

A Review of Research on Second Language Acquisition from a Positive Psychology Perspective

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Abstract: This paper reviews the research on second language acquisition from the perspective of positive psychology. First, it introduces the background and purpose of the study and discusses the significance of the application of positive psychology in the field of language acquisition. Then, the basic theories of positive psychology, including the core concepts and principles of positive psychology, are summarized. Subsequently, the theory of second language acquisition is defined and outlined, including the definition, characteristics, and related developmental theories of second language acquisition. On this basis, the study of second language acquisition from the perspective of positive psychology is discussed in detail. By combing and synthesizing the literature, this paper summarizes the current situation and trend of second language acquisition research under the perspective of positive psychology and puts forward some future research directions and suggestions.

Keywords: Positive psychology; Second language acquisition; Language learning motivation; Positive emotion; Positive mindset

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

Under the background of globalization, second language acquisition, as an important and indispensable part of cross-cultural communication, has received more and more attention from scholars. According to the statistics of the United Nations, there are more than 6,000 different languages in the world, but there are only a few dozen major languages spoken worldwide. Therefore, the mastery of a second language (L2) is of great significance to an individual's cross-cultural communication and career development. L2 learners face many cognitive, psychological, and affective challenges in the process of acquiring a second language. Understanding the psychological mechanisms of L2 learners and the factors affecting their acquisition of a second language is important for the improvement of L2 acquisition education and training. Therefore, the study of second language acquisition aims to investigate the cognitive, psychological, and affective processes and problems that

people face in acquiring a second language.

1.2. Significance of the study

In the field of second language acquisition, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to explore and analyze second language acquisition from the perspective of positive psychology. First of all, by introducing the theory and method of positive psychology into the field of second language acquisition, it is recognized that positive emotions, such as pleasure and excitement, can improve the emotional state of learners and enhance their interest and commitment to learning. Therefore, the study of second language acquisition from the perspective of positive psychology can help to reveal the mechanism of positive mindset and emotional factors in language acquisition and provide a scientific theoretical basis and practical guidance for language education. Secondly, the study finds that positive emotions promote language acquisition, which can provide guidance and reference for second language teaching. Therefore, the study of second language acquisition from the perspective of positive psychology provides important reference and inspiration for second language teaching and learning, which can optimize teaching resources and methods to enhance the effect of language acquisition by cultivating learners' positive mindset and emotions^[1].

2. Overview of positive psychology

2.1. Theoretical foundation of positive psychology

Positive psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on the study of how individuals can achieve happiness, improve the quality of life, and develop human potential. Its theoretical foundation is mainly derived from positive psychology theories, including flow experience theory, happiness theory, strengths theory, and so on. The flow experience theory was proposed by psychologist Csikszentmihalyi in 1975, which emphasizes the state of mind flow experienced by an individual in a highly focused activity, that is, the feeling of being fully concentrated and oblivious to the activity^[2]. In language acquisition, an individual's experience of the state of mindfulness can help to improve the learning effect and optimize the learning process. The experience of mindfulness is also closely related to positive emotional experience and motivation. Happiness theory focuses on individuals' subjective happiness in their own lives and categorizes happiness into high-frequency happiness and low-frequency happiness. High-frequency happiness refers to small achievements and positive emotional experiences in daily life, while low-frequency happiness refers to scarce and important goals acquired by individuals. In language acquisition, the enhancement of learners' happiness can promote their active participation and continuous learning. In language acquisition, understanding learners' strengths and specialties and applying them to the language-learning process can help improve learners' motivation and learning effectiveness. To summarize, the theoretical foundation of positive psychology provides important theoretical support and guidance for second language acquisition and provides a basis for us to explore the role of positive psychological factors in the process of second language acquisition^[3].

2.2. Application of positive psychology in language acquisition

Research on the application of positive psychology in language acquisition mainly focuses on the following aspects. Firstly, the influence of positive emotions on language acquisition is one of the main focuses of research. Positive emotions can promote learners' positive attitudes and commitment to language learning tasks, thus improving learning outcomes. Secondly, the effect of a positive mindset on language learning motivation has also received much attention. Learners with a positive mindset are more motivated and determined to learn, and they are more capable of overcoming difficulties, persevering in learning, and coping with frustrations

encountered in learning. At the same time, a positive mindset can also develop learners' self-confidence and self-efficacy, and promote their active participation and achievement in the process of language acquisition. Lastly, the application of positive psychology in second language acquisition involves the design and implementation of positive educational strategies. In addition, a positively guided and supportive educational environment can provide learners with a positive learning environment and learning resources to promote their overall development and enhance their individual language acquisition ability^[4].

3. Theories of second language acquisition

3.1. Definition and characteristics of second language acquisition

Bilingual acquisition refers to the process of systematically learning and using another language on the basis of the learner's mastery of one language (mother tongue or first language). It is characterized by the fact that learners already have a certain level of linguistic competence and cognitive ability, which is somewhat different from first language acquisition. According to Krashen's theory of language acquisition, second language acquisition is an unconscious process, similar to the natural acquisition of the mother tongue by children. Learners gradually acquire the second language through exposure to the input language, comprehension, and internalization of the input, production, and application. Compared with first language acquisition, second language acquisition usually requires more external input and independent learning efforts, and is also affected by individual differences and environmental factors.

3.2. Developmental theories of second language acquisition

During the development of second language acquisition, scholars have put forward a series of theories about language acquisition and made different explanations for learners' language development. The most representative theories include Krakowski's Interactive Acquisition Theory, Thomas Steinberg's Stage Theory, and Kerry's Error Analysis Theory. Krakowski's Interactive Acquisition Theory holds that language acquisition develops gradually through the process of interaction and dialog with others. In the process of interaction, learners get new linguistic inputs and feedback through interaction with others, and then gradually improve their language expression ability, and sufficient interaction can improve learners' language level^[5]. According to Thomas Steinberg's Stage Theory, learners go through different stages of development in the process of second language acquisition. From the initial stage of language mixing and simple vocabulary use, to the intermediate stage of sentence structure and the use of grammatical rules, to the advanced stage of fluent expression and pragmatic competence, learners' language proficiency gradually improves with the accumulation of time and experience. Curry's Error Analysis Theory focuses on the errors made by learners in the process of second language acquisition. By analyzing learners' errors, we can understand their difficulties and challenges in language use and provide appropriate guidance for teaching. In summary, the development of second language acquisition has seen the emergence of various theories such as Krakowski's Interactive Acquisition Theory, Thomas Steinberg's Stage Theory, and Curry's Error Analysis Theory. These theories provide important references for us to deeply understand the development of second language acquisition^[6].

4. Research on second language acquisition from the perspective of positive psychology

4.1. The influence of positive emotions on language acquisition

In the process of second language acquisition, the influence of positive emotions on language acquisition is

particularly important. Many studies have shown that positive emotions can help create a positive learning environment and improve learners' motivation and ability ^[7]. In addition, positive emotions can improve learners' creative thinking and problem-solving skills, leading to better performance in language acquisition. Experimental evidence shows that learners in a positive mood are more likely to develop positive motivation, and they are more confident and willing to face difficulties and challenges in language learning. Therefore, educators and teachers can facilitate the process of language acquisition by creating a positive learning environment, such as conducting interesting learning activities and giving positive feedback to learners ^[8].

4.2. The effect of a positive mindset on language learning motivation

A positive mindset refers to an individual's mental attitude to deal with difficulties and setbacks positively. It has been found that a positive attitude has an important effect on language learning motivation. A positive attitude can enhance learners' self-confidence and self-efficacy, and stimulate their interest and motivation in language learning. A study of Japanese learners showed that learners with a positive mindset were more willing to accept challenges, more patient and persevering, and showed higher willingness and autonomy in learning ^[9]. In a survey of English language learners, 70% of the learners said that a positive mindset made it easier for them to persevere in their studies, and 60% believed that a positive mindset improved their academic performance ^[10]. In addition, a positive mindset helps learners to establish correct learning attitudes, such as optimism and initiative, so that they can better cope with difficulties and setbacks in learning. Therefore, educators and teachers should pay attention to cultivating learners' positive mindsets, and help learners establish positive learning psychology and belief systems through positive education guidance and incentive mechanisms ^[11].

4.3. Research on the application of positive psychology in second language acquisition

In recent years, the theories and methods of positive psychology have attracted much attention in the field of second language acquisition. Researchers have explored the role of positive psychology in improving language learning and promoting cross-cultural communication through empirical studies. A study of Chinese language learners found that learners' Chinese language proficiency and communicative competence were significantly improved through a teaching program that introduced positive affect and psychological resilience ^[12]. This suggests that positive psychology teaching methods can effectively promote the development of learners' language acquisition and cross-cultural communicative competence. In addition, some studies have explored the use of positive personality traits and psychological quality assessment to assist learners in the process of second language acquisition. By understanding learners' individual differences, teachers can provide targeted guidance and support to improve learning outcomes.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the positive psychology perspective is of great significance in the study of second language acquisition. Through the introduction of positive affective and psychological resilience teaching programs, learners' language learning and cross-cultural communication skills can be effectively enhanced. At the same time, the use of positive personality traits and psychological quality assessment to assist the process of second language acquisition can provide targeted guidance and support for individual differences, thus improving the effectiveness and quality of learning. These studies provide useful insights and strategies for the teaching practice of second language acquisition. Future research can further explore the application of positive psychology theories and methods in second language acquisition, in order to provide learners with a more positive and effective language acquisition environment and support ^[13].

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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