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Wei Li

### Aims and scope

*Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education* is an interdisciplinary journal of second and foreign language education studies, a peer-reviewed journal of international scope. It provides a forum for high-quality linguistic and experimental research on topics which investigate applied linguistic theories, second and foreign language learning and teaching. It offers new insights not only into applied linguistics but also into a wide variety of second and foreign language education phenomena. The disciplines covered include applied linguistic educational

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# The impact of the cognitive-emotive dialectic on L2 development of English majors in the free teacher education program in China: a *perezhivanie* perspective

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## Abstract

The field of second language acquisition (SLA) research had long been governed by a paradigm that prioritized cognition over emotion. Recently, increased attention has been drawn to the role of *perezhivanie* in language development as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) brought together emotion and cognition, thereby offering an analytical tool to explore the interplay of emotion and cognition in a holistic way. The present study seeks to explore and capture the notion of *perezhivanie* in three Chinese learners of L2 English in the free teacher education program and its link for their language development. Utilizing multiple sources of data, including questionnaires, narrative frames and interviews, this study conducts a thematic analysis of the cognitive and emotive elements in the data. The study reveals that the three participants shared the same purpose in learning English: to become English teachers in either primary or high schools. It also demonstrates that during the language learning process, predominantly negative emotions, while not inevitably hindering progress, can slow down the pace of language development, whereas positive emotions consistently foster language development.

**Keywords:** Cognitive-emotive dialectic, Free teacher education program, English majors, *Perezhivanie*

## Introduction

There is a large body of knowledge in human sciences that has investigated cognition and emotion as two separate and independent phenomena (Swain, 2013). Compared to the research of cognition, in terms of the amount of literature and development of theoretical construction, the research on emotion has long been in the secondary position in the field of SLA. Language learning is permeated with emotions and these emotions hold a significant place in the learning process. By splitting cognition and emotion, and marginalizing emotions, we miss the opportunity to fully understand what motivates learners to learn. Then the affective turn in cultural, social and educational theory enabled researchers to deepen concepts and methodologies involved in the learning



process beyond the cognitive-intellectual variables. The affective filter hypothesis states that affective variables such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety can influence the acquisition of a second language. Learners with high motivation, self-confidence, and low anxiety are better equipped to receive input and acquire language than those who are unmotivated, lack confidence, or have high levels of anxiety. Positive psychology, which formally emerged as a field of study in the late 1990s and early 2000s, lays stress on the significance of positive emotions, character strengths, and optimal functioning in individuals rather than the role of negative emotions, and provides implications for the research of language learning (Derakhshan et al., 2023). In language development, positive emotions, such as happiness and interest, have been proved to strengthen motivation and promote more effective and sustained language learning (MacIntyre, 2016). It is a misconception that all positive emotions are always beneficial for learning and all negative emotions are always detrimental to learning. Positive emotions don't have to be present for learning to occur (Swain, 2013). Likewise, negative emotions may not necessarily hinder language development as demonstrated by Swain's study (2013). Fredrickson (2003) holds that positive and negative emotions are not dichotomous or opposite ends of the same continuum; "they are better conceptualized as two dimensions of experience" (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014, p.162). This two-dimensional perspective of emotion not only incorporates the see-saw perspective of emotion, which means that positive goes up and negative goes down, but also unlocks the possibility of investigating ambivalence (MacIntyre, 2007), i.e. the co-existence of negative emotion with positive emotion. The co-occurrence of negative emotion with positive emotion is very common in SLA. For example, a student may feel both confident and anxious before he or she delivers a speech or gives a classroom presentation in another language.

Learning another language involves not merely a cognitive process, but also an emotional dimension. Following Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical perspective, Swain (2013) emphasized the relevance of emotion for language learning and recognized the inseparability of emotion and cognition. Emotions stem from social and cultural contexts, and they, together with cognition, mediate learning. In other words, learning achievement is closely connected with learners' emotional and cognitive involvement (Huang et al., 2022). The two-dimensional perspective of emotion and a non-dualistic methodological approach are required to have an insightful comprehension of the role of positive and negative emotions, and their interaction with cognition to influence SLA.

English majors who have enrolled in the free teacher education program in China are the beneficiaries of specific education policies. When they enter the normal major, the government provides full reduction of tuition and accommodation fees and a certain amount of living allowance, aiming at attracting more outstanding talents to join the ranks of teachers, especially in some areas where educational resources are relatively scarce. The core advantage of this program is that it provides students with financial security and reduces their financial burden. Meanwhile, the policy ensures that these students can obtain jobs after graduation, and provides a stable guarantee for their career development. In addition, one year after graduation, they will receive the letter of admission to graduate school. This opportunity to obtain a master's degree is very valuable since nowadays the entrance examination for graduate school is highly competitive. Choosing to major in English in the free teacher education program is often more of

an individual decision which hinges on an individual's attitude towards the English language and culture. This choice may also be impacted by an individual's passion for English education. Moreover, the choice may be driven by the pursuit of a higher degree and a stable career, a common consideration in the current competitive job market. Given the emotional factors that play a part in students' decisions to major in English in the free teacher education program, an examination of L2 English might offer a different insight on the impact of the cognitive-emotive dialectic on language development. Following Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie*, this paper aims at a nuanced comprehension of the cognitive-emotive struggles of three English majors in the free teacher education program and concentrates on whether their different *perezhivaniya* are related to their English development and how their different *perezhivaniya* influence their English development.

### Literature review

Considering the prevalent focus on cognition in language studies, the incorporation of *perezhivanie* into research of language learning represents a significant and noteworthy advancement. In SLA, the emotional pole of language learners is their emotional reaction, while the cognitive pole is what language learners think, know, believe, and do. Yet the interplay between cognition and emotion in SLA may be very complex. For instance, a learner might confront a shortage of confidence, preventing him or her from embracing risks that are essential for intensified practice and language proficiency advancement. This diminished confidence transcends mere emotional factors; it is intricately intertwined with cognitive abilities, personal assessment of those abilities, and their practical manifestations in specific circumstances. For example, fleeting moments of nervousness or distraction can significantly influence a learner's confidence, among other aspects.

In SLA, some researchers highlight the emotional characteristics of *perezhivanie* and advocate a holistic view to observe the dynamic changes and development of learners' emotions in specific situations, focusing on the emotional content, factors affecting emotions, and the derivative effects of emotions in learners' language learning experience. For example, Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) explored the impact of emotional factors on second language learners in high school and college through the dialogue logs between teachers and learners, and pointed out that teachers need to understand learners' *perezhivaniya* in classroom environment to provide them with emotional support.

On the other hand, some researchers argue that *perezhivanie* encompasses both emotional and cognitive components, forming a complex and indivisible whole. Therefore, they place greater emphasis on the interrelationship between emotion and cognition in the development process. For instance, in language learning and teaching, Swain (2013) emphasized the critical role of learners' emotions while recognizing the inseparability between emotion and cognition through the examination of the dialogue between Sophie and Rachel, two young learners of L2 French in the eighth grade of an early French immersion program. Utilizing video recordings, Cross (2012) investigated the creative endeavors of students in a content-and-language-integrated-learning (CLIL) classroom, following their catharsis resulting from emotional tensions. The results suggested that Vygotsky's understanding of catharsis—in particular, the transformative potential of emotion—gives cause to rethink the qualitative nature of pedagogy, and



especially the importance of “mundane creativity” at the core of teaching and learning. Swain et al. (2015) analyzed the emotional experience and identity transformation of Grace, a bilingual user, through her narrative activities over the years of bilingual use. Their findings revealed that negative emotions do not invariably equal no learning, and emotions, socially constructed from the SCT perspective, mediate learning and participation in various ways. Kim (2021) focused on the role of *perezhivaniya* in understanding L2 learning motivation and suggested that L2 learners’ accumulation of emotional experiences and their evaluation of those experiences play an important role in recognizing their identities as L2 learners and fostering a heightened level of motivation for L2 learning. Xu and Zhang (2023) investigated *perezhivaniya* in two Chinese learners of L2 Japanese and its relevance for their language development and revealed that two learners had different purposes for learning Japanese and emotion facilitated or inhibited the learning process. Intriguingly, this study suggested that negative emotion does not necessarily hinder language development while positive emotion does not always propel language development, and also underscored the dialectical unity of negative and positive emotions.

These studies are significant in bringing *perezhivanie* into the context of SLA. Yet the theoretical and empirical exploration of *perezhivanie* is still in its infancy, and there is a need for more researchers to conduct in-depth research on the role of *perezhivanie*. The emotional factors behind students’ choice of English majors in the free teacher education program in China are multifaceted, including their love and interest in English, enthusiasm and dedication to the education cause, consideration of career prospects, pursuit of self-worth, as well as influence from others and the role of examples. These factors jointly influence their decision-making process, ultimately leading them to choose English as their major direction of development. Despite the role that emotions play in students’ choices of English majors in the free teacher education program in China, this area has not been touched upon in the previous research in SLA. To fill this gap, this qualitative study focuses on how emotions and cognition interact to influence students’ language development in the free teacher education program.

### Theoretical framework

The framework in the study is the psychological theory of mental development proposed by Vygotsky and his colleagues, which is referred to as cultural-historical theory (CHT), or sociocultural theory (SCT), the adaptation of CHT for SLA research. The following part will zoom into SCT and the key concept, *perezhivanie*.

#### Sociocultural theory

SCT is a framework that provides deep insights into the development of human cognition and learning. This theory underscores the “dialectic comprehension of human consciousness and mental growth” (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 6). At the heart of SCT lies the emphasis on social interactions and engagement as crucial factors in shaping learners’ cognitive development. Through continuous engagement with their learning communities, learners immerse themselves in practices that facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. SCT, drawing from the pioneering work of Vygotsky (1978),

elucidates the progression of cognitive processes from social relations to mental functions via mediated learning.

Within this theoretical perspective, human cognition is characterized by a dialectical logic. This means that elements traditionally treated as discrete variables in psychology, such as the mind versus body and individual versus society, are interconnected and dynamically interrelated. A dialectical view surpasses these traditional dichotomies by recognizing phenomena as syntheses of contradictions or opposing forces that mutually influence and shape each other (Vygotsky, 1978). This interdependence underscores the complexity and fluidity of human cognition.

SCT maintains that learning is a constructed process rather than a replicated one. It is multifaceted, encompassing social, cultural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions. Overall, SCT offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the development of human cognition and learning, emphasizing the pivotal role of social interactions and engagement in shaping cognitive development, recognizing the dialectical nature of human cognition, and highlighting the constructed nature of learning. This theory prompts a fresh examination of the social environment in SLA. *Perezhivanie* constitutes an integral component of the theoretical framework employed by the socio-cultural approach to SLA.

### ***Perezhivanie***

Vygotsky (1994) defines “the *perezhivanie* of an individual as a kind of psychological prism, which determines the role and influence of the environment on development” (p.341). The Vygotskian notion of *perezhivanie* puts stress on the dynamic relationship between cognitive and emotive processes as Vygotsky (1994) explains that *perezhivanie* is how an individual “becomes aware of, interprets and emotionally relates to a certain event” (p.341). Following Vygotsky’s understanding of *perezhivanie*, Roth (2007) argues that “emotion is a constitutive element in cognition and action” (p.45). Del Rio and Alvarez (2002) point out that cognition and emotion “may unite and enhance each other to yield an outcome greater than either of them alone” (p.65). The dialectical unity of emotion and cognition goes against the simplistic linear viewpoint that holds that the flow of influence is directional as Vygotsky (1993) regards the unity of emotion and cognition as “a dual dependence” (p.232).

Blunden (2016) points out that the verb *perezhivat* suggests that someone has survived a painful circumstance or experience but only after having relived the experience and worked through it multiple times. Unlike the English word “experience”, *perezhivanie* is something that is worked on, processed and can finally be assimilated into an individual’s personality and may have a lasting effect on the individual long after occurrence of the event. “A *perezhivanie* is both an experience and the working over of it” (Blunden, 2016, p.277), the latter of which involves catharsis. Therefore, *perezhivanie* also includes catharsis since an individual lives through and works over the experience.

Veresov (2017) insists that the experiences must be “dramatic”, involving “social collision ... a drama between two individuals” (p.60). But Blunden (2016) argues that “The concept of *perezhivanie* allows us to understand experiences that are not so dramatic ... those relatively minor joys and embarrassments that ‘stick in our minds’, [which] still evoke an emotional response and are connected with our motivation, without becoming



life-changing traumas” (p.281). This study adopts Blunden’s view that experiences need not be that dramatic and some ordinary but impressive experiences may play a role in an individual’s language development.

Vygotsky’s (1994) argument that the concept of *perezhivanie* enables us to examine the role and impact of the environment on the psychological development of children in the context of analyzing the laws of development, underscores its role as an analytical tool and a theoretical lens for investigating the developmental process. In SCT, *perezhivanie* is in itself sufficient as a unit of analysis as the characteristics that are developmentally relevant are only those which are actually manifested in *perezhivanie*. *Perezhivanie* provides a means to approach and reconceptualize language learning from an emic perspective, which is argued to be necessary for theoretical, conceptual and methodological balance in a field traditionally dominated by cognitive approaches. According to Mok (2015), embedding emic SLA research methods within CHT through the concept of *perezhivanie* introduces a crucial perspective to the understanding of L2 learning, one that transcends the classroom setting and encompasses various forms of learning and practices occurring outside formal education. In addition, *perezhivanie* enables researchers to adopt qualitative and emic methods, such as narrative analysis, diary studies, conversation analysis to re-examine their data within the theoretical framework of SCT.

For SLA, *perezhivanie* offers both a holistic view and a theoretical basis to comprehend the interconnected nature of cognition and emotion in language learning. In the current study, learners’ *perezhivanie* includes (1) learners’ positive or negative emotions in the process of L2 English learning; (2) the cognitive-emotive struggle learners experience when faced with difficulties in L2 English learning; (3) how learners transcend the cognitive-emotive struggle in L2 English learning.

## Research methodology

### Research questions

The study examines the role of *perezhivanie* in L2 development through an exploration of the dialectical interplay between cognitive and emotive factors among three native Chinese university students who major in English in the free teacher education program. The following research questions will be the primary concerns:

1. What kinds of emotions do the university English majors in the free teacher education program experience in learning English and how are these emotional experiences shaped?
2. How do the university English majors in the free teacher education program experience the cognitive-emotive struggle when faced with difficulties in learning English?
3. How do the university English majors in the free teacher education program transcend their cognitive-emotive struggle and achieve higher proficiency in learning English?

### Participants

Three second year university students learning English as a major in the free teacher education program were selected for the study based on convenience sampling. All participants were voluntary. All participants with Chinese as L1 have been learning English as L2 for over 10 years. In addition, all participants have taken the written Test for

English Majors-Band 4 (TEM 4), a nationwide standardized English proficiency test for sophomores of English majors, which aims at examining the English abilities of English majors, including listening, reading and writing (Table 1).

Data collection and analysis

The researcher used questionnaires, narrative frames, and interviews to collect data. The participants were well informed of research purpose and data collection procedures. After the participants signed the consent form, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire about their demographic information and details of their English learning experience. Then they were asked to finish English narrative frames about their emotional experience and cognitive strategies in learning English. After that, the participants were asked to participate interviews during non-instructional time. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio-recorded throughout the interviews to learn more details about their emotional experience and cognitive strategies in learning English. Finally, their scores in TEM 4 were collected.

The goal of data analysis was first to identify emotive elements within learners’ narratives and interviews, and then to assess the extent to which the emotive elements appeared to index areas of cognitive dissonance and cognitive congruence, indicating potential areas of development for language learners. The unit of analysis was language itself (Vygotsky, 1978), encompassing both positive and negative emotions, as both types of evaluations offer insights into aspects of learner thinking and activity. Drawing on Imai’s (2010) perspective, the analysis was grounded in the assumption that emotional content is expressed at various linguistic levels, ranging from individual words to entire discourses.

The researcher initially reviewed the narratives and transcribed interviews multiple times to compile a concise list of recurring themes pertinent to English learning. These themes were then categorized into broader groups, based on the three interpretations of *perezhivanie* employed in the study. Following this categorization, the researcher thoroughly re-examined all the texts, paying special attention to the elements detailing the learners’ *perezhivaniya*. Only those excerpts that consistently received the same coding were ultimately incorporated into the report.

Research ethics

Research ethical concerns were considered before the data was collected for further analysis. First, approval was sought from the institution of the participants. Second, the participants were informed of the study and all the questionnaires, narratives and interviews were permitted to be used for the study by the participants.

Table 1 Participants’ demographic information

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	English score in college entrance exam	English learning duration	TEM 4 grade
Eloise	21	Female	120	11 years	65
Kelly	19	Female	142	10 years	80
Amber	21	Female	127	12 years	89



Based on the following two reasons, reliability of the data and validity of data analysis can be guaranteed. First, a pilot interview with other English majors in the free teacher education program at the same university was carried out, which offered insightful and useful information to improve the interview questions. Second, the researcher has taught the participants the core subject, Comprehensive English, in their whole sophomore year. For one year, the researcher met the participants twice every week and lectured 90 minutes each time. In addition, the researcher has been the mentor for the participants for two years, guiding and helping them in their lives and studies during their freshman and sophomore years. The frequent interaction between the researcher and the participants gave the researcher a great opportunity to better understand the participants. The harmonious relationship between the researcher and the participants helped the researcher obtain in-depth knowledge of the participants' *perezhivaniya* in their L2 English development.

### Findings

The participants' *perezhivaniya* were presented under three themes: (a) their emotions towards English learning, (b) the cognitive and emotional challenges, along with their subsequent catharsis, in connection with their learning obstacles, and (c) the significance of these experiences to their language development.

#### Eloise's *perezhivaniya* in English learning

##### *Eloise's positive and negative emotions towards English learning*

Excerpt 1 suggests that Eloise experienced both positive and negative emotions towards English learning. In junior high school, she distinguished herself as the English class representative, owing to her exceptional proficiency in English and consistently achieving the highest grades in class. Furthermore, her admiration for her English teacher fueled her passion for English. Yet the inadvertent neglect of English in the first year in senior high school resulted in a noticeable decline in her grades. In the college entrance examination, she secured a score of 120 out of 150 in English, a mark that ranked high among her peers. But among the students committed to studying English as their major at university, 120 was not considered to be a very high score.

Eloise's *perezhivanie* of English learning in high school was not stable but changing. In junior high school, she had very positive emotion towards English learning, derived from her affection towards her English teacher and her performance in exams. In senior high school, her once positive emotion towards English learning gradually transformed into a negative one, stemming primarily from a decline in her English scores and a growing distraction towards other pursuits. In these two periods, it seems that her emotion towards English learning played a decisive role in language achievement. Her positive emotion facilitated her language achievement in junior high school while her loss of advantage in English in senior high school made her lose her enthusiasm for English learning. Perhaps for that reason, she devoted less cognitive engagement to English study, thereby increasing her negative emotion towards English learning.

**Excerpt 1****Eloise, narrative frame, 18 November 2023**

*I was the English class representative in junior high school. I particularly liked my English teacher. I studied happily and effortlessly without any reluctance or laziness. My English score ranked top in the class.*

*But in senior high school, I lost the advantage in English. I was quite playful and easily distracted. I neglected English for a long period of time and started to pay attention to English after I found that I did not do well in the exams in the second year of high school. Later, when the study pressure intensified, I tended to focus on science and had little time to study English.*

*My favorite subject was biology. I intended to major in medicine. My parents thought the teaching profession was stable and they wanted me to be a teacher, so I followed their advice although I didn't like teaching.*

Excerpt 2 portrays Eloise's arduous journey in English learning during freshman year. In contrast to the bilingual approach of her high school English teachers, who integrated both English and Chinese in instruction, the university lecturers conducted classes exclusively in English. In high school Eloise was able to keep pace with her English lessons while at university she struggled to comprehend the lectures delivered solely in English. This transition marked a painful experience as Eloise struggled to keep up with the fast-paced and immersive language environment. She employed a range of emotive words such as "frustrated", "fear", "nervous", "painful" and "numb" to convey the intensity of her extremely unpleasant English learning experience at university. In this period, in Eloise's cognitive-emotive struggle, the emotional pole was foregrounded over the cognitive one. Her emotion towards English learning was predominantly negative.

**Excerpt 2****Eloise, narrative frame, 18 November 2023**

*Teachers at university taught courses mostly in English. I could not follow them, especially in the first semester of freshman year. I felt very frustrated. What I fear most is audio-visual and oral English. I'm introvert and don't like expressing myself in the public. There are a lot of presentations to be done in class. I am very nervous when I do presentations in class. I felt very painful, but I gradually got used to it. Or it means that I felt numb. I usually sit at the back of the classroom. I don't take the initiative to answer questions in class. In group discussion, I am usually a passive listener rather than an active speaker.*

**Eloise's negative emotion towards choice of English major in the free teacher education program**

Excerpt 1 shows that Eloise chose English major in the free teacher education program largely because of her parents' conviction that teaching English in high school offered a secure career amidst the fiercely competitive job market. However, her true passion in high school was biology, and her dream major was medicine. Her college entrance



examination score met the admission requirement of English major in the free teacher education program. Despite reluctance, she finally decided to major in English in the free teacher education program.

### **Eloise's cognitive and emotive struggle and catharsis**

Despite Eloise's negative emotion towards English learning and the hesitation in choosing English major in the free teacher education program, she was forced to study English since she will be an English teacher after graduation. Her cognitive engagement and cognitive strategies, to some degree, helped her overcome some difficulties and gradually reached catharsis. Excerpt 3 is a detailed illustration of her cognitive-emotive struggle in English learning. Eloise encountered a lot of challenges that hindered her progress. She had trouble sustaining her concentration while reading extended texts. Moreover, her ability to retain newly learned words was limited, as she tended to forget them rapidly. When it came to listening comprehension, Eloise struggled to extract and comprehend key information. Furthermore, her vocabulary was insufficient to articulate her thoughts and ideas fluently in writing. Lastly, the intricacies of English grammar presented a formidable obstacle. In face of these difficulties, she employed some cognitive strategies, such as doing listening comprehension exercises, watching English TV series, and memorizing new words. She devoted a certain amount of cognitive engagement to English learning, but her emotion towards English learning tended to be dominated by negative affect. It was quite likely that her emotional pole took priority over the cognitive pole in her cognitive-emotive struggle with English learning and the cognitive pole, to some degree, played a role in her language development. Nevertheless, amidst this struggle, she has made some progress in English proficiency, albeit to varying degrees.

### **Excerpt 3**

**Eloise, first interview, 18 February 2024**

*I can't keep up with my classmates. I find reading to be the most difficult for me. I struggle to sustain focus when reading long articles or novels. In listening comprehension, I often fail to get key information. I do listening exercises and watch English TV series to improve my listening ability. In writing, despite having a lot of ideas to express, I often find myself constrained by limited vocabulary. Moreover, my writing is plagued by grammatical errors. Grammar is a big headache for me. I try to memorize more words, but forget them very quickly.*

### **The significance of Eloise's *perezhivanie***

Excerpt 4 reveals that Eloise did not allocate sufficient efforts in English learning in the first two years of university. Probably her negative emotion, arising from her unpleasant experience in high school and her unwillingness to choose English major in the free teacher education program, contributed significantly to her indolence in English learning at university. She realized that the insufficient amount of cognitive engagement resulted in the less-than-desirable outcomes although compared to her English level in the freshman year, she did make some progress. She passed TEM 4 with a score of 65, which falls under the qualified level.

**Excerpt 4****Eloise, second interview, 5 June 2024**

*I manage to complete assignments on time, but I do not engage in extensive self-study beyond the required curriculum. For most courses, I was merely able to get passing grades. Compared with freshman year, I have made progress in listening, reading and vocabulary. Despite my dissatisfaction with the results, I realize that the cause lies in my inadequate effort and lack of enthusiasm towards English learning.*

**Kelly's perezhivaniya in English learning****Kelly's positive emotion towards choice of English major in the free teacher education program**

Excerpt 5 suggests that Kelly felt very positive about her decision to major in English in the free teacher education program. Her achievement of attaining a stellar score of 142 out of 150 in English in the college entrance examination underscored her proficiency and dedication to English. Her decision to choose English major in the free teacher program stemmed from a profound passion for teaching, fueled by an aspiration to become a renowned educator and, ultimately, to establish charitable schools that would serve as hope for students in remote areas. Her favorite subject in high school was Chinese, which suggested that she somewhat had a talent for language learning.

**Excerpt 5****Kelly, narrative frame, 18 November 2023**

*I chose English major in the free teacher education program for several reasons. Firstly, my English score was very good and I like English very much. Secondly, my parents want me to do so for this job is stable. Thirdly, I really admire those great educators and I hope one day I can establish some charity schools for poor students.*

Excerpt 6 shows that Kelly had very pleasant experience in English learning. Her exceptional performance as the hostess in high school English Festival, coupled with the recognition she received, significantly boosted her confidence in her oral English proficiency, inspiring her to strive even harder to enhance her language skills. This delightful emotional experience had a very positive influence on her language learning, motivating her to devote more cognitive engagement to English learning, particularly in terms of English pronunciation and speeches.

**Excerpt 6****Kelly, narrative frame, 18 November 2023**

*The most unforgettable English learning experience was that I was the hostess in English Festival in high school. I felt extremely happy and confident at that time. It was this experience that motivated me to love English more, especially English pronunciation and English speeches.*



### Kelly's cognitive and emotive struggle and catharsis

Excerpt 7 suggests that in Kelly's *perezhivaniya* in English learning, positive emotions were dominant while she also experienced some negative emotions. Kelly possessed exceptional proficiency in both listening and speaking, stemming from her past delightful experiences in high school that had instilled in her a profound sense of confidence. The confidence motivated her to dedicate more cognitive effort to enhance her listening and speaking abilities. She mimicked the characters' dialogues when watching English movies, and covered the subtitles to enhance her listening skills. Her enjoyment, coupled with efficient cognitive strategies, enabled her to be better in listening and speaking. Kelly demonstrated a remarkable level of enthusiasm and confidence whenever she delivered presentations in class or contributed her insightful opinions during group discussions.

Meanwhile, she experienced some negative emotions in English learning, particularly in terms of grammar, vocabulary and writing, among which writing presented the most significant challenge for her. She frequently encountered a mental block, where her mind seemed to be a void, and she struggled to articulate her thoughts precisely in English. In the writing process, her ideas became fragmented and jumbled, leaving her feeling disoriented and uncertain about how to convey them effectively. Her difficulties with writing stemmed partly from an inadequate vocabulary and a lack of proficiency in grammar.

### EXCERPT 7

Kelly, first interview, 18 February 2024

*In writing, I always feel like my brain goes blank and I don't know how to express myself accurately in English. While writing, I feel my thoughts are scattered and confused. My vocabulary is not adequate, and I have many problems with grammar.*

*The most interesting thing for me is to practice listening and speaking. I like to imitate the characters' voices when watching movies. I often cover the subtitles to practice listening.*

*My daily study routine primarily focuses on attending classes and completing academic assignments. Within my self-study endeavors, I actively engage in areas I am interested in, such as listening, speaking, and culture. I am not willing to delve into complex and tedious vocabulary and grammar.*

### The significance of Kelly's *perezhivanie*

In the cognitive–emotive struggle of Kelly's English learning, both her emotion and cognition function well in her language development. Kelly's *perezhivanie* illustrates the harmonious coexistence of cognition and emotion throughout her developmental trajectory. Kelly's positive emotion towards English learning, derived from her pleasant learning experience in high school, and her passion for teaching career, motivated her to study diligently. Her avid interest in listening, speaking, and culture fueled her dedication to invest even greater time and energy into refining these facets,

relentlessly striving for optimal outcomes and remarkable achievements. These facets were comparatively more intriguing and cognitively less demanding in contrast to the memorization of words, the study of grammar and the often arduous task of writing for her.

Meanwhile, Kelly inevitably encountered a fair share of adverse emotions towards English learning. Her struggles with English writing were partly due to a lack of ideas to express and the chaotic nature of her thoughts. She encountered difficulty in formulating coherent sentences, as her mind wandered aimlessly without a clear direction. In addition, she grappled with issues related to vocabulary and grammar, adding another layer of complexity to her writing challenges. Her limited knowledge of vocabulary hindered her ability to express herself clearly and precisely, while her grasp of grammar rules was insufficient to ensure the coherence and accuracy of her sentences.

Nonetheless, her positive emotions towards English learning emerged victorious, refusing to be overshadowed by the negative ones. Her determination and passion for English learning stood out, ensuring that positive emotions remained the dominant force within her. She invested a lot of cognitive efforts into overcoming difficulties, engaging in a multitude of activities to bolster her proficiency. Among these endeavors, she completed a lot of grammar exercises to refine her linguistic precision, devoting herself to reading at least four books per semester, thereby expanding her intellectual horizons and enhancing her vocabulary. Furthermore, she crafted structure diagrams for her essay-writing, ensuring a logical and coherent flow of ideas. She employed these English learning strategies to transform negative emotions into a driving force rather than allowing them to hinder her progress. Thus, Kelly's English proficiency improved significantly under the positive interaction of emotion and cognition. Her positive emotions towards listening, speaking and culture resulted in her English development while her negative emotions towards vocabulary, grammar and writing did not invariably result in a lack of English development. The positive interplay between emotion, either positive or negative, and cognition, motivated her to become a competent English learner. She passed TEM 4 with a score of 80, a mark that stands high among her peers. Generally speaking, Kelly's *perezhivanie* remains constantly stable.

### Excerpt 8

Kelly, second interview, 5 June 2024

*I bought a grammar book with a lot of exercises and focused on mastering difficult grammatical points. For vocabulary, I used to memorize a lot of things for a word, such as its derivation, synonyms and antonyms, which made me feel like there was a lot to remember. I forgot them easily, so I didn't want to memorize them anymore. Now I only remember their pronunciation and the most common meaning first. Then I force myself to complete a certain task every day. Although I still forget some of them, I feel great when I can recognize some of them the next time I see them. I used to feel like I had nothing to write about and my mind was blank. But I found that I quite liked writing the kind of essay for TEM 4, because its structure is fixed, so I wouldn't be afraid of having nothing to write about. I also listened to many online courses and learned some methods. Now when I write, I first draw a structure diagram and fill in my opinions or good sentences that come to mind first. After*



*completing my essay, I compare it with a sample essay, identifying areas where my thought flow might be inadequate and examining whether my sentences lack vitality.*

*I have made great progress in reading, listening and speaking, mainly thanks to the four books I have to read every semester in reading class. Although I find it very painful to read them, my reading speed and depth have improved a lot. My English proficiency is far from the level of an ideal English teacher. My goal is to be as excellent as my high school English teacher.*

#### **Amber's perezhivaniya in English learning**

##### **Amber's positive emotion towards choice of English major in the free teacher education program**

Excerpt 9 shows that Amber was positive about her choice to major in English in the free teacher education program. Amber obtained 127 out of 150 in English in the college entrance examination. Her decision to choose English major in the free teacher education program stemmed from influence from her relatives who were high school teachers, and from her keen interest in language and literature. In addition, the belief in the promising prospect in English teaching career played a pivotal role in her decision to choose English major in the free teacher education program.

#### **Excerpt 9**

##### **Amber, narrative frame, 18 November 2023**

*My relatives, who are high school teachers, suggested I should become a teacher since teaching is a highly stable profession, especially for girls. I thought English was interesting and had a more promising prospect than other subjects. What is more, my genuine interest in language acquisition and a profound appreciation for literature further solidified my decision to major in English, so I am delighted to choose English as my major.*

Excerpt 10 reveals Amber's delightful experience in English learning in primary school. Amber's mother played a very important role in her English learning. Amber once had trouble remembering the word "glad". Amber's mother ingeniously devised an effective method to aid her daughter's memorization. By leveraging the Chinese pronunciation that phonetically resonated with "glad"—"gei lan de" (loosely translated as 'give the rotten one'), Amber's mother created a memorable scene that amused Amber, ensuring that whenever the word "glad" crossed her path, that whimsical image would spring vividly to her mind. This joyful learning experience has a profound influence in Amber's English learning journey.

#### **Excerpt 10**

##### **Amber, narrative frame, 18 November 2023**

*In primary school, I always had trouble remembering how to pronounce the word "glad". Then my mother and I acted out a dialogue in roles. At that time, we were eating bananas. My mother handed me a banana peel and said, "This is 'gei lan de'*

*(a Chinese pronunciation similar to 'glad'). Remember, you were very happy when I gave you the rotten banana peel." From then on, every time I saw this word, that scene would come to my mind.*

#### **Amber's cognitive and emotive struggle and catharsis**

Excerpt 11 shows that Amber has a very positive emotion towards English learning at university. She embraces English learning process with immense enthusiasm. For Amber, the diverse array of courses are not merely academic endeavors but invaluable tools that enrich her knowledge and fuel her passion. These subjects hold a special significance, as they contribute significantly to her personal growth and deepen her appreciation for the English language, making her experience truly fulfilling and exhilarating. The classroom ambiance was imbued with a sense of freedom and relaxation, fostering an environment conducive to learning and creativity. The successful completion of course paper on literature brought her a profound sense of achievement. All in all, Amber derives immense enjoyment from English learning.

#### **Excerpt 11**

**Amber, first interview, 18 February 2024**

*I really enjoy English learning at university. Most of the specialized courses are very interesting and useful. I have taken a variety of courses, such as literature. These courses have not only facilitated my language acquisition, but have also transformed into a source of immense enjoyment and intellectual stimulation for me. In literature class, the teacher introduced some fundamental literary research methodologies and some mainstream research directions, and guided us through an extensive appreciation of literary classics. Everyone could express their opinions freely. The classroom atmosphere was very relaxing. Last term, I wrote a course paper on literature, which was the most satisfactory one for me. Although the process was very hard, I enjoyed it.*

#### **The significance of Amber's perezhivanie**

Excerpt 12 shows that Amber did meet some challenges in English learning, with speaking posing a particularly daunting challenge for her. Nevertheless, she displays an exceptional aptitude for accurately identifying the root causes of problems. She realized that her anxiety about speaking English was rooted in her concern about not comprehending what others were saying. So, she tried a lot of ways to improve her listening ability. She delved deeper into the intricacies of English liaisons, reductions, and colloquial expression. Furthermore, she refined her English pronunciation and intonation by meticulously mimicking audio recordings, engaging in shadow reading exercises. Additionally, she immersed herself in English culture through listening to English songs and watching English films, all of which significantly contributed to her auditory comprehension and fluency.

The statements in Excerpt 12 indicate Amber's substantial cognitive engagement in English learning. When she meets difficulties in English learning, positive emotion helps her actively explore cognitive strategies to overcome those difficulties. Those cognitive



strategies proved to work well as she obtained a score of 89 in TEM 4, a mark that stands very high among her peers. Positive emotion and efficient cognitive strategies propelled her to become a proficient English learner.

### Excerpt 12

Amber, second interview, 5 June 2024

*I love English very much. So, I am not afraid of difficulties in English learning. I always try to work out solutions to improve my English. Regarding difficulties in spoken English, I have found the primary source of stress as my fear of not understanding what others are saying. My first step is to enhance my listening proficiency, as the abundance of liaisons, reductions, and colloquialisms poses a challenge to comprehension. I believe I will be more confident to engage in conversations once I can understand others. Secondly, my apprehension about my pronunciation and intonation often hinders me from speaking up. I've practiced my pronunciation and intonation in the phonetics classes, and I also selected audio materials to improve my pronunciation and intonation. Although this endeavor can be incredibly challenging and somewhat tedious for me, I sometimes opt for more enjoyable materials like English movies or songs.*

This section presents the findings of the comprehensive analysis exploring the relationship between emotions experienced by the participants and their cognitive engagement in English learning in the free teacher education program at university. The analysis revealed three distinct relationship patterns: the absence of positive emotions leading to low cognitive engagement, high level of positive emotions combined with high cognitive engagement in some aspects of English learning, and high level of positive emotion combined with high cognitive engagement in almost every aspect of English learning.

### Discussion

Eloise's, Kelly's and Amber's *perezhivaniya* and their relevance to English learning show that although negative emotion does not invariably lead to an absence of advancement of language development, the presence of dominant negative emotion can slow down the pace of language development, and that positive emotion consistently fosters language development. In addition, the relationship between language development and emotion is reciprocal instead of unidirectional (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Emotional factors play a role in language achievement while language achievement may enhance positive emotion, thus forming a virtuous cycle in language learning.

As for the emotional factors of *perezhivanie*, Eloise, Kelly and Amber demonstrated different emotional states about English learning, which derive from their individual histories, involving their previous academic performance and living environment as "the effects of a learner's previous experience may show up immediately or much later in life" (Swain, 2013, p.204). *Perezhivanie* encapsulates the significance of emotions in shaping and interpreting an individual's personal experiences. Emotions are mental constructs rooted in social situations, which are formed and influenced by individuals' past experiences and the cultural context. Securing a stable job was a primary motive for all participants, partly due to the influence of Confucian values that emphasize stability.

Therefore, many students tend to choose professions such as teaching, which combines stability with substantial development potential, making it a particularly popular choice among many girls. In addition, each of them had unique emotional responses to English learning, shaped by their past experience. Eloise experienced positive emotion towards English learning in junior high school thanks to her excellent performance as the English class representative in class, her affections towards her English teacher and her extraordinary academic performance in English exams, and a shift from positive emotion to negative emotion about English learning in senior high school due to her declining English scores. Eloise's *perezhivanie* of learning English in high school was not stable but evolving as "*perezhivanie* develops in line with and in connection with the leading activities in a person's life situation" (Blunden, 2016, p.281). The not-very-satisfactory performance in English exams in senior high school and college entrance examination, and the reluctance to choose English major in the free teacher education program resulted in her negative emotion towards English learning at university. As for Kelly, her positive emotion about English learning derived from her outstanding performance as the hostess during the high school English Festival and her impressive academic achievements in English exams. In English learning at university, Kelly experienced a mixture of positive and negative emotions. She enjoyed English learning, in particular in listening, speaking and culture; meanwhile, she struggled with vocabulary, grammar and writing. All in all, her positive emotion towards English learning was dominant. For Amber, her impressive English learning experience with her mother, and her strong interest in language acquisition imbued her with a very positive attitude towards her choice of English major in the free teacher education program. At university, despite inevitably encountering challenges in English learning, Amber consistently demonstrated positive and proactive emotions towards English learning. In essence, Eloise's, Kelly's and Amber's different emotions towards English learning were profoundly influenced by their past experiences and were enhanced by their present English learning environments.

Secondly, "*perezhivanie* underscores that both emotion and cognition are ever present but that one may gain prominence over the other in certain instances, as is expected with dialectical relations" (Poehner & Swain, 2016, p.226). Thus, *perezhivanie* prompts us to recognize that emotion is not just an additional element impacting the cognitive aspect of L2 development; instead, it serves as a dialectical unity that elucidates how cognition and emotion interact and influence each other, with one sometimes taking precedence at specific stages of development. For Eloise, her negative emotion influenced the cognitive pole of English learning; thus, her *perezhivanie* was predominantly driven by negative emotion. Although Eloise dedicated a certain amount of cognitive engagement, her negative emotion, to some degree, hindered or slowed down the pace of her English development. For Kelly, her overall positive emotion actively influenced the cognitive pole of English learning, especially in the dimensions of English listening, speaking and culture; yet in the fields of vocabulary, grammar, and writing, her somewhat negative emotion, more or less, inhibited her cognitive involvement. Kelly's *perezhivanie* was more emotion oriented. To be more specific, Kelly's *perezhivanie* was ambivalence of both positive and negative emotions, with positive emotion being dominant. For Amber, her consistently positive emotions towards English learning had a significant and lasting impact on her cognitive pole of English learning. Motivated by her enthusiasm about



English learning, Amber devoted sufficient cognitive effort and efficient cognitive strategies to English learning. Amber's *perezhivanie* was an efficient combination of cognition and emotion. So Eloise's dominant negative emotion which hindered the pace of English development, Kelly's ambivalence of positive and negative emotion with positive emotion being dominant which, combined with her cognitive engagement, motivated her to become a competent English learner, Amber's consistent positive emotion accompanying her high academic performance revealed the interaction of emotion, either positive or negative, and cognition affected L2 learning, and cognition and emotion may unite and facilitate each other to produce greater achievements than would be attainable by either force alone.

Thirdly, *perezhivanie* means the whole process of a potentially life-changing experience inclusive of the working over of that experience in a "catharsis" (Blunden, 2016, p.277). Lantolf and Swain (2019) hold that "the concept of *perezhivanie* includes catharsis as an individual works through and overcomes the experience" (p.83), and a *perezhivanie* involves a qualitative move forward (i.e. development) as a result of taking "a risk that paid off and opened a new phase of your life" (Blunden, 2016, p.276). Undoubtedly all the participants experienced cognitive-emotive struggle in language learning and demonstrated varying degrees of advancements in their English proficiency. In other words, they overcame and traversed the cognitive-emotive struggle and reached catharsis, achieving a qualitative move forward in language learning. Eloise's progress was relatively modest in comparison to Amber's, given that they had initially achieved comparable scores in English in the college entrance examination. In Kelly's case, despite her achievement of attaining an exceptionally high score in English during the college entrance examination, her subsequent progress in English learning at university was notably modest when juxtaposed with Amber's accomplishments. How did they traverse the cognitive-emotive struggle and achieve higher levels of proficiency in English learning? As for Eloise, it seemed that she was involved in a dual battle: grappling with her ever-present negative emotion towards English learning and at the same time endeavoring to use some cognitive strategies to overcome those obstacles in English learning, such as doing some listening comprehension exercises and watching English TV series. The cognitive-emotive incongruence, highly negative emotion and the invested cognitive effort to improve her English ability, took effect and helped her reach a slightly higher level of English proficiency. In the case of Kelly, her dominant positive emotion towards listening, speaking and culture in English learning, coupled with her cognitive strategies, such as imitating the characters' dialogues in English movies and being active in delivering presentations in English, motivated her to achieve higher levels of English proficiency and be more interested in these dimensions of English learning. But her negative emotion towards vocabulary, grammar and writing, at times, impeded her language development. Her statement that "I am not willing to delve into complex and tedious vocabulary and grammar" hinted at a tendency to consciously evade these aspects of language learning in certain instances. Despite her reluctance to handle the barriers in the areas of vocabulary, grammar and writing, she managed to adopt some cognitive strategies, including doing a lot of grammar exercises, reading at least four books every semester to enhance her vocabulary and refine her writing, crafting structure diagram for essay-writing, to advance her linguistic proficiency. The interplay of emotion and



cognition wove its way through Kelly's English learning: cognition and positive emotion together facilitated her acquisition of listening, speaking and culture while in the areas of vocabulary, grammar and writing, sometimes negative emotion came to the fore and later the cognitive pole gained dominance and enhanced, to some degree, Kelly's English development. In the case of Amber, her ever-present positive emotion, which stemmed from her pleasant English learning experience in her childhood, her keen interest in language and literature, and her willingness to be an English teacher, have been intertwined with her cognitive efforts to promote her English development. Inevitably Amber encountered some challenges, particularly in spoken English. Confronted with these difficulties, she also felt bored and at times, tedious. But she transcended her negative emotion and proactively sought some cognitive strategies, such as enhancing her listening ability, improving her English pronunciation and intonation, listening to English songs and watching English movies, to improve her spoken English proficiency. What we see in Eloise's, Kelly's and Amber's English learning is an interplay of cognition and emotion that weaves its way throughout the whole process. The fusion of cognition and emotion mediates their performance and helps them reach catharsis in language development. Since "*perezhivanie* comprises the cognitive-emotive unity that is necessary for understanding the full richness of human experience" (Poehner & Swain, 2016, p.221), it provides a lens which allows us to gain deeper insights into the intricacies and complexities of language learning process.

## Conclusion

From a holistic and dialectical perspective, this research adopted the concept of *perezhivanie* from SCT as its unit of analysis to investigate the relevance of *perezhivanie* in the language development of three learners of English in the free teacher education program in China since "*perezhivanie* is useful in that it provides a more general non-linguistic approach to the study of language learning, an approach that appreciates the need to understand, for example, mediation more thoroughly in terms of its relationship to the individual" (Mok, 2015, p.154). The study is a good example to reveal the inseparability of cognition and emotion in language development. What we can see in three participants' English learning process is the intertwining of their cognition and emotion. Eloise's, Kelly's and Amber's *perezhivaniya* pertaining to English learning manifested that negative emotion does not always result in the lack of language development, but dominant negative emotion does, to some degree, hinder or slow down the pace of language development, and ever-present positive emotion indeed facilitates language development. As emotion and cognition can conjointly and equally contribute to the control of thought, affect and behavior (Gray et al., 2002, p.4115), the harmonious fusion of cognition and emotion may reinforce each other to produce achievements that would surpass the limits achievable by either force acting separately. In the interaction of cognition and emotion, in some particular moments, one may move to the fore and take priority over the other. In addition, Eloise's, Kelly's and Amber's different *perezhivaniya* are largely molded by their varied past experience as *perezhivanie* inherently reflects the unique circumstances and social developmental contexts within which individuals find themselves. Thus, "*perezhivanie* is

a tool (concept) for analyzing the influence of sociocultural environment not on the individual per se, but on the process of development of the individual” (Veresov, 2017, p.57).

The awareness of cognitive-emotive dialectic has some implications for teaching and learning of second languages. Teachers may have access to the cognitive and emotive landscape of learners by listening to them. Teachers can learn about learners’ emotional reactions and cognitive challenges, enabling them to have a clear understanding of when and how it is appropriate to assist learners in comprehending their emotional responses and cognitive obstacles, and intervene to motivate and guide them towards optimal language learning outcomes. Teachers may sometimes create cognitive-emotive conflicts in order to motivate learners to reach catharsis, thereby achieving a higher level of language proficiency. For learners, being aware of the impact of the intertwining of cognitive engagement and emotional responses may help them mediate their performance in the self-directed language learning process.

Far from being a perfect project, this study has several limitations. The first limitation pertains to the source of data. The participants’ recollections of past experiences may not be entirely precise. This limitation is expected to be overcome in future research with the availability of diachronic studies in data collection. Second, these three participants did not take the speaking test in TEM 4. Thus, their speaking ability could not be assessed in this authoritative proficiency test. Future research may find ways to incorporate speaking test. All in all, *perezhivanie* offers a holistic perspective on language development as comprising both the emotive and cognitive. The current study is expected to extend the research on *perezhivanie* in SLA, which is a step forward in SLA. Looking ahead, future research can broaden the horizons of SLA by examining *perezhivanie* of learners in diverse learning environments, such as self-directed online language learning and blended learning in the new era of digitization.

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#### **Author contributions**

The author wrote and reviewed the manuscript. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

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#### **Data availability**

No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

#### **Declarations**

##### **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

The study was conducted in conformity with the recommendations of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Hong Kong. Ethical approval was obtained from College of International Studies, Southwest University prior to the commencement of the study. Before the study, informed consent was obtained from all study participants.

##### **Consent for publication**

The author, hereby, gives her consent for the publication of this article in *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*. The author also affirms that the content of the manuscript is original and has not been published elsewhere.

##### **Competing interests**

The author declares no competing interests.

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报告验真

# 检索报告

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数据库	委托篇数	收录篇数
ESCI	1	1


科学技术部西南



2025年6月20日  
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一、检索结果附表

序号	论文信息	收录情况	期刊指标
1	Li Wei. The impact of the cognitive-emotive dialectic on L2 development of English majors in the free teacher education program in China: a perezhivanie perspective. ASIAN-PACIFIC JOURNAL OF SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION, 2025, 10(1).	ESCI	JCR影响因子(2024):2.2 JCR分区(2024):Q1区 中科院分区(2025升级版): 大类:教育学3区 小类:语言学3区/教育学和 教育研究4区

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## 二、检索结果附件

### (一) ESCI收录

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标题: The impact of the cognitive-emotive dialectic on L2 development of English majors in the free teacher education program in China: a perezhivanie perspective

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# 检索报告

## 一、检索要求

1. 委托人: 李炜 (Li W.)
2. 委托单位: 西南大学
3. 检索目的: 论文被 SCOPUS 收录情况

## 二、检索范围

SCOPUS ( <a href="https://www.scopus.com/">https://www.scopus.com/</a> )	1960-present	网络版
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## 三、检索结果

委托人提供的1篇论文被SCOPUS收录, 论文收录情况见附件一。

特此证明!



检索报告人: 孟双凤

东北师范大学科技查新咨询中心

教育部科技查新工作站(L24)

2025年3月24日

## 附件一: SCOPUS收录情况

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摘要: The field of second language acquisition (SLA) research has long been governed by a paradigm that prioritized cognition over emotion. Recently, increased attention has been drawn to the role of perezhivanie in language development as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) brought together emotion and cognition, thereby offering an analytical tool to explore the interplay of emotion and cognition in a holistic way. The present study seeks to explore and capture the notion of perezhivanie in three Chinese learners of L2 English in the free teacher education program and its link for their language development. Utilizing multiple sources of data, including questionnaires, narrative frames and interviews, this study conducts a thematic analysis of the cognitive and emotive elements in the data. The study reveals that the three participants shared the same purpose in learning English: to become English teachers in either primary or high schools. It also demonstrates that during the language learning process, predominantly negative emotions, while not inevitably hindering progress, can slow down the pace of language development, whereas positive emotions consistently foster language development. © The Author(s) 2025.

作者关键字: Cognitive-emotive dialectic; English majors; Free teacher education program; Perezhivanie

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