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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**A Comparative Study on the Foreign Language Anxiety and Pleasure of Russian Teachers at Universities**

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**| ABSTRACT**

Anxiety and pleasure are fundamental emotional responses in the human body that often occur in life and work. This paper conducts a comparative study on the current levels of foreign language anxiety and pleasure among Russian language teachers at universities. The results show that owing to various factors, such as teaching pressure and professional identity, Russian language teachers at universities generally experience anxiety, with differences observed in age and teaching experience. Given the unique status and cultural background of Russian education in China, Russian language teachers also experience a certain degree of pleasure in their work. Through surveys and interviews with Russian language teachers at universities in Northeast China, it was found that teachers' foreign language anxiety mainly stems from self-identity and student-related aspects. On the other hand, pleasure primarily comes from student interaction, teaching outcomes, and cultural exchange. To address this issue, this paper proposes corresponding measures to promote the development of Russian language education in Chinese universities, effectively addressing the contemporary question of "What role does education play in building a strong country?"

**| KEYWORDS**

Russian teachers at universities; anxiety; pleasure; students; coping; comparative study

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**1. Introduction**

In China, Russia is not a required subject for most students. The number of Russian learners is small, with many starting from scratch during their college years. Therefore, Russian teachers at universities often face various emotional challenges in teaching, among which anxiety and pleasure are the most prominent emotional responses. The characteristics of students lead to occupational anxiety for university Russian teachers. Owing to the unique nature of their profession, the emergence of occupational anxiety (career anxiety) is inevitable. It affects all types of professionals<sup>[15]</sup> Studies have shown that college teachers in China generally suffer from occupational anxiety; long-term serious occupational anxiety can lead to occupational burnout (career burnout), which is "a symptom of physical and mental fatigue and exhaustion caused by heavy work pressure"<sup>[7]</sup>.

At the same time, teachers easily experience a pleasant mood. When communicating with students and interacting with teaching, they feel very happy. Dewaele et al. proposed that foreign language pleasure is a combination of positive emotions, which largely corresponds to the ability to solve difficult tasks and cope with challenges<sup>[5]</sup> Foreign language pleasure has a very obvious positive effect on foreign language teaching, and the study of teachers' foreign language pleasure can help improve the quality of foreign language teaching. Teachers' emotions also strongly influence students' emotions<sup>[9]</sup>. The pleasant emotions of foreign language teachers do not exist in isolation. The emergence of anxiety about the foreign language should be viewed critically, and the two are not in a relationship of mutual decline. Researchers should understand the coexistence of multiple

emotions of Russian teachers from an overall perspective.<sup>[3]</sup>In the future, foreign language emotion field research should investigate teachers' different emotions more deeply and address the lack of research.

Teaching is not only a cognitive activity but also an emotional practice<sup>[16]</sup>. Both positive and negative emotions of foreign language teachers can cause emotional fluctuations, and if negative emotions accumulate for a long time, they can lead to psychological health problems for teachers. In recent years, an increasing number of scholars have focused on the study of teachers' foreign language emotions. At present, in-depth research on teachers' emotions in the field of emotional research is lacking. Liu Xiaoming (2025) reported that mental health is one of the core competencies of teachers<sup>[11]</sup>. Teachers' own mental health literacy can directly affect students' mental health status and directly affect the quality of education and teaching effectiveness. Many studies often focus only on teachers' educational and teaching behaviors while ignoring the potential impact of teachers' emotions on teaching and student development. This leads to a lack of in-depth understanding of the complexity and diversity of teacher emotions. Second, the scope of research on teacher emotions is relatively narrow. Moreover, scholars in the field of teacher emotion research usually focus on negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and depression, while relatively less research has focused on the positive emotions, job satisfaction, and professional well-being of teachers. This makes it difficult for us to fully understand the emotional state of teachers and provide them with more comprehensive emotional support. On this basis, this article starts with the two major emotions of anxiety and pleasure, understands the current situation and causes of these two emotions, and seeks effective coping measures. This is highly important for improving the teaching quality of teachers and maintaining their mental health. Finally, the practical application areas of teacher emotion research still need to be expanded. Currently, scholars in related research fields focus mainly on theoretical exploration and phenomenon description but lack research on practical problem-solving and coping strategies. For example, Chen Liming (2025) described in very theoretical language the solutions to teachers' emotional problems<sup>[1]</sup>. The field of emotional research requires more practical research to apply theory to practice and provide effective emotional support and assistance for teachers. This article proposes methods and suggestions for teachers to maintain positive emotions and adjust negative emotions through data analysis and integration.

In summary, there are still shortcomings and overlooked areas in the study of teacher emotions in multiple aspects, which require more comprehensive and in-depth research to better understand teachers' emotional states, provide better support and assistance for teachers, and thus improve teaching quality. This article places its research perspective in the relatively lacking field of the Russian language, delving into the diverse influences of teacher emotions and comprehensively analysing the diversity and complexity of teacher emotions. This study enriches the field of emotional research, provides innovative perspectives, and is beneficial for universities to control teachers' emotional problems, improve teachers' mental health, enhance their professional happiness, and effectively improve teaching quality by conveying positive emotions to students.

## **2. Research Technique**

### **2.1 Subjects Investigated**

The subjects of this study are four teachers from the Russian Department of a university in Northeast China, including three age groups, 30--40, 41--50 and 51--59, covering three academic levels: undergraduate, master's degree and doctoral degree.

### **2.2 Research Tool**

The author interviewed four teachers of the Russian Department of a university in Northeast China (three of whom have more than 20 years of teaching experience) and asked the following questions:

1. What emotions do you often experience in your teaching work?
2. Do you think this emotion will affect your enthusiasm for teaching?
3. Do you often feel happy in the process of teaching Russian?
4. Do you think pleasant emotions are important to you? Why?
5. What is the classroom atmosphere of your class? Do you think the classroom atmosphere will affect your mood? Why?
6. Will your state of mind affect your mood during class? Why?
7. What strategies will you use to adjust your classroom teaching so that you can teach in a pleasant way?
8. As a Russian teacher in college, do you have any anxiety when teaching in Russia?
9. What situations in class cause you to feel the most anxiety?

10. How do you view and deal with your anxiety?

The interview transcript was based on previous interviews<sup>[4]</sup>The title and context were changed to Russian<sup>[12]</sup>With the explicit permission of the research subjects, the interviews were fully recorded and transcribed word by word. All the data presented in this paper have been confirmed to be accurate by the research subjects.

**2.3 DA**

The data analysis in this study adopted a qualitative approach and strictly followed the theoretical framework of the research. By thoroughly reading all the transcribed interview transcripts, various themes related to anxiety and pleasure, such as causes of anxiety, experiences of pleasure, coping strategies, etc., were extracted. These themes form the basis for further analysis and categorization. This study aims to explore the true thoughts of the subjects, including different perspectives on anxiety and pleasure, as well as coping measures based on years of teaching experience, hence the use of qualitative analysis. The interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format to gain deeper insights into the commonalities and differences among the subjects, thereby enriching the research data. Data analysis proceeded from bottom to top, with coding primarily using the original text for descriptive entries and summaries; see the analysis Table 1 Data encoding analysis table:

Data fragment number	Data fragment content	Preliminary coding	theme	notes
1	"I think the main issue is your emotional attachment to this job, and it's about finding ways to solve it"	Work Emotions	work moods	adoration
2	"For students with zero foundation, seeing their daily progress is the greatest joy"	student progress	Joyful emotions	Zero foundation students
3	"Being with students in daily life and gaining information that can approach society or the ideas of young people can bring joy"	Communicate with students	Teacher student atmosphere	teaching benefits teachers as well as students
4	"If students' classroom emotions are quite high, we may explain all the content of lesson preparation"	Student emotions	classroom atmosphere	Reflect psychological state
5	"The progress of learning and the overall improvement of students' quality in Russian language classes, as well as the establishment of a foundation for future work"	Student quality cultivation	Students' future goals	The main aspects of anxiety
6	"The teacher imagines an idealized state, while the students have their own reality, which creates a gap"	idealize	Sense of difference	Causing problems to occur
7	"We basically implement the principle of teaching students according to their aptitude, so that every student can receive encouragement in the classroom"	teach students in accordance with their aptitude	Countermeasures	Encourage and actively guide
8	"Students never want to learn no matter what, which means they have no major or design for the future"	No future goals	Students lack goals	The greatest anxiety
9	"Encourage teaching and engage in more classroom interaction, but there is a serious lack of classroom time"	Insufficient classroom time	Affects communication	Information gap occurs
10	"Students' learning enthusiasm and enthusiasm seriously affect teachers' pleasant emotions"	The attitude of students	Affects teacher pleasure	Response and emotional intelligence
11	"Anxious students cannot understand or comprehend, and poor grades and passing grades are all problems"	academic achievement	Maximum anxiety	Student learning attitude

Table 1 Data encoding analysis

Combined with the qualitative analysis of the data, the author extracted key words, screened preliminary coding, themes and notes three contents, and carried out secondary analysis in Figure 1 Data Analysis,**Error! Reference source not found.**

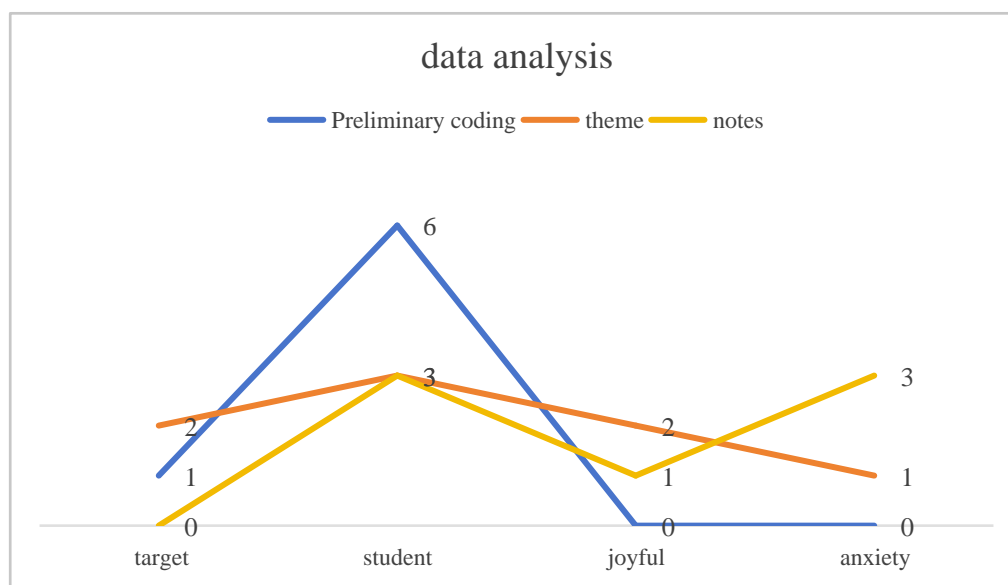


Figure 1 Data analysis

### 3. Analysis of the Results of the Study

This section will be divided into three sections to elaborate on the key findings of this study, each focusing on one emotion (such as anxiety), and the third section will compare the frequency of anxiety and pleasure to reveal the internal connection and cycle between the two emotions.

#### 3.1 Anxiety

Horwitz (1996) noted that there is a great lack of research on foreign language anxiety among teachers in the field of foreign language teaching. She proposed that the most important point is that foreign language teachers, like foreign language learners, are anxious<sup>[8]</sup>At the same time, the teacher foreign language anxiety scale was introduced in 2008<sup>[1]</sup>Zhao Lianjie (2020) proposed that teachers are inevitably troubled by negative emotions such as anxiety in the process of realizing the concept transformation of unifying beliefs and realizing ideal goals with practical behaviors<sup>[17]</sup>Owing to the limited resources for Russian language teaching, significant differences in student foundations, and the singularity of teaching methods, Russian language teachers often face immense teaching pressure, leading to anxiety. The number of Russian language teachers is relatively low, and most teachers have multiple roles with very tight schedules. Additionally, owing to the scarcity of Russian language teachers, many are older, and there is a lack of fresh talent entering the teaching profession. The heavy workload combined with increasing age inevitably affects their health, causing many teachers to experience health issues. Although these factors can lead to anxiety, they are not the primary source of maximum anxiety for Russian language teachers.

Owing to their rich experience as Russian language teachers, their deep love for the profession, and their strong professional competence, they rarely experience foreign language anxiety during teaching. Some interviewed teachers mentioned that when they were young and first stepping onto the podium, they might have felt anxious while teaching. However, after years of work, they have been able to handle such issues well. At the same time, having fewer classes, insufficient class time, low-level Russian proficiency, and teachers being unable to convey foreign language knowledge because using only Russian can lead to anxiety in teachers.

According to the statistical data analysis, without exception, the greater anxiety experienced by Russian language teachers stems from students not paying attention in class, struggling to understand despite repeated explanations, constantly looking down at their phones, giving up on their future goals, and even struggling to pass exams. One teacher highlighted the particularities of Russian learning, noting that, as a less common language, most students start from scratch. After intense college entrance examinations, students tend to be more relaxed at the beginning of their university life. In the early stages of Russian learning, the pace of the course is fast, making it difficult to catch up once one falls behind. Moreover, to date, students lack determination and perseverance, making it difficult to compensate for lost knowledge and leading to a vicious cycle.

### **3.2 Happy Mood**

The study of the pleasure and anxiety of second language learners from the perspective of positive psychology has gradually developed into the focus of relevant researchers<sup>[14]</sup>. Pleasant emotions are the most common positive emotions in foreign language learning<sup>[13]</sup>. The joy of foreign language teachers usually stems from multiple aspects. These factors not only enhance the professional satisfaction of relevant practitioners but also improve teaching effectiveness. First and foremost, it involves the growth and progress of students. When students transition from being hesitant to speak up to expressing themselves fluently and from being grammatically chaotic to being logically clear, a sense of achievement naturally arises in the teacher.

Second, active classroom interaction and a positive atmosphere bring joy to teachers, which can inspire them to rethink their teaching methods, fostering mutual growth. When Russian teachers receive positive responses from students in class, they become more confident in their teaching. This confidence stems from their proficiency in the language and effective use of teaching techniques. This well-handled teaching state greatly enhances the classroom atmosphere and benefits teachers' performance on the spot.

Second, the realization of personal professional value and the transmission of subject appeal can enhance teachers' threshold for positive emotions. When students fall in love with a language through a class or start to actively explore foreign literature and films, teachers feel the continuation of their knowledge influence. Teachers can effectively impart Russian language knowledge to students via efficient teaching methods, enabling them to learn and transform this knowledge, thereby improving their Russian proficiency. Teachers receive emotional feedback, allowing them to engage in teaching activities with enjoyment, thus achieving a state of positive emotion.

Finally, owing to the unique nature of foreign language teaching, which involves the charm of cross-cultural connections, teachers open windows for students to understand the world through their instruction. This process of cultural decoding is filled with intellectual enjoyment. At the same time, it helps students gain opportunities for studying abroad, working, or communicating confidently in international settings. Teachers indirectly experience the power of "changing lives," thus reaping joy.

### **3.3 Comparative study**

First, anxiety and pleasure are two opposing emotional states that teachers may experience simultaneously in their work, but the triggering factors are different. For example, joy may come from students' progress and teaching success, whereas anxiety may stem from work pressure, evaluation systems, or uncertainty in students' states.

Second, anxiety and pleasure emotions have an asymmetric relationship, and they are not simply emotional poles. There were significant differences between the two groups in triggering conditions, duration, and intervention methods. Moreover, anxiety and pleasure are dynamically balanced. At present, empirical research has shown that there is a dynamic balance between foreign language anxiety and pleasant emotions; that is, positive emotional effects can alleviate the negative effects of negative emotions to a certain extent<sup>[10]</sup>. However, even if positive emotions dominate, they cannot completely offset the negative impact of negative emotions<sup>[6]</sup>. Moderate anxiety can enhance teaching alertness (such as more rigorous lesson preparation), but it needs to be prevented from overgeneralization through organizational support. Joyful emotions are the core resource for maintaining teachers' professional resilience and require systematic cultivation.

Finally, through in-depth interviews, it was found that there are differences among teachers of different age groups. Teachers with less teaching experience are strongly influenced by factors such as the classroom atmosphere, unexpected situations during class, and lesson preparation content, whereas experienced teachers with more teaching experience can regulate their emotions in a timely manner. Two of the survey respondents noted that the learning status of students in different grades is different. Some teachers believe that students' quality is not as good as before, which leads to a significant decrease in the pleasant emotions gained by teachers through classroom teaching activities. However, due to factors such as students playing with mobile phones and not listening to classes, the situation of unsatisfactory grades has increased, and there are communication problems between students and teachers. Under the influence of various factors, the anxiety emotions gained by Russian language teachers in their work are much greater than the pleasant emotions.

## **4. Detailed Measures to Address the Situation**

### **4.1 Measures to deal with anxiety**

According to the data reported in Wei Jianhua (2019), different teachers take different measures to address foreign language anxiety<sup>[18]</sup>

During the classroom teaching process, it is normal for Russian teachers to experience anxiety. First, teachers can give themselves positive psychological suggestions, avoid being overly critical of themselves, and appropriately adjust their state through classroom teaching techniques such as slowing down the speaking pace. Moreover, teachers can actively participate in teaching research and training activities to improve their teaching skills. Second, they can also adjust their teaching methods, using a variety of teaching approaches and means to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm in learning, encouraging more classroom interaction and thereby reducing teaching pressure. Finally, schools should establish support systems, reasonably schedule classes on the basis of course content, organize activities that promote communication between teachers and students appropriately, and provide psychological counselling and teaching consultation services to help teachers alleviate their anxiety.

#### **4.2 Measures to promote pleasure**

First, more affirmation and encouragement should be given. Schools should acknowledge teachers' teaching achievements and encourage students to affirm their teachers' work, thereby enhancing teachers' sense of self-worth. Moreover, in response to issues such as the large number of students on campus and a lack of mutual understanding among them, schools can organize faculty-student social gatherings to promote better interaction between students and teachers. Second, academic activities can be enriched, such as organizing diverse academic exchange events, providing platforms for teachers to showcase themselves, and boosting their academic achievements.

#### **5. Conclusion**

This study conducted interviews with several Russian language teachers at a university in Northeast China and revealed that the emergence of foreign language anxiety among Russian teachers is due to three main factors: a lack of teaching conditions, frustration with work enthusiasm, and barriers in teacher-student communication. These three causes are not unrelated but closely linked, with students being the key node. Moreover, positive emotions are also an important part of teachers' work and life. Positive interactions with students and the mutual growth between teachers and students provide teachers with a sense of joy.

The foreign language anxiety and pleasure emotions of Russian teachers in higher education institutions are inevitable emotional responses during the teaching process. Understanding the current state and causes of these two emotions and taking effective measures to address them are crucial for improving teaching quality and maintaining teachers' mental health. By adjusting teaching methods, establishing support systems, and scheduling classes reasonably, teachers can effectively alleviate their anxiety. On the other hand, through affirmation and encouragement, enriching academic activities, paying attention to student growth, and increasing communication with students, teachers can enhance their understanding of students and increase confidence in students' future development, thereby increasing their pleasure emotions. Balancing and coordinating these two emotions will help improve teaching effectiveness and professional happiness.

This study conducted a simple investigation into the anxiety and pleasure emotions of Russian language teachers at a single institution. The number of participants was limited, and the foreign language emotions involved were relatively singular. In future research, the sample size and scope can be expanded to obtain more specific and universal conclusions. In the field of foreign language emotion research, very few related studies exist. Future researchers should broaden their scope of study, delve deeply into the different emotions of Russian language college teachers, and further focus on the emotional changes of these teachers. This will help explore more effective coping strategies, providing more support for the mental health and professional development of teachers. The study of teacher emotions has practical significance and can provide a deeper understanding of teachers' emotional states. Research can help reveal the impact of teachers' emotions on teaching behavior and provide effective emotional management strategies, and relevant units can increase training in relevant areas to promote teachers' mental health, create a good teaching atmosphere, and ultimately improve students' learning outcomes. The study of teacher emotions can also help educational institutions and policy makers better understand the work pressure and emotional needs of teachers, thereby enabling schools to provide more appropriate support and resources to promote the professional development of teachers. In addition, research can provide a more theoretical and empirical basis for teacher emotions in the fields of educational psychology and education and promote the development of related disciplines. Therefore, the study of teacher emotions has a profound impact on and practical role in the field of education. Moreover, attention should also be given to the emotional changes of students. Through interaction and communication between teachers and students, a positive and healthy teaching environment can be jointly created, fostering an atmosphere where both teaching and learning grow together, promoting the connotative development of higher education and building a strong educational nation.

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