

# Viewing IPPLL in Light of Gender Differences: An Exploratory Approach<sup>1</sup>

**Abbas Ali Rezaee<sup>2</sup> & Elnaz Oladrostam<sup>3</sup>, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran**

## Abstract

Compared to negative emotions, positive emotions have received less attention by researchers working in second language learning/acquisition field (Fredrickson, 2003). Likewise, in comparison to linguistic factors, a demographic variable such as gender which tends to play a key role in language learning, has not been paid its due attention in second language acquisition research. (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). The purpose of this study was to find out whether there are any significant differences between males and females in the way they judge the items of the Inventory of Positive Psychology in Language Learning (IPPLL). The results of Multivariate Analysis of the Variance (MANOVA) revealed that there were significant but weak to moderate differences between male and female students' means on the six components of IPPLL. As the results showed weak to moderate effect size value of .054, they should be interpreted cautiously. Relevant discussions, implications, and suggestions are presented in the sections of the paper.

## Resumen

En comparación con las emociones negativas, las emociones positivas han recibido menos atención por parte de los investigadores que trabajan en el campo del aprendizaje / adquisición de una segunda lengua (Fredrickson, 2003). Asimismo, una variable demográfica como el género, que tiende a desempeñar un papel clave en el aprendizaje de idiomas, no ha recibido la debida atención en los estudios de investigación en comparación con las emociones y otros factores afectivos. El propósito de este estudio fue determinar si existen diferencias significativas entre hombres y mujeres en la forma en que juzgan los ítems del Inventario de Psicología Positiva en Aprendizaje de Idiomas (IPPLL). Los resultados de MANOVA revelaron que había diferencias significativas pero débiles a moderadas entre las medias de los estudiantes masculinos y femeninos en los seis componentes de IPPLL. Como los resultados mostraron un valor de tamaño de efecto de débil a moderado de .054, deben interpretarse con cautela. Discusiones relevantes, implicaciones y sugerencias se presentan en las secciones del documento.

## Introduction

In comparison to negative emotions, such as anxiety and sadness, positive emotions have received less attention. Only a limited number of studies, including Bown and White (2010), Oxford (2014), and Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), have investigated positive emotions in the context of language learning. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) pointed out that the problem with the field of second language acquisition (SLA) is that it has only considered negative emotions and their effect on language learning. In the field of positive psychology, both positive and negative emotions are considered to create a balanced view of human flourishing. It would be beneficial if language education research followed the same pattern. In any learning situation, both positive and negative emotions are always mixed. Therefore, researchers should consider both types of emotions to draw better conclusions. An example would be when a person is feeling both stressed and confident before presenting something new. This balanced view helps us understand problems of learners such as 'absence', 'amotivation', and 'apathy' in a better way. Seligman (2011) also stated that happier people and those people who experience well-being are more creative and have broadened states of mind. They, therefore, learn more efficiently.

There has been a lack of attention to positive emotions and the key role that being happy plays in creating an improved state of mind in most of SLA studies. Therefore, this study aims at evaluating learners' responses and reactions to the role positive emotions or creating such positive emotions can have on their learning. If it can be shown that learners have a favorable attitude toward the role that positive emotions can play in language learning, Seligman's (2011) theory will be supported. Therefore, teachers can find additional vindication on using positive psychology practices in their classrooms. They can also feel freer to attempt to create more positive emotions such as gratitude, optimism, zest, and hope in their learners to create more broadened states of mind. These broadened states of mind will in turn affect their learning positively and will help them to be more creative.

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<sup>2</sup> [aarezaee@ut.ac.ir](mailto:aarezaee@ut.ac.ir)

<sup>3</sup> [e.olad@ut.ac.ir](mailto:e.olad@ut.ac.ir)

## Literature Review

Psychology has been mainly focused on negative emotions (e.g., anger and sadness) and how the resulting psychological consequences can be diminished (Fredrickson, 2003). Little attention has been paid to the role that positive emotions play in improving health and wellbeing (Fredrickson, 2003). Similarly, research in the area of applied linguistics has focused on such negative emotions as anxiety and learner inhibitions (Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014; Oxford, 2014). Positive psychology fosters tools to build both positive emotions and a greater interest in life and all its activities (Seligman, 2006). Positive psychology focuses on character strengths such as gratitude, kindness, and zest and their beneficial effects. Gratitude is defined as being thankful for good things that occur. Kindness refers to doing good things for others. Finally, Zest stands for having an energetic stance toward life (Ruch, Weber, Park, & Peterson, 2014). Research within positive psychology has shown that positively primed individuals exhibit fewer symptoms of depression and are more engaged and more likely to find creative solutions to problems by seeing the big picture that is normally hidden to negatively primed individuals (Fredrickson, 2003; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Positive psychology was introduced by Seligman in a 1999 study. According to Seligman (2006), positive psychology is tasked with finding the tools to create positive emotions and a greater interest in life. Funder (2010) stated that positive psychology is an area which could give new life to humanistic psychology. As a discipline that has predominantly focused on cognitive factors at the expense of affect, SLA can be a major beneficiary of the developments within positive psychology.

## Gaps in SLA research

Research within the realm of SLA has mainly focused on negative emotions and their debilitating effects on language learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014; Oxford, 2014). Less research is aimed at investigating positive emotions and their significance in language learning. For example, among recent studies, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) focused on the role of anxiety in language learning. Dewaele and Ip (2013) assessed possible connections between foreign language classroom anxiety and second language tolerance of ambiguity. In a similar vein, Mitchell and Myles (1998) stated that SLA theories are mostly concerned with how linguistic information can be transferred to the learner. This state of the affairs has happened in spite of the fact that emotions—especially positive emotions—are receiving more and more attention in recent theories. An instance of this is the adapted theory of well-being which has been put forward by Seligman (2011). According to this theory, happier people and those who experience well-being are more dynamic, creative, strategically equipped and therefore tend to have broadened states of mind. Oxford (2014) posited that the acronym PERMA is related to having a sense of well-being. PERMA stands for positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment. Underlying this acronym are twenty-four positive emotions or character strengths which form the basis of the questionnaire in the current study. According to this theory, people who are happier and experience well-being and possess these twenty-four strengths or emotions have expanded states of mind. They can therefore learn more efficiently. When we review most of the studies in the field of SLA, we encounter a lack of attention to these twenty-four emotional factors. There has been a lack of attention to strengths such as gratitude, hope, humor, and love of learning and how they can affect language learning positively.

Moreover, the effect of positive emotions or strengths has been investigated on general health. For example, Burton and King's (2004) study investigated the effects of writing about positive experiences on general health. Emmons and McCullough's (2003) study investigated the effect of gratitude listing on psychological as well as physical well-being. Effects of positive emotions have been investigated on student-teacher interaction as well. For instance, Howells (2014) investigated the effect of being grateful on enhancing student-teacher interaction. Positive emotions have not been largely investigated in SLA area except a few studies such as Bown and White (2010), Oxford (2014), and Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014).

With regard to the lack of attention to positive emotions or strengths in SLA, this study focuses on such emotions. Few studies have investigated positive emotions in relation with language learning. Thus, this study can address such gaps. Additionally, Seligman's (2011) theory emphasizes the beneficial effects positive emotions can have on creating broadened states of mind and therefore better learning. This study therefore is an attempt to address positive emotions and how both female and male learners judge the importance of such emotions in language learning. Seligman's (2011) theory can be strengthened if learners judge that positive emotions are of paramountcy in language learning. Teachers can therefore instill positive emotions in their daily instructional endeavors. Teachers should insert such positive emotions in their learning programs and activities since using these emotions will lead learners to have more broadened states of mind; these broadened states will lead to a better learning.

## Review of the Studies on Gender Differences

In their study, Marcenaro-Gutierrez, Lopez-Agudo and Roperero-Garcia (2018) assessed the effect of some socio-economic variables in gender differences on academic achievement. They found that the number of years female participants expect to complete in college and the number of hours a student studies affect their academic achievement. The same result was not found for males. Socio-economic status of the family, living with their siblings, living in the capital city where you can find a better quality of life, and the number of corrections males received on their misbehavior all affected their academic achievement. These factors did not have effects on females' scores. As for their initial learning skill, that is, the age that students began to read and write, there were no significant differences between males and females. In other words, the age at which students began to develop their literacy skill did not affect their academic achievement but males seemed to benefit more from this variable in comparison to females.

In their study, Harmala, Leontjev and Kangasvieri (2017) investigated the effects of background factors such as L1, gender, future study plans and opinions of English on learning outcomes. Students' opinion of English accounted for 50% of learners' proficiency. The relationship between other variables and L2 proficiency was weak. The effect of future study plans together with their opinions of English tended to have a small moderate effect on their proficiency. That is, students who had plans to continue education at secondary school had a better proficiency. Tougo, Tulviste, and Suits (2014) conducted a study in which they asked children to talk about their previous birthdays and past events. The children's age ranged from four to six years. Upon analyzing the interactions' content, they found that, whereas boys tended to talk more about themselves, girls preferred to talk about the people that had experienced the event with them.

Two of the above-mentioned studies found significant differences between females and males. The purpose of the current study was to find out whether there are differences between females and males in the way they judge importance of these twenty-four character strengths or emotional factors in learning a foreign language. Finding such differences between these two genders can have practical implications for instructors and researchers in SLA field.

## Research Questions

*The research question was established thus:*

Are there any significant differences in the way females and males judge importance of IPPLL (Inventory of Positive Psychology in Language Learning) items in learning a foreign language?

## The Study

### *Method*

Considering beneficial effects that positive emotions have on language learning and the scant attention to positive and affective factors, this study focused on such emotions. With regard to the key and beneficial role gender plays in language learning as well, the purpose of this study was to find out whether there are significant differences between the ways males and females judge the significance of such positive emotions in language learning. The current study is descriptive-analytic and investigated the existence of possible differences between males' and females' responses to the items of IPPLL. This study is descriptive since all character strengths are considered important in learning a foreign language have been described fully in the items of IPPLL. It is also an analytic study because it analyzes discrepancies between females' and males' reactions to items in IPPLL. Making this comparison would enable us to have a clearer picture of the way different genders view the importance of character strengths in language learning.

### *Participants*

There were 369 participants, 120 males (32.5%) and 249 females (67.5%). They were Iranian teenagers and adults studying English as a foreign language at Kish Institute of Science and Technology with an average age of 18 years. They were studying either at pre-intermediate, intermediate or upper-intermediate levels with Persian as their native tongue. In the main study, 385 participants including 70 male (17.6) and 315 female learners (82.4) at the same age (M=18) and proficiency level participated.

### *Procedure*

This study was carried out in two phases: the pilot and the main study. The pilot study phase was carried out to make sure whether learners mark all items as important or related to language learning or not. If some of the items were not considered as important factors in learners' views, they were omitted. The pilot study was carried out as to make sure that all 54 items were related to language learning. The final

outcome of the pilot study was used to revise and omit some of the items on the questionnaire. To ensure the participants about the privacy policy, before administering the questionnaires, the participants were informed that their identities would not be revealed to any third party even if they wrote it down. Participants were encouraged to read all the items carefully and to tick one of the boxes which applied to them. The questionnaire was first administered to 369 learners. The exploratory factor analysis in the first phase of data analysis showed that nine items did not have high factor loadings (3, 7, 14, 22, 25, 27, 38, 40 and 53). The revised questionnaire was administered to 385 learners including 70 male and 315 female learners who were at the same age ( $M=18$ ) and proficiency level as those in the pilot study.

### *Instrument*

The questionnaire consisted of six major categories. These categories were selected to inform about as well as reinforce Seligman's (2011) theory. According to Seligman (2011), the goal of well-being theory is to help people flourish and help them become happy and experience a good sense of well-being by increasing positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Oxford (2014) stated that underlying these five major categories are positive psychology character strengths such as love of learning, perspective, perseverance, zest, bravery, teamwork, leadership, self-regulation, appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor and spirituality which comprised subcategories of the questionnaire. According to Seligman (2011), people experience a better sense of flourishing through these emotions. These emotions also help them have more broadened states of mind and thus learn better. The questionnaire was constructed using these positive emotions and these categories and subcategories were selected to assess the value they can have in terms of language learning not just general learning in learners' view. For example, appreciation of beauty and excellence which is one of the subcategories of transcendence category or forgiveness as one of the subcategories of temperance category, tend to make people happy. They also help them experience a good sense of well-being and tend to broaden learners' minds. They additionally help them be more creative and more strategically equipped in the long run and thus they will learn more efficiently.

Seligman's theory regarding benefits of character strengths has been used to inform decisions of the authors for selecting the most appropriate questionnaire in positive psychology field. The items of the questionnaire used in this study were taken from the adapted version of Virtues in Action (VIA) inventory by Ruch, Weber, Park, and Peterson (2014). This was the first time that such a questionnaire was connected to language learning. The reason for selecting the following checklist was that in this checklist all character strengths along with their appropriate definitions were listed. These definitions were used to inform item construction phase of the newly developed questionnaire. In other words, in VIA questionnaire, general definitions for character strengths were solely given. The authors used the definitions to relate items of the newly developed questionnaire to foreign language learning. The newly developed questionnaire which was formed on the basis of strengths' checklist is called IPPLL or inventory of positive psychology in language learning. The questionnaire consisted of 54 items. The newly developed questionnaire contained six categories. Each of these categories consisted of some character strengths. The categories along with their related strengths are listed as below:

Wisdom and knowledge: Mental strength that includes acquiring and using knowledge

1. Creativity
2. Curiosity
3. Open-mindedness
4. Love of learning
5. Perspective

Courage: Strengths that help us accomplish a goal even in face of internal and external forces

1. Bravery
2. Perseverance
3. Honesty
4. Zest

Humanity: Strengths that help us connect to others and make friends with them

1. Love
2. Kindness
3. Social intelligence

Justice: Strengths that help us have a healthy social life

1. Teamwork
2. Fairness
3. Leadership

Temperance: Strengths that stop us from indulging

1. Forgiveness



2. Modesty
3. Prudence
4. Self-regulation

Transcendence: Strengths that help us connect to the larger universe

1. Appreciation of beauty and excellence
2. Gratitude
3. Hope
4. Humor
5. Religiousness

As has been previously stated and shown above, the VIA inventory was only in form of classification of character strengths. The authors extracted the strengths from this inventory and changed them in to items of a questionnaire. In other words, the checklist was changed into a questionnaire which consisted of items which were aimed at relating such strengths to foreign language learning to assess learners' views about importance of such items in foreign language learning.

The first ten items of the questionnaire belonged to the first category which was wisdom and knowledge. As can be seen in the Appendix, the items are designed in such a way to include major subcategories of wisdom and knowledge such as creativity, curiosity, love of learning and perspective. (See the Appendix for the first ten items). For example, items one to ten comprised effectiveness of teachers' feedback and classmates' feedback in learning which presented perspective in the wisdom and knowledge category. (Items 9 and 10 in the questionnaire). Two items were aimed at evaluating teachers' use of creative methods or learners' use of creative methods. These two items represented creativity in wisdom and knowledge category. (Items 1 and 2 in the questionnaire).

Items 11 to 18 belonged to the second category, which is courage. As can be seen, items are designed in a way to include major themes that belong to the courage category such as bravery, perseverance, and zest. Instances included being able to deal with difficulties and challenges and becoming a volunteer for classroom activities which represented bravery in the second category. (Refer to items 11 and 12 in the questionnaire). Two items were aimed at assessing effectiveness of having energetic classmates and teacher in learning. These two items represented zest in this category. (Refer to items 17 and 18 in the questionnaire).

Items 19 to 29 belonged to the third category or humanity category. Love, kindness, and social intelligence are representatives of the humanity category. Items related to this category were comprised of learners' awareness of their own feelings and their awareness of their classmates' feelings. These two items represented social intelligence in the humanity category. (Refer to items 25 and 26). Two other items which represented social intelligence in this category were "having a high rapport with classmates" and "the teacher is effective in my learning". (Refer to items 19 and 20 in the questionnaire). Two items aimed at assessing effect of assisting classmates as well as the teacher in learning. These two items represented kindness in this category. (Refer to items 23 and 24).

Items 30 to 34 belonged to justice category. Teamwork, fairness, and leadership which are parts of justice category have been included in these items. Instances included "group activities done in the classroom are effective in my learning" or "the same behavior of the teacher with all students is effective in my learning". (Refer to items 30 and 32 respectively). These two items represented teamwork and fairness in this category.

Items 35 to 45 belonged to the temperance category, attributes such as forgiveness and self-regulation. Instances included "my teacher's neglect of my mistakes is effective in my learning" which represented forgiveness in this category. Item 40 represented forgiveness. Items 43 and 44 were "making conscious choices about learning" and "monitoring my own learning" are effective in my learning which represented self-regulation in this category.

Finally, items 46 to 54 belonged to the last category or transcendence category. Gratitude, hope, and humor which are important building blocks of transcendence have been included in these items. Instances included "having a sense of gratitude toward classmates is effective in my learning" or "having a sense of gratitude toward my teacher is effective in my learning". These two items represented gratitude, which is a part of the transcendence category. (Refer to items 46 and 47). Item 49 which was "being optimistic about learning a language fully is effective in my learning" indicated hope one of the subparts of this category.

## Results

In order to have a closer look at the data and to see if there were any differences between the mean scores of both males and females on the six components of IPPLL, descriptive statistics were used. The

results are displayed in Table 1. The results indicated that the female group had higher means on all six sub-sets of IPPLL than the male students. For example, in case of the first category, which is wisdom and knowledge, the females' mean (22.30) is higher than that of the males' (20.57). Means for other categories are displayed in Table 1 as well.

Dependent Variable	Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Wisdom	Female	22.294	.398	21.511	23.076
	Male	20.569	.849	18.900	22.239
Courage	Female	19.699	.343	19.024	20.374
	Male	18.077	.733	16.636	19.518
Humanity	Female	22.503	.403	21.710	23.296
	Male	19.831	.860	18.139	21.523
Justice	Female	13.970	.261	13.456	14.483
	Male	12.846	.557	11.751	13.942
Temperance	Female	25.213	.454	24.321	26.105
	Male	22.277	.968	20.373	24.181
Transcendence	Female	22.639	.378	21.894	23.383
	Male	20.123	.808	18.535	21.711

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics; Components of IPLL by Gender

The results of Multivariate Analysis of the Variance (MANOVA) (Table 2) ( $F(6,454)=3.37, p=.003, \text{Partial}\eta^2=.054$  representing a weak to moderate effect size) revealed that there were significant but weak to moderate differences between the male and female students' means on six components of IPPLL.

In other words, it was shown that females had higher means compared to males, although the results should be interpreted prudently due to the weak to moderate effect size value of 0.54.

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.952	6	454	.000	.952
	Wilks' Lambda	.048	6	454	.000	.952
	Hotelling's Trace	19.825	6	454	.000	.952
	Roy's Largest Root	19.825	6	454	.000	.952
Group	Pillai's Trace	.054	6	454	.003	.054
	Wilks' Lambda	.946	6	454	.003	.054
	Hotelling's Trace	.057	6	454	.003	.054
	Roy's Largest Root	.057	6	454	.003	.054

Table 2: Multivariate Tests; Components of IPLL by Gender

Based on the results displayed in Tables 1 (above) and 3 (below), it can be concluded that there was no significant difference  $p=.067, \text{Partial}\eta^2=.009$  representing a weak effect size) between male ( $M=20.57$ ) and female ( $M=22.29$ ) students on wisdom and knowledge. In contrast to the wisdom and knowledge category, the female students ( $M=19.70$ ) had a significantly,  $p=.046, \text{Partial}\eta^2=.011$  representing a weak effect size) higher mean on courage than the male students ( $M=18.08$ ) although the results should be interpreted cautiously because the effect size of .011 was weak. Similarly, the female students ( $M=22.50$ ) had a significantly  $p=.005, \text{Partial}\eta^2=.022$  representing a weak effect size) higher mean on humanity than the male students ( $M=19.83$ ) although the results should be interpreted cautiously because the effect size of .022 was weak. Like what was found for wisdom and knowledge category, there was not any significant difference  $p = .069, \text{Partial}\eta^2 = .009$  representing a weak effect size) between male ( $M = 12.85$ ) and female ( $M = 13.97$ ) students on justice. The female students ( $M = 25.21$ ) had a significantly ( $p = .006, \text{Partial}\eta^2 = .021$  representing a weak effect size) higher mean on temperance than the male students ( $M = 22.28$ ) although the results should be interpreted cautiously because the effect size of .021 was weak. Finally, the female students ( $M = 22.64$ ) had a significantly ( $p$

= .005, Partial  $\eta^2 = .022$  representing a weak effect size) higher mean on transcendence than the male students (M = 20.12) although the results should be interpreted cautiously because the effect size of .022 was weak.

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	Wisdom	158.533	1	158.533	3.383	.067	.009
	Courage	140.286	1	140.286	4.021	.046	.011
	Humanity	380.688	1	380.688	7.912	.005	.022
	Justice	67.266	1	67.266	3.335	.069	.009
	Temperance	459.393	1	459.393	7.539	.006	.021
	Transcendence	337.229	1	337.229	7.955	.005	.022
Error	Wisdom	16821.368	359	46.856			
	Courage	12524.855	359	34.888			
	Humanity	17273.135	359	48.115			
	Justice	7241.188	359	20.170			
	Temperance	21876.607	359	60.938			
	Transcendence	15219.336	359	42.394			
Total	Wisdom	191440.000	361				
	Courage	148632.000	361				
	Humanity	192730.000	361				
	Justice	75732.000	361				
	Temperance	242297.000	361				
	Transcendence	193241.000	361				

Table 3: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects; Components of IPPLL by Gender

Figure 1 shows the differences in the way males and females judge IPPLL components. The graph is used here to in order for the reader to be able to grasp discrepancies in the way both genders have judged importance of different categories in their learning more clearly. For example, although the graph shows that females had a slightly better attitude toward items in wisdom and knowledge category, this difference is not significant due to weak to moderate effect size. In a similar vein, although females tended to have a slightly more favorable attitude on justice category in comparison to males, the difference was not significant again due to the weak effect size.

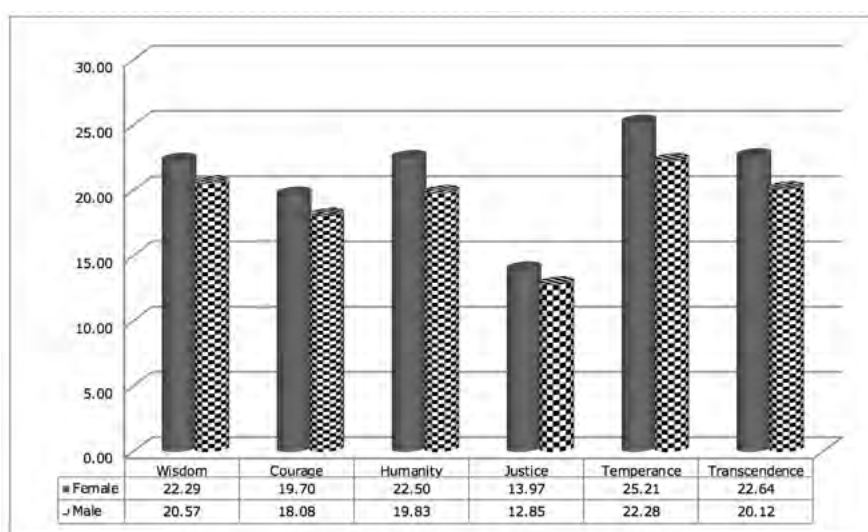


Figure 1. Means on components of IPPLL by gender

## Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, it was found that there were significant but weak to moderate differences between females and males considering most of the categories in IPPLL. In other words, females had higher means on most of the categories included in IPPLL. With regard to the first category- -wisdom and knowledge-, there were not any significant differences between males and females in the way they viewed importance of emotional factors like creativity, curiosity, love of learning and perspective in learning a language. With respect to the second category, or courage, females had higher means than males. It can be then concluded that major emotional subcategories of courage comprising bravery, perseverance, honesty, and zest are considered more influential in learning a language in females' view in comparison to males.

Regarding the third category, or humanity, females again had higher means in comparison to males. In other words, it was found that females considered factors like love, kindness, and social intelligence to be more influential in learning a language than males. With regard to the fourth category, i.e., justice, there was no significant difference between males and females. In other words, emotional factors like teamwork, fairness, and leadership received the same amount of attention from both females and males. Considering the fifth category, or temperance, females rated higher in comparison to males. In other words, females tended to judge emotional factors like forgiveness and self-regulation more important in language learning in comparison to males. Finally, females had higher means on the transcendence category in comparison to males. In other words, females judged emotional factors like hope, gratitude, and humor as more important factors in language learning compared to males.

Most of the studies in SLA have been focused on negative emotions. For example, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) and Bailey (1983) focused on anxiety and competitiveness. Elsewhere, Bailey, Daley and Onwuegbuzie (1999) studied empirical relationships between language anxiety and learning styles. Shao, Yu, and Ji (2013) and Dewaele and Ip (2013) investigated foreign language classroom anxiety. Even among studies which have focused on positive emotions, such as Oxford (2014) or Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), the second study focused on both positive and negative emotions. The emotions which were considered were enjoyment and anxiety respectively. Considering the gaps in SLA regarding focusing on positive emotions, this study focused on positive emotions and students' possible views about the effectiveness of such emotions in their learning. In this study, effects of six categories including wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence were assessed. Subcomponents of each category included positive emotions such as love of learning, zest, kindness, gratitude, and hope. It was found that students tended to have favorable attitudes toward positive emotions such as being optimistic or being grateful, or having interest in classmates as well as classroom activities and their teacher. They also believed that these positive emotions had a great effect on their learning.

Results of this study are related to results of similar studies which have been conducted in the field of positive emotions. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) found that levels of foreign language enjoyment were much higher than foreign language classroom anxiety among foreign language learners. They also concluded that foreign language enjoyment was associated with background factors like number of foreign languages known and education level. Oxford (2014) focused on two learners' histories and various experiences they had while learning English. She concluded that the learner who experienced more positive emotions such as having a good teacher or being treated well by teachers was a more successful and a more strategic learner while the other learner who experienced negative emotions such as thinking that she had a cruel teacher throughout learning was a less successful and a less strategic learner. In this study, it was also found that students involving both females and males judged the role of positive emotions such as love of learning and humor as very crucial in their learning. Therefore, all six major categories along with their subcomponents tended to be viewed as effective in learning in learners' views. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) found that learners tend to experience positive emotions more than negative emotions. Similarly, according to Oxford (2014), learners who experience positive emotions are more strategically equipped in learning. In our study, we also concluded that learners - especially females- tend to have very favorable attitudes toward positive emotions. Such results can clearly indicate the importance of positive emotions and the significance of their use in teaching and learning contexts.

This study was aimed at testing Seligman's (2011) well-being theory. The goal of well-being theory is to increase a good sense of development within individuals. Oxford (2014) stated that this theory uses PERMA which stands for positive emotions, engagement, meaning, relationship, and accomplishment to create a sense of development within individuals. Underlying these five categories are the twenty-four character strengths which formed the basis of our questionnaire. Learners in this study believed in the importance of the role of these twenty-four character strengths or positive emotions such as gratitude, hope, and humor in learning a language. It was therefore shown that both female and male learners



believed that these positive emotions create a sense of development and broadened states of mind and are also influential in their learning.

In this study, we concluded that learners seemed to have favorable views toward items in IPPLL. Therefore, this study suggests that such strengths or positive emotions are not only helpful in general health and areas such as teacher-student interaction, they are also judged as helpful in learning a foreign language by learners. English language instructors could follow positive psychology programs in which such strengths are included to assess their effects on learning a foreign language practically. For example, Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, and Linkins (2009) in their study wrote about The Geelong Grammar School Project. In this project, teachers and administrators embedded positive education including the twenty four character strengths in to their academic courses. Similar studies could be carried out in which strengths such as hope, optimism, and gratitude are embedded in educational programs such as foreign language programs to evaluate their effects on learning. This study also seems to show that that females tend to have a more favorable view toward items in IPPLL in comparison to males. This suggests that positive education programs might yield better results for females in comparison to males. In other words, programs in which character strengths are included might have better results for females and might help their learning more positively. Therefore, instructors could pursue such positive emotions' programs in their classes for females more confidently in comparison to males.

This study suffered from a number of limitations. First, due to the difficulty associated with getting permission from other institutes' managers to administer questionnaires, only learners from Kish institute participated in the study. Other studies should/need to be carried out in which students from other institutes are selected to see whether there are any differences between the way students judge IPPLL items in different learning contexts. Second, since there was less access to male participants, in this study more female learners participated.

This study indicated that female students and to some extent male students had favorable views toward positive psychology practices. Therefore, studies could be carried out in which the same questionnaire is administered to both teachers and students. We could therefore make a comparison between the two groups' views about the items contained in IPPLL. Other studies could be replicated in which the same questionnaire is given to English teachers at schools and English teachers in language institutes to make a comparison between their views toward items in IPPLL. Similar studies could also be carried out in which the same questionnaire is administered to learners of English as a foreign language at schools and at foreign language institutes to make a comparison between their views toward items of IPPLL.

In this study, learners seemed to have good views toward positive psychology character strengths and their effects on learning a foreign language. Some longitudinal studies could be conducted in which positive education is included in teachers' practices. This could be done to see what effects this type of education might have on second and foreign language learning/acquisition. Moreover, in this study, it was interpreted that students tended to agree with items in IPPLL. Some studies could therefore be carried out in which some correlational measures between the way students answer IPPLL items and their exam scores could be established. The results would indicate if these two are related or not.

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## Appendix

### Inventory of positive psychology in language learning (IPPLL)

Dear Learners,

Read the items carefully and tick the extent to which you agree with each item.

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1. My own use of creative learning methods is effective in my learning					
2. Teacher's use of creative learning methods is effective in my learning					
3. My interest in the materials which are presented is effective in my learning					
4. My interest in my classmates is effective in my learning					
5. My interest in my teacher is effective in my learning					
6. My interest in class atmosphere is effective in my learning					
7. Having a critical stance toward what is presented is effective in my learning					
8. Mastering new skills and areas is effective in my learning					
9. Classmates' feedbacks are effective in my learning					
10. Teacher's feedbacks are effective in my learning					
11. Being able to deal with difficulties and challenges is effective in my learning					
12. Becoming a volunteer for doing class activities is effective in my learning					
13. Having a high level of perseverance and expanding a lot of effort is effective in my learning					
14. Showing my true skills and capabilities in the class is effective in my learning					
15. High attraction of classroom materials is effective in my learning					
16. An exciting classroom is effective in my learning					
17. Having energetic classmates is effective in my learning					
18. Having an energetic teacher is effective in my learning					
19. Having a high rapport with classmates is effective in my learning					
20. Having a high rapport with teacher is effective in my learning					
21. My teacher's interest in me is effective in my learning					
22. My teacher's interest in my classmates is effective in my learning					
23. Assisting classmates is effective in my learning					
24. Assisting teacher is effective in my learning					
25. My awareness about my own feelings is effective in my learning					
26. My awareness about my classmates' feelings is effective in my learning					
27. Being aware of the true value of learning is effective in my learning					
28. Activities that create motivation in me are effective in my learning					

29. Activities that create motivation in my classmates are effective in my learning					
30. Group activities done in classroom are effective in my learning					
31. Getting classmates' feedbacks about my class activities is effective in my learning					
32. The same behavior of teacher with all students is effective in my learning					
33. Being a group leader is effective in my learning					
34. Being able to accomplish group activities successfully is effective in my learning					
35. Getting help from classmates is effective in my learning					
36. Getting help from teacher is effective in my learning					
37. Giving corrective feedbacks to my classmates is effective in my learning					
38. Receiving corrective feedbacks on my mistakes from my classmates is effective in my learning					
39. Receiving corrective feedbacks on my mistakes from the teacher is effective in my learning					
40. My teacher's neglect of my mistakes is effective in my learning					
41. My classmates' awareness of my capabilities is effective in my learning					
42. My teacher's awareness of my capabilities is effective in my learning					
43. Making conscious choices about learning methods is effective in my learning					
44. Monitoring my own learning is effective in my learning					
45. Monitoring my emotions is effective in my learning					
46. Having a sense of gratitude toward classmates is effective in my learning					
47. Having a sense of gratitude toward the teacher is effective in my learning					
48. Being grateful about good events which have happened to me as the result of learning the language is effective in my learning					
49. Being optimistic about learning the language fully is effective in my learning					
50. My sense of humor is effective in my learning					
51. Classmates' sense of humor is effective in my learning					
52. The teacher's sense of humor is effective in my learning					
53. Having an awareness about goals of learning a language is effective in my learning					
54. Having an awareness of the benefits of learning a language is effective in my learning					