

Chapter 8

Enhancing EFL Writing Performance Through Differentiated Positive Psychology Interventions


Ariyanti Ariyanti

Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda, Indonesia

Slamet Setiawan

Universitas Widya Gama Mahakam Samarinda, Indonesia

Ahmad Munir

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0606-3590>

Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Suhartono Suhartono

Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Syafi'ul Anam

Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The emergence of positive psychology interventions in foreign language classrooms has shown improvements in learner outcomes. However, more research is needed on how positive psychology can optimize second language acquisition experiences and writing performance. This mixed-methods study investigated the efficacy of positive psychology techniques in improving Indonesian university students' English writing skills across multiple areas. 60 students were randomly assigned to experimental

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and control groups. Assessments captured quantitative and qualitative performance differences before and after the intervention. Large effect size gains occurred for the treatment group. Students favored hope-based activities like feedback and consultations. Findings imply more positive versus negative feedback enhances writing motivation and outcomes. Further research is warranted on how positive psychology manifests in learners' complex experiences during foreign language acquisition and influences multifaceted writing performance.

INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology (PP) delves into the essence of human nature, exploring its connection to affirmative characteristics and life experiences (Jorgensen & Nafstad, 2004), functioning as a healing discipline (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The methodologies employed by ancient thinkers to comprehend human existence diverge from contemporary approaches, which are shaped by globalization, threatening environments, and potential transformations of local cultures. Consequently, the advent of positive psychology aims to redefine the psychological paradigm to align with the evolving human condition (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder et al., 2002). PP has found acceptance across various domains, encompassing clinical and health spheres, workplace settings, counseling practices, rehabilitation efforts, and educational realms.

Notably, positive psychology's foray into the educational realm, termed “positive education,” was pioneered in 1998 by Martin E. P. Seligman, the progenitor of positive psychology, and has since gained widespread adoption in educational institutions, becoming a tool employed by educators (Fineburg & Monk, 2015). Within educational contexts, a prevalent phenomenon is the emphasis placed on students' cognitive capabilities and the attainment of elevated scores across academic subjects. However, education transcends the mere cultivation of cognitive aptitude, as psychological factors, such as students' emotional states, warrant equal consideration. Neglecting emotional aspects can precipitate scholastic challenges, such as trepidation concerning errors, diminished self-assurance, apprehension regarding peer ridicule, and conflicts among students, teachers, and parents (Murberg & Bru, 2007).

The field of positive psychology - the study of optimal functioning - has brought new perspectives to second language acquisition (SLA) research and practice. Positive psychology interventions (PPI) cultivate positive emotions, engagement, and accomplishment through structured activities. Recent SLA studies have integrated such techniques into foreign language classrooms and found impacts on affective, cognitive, and performance outcomes. For example, negative emotions like anxiety

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