

# Reviewing the Influence of Positive Emotions on Second Language Learning

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**Abstract.** Previous studies at home and abroad have focused more on negative emotions and the negative effects of various emotions while neglecting positive emotions and the positive effects of various emotions. However, with the continuous deepening of research on emotions, positive psychology has emerged and emerged, and research on positive emotions has also begun to shift towards positivity. However, due to the lack of relevant research, in this article, positive emotions have been chosen for research, mainly to explore the definition, classification, role of positive emotions and the process of their impact on second language learning. The research has shown the following results: firstly, there exists a positive correlation between the positive emotions of teachers and those of students. Secondly, students' positive emotions are beneficial for second language acquisition. The conclusion drawn from the collected literature and some surveys in this article is that positive emotions have an important and positive impact on foreign language learning.

**Keywords:** Positive, emotion, second language, student, learning.

## 1. Introduction

Learning a second language is a unique experience that represents students facing new information that is vastly different from before, such as vocabulary, grammar, culture, and reading and writing habits [1]. During the process of language learning, various positive and negative emotions can arise, which have a significant impact on second language learning. However, previous studies have focused more on the negative effects of negative emotions, neglecting emotions that have a promoting effect on second language acquisition [2, 3]. However, with the development of positive psychology in China, the variables studied domestically and internationally are no longer limited to negative factors in language learning, and the research variables are also more diverse, such as some positive emotions and emotions that have a positive impact on language learning [4]. However, due to the lack of relevant research, further research is required to investigate the impact of positive emotions on the acquisition of a second language. Therefore, the authors of this article chose positive emotions to explore. In terms of research significance, the authors' work can offer new insights into learning a second language and broaden research topics in this area, and expand more research space. In addition, as the authors have also studied methods for cultivating positive emotions in the process of second language acquisition, this study is also beneficial for promoting the learning of second language learners.

## 2. Definition of Positive Emotions

With the continuous development of emotional research, the concept of positive psychology has gradually emerged in the public eye. Positive psychology is the scientific investigation that tries to comprehend the conditions and procedures connected with the prosperous and ideal functioning of communities and individuals [5]. Positive psychology highly values personal happiness and approaches human struggles through a focus on strengths, rather than weaknesses [6]. In short, although psychology always focuses on studying the pain, unhappiness, and other negative aspects of an individual's life, the purpose of positive psychology is to study positive emotions such as happiness and happiness. Unlike traditional psychology, which studies diseases (defects), it focuses

more on positive qualities that can lead to human success, satisfaction, and self-actualization [7]. With the publication of the groundbreaking paper by Seligman and Sixente Mikhail in 2000, positive psychology announced its arrival and revival [8]. As a new area of psychology, it focuses on the good parts of human experience instead of mistakes in life. With the continuous development of positive psychology, research on positive emotions is also increasingly valued. Positive emotions, as one of the three cornerstones of positive psychology, include pleasure, interest, and flow. It represents a positive and positive emotional state, mainly manifested in emotional experiences such as happiness, thankfulness, pride, joy, hope, and admiration.

### 3. Classification and Function of Positive Emotion

Different categories of behaviors are performed by learners during the process of second language learning. A sea of researchers and scholars paid attention to positive emotions in this field before, and countless meaningful research results and theories were obtained. According to the broaden-and-build theory mentioned by Fredrickson, a few concrete performing forms are suggested such as play, creativity, curiosity, and exploration, among which are generally considered beneficial to learning a second language [9]. By the way, from sentiment analysis and emotion detection, a conclusion has been summed up, which is positive emotion could be divided into happiness, cheerfulness, joy, etc [10]. From the authors' point of view, there is no exact classification of positive emotion, which means that all of these types mentioned above can be called positive emotion. Besides, an obvious difference exists between these broadening behaviors and those produced by a negative emotional response.

On the other hand, it is obvious that positive emotions have promoting effects during the process of learning a second language. There are three definite roles of positive emotions: extending our thought-action repertoires, constructing resources for the future, and reversing the undesirable effects of negative emotions [9]. Positive emotions are just like endless power to push learners through the difficulties they have met during language learning, compared to the use of steam engines during the First Industrial Revolution. These strategies are useful for overcoming challenges, sadness can aid in reconnection after a period of separation, and contempt is frequently utilised to maintain social hierarchies [11]. But when a second-language learner keeps researching the deep field, it is inescapable to face negative emotions. These actions are effective in overcoming obstacles, sadness facilitates reconnection after separation, and contempt is often used to uphold social hierarchies [12]. Negative emotions typically concentrate on a solitary and distinct objective within the stream of consciousness, directing resources towards a specific, purposeful action. Lazarus indicates that negative emotions frequently correspond with a particular action tendency [12].

The ramifications of incorporating positive emotions into second language learning could go far beyond those of minimizing or reversing the impact of negative emotions, according to the broaden-and-build approach [13]. Applying this theory revealed that they extend offerings to vantage points and encourage interaction with the language, play, and field exploration in unfamiliar environments. When anxiety is difficult to avoid, positive emotions may even act as a prophylactic or protective mechanism against bad feelings like language anxiety [14]. The educational methods used in foreign language classes might change if we adopt a broaden-and-build approach to pleasant emotions [14].

Among those of perform positive emotions, most of the researchers seem to have a particular interest and therefore concentrate their attention on enjoyment due to it is widely applied to language learning and communication requirements. When one not only meets their requirements but goes above and above to accomplish something unexpected or surprising, they experience enjoyment [12]. There is a risk inherent in the pleasure that creates a potentially complex and mixed relationship between the two separate sides of the emotions. While it appears intuitive that enjoyable experiences are crucial to second language learning, research into the connection between the emotions that drive enjoyment and language learning is in its beginning stages [15,14].

#### **4. Methods of Developing Positive Emotions in the Process of Learning Second Language**

Although positive psychology research has been widely applied in fields such as mental health and education, there is still relatively little research on second language teaching and learning. The experiment confirmed that positive academic emotions can positively promote the improvement of learning motivation. Therefore, people need to cultivate positive emotions among teachers and students in teaching and learning a second language. Based on the above positive emotions play a valuable role in the process of learning a second language, and how to turn them into driving forces for students to learn a second language then becomes an important research topic. What they must do is exert their inner driving forces or through external factors to promote positive emotions play to promote. Lots of researchers draw conclusions about the above talking. Previous research has demonstrated that a positive learning environment can facilitate positive emotions, which in turn, can impact positive learning behaviours. Therefore, Dewi, Sani, and Jeremiah posit that the quality of learning is dependent on various factors that cultivate a positive classroom environment [16]. They analysed a portion of the existing examples and identified ways in which emotions could be modelled to improve the service and provide meaningful information to users. Additionally, they defined and discussed the capacity of the system to generate analysis and recommendations based on the theory of teaching and learning. During the experiment, it was found that the teaching style of lecturers has a positive impact on students' learning behaviour when their emotions are recognised during classes. A computational system assumes that positive emotions in the class are a result of positive student emotions and encourages lecturers to retain or improve their teaching styles accordingly. Another method founded by Lingmei Cao and Shuxian Zhu is that the communicative approach and process-oriented approach could help college students develop positive emotions during second language learning and writing through the analysis of emotional barriers and corresponding drawbacks caused by the traditional teaching method [17]. Anika Cohen suggests that exploring the concept of positive thinking through enjoyable activities can foster positive emotions when acquiring a second language. Given children's affinity for learning through games and crafts, it is unsurprising that they may develop a constructive outlook through playful discovery [18]. As far as the author's concerned, the above researcher's methods are relatively effective and feasible. Because different methods lead to different aspects of positive emotions promoting second language acquisition, there is no way to say which method is better than others. By summarizing the above methods, two perspectives could be drawn to develop positive emotions in the process of learning a second language. From the perspective of teachers, they are the main external factor that affects students' foreign language pleasure. In the concept of positive psychology, individuals need to strengthen the experiences of learners and teachers in terms of mobility, hope, courage, happiness, optimism, creativity, happiness, perseverance, resilience, strength, and laughter, to improve learners' language progress [7]. Therefore, teachers should actively improve their positive emotions during the teaching process, pay more attention to students' positive emotions and experiences, stimulate students' interest, bring them a sense of classroom pleasure, give positive evaluations to students, and further stimulate students' positive emotions for learning. From the perspective of students, they should give their teacher authentic feedback to help the teacher to change teaching styles and activities timely to stimulate students' positive emotions. Students should also vigorously cooperate with the teacher's work and use their inner driving force to help themselves take a further step in learning a second language.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Based on the above research on some literature and surveys, the authors draws the following two conclusions: firstly, there exists a positive correlation between the positive emotions of teachers and those of students. Secondly, students' positive emotions are beneficial for second language acquisition. Overall, the conclusion drawn by the authors from the above literature and some surveys is that positive emotions have an important and positive impact on foreign language learning. However, due

to the many and complex variables that affect foreign language learning, this study is not yet comprehensive and further research is needed. For example, the research object is mainly college students, which is relatively single. The scope of the research object can be expanded, such as increasing the number of primary and secondary school students and social figures. As science and technology continue to advance, online teaching methods have made significant progress. It is imperative to focus on the impact of online instructional materials, teachers and students, and the classroom environment on teacher-student relationships and second language learning.

## Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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