

Review And Prospects Of Studies On Boredom In Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract:

As the "affective turn" transpires within applied linguistic research, studies on emotions in language learning have emerged as a burgeoning aspect of foreign language acquisition psychology. However, both domestic and international academia seldom delve into the negative emotion of boredom in foreign language learning. A thorough understanding of the current state of boredom research within foreign language learning can enrich its emotional studies theoretically and explore practical methods for alleviating students' ennui. Thus, summarizing this emotional state's research helps provide theoretical perspectives for future inquiries and practical approaches for addressing learners' boredom. Focusing on boredom in foreign language learning, this review selects domestic and international academic studies on emotions in linguistic endeavors within the past decade. The research on boredom in language learning is organized into three distinct stages: initial stage (2013-2016), developmental stage (2016-2019), and prosperous stage (2019-present). Building upon this foundation, the introduction and critique of the research across these phases incorporate an analysis of the thematic features, in-depth delineation of the research methods and subjects, and a critical examination of similarities and differences. Ultimately, this review offers a prospective outlook on future research into boredom within foreign language learning, with the intention of broadening domestic academia's understanding of such studies and their connection to second language learning, ultimately bolstering their development.

Key Word: Academic emotion; Boredom; Second language acquisition

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I. General Introduction

For an extended period, academic emotion was largely dismissed as an irrelevant and irrational element in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) research. However, in recent years, the "affective turn" in applied linguistics studies (Pavlenko, 2013) has sparked a surge of interest in the emotions associated with SLA. Consequently, researchers have started to acknowledge the diverse and significant nature of language learners' academic emotions (Li, 2021). As the corpus of theoretical and empirical studies has expanded, research topics have broadened from the initial focus on foreign language learning enjoyment to encompass a range of positive and negative academic emotions, such as love, happiness, shame, and boredom. The present study seeks to examine boredom, specifically, within this spectrum.

Boredom, defined as a negative emotional or psychological state that impedes and hinders student motivation, has been demonstrated to pervade educational settings, consistently undermining individual academic functioning and negatively impacting student engagement, cognition, motivation, and outcomes (Li, 2021). Owing to its association with low physical arousal, cognitive stimulation, specific time perceptions, and action tendencies (Goetz & Hall, 2014), boredom is frequently misinterpreted as a mere reluctance to learn, and thus, often overlooked by educators and researchers (Zawodniak & Kruk, 2019). The theoretical study of boredom in foreign language learning serves to enhance understanding of other negative emotions and enrich the existing body of knowledge on foreign language academic emotions. In practice, such knowledge can aid in the creation of an improved foreign language learning environment, ultimately reducing student boredom and optimizing their learning experience (Chapman, 2013).

Initially, the present study aims to delineate the concept of boredom. Subsequently, building upon previous investigations of boredom in SLA, the study will review and summarize the themes and characteristics of past research, offering future research prospects on boredom in SLA as the paper concludes. By examining the developmental stages of boredom in SLA, and providing an overview of previous theoretical frameworks, topical scope, and research methods, the current study aims to contribute to the advancement of future research and practice in this area.

II. Connotation and Extension of Boredom

Boredom is not a novel concept in education. Several distinguished models and theories, such as the under-stimulation model, forced-effort model, control-value theory of achievement emotions, attentional theory of boredom proneness, and emotion theory (Zawodniak & Kruk 2019), have been proposed to elucidate the structures and causes of boredom. These models and theories facilitate a deeper understanding of student boredom and highlight the complexity and multifaceted nature of boredom.

Boredom is widely acknowledged as an unpleasant emotional or psychological state characterized by low physical arousal, cognitive stimulation, specific time perceptions (e.g., slowing down or standing still), and action tendencies (e.g., withdrawal from ongoing boredom-inducing situations through cognitive and/or behavioral disengagement) (Goetz & Hall, 2014). It pervades academic settings, consistently impacting various aspects of learning, including individual engagement, cognition, motivation, self-regulation, learning strategies, and learning achievement (Macklem, 2015). Importantly, boredom is delineated from both a situational and individual perspective, with two types identified: trait boredom and state boredom. Trait boredom refers to a relatively stable proneness or disposition towards habitual and recurring boredom experiences related to a learning activity or subject, while state boredom pertains to momentary, transient boredom experiences triggered by specific situations (Putwain et al., 2018).

Research has demonstrated that boredom in foreign language learning is closely connected to the learning environment, illustrating the transient and fluctuating nature of state boredom in SLA. From a positive psychology and teaching perspective, foreign language learning boredom embodies not only a stable situation, reflecting the forces of habitual inertia and reproducibility of boredom in educational settings but also a dynamic phenomenon, indicative of the circumstantial and temporary nature of boredom (Li, 2021). Beyond the typical features of academic boredom, such as a lack of interest in given tasks or materials, foreign language learning boredom exhibits greater relevance to educational settings. This implies that foreign language learning boredom possesses a certain stability and differs according to distinct foreign language learning tasks, classroom environments, and teacher-student interaction modalities (Zawodniak & Kruk, 2019). Furthermore, during different SLA stages, academic boredom is influenced by various personal and environmental factors, including learning motivations, strategies, modes, content, and activity formats (Chapman, 2013; Kruk, 2019; Pawlak et al., 2020a).

III Literature Review

Tracing back, there has been a consistent growth in research concerning emotions and SLA since the 1990s. For instance, Peacock's (1997) study aimed to examine the effects of authentic materials on in-class motivation among a group of Korean EFL learners. It highlighted a significant discrepancy between students' perceptions of the provided materials and their observed on-task behavior, which appeared more boring compared to their non-authentic counterparts. Jean and Simard (2011) sought to investigate students' overall learning situations in Québécois high schools, where English was taught as a second language, and French as a third language. This study encompassed tests on grammatical accuracy, diverse grammar instructions, and teacher-provided corrective feedback. The students' equivocal attitudes toward grammar issues in L2 classrooms prompted the researchers to question the potential coexistence of 'boring' and 'effective' terms on equal footing within language learning and teaching environments. The aforementioned research can be considered as pioneering boredom-related inquiries concerning L2 classrooms, providing useful references for subsequent studies.

In the present study, Chapman's (2013) investigation of foreign language learning boredom in German classrooms serves as an initial exploration within the SLA domain. Research on foreign language learning boredom in China only emerged in 2020 (Li, 2020). Utilizing CNKI and Scopus databases, 30 articles pertaining to foreign language learning boredom in SLA were retrieved between 2013 up until June 21, 2022. These studies on boredom have created a surge of interest, infusing novel aspects into the SLA field in terms of research perspectives, theoretical resources, research topics, and methods. To elucidate the research context's progression, the present study intends to categorize related accomplishments into three primary stages: the initial stage (2013-2016), the developmental stage (2016-2019), and the prosperous stage (2019-present). These stages will be examined in depth in the subsequent sections.

The Initial Stage

During the initial stage, as boredom had newly garnered interest among scholars in the SLA field, relevant research primarily focused on preliminary exploration of related theories and empirical studies. Among the few pioneering studies exploring boredom in the SLA context, almost all were conducted exclusively within higher education institutions, particularly among English majors at the tertiary level.

Chapman (2013) was the first researcher to investigate foreign language learning boredom, specifically in German classes. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, consisting of questionnaires and interviews, Chapman

discovered that positive attitudes towards foreign language instructors in German classes among American college students were significantly, negatively correlated with their boredom levels. Additionally, factors such as internal class coherence and cooperative learning patterns with peers effectively alleviated boredom. The study also examined several classroom factors, including the effects of teaching aids (PowerPoint or blackboard), activity scope (whole class or individual groups), instructional focus (grammar or vocabulary), and activity format (discussion or role play) on students' boredom. Unfortunately, no significant patterns were identified. Chapman reasoned that a specific combination of these factors could potentially cater to individual student preferences and effectively alleviate language learning boredom. For instance, employing PowerPoint instead of a traditional blackboard, group-based activities, and vocabulary-related role play games and discussions could effectively reduce some students' boredom. However, if other students had opposing preferences for these strategies, the situation could unexpectedly worsen.

In traditional face-to-face classroom settings, teachers often assume a dominant role, with teaching content serving as the mediator in student-teacher interactions—inevitably impacting students' boredom and emotions. Wen and Wang (2004) identified external factors affecting the quality of foreign language learning, including social, family, school, and classroom environments, and teaching methods. In this context, Chapman's original research confirmed that boredom is highly correlated with these environmental factors, thus laying a solid foundation for future investigations.

Macklem's (2015) research consolidates previous findings on the multidimensional nature of chronic student learning boredom, elucidating its association with adverse academic emotions, health consequences, and effective professional intervention strategies. He emphasizes the complexity of the pervasive issue of student boredom in the classroom, particularly noting its prevalence during the crucial K-12 years, encompassing primary and secondary education, as well as preschool. Macklem's study scrutinizes the cognitive and emotional dimensions of boredom, pinpointing emotional competencies that can be fortified to mitigate it. Importantly, he highlights how educators across various grade levels, despite recognizing student classroom boredom, may improperly ascribe it to factors such as laziness and language anxiety, depression, and subsequently deflect any responsibility for its emergence. This misattribution could potentially exacerbate the detrimental effects of boredom on students. Macklem's research calls attention to the importance of teachers' roles in addressing boredom in foreign language education. Additionally, he distinguishes between in-class and homework-related boredom, asserting that both types of boredom are tied to students' academic achievements, necessitating separate evaluation and intervention measures from educators to alleviate boredom in SLA. Thus, Macklem's study underscores the significance of external factors, particularly the teacher's role, in contributing to student boredom.

Subsequently, the research perspective on language learning boredom, as exemplified by Kruk's work, shifted from external to internal factors. Kruk (2016) carried out two studies investigating fluctuations in language learning boredom and its association with other psychological factors among 16 English majors at a Polish university while participating in the virtual world of Second Life for an entire semester. The studies primarily focused on the students' engagement in classroom conversations. The findings revealed that motivation and boredom levels varied over time, displaying correlative patterns to different extents. Students' motivation peaked at the beginning of the conversation and reached its lowest point at the end, exhibiting an overall decline. Conversely, boredom levels remained relatively low before and during conversations, gradually increasing and reaching a maximum at the session's conclusion. In contrast, language anxiety levels remained stably low and exhibited an opposing trend. Kruk's research pioneered the exploration of boredom level fluctuations concerning anxiety, motivation, and other psychological factors. In a subsequent study, Kruk (2016) expanded on this research by introducing communicative intention as a factor. The fluctuating trajectory revealed that boredom and language anxiety tended to change in the same direction, whereas boredom exhibited an inverse relationship with communicative willingness and motivation.

In the initial stages, although the number of related studies was limited, various scholars made considerable efforts in uncovering the complexities of boredom in SLA. The aforementioned preliminary research indicated that students' foreign language learning process involves a close relationship between other psychological factors and the emergence and development of boredom. Generally, boredom levels show a negative correlation with positive psychological factors and a positive correlation with negative emotions, such as language anxiety. Apart from internal psychological factors, external factors like teaching settings and the role of educators can also influence students' learning statuses in SLA.

The Developmental Stage

As research on boredom in foreign language learning entered its developmental phase, the number of related studies grew, and the scope of inquiry expanded in depth. Although several studies investigated the internal and external factors contributing to boredom, research on the internal structure of boredom in foreign language learning, remained in its early stages. Zawodniak, a prominent scholar in boredom in second language

acquisition (SLA), continued to explore the dynamic changes in boredom influenced by various factors such as learning contexts, course content, and individual differences. Initially, Zawodniak (2017) analyzed the diaries of 30 Polish English postgraduate students in their practical English classes, demonstrating the pervasive presence of boredom in English learning environments. Subsequently, Kruk and Zawodniak (2017) developed the first large-scale questionnaire, titled “Boredom in Practical English Language Classes” (BPELC), to gather quantitative and qualitative data on boredom among English majors at a Polish university. Employing exploratory factor analysis, they identified two salient aspects of factors underlying the boredom construct in practical English classes: (1) Disengagement, monotony, and receptivity, and (2) Lack of satisfaction and challenge.

Building upon their findings on the pervasive nature of boredom in English classes and the two underlying aspects, Zawodniak and Kruk (2018) interviewed 15 Polish English majors about their in-class boredom experiences. They discovered that boredom levels in practical English classes varied, potentially due to students’ initial curiosity and anticipation of course content, and subsequent loss of interest in teaching activities. They found that students with low boredom levels were typically more self-conscious and autonomous, indicating that they could effectively manage themselves and distribute their energy and effort across various learning activities while maintaining a positive attitude towards language learning. In contrast, students with medium to high boredom levels exhibited less self-regulation, were more influenced by personal preferences, and displayed a lack of emotional problem-solving strategies. Lastly, Kruk’s (2019) research determined that classroom boredom manifested as a blend of “stability, variability, and contextualization,” viewed through the lens of complex dynamic systems theory. In other words, students with diverse psychological traits exhibited distinct patterns of boredom development and tendencies in second language acquisition.

In the study aimed at investigating the link between students’ perceived level of challenge and their career aspirations, Krannich (2019) sought to examine the relationship between students’ academic self-concept, academic boredom, and career ambition. The research hypothesized an indirect effect of over- and under-challenge on career ambition through academic self-concept and academic language learning boredom. Results indicated that over-challenge negatively impacted academic self-concept, which in turn correlated with lower career aspirations. Conversely, increased academic self-concept positively associated with students’ career ambitions. Most importantly, both over-challenge and under-challenge exacerbated the growth and spread of academic boredom in language learning, subsequently leading to a decline in students’ career ambitions. Krannich emphasized the significance of addressing under-challenge, as its influence on career aspirations via academic trait boredom was negative, whereas via academic self-concept, a positive indirect effect was observed. At first glance, foreign language learning boredom appeared not to be the central focus of the study; however, this exploration effectively compared the connections between boredom, personal traits such as self-concept, and practical future career aspirations among foreign language learners, extending beyond the singular framework of SLA to integrate sociological content in examining academic boredom. This approach demonstrated the pervasiveness of academia across subjects and the unique characteristics of boredom within SLA.

Other researchers have also contributed to understanding the infiltration and connections between boredom in SLA and other subjects. The control-value theory represents one of the classic theories in the study of academic emotions. According to the control-value theory of academic emotions, boredom is characterized by two dimensions: valence and activation; the former refers to whether emotions are positive and enjoyable or not, while the latter pertains to whether emotions drive or deactivate and lead or prevent emotional withdrawal (Pekrun, 2006). This theory posits that learners’ appraisals of control and value in relation to a specific activity predict the type and intensity of experienced emotions, such as boredom and enjoyment. When learners perceive a task as uninteresting and unrewarding and feel they cannot control the outcome of their invested effort, they are likely to lose patience and interest in their performance and results, inevitably resulting in boredom with the given task or class. Consequently, learners’ cognitive focus decreases, and their attention shifts to more promising and engaging pursuits through distraction or misbehavior. In summary, boredom diminishes learners’ academic motivation and negatively affects achievement by prompting superficial information gathering and processing during learning periods.

In Putwain’s study (2018), the control-value theory was initially applied to investigate the connection between foreign language learning and another subject (mathematics) concerning academic boredom. Self-reported data on appraisals and emotions were gathered from 579 students in their final year of primary education. According to the control-value theory, control and value appraisals adhere to the principle of domain specificity, implying that students’ academic emotions should also be constructed in subject-specific manners (Putwain 2018). However, in the case of academic boredom, the findings deviated somewhat. The research demonstrated that academic boredom increased when a task was perceived as neither positively nor negatively valued, regardless of whether it was within foreign language learning or mathematics learning. Although the

control-value theory had been introduced and applied in various fields for an extended period, its utilization in examining academic boredom in foreign language learning and mathematics study remains significant, as it combines the theory to address the similarities and differences of boredom concerning different subjects. Putwain's study also confirmed the common feature of boredom's emergence in various subjects when students perceive the provided lessons as neither valuable nor meaningful.

Though the scientific principles underlying foreign language learning considerably differ from those in other subjects, such comparative studies can still provide further insight into the nature of boredom in educational contexts. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of boredom and the feasibility of studying it.

The Prosperous Stage

In the third stage, there is a noticeable surge in the number of related research studies. During this time, investigations on boredom among foreign language learners in China, such as those represented by the scholar Li Chengchen, also began to flourish. Focusing on Polish English majors, Pawlak (2020) examined the boredom status of 107 participants and developed a 23-item Practical English Classroom Boredom Questionnaire. The findings revealed that students exhibiting low levels of boredom experienced a steady increase in boredom within the English-learning classroom, while the boredom levels of students with medium or high boredom fluctuated considerably from low to high levels. Moreover, Pawlak (2020) established a connection between changes in boredom levels and learning content; students tended to be more bored and less engaged when studying grammar as opposed to participating in listening, reading, and writing exercises. Additionally, students' lack of creativity, enthusiasm, and negative attitudes further exacerbated language learning boredom in the classroom.

Building on Pawlak's research, Li (2021) conducted a mixed study on foreign language learning boredom among Chinese non-English major university students, developing a 32-item Foreign Language Learning Boredom Scale (FLLBS) encompassing seven variables to measure boredom. The seven categories of boredom variables included: boredom in foreign language classrooms, boredom with over-simplified tasks, boredom in PPT contexts, boredom in homework contexts, boredom due to teacher aversion, boredom related to learning traits, and boredom with exceedingly difficult or meaningless tasks. The original scale, designed for English majors in Polish universities, aimed to assess the status of boredom in practical English classes. To some extent, it met the objectives of earlier research. In comparison to the previous questionnaire design, Li's new scale offers broader applicability, catering not only to English majors but also non-English majors, and more accurately reflects students' boredom status in foreign language learning. This enhanced scale also renders subsequent research more manageable and scientifically sound. The study emphasizes the contextual nature of foreign language learning boredom and expands upon future research concerning the structure of such boredom. Furthermore, it provides a highly reliable and valid measurement tool for future studies.

Subsequently, Dewaele and Li's study (2020) discovered the predictive effects of emotional intelligence traits and perceived benefits from online college courses on foreign language learning boredom. Specifically, individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to manage their emotions more effectively and relieve stress more efficiently. Moreover, students with high levels of emotional intelligence and gains from online classes experience significantly lower boredom levels than those with lower levels, leading to more accurate and significant predictive effects.

The aforementioned research established that boredom positively correlates with negative emotions such as language anxiety, and negatively correlates with positive psychological factors such as motivation, communicative intent, and emotional intelligence. These findings were supported by a rigorous and persuasive research design that combined qualitative and quantitative methods. As a result, learners' self-concept, attitudes toward English language learning, control-value evaluation of learning tasks, and other factors have become a new wave of research focus.

Building upon control-value theory, Li (2021) determined that students' control and value assessments of foreign language learning boredom significantly predicted boredom levels. Among these assessments, intrinsic value evaluations had a stronger predictive effect on boredom compared to control and extrinsic value evaluations. The study also revealed that the three assessments collectively influenced boredom levels. To obtain more comprehensive data, Li (2021) interviewed 21 Chinese non-English first-year students and 11 English teachers, further demonstrating the prevalence of boredom in educational settings. Utilizing a mixed research approach, Li investigated the impact of proximal triggers (i.e., control and value appraisals) on boredom in SLA and discovered that while intrinsic-value evaluations had the most potent predictive effect, both intrinsic and extrinsic control-value assessments negatively predicted boredom together, thereby introducing the fundamental concept of "foreign language learning boredom." Building on Li's findings, Xia (2022) examined perceived classroom affordances, control-value appraisals, and emotional experiences of boredom in Content and Language Integrated Learning classrooms, as well as their interrelationships based on control-value theory.

Research revealed no direct significant relationship between perceived classroom affordances and boredom, but identified an indirect significant relationship mediated by control-value appraisals.

Aside from the previously mentioned research that incorporates classic theories to investigate boredom in SLA with different variables, several other researchers aimed to explore potential factors contributing to boredom in SLA, including teaching activity formats and characteristics.

In 2020, Pawlak et al. conducted several significant studies to investigate boredom induced by various factors. Pawlak et al. (2020b) discovered that due to the repetitive nature and insufficient challenge of teaching tasks, Polish undergraduates majoring in English across different levels generally exhibited a tendency of boredom, characterized by a lack of enthusiasm and negative engagement in learning activities. Students were more likely to experience boredom in repetitive, monotonous grammar classes than in listening classes that featured diverse topics and tasks. Pawlak et al. (2020c) revealed that factors such as task characteristics could also contribute to different levels of boredom. Students with a low level of boredom felt less ennui during in-class quizzes and were the most bored while reading assigned materials. Conversely, students with a high level of boredom experienced the least boredom at the start of quizzes and were most bored during their progress. The same pattern applied to their listening exercises.

To determine whether students' boredom levels varied when learning different languages in the classroom, Kruk and Zawodniak (2020) examined the differences in boredom experiences between second language (English) and third foreign language (German) classes among English major students in Poland. They found that although there were no significant differences in students' boredom between second and third foreign language classes, boredom levels were higher overall in second language classes.

Studying university students in Thailand as cases, Nakamura et al. (2021) determined that an imbalance between internal learner factors and external classroom factors, such as learner-activity mismatch, lack of comprehension, inadequate second language skills, task difficulty, excessive input, and absence of creativity, were crucial boredom triggers in the language learning classroom.

In Poland, Zawodniak et al. (2021) gathered descriptions of boredom experiences in English learning classrooms from 115 Polish university students. The study identified five factors potentially contributing to foreign language learning boredom: language tasks (task difficulty, repetition, etc.), the teacher (teacher involvement, extent of discourse, etc.), class organization methods (individual tasks, group work, etc.), class components (listening lectures, writing lectures, etc.), and other factors (mandatory participation activities, the timing of the English lesson, etc.).

III. Conclusion

In accordance with the SLA research framework proposed by Wen and Wang (2004), which encompasses interlanguage research, internal learner factors, and external learner factors, this study aims to provide a comprehensive summary of existing investigations on foreign language learning boredom. These studies can be broadly categorized into two types: internal research and external research. Internal research primarily examines the inherent nature of boredom in foreign language learning, its developmental patterns across grades and variables (Chapman 2013; Li & Dewaele 2020), the relationship between boredom and students' psychological factors such as self-concept (Chapman 2013), and dynamic changes in boredom levels during different class periods or activities (Zawodniak & Kruk 2019). Furthermore, it delves into the various types of boredom arising due to factors like communicative intent, motivation, and language anxiety (Kruk 2019). Conversely, external studies explore the environmental factors that impact boredom in foreign language learning, scrutinizing the influence of factors such as learning context, language classroom characteristics, teaching materials, and teacher-student interaction on boredom (e.g., Chapman 2013; Pawlak et al. 2020c). Additionally, these studies compare boredom levels between foreign language learning and other subjects (e.g. Krannich et al. 2019). With the rise of online teaching and learning in recent years, investigations into boredom in online settings, such as virtual classrooms, have become increasingly relevant (e.g., Kruk 2016; Li & Dewaele 2020).

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, online education has emerged as a prominent teaching modality. Consequently, researchers have focused their attention on online foreign language learning boredom. Despite being in its nascent stage, studies conducted approximately six years ago, such as those by Chapman and Kruk, have provided valuable insights into potential external environmental and internal psychological factors influencing boredom. Kruk (2016) found that students in online foreign language communication environments exhibited moderate levels of boredom overall. Kruk's study (2016) identified potential causes, suggesting that engaging topics and shared interests could enhance students' communicative desires and motivation. However, students were more likely to experience boredom when encountering uninteresting partners and lackluster topics during online conversations. In line with Chapman's research, similar effects were observed in online teaching. When instructional methods mirror traditional offline classroom approaches, such as teacher-centered instruction with handwritten notes on blackboards, students may experience heightened boredom due to the lack

of genuine interaction in online learning environments. This absence of interaction could make it more challenging for students to find meaning and enjoyment in learning.

IV. Future Prospects

In recent years, boredom in foreign language learning has garnered increased attention from the academic community, with the number and scope of related studies expanding, and research on its connotations and extensions deepening. Nonetheless, future research on boredom in foreign language learning can be further developed from the following three aspects.

Research Themes

Despite substantial research conducted from various perspectives, the themes explored remain somewhat limited. The majority of previous studies primarily focus on the causes and effects of boredom in second language acquisition (SLA). However, as further exploration continues in related fields, the boundaries of SLA research's connotations and extensions persistently expand. SLA has increasingly integrated with other disciplines, with scholars from both China and the West investigating the intricacies of SLA through multidisciplinary lenses, such as the intersection of sociology and SLA, enhancing SLA efficiency from psychological and educational standpoints, and examining SLA mechanisms from a neuroscience angle.

As such, when addressing boredom—a ubiquitous phenomenon in the process of second language learning—the research themes should also broaden to encompass different domains. For instance, in the context of the post-COVID-19 era and the widespread adoption of online teaching, further attention should be directed towards the effects of teaching materials, teachers' roles, instructional software and hardware environments on students' boredom, and examining the relationship between parental factors, activity design, and other elements in connection to boredom within the diversified framework of teaching methodologies.

Research Theories

Since SLA encompasses interdisciplinary concepts, its research has drawn upon relevant theoretical advancements from various fields, such as psychology, educational psychology, sociology, and linguistics. Dewaele (2005) emphasizes that introducing interdisciplinary theories and methods can foster the growth of emotion studies in SLA, which similarly applies to researching boredom in SLA.

A review of the literature reveals that relatively few theories have been employed to examine the nature of boredom in SLA. Various valuable theories and models have been proposed to explain the structures and causes of boredom under different circumstances, including the under-stimulation model, the forced-effort model, the control-value theory of achievement emotions, the attentional theory of boredom proneness, and the emotion theory. Li (2021) is among the scholars who have applied the control-value theory to explore the contextuality resulting from the intricate interaction of boredom with its immediate environment. This successful attempt serves as an excellent foundation for future research. Chinese scholars should learn from earlier studies, integrate multidisciplinary components and achievements, and develop innovative, high-level theoretical models to investigate foreign language learning boredom.

Research Methods

Various research methods exhibit distinct characteristics and advantages, compensating for the limitations and deficiencies in the design of earlier studies. As foreign language boredom constitutes a complex, multidimensional system arising from the interaction between learners' internal traits and the surrounding educational environment, research methods should account for its dynamism, complexity, situationality, and instability. Scholars can reference methods used in SLA research, such as the idiodynamic method, formative experiments, and action research.

Researchers in each country should devise locally relevant research methods and experimental designs, enhancing the applicability of their findings within local contexts. Furthermore, they can refine existing methods and experiments based on earlier research methodologies, allowing them to explore how different learner groups respond to specific designs and to broaden the generalizability of their study findings.

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