

Exploring foreign language enjoyment and the teacher's role among university students from a dynamic systems theory perspective

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Abstract

This study investigates foreign language enjoyment (FLE) among university students of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the role of the teacher in shaping learners' emotional experiences, drawing on Dynamic Systems Theory. Descriptive and non-parametric inferential statistical analyses were used to examine levels of enjoyment and their relationship with selected variables. The results reveal a high overall level of foreign language enjoyment among ESP students, particularly regarding classroom atmosphere and cooperation with peers, while slightly lower levels of enjoyment were reported for oral presentations. No statistically significant differences in enjoyment were found with respect to gender, age, or year of study. While foreign language enjoyment was not significantly related to anxiety at the beginning of studies, a strong positive relationship was observed between enjoyment and a reduction in anxiety over time, alongside moderate to strong negative correlations with current anxiety levels, including presentation anxiety. Although many students reported negative emotional experiences in earlier educational contexts, high levels of enjoyment were reported in the current learning environment, suggesting that the teacher and classroom atmosphere play an important role in shaping learners' emotions. Overall, the findings support the view that foreign language enjoyment is dynamic and context-dependent.

Keywords: *foreign language enjoyment, teacher's role, Dynamic Systems Theory*

Introduction

Emotions play a significant role in foreign language learning, influencing not only the success of acquiring language skills but also learners' attitudes and engagement. Mihaljević Djigunović (2007) confirms the importance of affective factors for success in developing learners' speaking skills, especially in situations that require expressing opinions or participating in discussions. Her research shows that communicative competence is particularly sensitive to affective factors in language learning. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) highlight that anxiety and enjoyment represent two aspects of the emotional experience of language learning. Enjoyment and anxiety in foreign language learning are not simply opposite ends of a single continuum, where an increase in one automatically results in a decrease in the other. On the contrary, these two emotions can coexist, although in varying proportions. As research has largely focused on negative emotions such as language anxiety, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) introduced the concept of foreign language enjoyment to highlight positive emotions in the learning process that can facilitate more effective language acquisition. The study by MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) further extends understanding of these emotional experiences through the lens of positive psychology, emphasizing the importance of positive emotions such as joy, interest, and pride, which promote cognitive development and social connectedness, whereas negative emotions, including anxiety, may narrow perception and hinder the learning process. Elahi Shirvan and Talebzadeh (2020) explain that foreign language enjoyment and anxiety can be understood through a complex dynamic systems perspective. They emphasize that emotions change over time, are interconnected, and vary depending on the learning context and situation. Learners respond differently to the same conditions, and emotional experiences are highly individual and shaped by the environment. Therefore, it is important to examine students' emotions in the foreign language classroom and the impact of the overall classroom environment, with particular emphasis on the teacher's role in this process.

Theoretical background

Foreign language enjoyment

Since emotions play an important role in foreign language learning, Krashen's (1982) theory provides a useful framework for examining how emotional factors influence the language learning process. According to Krashen (1982), affective factors include motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. These factors do not directly affect learning outcomes but influence how much language input learners can process. When learners feel anxious, tense, or lack confidence, the affective filter becomes high and limits input, making language learning more difficult. In contrast, when learners feel relaxed, confident, and motivated, the affective filter is low, allowing them to better understand and acquire the language. Dewaele and Li (2020) describe emotions research in second language acquisition as developing through three phases. In the emotion avoidance phase, emotions were largely ignored and considered irrational, with emphasis on cognitive factors. This was followed by the anxiety-prevailing phase, in which emotions were acknowledged but research focused mainly on language anxiety. The most recent phase, the positive and negative emotions phase, broadened the scope to include a wide range of learner and teacher emotions, recognizing them as central to language learning and teaching. Within the framework of positive psychology, Fredrickson (2001) argues that positive emotions such as joy, interest, and love expand people's ways of thinking and acting and help them develop lasting personal resources, physical, intellectual, social, and psychological, which support long-term personal growth and resilience. A meta-analysis by Botes et al. (2022) found that the more learners enjoy the process of foreign language learning, the less foreign language anxiety they experience; they are more willing to communicate in the language, achieve better learning outcomes, and hold more positive perceptions of their own achievements in foreign language learning. A study by Dewaele (2019) showed that willingness to communicate in English among Spanish learners studying English as a foreign language at university or secondary school was reduced by feelings of anxiety, whereas enjoyment in the classroom increased this willingness. Łodej and Osmoła (2024) explain that interaction with peers is a significant source of foreign language enjoyment. Their study shows that activities such as group discussions, collaborative tasks, and exchanging feedback create a supportive learning environment. These peer-based interactions help learners feel more comfortable, engaged, and confident, which in turn increases enjoyment and positive emotions in the language classroom. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) described foreign language enjoyment as a complex emotion involving the interaction between challenge and a sense of personal competence, reflecting the human desire for success when confronting demanding tasks. Enjoyment arises when individuals not only meet their needs but also surpass them.

Dynamic Systems Theory

Research on foreign language enjoyment implies its dynamic nature (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020; Elahi Shirvan et al., 2020; Elahi Shirvan & Talebzadeh, 2020), highlighting the relevance of Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2013) for understanding how enjoyment develops and changes over time. In line with Dynamic Systems Theory, emotions in language learning are not static but change depending on a range of interconnected factors, from learners' personal characteristics to the instructional context and interaction with the teacher. MacIntyre (2017) states that emotions such as anxiety in language learning are not stable but change continuously through interaction with personal and situational factors, including linguistic abilities, self-evaluation, physiological reactions, interpersonal relationships, the topic of communication, and the learning environment. These emotions can vary over both short and long periods. As Dörnyei (2014) explains, a system is considered complex or dynamic if it consists of two or more elements which are interconnected, and each change over time. Thus, a complex or dynamic system comprises multiple components that influence one another, while each component can also change independently, leading to continuous changes in the system as a whole. Dynamic Systems Theory emphasizes that emotions in language learning are variable, influenced by multiple factors, and represent dynamic states tied to specific situations rather than stable traits (Larsen-Freeman, 2006). Larsen-Freeman (1997) uses the term *attractor* to refer to a pattern, state, or behavior toward which a system spontaneously moves and in which it tends to remain

stable. Thus, teacher feedback can function as an attractor in the foreign language classroom by shaping learners' emotional experiences over time. The presence of supportive teacher feedback can reduce anxiety and promote positive emotional states, while its absence may increase anxiety (Elahi Shirvan & Talebzadeh, 2020). The learning environment and situational factors shape learners' emotional states (Elahi Shirvan & Taherian, 2018; Elahi Shirvan & Talebzadeh, 2020), and even small changes in instructional approach can substantially affect levels of anxiety or enjoyment. Such changes in emotional states influence various aspects of learning and learner behavior; for example, they can increase or decrease learners' willingness to communicate, reflecting how ready learners are to use the foreign language in class (Dewaele, 2019). It represents a stable point to which the system repeatedly returns, even though it is constantly changing. Larsen-Freeman (2013) further explains that changes involving many interacting elements are often nonlinear, known as the butterfly effect, meaning that small causes can have large consequences, as language develops, changes, and is learned through dynamic use. Elahi Shirvan and Talebzadeh (2020) describe five aspects that link the complex dynamic systems approach with emotional states in foreign language classroom. First, dynamic systems constantly change and develop over time. Second, their components are interconnected, so a change in one element affects others. Third, learners' emotional states vary in response to external stimuli; for example, enjoyment may depend on the lesson topic, while anxiety may depend on whom the learner is communicating with. Fourth, the average behavior of the system does not necessarily reflect individual responses, as learners do not react in the same way to identical stimuli. Finally, emotional experiences in language learning are highly individual and strongly context-dependent, with the environment and situation playing a crucial role in shaping behavior. Complex Dynamic Systems Theory thus emphasizes that emotions in foreign language learning are variable, interconnected, and strongly conditioned by the instructional context.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to examine the level of foreign language enjoyment among students of English for Specific Purposes, its relationship with learners' emotional experiences over the course of the study, and the extent to which teachers influence these experiences in the foreign language classroom. This study contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between affective variables in a specific higher education context and provides a basis for future research which, using a larger and more heterogeneous sample and a longitudinal research design, could offer deeper insight into the dynamic nature of enjoyment in foreign language learning.

In line with the aim of the study, the following research questions are formulated:

RQ1: What is the level of foreign language enjoyment among students of English for Specific Purposes?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between foreign language enjoyment and changes in foreign language anxiety over the course of the study?

RQ3: Do sociodemographic variables (gender, age, and year of study) influence the level of foreign language enjoyment?

RQ4: What is the role of the teacher in shaping students' foreign language enjoyment in the foreign language classroom?

Methodology

Research context

The University of Dubrovnik (UNIDU) provides a learning environment that emphasizes the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in higher education. Situated in one of Croatia's major tourist destinations, the university offers study programs that require a high level of foreign language proficiency, as they often involve communication within academic and professional communities. ESP is a compulsory course in many degree programs at UNIDU. While the University also offers other foreign languages, such as French, Italian, German, and Spanish, these are mostly elective. Given the University's strong focus on internationalization, foreign language skills are particularly important, making it necessary to further examine various aspects of

ESP instruction.

In the Hospitality, Restaurant, and Gastronomy study program English is a compulsory course in all three years of undergraduate study and both years of graduate study. In the first year of undergraduate study, students have four hours of English instruction per week, while in the second and third years they have three hours per week. At the graduate level, students have three hours of English instruction per week. English classes in the observed study program are taught by a single instructor, who is also the author of this study. The participant groups were deliberately selected so that students from all years of study were taught by the same teacher. This approach was adopted to examine whether foreign language enjoyment is related to the role of the teacher rather than differences between teachers. By keeping the teacher constant, the study allows for a clearer focus on the relationship between foreign language enjoyment and the teacher’s influence.

Participants

The study was conducted on a sample of 38 students from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Dubrovnik, enrolled in the Hospitality, Restaurant, and Gastronomy study program. The sociodemographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1. With regard to age, the largest proportion of participants were 21 years old (26.3%), followed by students aged 22 and 23 (23.7% each). Students aged 20 accounted for 21.1% of the sample, while 19-year-old students were the least represented (5.3%). In the academic year 2024/2025, a smaller number of students were enrolled compared to previous academic years. In terms of gender, 55.3% of the participants were female and 44.7% were male. Analysis of the study program shows that the majority of participants were enrolled in the undergraduate program in Hospitality, Restaurant, and Gastronomy (84.2%). A smaller proportion of participants attended the graduate program in Hospitality (7.9%) and the undergraduate program in Business Economics (7.9%), as Business Economics students, where Business English is an elective course, join the Hospitality study program group in the second and third years of undergraduate study. Regarding the year of study, the largest number of participants were enrolled in the third year of undergraduate study (50.0%), followed by the second year of undergraduate study (31.6%). First-year undergraduate students accounted for 10.5% of the sample, while 7.9% of participants were in the first year of graduate study. There were no participants from the second year of graduate study.

Table 1: Sociodemographic indicators

		N	%
How old are you?	19	2	5.3%
	20	8	21.1%
	21	10	26.3%
	22	9	23.7%
	23	9	23.7%
	Total	38	100.0%
What is your gender?	Male	17	44.7%
	Female	21	55.3%
	Total	38	100.0%
What is your study program?	Undergraduate program in Hospitality, Restaurant, and Gastronomy	32	84.2%
	Undergraduate program Business Economics	3	7.9%
	Graduate program Hospitality	3	7.9%
	Total	38	100.0%
What is your year of study?	1 st year of undergraduate study	4	10.5%
	2 nd year of undergraduate study	12	31.6%
	3 rd year of undergraduate study	19	50.0%

	1 st year of graduate study	3	7.9%
	Total	38	100.0%

The sample was a convenience sample, participants were selected based on their availability and relevance to the research, which focuses on learning English for specific purposes in the context of tourism and hospitality.

Instrument

The study used an adapted version of an existing **Short Version of the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale** (Botes et al., 2021), which measures positive emotional aspects of foreign language learning, including feelings of satisfaction, pride, and enthusiasm during language-related activities. The instrument was modified through wording changes, translation, item reduction, and contextual adjustment. The instrument was not fully validated; instead, its reliability in the Croatian context was tested using the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. In its original English version, the scale consists of nine items, and participants indicate their level of agreement using a five-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree). For the purposes of this study, the following five items were selected: *I am doing well in English language classes; I feel proud of my accomplishments in English classes; I feel comfortable when giving presentations; It is a positive environment; The classroom atmosphere is good.*

In addition to the main instrument, the author developed a set of additional questions aimed at gaining deeper insight into participants’ personal experiences and subjective perceptions related to changes in emotions during their studies, in order to examine its relationship with foreign language enjoyment. This part of the questionnaire consisted of four items. For each item, participants indicated their level of agreement or intensity of experience on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The items were as follows: My foreign language anxiety has decreased since I started university; How strong was your foreign language anxiety at the beginning of your studies? (scale from 1 to 5; 1 = no anxiety at all, 5 = very strong anxiety); How strong is your foreign language anxiety now? (scale from 1 to 5; 1 = no anxiety at all, 5 = very strong anxiety); and Do you feel anxiety or discomfort when giving a presentation in English class? (scale from 1 to 5; 1 = no anxiety at all, 5 = very strong anxiety).

Procedure

The study was conducted in April 2025 on a sample of 38 students from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Dubrovnik, enrolled in the Hospitality, Restaurant, and Gastronomy study program. Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. Before participating, students were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The estimated time required to complete the questionnaire was approximately 10-15 minutes.

Results and discussion

This section presents the results of the statistical analyses conducted to address the research questions. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to examine foreign language enjoyment and its relationship with selected variables.

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the foreign language enjoyment items, including the mean scores and standard deviations.

Table 2: Foreign language enjoyment

		N	%	\bar{x}	Sd
I am doing well in English language classes	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%		
	Disagree	0	0.0%		
	Undecided	3	7.9%		

	Agree	6	15.8%		
	Strongly agree	29	76.3%		
	Total	38	100.0%	4.68	.62
I feel proud of my accomplishments in English classes	Strongly disagree	1	2.6%		
	Disagree	1	2.6%		
	Undecided	5	13.2%		
	Agree	9	23.7%		
	Strongly agree	22	57.9%		
	Total	38	100.0%	4.32	.99
I feel comfortable when giving presentations	Strongly disagree	1	2.6%		
	Disagree	2	5.3%		
	Undecided	14	36.8%		
	Agree	10	26.3%		
	Strongly agree	11	28.9%		
	Total	38	100.0%	3.74	1.03
It is a positive environment	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%		
	Disagree	0	0.0%		
	Undecided	3	7.9%		
	Agree	6	15.8%		
	Strongly agree	29	76.3%		
	Total	38	100.0%	4.68	.62
The classroom atmosphere is good	Strongly disagree	0	0.0%		
	Disagree	2	5.3%		
	Undecided	0	0.0%		
	Agree	2	5.3%		
	Strongly agree	34	89.5%		
	Total	38	100.0%	4.79	.70

The results indicate that the vast majority of respondents have a positive experience in English language classes. The highest mean value was observed for the statement *The classroom atmosphere is good* (4.79), suggesting a highly positive perception of the learning environment. Similarly, most students strongly agree that they coped well in class and that cooperation with classmates is positive (4.68). A slightly lower, though still relatively high, mean value was found for comfort during presentations (3.74), suggesting that some students continue to experience a certain level of discomfort when speaking publicly in a foreign language. Overall, the results point to a high level of foreign language enjoyment among the respondents.

Before conducting further statistical analyses, the normality of the distribution of the foreign language enjoyment variable was examined. The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that the distribution significantly deviated from normality ($p < 0.05$). Since the level of significance was not greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the assumption of normality was not met. Therefore, non-parametric statistical tests were used in the subsequent analyses. The reliability of the questionnaire measuring foreign language enjoyment was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The Cronbach’s alpha value was 0.68 for the scale consisting of five items, which can be considered an acceptable level of internal consistency. This result indicates that the instrument used is sufficiently reliable for measuring the examined construct.

Table 3 presents the relationship between foreign language enjoyment and various variables related to foreign language anxiety as well as demographic characteristics.

Table 3: Spearman’s correlation coefficient

	FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENJOYMENT		
What is your year of study?	r	.032	
	p	.850	
	N	38	
My foreign language anxiety has decreased since I started university.	r	.559**	
	p	.000	
	N	38	
How strong was your foreign language anxiety at the beginning of your studies?	r	-.154	
	p	.357	
	N	38	
How strong is your anxiety of a foreign language now?	r	-.381*	
	p	.018	
	N	38	
Do you feel anxiety or discomfort when giving a presentation in English class?	r	-.655**	
	p	.000	
	N	38	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between foreign language enjoyment and year of study ($p = 0.850$), nor between enjoyment and the level of anxiety at the beginning of studies ($p = 0.357$). In contrast, a strong and statistically significant positive correlation was found between foreign language enjoyment and the reduction of foreign language anxiety during the course of study ($r = 0.559, p < 0.01$). In addition, moderate to strong negative correlations were observed between enjoyment and current anxiety levels, as well as anxiety experienced during presentations.

Table 4: Comparison by gender (Mann–Whitney U test)

		What is your gender?			p*
		Male	Female	Total	
FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENJOYMENT	Median	4.60	4.60	4.60	0.800
	Percentile 25	4.20	4.00	4.00	
	Percentile 75	4.80	4.80	4.80	

Table 4 presents a comparison of foreign language enjoyment levels between male and female participants. The median value is the same for both groups ($Md = 4.60$), and the differences between genders are not statistically significant ($p = 0.800$). These results indicate that gender does not represent an important factor in the experience of enjoyment in foreign language learning in this sample.

Table 5: Comparison by age (Kruskal–Wallis test)

		How old are you?					p*
		19	20	21	22	23	
FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENJOYMENT	Median	4.90	4.60	4.50	4.60	4.20	0.400
	Percentile 25	4.80	4.00	4.40	4.20	4.00	
	Percentile 75	5.00	4.90	4.80	5.00	4.60	

Table 5 presents differences in foreign language enjoyment with respect to the participants’ age. Although minor differences in median values can be observed across age groups, the Kruskal–Wallis test did not reveal

statistically significant differences ($p = 0.400$). This suggests that students' age does not have a significant effect on the level of enjoyment in learning English.

Table 6: Comparison by year of study (Kruskal–Wallis test)

		What is your year of study?				p*
		1 st year of undergraduate study	2 nd year of undergraduate study	3 rd year of undergraduate study	1 st year of graduate study	
FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENJOYMENT	Median	4.70	4.50	4.60	4.00	0.687
	Percentile 25	4.10	3.70	4.20	3.80	
	Percentile 75	4.90	4.80	5.00	5.00	

Table 6 presents a comparison of foreign language enjoyment with respect to the year of study. Although students in lower years of study show slightly higher median values compared to graduate students, the differences are not statistically significant ($p = 0.687$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the year of study does not have a significant effect on the level of foreign language enjoyment in this study.

Table 7 presents students' responses on whether they experienced anxiety or discomfort while learning a foreign language in primary or secondary school, as well as the reasons for these feelings.

Table 7: Did you experience anxiety or discomfort when learning a foreign language in primary or secondary school? If yes, please specify the reasons

	N
Yes, because I did not know how to pronounce some words.	1
Yes, because teachers did not have an appropriate approach that encouraged learning from mistakes; instead, they created pressure based on mistakes.	1
Yes, during presentations.	1
Yes, due to lack of knowledge.	1
Yes, I was not confident in myself and no one encouraged me to make an effort.	1
Yes, because I did not have sufficient knowledge in primary school.	1
Yes, because I thought I wouldn't be able to learn and understand everything	1
Mistakes and fear.	1
The only problem in secondary school was a teacher who could not teach the language properly, insisted she was always right, and failed us for that reason. It was a great relief to see that this was not the case in Professor Hrnić's classes.	1
Yes, I was afraid that I wouldn't pronounce some words correctly or use correct grammar.	1
I was mostly afraid of making mistakes or not knowing something well enough.	1
No	19
A feeling of not knowing enough and being judged.	1
I feel discomfort when I have to prepare a speech in front of everyone.	1
Teachers expected memorized answers and did not explain mistakes, but only corrected individual words.	1
Fear of speaking.	1
Fear of teachers' dissatisfaction and the fact that others know more.	1
Fear of making mistakes.	1
Because of my speech impediment, I do not like situations where classmates and teachers have to wait while I speak due to stuttering.	1

Half of the responses indicate negative emotional experiences in earlier education, with the main sources of anxiety being the teaching approach, fear of making mistakes, giving presentations, lack of support, and feelings of being judged. Some students report that teachers created pressure, did not encourage learning through mistakes, or used an inadequate pedagogical approach. However, it is worth mentioning that a significant number of students did not experience anxiety or discomfort when learning a foreign language in earlier educational contexts. This suggests that learners' emotional experiences are not uniform and that positive language learning experiences also occurred in previous educational settings. However, despite this diversity of initial experiences, the results of the present study show a consistently high level of foreign language enjoyment among students across different years of study. Therefore, the results indicate that the teaching context may help mitigate earlier negative learning experiences.

In line with Dynamic Systems Theory, emotions in language learning develop through interaction between past experiences and the current learning environment. Although earlier experiences may shape initial emotional states, the findings of this study suggest that a consistent and supportive teaching approach can foster stable enjoyment regardless of students' previous experiences. With regard to RQ1, the results presented in Table 2 show high mean values across almost all items. Particularly high scores were observed for classroom atmosphere, doing well in class, and cooperation with peers, while slightly lower—though still relatively high—scores were found for comfort during presentations. Overall, the findings indicate a high level of foreign language enjoyment among ESP students, suggesting that learners generally experience positive emotions in English language classes. With regard to RQ2, the relationship between foreign language enjoyment and foreign language anxiety, the results indicate that enjoyment is not significantly related to anxiety at the beginning of the studies. However, a strong positive relationship was found between foreign language enjoyment and a reduction in anxiety over time, alongside moderate to strong negative correlations with current anxiety levels, including presentation anxiety. Overall, these findings suggest that higher levels of foreign language enjoyment are associated with lower anxiety and a greater decrease in anxiety during the course of the study. With regard to sociodemographic variables (RQ3), the results show no statistically significant differences in foreign language enjoyment based on gender, age, or year of study. These findings indicate that foreign language enjoyment is relatively stable across different student groups within the examined sample. With regard to the role of the teacher (RQ4), the findings suggest that despite students' negative emotional experiences in earlier educational contexts, high levels of foreign language enjoyment are reported in the current learning environment. The teacher and the classroom atmosphere play an important role in shaping learners' emotional experiences and can mitigate earlier negative language learning experiences. This is in line with research conducted by Dewaele and Dewaele (2020), which suggests that foreign language enjoyment (FLE) is more strongly associated with the teacher's personality and teaching style, whereas foreign language anxiety (FLA) is more stable and less dependent on the teacher. Teaching practices often represent an important factor that can either trigger anxiety or foster enjoyment in foreign language learning. These emotional experiences influence learners' decisions to continue or discontinue learning English and, consequently, the level of language competence they ultimately achieve (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). The study by Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018) shows that emotions experienced during foreign language learning have long-term effects on how learners perceive and use the foreign language. The authors emphasize that teaching practices strongly influence these emotions; therefore, teacher education should promote awareness of the emotional dimensions of teaching in order to help teachers create a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that foreign language enjoyment among ESP students is shaped primarily by the current instructional context rather than by learners' sociodemographic characteristics or earlier educational experiences. High levels of enjoyment, together with a significant reduction in foreign language anxiety over time, indicate that positive emotional experiences in the classroom can develop and

stabilize through a consistent and supportive teaching approach. In line with Dynamic Systems Theory, the teacher and classroom atmosphere appear to function as key attractors that influence learners' emotional states, enabling the mitigation of earlier negative experiences and the maintenance of enjoyment in foreign language learning.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The research was conducted on a relatively small and homogeneous sample, consisting of students from a specific higher education context and discipline. As a result, the findings cannot be readily generalized to students from other study programs, institutions, or educational levels. In addition, changes in foreign language enjoyment and anxiety over time are based on self-reported perceptions rather than direct observation of emotional development across different stages of study. Although the role of the teacher is addressed, it is examined indirectly, mainly through students' reflections on previous learning experiences.

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