



# Integrating Positive Psychology through ESP Learning for Science Classes in Senior High School

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**Abstract:** This research aims to identify positive psychology through ESP learning in science classes at senior high schools in Indonesia. This study used qualitative method. The data collection method employed interviews and observations to obtain more detailed information regarding the research findings. Three distinct data collection methods involved observation, interview, and questionnaire. The qualitative data analysis method was from data summarization, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Research instruments used triangulation, which involved interviews, observations, and documentation. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that positive psychology serves as a connection or link between humanism and transpersonal. The concept of developing personality potential is evident in Positive Psychology, which also incorporates transcendence as one of its virtues, particularly in relation to spirituality and meaningfulness. The ESP learning concept can enable students to actively participate in foreign language teaching practices in the natural science learning process.

**Keywords:** EFL; ESP; Emotions; Higher Education; Positive psychology

## Introduction

During school learning activities, teachers aspire to see students can achieve good learning outcomes from the material and knowledge that have studied. However, the reality of what has been learned is that many students showed symptoms of being unable to complete the expected learning outcomes, as stated. Some students showed the low grades despite the teacher's efforts to manage the learning process as much as possible. When teachers implement the learning process, they often face the problem that some students still need help learning, it means that students need to follow lessons optimally. Learning difficulties are a condition where students cannot understand well, due to threats, obstacles, or disruptions in learning.

When studying foreign terms in science lessons, students can experience difficulties in understanding the concepts being taught. Students understanding of science subject matter can be caused by unfamiliar

words that are difficult to understand, and the complexity of an image or material is due to the complexity of the material or image. This affects the psychological condition of students in studying the material being taught. There are some well-known theories in regards of psychological theories in education namely behaviorism, constructivism, humanism, transpersonal psychoanalysis, as well as positive psychology (Saefullah, 2012). Positive psychology firstly initiated by Seligman in which emphasis on positive impacts on someone's life (Lenzenweger, 2004). Furthermore, it also deals with a character strength, optimism, and constructive organization (Rozak, 2022).

There is numerous research that show how important positive psychology in learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Dörnyei, 2014; Fredrickson, 2003; Helgesen, 2016; Oxford & Cuășlar, 2014; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2009). It is also common to find student who are passive during the

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class due to their negative emotions, such as unconfident in using the target language (Lee & Chen, 2011); anxious in articulating their ideas due to judgement from their peers Macintyre (2016) and passive and unconfident during learning process (Howlett & Waemusa, 2019). Thus, positive psychology is perceived as an alternative to build positive emotions towards learning. It is also an attempt to improve students' anxiety so that they are able to maximize their cognitive to the fullest while learning. Furthermore, in learning ESP, it is crucial to have a meaningful atmosphere since the students learn more specific terminology in accordance with their professional carrier in the future, such as foreign terms in science lessons. Further consideration in selecting appropriate methods and approach is needed to achieve learning goals. This research is able to provide alternatives to the practitioners in implementing a more meaningful teaching and learning process, especially in teaching ESP to higher education students.

## Method

This study used qualitative method. According to Creswell (2018), the qualitative descriptive research method aims to comprehend the phenomena experienced by the subjects or objects of study, such as actions, perceptions, and behaviors. This study examined the research title from the perspective of positive psychology in descriptive ESP learning, employing various scientific approaches within a specific natural context. Descriptive research is a type of research conducted with the aim of objectively describing a situation. This research was conducted to address or answer current issues. Qualitative descriptive research gathered data to depict or analyze research findings but did not provide broader conclusions. The data collection method employed in this study involved the use of interviews and observations to obtain more detailed information regarding the research findings.

Furthermore, research instruments employed in this study used triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation. Research instruments refer to the implements utilized for gathering data (Notoajmodjo, 2018). Firstly, Interviews are a method of gathering data in which researchers engage in verbal communication with sources, either through direct conversation or oral interaction (Creswell, 2018). The researchers employed interview procedures to investigate the implementation of English Language Teaching (ESP) and the utilization of positive psychology in teaching and learning activities. Secondly, Observation instruments were served as a point of reference for researchers' observations while conducting fieldwork or at a specific location. The observations

encompass the teaching and learning activities, together with the verification process using the syllabus and lesson plans at the research site. Finally, documentation was required to validate the data between observation and printed or written data at school, such as lesson plan, syllabus and the module used for the teaching and learning process.

After gathering data from several sources, it was then triangulated employing diverse methodologies or data sources to attain a full comprehension of a certain phenomenon (Carter et al., 2016). There are four types of qualitative triangulations: method triangulation, theory triangulation, data source triangulation, and investigator triangulation. Method triangulation involved multiple data collection methods, while theory triangulation involved findings comparison with relevant theoretical perspectives to avoid bias from individual researchers. Data source triangulation involved verifying information using various data sources. Investigator triangulation involved having multiple researchers collect data (Lee et al., 2019). This study employed triangulation, utilizing three distinct data collection methods: observation, interview, and questionnaire.

The participants of this research involved an English teacher who is in charge of the class of Senior High School in West Java. The observation was conducted before and during the class occurred in which include lesson plan, syllabus, teaching and learning process as well as evaluation of the class. The research employed the qualitative data analysis method based on Miles and Huberman's notion as described in Sugiyono (2012) through three concurrent activities: data summarization, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Data reduction is a method of manipulating and organizing raw data obtained from recorded field notes, with the aim of simplifying, abstracting, and transforming. Data reduction involved the process of condensing information by summarizing, selectively filtering crucial aspects, identifying recurring themes and patterns, as well as directing attention towards significant components. Reduced data enhanced researchers' ability to perform their research by providing a more precise and unambiguous representation. Data presentation refers to the organized compilation of information that enables the gathering of data and the formulation of conclusions. Textual representations are commonly employed to analyze qualitative data. Following the completion of the reduction process, the subsequent stage involved presenting the data. Presenting facts facilitates comprehension and enables the formulation of informed strategies for future work.

## Result and Discussion

Teaching and learning process require curriculum and set the goal to achieve learning outcomes. Hence, the ongoing curriculum is designed should be considered in implementing a specific and prospective strategy. Therefore, the following point highlight some holistically interrelated aspects starting from the ongoing curriculum, teaching methods in which positive psychology is integrated into the science class.

The government is currently shifting the paradigm, from teacher-centered education to student-centered education through the Independent Curriculum. In this curriculum, students are the pivotal point of education. In its implementation, the government, implicitly, formulates this curriculum to adapt learning corridors to student characteristics and achievement levels. Jenkins (2020) states that adapting learning to student characteristics and level of achievement is very crucial. In regards of adapting to the dynamic state of education, Indonesian government attempt to improve the curriculum into the latest ongoing curriculum, namely Merdeka Curriculum.

The Merdeka Curriculum program grants educational institutions independence and self-governance, as well as empowering students to select their preferred areas of study. The Independent Curriculum is an educational approach that operates at the unit level and emphasizes autonomy and flexibility. It aims to foster a creative learning culture that is not limiting and aligns with the specific requirements of both teachers and students (Sopiansyah et al., 2021). The government designs this curriculum in a way that adjusts learning pathways to align with the unique qualities and levels of success of students. The Kurikulum Merdeka teaching module encompasses a variety of methodically created tools, media facilities, methods, instructions, and guidelines tailored to the specific needs of pupils. The teaching module is an application of the Learning Objectives Flow (ATP), derived from Learning Achievements (CP), with the Pancasila Student Profile as the intended outcome. Teaching modules are organized based on the specific phase or stage of student development (Setiawan et al., 2022). Moreover, teaching modules also take into account the intended learning outcomes with explicit learning objectives. The foundation for development is also directed towards long-term goals. Teachers must possess knowledge and comprehension of teaching modules in order to enhance the learning process by making it more engaging and significant.

Learning foreign terms in science lessons is about more than structuring all students to follow the pattern stated in the book. The nature of language is

communication, and each student has different tendencies in terms of learning and acquiring a foreign language (English) (Sopiansyah et al., 2021). There are those who have different learning styles, such as the auditory method (with songs, podcasts, radio, etc.), visual method (with movie, pictures, infographics, drama, etc.), kinesthetic method (speaking, communication, etc.), and there are also those who prefer theoretical methods (memorizing formulas, reading, etc.). This variation is certainly very humanistic considering that each student has a different social, cultural, environmental, and parental background, which makes their cognitive and motor development different from each other. However, this also has a quite risky side, considering that by freeing educators, it will also affect assessments. In short, if you want students to be inspired, teachers must let them innovate (Kemendikbud, 2020). Teaching modules must be interesting, meaningful and challenging, which is expected to foster interest in learning and involve students actively in the learning process. The Merdeka Curriculum encourages teachers to bridge the potential of students with various freedoms. This means that teachers must provide a service that can bridge the potential and skills that students are interested in for their future.

Currently, the process of foreign terms in science lessons goes beyond just instructing all students to adhere the prescribed format outlined in the textbook. The fundamental purpose of language is communication, and each student possesses distinct inclinations when it comes to studying and adopting a foreign language, such as English (Setiawan et al., 2022). Some individuals prefer to the auditory approach, utilizing songs, podcasts, radio, and similar mediums. Others towards the visual method, relying on movies, pictures, infographics, drama/theater, and so on. Some individuals prefer the practical approach, emphasizing speaking and communication skills. Lastly, there are those who tend to theoretical methods, such as memorizing formulas and engaging in extensive reading.

This variance is undeniably humanistic, as it concerns to the diverse social, cultural, environmental, and parental backgrounds of each student, resulting in distinct cognitive and motor development for each individual. Nevertheless, this approach carries inherent risks as it will inevitably impact the evaluation of educators. One participant who disagreed may have used this way as the foundation for their response. Essentially, in order to foster inspiration among students, teachers must allow them to engage in innovative practices (Kemendikbud, 2020). Teaching modules should possess qualities, such as being

engaging, significant, and demanding, as this is anticipated to cultivate a desire for learning and actively engage students in the process of acquiring knowledge. The Merdeka Curriculum promotes the integration of students' potential with many freedoms through teacher guidance. Consequently, teachers are required to offer a service that can connect the potential and abilities that students are enthusiastic about for their forthcoming efforts.

In this research, the school implement Merdeka Curriculum as suggested by the government. Additionally, the teacher initiates to integrate with ESP, typically English for Business Communication to the teaching and learning process in their sophomore. It is based on the students' needs that this method is suggested by the interview with the informant (R.A.), stating that: As a teacher, I apply ESP to the classroom because students enjoy this lesson and they can easily understand (R.A., 2023). ESP is perceived as further attempt to fulfill the students' 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skill needs. After passing the GE in the first year, the students take evaluation to investigate learning outcomes and prepare further step to take in the following semester or year.

More than ten years after the inception of the positive psychology movement, Lenzenweger (2004) published *Flourish*, a book that introduced a fresh framework for positive psychology called PERMA. The acronym represents the constituents of positive psychology: Positive emotion, Engagement, positive Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. PERMA can be conceptualized as 'Happiness 2.0' or, more precisely, 'Well-being 2.0' as it considers happiness as a component of a broader and more comprehensive perspective.

This study examines methods of integrating PERMA into ESL lessons by including positive psychology practices and explicit language teaching/learning objectives. Essentially, it examines the integration of happiness and the language classroom. Such other tasks in the language learning classroom, the potential for favourable outcomes motivates most learners to engage in the activities, even if they differ from those typically associated with studying foreign terms in Science lessons.

The first attribute of Seligman framework is positive emotion. The teacher endeavors to always create enjoy and fun learning so that the student might feel the positivity throughout the learning process. For instance, the teacher utilizes ice breaking before starting the class to attract students' motivation. The manifestation of motivation in learning is evident through students' behaviors and traits, such as their willingness, attentiveness, concentration, and diligence.

Students with strong desire in studying foreign terms in science lessons will demonstrate eagerness, attentiveness, and focus on their studies or learning activities (Adi et al., 2021). From alternative perspectives, students with poor motivation will exhibit a lack of enthusiasm, be prone to boredom, and actively want to evade engaging in learning activities. In order to cultivate students' interest in learning, the teacher must employ several tactics that can enhance their motivation by presenting stimuli to influence their motivation (Makhmudovna, 2022). Various strategies can be employed to enhance students' motivation, including providing rewards and commendations for their exemplary performance.

The second attributes that is highlighted by Seligman is engagement. Research has demonstrated a correlation between heightened student engagement and enhanced curiosity, enjoyment of learning, and creativity (Seligman, 2013). Engagement is a formidable obstacle. Learners become bored when things are excessively simple. The tasks become excessively challenging, learners tend to abandon their efforts. Tomlinson (2001) argue that engaging students in work that captures their interest is crucial for providing a suitable level of challenge. This type of work can lead to a state of complete absorption in the present moment, as described by Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2002). Snyder (2007) asserted that 'flow arises when the difficulty level of a task is elevated, while still within the individual's capability to successfully accomplish the activity'. During flow experiences, attention becomes organized and completely engaged, resulting in a diminished self-awareness and a distorted perception of time. Cooperative learning and scaffolded autonomy tasks in the classroom can result in a state of flow, as described by Csikszentmihalyi et al. (2002).

Flow necessitates a harmonious equilibrium between the level of difficulty and the level of proficiency. The objective should be both demanding and attainable. During the task, pupils are allocated for a specific topic. Positive psychology can be applied in ESL/EFL classrooms by incorporating personalized things that are relevant to positive behavior. Any topic can be utilized for this purpose.

In this case, the teacher often divides the student into groups and do the activity together. As an instance, a focus group discussion, the students are provided some general issues found in the office and they discuss how to solve the problem together in a group, then share or present it in the class by using English. As noted by the informant that: I always try to engage students so that they can have interaction with their peers. It is often that one or two students dominate the class and other students are too shy to speak English. So, they do not



contribute much during the class. Then, I put the silence student with the dominant one and ask the dominant to guide the other as peer mentor (R.A. 2023).

The third aspect is relationship. Teachers can function as social agents, influencing students' cognitive and socio-emotional experiences through the establishment of a classroom environment that fosters both student motivation and learning. Furthermore, teacher-student relationships have a crucial role in regulating the growth of social, emotional, and academic abilities (Davis, 2006). Likewise, young children who derive pleasure from receiving favourable encouragement from teachers and establishing affectionate and intimate connections with them seem to exhibit proficiency in both social and academic domains at school (Pianta, 2004). The informant states: We learn to build a good relationship for each other. For example, keeping a good communication between teacher-students as well as student-student. I also try to be as flexible as possible so that they would not feel nervous when talk to me (R.A., 2023). It is safe to say that the teacher maintains a good relationship by giving less tension to the students. Meaning that building a supportive environment by taking care of how we communicate with the students should be taken into consideration.

In a study conducted by Davis (2006), it was discovered that middle school students and instructors who evaluated their relationships as helpful and positive experienced increased motivation, more conducive classroom environments, and higher academic grades. In a similar vein, Birch et al. (1997) discovered that teacher-student connections characterized by support are crucial for fostering school adjustment abilities, such as attention, motivation, problem-solving, and self-esteem. According to Birch and Ladd, when teachers granted students greater autonomy and tailored their education to align with students' own interests and relevance, students exhibited higher levels of emotional and behavioral engagement in their schoolwork. Additionally, they developed more supportive connections with their teachers. Furthermore, another research has discovered that students who indicate that their teachers offer greater levels of autonomy exhibit more advantageous patterns of learning (Davis & Ashley, 2003; Stipek, 2002).

Furthermore, it is found an interesting material that was taught. The teacher created a motion of "building a healthy relationship". The students do a group activity and create a poster together with the theme building a healthy relationship. Then, the students think of some ways in order to keep away from a toxic relationship. The issues include racism, judgement, maintain a good communication with clients, colleagues at work, etc. The

activity is beneficial to increase students' awareness of how a relationship should be build and maintained.

The next element of Seligman framework is meaning. Language teachers may find it surprising that the terms 'meaning' and 'meaningfulness' must be explicitly mentioned. In the 1970s, there was a change in language teaching methods. It moved away from a mechanical and tight concentration on grammar rules, and instead emphasized the importance of meaning and communication in the learning process. This transition led to the development of communicative and task-based approaches. However, in the field of positive psychology, the term 'meaning' carries a distinct and specific connotation. Seligman (2013) provided a definition of this concept as "being a part of and contributing to something that one perceives as being greater than oneself."

To ensure that learning is meaningful and applicable, the method must facilitate the learners' ability to establish connections between classroom activities and the real-life situations they encounter. There should exist a correlation between the theories that learners acquire in the classroom and their practical application in their daily lives (Prabandari et al., 2017). Additionally, learners should have the opportunity to witness the practical utility of ideas in addressing social issues within their society. Therefore, learning is seen to be pertinent and significant when the obtained knowledge can be applied to benefit others.

Teachers frequently need to make innovative and groundbreaking efforts in order to produce meaningful and applicable learning experiences. For teachers who are resistant to change, this might provide a challenge. Common activities in classroom practise encompass discussions, sharing, simulations, lectures, and exercises, all aimed at facilitating learners in mastering the subject. These activities primarily emphasize theoretical concepts and fail to offer students practical experience in applying information within real-world societal contexts. An attempt from the informant, the teacher usually makes a role play for the students to practice. The informant explains: Students need some soft skills to support their career in the future, such as interviewing, negotiating, and also presenting. So, I ask them to practice and practice, but of course in a fun way. Sometimes, we watch a short video from YouTube and then practice together (R.A. 2023).

Finally, the last element of Seligman framework is achievement or accomplishment. Accomplishment or achievement can significantly influence good emotions. The efforts to achieve victory - executing the game with skill - might hold equal significance to the tangible benefits of winning. Passer et al. (2010) asserted that happiness is correlated with possessing high self-

esteem, maintaining an optimistic outlook. The concept encompasses 'pathway thinking', which refers to the process of setting objectives and identifying other approaches to achieve them in the event of obstacles, and 'agency thinking', which entails taking proactive measures to go along those alternative routes. According to Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), there are six psychological advantages of pursuing goals. These include providing individuals with a sense of purpose, enhancing self-esteem when the goals are meaningful, bringing structure and significance to one's life, assisting in prioritization for the attainment of higher-order goals, developing skills to overcome obstacles and replace unattainable goals, as well as when the goals involve interacting with others, the pursuit of these goals becomes intrinsically rewarding.

According to Wingate et al. (1994), the exercise 'Future Dreams' introduces goal-setting into the classroom. Students are encouraged to contemplate their aspirations, then pinpoint the obstacles or difficulties hindering the achievement of each objective, devise strategies to overcome these obstacles, and, of utmost significance, deconstruct these strategies into manageable steps that can be feasibly accomplished.

The informant has implemented this activity in the class, namely "where will I be in the next 5 years". The student guide to depict their goal and what are their actual and feasible attempt to accomplish it. They are provided some time to think and frame their individual goal for the next 5 years. Then, the students are classified into some group with similar goals and share each other, for example there are student who want to continue their study, but some others want to start pursuing a career. For more advanced students (typically for the class of 12), the informant usually modifies the theme into more specific ones. For instance, as a secretary, I want to give my best. Then, the students brainstorm what are more specific effort that they can do to be the best, such as I will do the task before deadlines, I will expand my networking by joining some events etc.

Snyder et al. (2009) advocated for the use of affirmative self-dialogue, such as 'I will persist', as a means to motivate individuals in their pursuit of objectives. According to Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), making such utterances can contribute to the creation of self-fulfilling prophecies. Kumar (2016) argued that those with low self-worth may experience a decrease in self-esteem when engaging in the practise of repeating positive affirmations, such as 'I am a lovable person'. They begin to experience a sense of being unlovable. The purpose of addressing these matters is to acknowledge their intricacy. Performing a search on Google for affirmations specifically tailored for students yields more than 500,000 results. Nevertheless, the data

unequivocally illustrates that instructing pupil to utter positive affirmations is not a straightforward solution. Teachers should possess an understanding of the intricacy involved and, maybe, communicate some of those challenges to students, motivating them to express genuinely positive sentiments.

Additionally, individuals who cultivate numerous friendships are more likely to experience feelings of happiness. When learning, such as English, the state of happiness is important (Sanger et al., 2022). Passer et al. (2010) stated that self-esteem is a crucial component of human well-being, enjoyment, and adaptability. Additionally, those who possess a large social network tend to experience feelings of happiness. Friendship is also correlated with happiness. Patty O'Grady (2012) posited that cultivating interpersonal connections engenders feelings of contentment.

The experience of happiness is unattainable for individuals who lack positive interpersonal connections. Establishing strong interpersonal connections is crucial for attaining happiness, and sad individual has the potential to induce feelings of depression. According to Delaware (2012), research indicates that there is a negative aspect to experiencing positive emotions, and that striving for happiness can occasionally lead to feelings of depression. In addition, he asserted that an excessive amount of enjoyment might lead to gullibility, selfishness, decreased success, and, in certain instances, suicidal tendencies. According to Moeller (2012) study, individuals experienced an increase in well-being and happiness when they were fully immersed in activities and actively acquiring new knowledge. Individuals that actively engage in and acquire new knowledge and skills will discover a sense of fulfilment and joy in their lives.

The data from questionnaire shows that 81,5% from 27 participants mentioned that they enjoy learning English. Furthermore, they mentioned that they find happiness from their friends and the environment.

Do You Enjoy learning English?  
27 jawaban

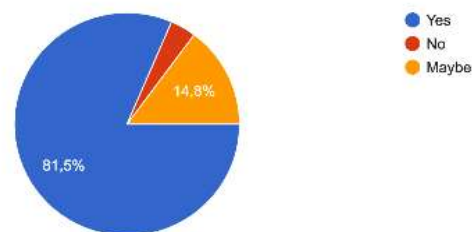


Figure 1. Data Participant

A study from Moskowitz and Derakhshan et al. (2022) elucidate that the correlation between students' assessment of teacher happiness and their overall attitude and motivation, as well as their attitude towards the teacher, was found to be statistically significant and favourable. This can be understood as a depiction of the phenomenon of positive emotional contagion occurring between teachers and students.

Various environmental circumstances, which are either integral to the learning process or associated with it, can significantly impact human emotions. Music, by itself, can significantly influence an individual's mood (Sachs et al., 2015). The study conducted by Fox et al. (2015) establishes a correlation between sorrowful music and a positive emotional state. Students frequently encounter a range of emotions when engaging in learning activities, which can elicit varied affective responses among individuals. Certain circumstances may be seen as challenging or elicit feelings of worry (Ivanova et al., 2021). For instance, when students view an activity as challenging but also feel joy, relief, or pride when doing it, they are more likely to modify their perceptions and become open to attempting new activities in the future. Therefore, the emotions that are involved in this assessment process offer pupils the impetus to guide their behaviours and influence their cognition. The process of evaluation and appraisal is crucial in any learning journey as it determines whether it will continue or come to an end. The entire emotional state has a significant impact on cognitive performance.

## Conclusion

It is safe to conclude that positive psychology serves as a connection or link between humanism and transpersonal. The concept of developing personality potential is evident in Positive Psychology, which also incorporates transcendence as one of its virtues, particularly in relation to spirituality and meaningfulness. Therefore, the ESP learning concept can enable students to actively participate in foreign language teaching practices in the natural science learning process regarding their psychology aspects as well.

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visualization, , S.R.S, I.I.N, R.M, R.K, and N.K; supervision, , S.R.S, I.I.N, R.M, R.K, and N.K; project administration, , S.R.S, I.I.N, R.M, R.K, and N.K; funding acquisition, , S.R.S, I.I.N, R.M, R.K, and N.K All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Conflicts of Interest

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal and other relationships with other peoples or organization related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

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