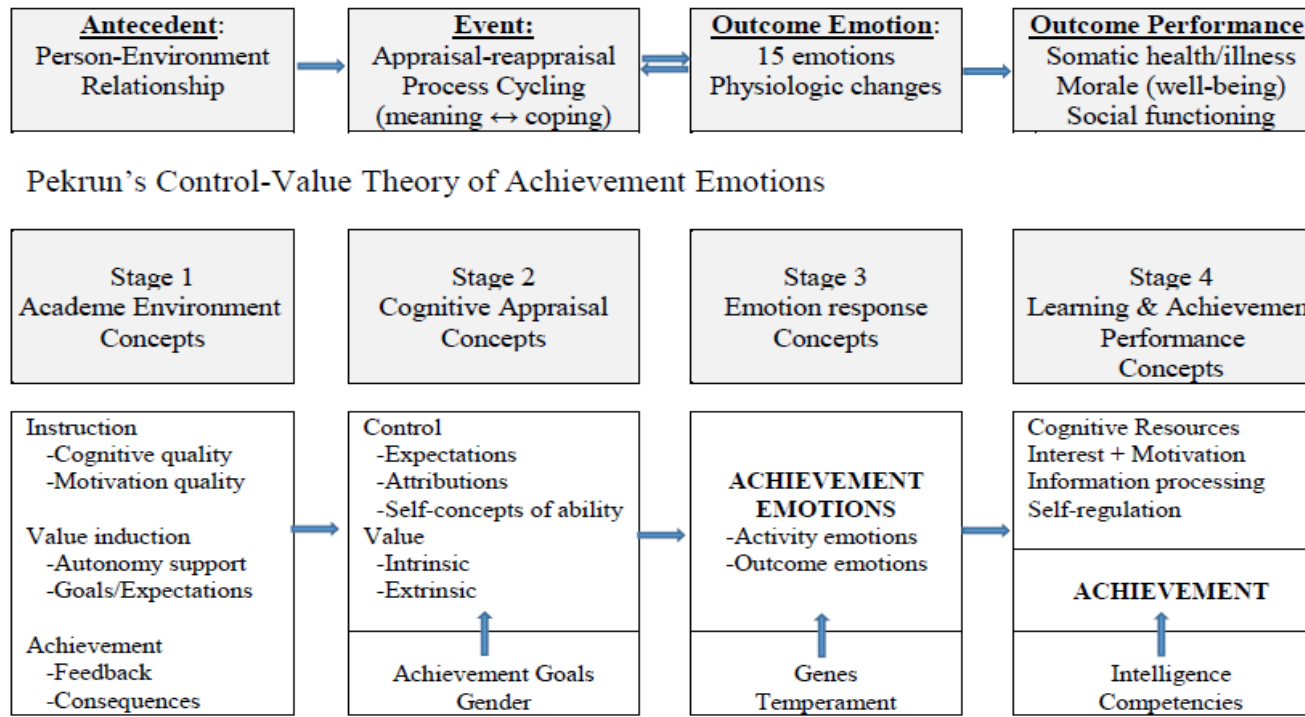


| **Antecedent**: Person-Environment Relationship | → | **Event:** Appraisal-reappraisal Process Cycling (meaning ↔ coping) | ⇄ | **Outcome Emotion**: 15 emotions Physiologic changes | → | **Outcome Performance** Somatic health/illness Morale (well-being) Social functioning |

Pekrun's Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions

| Stage 1 Academe Environment Concepts | Stage 2 Cognitive Appraisal Concepts | Stage 3 Emotion response Concepts | Stage 4 Learning & Achievemen Performance Concepts |

| Instruction -Cognitive quality -Motivation quality  Value induction -Autonomy support -Goals/Expectations  Achievement -Feedback -Consequences | → | Control -Expectations -Attributions -Self-concepts of ability Value -Intrinsic -Extrinsic  ↑ Achievement Goals Gender | → | **ACHIEVEMENT EMOTIONS** -Activity emotions -Outcome emotions  ↑ Genes Temperament | → | Cognitive Resources Interest + Motivation Information processing Self-regulation  **ACHIEVEMENT**  ↑ Intelligence Competencies |

**Figure 2.1.**

*Revised model of stress and coping with a linear demand-perception-response. Adapted from Lazarus's (1999)*

To support his new revised model, Lazarus (1999) advised a paradigm shift in research from being variable-centered (quantitative) to person-centered (qualitative) to focus on individual emotion processing and the behavioral outcomes (p. 205). His recommendation specifically focused on qualitative methodology known as "emotion narrative" (p. 205) in which each individual participant in a study would be allowed to express his/her emotions on the academic situation and his/her performance. This new approach offers researchers

the unique opportunity to test "whether the individual's subjective cognitive perspectives conforms to the objective physical evidence or not" (p. 204).

**Pekrun's Five Qualitative Studies**

The new approach of "emotion narrative" was applied by Pekrun and colleagues (Pekrun, 1992; Pekrun et al., 2002; Spangler, Pekrun, Kramerc, & Hofmannd, 2002) to gain a deeper understanding of Lazarus's revised model of stress, coping, and adaptation (1999) with a focus on the spectrum of academic emotions. In a series of five qualitative phenomenological studies (Pekrun, 1992; Pekrun et al., 2002), a new model emerged from within concepts known to effect the person-environment relationship. Study populations were limited to university students and their appraisal of academic experiences in three distinct academic environments (in class, while studying, and during tests). Students reported a diverse range of positive and negative emotions within the academic experience, specifically academic achievement (Pekrun et al., 2002). The reported frequency of positive emotions (enjoyment of learning, hope, pride, & relief) were nearly identical to negative emotions (anxiety, anger, boredom, shame, & hopelessness) with anxiety being the most frequently reported one. Hopelessness was the least reported one as a contributory factor to "failing an exam" or "personal tragedies outside the academic environment".

However, several key findings are worth noting here. First, the recognition of social emotions like gratitude, admiration, contempt, and envy were reported albeit less frequently than the above achievement emotions (Pekrun et al., 2002). Thus, educators need to be more aware of the importance of the social-relational effects on the academic emotional experience. Second, emotions can activate or deactivate the motivation to learn, indicating that educators can harness them for students' success. Third, emotions were object-focused depending on the academic environments (class-related and learning-related) and timing (test-related). For example, anxiety was reported in all three academic environments with highest intensity before, during, and after test-related situations, enjoyment was reported in learning situations (class and studying), and pride or shame were reported after tests.

Pekrun et al. (2002) developed a three-dimensional taxonomy (2x3) of the nine identified emotions and some social emotions based on two object-focuses (activity and outcome where the outcome is both anticipation of and reflection after tests), two valences (positive or negative), and two motivation activations (activating and deactivating). Fourth, the phenomenon of student's meta-emotions emerged where discreet emotions combine into a grand affective experience with overlapping components underscoring the complexity of emotion research. This finding has the potential to violate statistical analyses where the assumption of independent observations may not be tenable.

Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2014)maintained that different emotions emerge from three types of object focus. First, learning activities are appraised as either easy or hard (challenging). Second, the anticipation of outcomes is categorized as possible success or possible failure. Third, reflection of the outcomes is perceived as success or failure. Emotional responses for each objective are identified with activating (motivating & energizing) or deactivating (demotivating & deenergizing) valance.
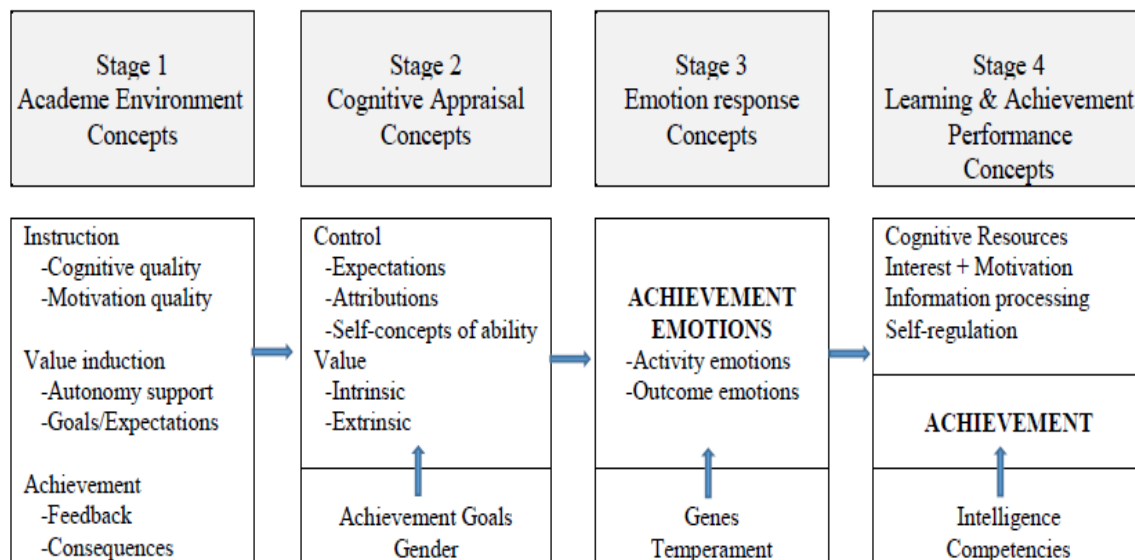


**Figure 2.2.**

*Pekrun's control-value theory of achievement emotions*

**Integration of Reed's Self-transcendence and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

The control-value theory is a powerful theory that links Erikson (1968) psychosocial stages and Piaget's cognitive development stages through the dynamic appraisal processing of Maslow's motivation hierarchy of value and control to perceived achievement goals measurable by achievement outcomes within the academe environment. The overarching outcome is the emotional experience generated within the framework of the studens' individual cognitive and psychosocial development stage (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014).

Pekrun's (2006) control-value theory of achievement emotions is linked with Erikson's psychosocial stages through cognitive appraisal, enacted coping/learning strategies, and experienced emotional responses. Educators need to be aware that each student has their own unique psychosocial developmental levels built up from infancy and progressing through primary, secondary, and higher education. Each student-academic environment encounter is appraised as a threat/benefit with value/control using Maslow's appraisal processing. Each successive outcome incrementally culminates in progressive self-transcendence/growth or regression/woundedness (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). Self-transcendence is known as the process of cognitive growth and learning (from positive emotions) that educators strive for (or should strive for). Although Erikson and Erikson (1997) originally placed the self-transcendence stage as a final life stage, nursing theorist research supports self-transcendence as an individual's developmentally-based accumulative resource of cognitive appraisal skills through lifetime experiences (Reed, 2009).

informs students' on their progress level. It has also become the medium for teachers to provide the correct model; 2) Feedback consists of hints the students can use to improve their language skills. It can give beneficial commentary rather than any simple explanation which is usually delivered in the class; 3) Feedback informs the student about their current language skills. In this case, teachers can deliver significant language learning tips to the

students orally or in a written form. Students will learn new vocabulary items, correct pronunciation, and sentence structure from the model which is delivered through feedback; 4) Feedback can be a beneficial stimulus to the students as it can arouse the students' motivation better than giving mark or grades. Throughout the teaching and learning process, a teacher can understand the different characteristics of the students. Therefore, by using feedback the teacher can encourage students to study and to use the language to the best of their ability; 5) Feedback can guide students to become independent in the learning process as it aims to guide students to find their own mistakes.

## 3. Method

### Participants

A sample of 150 Iraqi EFL learners, who were studying English for communicative purposes participated in the study voluntarily with no expectation of incentives. They were studying English at private language institutes of Iraq. To control for the role of language proficiency level, the students who were at intermediate level were considered. Besides, the participants of the current investigation were young adults with the age range of 13 to 18. The respondents were both male (n = 77, 51%) and female (n = 73, 48%) learners who were selected from English Institutes of Samawa, Iraq, based on convenience sampling method.

### Instruments

### Student Conceptions of Feedback Inventory

The 28-item student conceptions of feedback questionnaire developed by Harris, Brown, and Harnett (2014) was used to capture the students' conceptions of feedback (Appendix A). Participants rated how much they agreed or disagreed with the items using a 5-point Likert scale. The three imbedded factors were "comments for improvement" (13 items), "interpersonal feedback" (7 items), and "negative feedback" (8 items). Using Cronbach Alpha, the overall reliability of the scale was .83. The following table presents the items and the reliability indices of each factor (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

*The Comprising Factors of Conceptions of Feedback*

| Factors Reliability | Statements in the Inventory | Number of Items | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Comments for improvement | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 | 13 | .88 |
| Interpersonal feedback | 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 | 7 | .82 |
| Negative feedback | 21, 22, 23, 24,15, 26, 27, and 28 | 8 | .86 |

**Achievement Emotions Questionnaire**

To reflect English language learners' class-related emotions, Bieleke et al.'s (2021) short version of Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ) was used (Appendix B). There are three sections to the AEQ, including the class-related, learning-related, and test-related emotion scales. More specifically, the class-related emotions is a subscale which is focused exclusively on the eight class-related emotions, namely enjoyment (4 items), hope (4 items), pride (4 items), boredom (4 items), anxiety (4 items), anger (4 items), shame (4 items), and hopelessness (4 items). To this end, 32 items from AEQ were modified to be appropriate for measuring L2 class-related emotions. It is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*srongly agree*) (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

*The Comprising Factors of Achievement Emotions Questionnaire*

| Factors | Statements in the Inventory | Number of Items | Reliability |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Enjoyment | 1, 2, 3, and 4 | 4 | . 94 |
| Hope | 5, 6, 7, and 8 | 4 | .86 |
| Pride | 9, 10, 11, and 12 | 4 | .88 |
| Anger | 13, 14, 15, and 16 | 4 | .88 |
| Anxiety | 17, 18, 19, and 20 | 4 | .93 |
| Shame | 21, 22, 23, and 24 | 4 | .87 |
| Hopelessness | 25, 26, 27, and 28 | 4 | .91 |
| Boredom | 29, 30, 31,and 32 | 4 | .93 |

**L2 Achievement**

The learners' L2 achievement will be assessed with regard to their final scores at the end of the term. Their final exam will have different measures of reading comprehension, language structure, vocabulary, and listening. The reason for setting course grades as the index of L2 achievement is that course grades have been reported to be more representative of the learners' motivational and personality factors than standardized tests (Arens, Morin, & Watermann, 2015).

**Procedure**
**Data Collection**

Using convenience sampling method, 150 EFL learners were selected randomly from English language institutes of Iraq. In the first phase of the study, Bieleke et al.'s (2021) short version of AEQ was utilized so as to assess language learners' positive (enjoyment, pride, & hope) and negative emotions (anxiety, anger, boredom, shame, & hopelessness). In the second phase, the students' conceptions of feedback inventory was shared with the students so as to capture the students' opinion regarding the three types of feedback namely, "comments for improvement", "interpersonal feedback", and "negative feedback" . The questionnaires were administered online due to the researcher's restricted access to the students within in-person classes during the pandemic. In so doing, the scales were prepared in Google Form and the link was shared online. Besides, all the instructions for filling out the questionnaires were given to the students as the researcher was present during the scale completion stage in online classes. The students' final scores were obtained at the end of the term as the index of L2 achievement. The process of data collection took place in January 2021 and lasted until April 2021. Further, to increase the homogeneity of the sample regarding the proficiency level, not only intermediate students were selected, but also the students whose final marks on L2 achievement test, did not fall within two standard deviations of the mean were excluded.

## 4. Results

**Descriptive Findings**

Table 4.1. shows the descriptive statistics of achievement emotions including enjoyment, hope, pride, anger, anxiety, shy, hopelessness, and boredom, as well as the conceptions of feedback such as comments for improvement, interpersonal feedback, and negative feedback. The results of the data analysisindicated that the present dataset satisfied all the requirements for normality, multicollinearity, residual values, and

multivariate outliers as the skewness and kurtosis values did not exceed ± 2.0. Among the academic emotions, enjoyment was reported to be the highest active emotion in English language classes (M = 14.99), followed by anxiety (M = 13.79), hope (M = 13.66), anger (M = 12.97), hopelessness (M = 12.62), shy (M = 12.29), pride (M = 12.19), and boredom (M = 12.16). In case of the conceptions of feedback, comments for improvement (M = 45.88) had the highest mean, followed by negative feedback (M = 25.84), and interpersonal feedback (M = 24.52).

**Table 4.1.**
*Descriptive Statistics*

|  | N | Mini | Max | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness Statistics | Std. Error | Kurtosis Statistics | Std. Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| achievement | 150 | 50.0 | 99 | 82.662 | 9.1175 | -.633 | .151 | .163 | .301 |
| enjoyment | 150 | 4.00 | 20 | 14.9933 | 2.75266 | -.292 | .198 | -.259 | .394 |
| Hope | 150 | 4.00 | 20 | 13.6600 | 4.32385 | -.505 | .198 | -.390 | .394 |
| pride | 150 | 4.00 | 20 | 12.1967 | 3.87798 | -.301 | .198 | -.532 | .394 |
| anger | 150 | 4.00 | 20 | 12.9733 | 3.61196 | -.122 | .198 | -.119 | .394 |
| anxiety | 150 | 4.00 | 20 | 13.7919 | 4.96648 | -.109 | .199 | -1.178 | .395 |
| shy | 150 | 4.00 | 20 | 12.2933 | 4.08721 | .227 | .198 | -.813 | .394 |
| hopelessness | 150 | 4.00 | 20 | 12.6200 | 4.06932 | -.032 | .198 | -.729 | .394 |
| boredom | 150 | 4.00 | 20 | 12.1600 | 4.70908 | .028 | .198 | -1.013 | .394 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comments for improvement | 150 | 13.00 | 65 | 45.8844 | 9.87491 | -.252 | .200 | .105 | .397 |
| Interpersonal feedback | 150 | 7.00 | 35 | 24.5238 | 6.55883 | -.500 | .200 | -.006 | .397 |
| Negative feedback | 150 | 12.00 | 37 | 25.8400 | 6.42779 | .042 | .198 | -1.008 | .394 |

**Correlational Findings**

To investigate the association between EFL learners' achievement emotions and their L2 achievement, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was administered to measure the strength of a linear association between the components of the two variables (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2.**

*Emotions and L2 Achievement*

| | | L2 achievement |
|---|---|---|
| enjoyment | Pearson Correlation | .751[*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| Hope | Pearson Correlation | .339[*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| pride | Pearson Correlation | .402[*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .623 |
| anger | Pearson Correlation | -.351[*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| anxiety | Pearson Correlation | -.458[*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| shy | Pearson Correlation | -.092 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .264 |
| hopelessness | Pearson Correlation | -.432[*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| boredom | Pearson Correlation | -.421[*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |

Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The findings show that there was a positive correlation between positive emotions (enjoyment, hope, & pride) and L2 achievement with higher levels of positive emotions being associated with better performance in L2 learning (Table 4.2). To be more specific, there was a significant positive relationship between enjoyment and L2 achievement ($r = .75$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$) followed by pride ($r = .40$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), and hope ($r = .33$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Besides, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that the learners' enjoyment, pride, and hope share 56%, 16%, and 10% of the variance with L2 achievement, respectively.

Regarding the negative emotions, the results revealed that there were negative correlations between anger, anxiety, hopelessness, boredom, and L2 achievement with higher levels of negative emotions being associated with lower performance in L2 learning (Table 4.2). In particular, there was a significant negative relationship between anxiety and L2 achievement ($r = -.45$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$) followed by hopelessness ($r = -.43$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), boredom ($r = -.42$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), and anger ($r = -.35$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Besides, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that the learners' anxiety, hopelessness, boredom, and anger share 20%, 18%, 17%, and 12% of the variance with L2 achievement,

respectively. Further, there was no significant relationship between shy and L2 achievement ($r$ = -.09, $n$ = 150, $p$ >.05),

The second research question attempts to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' conceptions of feedback and emotions. In this case, preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The findings demonstrated that there were positive relations between comments for improvement and positive emotions with higher level of enjoyment, hope, and pride being correlated with higher conceptions of comments for improvement (Table 4.3). To shed light, there was a significant positive relationship between hope and conceptions of comments for improvement ($r$ = .66, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01) followed by pride ($r$ = .60, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01), and enjoyment ($r$ = .55, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01). Besides, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that the learners' hope, pride, and enjoyment share 43%, 36%, and 30% of the variance with conceptions of comments for improvement, respectively.

Negative emotions reported to be negatively associated with conceptions of comments for improvement with higher levels of anger, anxiety, hopelessness, and boredom being related with lower consideration of comments for improvement. More specifically, there was a significant negative relationship between hopelessness and comments for improvement ($r$ = -.83, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01) followed by anxiety ($r$ = -.67, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01), anger ($r$ = -.62, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01), and boredom ($r$ = -.46, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01). Shy was the only negative emotion which was positively associated with comments for improvement ($r$ = .47, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01).

Besides, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that the learners' hopelessness, anxiety, anger, boredom, and shy share 68%, 44%, 38%, 21%, and 22% of the variance with comments for improvement, respectively.

Concerning interpersonal feedback, the statistical findings displayed that there were positive relations between interpersonal feedback and positive emotions with higher level of enjoyment, hope, and pride being correlated with higher consideration of interpersonal feedback (Table 4.3). To clarify, there was a significant positive relationship between enjoyment and consideration of interpersonal feedback ($r$ = .55, $n$ = 150, $p$ < .01) followed

by hope ($r = .53$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), and pride ($r = .50$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Besides, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that the learners' enjoyment, hope, and pride, share 30%, 28%, and 25% of the variance with interpersonal feedback, respectively.

In respect with negative emotions, the results indicated that there was a negative relationship between anger, anxiety, hopelessness, and boredom with interpersonal feedback with higher levels of negative emotions being correlated with lower levels of interpersonal feedback (Table 4.3). In this regard, there was a significant negative relationship between anxiety and interpersonal feedback ($r = -.67$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$) followed by anger ($r = -.63$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), hopelessness ($r = -.49$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), and boredom ($r = -.47$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Shy was the only negative emotion which was positively associated with interpersonal feedback ($r = .55$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Moreover, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that the learners' anxiety, anger, hopelessness, boredom, and shy share 44%, 39%, 24%, 22%, 30% of the variance with interpersonal feedback, respectively.

Taking negative feedback into account, the results revealed that there was a negative association between conceptions of negative feedback and positive emotions with higher levels of enjoyment, hope, and pride being negatively related to negative feedback (Table 4.3). In this respect, there was a significant negative relationship between pride and negative feedback ($r = -.76$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$) followed by enjoyment ($r = -.68$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), and hope ($r = -.65$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Additionally, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that the learners' pride, enjoyment, and hope share 57%, 46%, and 42% of the variance with negative feedback, respectively.

Finally, the analysis of negative emotions revealed that they were positively correlated with negative feedback with higher levels of anxiety, anger, hopelessness, and boredom being associated with higher conceptions of negative feedback (Table 4.3). As a result, there was a significant positive relationship between anxiety and negative feedback ($r = .82$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$) followed by anger ($r = .70$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), hopelessness ($r = .59$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$), and boredom ($r = .49$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Shy was the only negative emotion which had a negative relation with negative feedback ($r = -.53$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Further, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that the learners' anxiety,

anger, hopelessness, boredom, and shy share 67%, 49%, 34%, 24%, and 28% of the variance with negative feedback, respectively.

**Table 4.3.**

*Conceptions of Feedback and Emotions*

| | | enjoyment | Hope | pride | anger | anxiety | shy | hopelessness | boredom |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comments for improvement | Pearson Correlation | .559** | .661** | .605** | -.625** | -.678** | .473** | -.836** | -.469** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Interpersonal feedback | Pearson Correlation | .554** | .533** | .501** | -.637** | -.678** | .559** | -.498** | -.475** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Negative feedback | Pearson Correlation | -.680** | -.653** | -.764** | .701** | .822** | -.534** | .590** | .494** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |

To answer the third research question on the relationship between EFL learners' conceptions of feedback and L2 achievement, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted to measure the strength of a linear association between the the two variables (Table 4.4). Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The findings show that there was a positive correlation between comments for improvement, interpersonal feedback,

and L2 achievement with higher levels of conceptions of comments for improvement and interpersonal feedback being associated with better performance in L2 learning (Table 4.4). To be more specific, there was a significant positive relationship between comments for improvement and L2 achievement ($r = .56$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$) followed by interpersonal feedback ($r = .37$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). However, negative feedback revealed to have a negative association with L2 achievement ($r = -.38$, $n = 150$, $p < .01$). Besides, the result of the coefficient of determination shows that comments for improvement, interpersonal feedback, and negative feedback share 31%, 13%, 14% of the variance with L2 achievement, respectively.

**Table 4.4**
*Conceptions of Feedback and L2 Achievement*

|  |  | achievement |
|---|---|---|
| Comments for improvement | Pearson Correlation | .569[*] |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| Interpersonal feedback | Pearson Correlation | .373[*] |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| Negative feedback | Pearson Correlation | -.385[*] |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |

The following chapter will discuss the results of the present study as well as the implications of the findings.

# 5. Discussion

## Restatement of the Problem

Although emotions have been recognized as having a crucial role in foreign language learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Ellis, 1994), the investigation of emotions has

not yet been considered seriously in the research domain in language learning area (Dewaele, 2005; Garret & Young, 2009). Thus, there is an overall dearth of research into language learners' emotions in their actual experience of classroom learning (Méndez López, 2011). Similarly, though the concept of feedback has received special attention within the past decade, it has been less explored in combination with learners' emotions within the language learning context.

The above-mentioned gap resides in education in general and more specifically in the language learning domain. A typical context is EFL learning in Iraq, a developing country, where for many years education in general and language learning in particular have been studied less comprehensively.

Influenced by the overall attraction of the topic (i.e. exploring the association between learner perceived feedback, emotions, & language proficiency) and the existing gap in the literature, the present research aimed to investigate the interrelationships among three variables including learners' perceived feedback, emotions (negative and positive), and language proficiency (achievement). The results of this research can reveal valuable facts about the affective involvement of L2 learners in the language learning process and their conceptualization of feedback along with the role it plays in class. More importantly, how these two variables are associated with learners' language proficiency was explored was investigated which can elucidate how feedback and learners' emotions mutually affect each other and how they both can play a role in language learners' academic achievement.

## 6. Conclusion

In light of the present findings, there are several conclusive remarks that can be made with an aim to contribute to the overall EFL learning and teaching domain. Firstly, EFL learners' emotions need close investigations in the language learning process. To elucidate, in developing countries, where people are under much more life pressure (for different governmental or political reasons), students' emotions can be much more shaky and need cautious care in class. Probably, teacher education programs or in-service programs need to take this matter into account and prepare teachers to care more about learners' emotions.

Teachers are advised to help promote language learners' positive emotions and lower the negative emotions such as boredom, and anxiety.

Secondly, the value of caring about and investigating learners' emotions lies in the links they have with learning outcomes. As the present findings revealed, EFL learners' positive and negative emotions were accompanied by desirable and undesirable academic achievement. Thus, it seems to be obligatory to raise teachers' and curriculum designers' awareness of this association. Teachers can indirectly, through motivating learners and changing the class environment into a more enjoyable one, affect language learners' academic performance. It appears that teaching is beyond the mere content knowledge of the teacher and requires more practical terms such as pedagogical knowledge. Involving EFL learners' emotions can be followed by better language learning outcomes. Yet, the direct or indirect effects need further empirical data.

Thirdly, positive and negative feedback, if applied appropriately in class and if the value is perceived by the students, can predict better language learning outcomes. Again teacher preparation and teacher training courses are advised to incorporate different techniques for positive and negative feedback to pre-service teachers. Teachers need to also learn how to improve their students' perception of feedback in class, especially the negative (corrective) feedback, which has been more touched upon in the existing literature, yet less fully understood in the actual EFL class.

Fourthly, the potentially interactive effect of feedback and emotions in class needs special attention as well. Teachers can help EFL learners receive the required correct form of feedback when needed without hurting feelings through an enjoyable and comfortable manner.

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