Article

Relations among and Predictive Effects of Anxiety, Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy on Chinese Interpreting Majors' Self-Rated Interpreting Competence

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Abstract: It is generally acknowledged that emotions play important roles in second/foreign language learning. Nevertheless, though interpreting is highly stressful, not much research on emotions has been conducted is this area. Hence, this research investigated foreign language anxiety and enjoyment in interpreting class and self-efficacy in learning interpreting among Chinese university majors of interpreting. Analyses of 67 mixed-form questionnaires revealed the following major findings: (a) More than half of the participants felt anxious in the interpreting class, (highly) enjoyed the interpreting class and had (great) self-efficacy in learning interpreting well; (b) Interpreting classroom anxiety, enjoyment and self-efficacy were significantly related to one another and students' self-rated interpreting competence; (c) Interpreting classroom anxiety negatively predicted students' self-rated Chinese–English interpreting competence, while social enjoyment positively predicted students' self-rated English–Chinese interpreting competence; and (d) A number of factors were reported for students' anxiety and enjoyment in interpreting class and self-efficacy in learning interpreting. Based on these findings, some implications were discussed.

Keywords: foreign language anxiety; foreign language enjoyment; self-efficacy; interpreting class; self-rated interpreting competence

1. Introduction

Emotions typically arise in response to an event, either internal or external, that has a positively or negatively valenced meaning for the individual [1] (p. 2). They are "short-lived, feeling arousal-purposive-expressive phenomena that help us adapt to the opportunities and challenges we face during important life events" [2] (p. 294). Emotions sometimes can activate, or even determine, cognition under some circumstances [3], and serve as amplifiers in that they add "intensity, urgency, and energy" to whatever we do [4] (p. 61). Ref. [5] pointed out that "emotions play a central role, indeed an indispensable role in those changes in behavior or performance which are said to represent 'learning'" (p. 307).

The language learning process itself is fraught with emotions, and is thus, greatly affected by emotions, e.g., [6–9]. However, it is generally believed that second language acquisition (SLA) research has long been focusing on cognition at the expense of emotions. Ref. [10] claimed that "emotions are the elephants in the room—poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought" (p. 205). Ref. [11] pointed out that despite the fact that emotions play a crucial part in our lives, they have been largely 'shunned' by SLA scholars (p. 9). Most of the studies on emotions focus on the negative side, with anxiety being the most studied topic; far less research has targeted positive emotions [12–14]. Though anxiety has been much researched in relation to various aspects of second/foreign language (SL/FL) learning, not much anxiety research can be found in interpreting or translation, let alone enjoyment.

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to do something (well) [15], is believed to affect SL/FL learning achievements and interacts with other psychological and affective factors, such as motivation and anxiety, e.g., [16–18]. Yet, it has not been much examined in interpreting or translation, let alone the relations among anxiety, enjoyment and self-efficacy, in interpreting/translation. Thus, this research sought to investigate foreign language anxiety and enjoyment in interpreting classes, as well as self-efficacy in learning interpreting among Chinese university majors of interpreting in terms of their levels, relations and predictive effects and causes.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety in Interpreting

According to [19], anxiety is "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (p. 1). It is multi-faceted and can be categorized into several types. Ref. [20] established the state-trait distinction in anxiety: the anxiety associated with specific activities ("state anxiety") vs. the anxiety that one feels in daily life ("trait anxiety"). Ref. [21] coined the term "foreign language anxiety", which is defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). Foreign language classroom anxiety refers to "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" [22] (p. 284). In brief, it is "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" [23] (p. 27). Anxiety is also categorized into situation-specific anxieties, inter alia, listening anxiety, speaking anxiety, reading anxiety, writing anxiety. Ref. [24] states that interpreting classroom anxiety is one of the situation-specific anxieties.

Numerous studies have found that anxiety exists in many SL/FL learners in various aspects of SL/FL learning, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, and predominantly negatively affects SL/FL learning, including learning outcomes, motivation and confidence in learning the SL/FL, e.g., [25–29]. For example, Ref. [27]'s longitudinal study investigated the changes in foreign language reading anxiety and its predicting effects on 71 Chinese university students' English reading performance. The study showed that the students generally experienced a medium level of foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA), and that the students' FLRA was significantly negatively correlated with and significantly negatively predicted their reading performance at different time points. Ref. [25] examined the relationships among foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), enjoyment (FLE) and expectancy-value motivation, as well as their predictive effects on self-rated English proficiency in 280 Chinese high school students. Analyses of the quantitative data showed that the students generally experienced a medium-to-high level of FLCA and FLE, with FLE being slightly higher than FLCA; the students' FLCA and FLE were significantly negatively related to each other and highly related to motivation scales, and the measured scales jointly significantly predicted the students' self-rated English.

Interpreting itself is highly anxiety-provoking [30] not only because it "involves the performance of a series of complex cognitive and psychomotor activity" [31], (p. 105) in which the interpreter simultaneously involves himself/herself in listening, analyzing, comprehending, translating, editing and reproducing activities [32], but also because it can be derailed by various unexpected elements, such as poor speakers, difficult accents, difficult source texts and technical deficits, to name but a few. Higher levels of neuroticism, anxiety and reactivity to stress in an individual are likely to impede the acquisition and performance of interpreting skills [33]. Even so, empirical research on anxiety in interpreting is still insufficient [34,35], which has observed levels, causes and effects of foreign language anxiety on interpreting/translation, mainly based on adapted versions of the questionnaire developed by [21] to measure anxiety in foreign language classrooms and/or interviews. For example, Ref. [36]'s large-scale survey of 1400 interpreters throughout the world identities four general stressors: physical environmental factors, task-related factors,

interpersonal factors, and the home/work interface. Ref. [37] reported that one third of Taiwanese student interpreters suffered from foreign language anxiety. In the process of interpreting, foreign language anxiety can be transformed into or manifested as interpreters' stress. Ref. [38] used the State and Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) to investigate conference interpreters' anxiety levels, and confirmed the hypothesis that conference interpreters had better situation-dependent control over their feelings of anxiety and managed to label their anxiety in a positive way. Ref. [39] empirically probed into the role of foreign language anxiety (FLA) in 213 Chinese–English interpretating students' learning outcomes, and found that after controlling for the effect of trait anxiety, the relationship between FLA and interpretating learning outcomes remained significant. Ref. [40]'s study of 50 translation major students in a Hong Kong university found that there are significant correlations between L2 writing anxiety, translation performance, and language ability. Ref. [31]'s study found that anxiety was not negatively related to interpreting performance. Ref. [35] examined the effects of the specific interpretation classroom foreign language anxiety (ICFLA) on interpretation learning and dependency distance (DD) as an indicator of learners' cognitive load in 49 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in English–Chinese interpretation classes at a university in Hong Kong. They found that ICFLA was significantly negatively correlated with consecutive interpretation achievement scores, and was negatively correlated with DD in consecutive interpretation. They also identified four factors underlying ICFLA: fear of public speaking, difficulty in listening comprehension, fear of negative evaluation by peers, and apprehension about communicating with native speakers.

2.2. Foreign Language Enjoyment in Interpreting

Since the introduction of positive psychology into applied linguistics by [13], positive emotions, especially enjoyment, have been catching the attention of increasing number of researchers, e.g., [25,41–44]. Based on positive psychology, Ref. [42] proposed the concept of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and defined FLE as "a complex emotion, capturing interacting dimensions of challenge and perceived ability that reflect the human drive for success in the face of difficult tasks" [45] (pp. 216–217). To measure FLE, Ref. [42] designed the 21-item Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (FLES), which was then reduced to 14 items, and covers two dimensions: FLE-Social ("positive feelings boosted by encouraging peers, nice teachers and a supportive environment") [45] (p. 225) and FLE-Private ("thoughts and feeling coalescing around a sense of accomplishment") [45] (p. 228). This scale was later shortened to 10 items, reflecting three FLE dimensions: FLE-Social, FLE-Private, and peer-controlled versus teacher-controlled positive atmosphere in the FL classroom [41]. Based on these results, Ref. [46] validated a short nine-item form of FLES consisting of three factors: teacher appreciation ("the extent to which the learner perceived that their psychological needs were met by the FL teacher") (p. 867), personal enjoyment, and social enjoyment ("the fulfilment of social psychological needs in the FL classroom") (p. 868).

These different versions of FLES have been used in empirical research, e.g., [25,43,44,47], which shows that foreign language enjoyment is positively correlated with academic achievement [43,47], motivation [25,48], and self-perceived competence [25,41], and negatively correlated with anxiety [25,42,45,47]. For example, Ref. [49] found that positive emotions, such as 'interest-enjoyment' and 'task-involvement', were positively associated with performance, while negative emotions were negatively related to performance. Ref. [42] collected the data of 1746 FL learners from around the world and found a moderately negative correlation between FLE and FLCA, suggesting that FLE and FLCA are partially inter-related but essentially "independent emotions, and not opposite ends of the same dimension" (p. 261). Ref. [50] compared links between FLE, FLCA and the language performance of British secondary-level pupils and Saudi learners at the tertiary level, and found that FLE was a slightly better predictor of performance than FLCA. Ref. [51]'s study of 1307 Chinese learners of English also found that FLE and FLCA ratings were significant predictors of learners' self-perceived proficiency. Ref. [7]'s study of 168 Arab and Kurdish EFL learners in both in-person and emergency remote teaching (ERT) classes found that

learners experienced significantly more FLE, more FLCA, and less FLB (foreign language boredom) in in-person classes than in ERT classes.

According to [45], foreign language enjoyment and anxiety go hand in hand for every language learner; thus, it is necessary to research enjoyment to better understand its relation with SL/FL learning in various contexts.

2.3. Self-Efficacy in Interpreting

Self-efficacy is a concept introduced by [52] to refer to "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). Ref. [53] regards it as "the belief in one's capability to execute required actions and produce outcomes for a defined task" (p. 431). Similarly, Ref. [54] described it essentially as a level of expectancy of succeeding at a task, resulting from belief in one's overall performance competence. Ref. [55] defined specific self-efficacy as one's belief in one's competence to successfully resolve issues in specific situations.

According to [56], self-efficacy determines students' resilience, efforts, and calmness in face of challenging goals, and plays an important role in the close relationship between motivation and attainment by raising individuals' expectation for success, making them value more challenging tasks, and thus, driving them to put greater effort in pursuing more challenging goals. Mainly via questionnaires, such as the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy scale [57] and Language Self-Efficacy Scale [58], research has found that self-efficacy affects SL/FL learning achievements and interacts with other psychological and affective factors, such as motivation and anxiety [16–18]. For example, Ref. [59] investigated English self-efficacy in 102 8th grade Korean middle school students, and found that the students' self-efficacy influenced their English achievement via integrative motivation. Ref. [58]'s study of 74 Malaysian graduate ESL pre-service teachers revealed a significantly positive relationship between language learning strategies and language self-efficacy.

Since self-efficacy can "modulate the effect of anxiety on interpreting performance" [31] (p. 114), [60] (p. 7) and moderate stressors [61], the relationship between self-efficacy and interpreting performance has attracted researchers' attention, e.g., [62,63]. Ref. [63] developed an Interpreting Self-Efficacy (ISE) Scale with three subscales, namely self-confidence, self-regulatory efficacy, and preference for task difficulty. Ref. [64] designed a preliminary translation self-efficacy scale (TSE) with a five-factor structure: communicative and pragmatic competence, self-evaluation and learning, problem-solving, client-related issues, and strategic competence. With the application of these scales, research shows that self-efficacy is generally positively related to translation/interpreting skills and/or performance [52,65]. For example, Ref. [33]'s study of 110 accredited signed language interpreters in Australia showed that self-efficacy was positively related to perceived interpreter competence. Ref. [62] confirmed the influence of self-efficacy on interpreting, particularly its impact on student interpreters' actions and choices. Ref. [66]'s study of 281 interpreting trainees found that self-efficacy was relevant when predicting performance only in trainees with high linguistic competence, and not relevant for trainees with low linguistic competence. Ref. [67]'s online survey of currently practiced sign language interpreters found that self-esteem was among the strongest indicators of competence, and that enhancing interpreters' self-efficacy might mitigate anxiety. Ref. [65]'s study of 53 junior and senior undergraduate translation students revealed a positive correlation between self-efficacy and note-taking inclination in interpreting. The researchers thus claimed that interpreter training programs at the B.A. level should pay more attention to learners' self-efficacy.

Even so, the research on self-efficacy in translation/interpreting is still far from enough, which just motivates the present research.

2.4. Relations among Foreign Language Anxiety, Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy

As two opposite emotions, foreign language anxiety and enjoyment have been generally revealed to be negatively related to each other, e.g., [25,42,68,69]. Ref. [42] revealed a moderately negative correlation between FLE and FLCA, which was confirmed by subse-

quent studies [25,68,69]. Moreover, it was noted that FLE and FLCA, though negatively correlated in some way, are independent emotion dimensions working along separate pathways with a very small amount of overlap [42,69], and that attempts to reduce one do not necessarily boost the other. Ref. [50] investigated the effect of FLE and FLCA on the foreign language performance of 189 secondary school pupils from two schools in Greater London and a group of 152 Saudi learners of English. The results showed that in learning a FL, FLE seemed to have a stronger effect than FLCA on learners' language performance.

Meanwhile, foreign language anxiety is generally found to be negatively correlated with self-efficacy, e.g., [70–72]. For example, Ref. [70]'s study of 113 Turkish language teacher candidates found that self-efficacy was negatively related to writing anxiety. Ref. [71]'s study of 226 American undergraduate students found a negative relationship between anxiety and self-efficacy in learning mathematics. On the other hand, self-efficacy is said to mediate the impact of anxiety. For example, Ref. [73]'s study of 356 Taiwanese senior high school students confirmed the important role of self-efficacy in mediating the impact of anxiety on English learning achievement. Likewise, Ref. [72] also labelled self-efficacy as a mediator of the impact of anxiety on Chinese college students' English performance.

Expectedly, enjoyment is generally found to be positively correlated with self-efficacy [74–76]. Ref. [76]'s study of 478 college business students in Mexico found that students with a growth mindset tended to exhibit greater enjoyment, which, in turn, promoted positive creative self-efficacy beliefs. Ref. [74] implied that though enjoyment and self-efficacy are not of reciprocal causation, enjoyment affects self-efficacy. Likewise, Ref. [75] supported the serial mediating pathway from enjoyment to self-efficacy. Ref. [77] (p. 23) stated that enjoyment is an essential and important contributor to self-efficacy. Despite the fact that the existing research on foreign language anxiety, enjoyment and self-efficacy is very informative, more research is still needed to examine the relations among them considering their importance in SL/FL learning and the huge diversity of learners and learning contexts.

There has been increasing acknowledgement of the fact that the emotional aspects of translator/interpreter behavior may affect translation or interpreting performance. However, it is only relatively recently that scholars have started to empirically explore the impact of affective factors on translation or the interpreting process. Research has been carried out to probe into emotional factors and interpreting performance. For example, Ref. [33] empirically showed that affective factors, such as self-efficacy, goal orientation and negative affectivity, might be a relevant parameter in accounting for interpreters interpreting performance; Ref. [78] focused on the relationship between interpreting performance and affective factors such as self-efficacy, motivation and anxiety in interpreting students. Yet, there has been no study on the predictive effects of anxiety, enjoyment and self-efficacy on interpreting competence.

3. Research Questions

As shown, emotions play a critical role in SL/FL learning, and have been widely researched since the 1970s in second language acquisition. Even so, the available research enormously focuses on negative emotions, with foreign language anxiety as the typical representative. As positive psychology was introduced into second language acquisition [13], positive emotions began to gain more attention in recent decades; yet, relevant research is still inadequate. Moreover, research on both positive and negative emotions in translation and interpreting is scarce [35], though they are inherently anxiety-provoking [30]. It is the same with self-efficacy. Hence, the present research aimed to examine foreign language anxiety and enjoyment in interpreting classes, as well as self-efficacy in learning interpreting among Chinese university majors of interpreting in terms of their levels, relations, predictive effects and causes. The following research questions were of particular interest:

(1) What are the levels of the students' interpreting classroom anxiety, enjoyment, self-efficacy in learning interpreting?
(2) How are the students' interpreting classroom anxiety, enjoyment and self-efficacy related to one another and to their self-rated interpreting competence?

(3) How do interpreting classroom anxiety, enjoyment, and self-efficacy predict the students' self-rated interpreting competence?

(4) What are the causes for the students' anxiety and enjoyment in interpreting class and self-efficacy in learning interpreting?

4. Research Design

4.1. Context

The bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpreting (BTI) has been offered in more than 270 universities in China since its inception in 2006. The university under study here is a state-owned university in Beijing, where BTI students there take varied interpreting courses from English to Chinese or from Chinese to English (e.g., interpreting and listening, consecutive interpreting, sight interpreting and simultaneous interpreting), and manifold translation classes from English to Chinese or from Chinese to English (e.g., translation skill development, translation of diplomatic documents, translation of literary works, translation of classic works and translation of international news). They start their training in interpreting in the first semester of their freshman year, and in translating in the second semester of their sophomore year. By the end of the second semester of their junior year, BTI students will have completed 18 credits (648 h) of interpreting classes and 8 credits (288 h) of translation courses. Third-year BTI students are required to complete 2 credits (72 class hours) of translation of diplomatic documents, 2 credits (72 h) of translation of international news, and 4 credits (144 h) of consecutive interpreting in the first semester, as well as 4 credits (144 h) of diplomatic interpreting, 2 credits of sight interpreting and 2 credits of comparison and translation between English and Chinese in the second semester.

4.2. Participants

A total of 67 (12 male and 55 female) third-year students from two intact interpreting classes participated in this study. With an average age of 20.13 (SD = 0.776), the participants rated their overall English proficiency as 5.66 (SD = 1.213), their English–Chinese interpreting competence as 5.51 (SD = 1.185) and their Chinese–English interpreting competence as 5.06 (SD = 1.266) on the scale of 1–10. Meanwhile, they reported spending an average of 0.7 h (SD = 0.559) practicing interpreting Chinese into English and 0.87 h (SD = 0.718) practicing interpreting English into Chinese per day.

4.3. Instruments

The data in this research were gathered via a mixed-form questionnaire, which consisted of an 8-item Interpreting Classroom Anxiety Scale, a nine-item Interpreting Classroom Enjoyment Scale, a three-item Self-Efficacy Scale, a five-item background questionnaire and six open-ended questions, as detailed below.

Interpreting Classroom Anxiety Scale. The eight-item unidimensional Interpreting Classroom Anxiety Scale (ICAS) was adapted from the short form of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, which can be found in [79]. To better suit the research, expressions such as "foreign language" were changed to "(my) interpreting", and "other students" to "my classmates". The sample items are 'Even if I am well prepared for my interpreting class, I feel anxious about it' and 'I get nervous and confused when I am interpreting in my interpreting class'. Aiming to measure the anxiety specific to the interpreting class, the seven-point Likert ICAS achieved a Cronbach alpha (*a*) of 0.891 in this study. The higher the score, the more anxious the students were.

Interpreting Classroom Enjoyment Scale. The nine-item Interpreting Classroom Enjoyment Scale (ICES) was adapted from the short form of the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale, found in [46]. To better suit the present research, the following modifications were made: (a) 'the teacher' was changed to "(my) interpreting teacher"; (b) 'it' was changed to "(my) interpreting class". Example items are 'I enjoy my interpreting class' and 'My interpreting teacher is encouraging'. Aiming to measure the participants' enjoyment specific to the interpreting class, the 7-point Likert ICES achieved a Cronbach alpha (*a*) of 0.905 in

the study. The higher the score, the greater the enjoyment of the participants. Meanwhile, as discussed in [46], ICES had three dimensions, with each dimension having three items: the Teacher Appreciation Subscale (TAS) (a = 0.966), Personal Enjoyment Subscale (PES) (a = 0.815) and Social Enjoyment Subscale (SES) (a = 0.861).

Self-Efficacy Scale. The 3-item unidimensional Self-Efficacy Scale (SEFS) was developed with reference to the 10-item Language Self-Efficacy Scale developed in [58]. Intending to measure the participants' self-efficacy in learning interpreting, the 7-point Likert SEFS achieved a Cronbach alpha of 0.891 in this study. The higher the score, the greater the self-efficacy of the students.

Background Questionnaire. The background questionnaire had five items, aiming to collect such information about the participants as age, gender, self-rated overall English proficiency, and average time spent in practicing Chinese–English interpreting and English–Chinese interpreting per day.

Competence in interpreting. The respondents were required to self-rate their overall proficiency in English, competence in Chinese–English interpreting and competence in English–Chinese interpreting on a scale of 1 (the poorest) to 10 (the best).

Open-ended questions. In addition to the Likert scales, the respondents were asked to respond to six open-ended questions: (a) Do you feel anxious in your interpreting class? Why or why not? (b) What do you do when you feel anxious in the interpreting class? (c) Do you enjoy your interpreting class? Why or why not? (d) What do you do when you feel joyful in the interpreting class? (e) Do you think you have the ability to learn interpreting well? Why or why not? and (f) How do you usually learn interpreting?

4.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The study was approved by the Research Committee of each of the authors' respective university department. Then, the questionnaires were translated into Chinese and double-checked by a researcher proficient in both Chinese and English. They were then distributed online, together with a consent form in Chinese, to students in the two intact interpreting classes at the end of the first semester of the academic year. All participation was voluntary, which yielded 67 valid questionnaires.

The survey data were analyzed via SPSS 22. Reliability scores, means and standard deviations were computed to explore the participants' levels of anxiety and enjoyment in the interpreting class, as well as their self-efficacy in learning interpreting. Correlation analyses were conducted to examine the associations among interpreting classroom anxiety, enjoyment, self-efficacy in learning interpreting, and self-rated competence in Chinese–English interpreting and English–Chinese interpreting. Regression analyses were ran to investigate the predicting effects of the measured variables on the participants' self-rated competence in Chinese–English interpreting and English–Chinese interpreting. Reponses to the open-ended questions were subjected to thematic content analysis [80]. During the process, a number was given to each respondent to protect their privacy. To achieve accuracy and reliability, all the responses were read two times by the second researcher and a research assistant to identify group and regroup themes, which were finally categorized into higher-order themes by axial coding. To support the generalized themes, representative remarks were cited.

5. Results

5.1. Results of Quantitative Data

5.1.1. Levels of and Correlations among Interpreting Classroom Anxiety, Enjoyment, Self-Efficacy and Self-Rated Interpreting Competence

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of and coefficients among ICAS, ICES scales, SEFS, SETC and SCTC. As shown in Table 1, the participants scored 4.834 on ICAS, 5.236 on ICES, 6.025 on TAS, 5.055 on PES, 4.627 on SES, and 4.711 on SEFS, well above 4, the scale midpoint. This meant that more than half of the participants felt anxious (ICAS); yet, they (highly) enjoyed (ICES) the interpreting class. They highly valued their

interpreting teacher (TAS) and (strongly) believed that the teacher was encouraging, kind and supportive. They personally enjoyed the class (PES), and reported that they liked the interpreting class, learned interesting things from the class and felt proud of their accomplishments in interpreting. They also had good relationships with their peers (SES) and reported that they formed a tight group and laughed a lot in the interpreting class. In addition, they generally believed that they had the ability to learn interpreting well (SEFS) and would become highly competent interpreters.

Table 1. Mean, SD and correlations of the measured variables (N = 67).

Measures	Mean	SD	ICES	TAS	PES	SES	SEFS	SEIC	SCIC
ICAS	4.834	0.926	−0.183	0.095	−0.266 *	−0.255 *	−0.404 **	−0.319 **	−0.384 **
ICES	5.236	1.048	1	0.813 **	0.883 **	0.847 **	0.611 **	0.322 **	0.186
TAS	6.025	1.092		1	0.664 **	0.473 **	0.353 **	0.138	0.068
PES	5.055	1.187			1	0.607 **	0.652 **	0.220	0.183
SES	4.627	1.426				1	0.533 **	0.422 **	0.206
SEFS	4.711	1.301					1	0.293 *	0.256 *
SEIC	5.51	1.185						1	0.545 **
SCIC	5.06	1.266							1

Notes. ICAS = Interpreting Classroom Anxiety Scale; ICES = Interpreting Classroom Enjoyment Scale; TAS = Teacher Appreciation Subscale; PES = Personal Enjoyment Subscale; SES = Social Enjoyment Subscale; SEFS = Self-Efficacy Scale; SEIC = self-rated English–Chinese interpreting competence; SCIC = self-rated Chinese–English interpreting competence. coefficient of determination: small = r ≤ 0.1; medium = r = 0.3; large = r ≥ 0.5 [81]. * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.05 = 1$.

As shown in Table 1, ICAS was negatively related to the ICES, PES, SEFS and self-rated interpreting competence. In particular, ICAS was significantly negatively correlated with PES, SES, SEFS, SEIC and SCIC, with coefficients ranging from −0.255 to −0.404 ($p ≤ 0.5$). Namely, the more anxious (ICAS) a respondent was, the less joyful both personally (PES) and socially (SES) he/she was, the lower self-efficacy he/she had in learning interpreting, and the lower the self-rating in Chinese–English and English–Chinese interpreting competence. In addition, the ICES scales were highly positively related to one another ($r = 0.813~0.883$, $p ≤ 0.1$) and SEFS ($r = 0.353~0.652$, $p ≤ 0.1$). This meant that a respondent who appreciated the teacher more tended to have greater personal and social enjoyment in the interpreting class. A respondent with greater enjoyment in the interpreting class also tended to have greater self-efficacy (SEFS) in learning interpreting. Although the ICES scales were all positively related to the participants' self-rated competence in English–Chinese and Chinese–English interpreting, only TCES and SES were significantly positively related to self-rated competence in English–Chinese interpreting (SEIC). Alternatively, the greater the interpreting classroom enjoyment or social enjoyment, the higher the self-rating in the English–Chinese interpreting competence. Table 1 also shows that SEFS was significantly positively related to both SEIC and SCIC, indicating that a respondent who had greater self-efficacy in learning interpreting tended to self-rate his/her competence in English–Chinese and Chinese–English interpreting higher. Furthermore, as reported in Table 1, SEIC and SCIC were highly positively related to each other ($r = 0.545$, $p ≤ 0.1$), indicating that a student who self-rated his/her competence in English–Chinese interpreting higher tended to self-rate his/her competence in Chinese–English interpreting higher.

5.1.2. Predictive Effects of Interpreting Classroom Anxiety, Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy on Self-Rated Competence in Interpreting

To explore the predictive effects of interpreting classroom anxiety, enjoyment and self-efficacy on self-rated competence in interpreting, a multiple regression analysis was ran, with ICAS, ICES scales and SEFS as independent variables and SEIC and SCIC as the dependent variable. The results are reported in Table 2, which shows that the analysis produced one model for both SEIC and SCIC. The SES (Social Enjoyment Subscale) was a positive predictor for SEIC ($β = 0.422$, $t = 3.748$, $p = 0.000$), accounting for 17.8% of the total variance; the ICAS (Interpreting Classroom Anxiety Scale) was a negative predictor

for SCTC (β = −0.384, t = −3.353, *p* = 0.001), accounting for 14.7% of the total variance. This suggested that social enjoyment positively predicted students' self-rated English–Chinese interpreting competence, while interpreting classroom anxiety negatively predicted students' self-rated Chinese–English interpreting competence.

Table 2. Multiple regression coefficients and significance of predictors for students' self-rated competence in interpreting (N = 67).

Predictors	1. SEIC				
	β	t	*p*	VIF	Cohen's f^2
SES	0.422	3.748 **	0.000	1.000	0.217
	2. SCIC				
Predictors	β	t	*p*	VIF	Cohen's f^2
ICAS	−0.384	−3.353 **	0.001	1.000	0.172

Notes. ** = $p \leq 0.01$. **effect size of Cohen's f^2: small = f$^2 \leq$ 0.02**; medium = f^2 = 0.15; large = f$^2 \geq$ 0.35 [81].

5.2. Results of Qualitative Data

5.2.1. Anxiety in the Interpreting Class

When asked about whether they felt anxious in their interpreting class, 14 students (20.9%) said that they did not feel anxious, while 53 students (79.1%) reported feeling anxious, of whom 3 reported feeling very anxious, and 10 reported feeling anxious sometimes or feeling a little anxious. They also voiced reasons for feeling anxious or not anxious in their interpreting class, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reasons for feeling anxious or not anxious in their interpreting class (N = 67).

Reasons for Being Not Anxious (N = 14)	Reasons for Being Anxious (N = 53)
The teacher is kind (2/14.29%)	Poor English proficiency (11/20.75%)
Not fearing making mistakes (1/7.14%)	Fear of making mistakes (9/16.98%)
Interpreting is not going to be one's career (1/7.14%)	Fear of poor performance and leaving a bad impression on the teacher (9/16.98%)
Often having time to prepare (1/7.14%)	Not feeling confident (3/5.66%)
Being out-going (1/7.14%)	Limited vocabulary (3/5.66%)
Liking interpreting (1/7.14%)	Poor English listening (3/5.66%)
It is not necessary to feel anxious (1/7.14%)	Not well prepared (3/5.66%)
	Lack of interpreting practice (2/3.77%)
	Limited preparation time (2/3.77%)
	Low interpreting competence (2/3.77%)
	The mind goes blank when interpreting (1/1.89%)
	Unable to find the proper expressions (1/1.89%)
	Being slow-minded (1/1.89%)
	Interpreting requires full attention (1/1.89%)

As displayed in Table 3, the respondents listed seven reasons for not feeling anxious in the interpreting class, such as the teacher being kind, not fearing making mistakes, having time to prepare, being outgoing and liking interpreting. Meanwhile, more reasons were reported for feeling anxious in the interpreting class, the most common of which were poor English proficiency (11/20.75%), fear of making mistakes and fear of poor performance and leaving a bad impression on the teacher (9/16.98%). As No. 7 reported, "I am anxious in the interpreting class, mainly because interpreting is very difficult. I'm afraid I can't do it well, then the teacher may look down upon me". Meanwhile, lack of confidence, limited preparation time, lack of practice and other factors might all provoke the participants to become anxious in the interpreting class. For example, "I'm a bit anxious when doing translation but very anxious when interpreting in class. This is probably because we have little time to prepare for interpreting but more time to prepare for translation. . . . " (No. 25). "I'm anxious. This is because I'm not confident in my ability to interpret. Even if I'm prepared before class, I am still afraid of having not adequately prepared or of forgetting

what I have prepared when feeling anxious." (No. 53). "I'm a kind of anxious, because interpreting requires full attention. Otherwise, mistakes occur" (No. 63).

When feeling anxious, 9 of 53 respondents reported feeling helpless, while the others voiced a number of ways they would try to calm down: (a) Breathing deeply (10/18.87%); (b) Focusing on the course content (6/11.32%); (c) Talking to partners and encourage one another (5/9.43%); (d) Telling themselves not to be anxious (4/7.55%); (e) Drinking water (2/3.77%); (f) Check dictionary/apps for help (2/3.77%); (g) Encouraging themselves to be confident (2/3.77%); (h) Shifting attention to other things (1/1.89%); (i) Deciding to study harder (5/9.43%); and (j) Listen to others' interpreting (1/1.89%).

5.2.2. Enjoyment in the Interpreting Class

When asked about whether they enjoyed their interpreting class, 37 (55.22%) respondents reported that they did and the others said that they were not sure (3/4.48%), that they did not enjoy the class (6/8.96%), and that the class was just OK (21/31.34%). The reasons are reported in Table 4, which shows that the students did not enjoy the interpreting class because they were (too) anxious (2/33.33%) or were not interested in interpreting (2/33.33%). The interpreting class was just OK because they were not much interested in interpreting (2/9.52%), or because the class was demanding (1/4.76%) or challenging (1/4.76%) though interesting.

Table 4. Reasons for enjoying or not enjoying the interpreting class (N = 67).

Reasons for Not Enjoying the Class (N = 6)	Reasons for Enjoying the Class (N = 37)	Reasons for Being Just Ok (N = 21)
Being (too) anxious (2/33.33%)	Learning (a lot) (15/40.54%)	Not much interested in interpreting (2/9.52%)
No interested in interpreting (2/33.33%)	The classroom atmosphere is good (8/21.62%)	The class in interesting but demanding (1/4.76%)
	The class is interesting (8/21.62%)	The class is informative but challenging (1/4.76%)

As reported in Table 4, the participants enjoyed the interpreting class mainly because of three reasons: (a) They could learn a lot from the class (15/50.54%); (b) The classroom atmosphere was good (8/21.62%); and (c) The class was interesting (8/21.62%). The following are some typical remarks made by the respondents: "I enjoy the class, because I learn a lot from the class. In each class, I learn new interpreting skills and I can see my progress" (No. 12); "The classroom atmosphere is good. The teacher is warm-hearted, encouraging, and kind, the students are helpful." (No. 25); and "I feel pretty happy in my interpreting class. I think translation and interpreting are very professional, challenging and noble. I admire those who can interpret well. I feel honored to learn interpreting" (No. 40).

When enjoying the interpreting class, the respondents would continue to be attentive in class (18/48.65%), smile/laugh (11/29.73%), feel energetic and study harder, such as engaging in more interpreting practice (10/27.03%), communicate with their partners or the teacher about their feelings (7/18.92%), think of happier things/moments (2/5.41%), become more active in response to the teacher (2/5.41%), and praise themselves (1/2.7%).

5.2.3. Self-Efficacy in Learning Interpreting

When asked about whether they had confidence in learning interpreting well, 5 (7.46%) respondents said that they were not sure, 14 (20.896%) said that they did not have confidence, and 49 (73.13%) reported that they had confidence. The reasons are reported in Table 5, which shows that the students did not have any confidence in learning interpreting well, mainly because of the following reasons: (a) They thought they were not fit for interpreting (3/21.43%); (b) They were not confident (3/21.43%); (c) Their Chinese was not good enough (2/14.29%); and (d) They had no interpreting skills (2/14.29%). For example, a student (No. 13) explained that "I don't think I will learn and interpret well. I am probably not fit for doing interpreting. Interpreting is highly time-specific, and requires a very good psychological state and quick response ability" (No. 13). "I don't have enough linguistic knowledge, and I can't find the strategy to learn interpreting" (No. 35). "I don't have

the self-efficacy to learn interpreting well. Interpreting requires the person to be not only proficient in English but also in Chinese. I don't think I am highly proficient in Chinese" (No. 60). In addition, the students voiced other reasons for having no confidence in learning interpreting well, such as having no motivation or gift for learning interpreting.

Table 5. Reasons for having (no) confidence in learning interpretation well.

Reasons for Having No Confidence (N = 14)	Reasons for Having the Confidence (N = 49)
Not being fit for doing interpreting (3/21.43%)	Practice makes perfect (10/20.41%)
Not beingconfident (3/21.43%)	Interpreting is the major (6/12.24%)
Chinese is not good enough (2/14.29%)	Being good at both Chinese and English (4/8.16%)
Having no interpreting skills (2/14.29%)	The teacher is responsible (3/6.12%)
AI will replace interpreters (1/7.14%)	Being interested in interpreting (2/4.08%)
Having no gift for interpreting (1/7.14%)	Interpreting requires solid language proficiency and wide knowledge (1/2.04%)
Interpreting is rather challenging (1/7.14%)	Loving English (1/2.04%)
Having no motivation (1/7.14%)	Having enough learning resources (1/2.04%)
Poor hearing (1/7.14%)	Being motivated by various tests (1/2.04%)
Not beingsensitive to interpreting (1//7.14%)	

As summarized in Table 5, a number of reasons were listed by the participants for their confidence in learning interpreting well, including practice, high proficiency in both English and Chinese, interest in interpreting and love for English. Of the listed reasons, the most common one was practice (10/20.41%). As the saying goes, practice makes perfect. The respondents firmly believed that with repeated practice, they would improve in interpreting. As a student confided, " . . . Though I'm not much competent right now, with more practice, I'll be able to do it well" (No. 7). Another reason was that interpreting was their major, as No. 45 reported, " . . . It is my major, and I am interested in translation and interpreting. Also, I believe that as long as I study hard, I will definitely achieve what I want". Meanwhile, some students thought that tests would push them to learn interpreting well, in that " . . . We have to take different kinds of tests required by the university or to obtain certificates. So we have to learn interpreting well" (No. 11).

5.3. Strategies to Learn Interpreting

When asked about what strategies they adopted to learn interpreting, the respondents reported a number of strategies: (a) Practicing interpreting (45/67.16%); (b) Reading and listening more (30/44.78%); (c) Being attentive in class (6/8.96%); (d) Memorizing words and expanding their vocabulary (4/5.97%); and (e) Carefully thinking about the teacher's feedback (2/2.985%). Clearly, the most often used strategy was to practice interpreting. As reported by the respondents, they practiced interpreting long and complex sentences into Chinese or English, and then, compared their interpretation with others or the original sentences. They also listened to English (radio or video programs) every day and tried to translate it into Chinese while listening. Meanwhile, reading and listening more helped them to acquire more interpreting skills so that they could improve in interpreting. Listening to the teacher's comments and explanation was insightful as well. In addition, they considered it important to understand an expression in a particular situation, which was critical for the proper interpretation of the expression. The following are some typical remarks made by the respondents: "I think it's useful to read and listen a lot. I read books on translation and interpreting to understand the skills and strategies, I also read newspapers and other materials and try to translate if the sentences are long and/complex" (No. 31), and " . . . Practice is necessary. I often translate a text and then compare my translation with the original text to see the similarities and differences. This helps me a lot" (No. 37).

6. Discussion

6.1. Levels of Interpreting Classroom Anxiety, Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy

Analyses of the data revealed that more than half of the participants felt anxious in the interpreting class, higher than the finding reported in general foreign language classrooms, e.g., [25,26,47]. This might be because interpreting is comparatively more

challenging and stressful than other activities [30–32]. In addition, the participants in the present research reported a higher level of anxiety than their peers in [37], which might be because the participants did not have much interpreting practice in real life despite having taken interpreting courses for 2.5 years in university. It might also be because interpreting (i.e., diplomatic interpreting and sight interpreting) became more challenging in the third year. This, however, needs to be further researched.

This study also reveals that more than half of the participants (highly) enjoyed the interpreting class. They highly valued their interpreting teacher and (strongly) believed that the teacher was encouraging, kind and supportive. They personally enjoyed the class and reported that they liked the interpreting class, learned interesting things from the class and felt proud of their accomplishments in interpreting. They also had good relationships with their peers and reported that they formed a tight group and laughed a lot in the interpreting class. This finding was partially consistent with that in similar research in other contexts, e.g., [7,25,45,50,51]. A higher percentage of participants reported enjoying the interpreting class in the present study probably because they were interpreting majors who were often more interested in and devoted to learning interpreting well.

Meanwhile, the respondents in this study generally believed that they had the ability to learn interpreting well and would become highly competent interpreters, as found in studies in general foreign language classrooms, e.g., [58,82]. This was probably because as interpreting majors, most participants would spend much time learning and practicing interpreting and trying their best to be competent in interpreting.

6.2. Relations among Interpreting Classroom Anxiety, Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy

As found in studies in general foreign language classrooms, e.g., [25,42,68,69], this study found that interpreting classroom anxiety was significantly negatively related to two ICES scales, personal and social enjoyment, indicating that the more anxious respondent tended to be less joyful both personally and socially in the interpreting class.

The correlation analysis also showed that interpreting classroom anxiety was significantly negatively related to self-efficacy in learning interpreting, as found in [70], which focused on writing anxiety and self-efficacy and [71], which focused on anxiety and self-efficacy in learning mathematics. This finding indicated that the more anxious respondents tended to have lower self-efficacy in learning interpreting.

As found in studies on self-efficacy and enjoyment in other contexts, e.g., [74–76], the present research revealed significantly positive correlations between ICES scales and SEFS, demonstrating that a respondent with greater enjoyment in the interpreting class tended to have greater self-efficacy in learning interpreting.

Clearly, anxiety, enjoyment and self-efficacy were closely related to one another. Yet, since not much research has examined the relations among these variables in interpreting/translation, these relations need to be validated in more research.

6.3. Predictive Effects of Interpreting Classroom Anxiety, Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy on Self-Rated Competence in Interpreting

This study showed that ICAS was significantly negatively correlated with SEIC and SCIC, indicating that the more anxious (ICAS) respondents tended to self-rate their interpreting competence lower, similar to the finding in similar studies on translation or interpreting students [35,39,40]. Meanwhile, interpreting classroom anxiety (ICAS) was revealed to negatively predict students' self-rated Chinese–English interpreting competence, confirming the belief that anxiety is likely to impede the acquisition and performance of interpreting skills [33]. Meanwhile, this finding suggested that anxiety affected interpreting from Chinese to English more than interpreting from English to Chinese. This might be because the participants were much more proficient in their native language, Chinese, than the foreign language, English. Nevertheless, both the predicting effects and possible causes need to be further researched.

In addition, the study revealed that ICES scales were positively related to students' self-rated interpreting competence though significant correlation occurred only between ICES and SEIC and between SES and SEIC, partially consistent with the finding in studies in general foreign language classrooms, e.g., [25,50,51]. These findings indicated that a respondent who enjoyed the interpreting class more tended to self-rate their interpreting competence higher. Concurrently, social enjoyment (SES) was found to positively predict students' self-rated English–Chinese interpreting competence, partially supporting the finding that foreign language enjoyment positively predicts students' foreign language achievement, e.g., [25,50,51].

The present study also showed that students' self-efficacy (SEFS) was significantly positively related to their self-rated competence in Chinese–English and English–Chinese interpreting, as found in [33,58,65]. Namely, a respondent with greater self-efficacy in learning interpreting tended to self-rate their competence in interpreting significantly higher, indicating the importance of self-efficacy in learning interpreting. Nevertheless, unlike [59,62], this study found that self-efficacy did not predict self-rated interpreting competence. Yet, as few studies have examined the predicting effects of self-efficacy on translation or interpreting, more such research is needed to better understand it.

6.4. Causes for Interpreting Classroom Anxiety, Enjoyment and Self-Efficacy

As previously presented, though some respondents did not feel anxious in the interpreting class because of such reasons as the teacher being kind, not fearing making mistakes, having time to prepare, being outgoing and liking interpreting, more respondents reported feeling anxious in the interpreting class mainly because of poor English proficiency, fear of making mistakes, fear of poor performance, leaving a bad impression on the teacher, lack of confidence, limited preparation time, lack of practice and so on. These findings generally conformed to those in anxiety research in other contexts, e.g., [35–37]. This indicates that interpreting, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, is also foreign language skill and requires effort to learn it well. It also means that adequate practice probably leads to successful interpreting.

Concurrently, more than half of the participants reported enjoying the interpreting class in that they could learn a lot from the class, the classroom atmosphere was good, or the class was interesting, as found in [7,47]. This, coupled with the fact that they were interpreting majors, might explain the finding that around 70% of the respondents had (high) self-efficacy in learning interpreting well. They believed that repeated practice, coupled with high proficiency in both Chinese and English, interest in interpreting and love for English would eventually result in a satisfying interpreting performance.

7. Implications

As discussed above, anxiety was a big problem in the interpreting class though most students enjoyed the class and had self-efficacy in learning interpreting well. Thus, it is important for instructors to help students to cope with anxiety. As suggested in [35], teachers can discuss different styles of speaking with their students and organize diverse speaking/interpreting-related activities. As students gradually become accustomed to speaking and interpreting, they may become less anxious and more confident, as has been found in many studies in general language learning contexts, e.g., [45,68,83]. Moreover, instructors can organize meetings to share and discuss one another's own interpreting experiences. Being empathetic always appeals to learners and helps them reduce their anxiety, e.g., [83]. Furthermore, it is beneficial for instructors to encourage students to become partners and form groups to practice interpreting together. When doing so, students can listen and give feedback to one another's interpreting performance and learn from one another. They can also record their own performance, analyze and reflect on it so that they can improve later on. Meanwhile, it is often encouraging if instructors praise students often, and boost the students' confidence in interpreting from time to time. As found in the present research, if students appreciate the teacher, have good

relations with their peers, encourage and support one another, they are highly likely to enjoy the class, feel confident and actively engage themselves in classroom activities.

Since interpreting is highly anxiety-provoking, the ability to control anxiety is crucial for successful interpreting [36,84]. In addition to what has been discussed, students were able to calm themselves down most effectively by encouraging themselves, breathing deeply, shifting attention and communicating with partners, as reported by the participants in the present research. As they become less anxious, they may enjoy the interpreting class more and perform better. Meanwhile, it is always beneficial for learners to practice interpreting, engage in more reading and listening, expand their vocabulary, and listen to feedback, as suggested by the respondents in this research.

The present study examined Chinese university interpreting majors' anxiety and enjoyment in the interpreting class and self-efficacy in learning interpreting and their relations to self-rated competence in interpreting, thus enriching the current literature and contributing to our knowledge of emotions in interpreting—an under-studied area. Even so, it had certain limitations. The first one was the relatively small sample size, which limited the generalizability of the findings. A larger sample size may reveal more interesting and convincing findings. Consequently, the relationships found in this study need to be confirmed in more investigations in diverse contexts. In addition, qualitative data, such as interviews and diaries, can be collected to find out more about students' interpreting classroom anxiety and enjoyment and self-efficacy in learning interpreting.

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