Time to Focus on Positivity: Integrating a Positive Psychology Perspective into EFL Research in Korea

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The purpose of this paper was to introduce positive psychology, to the fields of SLA and English education in Korea. Positive psychology investigates how people flourish and seeks the virtues and strengths of humans. It focuses on the factors enabling people and their communities to thrive, instead of focusing on psychological disorders and abnormalities, longstanding issues of general psychology. Its three main research topics include positive emotions, traits, and institutions, all of which have relevance to SLA and L2 education. This paper examined how these topics have been approached in SLA. Much attention has focused on positive emotions, particularly, enjoyment, which has gained momentum in recent years with publications. Empirical studies of the impacts of positive emotions on L2 learning were reviewed with discussion of enjoyment. The paper concludes by discussing directions for future research, applying positive psychology to Korean EFL contexts.

Key words: positive psychology, positive emotions, positive traits, positive institutions, foreign language enjoyment

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1. INTRODUCTION

People experience a spectrum of emotions when learning a second or foreign language, which include happiness, enjoyment, pride, interest, frustration and anxiety. It is widely accepted that these emotions are of critical importance to L2 learning, either promoting or inhibiting one's interlanguage development as well as L2 communication (Dewaele & Li, 2020; Khajavy, MacIntyre, & Barabadi, 2018; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017; Oxford, 2016). As teachers and educators of English as a foreign language, we all wish that our students have positive experiences and feel happy in the English classroom. Accordingly, we try our best to create an enjoyable and supportive learning environment. This endeavor is based on the belief that positive emotions that students experience in positive classrooms would engage them in learning activities, motivate them to exert more efforts in studying English, and help them stay in the L2 program. Whether or not this belief is derived from solid theoretical foundations, our own experiences assert that it is fully genuine and valid in its own way.

It is fair to say that much emotion research in SLA has so far focused on negative emotions with anxiety being most investigated, while positive emotions and their effects have largely been unaddressed (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; Shao, Nicholson, Kutuk, & Lei, 2020). It is to a certain extent understandable considering all the difficulties that L2 learning brings about and their effects on the learning process and the outcomes. Unlike L1 learning, not every L2 learner succeeds in their pursuit of mastering the target language. Even successful learners would confess that their journey to a higher level of L2 proficiency was rather a struggle filled with years of practicing and agony for not being able to perform as good as they wish to. Nevertheless, the relevance of positive emotions to L2 learning is too obvious to ignore as many teachers would testify. In fact, experiencing positive emotions is of crucial importance for EFL learners since their self-image is particularly vulnerable in the L2 classroom and their L2 skills do not match their intellectual levels (Arnold, 1999; Arnold & Fonseca Mora, 2011), from which humiliation would ensue.

Fortunately, an increasing number of L2 scholars are now turning their attention to positive emotions that learners experience in the L2 classrooms and beginning to gain more insights into whether and to what extent positive emotions, such as enjoyment, love, and pride, play a role in L2 learning (e.g., Ahmadi-Azad, Asadollahfam, & Zoghi, 2020; Alenezi, 2020; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014, 2016; Dewaele, Witney, Saito, & Dewaele, 2018; Li, Jang, & Dewaele, 2018; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017). In addition, a few scholars have shed light on the positive effects of negative emotions such as anxiety and guilt on L2 motivation and achievement, moving away from focusing on only their debilitating functions (López & Aguilar, 2012; Swain, 2013; Teimouri, 2018).

The development is partly influenced by positive psychology, a subfield in psychology,

which explores what makes people feel happy and flourish by studying positive emotions, character strengths, and institutions that help people thrive (Dewaele, Chen, Padilla, & Lake, 2019; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2019; Shao et al., 2020; Wang, Derakhshan, & Zhang, 2021). The proponents of positive psychology argue that the field of psychology as a whole has been dominated by psychological disorders and abnormalities, which might have contributed to our incomplete understanding of human nature (Peterson, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology, however, does not intend to disregard the long-established psychological issues and research topics. It rather tries to provide a complementary approach to studying the psychological aspects of people in the belief that having a more balanced view of human nature would help people lead more enjoyable and fulfilling lives.

The central principles of positive psychology have important implications for the fields of SLA and language education where the ultimate goal is to support learners to reach their highest levels of proficiency and success by providing them with enjoyable language learning experiences. In particular, positive emotions, a key component of positive psychology, deserve more attention in that they are not only end results of psychological wellbeing, but also a means to foster learners' engagement in learning, performance, intellectual growth, motivation and resiliency (Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). Acquiring a second or foreign language requires a long-term efforts, motivation, interest, and perseverance from learners (MacIntyre et al., 2019) which are very difficult to possess without positive learning experiences.

Nevertheless, there has been little research interest when it comes to positive emotions in EFL research in Korea although a handful of studies dealing with the topic have been published recently (Cho, 2022; Ma & Cho, 2020; Park & Lim, 2021; Shin & Shin, 2021). Investigating both positive and negative emotions together with their causes and effects would allow SLA researchers and English educators to have in-depth knowledge of L2 learning emotions that could eventually lead learners to either success or failure in the long run (Oxford, 2016). This paper, hence, aims to introduce positive psychology and pave the way for more comprehensive research on language learning emotions. To do so, the tenets, theoretical foundations, and research focuses of positive psychology will be presented first, followed by the analyses of existing positive psychology research in SLA. The directions and areas for future research will also be discussed as well as the limitations of the paper.

2. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND SLA

2.1. Three Main Topics of Positive Psychology Research

Positive psychology can be defined as a scientific study of positive aspects of human beings and their life. Since its formal introduction in 1998 by Martin Seligman, the president of American Psychological Association at the time, the field of positive psychology has been rapidly expanding with academic associations, annual conferences, scholarly journals, and numerous publications. After identifying 'treating mental illness', 'helping people have more fulfilling lives', and 'developing strong individual qualities' as three missions in psychology, Seligman (1999) insisted that the latter two missions had remained in the shadows of the first one, which received exclusive attention from both researchers and clinical practitioners. Consequently, in general psychology focus has been on the negative human experiences and mental illness and the development of tools to reduce the undesirable aspects.

On the contrary, positive psychology aims to investigate how human beings flourish and what makes life worth living, such as satisfaction, wellbeing, happiness, flow, hope, and much more (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It also attempts to develop the means that create positive emotions, promote more active involvement in life, and pursue a meaningful life (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). The research on the positive features of human life is usually conducted on three different levels: subjective, individual, and group (Kim, Keck, Miller, & Gonzalez, 2012), which are so called 'thee pillars' of positive psychology. At the subjective level, the focus is on the individuals' internal experiences, that is, positive emotions (e.g., happiness, pleasure, and satisfaction) while at the individual level the focus is geared toward positive traits and character strengths. Finally, at the group level, research is carried out on the institutions that empower people and their communities. In the following subsections, each of the three research topics will be briefly but succinctly discussed.

2.1.1. Positive emotions

Positive emotions are different from mere sensory pleasure or a positive mood which are usually experienced briefly. Rather, positive emotions involve a cognitive evaluation of the situation in that they are responses to the changes in the way people interpret the current circumstances (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). That is to say, people upon going through an event or situation reflect on how the event affects their personal wellbeing and how they should deal with the situation. Positive emotions are described to help people broaden their perspectives and develop different ways of thinking and acting, unlike negative emotions which tend to result in narrow perspectives and restricted responses (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001). These broadened perspectives, thoughts, and actions are shown to in turn foster individuals' intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social growth (Fredrickson, 2013). Various types of positive emotions have been the targets of empirical studies, and among them, people are reported to experience love, joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, and pride,

more frequently than others in everyday life (Fredrickson, 2013). The topic of positive emotions is the one area that has attracted several SLA scholars studying individual differences, in particular, affect. Related discussion will be provided in detail in Section 3.

2.1.2. Positive traits

The second domain of positive psychology research is the study of positive traits such as virtues and character strengths of people. In essence, positive traits are subjective characteristics that individual people possess. Yet, they can also be experienced through actions and behaviors which bring about certain experiences such as being kind, fair, or honest. Peterson and Seligman (2004), two pioneering scholars of positive psychology, studied the virtues and character strengths presented in philosophy and religious texts from various cultures around the world and then, identified a total of 24 universal character strengths which were classified into six virtues (Table 1, adapted from Ruch, Weber, Park, & Peterson, 2014). However, it is worth noting that character strengths do not function alone. Individuals who wish to achieve a certain virtue should take on the whole group of character strengths under the associated virtue (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). For instance, to have courage, a person should practice being brave, persevere, honest, and zestful.

TABLE 1
Positive Traits: Six Virtues and 24 Positive Character Strengths

Virtues	Descriptions	Character Strengths
Wisdom & knowledge	Cognitive strengths that lead to the acquisition and use of knowledge	creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, perspective
Courage	Emotional strengths that require the will to achieve goals in the face of adversity	Bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest
Humanity	Interpersonal strengths that entail making friends with and caring for others	Love, kindness, social intelligence
Justice	Civic strengths that enable healthy community life	Teamwork, fairness, leadership
Temperance	Strengths that keep people from going beyond a limit	Forgiveness, modesty, prudence, self-regulation
Transcendence	Strengths that help make connections with the larger world and give meaning	Appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, religiousness

A substantial number of studies in this area have focused on whether different cultures prioritize virtues differently, and the results show that there are more similarities than differences. For example, according to a study which studied 12,000 and 450 adult subjects from the US and Switzerland, respectively, those who have higher levels of life satisfaction are more likely to have hope, zest, love and curiosity (Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007). Similar results were also reported by other studies carried out with subjects from the UK (Linley et al., 2007), Japan (Shimai, Otake, Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006), and South Africa (Van Eeden, Wissing, Dreyer, Park, & Peterson, 2008).

2.1.3. Positive Institutions

The last research interest of positive psychology is positive institutions. At this level, positive psychology is about the civic virtues and the institutions that support individual people to have a more meaningful life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The major issue in this domain is to identify the institutions and the practices which help to take out the best qualities of human beings (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005). Positive institutions here are understood as organized endeavors made to develop systems which facilitate individuals to socially thrive, including family life, educational institutions, business, community organizations, and societies (Kim et al., 2012). It is reasoned that creating a supportive environment where individuals receive uninterrupted encouragement and mentoring would nurture positive emotions and traits. In this regard, three components of positive psychology, i.e., positive emotions, traits, and institutions, are closely linked, and it is imperative to balance the individual wellbeing and trait development with the collective efforts of the institutions. It is also implied that when applying positive psychology to SLA and language education, it is also necessary to consider the wider context of learning and teaching to better understand how learners undertake L2 learning.

2.2. Positive Psychology in SLA

Positive psychology offers a complementary approach to studying psychology in general by broadening the research foci with the inclusion of positive aspects of human life. In this regard, it is worthwhile to incorporate positive psychology in SLA and L2 education which also value pleasant emotions, productive traits and supportive environments but have been dominated by the exclusive attention to negative emotions. Fortunately, about a decade ago, MacIntyre and colleagues started to draw L2 researchers' attention to positive psychology by introducing related theories and conducting empirical studies (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). Dewaele and colleagues have also been passionate advocates of positive psychology by studying the effects of both negative and positive

emotions on L2 learning. In particular, they have conducted extensive research on foreign language enjoyment including its antecedents and outcomes, and differences between genders (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2018). Foreign language enjoyment will be the focus of Section 4.

Yet, in retrospect, it is quite obvious that the fields of SLA and L2 education have been more than ready to incorporate positive psychology into its research agenda for years now. In the 1970s, the humanistic approaches recognized the importance of affect in language learning and took more a holistic view of L2 learning with the focus on both cognition and emotion. Krashen (1985) took a note of the role of emotions with his affective filter hypothesis, while Gardner insisted learners' perceptions of the target language speakers and culture influence L2 learning outcomes. Clément (1986) also proposed the socio-contextual model which draws attention to the learning context, the power of relationships among groups. The model emphasizes the fact that individual learners' psychological aspects are affected by the social and cultural contexts where they are embedded. Finally, good language learner studies provide evidence that positive personality traits such as openness, perseverance, grit, tolerance of ambiguity, and empathy are beneficial for L2 acquisition (Ehrman, 2008; Ockey, 2011; Rubin, 2008; Wei, Gao, & Wang, 2019; Wilson, 2008).

As can be seen from the brief review of history, ground work has been done by several SLA scholars. However, it should be noted that the above mentioned approaches have their own weaknesses and criticisms. The humanistic approaches were heavily criticized for the lack of empirical evidence and the excessive attention on affect while neglecting the cognitive and linguistic aspects of L2 learning. Likewise, the affective filter hypothesis was questioned because Krashen failed to operationalize the affective filter and provide valid measuring instruments. On the other hand, the works of Gardner and Clément have been criticized in terms of its applicability beyond the Canadian context where their models were conceived (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). Finally, the personality trait research has suffered from the lack of reliable and valid measurements, which in turn produced conflicting results (Lightbown & Spada, 2019).

More recent studies are grounded on specific theories of positive psychology such as the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotion (Fredrickson, 2004, 2013) and the control-value theory of achievement emotions (Pekrun, 2000, 2006; Pekrun & Perry, 2014). According to the former theory, the function of positive emotions is to broaden "the scope of awareness, creating a form of consciousness within individuals that included a wider array of thoughts, actions, and percepts than typical" (Fredrickson, 2013, p. 15) which in turn help build personal and social resources for survival and success as shown in Figure 1. As for the control-value theory, it is claimed that positive control and value beliefs result in more productive outcomes in learning such as better recall by enhancing the positive emotions (Buff, 2014; Do, 2008).

FIGURE 1
The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2013, p. 16)
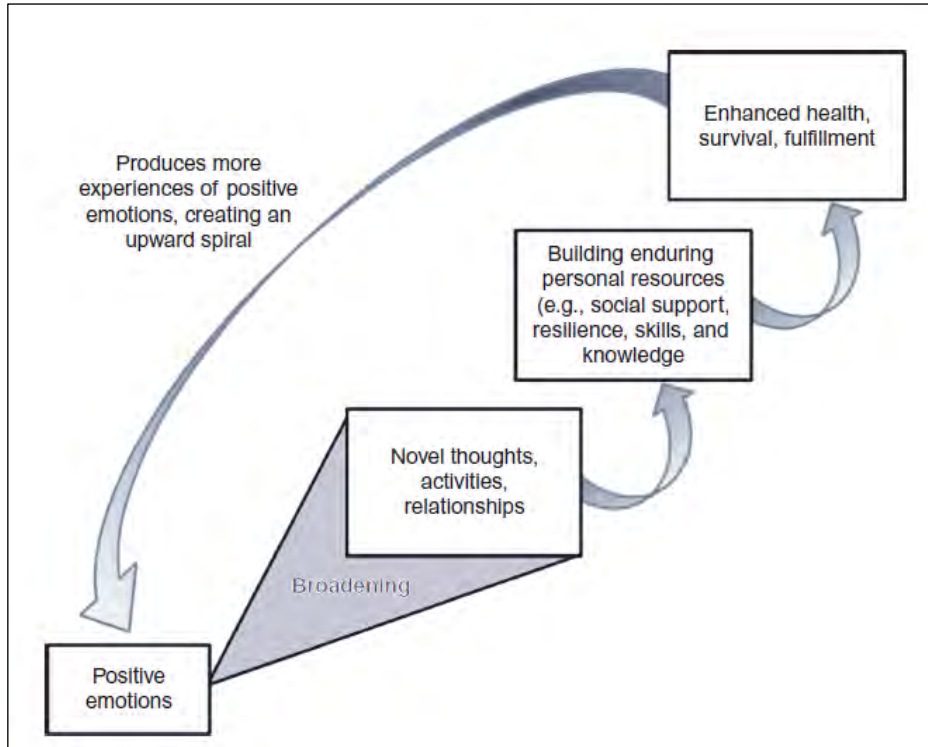
It is unfortunate that SLA and L2 scholars have paid little attention to the other two pillars of positive psychology, positive traits and institutions. In fact, there are very few studies investigating their relationships with L2 learning. Of course, a great number of studies have been carried out on personality traits and their connections to SLA. However, they were not based on the principles of positive psychology and produced inconsistent results. One notable exception is the study by Dewaele et al. (2018) which explored the mediating role of institutional variables (e.g., teacher and peer support). They reported that such positive institutional variables contributed to joyful L2 learning experiences.

Due to the dearth of studies on the two pillars of positive psychology, the present study will mainly focus on positive emotions. Before delving into positive emotions, though, it should be noted that positive psychology researchers in SLA and L2 education do not accept the view that negative and positive emotions are located at the other ends of the same emotional continuum. Rather, they acknowledge that the two cannot be separated from each other and attempt to have a more holistic view of emotions experienced while learning an L2, moving away from the overwhelming focus on either emotion only. This is in line with

Fredrickson's conclusion that these two types of emotions are not complete opposite and they are in fact qualitatively different from each other (Fredrickson, 2013).

3. POSITIVE EMOTIONS IN SLA

3.1. Relationship Between Positive Emotions and L2 Learning

Emotion has been studied for a long time in SLA and L2 education, but only after the emergence of positive psychology as a recognized research field, positive emotions have become a noteworthy topic in SLA and L2 education (MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017). A few pioneering L2 scholars who are actively involved in the positive psychology research suggest that the effects of positive emotion are more than just pleasant feelings (e.g., MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). As discussed above, positive emotions (e.g., enjoyment, pride, hope, and satisfaction) lead to increased attention and expansive thinking. For instance, L2 learners who experience positive emotions in L2 classroom will notice more of incoming language input (Gregersen, MacIntyre, & Meza, 2016). Positive emotions are also believed to undo lingering effects of negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2013), which is crucial in that negative emotions can decrease L2 students' attention, limit the processing of language input, and compromise their learning potential.

3.2. Review of Empirical Studies

Several studies have been conducted on how positive emotions (love, pride, hope, and enjoyment) affect learners' academic achievements. Pavelescu and Petric (2018) conducted a qualitative study in order to see a relationship between one of the positive emotions, 'love', and foreign language learning by interviewing four participants. Among the four, two participants showed a strong positive emotion (love) toward English. The rest of them showed enjoyment in learning a foreign language. The findings demonstrated that the positive emotions contributed to enhancing learners' motivation and sustaining engagement in learning. It was also found that the positive emotions were shaped from their belief regarding learning a foreign language, and by interacting with their family members and supportive language teachers.

Ross and Stracke (2016) attempted to investigate another positive emotion, 'pride'. In their study, 12 university students participated in three interview sessions over 6 months. The findings revealed that pride would be established by achieving goals that learners and others value. In particular, the learners experienced pride after accomplishing a task especially when others could not do so. In their study of eight ESL students at the university

level, Ross and Rivers (2018) identified three different types of emotions, hope, enjoyment and frustration experienced in language learning context. They discovered that the emotion of hope is relevant to 'future self' even though learners can feel it in the present.

Enjoyment, by far the most studied positive emotion, has been thought of as a central issue in L2 learning, which will be examined more thoroughly in the next section. Enjoyment can be defined as a kind of positive feelings that exert a positive influence on achieving academic goals when working on a demanding task. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) conducted a study to explore a relationship between academic achievements in foreign language learning and two different emotions, enjoyment and anxiety. An online survey was conducted with 1,746 people studying various second or foreign languages including English. The results showed that the two emotions were independent from each other, and enjoyment was negatively correlated with foreign language anxiety. L2 learning was also more related to the positive emotion, enjoyment, than to the negative emotion, anxiety. The results were confirmed by other studies as well (Dewaele et al., 2018; Kim & Park, 2019).

4. FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENJOYMENT

4.1. Factors Affecting Foreign Language Enjoyment

It has been reported that foreign language enjoyment (FLE hereafter) is affected by a number of variables which include learners' internal factors such as demographic profiles (e.g., age and gender), L2 proficiency, and external factors such as interpersonal dynamics with an instructor or peers. A number of studies have been conducted to discover how these factors impact the FLE (Dewaele & Li, 2022; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele et al., 2018; Kim & Park, 2019; Park, & Lim, 2021), some of which are discussed below.

Dewaele and colleagues (2016) discovered the effect of gender and L2 proficiency on the FLE. They conducted a study with 1,736 foreign language learners from several different countries and found that female students experienced enjoyment more than male students. Interestingly, female students reported a high level of anxiety as well and performed better than their male counterparts. The result implies that co-existence of two different emotions such as enjoyment and anxiety in learners could be a source to enhance their performance. Dewaele and Li (2022) focused on how learners' L2 proficiency will contribute to forming learners' enjoyment and anxiety in the Chinese context. A total of 1,414 participants were asked to report both their overall foreign language achievement and the self-perceived achievement in six areas: listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar. The regression analyses showed that the participants' self-perceived achievement in speaking and grammar was the strongest predictor of the FLE. Their self-perceived achievement in

reading was able to predict enjoyment only.

On a different note, Dewaele and colleagues (2018) have focused on how enjoyment and anxiety are related to the external factors such as peers, teachers, and classroom environments. In their study, 189 high school students from the UK were asked to complete an 18-item questionnaire. The results revealed that the learners' positive attitudes towards their teachers had a positive correlation with the FLE. Interestingly, though, the learners' internal factors such as gender and L2 proficiency had a stronger relationship with the two emotions than the external factors. The results of the studies reviewed here demonstrate the necessity of further research on the factors that affect the FLE, which will improve our understanding of its inner workings.

4.2. Effects of Foreign Language Enjoyment

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the effects that foreign language enjoyment has on various aspects of L2 learning such as learners' engagement, academic achievement, motivation and empathy. One of them is Dewaele, MacIntyre, Boudreau and Dewaele's (2016) study, which examined the effects of two different emotions, enjoyment and anxiety, on foreign language performance. The participants were asked to take a 60-item vocabulary test as well as answer the FLE and the foreign language classroom anxiety questionnaires. The results showed that the FLE predicted the learners' proficiency better the foreign language anxiety. Guo (2021) also found that FLE was highly and positively correlated with learner engagement although it had low correlations with learners' academic achievements.

The relationship between emotions and three motivation models (i.e., Gardner's L2 motivation model, Clément's social-contextual model, and Dornyei's L2 self-system) in SLA was also explored by MacIntyre and Vincze (2017). Correlation analysis revealed that positive emotions such as the FLE are significantly more associated with the L2 motivation model among the three models. Similar studies were conducted in the Korean EFL context as well. To name a few, Park and Lim (2021) investigated the effects of the FLE on learners' motivation and empathy. A total of 184 3rd year middle school students participated in the study whose results indicated that the FLE had a moderate positive relationship with both motivation and empathy. The researchers also discovered using hierarchical regression analysis that both empathy and enjoyment were statistically significant predictors of motivation by providing a positive learning experience. Yet, there is still a huge gap in our understanding of the relationship between the FLE and L2 motivation, which guarantees further research studies with more diverse subjects.

4.3. Measurement Issues of Foreign Language Enjoyment

A few attempts have been made to develop an instrument to measure foreign language enjoyment over the last ten years. One of the first attempts was made by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). They developed a 21-item scale specifically designed to suit the foreign language learning environment. The items measure enjoyment, fun, interest, and boredom in relation to language learning, reflecting learners' internal factors (creativity, pride, interest, fun) and the classroom context (teachers and peers). Later, they conducted a validation study to identify the internal factor structure of foreign language enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). By employing the exploratory factor analysis technique so as to remove meaningless items, they were able to discover a 2-factor structure, namely FLE-private (9 items) and FLE-social (8 items). The scale was shown to have a high reliability, indicating high internal consistency across items ($\alpha = 0.936$).

Jin and Zhang (2021) also explored the dimensions of foreign language enjoyment with 320 Chinese high school students. Unlike Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), they found a 3-factor solution which included enjoyment of teacher support, enjoyment of student support, and enjoyment of foreign language learning on the basis of an explanatory factor analysis. In Korea, Ma and Cho (2020) have developed the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale for Korean learners of English. The questionnaire was formulated with a five-point Likert scale on the basis of several sources; 21 items were adopted from the original FLE scale discussed above, 13 items were taken from the EGame Flow scale (Fu, Su, & Yu, 2009), and 11 items were associated with L2 learning strategies and L2 culture. They extracted six factors from the data, which were learners' positive emotions, teacher and classroom environments, L2 culture, English class, learning strategies, and peers. In spite of the several attempts to develop a valid instrument measuring the FLE, there is no certainty with regard to the internal structure of the construct of foreign language enjoyment, which means that it is necessary to continue to investigate the matter with more rigorous research standards.

5. CONCLUSION

Positive psychology is an empirical study of how people flourish and thrive and comes with an array of specific concepts and themes to be explored. This paper is intended to introduce positive psychology, a rapidly expanding subfield in psychology to both scholars and educators working in the fields of SLA and English educations in Korea. Although emotions have been studied extensively in Korea, the majority of studies are concerned with negative emotions. As a consequence, we have very scant knowledge of what roles positive emotions play when it comes to learning English in the Korean context, let alone how they

interact with other variables. With this brief but timely introduction, it is hoped that people see the potential of positive emotions (e.g., enjoyment, love, hope, and pride) as a research topic and will become interested in conducting empirical studies with the positive psychology perspective.

Up to now enjoyment is the most examined positive emotion in SLA with a significant number of empirical studies conducted overseas. The construct seems to have close relationships with other individual learner variables such as gender, L2 proficiency and attitudes towards foreign language learning. Yet, there are still very few studies that examine the interplay between enjoyment and other contextual variables, which necessitates further research on the topic. Other positive emotions such as pride, love, and hope, are still yet to be examined including their triggers and impact on L2 learning. In particular, they need to be studied in relation to personality traits and institutions with which these emotions could be either fostered or inhibited.

Another fruitful research area in L2 positive emotions is the development of reliable and valid measurement tools. Massive data were collected in several studies to develop inventories for measuring emotions including foreign language enjoyment that occur in various learning contexts. These studies usually adopted a mixed method approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods to reflect more sophisticated emotions experienced by L2 learners (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Ha & Kim, 2014; Kim & Park, 2019; Guo, 2021). Nonetheless, a closer analysis of previous validation studies of enjoyment and other emotions reveal that their factor structures are not clear-cut. It indicates that the internal factors of positive emotions are intercorrelated with each other, rather than being independent dimensions. Again, it is warranted that future studies should delve into the multi-dimensional nature of positive emotions using more robust research methods.

Learning English as a foreign language requires both cognitive and emotional endeavors from learners. SLA and English education scholars in Korea, however, have exclusively focused on the cognitive processes leaving L2 emotions unaddressed, which has limited our understanding of L2 learning and teaching processes. The only exception is foreign language anxiety whose debilitating effects on L2 motivation, performance, and proficiency have been discussed to a greater extent. This pattern of research can be changed by adopting the positive psychology perspective. With the new perspective, it would be possible to examine various L2 learning emotions, both positive and negative, with other related variables, that is, their antecedents, mediators, and outcomes. This will in turn enable us to have a better insight into what it entails to learn English in the Korean context and how we can help our learners use their emotions to their advantage.

Applicable levels: Elementary, secondary, tertiary

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