

# An Investigation of the Relationship Between English Classroom Environment in Rural Junior Middle School and Students' English Learning Boredom

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**Abstract:** Learning boredom is a negative sense of experience caused by students' lack of interest in learning. For rural junior high school students, English learning is often limited to English classroom. Although a consensus has been reached that the classroom environment has an impact on the process and outcome of second/foreign language learning, it's still unclear how the classroom environment is related to the process of breeding negative emotions such as boredom among learners. Under such a circumstance, this study adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, taking 480 students from rural junior high schools as subjects, using methods with a combination of questionnaire survey and interview to study the current situation and correlation between English classroom environment and English learning boredom in rural junior high schools. And the results show that rural junior high school students' overall perception of English classroom environment is at a high level and the overall English learning boredom among rural junior high school students is at a medium level. Also, there is a negative correlation between English classroom environment and English learning boredom. The English classroom environment has the function of negative prediction of boredom in students' learning process.

**Keywords:** Rural Junior High School Students, English Classroom Environment, English Learning Boredom.

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## 1. Introduction

Boredom is believed to be the most pervasively experienced emotion in learning process [1]. Although boredom plays an important role in the educational psychological field, there are still gaps in the applied linguistics field about the influence of language learning boredom. Thus, it is necessary for language scholars and researchers to conduct systematic researches to fill this gap. In the meanwhile, English classroom environment is another issue that has an important effect on students' English learning. The classroom environment is a complex system which combines all kinds of physical and psychological issues [2]. It can provide language acquisition conditions which are different from natural communication and interaction [3]. However, there are quite few studies to figure out the relationship between English classroom environment and English learning boredom.

In this case, this research will be fulfilled from both theoretical and empirical aspects just in order to figure out the relationship between English learning boredom and English classroom environment where the teaching and learning processes are implemented.

## 2. Classroom Environment and Learning Boredom

Sinclair [4] is the first scholar to define the classroom environment as a state which contains the conditions and other issues to improve students' learning ability. From the physical aspect, Knirk [5] defines the classroom environment as a learning station which includes the teaching buildings, playgrounds, laboratories, and other equipment buildings. From the psychological aspect, Fraser and Treagust [6] referred to the classroom environment as teachers' and students' perceptions, especially the perception of the

psychological atmosphere. Taken as a kind of psychological issue, Walberg [7] regarded the classroom environment as a kind of atmosphere which can influence students' learning. With the connection of physical and psychological issues of classroom environment, Dorman [8] defined the classroom environment as a combination of physical classroom environment, social classroom environment and psychological classroom environment which are perceived by students and teachers.

Philosophers firstly defined boredom as a kind of perception of a complex condition in all human beings [9]. In psychological and sociological fields, boredom is only believed as a kind of complex phenomenon [10]. Especially in the psychological field, it is treated as a kind of temporary experience that may hinder the learning process [11]. And in the sociological field, boredom is taken as one's personality which resists school orders imposed by the educational system [12]. It also can be concluded that boredom is related to a statement that proposes some negative impacts on one's performance of tasks at hand [13]. In other words, boredom causes a disengaged state which prevents human behaviors [14]. Here, we can find that boredom is a complex research target, and it is necessary to classify and investigate the subtypes of boredom to better understand how it functions.

## 3. The Investigation and Analysis of Junior High School Students' English Learning Boredom and English Classroom Environment

The questionnaire was firstly designed and then distributed to junior high school students from rural areas in November 2021. With the supervision of teachers and researchers, 480 eighth grade students participated in the empirical study to fill in the questionnaire. The researchers distributed 480 questionnaires and received 468 valid inventories. There are

236 males and 232 females who participated in the survey. Also, the significance and principles of filling the questionnaire were informed to students before the distribution of the questionnaire. Having checked and recorded each item of the questionnaire on the computer, these data were tested by SPSS 18.0 which is widely used to analyze statistics in research. The questionnaires were firstly analyzed by doing item analysis, validity analysis and reliability analysis. Also, descriptive statistics analysis, independent sample test, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were conducted. Then, the current situation of English classroom environment and students' English learning boredom was statistically analyzed. Next, an independent sample T-test is used to explore the difference between males and females in English classroom environment and English learning boredom respectively. Following, one-way ANOVA is carried out to investigate whether students with different language proficiency have been affected by English classroom environment and students'

English learning boredom and how it is influenced by this atmosphere. Next, the correlation analysis is applied to explore the overall relationship between junior high school English classroom environment and students' English learning boredom. Lastly, the four dimensions of Students' English classroom environment are used as independent variables, while another four dimensions of English learning boredom are served as dependent variables for multiple regression analysis. At the time of analyzing the results of quantitative data, the interviews are combined to explain the impact of English classroom environment on students' English learning boredom.

### 3.1. The Description of Overall Rural Junior High School Students' Perception of English Classroom Environment

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of English classroom environment

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Peers' cooperation	468	1.00	5.00	3.2160	1.04515
Teachers' support	467	1.33	5.00	3.5415	.88909
Classroom equipment	468	1.00	5.00	3.3661	.85757
Class order	468	1.20	5.00	3.4803	.83697
Overall	466	1.85	4.70	3.4066	.62057
Valid N (listwise)	466				

As is seen from table 1, the overall mean of rural junior high school students' perception of English classroom environment reaches 3.4066. And this result identifies the 468 junior high school students perceive their English classroom environment relatively well. The average value of teachers' support is 3.5415, which belongs to the higher level. We can know that the general students are content with their English teachers and their teachers help them a lot, and there exists a harmonious teacher-student relationship between them. As for the average values of Peers' cooperation, Classroom equipment and Class order, all these three different dimensions belong to the medium level with the means of 3.2160, 3.3661 and 3.4803 respectively. This explains that

students would like to help each other in English class and the class teaching equipment and the English learning atmosphere are relatively suitable for learning. We can learn from the above data analysis that rural junior high school students are relatively satisfied with their English environment. In addition, with the intention of furthering the research on students' perception of English classroom environment, each item in the four dimensions is illustrated.

### 3.2. The Description of Overall Rural Junior High School Students' Perception of English Learning Boredom

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of English learning boredom

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
inattention	468	1.00	5.00	3.1591	.80951
low arousal	466	1.38	5.00	3.5583	.78352
disengagement	467	1.00	5.00	3.4860	.86303
high arousal	466	1.00	5.00	3.6989	.93374
Overall	463	1.29	4.89	3.4829	.74682
Valid N (listwise)	463				

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of rural junior high school students' English learning boredom scale. As can be seen from the table, the mean value of high arousal (M=3.6989; SD=0.93374) is the highest and the mean value of low arousal (M=3.5583; SD=0.78352) is the second. It can be said that most junior high school students in rural areas have a strong negative emotion of boredom. Although they are in the classroom, they are uneasy about their English learning and sometimes even feel annoyed or horrified about

the issues in English classroom. And the mean values of inattention (M=3.1591; SD=0.80951) and disengagement (M=3.4860; SD=0.86303) belong to the middle level, which manifests that junior high school students may lose interest in their English study and feel distracted in their English learning. The overall mean value (M=3.4829; SD=0.74682) of the whole English learning boredom research at the medium level. Also, the English learning boredom has a good consistency as the four dimensions of English boredom are

below 1.00. In a word, rural junior high school students raise high boredom in their English classes. The characteristics of learning boredom reflect losing interest, feeling bored, feeling anxious and even horrible and feeling distracted in class.

## 4. Relationship Between English Classroom Environment and English Learning Boredom

### 4.1. Pearson Correlation Analysis Between English Classroom Environment and English Learning Boredom

**Table 3.** The Pearson correlation analysis of English classroom environment and English learning boredom

		Inattention	Low arousal	disengagement	High arousal	Overall learning boredom
Peer cooperation	Pearson Correlation	-.268**	-.233**	-.285**	-.269**	-.264**
	Sig (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	466	466	466	466	466
Teachers' support	Pearson Correlation	-.173**	-.165**	-.110**	-.172**	-.176**
	Sig (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	466	466	466	466	466
Classroom equipment	Pearson Correlation	-.450**	-.483**	-.483**	-.497**	-.482**
	Sig (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	466	466	466	466	466
Class order	Pearson Correlation	-.476**	-.381**	-.462**	-.398**	-.491**
	Sig (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	466	466	466	466	466
Overall classroom environment	Pearson Correlation	-.488**	-.479**	-.428**	-.509**	-.501**
	Sig (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

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

According to table 3, we can learn that there exists a negative correlation between English classroom environment and English learning boredom. And the Pearson coefficient of the overall English classroom environment and overall English learning boredom is -0.501. The correlation coefficient of this study's variables is rightly in this interval, thus we can say that the degree of correlation between English classroom and English learning boredom is in the medium. In other words, if students have a higher perception of the current English classroom environment, they will have a lower perception of English learning boredom. Conversely, the lower perception of current English classroom environment, the higher perception of English learning boredom.

To better explore the correlation between English classroom environment and English learning boredom, the author used the Pearson correlation to analyze the correlation between the dimensions of these two variables respectively. As seen from the above table, the four dimensions of English classroom environment and four dimensions of English learning boredom have a negative correlation with each other. The Pearson correlation coefficients of classroom equipment with the other four dimensions are -0.450\*\*, -0.483\*\*, -0.483\*\* and -0.497\*\*, which manifests that the classroom equipment is mediating correlated with four dimensions of English learning boredom. Thus, it can be seen that the rural junior high schools' classroom equipment has a relatively significant impact on students' learning boredom. According to the descriptive results of students' perception of classroom equipment, the lacking of using multi-media teaching equipment is an important issue that causes English learning boredom. The Pearson correlation coefficients of class order with the other four dimensions are -0.476\*\*, -0.381\*\*, -0.462\*\* and -0.398\*\*, which illustrate that there exists a strong

correlation between the class order and four dimensions of English learning boredom. Sometimes, the disordered class order can also cause students to feel bored with their English class. Student E once said when he saw many students chatting in English class he was in no mood to study and raised a boring mood for that class. The Pearson correlation coefficients of peer cooperation and the other four dimensions are -0.268\*\*, -0.233\*\*, -0.285\*\* and -0.269\*\*, which expressed that there is a low correlation between peer cooperation and the other four dimensions of English learning boredom. This verifies that the classmates' cooperation has little impact on students' English learning boredom. The Pearson correlation coefficients of teachers' support and the other four dimensions are -0.173\*\*, -0.165\*\*, -0.110\*\* and -0.172\*\*. These results are relatively lower compared with other groups of data and manifest teachers' support has a low impact on students' English learning boredom. Rural junior high school students have a high perception of teachers' support from the descriptive statistics of English classroom environment. For them, it makes no difference to feel boredom caused by English teachers. Student C said her English teacher always gave help equally to all students in her class and seldom has anyone felt boredom with her. As for the sig(2-tailed) of the Pearson correlation coefficients of the two variables, all of them have reached 0.000, which means there is a significant difference between each dimension of English classroom environment and English learning boredom.

## 4.2. Multiple Regression Analysis Between English Classroom Environment and English Learning Boredom

**Table 4.** The Model Summary of the influence of English classroom environment on overall English learning boredom

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.637 a	.406	.386	.70352	.231	13.235	1	402	.000
2	.603 a	.397	.348	.70457	.018	12.078	1	407	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), classroom equipment  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), classroom equipment, class order  
 c. Dependent Variable: English learning boredom

In table 4, the model summary of English classroom environment and English learning boredom is presented. In this section, the four dimensions of English classroom environment serve as independent variables and overall English learning boredom functions as the dependent variable. We can see from the table that model one is .637 a and model

two is .603 a , which means the class equipment and class order have a strong linear correlation with the English learning boredom. The “Adjusted R Square” of model one is 0.386, which means that classroom equipment can account for 38.6% of the overall English learning boredom. The “Adjusted R Square” of model two is 0.348, which means that the class order can account for 34.8% of overall English learning boredom.

**Table 5.** Regression analysis of the influence of English classroom environment on overall English learning boredom

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.587	.332		4.825	.000		
	Classroom equipment	-.565	.157	.564	-6.908	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	.523	.268		3.625	.000		
	Classroom equipment	-.506	.138	.478	-6.832	.000	.447	1.369
	Class order	-.447	.145	.153	-6.754	.000	.447	1.369

Table 5 shows the coefficients of the regression model of English classroom environment and English learning boredom. From the table, we can learn that the sig (2-tailed) is 0.000, which means there is a significant difference in the regression coefficients, verifying that the two dimensions of English classroom environment can predict the dependent variable. And because the unstandardized coefficients are negative numbers, it can be concluded that the classroom environment and class order have a negatively predictive function on English learning boredom. In other words, if the classroom equipment is advanced and teachers adopt multimedia as teaching forms, and the class order is good organized as well, students will have a low perception of boredom. In contrast, students will have a high perception of boredom, if English teachers adopted monotonous teaching methods and equipment and the class order is chaotic in rural junior high schools.

## 5. Conclusion

The research found that rural junior high school students have a good perception of their English classroom environment and a mediating level of English learning boredom. In the meanwhile, the results show that there is a negative correlation between English classroom environment and English learning boredom. And there exists a significant difference between each dimension of English classroom environment and English learning boredom.

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