

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review: Padilla, A.M., Chen, X. (2025). *Positive Psychology and Second Language Education*; Springer Nature Switzerland AG: Cham, Switzerland; ISBN: 978-3-031-95135-0

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Positive Psychology and Second Language Education by Amado M. Padilla and Xinjie Chen (2025) provides an innovative and optimistic outlook on language learning. The book argues that second language learning and teaching could be viewed through a positive psychology framework that places emphasis on learners' strengths, well-being and flourishing. It redirects the interest away from focusing primarily on learners' deficits, such as anxiety and failure towards promoting a positive state of mind when acquiring a second language. In addition, the authors introduce positive psychology (PosPsy) as a model of language education. Combining theoretical insights with practical strategies for both teaching and learning, the book is a significant addition to applied linguistics. What is especially attractive about the work,

however, is that it works to connect affective perception in language acquisition with cognitive thought processes, an idea often discussed but rarely approached systematically. Placing language learning within the framework of human flourishing, the authors force readers to think about the nature of becoming a successful language learner. In the following sections, I will discuss how each part of the book contributes to our understanding of language learning through a positive psychological lens.

The book is structured into three thematic areas, which provide a unified storyline. The first part (Chapters 2–5) introduces Positive Second Language Caring (PSLC) and establishes the theoretical framework for positive psychology in the L2 context. It emphasizes the emotional and social

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aspects of teaching and learning, where teachers as well as learners must be supported, and nurturing a caring environment should be a priority. Such an atmosphere, the authors contend, boosts both academic success and personal growth. They illustrate with examples as well as pedagogical recommendations of how empathy, motivation and self-efficacy promote effective learning experiences. This section has the perfect balance between theory and practice. Instead of being a conceptual paper, Amado and Chen present tangible classroom practices and reflection questions that will help teachers apply aspects of positive psychology experience in authentic classroom settings. One of the strongest parts is the interrelation of emotional well-being and learning success.

The researchers illustrate how affective components impact motivation and perseverance in learning new languages by focusing on positive feelings such as enjoyment and gratitude. The conversation goes beyond relationships between teachers and students to include parents, peers, and community members as both passive and active agents in the motivation of learners. It is particularly interesting to hear the suggestion to implement parent education programs for parents of special needs children, which speaks to the inclusive and compassionate education we aspire to. This new concept could help to inspire widespread implementation in educational systems around the world.

However, in Chapter 2, the empirical study raised by Froh et al. (2008)^[1] is the Gratitude-Based Intervention and introduces ethical concerns. The research involved 221 middle-school students who were separated into groups, such as a “Hassle Condition Group,” in which students thought about negative experiences in their lives. This design may potentially lead to some participants’ distress, raising ethical concerns for minors within psychological research. According to the American Psychological Association’s^[2] code of ethics, researchers need to protect participants’ emotional health and, in some cases, when conducting psychological research with adolescents, adult participants capable of providing adequate consent and understanding potential emotional risks might have participated on a more ethical level. That does not detract from the book’s scope but does remind readers that ethical sensitivity should be the underpinning of all educational research particularly where vulnerable populations are concerned.

The second section (Chapters 6–7) focuses on Positive

Second Language Doing (PSLD), which takes an emotional approach towards action^[3]. In the book, Amado and Chen explore the way in which learners deliberately participate in language learning in both formal and informal contexts (including digital). They support practices that encourage them to be self-directed, artistically intelligent and self-confident and insist that learning becomes more meaningful when students feel a stake and responsibility for their development. Their method dovetails with learning theories such as experiential learning and task-based learning by demonstrating how hands-on tasks and technology can generate interactive participation and enjoyment for the language learner. The value of this section is in its practical orientation. Each chapter provides activities, reflective questions and experiments that promote language competence and psychological well-being. Additionally, the integration of digital tools and online learning is especially timely, recognizing how modern learners interact with language through social media, gaming, and other online platforms.

The last section, Chapter 8, elaborates on the concept of Positive Second Language Being (PSLB), and explains how being bilingual and multilingual learners contributes to both individual and societal well-being. According to Amado and Chen, language learning has positive implications for cognitive, communicative and cultural processes as well as identity-building, along with feelings of belonging. Framing multilingualism as a kind of empowerment and resilience (both language development and resilience) leads the researchers to promote learning to become multilingual as self-reliance and strength through lifelong learning and is thus viewed as developing one’s worldview through multilingualism.

This conversation echoes the strong connection of positive psychology on growth, meaning and fulfillment from the personal to the collective perspective, which extends the question from one of individual success to community and societal welfare. At the end of the chapter the authors synthesise what they have found based on their research and pedagogical approaches in their conclusion, underlining the multidisciplinary nature of the book. They seek educational systems that center children’s emotional development close to the achievement of academic ones and call on educators to promote curiosity, gratitude, and collaboration in the classroom.

By connecting theory to practice within every aspect of

both teaching and learning, both the classroom activity and the reflection activities make this volume useful for teachers and scholars. Based on the three dimensions of caring, doing, and being, the structure of the book is comprehensive and easy to understand, helping to develop a framework for using positive psychology in second language learning. Amado and Chen's writing is characterized by its clarity, coherence, and relevance to practical contexts. At the same time, they write in a way that is both engaging and rigorously academic. In so doing, they demonstrate their mastery of both psychology and language pedagogy, reflecting deep expertise.

From a theoretical point of view, the approach proposed by Amado and Chen complements Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis^[4], which had also made extensive use of emotion in acquiring language and it helps us understand language. Positive psychology lowers the affective filter and increases motivation, which in turn creates the ideal condition for learning. The authors further develop Krashen's theory by integrating it into a global psychological and social context, demonstrating how emotional well-being facilitates linguistic proficiency and personal development.

The authors' commitment to linking research and fieldwork, the diversity of learning styles, and the progressive vision for teaching and learning that they have formulated are all substantial contributions to both psycholinguistics and educational psychology. It is also a timely addition to the field of applied linguistics. Amado and Chen reframe our understanding of how languages are learned and taught by shifting our attention from anxiety and stress to confidence and well-being. Their discussions are evidence-based and practical. While the book provides inclusive and rich content on topics such as well-being, bilingualism, institutions, lifespan learning, digital learning, and character strengths, the variety of themes discussed may limit its depth and distract the reader. However, these limitations are minor, and although ethical concerns were raised, its merits remain evident. This book is recommended for researchers, teachers, and learners, as it is strongly grounded in theoretical frameworks and pedagogical practices that provide inspiration and direction within the educational field. It is also recommended for parents who aim to enrich their children with more than one language, as it serves as a highly informative source for raising children bilingually.

I anticipate revisiting this book multiple times, as it resonates with me deeply and has repeatedly reminded me,

more than once, of my time as a student. This work is highly insightful and offers significant inspiration for my teaching career, as it helps me address learners' difficulties by focusing on their strengths first and then indirectly working on their weaknesses. This work teaches us that successful language learning is not about teaching grammar or vocabulary, but about developing the whole child emotionally, intellectually, and socially. In the end, it links psychological principles to language teaching and learning. As the project draws on positive psychology combined with pedagogical strategies, the book is an addition to applied linguistics.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AI Use Statement

Since English is not my first language, ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used for proofreading and language refinement, including grammar and structural clarity. No AI tools were used for data analysis, interpretation, or generation of scientific content. All outputs were critically reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

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