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Multidimensional Reconstruction for Foreign Language Enjoyment

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Abstract

Foreign Language Enjoyment, as an important affective variable from the perspective of positive psychology, plays a positive role in learners' motivation, classroom engagement, and language development. However, existing studies have mainly focused on the conceptualization, influencing factors, and effects of foreign language enjoyment, while relatively little attention has been paid to its application in classroom teaching. Based on the multidimensional construct of foreign language enjoyment, this paper explores pedagogical approaches to fostering foreign language enjoyment from three dimensions: task design, learning process, and assessment. Specifically, multimodal output tasks are used to enhance learners' sense of achievement, collaborative learning and peer support are employed to foster a positive classroom emotional climate, and reflective activities are adopted to reinforce and sustain positive learning experiences, thereby forming a pathway for fostering foreign language enjoyment through task, process, and assessment. This paper aims to provide guidance for cultivating positive emotions and optimizing instructional practices in foreign language classrooms.

Keywords

Foreign Language Enjoyment; Task Reconstruction; Process Reconstruction; Assessment Reconstruction

1. Introduction

1.1. The Positive Psychology Turn in Foreign Language Education

For a long time, mainstream second language acquisition research has been profoundly influenced by the cognitivist paradigm and the Deficit Model, focusing primarily on the mechanisms underlying language input processing (Krashen, 1985) or on the detrimental effects of negative emotions, such as anxiety and burnout, on language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). Within this deficit-oriented perspective, foreign language classrooms have often been reduced to spaces primarily concerned with minimizing emotional threats and correcting linguistic errors (MacIntyre &

Gregersen, 2012). However, with the emergence of Positive Psychology in the late twentieth century (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and its subsequent influence on the field of applied linguistics, research on second language acquisition has witnessed a notable emotion turn over the past decade (Dewaele, 2015; Zhou & Wang, 2022).

The essence of this shift lies in the growing recognition that reducing negative emotions does not necessarily lead to the emergence of positive emotions (MacIntyre, 2017). Foreign language learning is not merely a process of overcoming anxiety; it is also a dynamic process through which learners develop positive psychological capital and cultivate positive emotional resources (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Against this background, Foreign Language Enjoyment has established as a central construct within the positive psychology paradigm in SLA research (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). According to the Broaden-and-Build Theory, positive emotions such as enjoyment broaden learners' momentary thought–action repertoires and facilitate the development of enduring physical, intellectual, and social resources (Fredrickson, 2001). In second language classrooms, FLE has not only been found to be positively associated with foreign language achievement (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018), but has also been shown to enhance learners' academic buoyancy and psychological resilience when facing academic setbacks, thereby facilitating motivational regulation and behavioral engagement (Liu et al., 2026). Therefore, exploring how to foster and sustain FLE in foreign language teaching has become a major focus of current research on emotions in second language acquisition.

1.2. Emotional Deficits in Traditional and Digital Foreign Language Classrooms

Despite the growing influence of Positive Psychology, foreign language teaching in China continues to experience a pronounced emotional deficit. With the increasing integration of digital technologies into language education, this problem has taken on more complex forms of emotional alienation. In traditional face-to-face classrooms, the dominance of high-stakes examinations and mechanical grammar instruction has resulted in an excessive emphasis on error-correction rather than encouragement, thereby facilitating the spread of language anxiety among learners (Li, 2020). In recent years, online and blended teaching have been widely adopted as alternative instructional approaches. However, their excessive reliance on technological mediation has unintentionally positioned digital technologies as emotional barriers between teachers and students, further intensifying emotional alienation in foreign language learning.

From the perspective of ecological pedagogy, technology-mediated learning environments have not effectively alleviated the anxiety commonly found in traditional classrooms. Instead, the absence of physical presence has contributed to deeper experiences of screen fatigue and technological detachment (Derakhshan et

al., 2021). Without a shared physical learning environment, teachers find it difficult to perceive learners' facial expressions and emotional responses in real time. Consequently, authentic classroom interaction is often reduced to routine online interactions and mechanical responses. At the same time, peer interaction frequently remains superficial because of asynchronous communication and the lack of well-structured collaborative activities (King, 2016). Such a decline in social presence has directly contributed to widespread digital boredom and feelings of social isolation arising from a lack of belongingness (Pawlak et al., 2020).

Under these prolonged and alienated emotional conditions, the social and self-developmental nature of foreign language learning is substantially weakened. Learners are unable to experience the sense of shared enjoyment reflected in the social dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment. Meanwhile, prolonged exposure to isolated and inefficient learning activities limits their awareness of personal language progress, thereby diminishing the sense of achievement associated with the private dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment (Jiang, 2020). Against the backdrop of widespread boredom, social isolation, and the decline of multiple dimensions of FLE in digital foreign language classrooms, it has become increasingly important to overcome the emotional barriers created by technology and, drawing on the Emotional Support Model for Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (Zheng & Zhou, 2023), to explore a multidimensional reconceptualization of FLE together with its pedagogical reconstruction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of Foreign Language Enjoyment

Early research on affect in second language acquisition devoted relatively limited attention to positive emotions and generally conceptualized Foreign Language Enjoyment as a single, unidimensional affective variable (Dörnyei, 2005). Within this line of research, scholars primarily examined the relationship between FLE and foreign language classroom anxiety within a dichotomous framework of anxiety versus enjoyment. Pedagogical implications were often based on the assumption that reducing learners' anxiety would naturally lead to higher levels of enjoyment. However, this unidimensional perspective was soon found to be inadequate because it overlooked the independence and co-occurrence of positive and negative emotions in both physiological activation and cognitive processing. As a result, it could not adequately explain why some learners simultaneously experience high levels of anxiety and enjoyment in foreign language classrooms (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

To address this limitation and gain a deeper understanding of the internal structure of FLE, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) conducted exploratory factor analyses based on large-scale samples of second language learners and identified the multidimensional nature of FLE. They proposed two core dimensions, FLE-Private

and FLE-Social. The former refers to learners' sense of personal achievement derived from overcoming linguistic challenges, engaging in intellectual challenges, and developing language competence, whereas the latter emphasizes learners' sense of belonging fostered through teacher–student interaction, peer collaboration, and a supportive classroom environment. The identification of these two dimensions shifted FLE research from a broad discussion of positive emotions to a more fine-grained examination of its internal structure. Nevertheless, this multidimensional framework was developed primarily within Western educational settings and individualistic cultural contexts, without fully accounting for the characteristics of foreign language classrooms in Asian contexts, particularly in China, where collectivist values and Confucian cultural traditions contribute to a learning environment characterized by high levels of anxiety and strong concerns about maintaining face.

Recognizing the limited explanatory power of Western models in the Chinese educational context, Chinese scholars (Jiang, 2020) have adapted and validated FLE scales based on the realities of foreign language teaching in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Their findings suggest that Chinese learners' FLE is shaped not only by personal achievement and teacher support, but also by sociocultural factors such as peer approval and concerns about face. Although these localized studies have enriched the dimensional structure of FLE and strengthened its cross-cultural validity, most of the existing research remains cross-sectional and quantitative in nature, focusing primarily on the static relationships between FLE and learning outcomes, such as foreign language achievement and learner engagement (Zhou & Wang, 2022).

2.2. Foreign Language Emotions in Technology-Mediated Learning Environments

With the rapid digital transformation of education, early research at the intersection of educational technology and second language acquisition was generally optimistic about technology-mediated foreign language learning. It was widely assumed that easy access to information and multimodal language input afforded by modern technologies could naturally stimulate learners' motivation and enhance positive learning experiences (Plonsky & Ziegler, 2016). Some studies further argued that online self-directed learning conducted through digital platforms could reduce the anxiety associated with face-to-face oral communication, thereby creating favorable conditions for the emergence of positive emotions. However, this technologically utopian perspective was soon challenged by the realities of digital language classrooms. An increasing body of research has shown that technology-enhanced learning, in the absence of meaningful emotional engagement, does not automatically translate into positive emotional resources.

Recent studies in applied linguistics have suggested that prolonged screen-based learning with limited opportunities for meaningful social interaction may lead to psychological distress among language learners. Derakhshan (2021) found that, in technology-mediated foreign language classrooms, the absence of physical presence makes it difficult for teachers to perceive learners' facial expressions and emotional responses in real time. As a consequence, classroom interaction becomes increasingly mechanical and delayed, giving rise to widespread digital boredom. Likewise, Pawlak (2020) argued that, without carefully designed pedagogical support, online and blended learning environments may intensify learners' feelings of social isolation, reducing foreign language learning to solitary and repetitive screen-based practice. More importantly, although many blended foreign language courses advocate online collaboration, such collaboration often remains limited to group chats on social media platforms or the sharing of online learning resources. Because these superficial collaborative activities lack well-structured social interaction and shared goal commitment, they not only fail to enhance learners' motivation or alleviate academic pressure (Liu et al., 2026), but may also exacerbate technology-related anxiety and peer conflict as a result of unequal task distribution and ineffective communication.

To address the lack of emotional support associated with superficial collaboration, Zheng and Zhou (2023) proposed the Emotional Support Model for Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning, arguing that technology-mediated learning should incorporate technology-assisted tasks characterized by higher-order cognitive challenges and multimodal output, together with a comprehensive collaborative support system, to effectively foster higher-order positive emotions among learners. This perspective provides an important analytical framework for understanding emotional alienation in technology-mediated foreign language learning. Technology itself does not directly foster Foreign Language Enjoyment. Rather, its emotional value depends on the extent to which task interdependence is effectively integrated with interaction-support mechanisms. Accordingly, investigating how peer support networks and positive goal interdependence jointly contribute to the multidimensional reconceptualization of FLE in technology-mediated contexts, and clarifying the underlying mechanism through which emotional experiences are translated into pedagogical practice, constitute the primary objective of the present study.

3. Emotional Challenges in Educational Practice and the Theoretical Basis for Multidimensional Reconstruction

3.1. Emotional Alienation in Traditional and Online Instruction

In contemporary foreign language teaching, both traditional classroom instruction characterized by mechanical practices and widely adopted blended

learning environments are susceptible to varying degrees of emotional alienation. The underlying mechanism of this phenomenon lies in the erosion of social presence during the language learning process (Short et al., 1976). In traditional classrooms, learners' negative emotions often stem from excessive error correction and the pressure associated with high-stakes assessment (Li, 2020). By contrast, in technology-mediated learning environments, emotional alienation is more commonly manifested in widespread digital boredom and feelings of social isolation (Pawlak et al., 2020).

From a socio-ecological perspective, when foreign language learning is reduced to one-way online check-ins, isolated grammar drills, and mechanical responses lacking authentic communicative contexts, the fundamental role of language as a medium for social interaction and emotional connection is gradually diminished by technological mediation. In the absence of physical presence, emotional exchanges among peers and between teachers and students are constrained by screen-mediated communication, resulting in a dehumanized classroom atmosphere (Derakhshan et al., 2021). The erosion of social presence not only deprives learners of opportunities to develop a sense of belonging and social connectedness through classroom interaction, thereby weakening the social dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment, but also undermines the private dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment. Because learners receive insufficient peer support and timely positive feedback over an extended period, they are less able to develop accurate appraisals of their own language development (Jiang, 2020). Consequently, their sense of personal achievement gradually declines, creating a vicious cycle in which both dimensions of FLE are diminished. This deterioration across the social and private dimensions of FLE constitutes a fundamental sociological explanation for the persistent emotional deficit observed in contemporary foreign language classrooms.

3.2. Reconstructing the Private Dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment

To address the multidimensional decline in Foreign Language Enjoyment, the first step in pedagogical reconstruction is to shift from an externally driven model of emotional support to one that fosters learners' intrinsic motivation. In traditional foreign language classrooms, positive emotional experiences often depend heavily on external incentives, such as teacher praise, high grades, or academic rewards. However, these externally supported emotions are easily undermined in technology-mediated learning environments where opportunities for immediate interaction are limited (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Consequently, instructional design should focus on reconstructing the mechanisms that foster learners' enjoyment.

According to Self-Determination Theory, learners’ intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement are fundamentally shaped by the extent to which their basic

psychological needs for competence and autonomy are satisfied (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This suggests that the development of Foreign Language Enjoyment cannot rely solely on superficial entertainment or external rewards, but should instead emphasize the cultivation of the private dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). Similarly, Control-Value Theory proposes that positive achievement emotions are more likely to emerge when learners develop strong perceptions of both control and value during the learning process (Pekrun, 2006; Zhou & Wang, 2022). Accordingly, blended language instruction should enable learners to perceive tangible progress in their language development throughout the learning process. When learners engage deeply in cognitively challenging tasks and successfully use the target language to solve authentic problems, the sense of achievement derived from improving their competence and realizing the value of learning can be transformed into a powerful source of intrinsic motivation. Such higher-order private enjoyment has been shown to enhance learners' academic buoyancy in second language learning, thereby strengthening their capacity for motivational self-regulation and facilitating deeper cognitive engagement in complex digital learning environments (Wang, 2025).

3.3. Reconstructing Peer Support Networks and Positive Goal Interdependence

Strengthening learners' intrinsic motivation alone is insufficient to counteract the motivational decline associated with prolonged social isolation in technology-mediated learning environments. Therefore, another key direction of pedagogical reconstruction is to shift from individual isolation to social interdependence. According to Cooperative Learning Theory, relationships among learners can be classified into three goal structures: competitive, individualistic, and cooperative. Among these, positive goal interdependence provides the essential foundation for meaningful collaboration, mutual support, and shared emotional experiences (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Applying positive goal interdependence to online and blended foreign language learning aims to move beyond the superficial collaboration often characterized by individual work and fragmented task allocation (King, 2016). Through the design of shared goals, mutual accountability, and collective responsibility, learners become genuinely interdependent in pursuing common learning outcomes. Within such a collaborative framework, peer support extends beyond superficial interaction or occasional communication to include substantive assistance in language learning, collaborative problem-solving, and emotional support (Zheng & Zhou, 2023). As positive goal interdependence becomes integrated with well-established peer support networks, technology-mediated learning environments are transformed from isolated digital spaces into socially connected learning communities. This transformation not only reduces learners' feelings of social isolation but also

facilitates the development of the social dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment. As a collective positive emotional experience, FLE-Social has been shown to play an important mediating role in promoting learners' academic engagement in second language classrooms, thereby supporting improvements in both emotional well-being and cognitive engagement (Liu et al., 2026).

4. Multidimensional Reconstruction of Foreign Language Enjoyment: Pedagogical Pathways and Instructional Practices

4.1. Task Reconstruction

The reconstruction of pedagogical practice begins with the design of engaging and cognitively challenging learning tasks that foster the private dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment. Drawing on the Emotional Support Model for Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (Zheng & Zhou, 2023), this study moves beyond low-level online check-ins and conventional writing assignments by incorporating technology-assisted multimodal output tasks into foreign language instruction. Rather than treating language learning as a process of passive knowledge acquisition, these tasks encourage learners to actively construct, apply, and transform knowledge through meaningful communication and creative production.

One representative instructional practice is collaborative educational video production. Working in groups, students select key grammar points, cultural topics, or business communication scenarios and jointly produce short instructional videos for a wider audience. Throughout this process, they collaborate on script writing, video recording, multimedia editing, and bilingual subtitle production. Building on this approach, multimodal output tasks may also include collaborative presentations based on English literary works and audiobook projects. Learners read literary texts together, co-produce audiobook recordings using digital audio platforms, and deliver collaborative online presentations supported by digital mind-mapping tools.

A common feature of these instructional tasks is that they transform isolated language practice into an integrated learning experience combining technology use, multimodal communication, and higher-order cognitive engagement. According to Control-Value Theory (Pekrun, 2006), positive achievement emotions are more likely to emerge when learners perceive high levels of both value and control in learning activities. Technology-assisted multimodal tasks provide learners with meaningful opportunities to experience competence and autonomy, thereby fostering the private dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment. Beyond expanding learners' cognitive engagement, these tasks also create authentic learning contexts in which positive emotions can be continuously developed and reinforced.

4.2. Process Reconstruction

The implementation of multimodal output tasks should be accompanied by the

reconstruction of collaborative learning processes. A central objective of this process is to optimize peer interaction so that situations traditionally associated with frustration in foreign language learning become opportunities for developing the social dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment. In language learning, activities such as revising linguistic forms, correcting pronunciation, and resolving technical problems are often regarded as sources of language anxiety and technology-related stress (Derakhshan et al., 2021). Through the establishment of collaborative peer-support networks, however, these potentially negative experiences can be transformed into meaningful opportunities for shared learning and positive emotional development.

During collaborative script writing and text revision, learners work together in cloud-based collaborative documents while communicating through real-time online discussion. When they encounter grammatical difficulties or struggle to select appropriate lexical expressions, they search language corpora, exchange ideas, and jointly negotiate more accurate and effective language use. As learners solve linguistic problems collectively, language revision becomes a collaborative process of knowledge construction rather than an individual source of frustration, fostering both confidence and shared achievement.

Similarly, technical challenges encountered during video editing or audio production become valuable opportunities for collaborative problem-solving. Through online communication platforms, group members provide technical assistance, exchange practical experience, and jointly resolve technical difficulties. Instead of reinforcing technology-related anxiety, these collaborative interactions strengthen peer support and increase learners' confidence in using digital technologies (Zheng & Zhou, 2023). At the same time, improvements in language proficiency and digital literacy reinforce one another throughout the collaborative process, promoting the simultaneous development of the private and social dimensions of Foreign Language Enjoyment in technology-mediated learning environments (Liu et al., 2026).

4.3. Assessment Reconstruction

The completion of a learning task does not mark the end of learners' emotional experiences. Unless positive emotions are reinforced through timely reflection, their beneficial effects may gradually diminish over time (Fredrickson, 2001). Therefore, the final stage of pedagogical reconstruction involves moving beyond traditional summative assessment by incorporating structured emotion-guided reflection and collaborative self-assessment. This approach enables learners to consolidate the positive emotions generated throughout the learning process and sustain Foreign Language Enjoyment over time.

Following the completion of multimodal learning projects, teachers invite students to complete structured reflection prompts designed to encourage emotional

reflection rather than knowledge recall. Instead of focusing on language accuracy or content mastery alone, these reflective activities encourage learners to revisit meaningful collaborative experiences, including successful teamwork during online document editing, collaborative problem-solving in response to technical challenges, supportive interactions with peers, and memorable moments when the group overcame difficulties together (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). These written reflections are complemented by group discussions in which learners share their experiences and collectively reflect on the learning process.

The value of this reflective process lies in helping learners reinterpret their learning experiences from a more positive perspective. Rather than dwelling on disagreements or the challenges encountered during collaboration, learners are encouraged to focus on how difficulties were overcome through teamwork and mutual support. Such reflective practices reinforce positive emotional experiences while strengthening learners' awareness of their own progress and collaborative achievements. In this way, the immediate enjoyment generated during individual learning tasks is gradually transformed into a more enduring sense of Foreign Language Enjoyment. Over time, the accumulation of these positive emotional experiences contributes to learners' psychological well-being, strengthens their academic buoyancy, and supports the sustained development of motivation and engagement in foreign language learning (Wang, 2025).

5. Pedagogical Implications

The multidimensional reconstruction framework proposed in this study provides practical implications for the design and implementation of blended foreign language instruction. Teachers need to reconsider their instructional roles, shifting from knowledge transmitters to facilitators of emotionally supportive learning environments (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). In technology-mediated classrooms, physical separation can easily contribute to digital boredom and feelings of social isolation among learners (Pawlak et al., 2020). Consequently, teachers should move beyond monitoring participation through indicators such as online attendance or assignment completion and instead strengthen their emotional presence through timely interaction, supportive feedback, and inclusive error-correction practices. Such strategies can help reduce learners' anxiety and promote a more positive classroom climate (Derakhshan et al., 2021).

Instructional design should prioritize meaningful learning tasks that integrate emotional support with multimodal language production (Zheng & Zhou, 2023). Rather than relying on repetitive, low-level online activities, teachers should design authentic, cognitively challenging tasks that encourage learners to apply language knowledge in real-world contexts while making effective use of digital technologies (Pekrun, 2006). Providing learners with greater autonomy in selecting task formats and modes of expression helps satisfy their needs for competence and autonomy, as

proposed by Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Such instructional practices also strengthen learners' perceptions of task value and control, thereby promoting the development of the private dimension of Foreign Language Enjoyment (Zhou & Wang, 2022).

Assessment practices should move beyond traditional score-oriented summative evaluation by incorporating continuous attention to learners' emotional experiences throughout the learning process (Li, 2020). Because Foreign Language Enjoyment is dynamic and develops over time (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012), isolated instructional interventions are unlikely to produce lasting emotional benefits. Teachers should therefore incorporate regular opportunities for emotion-guided reflection following collaborative projects and other major learning activities. Through structured reflective questions and collaborative discussion, learners can revisit successful learning experiences, recognize their own progress, and appreciate the value of peer collaboration. Such ongoing reflective practices help sustain Foreign Language Enjoyment, strengthen learners' academic buoyancy, and support the long-term development of motivation and engagement in technology-mediated foreign language learning (Liu et al., 2026).

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