

CCERBAL 2023
**BILINGUALISM AND MULTILINGUALISM: TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES,
MOBILITY, AND WELL-BEING**
MAY 4-6, 2023



KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Positive Psychology in SLA: Problems, Progress, and Prospects

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Psychology has a reputation for studying what Maslow called the ‘darker, meaner’ half of life. Positive psychology is a relatively new and diverse branch of psychology, emerging around the turn of this century, with a proposed focus on three pillars: positive emotion, positive character traits, and institutions that enable individuals to flourish. The sub-field has prospered, though it has had its share of criticism – some fair, some unfair. Building on its theoretical and empirical base, approximately 10 years ago began the effort to bring the topics of positive psychology to the study of second language acquisition (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Since then, a growing collection of theoretical developments, empirical studies, and pedagogical interventions have addressed themes such as enjoyment, flow, hope, and well-being.

After providing an overview of developments based on positive psychology in SLA, the presentation will review three key trends in detail. The first trend is the explosion of work on emotions which has led to the development of unique research methods, unexpected findings, and specific pedagogical recommendations (MacIntyre et al., 2018; Prior, 2019). The second trend reflects a challenge to the view of language learners as deficient version of native speakers (Byrnes, 2018; Dewaele, 2022). The third trend we will examine is a neglected focus on language teachers and their well-being (Mercer, 2022).

Criticism of positive psychology will be examined with the goal of separating constructive critiques from unfair criticism. There are several notable ways in which the development of positive psychology within SLA already is creatively addressing relevant issues and proposing solutions that affect both psychology and language education. The seeds of positive psychology have been described as falling on fertile ground in SLA (Dewaele et al. 2019). The presentation will conclude with suggestions for further development in an area that has the potential to become a prominent research area in SLA.