

The emotions of teachers teaching German in Chinese secondary schools

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ABSTRACT: As part of the continued effort to advocate multilingual education, China has recently included German, French, and Spanish as subjects in secondary education. Secondary teachers teaching these languages other than English (LOTEs) may confront new challenges and opportunities, potentially making their professional lives emotionally intense. We therefore take teachers teaching German in Chinese secondary schools as examples and examine their emotions, including the emotion types and the reasons behind those emotions. Using a mixed method, the study surveyed 136 Chinese German teachers nationwide, and then conducted follow-up interviews with 20 participants. The study reveals that the Chinese German teachers experienced more positive emotions than negative ones. The positive emotions were mostly associated with positive interactions in their school settings, followed by their teacher knowledge, interests, and personality, while opportunities created by the development of the German subject constituted an additional factor. Implications for how to enhance LOTE teachers' emotional experiences are discussed.

Keywords: German language teaching, language teacher emotion, Chinese German teachers, new curriculum standard.

Las emociones de los profesores que enseñan alemán en las escuelas secundarias chinas

RESUMEN: Como parte del esfuerzo continuo por promover la educación multilingüe, China ha incluido recientemente el alemán, el francés y el español como asignaturas en la educación secundaria. Los profesores de secundaria que enseñan estos idiomas distintos al inglés (LOTE) pueden enfrentarse a nuevos desafíos y oportunidades, lo que puede hacer que sus carreras profesionales sean emocionalmente intensas. Por lo tanto, tomamos como ejemplo a los profesores que enseñan alemán en las escuelas secundarias chinas y examinamos sus emociones, incluidos los tipos de emociones y las razones que subyacen a estas emociones. Utilizando un método mixto, esta investigación encuestó a 136 profesores chinos de alemán en todo el país, y luego realizó entrevistas de seguimiento con 20 participantes. El estudio

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revela que los profesores chinos de alemán experimentaron más emociones positivas que negativas. Las emociones positivas se asociaron en su mayoría con las interacciones positivas en sus entornos escolares, seguidas de los conocimientos, intereses y personalidad de los profesores, mientras que las oportunidades creadas por el desarrollo de la asignatura de alemán constituyeron un factor adicional. Se han discutido las implicaciones sobre cómo mejorar las experiencias emocionales de los docentes de LOTE.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza del idioma alemán, emoción del profesor de idiomas, Profesores chinos de alemán, nuevo estándar curricular.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language teaching and learning has long been theorized as a cognitive and also an affective endeavor (e.g., Swain, 2013). For example, the past two decades have witnessed a surge in research on L2 motivation (Boo, Dörnyei, & Ryan, 2015) and emotion (Li, Dewaele, & Jiang, 2020), which have been proven to be highly associated with L2 performance and learning achievement. Given that emotion is contagious, research on the affective side of language teaching has started to emerge but still remains in its infancy (King & Ng, 2018). Studies have also shown that teacher emotions are highly relevant to their students' progress (Ergün & Dewaele, 2021) and to teachers' job satisfaction and retention (Frenzel *et al.*, 2016). While a burgeoning body of research has been dedicated to understanding the emotions of English language teachers (e.g., Gkonou & Miller, 2019), the emotions of teachers of languages other than English (LOTES) remain unexplored. LOTE teachers are likely to find teaching a particularly emotionally intensive endeavor in that they may confront high attrition rates, have to compete for institutional resources, and lack community support (Acheson, Taylor, & Luna, 2016). We therefore decided to examine LOTE teachers' emotions. Against the backdrop of the implementation of a new LOTE education policy in China, we zoom in on the emotions of teachers teaching German in Chinese secondary schools.

German learning has enjoyed accelerating growth in China over the past two decades, particularly since the new LOTE education policy (Li & Lian, 2017). Driven by nationwide encouragement for multilingual education and the "Schulen – Partner der Zukunft" (PASCH) program², the number of secondary schools in China offering German courses increased from 6 to 123 between 2000 and 2015 (Ständige Arbeitsgruppe Deutsch als Fremdsprache, 2000; Auswärtiges Amt, 2015). Meanwhile, the number of German learners in schools soared from 600 to 12200 (*ibid.*). The popularity of German learning was further fueled by a newly-issued education policy in 2018 that German, French, and Spanish were to be officially introduced as subjects in secondary schools, and were included in the new curriculum standard for foreign languages (MOE, 2018; Li & Wu, 2023). The new curriculum standard also stipulates that these three foreign languages would be included as alternatives to English in the College Entrance Examination, giving them much more visibility in the Chinese education system.

The latest data shows that the numbers of both German learners in Chinese secondary schools and schools offering German courses have almost doubled in the past five years

² PASCH is an initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office, aiming to promote German language worldwide. So far it has built a global network of about 2000 schools. See <https://www.pasch-net.de/en/pasch-initiative/ueber-die-initiative.html>

(Auswärtiges Amt, 2015, 2020). In this context, there is an increasing demand for German teachers at secondary level. However, this group of teachers may confront unique challenges and opportunities, making their professional lives emotionally intense. To unpack their emotional experiences, this study examines the emotions that these teachers experience and why they experience them while teaching German in Chinese secondary schools.

2. LANGUAGE TEACHER EMOTION

Emotion has been theorized from psychological, social constructivist, and interactionist perspectives (Chen, 2021). Recent research has converged to conceptualize emotion as part of “a social-cognitive development process” (p. 333), emphasizing the dual nature of being personal and social. That is, one’s emotions are not only related to one’s thoughts and personal history but are also embedded in various kinds of relationships and shaped by contexts at multiple levels. The relevant literature has yielded a very mixed picture of language teacher emotions in relation to different stakeholders (e.g., students, colleagues, and parents) at the micro level, institutional settings at the meso level, and discourses and policies at the macro level.

Language teachers experience the most emotions while interacting with students, which can be emotionally draining or rewarding. Positive emotions emerge when language teachers are able to build bonds with students (Cowie, 2011; Miller & Gkonou, 2018; Xu & Tao, 2023), observe student achievement and positive feedback (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014), and develop a culturally responsive pedagogy for students (Wolff & De Costa, 2017). However, the teacher-student relationship requires reciprocity. When students fail to respond to teachers’ care or support, for example by showing disruptive behaviors, teachers can experience disappointment and frustration (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014).

This may be particularly relevant to language teachers, who can be faced with anxious, demotivated, or disinterested students. Language teachers feel obliged to create friendly and relaxed classroom environments so as to ease learners’ foreign language anxiety, which requires emotional labor and possibly induces teacher stress (Gkonou & Miller, 2019). While language teachers are committed to enhancing student engagement through pedagogical innovations, students may not cooperate or contribute actively in class, which disappoints the teacher and may force them back towards following a traditional knowledge-transmission teaching style (Alzaanin, 2021). However, language teachers need to suppress their negative feelings and put on a happy face (King & Ng, 2018), which may be detrimental to their well-being.

The situation for LOTE teachers could be even more difficult, given the declining enrolment and high attrition rates in some LOTE programs (Diao & Liu, 2021). In the face of demotivated students, LOTE teachers place significant emphasis on caring as pedagogy, and feel responsible for offering emotional support beyond language teaching (Warner & Diao, 2022). Moreover, their emotional investment can lead to exhaustion and burnout when LOTE teachers feel a lack of self-efficacy (Acheson *et al.*, 2016). Acheson *et al.*’s (2016) seminal work in this area is one of the few studies to date that documents LOTE teachers’ emotional labor with a consideration of the marginalized status of LOTEs. They were reported to feel an excessive burden to motivate students and to invest significant effort in countering negative attitudes towards language learning, but they still felt that they failed to

engage students and thus experienced a sense of self-doubt and burnout. The above research highlights the two-way reciprocal nature of language teacher emotions.

Apart from stemming from interactions with stakeholders, language teacher emotions are also shaped by their institutional and societal contexts. For example, language teachers' caring practice may not be merely out of individuals' own intentions but may also be politically and socially fostered (Miller & Gkonou, 2018). Teachers are expected to show caring within the social discourse on "teaching-as-caring" (*ibid.*) or within tacit norms associated with language teachers' professional roles as "entertainers" (King & Ng, 2018), which could induce emotional labor and teacher stress. In addition, educational policies such as high-stakes testing may generate vulnerability among language teachers (Loh & Liew, 2016).

Teachers in general may feel frustrated and demoralized by the constraining institutional policies which allow limited space for curriculum design and textbook selection (Alzaanin, 2021; Cowie, 2011). More relevant to language teachers is the discourse on global English and its impact on LOTE teachers. The hegemonic position of English may be so pervasive that LOTE teachers have to compete for institutional support (Warner & Diao, 2022) and fight for the social acceptance of their particular languages at community level (Acheson *et al.*, 2016), which can be emotionally draining. Negative emotions among LOTE teachers have been reported in the Chinese context, where LOTE teachers have increased job opportunities in universities because of the One-Belt-One-Road initiative, but also experience huge pressure to fulfill research requirements, causing them to feel lonely and passive (Kang, Shen, & Zheng, 2022; Liu, Chen, Shen, & Gao, 2022; Tao, Zhao, & Chen, 2019, 2020). However, it must be noted that the above research on language teachers has primarily been conducted in tertiary settings; we still have only a limited knowledge of language teachers working in secondary schools, not to mention LOTE teachers (with the exception of Acheson *et al.*, 2016), where institutional settings and students' learning motivations could be very different (Li & Lian, 2018).

The above review indicates the complexity of teacher emotions, which are co-constructed with other stakeholders and socially mediated by a wide array of factors. While language teachers have reported highly mixed emotions, LOTE teachers' emotions have been depicted as predominantly negative. Given the recent growing attention to positive emotions, such as language teaching enjoyment, and the call for more studies on teachers of LOTEs (Ergün & Dewaele, 2021), we felt it was imperative to give more attention to both the negative and positive emotions of LOTE teachers. To do this, we draw on Frenzel *et al.*'s (2016) Teacher Emotions Scales (TES) to measure the emotions experienced by teachers of German as a foreign language in Chinese secondary schools. Two research questions are addressed as follows:

- Q1: What emotions did the teachers experience in teaching German in Chinese secondary schools?
- Q2: Why did they experience the emotions identified above?

3. METHODOLOGY

Using a mixed method design, we administered a questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews. The research design was based on Frenzel *et al.*'s (2016) Teacher Emotions Scales (TES) which have been validated and used to measure teacher emotions in diverse settings

(e.g., Burić, Slišković, & Macuka, 2018). The TES were adopted for two reasons. They were originally designed for and tested among teachers in secondary and primary schools, which fits the contextual conditions of the study. Moreover, the TES address the most relevant kinds of emotions specific to teaching activity, which aligns with the focus of this study.

To conduct the questionnaire, we started with a pilot study in November 2021 to test, adapt and validate the instrument. Based on the TES (Frenzel *et al.*, 2016) and the teacher emotional model (Chen, 2021), we developed a questionnaire focusing on enjoyment, anger, and anxiety and in a Chinese translated version. 32 teacher participants were recruited for the pilot study. They came from 12 secondary schools in six provinces, with varying academic backgrounds, years of teaching, and class types. The participants were asked to rate the given items on a five-point Likert scale and then describe any other teacher emotions that were not mentioned in the questionnaire.

In addition, we further invited three teacher participants with various professional backgrounds to take part in one-on-one open-ended interviews to elicit their emotions experienced at work. The participants indicated two additional emotions, pride and frustration, as being highly relevant in German teaching. Besides, they also mentioned their management duty and research in school settings frequently as sources of their emotions. Therefore, the above two emotions and items about research and management were added into the instrument, thereby adapting Frenzel *et al.*'s (2016) scale to fit the Chinese LOTE teacher population.

The expanded questionnaire examined five emotions and contained 60 items (see Appendix A), including 35 items related to general scales and 25 to student-group specific scales. The general scales aim to depict the participants' experiences as a teacher, while the student-group specific scales focus on their emotions stemming from teacher-student relationships in their particular classes.

The main study was conducted in December 2021 and surveyed 136 Chinese German teachers teaching in 76 schools in 32 cities (19 provinces) nationwide (see the demographic distribution in Figure 1). All items were presented in a random order. Different from the pilot study, we adjusted the five-point Likert scale to a four-point scale to avoid the possibility of taking a neutral position without giving careful thought to the question (Kulas & Stachowski, 2009). SPSS 20 and MelCal were used for the quantitative data analysis, which yielded Cronbach's Alpha values for each subscale (see Table 1). Compared to the general scales, which contained items about research and management, the student-group specific scales showed better reliability. Given the focus of this paper on the teaching context, we will only report data from the items related to being a German teacher in general, and to teaching activity.

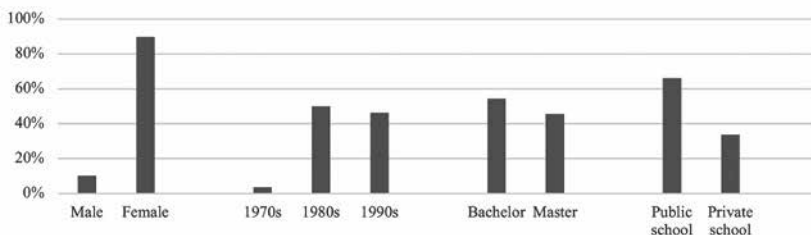


Figure 1. *The questionnaire participants' demographic information*

Table 1. Cronbach’s Alpha values for each subscale in the questionnaire

	GENERAL SCALES			STUDENT-GROUP SPECIFIC SCALES		
	Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha with standardized variables	Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha with standardized variables
Enjoyment	8	0.7817	0.8008	5	0.8636	0.8625
Pride	6	0.6425	0.6765	5	0.7611	0.7683
Anger	6	0.7400	0.7515	5	0.8385	0.8506
Anxiety	9	0.8030	0.8019	5	0.7865	0.7922
Frustration	6	0.6112	0.6149	5	0.8267	0.8297

The surveyed teacher participants had teaching experience ranging in length from 0.5 to 21 years, and offered a variety of German courses at all secondary school grades which fit into the following categories:

- (1) German as a first foreign language (GFFL)
 - (1a) preparation for Gaokao (National College Entrance Examination)
 - (1b) preparation for study abroad
- (2) German as a second foreign language (GSFL) (following English)

According to the learning intensity, the above courses can be further divided into compulsory courses, optional courses, and after-school interest courses. The distribution of participants teaching different course types is shown in Figure 2, indicating that teachers teaching GFFL courses numbered the most, and those teaching after-school interest courses the least. Please be noted that the teachers might have offered courses of several types.

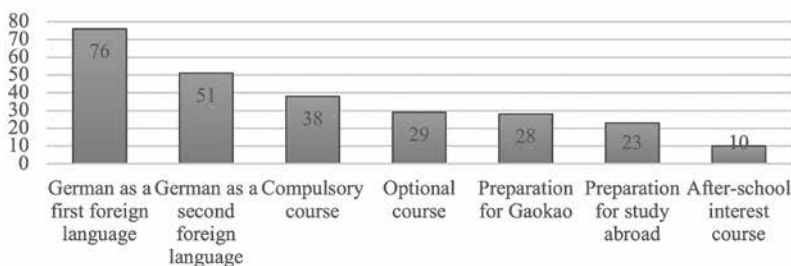


Figure 2. The distribution of the participants by course types

Building on the questionnaire results, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 participants between September and December 2022 in order to understand the antecedents of their emotions. We adopted a maximum variation sampling strategy to ensure the diversity of participants (Dörnyei, 2007), taking into account gender, educational background, teaching experiences, school type, and geographic location (see Figure 3) and thereby reflecting a

broad spectrum of opinion from the participants. We engaged in a cyclical process whereby we started analyzing the data while still collecting more data, until we reached a point of saturation (Dörnyei, 2007). Given that the questionnaire results revealed more positive emotions experienced by the Chinese German teachers, we designed an interview guideline giving more attention to enjoyment and pride. The interview guideline mainly consisted of their education and working experiences alongside their learning and teaching motivation, and they were encouraged to describe specific experiences in school settings that trigger the different emotions. The interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese (offline or online depending on the COVID-19 situation) and audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. Each interview lasted about one hour and was transcribed verbatim for the subsequent data analysis.

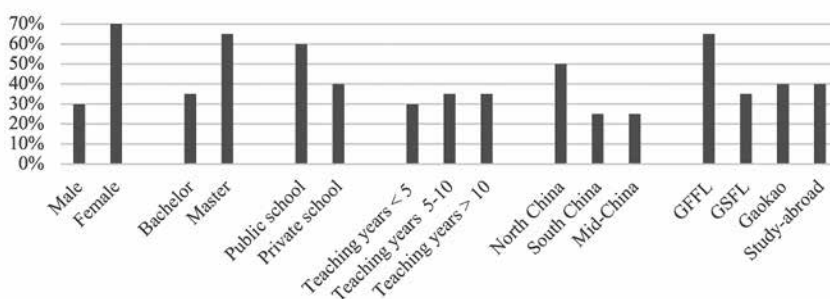


Figure 3. *The interviewees' demographic information*

The qualitative data analysis with NVivo 11plus involved three steps. First, we read through the transcripts to gain a general understanding of each participant, following the biographic approach (Gibbs, 2007). Participants' background information such as gender, education background, teaching years, and school type were collected to compile a mini-biography for each participant. Next, we searched for emotion-related episodes which were classified into two categories (positive and negative emotions). We further narrowed our focus on positive emotions. Based on the teacher emotion model (Chen, 2021), relevant statements were categorized into personal (teachers' knowledge, skills, personality), stakeholder, organizational, policy, and sociocultural factors so as to understand the multi-level antecedents of the teachers' emotions. In the third step we conducted open coding and analytic coding of the statements at different levels and identified the major themes.

4. FINDINGS

By using a mixed method design, the study yields a relatively positive picture of Chinese German teacher emotions. The survey data indicates more salient occurrences of enjoyment and pride compared with their negative counterparts, and the follow-up interviews further reveal that these positive emotions were mediated by multi-level factors, among which the positive interaction with stakeholders (i.e., students) emerges as the most prominent antecedent.

4.1. Chinese German teachers' emotional experiences

The survey results indicate that most of the participants had a positive perception of being a German teacher in secondary schools. As can be seen in Table 2, mean ratings for enjoyment and pride were relatively high (≥ 3 on the four-point scale) while mean ratings for the other three negative emotions were relatively lower (≤ 2.18), revealing the generally positive emotional state of German teachers in secondary schools. Moreover, mean ratings for positive emotions in the student-group specific scales were higher than those in the general scales, and mean ratings for negative emotion categories were lower. It can be inferred that the teaching activity itself can make teachers feel happy, enjoyment, respected, and bring them a sense of achievement and pride.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for the survey

	ENJOYMENT	PRIDE	ANGER	ANXIETY	FRUSTRATION
<i>Means</i>					
General*	3.31	3.00	1.87	2.16	2.18
General teaching**	3.52	3.40	1.74	1.96	1.97
Student-group specific***	3.58	3.58	1.85	1.82	1.73
<i>Standard deviations</i>					
General*	0.49	0.61	0.69	0.72	0.75
General teaching**	0.41	0.49	0.60	0.68	0.67
Student-group specific***	0.37	0.37	0.64	0.68	0.66

Notes: *: 35 items related to general scales.

** : 25 teaching related items, without 10 items related to scientific research and teaching management.

***: 25 items related to student-group specific scales.

In addition, course type has a significant impact on the teachers' emotions. As shown in Table 3, the teachers teaching studying abroad classes experienced higher levels of positive emotions overall compared with their counterparts who were teaching other course types. Second, although teaching German as a second foreign language (GSFL) might be less stressful, GSFL teachers showed higher levels of anger in teaching and frustration about their career development. GFFL teachers teaching study-abroad courses also experienced slightly more anxiety about setting high requirements of themselves or their teaching, as they rated higher on items such as "I generally feel tense and nervous while teaching German", "I am often worried that my teaching isn't going so well", and "I often worry that I am incompetent at teaching German".

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of the ratings by course types

	ENJOYMENT		PRIDE		ANGER		ANXIETY		FRUSTRATION	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>General</i>										
GFFL	3.53	0.33	3.41	0.42	1.73	0.60	1.96	0.65	1.93↓	0.67
Gaokao	3.52↓	0.32	3.38↓	0.42	1.69	0.58	1.98	0.80	1.98	0.71
Study-abroad	3.61●	0.26	3.57●	0.40	1.68↓	0.65	2.00●	0.81	1.97	0.60
GSFL	3.58	0.42	3.39	0.56	1.75●	0.54	1.92↓	0.60	2.05●	0.62
<i>Student-group specific</i>										
GFFL	3.57↓	0.33	3.60	0.30	1.83	0.65	1.69	0.63	1.80↓	0.66
Gaokao	3.60	0.29	3.61	0.26	1.88	0.69	1.67	0.53	1.86●	0.72
Study-abroad	3.62	0.28	3.67●	0.28	1.77↓	0.61	1.64↓	0.60	1.83	0.86
GSFL	3.65●	0.36	3.58↓	0.38	1.92●	0.63	1.72●	0.71	1.81	0.69

Notes: 1) German as a first foreign language (GFFL) and German as a second foreign language (GSFL) are distinguished by the weekly class hours. If students have more German courses than English courses, German is regarded as their GFFL.

2) ● indicates the highest rating for an item. ↓ indicates the lowest rating for an item.

4.2. The antecedents of Chinese German teachers' emotional experiences

Given the prominent occurrences of positive emotions from the questionnaire, we conducted follow-up interviews with 20 participants to uncover why they felt positive about teaching German in Chinese secondary schools. The results show that the German teacher participants' positive emotions during teaching were most related to stakeholders, followed by personal as well as policy and institutional factors.

4.2.1. Positive interaction in the working environment

The teacher participants' positive emotions were relevant to stakeholder factors (Chen, 2021) and were primarily associated with their interactions with students, which aligns with the previous research (e.g., Cowie, 2011; Miller & Gkonou, 2018). All the participants in our study stated that positive interactions with students were the major source of their happiness, enjoyment, and a sense of pride in the working context. The following two narratives illustrate why these two teacher participants experienced happiness and enjoyment while teaching German.

[1] My happiness comes mainly from the interaction with my students. For example, when the teaching effect turned out to be good and students made progress, or they were willing to communicate with me expressing their kindness and gratitude, it makes me feel trusted by these students. (A, public school, North China)

[2] I am really enjoying working here. If the total score is 100, I will grade my job 120! [...] My students have achieved some excellent results with me, and I have no reason to be unsatisfied. (B, private school, South China)

The above excerpts reveal that these positive emotions stem from trusting and close teacher-student relationships in which students are active in communication. Moreover, the positive emotions may be sustained and reinforced when students gain achievements in the target language and then show appreciation for their teachers' efforts. Regardless of school type and region, positive interaction with students is an essential factor that generates positive teacher emotions.

As the results of our questionnaire suggest (see Table 3), teachers teaching study-abroad programs showed more positive emotions than the other participants. The experience of Participant C exemplifies teacher-student relationships in different course contexts below.

[3] I have a close relationship with my students. Teaching those who want to study abroad brings me a great sense of achievement. Since we have a clear and common goal, when they are closer to this goal, I feel more fulfilled. [...] Speaking of interest class, it also makes me happy, but hardly brings such a sense of accomplishment. (C, private school, South China)

The above extract indicates that having clear and shared goals matters in Participant C's teacher emotions. In contrast to students in an interest-oriented class, students who plan to apply for universities in German-speaking countries have definite application requirements to meet. Thus, they have clearer goals to be achieved, which were shared by Participant C and his students. That made them into a learning community and enhanced their emotional connection. In addition to progress measured by their grades, Participant C's students received recognition in competitions as well. Seven participants shared similar feelings about seeing their students win prizes, and four of them reported their pleasure at witnessing their students' performance in campus activities.

In addition, it is worth noting that "a sense of achievement" was a keyword that frequently appeared in interviews. On the one hand, this sense is closely connected to the progress and achievements made by students; on the other hand, it is also strongly associated with students' learning motivations.

[4] I worked at a college and taught non-German-major students who wanted to pursue further education in German-speaking countries. In other words, these students used German to learn another major and treated language learning differently. [...] Now, in our school, teenagers learn German as their first foreign language. Learning step by step, they built a very solid language foundation. It brings me, as a German-major graduate, a greater sense of achievement. (D, public school, North China)

According to the extract above, the interaction with students who learned German because of their intrinsic motivations and the ways in which these students treated the language brought Participant D positive feelings. Two other participants who had previously worked in colleges or vocational high schools also reported that they gained a greater sense of achievement as German teachers teaching in secondary schools.

Even participants whose first choice was not teaching experienced a shift in their attitudes in favor of being a teacher, because of the positive interaction in school settings. That is, they were becoming more committed to the teaching profession, such as Participant E (private school, South China) and Participant F (public school, Mid-China).

The narratives above suggest that daily teaching forms the basis of constructing a positive teacher-student relationship. Along with this, the teachers built a learning community based on their interactions in and out of the classroom. In a relaxed, playful, and encouraging atmosphere the students learned more effectively and gave positive feedback to their teachers, who experienced positive emotions in turn.

4.2.2. Teachers' personal antecedents

The teachers' positive emotions are also highly related to their teaching motivation. The majority of the participants had chosen to be German teachers in secondary schools because they valued their German knowledge and skills at a personal level (Chen, 2021), as shared by the following teachers.

[5] I wanted to find a job related to my major. It's a pity for me to waste the German major after spending so many years on it. (G, experienced, public school, North China)

[6] I've liked the teaching profession since my childhood. My major and personality happens to match this job. (H, private school, South China; same reasons given by Participant J and Participant K, private school, Mid-China as well)

"I don't want to study German for nothing" and "Teaching fits my personality" were two motivations that were frequently mentioned by our participants. In particular, the former statement implies the participants' strong attachment to the German language. Although many German-major graduates switch to more lucrative industries, six of our participants stated that they would not give up German, recalling their tremendous learning effort. For example, participant L (public school, South China) firmly claimed that "[i]f I had to choose (a profession) again, I would still take this (German teaching) job."

Following teacher knowledge, engaging in the teaching activity itself was found to be the second major source of positive emotions.

[7] No matter whether I am teaching the GSFL-course or the DSD³-course, I find it a great pleasure to transfer knowledge to students. (M, experienced, public school, South China)

[8] I enjoy doing lesson preparation. I will pay attention to every detail. Since I only speak German in my class, I try my best to offer various interactive ways to illustrate a topic. (L)

The above two extracts demonstrate the happiness derived from their teaching engagement, including experimenting with pedagogical innovations. Participant L not only applied an immersion approach to foster an authentic learning environment, but also tried to use diverse teaching methods (e.g., game-based, project-based) to create a happy and effective class. Her experience confirms that student-centered teaching contributes to teachers' positive emotions (Hufnagel, 2019).

³ DSD is the German abbreviation for the "German Language Diploma", a secondary school-based program for German as a foreign language abroad. Passing the DSD II examination is one of the requirements to apply for a university in Germany without attending a preparatory course.

Moreover, personality emerged as a personal factor contributing to teaching motivation and positive emotions. Participant K believed herself to be good at handling classroom problems from primary school. Participant B believed that she was a person suitable for working in an enterprise, and in secondary school she worked as a “manager” in charge of the international department and several programs, which made her feel happy and fulfilled. As for Participant N and Participant O, both public school teachers in North China, working in secondary school meant working in a “pure” environment, and it was a release to work in a place with less complicated personal relationships. Three other participants (Participants O, P, and R) valued job security and wanted to work in a stable environment. The teaching profession is seen as a highly stable and secure job in China; although the situation has changed since the initiation of the tenure system in universities (Tao *et al.*, 2019), working in secondary schools is still relatively stable. Compared to university teachers, secondary school teachers are facing less research pressure, and the great job security and better cohesiveness in work teams made teachers like Participant P (private school, South China) feel happier than when they had worked in universities or other professions.

4.2.3. *The development of the German subject creates opportunities*

The development of the German subject at the policy and institutional levels also exerted a positive impact on the participants’ emotions. For example, the following extract described the dire situation of the subject in the past.

[9] The national curriculum standards of English, Japanese, and Russian for secondary schools have been implemented in China for many years, and the relevant teachers have a relatively mature promotion system. German, however, has always been a marginalized subject. (G)

As Participant J indicated above, there is a huge gap between the status of German and that of English in secondary schools. The lack of a systematic German teacher training system, high-quality teaching materials, and communication platforms among German teachers nationwide have been long-standing issues for the German subject in the basic or pre-tertiary education stages. With the promulgation and implementation of the first national German curriculum standard, as well as the inclusion of German in the College Entrance Examination, German teachers feel more visible in macro-level policies, and many of the participants (e.g., Participants F, G, and M) expected that the above issues would be solved soon.

Three participants (B, M, and Q) had participated in a series of curriculum development and implementation activities in response to the first German curriculum standard for secondary schools. As the following extracts suggest, these participants felt fulfilled by and proud of these chances and valued the increasing professional opportunities along with the development of the German subject.

[10] I feel honored to have participated in some important activities related to the first national German curriculum standard for secondary schools, compiling textbooks and supplementary materials for instance. I am satisfied with my working conditions right now, busy but fulfilling. (M)

[11] In addition to my daily teaching, I worked a lot for the German Teaching Alliance. [...] When my efforts are rewarded, I feel a sense of achievement. (Q, experienced, private school, South China)

Not only experienced teachers like Participants M and Q but also younger teachers like Participant B reported access to a range of opportunities in parallel with the recent changes in language education policy in China. From attending didactic workshops to providing training activities and open classes for other German teachers, Participant B gained not only pedagogical and social ability, but also recognition from her institution. The follow extract shows that Participant B felt happy, fulfilled, and grateful for having these chances, and regarded them as dividends of the development of the German subject in the Chinese basic education stage which her English colleagues would not enjoy.

[12] I think if I were an English teacher, I wouldn't have so many chances, such as being the "teaching expert" of the Goethe Institute and giving open classes to my colleagues nationwide and taking part in different projects. The competition among English teachers is particularly fierce. It can be said that the "cake" of the English subject has been divided, and only experts can get a slice of the cake, leaving young people with limited opportunities. (B)

Other contextual factors affecting the German teachers' emotions were their school's policies and support systems. For example, Participant C believed that his school attached great importance to the German program, receiving support from the management team who would attend German-related activities in person. It should be noted that Participant C's school was trying to make multilingualism a feature, which was also the case for Participant B. Their school policies attached high value to LOTE learning, which made them happy and motivated to achieve more ambitious goals. Meanwhile, three participants, namely A, G, and L, indicated that they were looking forward to more teaching support from their schools and local education sectors, and a more mature promotion system which will be feasible in years to come.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The newly-issued language education policy is giving rise to a huge demand for German education in China, and this study examines what Chinese teachers feel about German teaching and why they experience these emotions. By adapting Frenzel *et al.*'s (2016) Teacher Emotions Scales (TES), the study surveyed 136 teacher participants and conducted follow-up interviews with 20 teacher participants. Focusing on five emotions, the survey suggests that the participants experienced significantly more enjoyment and pride than anxiety, anger, and frustration. Informed by the teacher emotion model (Chen, 2021), the one-on-one interviews further reveal that their positive emotions were primarily derived from interacting with students but were also related to their teacher knowledge of the German language, their personal interest in the teaching process, and their personal fit with the teaching profession. Increased policy and institutional support for German education emerged as a third factor affecting the teachers' emotions positively.

While previous research reveals a predominantly negative representation of LOTE teachers' emotions (e.g., Acheson *et al.*, 2016, Kang *et al.*, 2022), this study yielded a

slightly different picture among Chinese German teachers. By measuring their experiences of enjoyment, pride, anger, anxiety, and frustration, the study reveals that the participants experienced a significantly higher level of positive emotions than negative ones. Thus, the study proves that LOTE teaching may be emotionally challenging, but it is also rewarding and offers a sense of pride and enjoyment. The data further reveals that enjoyment emerged as the most highly-rated emotion among the participants, responding to the call for attention to foreign language teaching enjoyment (Ergün & Dewaele, 2021). Moreover, the study suggests that pride could be another kind of positive emotion that should be explored among German and other language teachers.

The teachers' positive emotional experiences may be attributed to factors at multiple levels. First, the findings reaffirm that teachers experienced the most positive emotions as a result of interacting with students (Cowie, 2011; Miller & Gkonou, 2018). Their positive emotions were derived from building trusting teacher-student relationships and receiving positive feedback, including students' progress (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014); these emotions were particularly salient among the teachers teaching study-abroad preparation programs. Of particular relevance to language teacher emotion is that teachers and students in such programs usually have a shared language learning goal, building on an integrative motivational basis. That is, the teachers teach the language to prepare students for a test (i.e., DSD), but also for their futures living and learning in a German-speaking environment. In other words, exams are not the only teaching goal; the language they teach will be used in the near future. This may help to explain why this group of teachers might build more integrative bonds with their students, contributing to more positive emotions. Thus, the study further argues that having a shared language learning goal between students and teachers was particularly conducive to positive LOTE teacher emotions, even if they remain the minority in the schooling system.

Second, the German teachers' enjoyment and pride also resulted from the students' active participation and linguistic gains in class, which has rarely been found in previous research on LOTE teaching. This might be explained by the fact that the German teachers in the study encountered motivated learners, which differs from the situations of other LOTE teachers documented in the existing literature (e.g., Acheson *et al.*, 2016; Warner & Diao, 2022). However, this is inseparable from the institutional and macro-level contexts. Previous research has primarily focused on language teachers in universities who often deal with demotivated and disengaged students and have to work hard to retain their learning motivation (e.g., Alzaanin, 2021; King & Ng, 2018; Warner & Diao, 2022), which differs from the secondary-school context in China. The teacher participants had less concerns about their students' learning motivation due to the high-stake nature of German as a subject in *Gakao* or in study-abroad applications. Moreover, they felt lower pressure related to research or job security, which have discussed in relation to the negative emotions of university teachers (e.g., Kang *et al.*, 2022).

Another factor explaining their teaching enjoyment could be their pedagogical orientation towards creating a happy classroom environment (e.g., using game-based learning and the 3H principle). The 3H principle, i.e., the "head, hands and heart" metaphor, refers to the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains of learners (Sipos, Battisti, & Grimm, 2008) and requires teachers to engage in more affective commitment. Nevertheless, the study

echoes previous findings on the association between language teacher emotion and teaching method (e.g., Alzaanin, 2021).

As mentioned above, the teachers' positive emotions related to their students were also highly related to the institutional support and macro-level policy environment. First, the findings indicate that the multilingualism trend and the new education policy may have affected their emotions positively. The macro-level discourse and policy context are manifested in the inclusion of the German language in the school curriculum and high-stakes national tests and have resulted in more resources and opportunities for professional development (e.g., participating in textbook compilation). Thus, the findings suggest that having the opportunity for curriculum development could be a source of positive emotions (e.g., Alzaanin, 2021; Cowie, 2011). Moreover, while previous research has primarily reported negative emotions such as vulnerability related to high-stakes testing (e.g. Loh & Liew, 2016), this study suggests that high-stakes testing can also generate positive emotions; this may be particular to marginalized subjects such as LOTEs. The inclusion of German in the College Entrance Examination may have enhanced the visibility of the subject and students' learning motivation, contributing to German teachers' positive emotions. Second, institutional support is also fundamental to language teacher emotions (e.g., Acheson *et al.*, 2016), and having support from school leadership may enhance these teachers' visibility as a group in the given school, and thus transform their overall emotional experiences.

Finally, we argue that the adapted instrument contributes to the development of teacher emotion scales among language teachers in secondary schools. The study was one of the few validating and adapting Frenzel *et al.*'s (2016) TES among language teachers. Since language teachers may have specific emotions unique to the subject, we did not limit our study to the emotions covered by the TES (i.e., enjoyment, anger, and anxiety), taking a bottom-up approach to elicit more emotions from frontline German teachers. That is, we asked participants to nominate emotions through the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and also in one-on-one interviews, which resulted in the addition of pride and frustration to the instrument. Therefore, we believe that the adapted instrument could be also more applicable to the teachers teaching LOTEs who may confront similar situations to the German teachers in this study. We also call for more research to develop the TES instrument among teachers teaching other languages.

The study has important implications for LOTE teaching and teachers' well-being in China and other parts of the world. In particular, several measures may be taken to facilitate the emergence of positive emotions. At the micro level, LOTE teachers are advised to seize professional development opportunities to continue their learning of the target language and their development of new pedagogical methods, which may enhance their professional commitment as well as enjoyment. At the situational level, LOTE teachers should make efforts to engage the 3H principle for the sustainability of their teaching and should also develop shared language learning goals with their students. They should guide the students to articulate what they want to achieve through foreign language programs and then make these learning goals explicit throughout the lesson planning, which may contribute to rapport-building and the resulting positive teacher emotions. At the institutional or meso level schools should provide more space for curriculum development, resources for professional development, and supportive leadership in advocating LOTE learning. At the macro level,

LOTE teachers may feel more positive and expect a more promising career when LOTEs are institutionalized as part of the education system.

The study is not without limitations. First, we were unable to document the emotional trajectories of LOTE teachers working secondary schools with a one-shot study. Longitudinal analyses will therefore be needed. Second, we believe it will also be better to involve student perspectives, such as students' learning motivations, to triangulate with the teachers' self-reported data.

6. REFERENCES

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: The adapted instrument

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ajkOxAHEEUIGTYTMsyV5vecFpLpD62rN-E75ib-NC7Gg/edit?usp=sharing>

Appendix B: Guideline questions for semi-structured interviews

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ajkOxAHEEUIGTYTMsyV5vecFpLpD62rN-E75ib-NC7Gg/edit?usp=sharing>