ESP Instructors' Viewpoint towards Learners' Needs: The Case of Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences

Golchin Amani[1] iD
Mohammad Aliakbari[2*] iD
Yadolah Zarezadeh[3] iD
Reza Khany[4] iD

[1]Ph.D. Candidate of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Ilam University, Ilam, Iran
[*2]Professor of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Ilam University, Ilam, Iran
[3]Professor of Medical Education, Social Determinants of Health Research Center, Research Institute for Health Development, Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences, Sanandaj, Iran
[4]Professor of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Ilam University, Ilam, Iran

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at addressing ESP instructors' perspectives towards ESP learners' needs at Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences (KUMS). That is, we sought to investigate whether or not the learners' needs in ESP classes are met satisfactorily. Using census rather than sampling, a total number of 10 ESP instructors were selected as the participants. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant individually. The results obtained from the interviews yielded 13 dominant themes. It was revealed that instructor-oriented themes were mainly concerned with perceived/felt needs, subject specialists/language instructors, a-priori/negotiated syllabus, team teaching/solitary teaching, instructors as suppressors of needs, receptive/productive skills, transmissive/transformative instructors, and positive/negative reinforcement. However, students' unheard voices in material selection, sense of belonging to the class, students' ratings of instruction and heterogenous/homogenous class groupings were mainly associated with student-oriented themes. Finally, content gradation was found to be associated with coursebook/material-oriented theme. Each of the recognized themes played either a facilitating or hindering role in making learners' needs met. Henceforth, delving into the role of such themes in ESP classes would open new insights into the instructors' viewpoints towards their leaners' needs. The frequency of the retrieved themes was a sign of commonality and generalizability among the majority of instructors; however, the indirect and unidimensional analysis of learners' needs could be remedied by inspecting the learners' actual needs through their own perspectives in future studies

KEYWORDS: Needs analysis; English for specific purposes; Instructors' perspectives; Learners' needs; Course evaluation; Thematic analysis (TA)

1. Introduction

Learners are pivotal components in actualizing classroom objectives; however, they seem to be marginalized by the authorities who make value judgments about them. Atai and Hejazi (2019) introduced students as one of the "key stakeholder groups" (p.

280). Needs analysis is both the preliminary stage and basis on which a researcher can track his venue. Such a concept "has featured prominently in the literature of language teaching since the 1980s." (Masuhara, 1998, p. 238).

Emerging in the late 1960s, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as an umbrella term or a whole entity, shelters a variety of particulars including, English for Academic purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) or English for Vocational Purposes (EVP), English for Business Purposes (EBP), English for Medical Purposes (EMP), English for General Purposes (EGP), English for Fitness Purposes (EFP), English for Psychological Purposes (EPP) and a number of other subcategories each relating to a particular domain.

Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences (KUMS), a well-known public university in Sanandaj, forms the context of the present study. It offers up-to-date programs in five main faculties including, faculty of dentistry, faculty of health, faculty of nursing and midwifery, faculty of paramedical sciences, and faculty of medicine. The students take a two-credit course on General English during the primary semesters, then usually during the 3rd and 4th semesters, they are offered either two or four ESP courses (depending on the field of study).

The main problem which sets the ground for posing the research questions is to see whether or not the students' needs as one of the most significant pedagogic factors turns out to be a met or an unmet desire. The insufficient number of works eliciting ESP instructors' viewpoints towards learners' needs may be partly compensated by studies like the present one. The significance of the study is that by conducting course evaluation we take a middle position between curriculum evaluation (the broad scop) and textbook evaluation (the narrow scope). Making the instructors conscious about learners' needs can help them find the appropriate route for "instructional design" (Li, 2018, p. 4).

This study seeks to answer the following research questions.

Main Questions: Inspecting ESP instructors' viewpoints towards the learners' needs in the current status of offered ESP courses at KUMS, what themes are recognized as significant?

Sub-Question 1: What themes are instructor-oriented in the evaluated ESP course/s?

Sub-Question 2: What themes are student-oriented in the evaluated ESP course/s?

Sub-Question 3: What themes are coursebook/material-oriented in the evaluated ESP course/s?

2. Literature Review

ESP is the umbrella term which entails needs analysis as one of its components. Although the international literature by Hatam and Shafiei, 2012; Aliakbari and Boghayeri, 2014; Lesiak-Bielawska, 2014; Zafarghandi et al. 2017; Çelik, 2018; Halim et al. 2022; Elmechta, 2023 confirmed the conduction of ESP course in different disciplines, the following works elucidate teaching ESP in Iranian universities of medical sciences. Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2008) investigated foreign language learning needs of undergraduate nursing and midwifery students in Iran. They inferred that the studied ESP course does not fully prepare the students to embark on their studies. Examining the (ESP) needs of Iranian paramedical students, Akbari (2014) verified the participants' dissatisfaction with the number of current ESP courses for Bachelor of Arts (BA) students. Besides, Nezakatgoo and Behzadpoor (2017) explored the major challenges of teaching ESP in medical universities in Iran. They classified the challenges into institutional challenges, learner-related challenges, and teacher-related challenges. Sattarpour and Khalili (2019) outlined pronunciation, technical and general vocabulary knowledge, and the use of bilingual dictionaries as important target needs by the learners. Hosseini and Shokrpour (2019) attempted to identify the motivating factors affecting Iranian medical ESP learners. Khalili and Tahririan (2023) probed for the status of ESP in medical schools. They reported inappropriate materials, weak motivation and heterogeneous classes as the most dominant challenges.

Reviewing the related literature revealed three types of perspective investigation including the students' themselves, the instructors, or a triangulation of stakeholders' perspectives, among which the second one retrieved the least studies. Hereby, the studies by Fatehi et al., 2022; Khalili and Tahririan 2020; Mahdavi Zafarghandi et al., 2014; Nasiri and Khojasteh 2024; Sojoodizadeh et al., 2020; Zohrabi and Khalili, 2024 concentrated on learners' own perspectives towards their own needs. While, studies by Atai and Hejazi, 2019; Farahian and Rajabi, 2022; Mahmoodi et al., 2023; Nazari and Zaroori, 2021; Soodmand Afshar and Ahmadi, 2020; concentrated on a triangulation of perspectives in investigating learners' needs. Unlike the already offered literature, the study by Rajabi and Farahian (2021) strived to determine the status of ESP courses for the students of nursing from only the instructors' perspectives.

The review indicated insufficient number of works eliciting merely instructors' perspectives as knowledgeable stakeholders. Thus, such a lack could be partly compensated for by the present study which exclusively takes their viewpoints into account.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design

As a measure to assess the adequacy of needs analysis for ESP students, the instructors' viewpoints were assessed via interviews during the second academic semester of 2023-2024 at KUMS. The following offers a more detailed description on participant selection, instrumentation, and procedure in which the study was conducted.

3.2. Participants and sample size: Census rather than sample

The participants included all ESP instructors of KUMS. We intended to ask all of the study population to participate in the research. Therefore, there was no need to determine a sample rather census was used. Consequently, the type of sampling produced a "census-matched sample" (Ruiz and Bell, 2021, p. 1084). Male and female ESP instructors constituted %70 and %30 of the total participants respectively. The demographic information provided by the participants is documented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the interviewees

Participants (Coded)	Specialty	Degree	Employment Status	Age	Gender	Years of Experience	School	Duration(minute)
Male Dentistry 1	Periodontology specialist	Ph.D.	Faculty member	34	male	2	dentistry	11:21
Male Dentistry 2	Restorative Dentistry Specialist	PhD	Faculty member	36	male	2	dentistry	16:32
Male Dentistry 3	endodontist	PhD	Faculty member	37	male	7	dentistry	14:13
Male Medicine & Paramedical Sciences 4	English language teaching	PhD	Faculty member	47	male	12	medicine	15:58
Male Medicine 5	Medical education	PhD	Faculty member	53	Male	21	medicine	33.54
Male Health 6	Health Education & Promotion	PhD	Faculty member	43	male	6	health	12:50
Male Health 7	Environmental health	PhD	Faculty Member	48	male	12	health	18:46
Female Health 8	Health Education & Promotion	PhD	Faculty Member	60	Female	20	health	30:16
Male Nursing 9	Nursing education	PhD	Faculty member	40	male	6	nursing	16:33
Female Medicine 10	Nuclear medicine specialist	PhD	Faculty member	39	female	3	medicine	17:34

3.3. Instrumentation

The present study begins with semi-structured interviews with ESP instructors. Petrescu et al. (2017) noted that in such a data elicitation technique, the movement and transition is from "unstructured interviews" towards structured "template questions, asked in a specific order" (p.38). The already framed questions are better to be referred to as interview guide (Appendix A), in that they are not going to be asked in a rigidly predetermined order. They are almost flexible with each interviewee.

3.4. Procedure

Data collection began during the second academic semester of 1402-1403. The pilot study with one of the most knowledgeable ESP instructors was followed by four subsequent rounds of interviews. 11 potential interviewees were called and told that the interviews would not last more than 30-35 minutes. However, since one of the interviewees was on a long job leave, 10 interviews were successfully conducted. The whole interview sessions were audio recorded on the interviewer's cell phone. The rounds were categorized based on the timespan they were conducted in and their sequence led to the development of the final framework for themes. Furthermore, one cannot deny the significance of the formal language or the mother tongue used in a variety of domains specially surveys. Jacobsen (2022) confirmed that "a mismatch between the mother tongue and survey language increases the likelihood of item nonresponse" (p.466). Here, in order to avoid any possible inconveniences caused by the enumerated mismatch, all the face-to-face interviews were conducted in Persian (Appendix B).

3.5. Data collection and data analysis

Semi-structured interview was employed as the data collection technique; whereas, Thematic Analysis (TA), a method to identify themes in qualitative studies, was adopted to conduct data analysis. Although procedures for using TA as a qualitative technique began in the 1990s, it was Braun and Clarke's (2006) landmark paper in which "TA as a 'named and claimed' method has gained hugely in popularity and has entered the qualitative canon as a recognizable and reputable method of analysis" (Terry et al. 2017, p.18). Furthermore, they outlined the following six phases to conduct TA (p.23).

Phase 1: Familiarization

In order to get familiar with the data, the audio recorded interviews were played several times. The more we listened, the higher our curiosity went to get mastery over the dataset. After getting engaged with the dataset, the researchers felt the need to move towards a clearer path to extract some codes.

Phase 2: Generating Codes

We have already made several abstract and casual codes. Table 2 reports initial coding. Later on, we decided to remove some codes that were generated from only a very limited number of responses. Terry et al. (2017) described such themes as "thin" (p.31). They added that "The purpose of coding is to find the 'evidence' for the themes" (p. 19).

Phase 3 and 4: Constructing Themes and Reviewing Potential Themes

The already described phases paved the ground for constructing themes. Coding was not only employed to reduce data, but also as a process to organize the retrieved data (Terry et al., 2017).

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

In this phase, we bounded ourselves to offer definitions for the new terminologies and concepts which conveyed the themes. Two changes were made to the initial draft on themes. As mentioned earlier, thin ones were removed and some changes were made to the naming of some themes to make them more representative.

Phase 6: Final Report

This section partly equates with the discussion. The final report "should contain sufficient evidence of themes in form of demonstrated data extracts" (Majumdar, 2022, p.210). Henceforth, as the main building block in the analysis, explicit data extracts were provided and evaluated.

4. Results

Several themes were identified and labeled. The primary draft and finalized list of themes are presented in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively.

Table 2. Primary draft on themes

Rank	Theme	Categorizations	
1	Material	Pamphlet	Book
2	Book	Instructors' own book	Published by others
3	Number of instructors	One instructor	Team teaching/collaborative teaching
4	They have a head of department	Yes	No
5	Content gradation	Is considered	Is not considered
6	Which skills are taught, learnt or emphasized more	Receptive	Productive
7	A syllabus is decided	A priori	Negotiated
8	Students' class groupings	Homogenous	Heterogenous
9	ESP instructors act based on…	Perceived needs (needs of learners perceived by others)	Felt needs (needs of learners felt by themselves)
10	University's solution for weaker students	None	some

11	How weakness affects students' general performance	Less engagement	Desire/aspire to be engaged more
12	Who should teach ESP?	Subject specialists	Language instructors
13	The distance between instructors and students is longer when a class is taught by a…	Subject specialists	Language instructors
14	Friendly and dialogic interaction occurs more conveniently when the students are taught by	Subject specialists	Language instructors
15	What are the consequences of students' inability to express their criticisms freely in the class?	Lack of feeling engaged	Suppressed needs
16	The force exercised by the instructors to engage students is	Usually, constructive	Usually, destructive
17	The general condition of ESP classes is	Instructor-centered	Student-centered
18	Replacement exam/language proficiency screening test	Administered	Not Administered
19	The obligatory ESP Courses are considered as	Transitory without any other significance than the scores they get	Courses the students have understood their significance in job and education venue
20	The need to learn language is felt more during	General courses	Specialized courses
21	Students' status	Marginalized	Centralized
22	Types of Instructors	Transmissive	Transformative
23	Students' ratings of instruction	Are important for teachers	Are not important for teachers
24	Reinforcement	Positive	Negative
25	Undergraduate Programs	Continuous undergraduate students	Non-continuous undergraduate students

Table 3. Finalized themes

	Theme	Frequency
Instructor-Oriented	Team Teaching/ Solitary teaching	5
	Subject Specialist/ Language Instructor	9
	Perceived Needs/Felt Needs	11
	Instructors as Suppressors of Needs	3
	Syllabus Design (a priori /negotiated)	5
	Transmissive/ Transformative instructors	1
	Positive/Negative Reinforcement	1
	Receptive/Productive Skills	2
Total		37
Student-Oriented	Students' unheard voices in material selection	16
	Sense of Belonging and Engagement	8
	Students' Ratings of Instruction	5
	Heterogenous/Homogenous Classroom Groupings	3
Total		32
Coursebook/Material-Oriented	Content Gradation	3
All the Extractions		72

Inspecting the instructors' viewpoints towards leaners' needs, Table 2 yielded 72 themes. However, the research questions tended to be more specified by separating the orientations of themes. The frequency of the occurrence of themes in each domain determines the order they are discussed in the next section. In terms of the results for the first research question on instructor-oriented themes, types of needs (perceived needs/felt needs), types of instructors (Subject specialist/Language Instructor), types of teaching (team teaching/ solitary teaching), types of syllabus design (a priori /negotiated), instructors as suppressors of needs, receptive/productive skills, transmissive/transformative instructors and positive/negative reinforcement were retrieved. In terms of the results for the second research question on student-oriented themes, students' unheard voices in material selection, sense of belonging and engagement, students' ratings of instruction and heterogenous/homogenous classroom groupings were retrieved. In terms of the results for the third research question on coursebook-oriented themes, only one theme associating with content gradation was recognized.

Since the learners' needs were identified through the viewpoints of instructors the number of instructor-oriented themes was higher in comparison with the ones recognized as student-oriented. We would like to name the already recognized

themes as pedagogic instruments though which teaching will either partly or fully facilitate or hinder making learners' needs met. Discussion of the recognized themes is presented in the next section.

5. Discussion

The following is a discussion for the identified instructor-oriented, student-oriented and coursebook-oriented themes, respectively. The order in which they are discussed is based on the frequency of their occurrence.

5.1. Instructor-oriented themes

5.1.1. *Perceived needs/felt needs*

Regarding the concepts of perceived needs and the felt needs, the instructors elaborated on the following points.

> Actually, I myself have not considered the learners' needs from their own perspectives. I have taught what I had found to be probably useful for them both linguistically and scientifically. (*Male Dentistry 3*)

> We teach and assess all the students similarly. We cannot considerably take individual differences into account. (*Male Medicine & Paramedical Sciences 4*)

> We cannot meet individual needs; however, I appreciate those who are highly motivated. (*Male Medicine 5*)

> The students are viewed collectively. That is, the duration of classes is not enough and the volume of the material which is supposed to be taught is high. (*Male Health 6*)

> There are about 120 students in an ESP class. Thus, it is not possible to take the students' needs into account individually. (*Female Medicine 10*)

> The material I give the students is somehow different from the educational curriculum. I act based on my own experiences. (*Male Health 7*)

> Based on our experience, the ability we have in understanding what the students need, and the philosophy of pragmatism which emphasizes practical usefulness, we try to make the best out of the limited available time. (*Male Nursing 9*)

> He added that, what is effective in deciding what to teach is the occupational experience of instructors (*Male Nursing 9*).

One of the interviewees maintained that freshmen students are not knowledgeable enough about ESP courses; therefore, they cannot recognize their needs clearly.

> It is not appropriate to enquire about students' needs while they are still studying their second and third semesters. (*Female Medicine 10*)

> She added that,

> A student in the second semester of education does not have much vision on the clinical period. (*Female Medicine 10*)

> Contrary to our study, Salehi et al. (2015) considered perceived needs analysis in medical ESP classes as an unrealistic identification of learners' needs.

5.1.2. *Subject specialist/language instructor*

The following is an attempt to evaluate the priority of teaching ESP courses by subject specialist. Language teachers can find themselves weak where they are trying to answer questions about subject matter which is not their specialism (Vakilidousta & Rahmani, 2023, p. 12).

> In my opinion, whoever teaches ESP must certainly have a background knowledge in medical sciences. (*Male Medicine 5*)

> He added that:

> when we teach, we have some scenarios in our mind, which will cause sense of humor which will help in tackling b oredom in the classroom. And our teaching becomes more authentic. (*Male Medicine 5*)

> Thus, it is a good idea to flavor teaching with scenarios and real-life experiences.

One more point has to be clarified here;

Although language instructors may do their best to be equipped with additional content information, lack of content experiences will cause them failure. That is, they do not have reflection which causes integration. (*Male Medicine 5*)

A subject specialist is better to teach ESP. For example, I know what exactly the phrase "perceived barrier" means. However, a language instructor may offer an abstract translation. (*Female Health 8*)

The way a subject specialist translates texts is more tangible.

ESP should be taught by subject specialists. For instance, the term "treatment" has different meanings in different contexts. If a vet uses it, it means "timar", if a physician uses it, it means "darman", and for us it means "tasfieh". (*Male Health 7*)

There are some instructional scaffolding techniques that will be actualized better via subject specialists rather than language instructors.

The instructors should have worked in different wards, they should be familiar with technical terms. (*Male Nursing 9*)

This way, the subject specialist becomes a comprehensive package of knowledge. He added that:

Subject specialists can employ hundreds of resources which emanate from their experiences. (*Male Nursing 9*)

A language instructor is usually fed one dimensionally; whereas, a subject specialist is fed from a variety of sources.

Reading numbers and chemical formulae in English cannot be easily done by a language instructor. (*Male Health 7*)

One of the interviewees alluded to a nice point. She said that:

Whenever I teach general English, I tell my students that you may start talking in English and I may fall behind. However, in teaching ESP; for example, when we are teaching cardio, we should be engaged and understand it wholeheartedly. Otherwise, the teaching will become mere translation, what we actually do not seek to do in an ESP class. (*Female Medicine 10*)

Likewise, the studies by Estaji and Nazari 2015; Ferguson, 1997; and Master, 2005 supported the ideology that subject specialists are the right person to teach ESP.

5.1.3.   *Syllabus design (A priori/negotiated syllabus)*

A negotiated syllabus according to Boomer et al. (1992) demonstrates "a shared detailed understanding between teacher and students of what is going on, what needs to be done, and how it will be done" (p. 287). The following seeks to address instructors' approach towards syllabus design in their ESP courses.

Whatever is relevant to me is introduced in the first session. They will be told that this is the textbook for this semester and these chapters will be covered throughout the semester. (*Male Dentistry 3*)

The lesson plan is determined a priori. It is given to the educational affairs department at the beginning of the semester and it is given to the class representative by the person in charge of the educational affairs. (*Male Dentistry 1*)

Although the students may be active during the session, they are passive recipients of syllabi.

We usually upload this information on the website. When the lesson plan is uploaded, there is no space for flexibility. (*Male Medicine and Paramedical Sciences 4*)

The book *Medical Terminology* is introduced to the students at the beginning and I let them know that some predetermined chapters will be taught. (*Male Medicine 5*)

Before the beginning of the semester, we are required to upload the syllabus on HamAva Website. (*Female Health 8*)

The syllabi are decided a priori and there is not a dialogic atmosphere between the students and the instructors. Unlike the current instructors, the study by Ennis and Prior 2020; Peyvandi et al. 2021; and Sewell, 2005 advocated the necessity to employ negotiated syllabus in ESP classes to bring about positive effects.

5.1.4.   *Team teaching/solitry teaching*

By tam teaching, this study does not mean a collaboration between subject specialist and language instructor. In fact, it means classes with more than one subject specialist, each teaching a very specialized domain in the field. Baeten and Simons (2014) defined team teaching as the collaboration between two or more instructors "in the planning, delivery, and/or evaluation of a

course" (p.95). Aliakbari and Valizadeh (2023) indicated that "adequate empirical team-teaching projects in Iran offers a fruitful opportunity to examine the feasibility of team teaching to address the pending needs of learners" (p. 2). Thus, delving into the issue of team teaching is helpful in addressing the needs of learners via the transition recently observed at the studied dentistry school.

> The fourth ESP module in dentistry curriculum is taught by five or almost six instructors, by almost all the specialties available in the school. Instructors from different specialties including gum, tooth root, surgery, etc. each taught one or two sessions. (*Male Dentistry School 2*)

The very fact that each subject is taught by a specialist is highly appreciated. Alluding to Dieker and Murawski (2003), Walsh (2020) introduced the concept of "'closed-door syndrome' where teachers work in isolation, making coordination and communication with other teachers difficult" (p. 692). However, team teaching helps the instructors to keep in touch and go beyond their solitary-instructed and isolated classes.

> When two instructors teach the same course, one can find two different characteristics and methods. If the students cannot satisfactorily take advantage of one instructor, it could be compensated by having an alternative one. (*Male Medicine & Paramedical School 4*)

Although the majority of the interviewees enumerated on advantages realized by subject specialists, there were few ones pinpointing some challenges.

> One of the interviewees referred to a disadvantage caused by team teaching. She confirmed that:

> The difference in pronunciations uttered by different instructors may be confusing for the students. Although a variety of pronunciations are correct, the students are not used to hearing that variation. (*Female Health 8*)

The very nature of fragmented teaching may deprive the students from holding a holistic view towards their course but a piece-by-piece interwoven entity that may affect the way they perceive the general quality of the class. Gerhard and Rocha Filho (2012), (as cited in Santos et al. (2017) postulated that "knowledge is separated into relatively compartmented contents even in the context of a given discipline, and the contents are presented in a dissociated and disconnected fashion" (p. 72). Through this overspecialized manner of teaching, fragmented content areas are presented. Furthermore, the students have to adapt themselves to a variety of class conditions. They need to play as different types of learners based on the teaching environment and the priorities of instructors. The opportunity to be formatively assessed by each instructor is not satisfactorily provided in that one or two sessions are not long enough to both teach and assess the students in.

> In a solitarily teaching class, the instructor claimed that:

> The students read the texts; their problems are solved. Then, they will be fed with what they need for the next session. (*Male Medicine 5*)

Solitary teaching makes the fluid transition between sessions easier. That is to say, a class led by one instructor would be more coherent. Contrary to such assertions, the studies by Ahmadishokouh et al. (2024) and Apandi and Abdul Rahim (2020) supported the significance of team teaching.

5.1.5. *Instructors as suppressors of needs*

One of the interviewees asserted that the instructors may cause the suppression of needs themselves by:

> Not answering the students' questions, being indifferent towards them, not being accessible, not holding enough sessions, not being punctual, being irresponsible, lack of accountability, causing the students question their professional identity, being illiterate in the specialized domain, not having content organization, attending the classes without preparation, lack of an appropriate pronunciation and lack of mastery to the specialized language. (*Male Medicine 5*)

> He added that

> The more motivated the students become, the higher their natural satisfaction goes. (*Male Medicine 5*)

> Therefore, demotivating the students will become a suppressing factor in meeting learners' needs.

> I do not let my students ask me the meaning of the new words. I suppress my students in this case. They should not think of me as a dictionary. (*Female Health 8*)

Accordingly, the instructors can play contradictory roles. They are not always pedagogic facilitators. Sometimes, they become needs suppressors themselves. In contrast to our study, Górska-Poręcka (2013) confirmed the ESP instructors to be both facilitators and mediator of student learning.

5.1.6.   *Receptive/productive skills*

We seek to investigate whether the focus of the ESP courses is on receptive skills or the productive ones.

> We particularly seek to improve reading skills in students so that they can read articles in English. (*Male Dentistry 2*)

> Translation skills and reading comprehension in specialized texts are reinforced. (*Male Medicine & Paramedical Sciences 4*)

> Likewise, Costeleanu (2017) highlighted the priority of reading in ESP classes.

5.1.7.   *Transmissive of transformative instructors*

"Transformational (transformative) learning theory" was first introduced by Jack Mezirow in 1978 (Gravett, 2004, p. 260). The trend among most instructors is to move from being transmissive to transformative. The former ones are merely transferring what they have already received from their previous experiences, whereas the latter group is more dynamic. Parry (2008) argued that "Transmissive educational processes tend to result in surface learning". However, in a transformative model, the interactants, here the instructors are "more discriminating, open and reflective" (p.39). It is an active model of teaching.

> I had two teachers, Mr. Armand and Mr. Toorani who inspired me a lot ... I entirely loved their teaching and transmit their methods fully in my classes. (*Male Health 7*)

> In contrast with the above justification, Safari (2017) emphasized the privileges of being transformative.

5.1.8.   *Positive/negative reinforcement*

A limited number of interviewees referred to the outcome of the way the students were assessed. Skinner (1971) postulated that "when a bit of behavior is followed by a certain kind of consequence, it is more likely to occur again, and a consequence having this effect is called a reinforcer" (p. 27). Hence, providing the students with feedback is required to make them understand that they are given consideration in the class.

> The students will be rated based on class questionings. The way they answer the questions, leads to either positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement on different occasions. (*Male Medicine 5*)

> The instructors should not merely take advantage of one of these two approaches. In line with the above declaration, Wahab et al. (2013) elucidated that "positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement" are the cornerstones in classroom management that should be treated as a continuum (p.62).

5.2. Student-oriented themes

5.2.1.   *Students' unheard voices*

Zohrabi (2011) argued that "the main material which is used in undergraduate courses in Iranian universities is the coursebook" (p. 214). However, the instructors in the school of Dentistry pinpointed the lack of a certain coursebook to be taught.

> From the beginning of teaching ESP courses, I myself have selected the efficient material in domains including implant, endo, and prostheses. (*Male Dentistry 3*)

> The shortage of a coursebook deprives the class and its components from motivation and stimulation. Thus, when motivation is removed from a class, the propelling force to learn and to be engaged will be undervalued.

> Another interviewee referred to the fragmented nature of coursebooks written by non-native writers. She claimed that "Such books are not coherent, and interesting. In fact, they are abstract" (*Female Health 8*).

> The ESP instructors choose the material themselves. (*Male Dentistry 3*)

> The following extractions reveal instructors' justification for not having involved students in material selection.

> Since the students often seek to pass the courses with the least difficulty, I usually, based on some policies do not involve the students' opinions considerably in such issues. (*Male Dentistry 3*)

> Supporting the already extracted quotations, other interviewees suggested that:

> In the field of medicine, we cannot base the coursebook selection on the student's opinion…. the students cannot choose the references but they can only make some suggestions. (*Female Medicine 10*)

The ESP instructors themselves can be the pioneers in making any required changes…since the students begin taking ESP courses in the second and third academic semesters, they are not yet considerably knowledgeable about the ESP material. (*Male Medicine & Paramedical Sciences 4*)

Another interviewee claimed that:

I myself teach *Medical Terminology*. I do a needs analysis based on their specialized field of study, the academic level they are in, and the subjects and syllabuses that are included in their curriculum. (*Male Medicine 5*)

It seems that the school of medicine does not have much problem with the coursebook. They all said that they teach *Medical Terminology* by Cohen. They agree to follow what is prescribed to be taught as the course book.

By connecting the available material with what we supposed to be beneficial for the students later, we can greatly meet the students' educational needs. (*Male Nursing 9*)

The instructor is still the dominant figure in selecting the material

Four of the chapters from medical terminology are common for all the students then I almost choose four chapters based on their field and academic level. (*Male Medicine 5*)

At first, I used to teach a book titled *Public Health*. Whereas, after a while, I found its texts to be difficult for the students. Therefore, I decided to use different texts that were more appropriate and relevant for the students of public health. (*Male Health 6*)

The students usually do not have any suggestions for the sources. However, regarding teaching methods, they can express their opinions. (*Female Health 8*)

The ESP instructors act based on their common sense and what they think will work better. The following extractions support this assertion.

In order to teach the third and the fourth ESP courses, I personally, look for an article or a specialized text on the internet. (*Male Dentistry 2*)

The students usually do not have a say in selecting the material. (*Male Health 6*)

The students usually want to have simple material. They are assigned some exercises each session…I build the frame myself. (*Male Health 7*)

A dialogic interaction does not seem to exist in material selection. The finding closely correlated with what Ahmadi and Hasani (2018) reported about the instructors as the "sole leading factor" who marginalize students.

5.2.2. *Students' sense of belonging and engagement*

ESP courses are highly associated with learners' future occupation if they are going to be hired in a job relevant to their field of study. Thus, this bond is supposed to help them increase their sense of belonging and engagement during the course. However, there are usually some barriers.

Actually, since the ESP courses are somehow difficult for the students, they usually do not show a good interaction with them… engagement is not observed remarkably. (*Male Medicine & Paramedical Sciences 4*)

Regarding the sense of belonging, one of the participants alluded to a significant difference which existed between the students of continuous and non-continuous undergraduate degrees

Our students are of two types, they are either continuous or non-continuous undergraduate students. The latter group, usually does not express its needs. (*Male Health 6*)

The average age group of non-continuous undergraduate students is between 30-40. They are almost employed. They only seek to get a degree and get promoted in their workplace. (*Female Health 8*)

Therefore, the non-continuous group do not feel much belonged.

Making the students informed about the significance of ESP courses can be helpful in increasing their sense of belonging.

I always tell my students that learning English is the golden key, not only for the course itself but also for the next educational levels they will study in. (*Female Health 8*)

The majority of students view ESP courses as transitory courses that they only want to pass successfully. (*Male Medicine & Paramedical Sciences 4*)

We can make the students hopeful by letting them know that these courses will finally contribute to the construction of your professional identity, professional competency as well as professional authenticity. (*Male Medicine 5*)

Enumerating on the concept of belongingness as one of "the most powerful human drives", Maslow (1970), (as cited in Finley (2018) identified belongingness as one of five major needs" (p. 37-38). This way, the impossibility to meet such a psychological need, may be taken as a sign of needs ignorance for learners. However, contrary to our finding, Mačianskienė and Bijeikienė (2018) revealed fostering signs of learners' belonging and engagement in ESP classes.

5.2.3. *Students' rating of instructors*

Students' ratings of instruction provide unique evaluations of the quality of class and teaching. The students of KUMS rate their instructors before they know their final scores.

The scores provided by students' ratings of instruction are available at Education Development Center (EDC). (*Male Medicine 4*)

Other interviewees considered the results of such ratings as an unreliable criterion to judge teaching effectiveness.

Students' ratings of instruction are not valid. It is just a formality. (*Male Health 7*)

One of the interviewees trivialized the significance of the systematically conducted ratings of instruction.

I myself rely on what I receive as feedback from the students orally. This is important for me. Much more important than what I get as a score via systematic ratings. (*Female Health 8*)

One of the interviewees designated the type of relationship between instructors and learners as a factor in the process of receiving honest evaluation.

If the students trust their instructors, they can express their views honestly. (*Female Medicine 10*)

Unlike the disagreement presented by the interviewed instructors towards the validity of such ratings, McKeachie (1979) referred to students' ratings of instruction as the most valid source of data collected to assess teaching effectiveness.

5.2.4. *Heterogenous/homogenous class groupings*

"Heterogeneous classes provide difficulties in focusing who the target learner is." That is, if the instructor focuses on "slow learners," their "fast counterparts" will be bored and if the instructor seeks to spend more time with the fast learners, their slow counterparts will be demotivated (Gustinai, 2019, p. 302).

Teaching students with mixed-abilities conveys some advantages and disadvantages at the same time. However, the interviewees largely emphasized the bad side of the coin.

Heterogeneity is high among the students. The university cannot do anything in this case. (*Male Medicine & Paramedical Sciences 4*)

Some of the students are really weak, passive and unmotivated. Such problems could somehow be traced back to teaching methods and education they had been exposed to in school. A replacement exam may be a good solution. (*Male Medicine 5*)

Although the following interviewee referred to a kind of replacement assessment, it was still not enough. Through this approach, the instructor can get a general assessment to select the materials that will suit the majority of students but not all of them.

As for the first session, I myself bring a text to the class. I ask the students to read it. This way I assess the students' language level. (*Male Health 6*)

In accordance with our findings, Bouklikha Graia (2023) demonstrated the challenging nature of teaching in heterogenous classrooms.

5.3. Coursebook-oriented themes

5.3.1. *Course content gradation*

Altay (2012) introduced linear and cyclical types of gradation. He added that linearly graded courses are "mostly suitable for the learners who learn the target language for the first time without a past learning experience or knowledge" (p.133). However,

here, the students have already been acquainted with English both during school years and in their academic general English courses. Accordingly, ESP courses are not their first points of departure.

> Regarding ESP courses we cannot easily categorize and grade the contents for their simplicity and difficulty. (*Male Medicine & Paramedical Sciences 4*)

> In order to do content gradation, I select texts that include simple words, words that are relevant to public health. The students have seen such words more frequently. For example, we have some courses on epidemiology in which many words such as "shiou", and "borouz" are familiar to the students. (*Male Health 6*)

> The frequency or intertextual reoccurrence and familiarity level of students are significant criteria in determining simplicity and difficulty of terms. In fact, we don't have content gradation in *Medical Terminology*. All of the chapters follow a predetermined design. They each include a case presentation. (*Female Medicine 10*)

The findings confirm that linear gradation of course content is not employed extensively. Equally, the study by Baleghizadeh and Rahimi (2011) approved the lack of a logical order from simple to difficult in some studied ESP textbooks.

To sum it up, instructor-oriented themes revealed that regarding the perceived type of needs analysis, the instructors' own beliefs and values were almost overgeneralized to the students, which may cause an unreliable needs analysis. Comparing the teaching provided by subject specialists with those provided by the language instructors, one can conclude that the former is more natural and authentic; while lack of subject knowledge makes the latter artificial and not engaging. Scenarios a subject specialist has in mind can be transmitted to the students and enable them to identify with the examples better. This way, instruction facilitates learning. Subject specialists evaluated themselves as the right person who should teach ESP. Language instructors are given no green light to be admitted among the cohort of ESP instructors.

The majority of the interviewees reported an apriori type of syllabus. They argued that almost everything is predetermined and the learners have to follow what is prescribed. In this manner, the learners' needs were somehow ignored and marginalized. Lack of a unified pronunciation, lack of enough time and opportunity to be formatively assessed, fragmented teaching sessions, and disassociated fashion of teaching were reported as the challenges caused by team teaching. In addition, lack of the existence of any person occupying the position of the head of department in four schools would decrease unity. Making each instructor free to decide about everything, may cause chaos. A few numbers of instructors referred to the possibility that the instructors may cause the suppression of learners' needs themselves. They outlined several ways through which learners' needs could be suppressed. Among the four main skills in language learning, reading as a subtype of receptive skills was designated supreme significance. Only one of the interviewees pinpointed the concept of being transmissive; however, he did not evaluate its pros and cons. Such a theme seemed significant but was not fully manipulated. Positive and negative reinforcement were two dominant components that the instructors must be informed about.

Student-oriented themes revealed that lack of sense of belonging will demotivate the students from making their voices heard. Although the coursebooks are part of the sources from which the learners are fed, they are not themselves involved in selecting what fits them better. It is a manifestation for the well-known maxim asserting "nothing about us without us". Furthermore, being non-continuous undergraduate students rather than continuous and lack of motivation were reported as the key factors in inhibiting students from feeling belonged to the classes. Although students' ratings of instruction have been planned to be considered as a criterion in assessing learners' needs, it was not observed notably by the instructors. The instructors were not taking it as a touchstone to assess their success in teaching. Regarding the homogenous/heterogenous class groupings, the instructors were not provided with either enough time or equipment to consider the learners' needs particularly. It seemed that leaners with special needs may not benefit distinctly from such courses.

Finally, coursebook-oriented themes revealed that the learners and instructors usually move back and forth among the concepts over and over. Thus, content categorization rather than content gradation is a norm based on which the structure of ESP course has been developed. Familiarizing the learners with the essentials does not mean teaching simple concepts first. Thus, in the context of ESP courses, linearity does not mean moving from simple to difficult. Flexibility, circularity and interconnectedness of concepts altogether make a compensation for the shortcomings of a rigid linear content gradation.

6. Conclusion

When addressing the ESP instructors' viewpoints towards learners' needs, the majority agreed upon the claim that students' needs were not considerably taken into account; however, a few participants referred to some glimmers of light actualized by localized changes they made in their classes. The majority of the themes were categorized into two groups; however, we did not mean that they should be considered bipolarly or as a matter of black and white. In fact, we need to consider a middle status.

Lack of a systematic and coherent needs analysis was a challenge in the already discussed ESP courses. None of the instructors have formally and systematically inspected the students' needs in their ESP classes. The learners themselves were either not knowledgeable about their needs or they were not given the opportunity to express their personally experienced needs. Therefore, lack of a direct way to inspect learners' needs through their own perceptions will distort the reality and cause untrue or

partial needs analysis. We would like to name the already recognized themes as pedagogic instruments though which teaching will either partly or fully facilitate or hinder making learners' needs met. The majority of instructors held positive attitudes towards their own teaching strategies. They were almost satisfied with their teaching. However, the other side of the coin, which is inspecting their teaching efficacy through the students' viewpoints may reveal contradictory facts.

Overall, a triangulation of perspective would reveal more reliable and authentic information about the students' needs. The scope of a single study is not that vast to encompass all the required concerning points about a single issue. In fact, A systematic review on learners needs at medical universities would be helpful. Each study, by presenting the results for a specifically discussed issue can complete a part of the puzzle. Thus, putting them together would present a comprehensive guide for the ESP instructors to widen their viewpoints towards learners' needs and move in the correct way to satisfy their already ignored and marginalized but significant needs.

7. References

Ahmadi, R., & Hasani, M. (2018). Capturing student voice on TEFL syllabus design: Agenticity of pedagogical dialogue negotiation. *Cogent Education*, *5*(1), 1522780. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1522780

Ahmadishokouh, A., Janani, N., & Sadeghi, H. (2024). The effect of team teaching on Iranian ESP learners reading comprehension. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, *6*(2), 1172. http://dx.doi.org/10.59400/fls.v6i2.1172

Akbari, Z. (2014). Academic English needs of Iranian paramedical students and practitioners: An ESP context. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, *5*(2), 274-286.

Aliakbari, M. & Boghayeri, M. (2014) A needs analysis approach to ESP design in Iranian context. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, pp. 175-181. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.404

Aliakbari, M., & Valizadeh, P. (2023). Exploring identity construction in team teaching: The case of Iranian student-teachers. *Cogent Education*, *10*(1). 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2168934

Altay, İ. F. (2012). Gradation of the course content in English language teaching. In Emrah Ekmekçi E., Atli I., & Yaman I., (eds.). The 3rd Black Sea ELT Conference: Technology: A Bridge to Language Learning", 131-185.

Apandi, W. W., & Abdul Rahim, M. (2020). Collaborative teaching. *Ideology Journal*, *5*(2), 167–170. https://doi.org/10.24191/idealogy. v5i2.238

Atai, M. R., & Hejazi, S. Y. (2019). Assessment of academic English language needs of Iranian post-graduate students of psychology. *Ibérica: Revista de la Asociación Europea de Lenguas Para Fines Específicos (AELFE)*, (38), 275-302

Baeten, M., & Simons, M. (2014). Student teachers' team teaching: Models, effects, and conditions for implementation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *41*, 92-110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.03.010

Baleghizadeh, S., & Rahimi, A. H. (2011). Evaluation of an ESP textbook for the students of sociology. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *2*(5), 1009-1014. https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.5.1009-1014

Boomer, G., Lester, N., Onore, C., & Cook, J. (1992). *Negotiating the curriculum: Educating for the 21st century*. Falmer. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203975381

Bouklikha Graia, W. (2023). The impact of classroom heterogeneity on ESP students' achievement. *Rufuf Journal: Laboratory of Algerian Manuscripts, 11*(2), 4411-4401.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Çelik, H. (2018). A closer look into an ESP course through students' end-of-course evaluations: A case study. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, *6*(1), 125-139. http://dx.doi.org/10.22190/JTESAP1801125C

Costeleanu, M. (2017). The importance of reading in ESP classes. *Limba Şi Literature-Repere Identitare În Context European*, (21), 307-310.

Dieker, L. and Murawski, W. (2003). Co-teaching at the secondary level: Unique issues, current trends, and suggestions for success. *The High School Journal*, *86*(4), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2003.0007

Elmechta, L. (2023). ESP course evaluation and amelioration on the basis of needs analysis: The case of master 1 at the institute of nutrition, food and agri-food technologies, University of Constantine 1, Algeria. *Human Sciences Journal*, *34*(2), 35-49.

Ennis, M., & Prior, J. (2020). *Approaches to English for specific and academic purposes: Perspectives on teaching and assessing in tertiary and adult education*. *Bozen-Bolzano University Press*. https://doi.org/10.13124/9788860461711

Estaji, M., & Nazari, N. (2015). Exploring instructors' conceptions about EGP teacher challenges for becoming an ESP instructor in Iran: A qualitative study. *ESP World, 46*(1), 1-18.

Farahian, M., & Rajabi, Y. (2022). Quality of ESP courses for nursing students: Expectations and challenges. *Future of Medical Education Journal*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.22038/fmej.2022.50503.1346

Fatehi, A, Ahmadinia, H., Hakimi, H., & Rezaeian, M. (2022). Evaluation of specialized English curriculum from the perspective of students of Rafsanjan Faculty of Medicine in 2021: A descriptive study. *Journal of Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences*, *21*(8), 885-900. https://doi.org/10.52547/jrums.21.8.885

Ferguson, G. (1997). The teacher education and LSP. The role of specialized knowledge. In: R. Howard, G. Brown (eds.) *teacher education for LSP (80-89)*. Multilingual Matters.

Finley, A. M. (2018). Fostering success: Belongingness pedagogy for English language learners. *BC TEAL Journal*, *3*(1), 37-48. https://doi.org/10.14288/bctj.v3i1.273

Górska-Poręcka, B. (2013). The role of teacher knowledge in ESP course design. *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*, *34*(47), 27-42. https://doi.org/10.2478/slgr-2013-0021

Gravett, S. (2004). Action research and transformative learning in teaching development. *Educational Action Research*, *12*(2), 259-272. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650790400200248

Gustinai, Sri. (2019). Challenges and strategies in teaching English to heterogenous classes: A case study. *Edukasi: Journal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran, 6*(2), 301-310. http://dx.doi.org/10.19109/ejpp.v6i2.3909

Halim, N. B. A., Balakrishnan, S., Hamdzah, N. A., & Mokhtar, S. A. (2022). Academic writing course evaluation: Perspective of engineering students. *International Journal of Nanoelectronics and Materials*, *15*. 209-218.

Hatam, A. H., & Shafiei, S. (2012). The evaluation of the effectiveness of ESP courses in enhancing technical translation proficiency: A case study of ESP course for mechanical engineering students. *English Language Teaching*, *5*(5), 68-78. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt. v5n5p68

Hosseini, A., & Shokrpour, N. (2019). Exploring motivating factors among Iranian medical and nursing ESP language learners. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, *6*(1), 1634324. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2019.1634324

Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centered approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jacobsen, J. (2022). If they don't understand the question, they don't answer. language mismatch in face-to-face interviews. *Journal of Official Statistics, 38*(2), 453-484. https://doi.org/10.2478/jos-2022-0022

Khalili, S., & Tahririan, M. H. (2020). Deciphering challenges of teaching English for specific purposes to medical students: Needs, lacks, students' preferences, and efficacy of the courses. *Teaching English Language*, *14*(1), 365-394. https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2020.112768

Khalili, S., & Tahririan, M. H. (2023). English for medical purposes in Iran: Needs analysis, challenges, and prospects. *Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *12*(2), 49-68. https://doi.org/20.1001.1.24763187.2023.12.2.3.3

Lesiak-Bielawska, E. (2014). English for instrumentalists: Designing and evaluating an ESP course. *English for Specific*

Purposes World, *15*(43), 1-32.

Mačianskienė, N., & Bijeikienė, V. (2018). Fostering active learner engagement in ESP classes. *Key Issues in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education*, *11*, 223-242. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70214-8_13

Mahdavi Zafarghandi, A., Khalili Sabet, M., & Shahroudi, S. (2014). Developing an ESP needs profile of Iranian students of business administration. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, *3*(5), 3-18. https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsll.2014.456

Mahmoodi, H., Fathalipour, M., Sheybani-Arani, M. H., & Piroozan, A. (2023). Analysis of the educational needs for English in pharmacy: The perspectives of pharmacy school lecturers and students. *Research and Development in Medical Education*, *12*(1), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.34172/rdme.2023.33092

Majumdar, A. (2022). Thematic analysis in qualitative research. In *Research anthology on innovative research methodologies and utilization across multiple disciplines*, 197-220. IGI Global. http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-3881-7.ch031

Master, P. (2005). English for specific purposes. In: E. Hinkel (ed.) Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning. *Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates*, 99-115.

Masuhara, H. (1998). "What do teachers really want from coursebooks?" In B. Tomlinson (Ed.) *Materials development in language teaching* (236-267). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139042789.013

Mazdayasna, G., & Tahririan, M. H. (2008). Developing a profile of the ESP needs of Iranian students: The case of students of nursing and midwifery. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, *7*(4), 277-289. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2008.10.008

McKeachie, W. J. (1979). Student ratings of faculty: A reprise. *Academe*, *65*(6), 384–397. https://doi.org/10.2307/40248725

Nasiri, E., & Khojasteh, L. (2024). Evaluating panel discussions in ESP classes: An exploration of international medical students' and ESP instructors' perspectives through qualitative research. *BMC Medical Education*, *24*(1), 925. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-024-05911-3

Nazari, O., & Zarif Zaroori, S. (2021). A triangulated analysis of the English language needs of Iranian EAP undergraduate physiotherapy students. *Journal of Language Horizons*, *5*(2), 27-40. https://doi.org/10.22051/lghor.2020.32230.1335

Nezakatgoo, B., & Behzadpoor, F. (2017). Challenges in teaching ESP at medical universities of Iran from ESP stakeholders' perspectives. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, *9*(2), 59-82. https://doi.org/10.22111/IJALS.2017.3544

Parry, G. (2008). Business edge: A transformative perspective. *Eculture*, *1*(1), 37-46.

Petrescu, S. H., Lazar, A., Cioban, C., & Doroftei, I. (2017). Semi-structured interview. *qualitative research in regional geography: A methodological approach*, 37-50.

Peyvandi, G., Azarnoosh, M., & Siyyari, M. (2021). The effect of negotiated syllabus on autonomy of ESP students: A mixed methods study. *Journal of Language and Translation*, *11*(3), 135-155.

Rajabi, Y., & Farahian, M. (2021). Investigating instructors' expectations of ESP for BA students of nursing. *Educational Development of Judishapur*, *11*(4), 764-773. https://doi.org/10.22118/EDC.2020.210378.1210

Ruiz, J. B., & Bell, R. A. (2021). Predictors of intention to vaccinate against COVID-19: Results of a nationwide survey. *Vaccine*, *39*(7), 1080-1086. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2021.01.010

Safari, P. (2017). Proletarianization of English language teaching: Iranian EFL teachers and their alternative role as transformative intellectuals. *Policy Futures in Education*, *15*(1), 74-99. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210316681203

Salehi, H., Khadivar, Z., & Mehrabi, M. (2015). Evaluation of an ESP medical textbook: Instructors and learners' perceptions in focus. *International Education Studies*, *8*(7), 97-107. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v8n7p97

Santos, C. M., Franco, R. A., Leon, D., Ovigli, D. B., & Colombo, D. (2017). Interdisciplinarity in education: Overcoming

fragmentation in the teaching-learning process. *International Education Studies*, *10*(10), 71-77. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v10n10p71

Sattarpour, S., & Khalili, A. (2019). Exploring the present and target academic English language needs of Iranian undergraduate students: A Case at the Tabriz University of Medical Sciences. *Research and Development in Medical Education*, *8*(2), 113-123. https://doi.org/10.15171/rdme.2019.021

Sewell. (2005). *Syllabus types in a Korean context: Syllabus and materials*. University of Birmingham.

Skinner, B. F. (1971). *Beyond freedom and dignity*. Knopf. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/17.6.109

Sojoodizadeh, R., Ahangari, S., & Sheykhsaran, E. (2020). Evaluation of Tabriz medical students' expectations of learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP): A focus on gender and subject field. *Research and Development in Medical Education*, *9*(1), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.34172/rdme.2020.005

Soodmand Afshar, H., & Ahmadi, M. (2020). Students' needs or teachers' wishes? A triangulated survey of medical EAP in Iranian context. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, *12*(2), 225-260. https://doi.org10.22111/IJALS.2020-5596

Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *2*(17-37), 25.

Vakilidousta, S., & Rahmani, R. (2023). Collaborative and team teaching in ESP contexts. *Journal of Teaching English Language Studies*, *8*(1), 7-21.

Wahab, J. A., Mansor, A. N., Awang, M. M., & Ayob, N. M. (2013). Managing learners' behaviors in classroom through negative reinforcement approaches. *Asian Social Science*, *9*(16), 61-73. https://doi.org/10.5539/ass. v9n16p61

Walsh, T. (2020). 'Promoted widely but not valued': Teachers' perceptions of team teaching as a Form of professional development in post-primary schools in Ireland. *Professional Development in Education*, *48*(4), 688–704. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1725596

Zafarghandi, A. M., Sabet, M. K., & Delijani, Y. K. (2017). An Investigation into the effectiveness of an ESP course: A case study of graduate students of psychology. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, *4*(2), 57-80.

Zohrabi, M. (2011). Coursebook development and evaluation for English for general purposes course. *English Language Teaching*, *4*(2), 213-222. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt. v4n2p213

Zohrabi, M., & Khalili, A. (2024). A cross-cultural study into the utility of diverse written corrective feedback strategies in medicine students' ESP writing courses. *International Journal of Society, Culture and Language*, *12*(2), 150-169. https://doi.org/10.22034/ijscl.2024.2025600.3436

8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix A

Interview Questions Used as the Guide

1) Do you find ESP courses offered at KUMS satisfactory enough to help the students achieve their pedagogic needs?

2) If no, what types of needs are neglected among ESP students?

3) Are the students truly involved in decision makings with regard to their syllabus design, textbook selection, and types of assessments?

4) If not appropriately, in which domain/s the students can make themselves heard harder?

5) Are the general contexts of the ESP courses democratic and friendly for the students?

6) If it is possible to make some changes in the educational procedures who is the dominant harbinger of changes?

7)   Can you guess if the ESP students prefer the current status of the ESP courses to be ended, amended, or continued as they are?

8)   Who is a better choice to teach ESP courses? Is it a language instructor or a content instructor?

8.2. Appendix B

<div dir="rtl">

سوالات مصاحبه نیمه ساختار یافته

۱) آیا از نظر شما دروس زبان تخصصی ای که در دانشگاه ارائه میشوند در کمک به دانشجویان برای دستیابی به اهداف آموزشی شان رضایت بخش هستند؟

۲) در غیر اینصورت، چه نوع نیازهایی در دانشجویان بیشتر نادیده گرفته میشوند؟

۳) آیا از دیدگاه دانشجویان در تصمیم گیریهای مربوط به طراحی برنامه درسی، انتخاب کتاب درسی و نوع ارزیابی تکوینی و پایانی در نظر گرفته میشود؟

٤) در غیر اینصورت، در چه زمینه/هایی دانشجویان با سختی بیشتری میتوانند نظر خود را اعلام کنند؟

٥) آیا فضای کلی کلاسهای زبان تخصصی فضایی صمیمانه و گفتگویی است؟

٦) در صورت امکان ایجاد تغییرات در پروسه های آموزشی، چه کسی در این زمینه پیشگام و تصمیم گیرنده است؟

۷) به نظر شما دانشجویانی که دروس زبان تخصصی را پاس کرده اند چه نظری در رابطه با کیفیت کلی آن ها دارند؟ آیا بطور کلی خواستار عدم استفاده بیشتر از روشهای موجود هستند، میخواهند اصلاحاتی انجام شود یا به همین روالی که بوده ادامه پیدا کند؟

۸) به نظر شما بهتر است چه کسی زبان تخصصی را تدریس کند؟ فردی که زبان انگلیسی رشته تحصیلی اکادمیک او بوده و در واقع استاد زبان است؟ یا فردی که استاد محتوا و مطالب تخصصی است؟

</div>

Inclusion in Action: Pedagogical Translanguaging Strategies to Support Emergent Multilingual Writers

Esmaeel Ali Salimi[1*] (ID)
Seyed Mohammad Mousavi[2] (ID)

*[1]Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran
[2]Ph.D. Candidate of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

Since writing abilities in both Persian and English are still underdeveloped among emergent multilinguals, it is essential to provide a pedagogy that addresses this need. Hence, this study aimed to investigate how language teachers develop a pedagogical translanguaging space within the Iranian multilingual context of writing classrooms. Participants in this study were eight language teachers from various provinces of Iran, where at least one indigenous language is spoken. The participants were asked to participate in a narrative inquiry session, where they shared their experiences of implementing translanguaging strategies for teaching writing. Transcendental phenomenology was used as the method, and thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings suggested strategies, such as artefact scaffolding where teachers ask students to use Google Translate application to complete a composition and then edit it with peers and multilingual brainstorming to activate prior knowledge and also tasks such as bilingual writing in which students need to write a local story in Persian and a foreigner story in English, designed to enhance students' writing abilities in both Persian and English. This study offered a pedagogy leveraging students' linguistic repertoire through translanguaging strategies to enhance writing ability across multiple languages, fostering an inclusive educational environment that values diverse linguistic backgrounds. Teachers and teacher trainers can implement the recommended strategies and tasks in their classes and workshops.

KEYWORDS: Emergent multilingual; Multilingualism; Pedagogical translanguaging; Writing

1. Introduction

Traditional monolingual ideologies believed in language separation and welcomed only the target language in the classroom, advocating for native-speaker norms. This approach has a negative cognitive and affective impact on the learning process, as it disregards students' prior knowledge and leaves them in an unknown world; consequently, students may find these norms unreachable and feel a sense of failure as language learners (Cenoz et al., 2022). In contrast, translanguaging welcomes all students' or emergent multilinguals' (EMs) prior knowledge in the process of meaning-making. An emergent multilingual is a future multilingual who is proficient in two languages and learns an additional language. In a pedagogical sense, translanguaging can be beneficial in improving the weaker language (Lewis et al., 2012); however, in Iranian multilingual contexts, more than one language may be weak, Persian and English. Khonamri et al. (2023) mentioned that most students are not proficient in Persian,

their second language, as their home language, which is an indigenous language. This weakness may be related to the ability to write, as many researchers reported that students have problems with this ability worldwide (Gagalang, 2020; Kashi et al., 2024; Kaylaap et al., 2020, etc.).

Additionally, Iran has a diverse multilingual linguistic landscape, with more than 40 indigenous languages along with Persian, the official language (Windfuhr, 2009). In this diverse multilingual landscape, students from different ethnics speak languages other than the official language, and they learn Persian in schools. Monolingualism disregards not only the potential of prior knowledge of EMs' first language but also their experiences in learning Persian (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). The unrealistic goal of achieving native-speaker norms and ignoring prior knowledge lead to cognitive and affective problems among Iranian students, like other students around the world (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017, 2021). Specifically, it is reported that the absence of this prior knowledge for Iranian students leads to academic failure (Hoominfar, 2014) in that they do not understand the concepts declared in Persian or English (Khonamri et al., 2023). This monolingual policy also is unable to provide a condition to develop the Persian language along with the English language. However, translanguaging may enhance students' proficiency, specifically writing ability, in both their second and additional languages (Velasco & García, 2014). Despite some offered translanguaging pedagogies (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Espinosa et al., 2016; García et al., 2017), no research conducted to find a pedagogy in Iran's multilingual context, a pedagogy that covers Iranian students' need of enhancing their weak languages simultaneously. This study aims to provide insight into how teachers can better support EMs in developing their writing ability. Given that many students struggle with writing in both Persian and English, exploring translanguaging strategies can offer solutions for enhancing writing proficiency. Also, according to Iran's linguistic landscape status and the pressing need for educational frameworks that embrace multilingualism rather than enforce monolingual norms in Iran, this research will contribute to the development of pedagogical practices that recognize and utilize students' linguistic diversity, thereby promoting inclusivity and equity in education.

Therefore, this study aims to find how teachers create a pedagogical translanguaging (PT) space in writing classrooms based on Cenoz and Gorter's (2021) framework. The guiding question is: How do language teachers create a PT space in writing classrooms?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Monolingualism vs. multilingualism

Traditionally, language schools and institutions have adhered to monolingual ideology toward teaching and learning English (Garcia & Sylvan, 2011). The goal of language teaching was to develop communicative competence of the target language. Language learners should strive to progress toward the native speaker model; however, this goal can be challenging and may lead to various difficulties (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). According to Llurida (2014), highly proficient English speakers sometimes feel uncomfortable and experience a loss of self-esteem because they believe they cannot be as good as the native speakers. In addition to the cognitive and affective problems of monolingualism, it fails to meet the students' needs in multilingual contexts like Iran, where more than one language needs to be developed (Khonamri et al., 2023). In the literature, it has been justified that translanguaging can be a solution to these problems. For example, Yuzlu and Dikilitas (2022) reported that translanguaging significantly enhances students' cognitive and socio-affective development by allowing them to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire, which in turn fosters a comfortable learning environment and increases their motivation to learn English. In another study, Kiramba (2016) found that to meet the multilingual needs of often illiterate students in Kenya, teachers employed translanguaging in writing classrooms through bilingual tasks, such as summary writing. Although mixing languages in writing tasks conflicted with the language policy, students creatively utilized translanguaging in their compositions. In another paper, Velasco and Garcia (2014) proposed translanguaging as a self-regulating strategy that bilinguals can utilize in their writing. However, they do not present translanguaging as a pedagogy for teaching writing.

In Iran, students often experience English-only policy in schools and institutions (Naghdipour, 2016). Writing skill is obviously considered a monolingual practice in Iran, primarily assessed through tests that are mostly in English (Naghdipour, 2016). Following a global trend moving from monolingual to multilingual approaches and the emergence of translanguaging pedagogies (Garcia & Li, 2014), a multilingual shift occurred in recent years (see Khonamri et al., 2023; Nazari & Karimpour, 2023; Salimi et al., 2024;). In recent years, some studies have been conducted in Iran regarding the implementation of translanguaging. In one study, Khonamri et al. (2023) investigated the contribution of bilinguals' linguistic repertoire to teaching English grammar and reported that translanguaging was an effective tool for clarifying grammatical terms. In a recent study, Salimi et al. (2024) examined the beliefs and practices surrounding translanguaging among teachers in Iran. Their findings revealed a duality in teachers' perceptions of translanguaging; while some educators regarded their translanguaging practices as relevant and beneficial, others expressed a preference for monolingual policies. This sentiment aligns with the conclusions drawn by Nazari and Karimpour (2023), who cautioned that translanguaging should be approached with caution due to the prevailing negative attitudes among teachers. They argued that the educational context in Iran is not adequately prepared to implement such pedagogical strategies effectively.

These previous studies predominantly focused on translanguaging as a singular strategy which was inferred as spontaneous translanguaging (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). One potential reason for the feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and reluctance toward translanguaging (Wang, 2019) may be the absence of the planned pedagogical strategies that teachers can employ in writing instruction. Consequently, a notable gap in the literature is the lack of clearly defined translanguaging strategies and tasks that empower teachers with inclusive pedagogical approaches.

Another gap in the literature is that previous studies primarily focus on improving English language skills while disregarding other languages that may still be underdeveloped. This study aims to offer a pedagogy that creates a space for the enhancement of both languages. Previous research often viewed translanguaging as a mechanism through which prior language knowledge assists in learning an additional language. However, translanguaging can also provide an environment where both languages can improve simultaneously. This study seeks to address this gap by proposing a translanguaging pedagogy that incorporates the entire linguistic repertoire into tasks and teaching strategies, thereby fostering improvement in both Persian and English writing.

2.2. Pedagogical translanguaging

Translanguaging is defined as "the capability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401). In other words, it involves utilizing full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning. Translanguaging has two distinct sides: pedagogical and spontaneous. Spontaneous translanguaging refers to the natural use of multiple languages in everyday situations, where the boundaries between languages are fluid and constantly evolving (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). In contrast, PT involves the use of intentional strategies and activities that draw on the entire linguistic resources of EMs within a classroom setting (Cenoz et al., 2022). Here, "full" encompasses all aspects of a speaker's knowledge, including languages, semiotics, background knowledge, functional knowledge, strategic knowledge, and more. Essentially, PT addresses any potential communication barriers that may arise between different languages or modalities (Tian, 2022). Thus, using words or phrases from a language other than the target language serves not just a compensatory purpose (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021), but can also facilitate more effective communication for EMs.

Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2021) describe PT as an approach rooted in theoretical frameworks and learning theories aimed at promoting multilingualism. As portrayed in Figure 1, the current study will be based on these theoretical concepts (see Cenoz & Gorter, 2021, p. 19), which will be elaborated upon in the following.
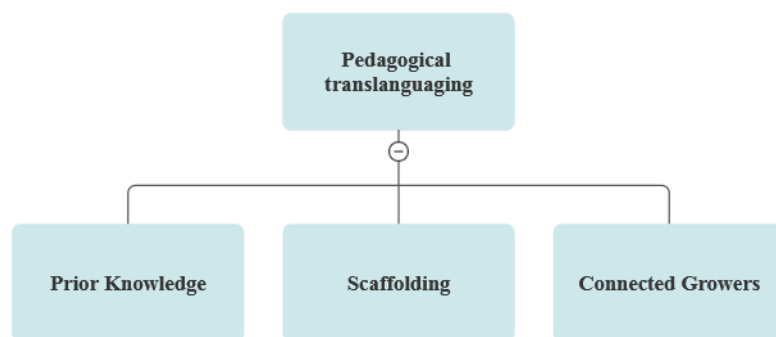

Figure 1. Aspects of pedagogical translanguaging

The first concept is prior knowledge. By emphasizing multilingualism, educators can help students link new information to what they already know, thereby facilitating the learning process (Schumacher & Stern, 2023). This existing knowledge may stem from either their home language or second language (L2), along with pragmatic and discourse skills (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). PT enables learners to draw on all their linguistic and non-linguistic resources, including their prior experiences, without the stress of needing to attain native-like proficiency (Garcia & Otheguy, 2020).

The second key element is scaffolding. In multilingual settings, scaffolding is not merely a means to support the dominant language; instead, it aims to enhance the entire linguistic repertoire (Cenoz and Gorter, 2021). Cenoz and Gorter (2021) explain that it involves strategies and techniques designed to enable students to leverage their resources as multilingual speakers. A primary focus in PT is that educators need to thoughtfully plan and devise various methods to assist EMs. Scaffolding strategies that

leverage all languages in a student's repertoire can be employed to enhance the writing process in the classroom (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016).

The third concept, based on dynamic systems theory and applied to multilingualism, is known as connected growers. This term describes the interconnection between the development of two or more areas of knowledge. As De Bot et al. (2007) noted, the relationship between listening comprehension and vocabulary growth can be viewed as a connected grower. These two areas mutually reinforce one another; improvements in listening comprehension can enhance vocabulary acquisition, while a more extensive vocabulary can improve listening skills (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). Multilingual tasks that incorporate all languages can be integrated into lessons to enrich the linguistic repertoire of students (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, 2017; Leonet & Saragueta, 2023). The goal of PT is to identify and nurture these connected growers (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021).

This framework can address the complexities of Iran's diverse linguistic landscape. It emphasizes the importance of leveraging students' prior knowledge from multiple languages, which aligns with the needs of EMs who navigate various linguistic resources in their learning processes. The framework outlines key components that are essential for developing effective translanguaging strategies. By focusing on these elements, this study aimed to investigate how teachers can utilize all available linguistic resources to enhance writing proficiency in both Persian and English. In this study, the researchers analyzed how teachers incorporated components of the framework into their teaching practices. For example, if researchers identified instances in participants' narratives where improvements in students' writing skills in one language positively influenced their abilities in another, they would assume that these instances relate to the connected growers emphasized by the framework.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants included two males and six females, selected through purposive sampling. The rationale for choosing participants was twofold: first, it ensured that the selected teachers had substantial experience (a minimum of five years) with translanguaging strategies, which was essential for providing rich, context-specific insights into their practices. Participants should have demonstrated their understanding of translanguaging concepts in initial interviews. Second, participants from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, such as Khorramabad, where Luri is spoken mainly; Rasht, where Gilaki is the primary language; Kermanshah, a city where Kurdish is predominantly spoken; Qouchan, where Kurdish is also one of the languages mostly spoken; Tabriz, where Azeri Turkish is the primary language, were included. This diversity not only enriched the data collected but also allowed for a comprehensive package of translanguaging strategies that can be used in multicultural classes. These criteria assisted researchers during the phases of phenomenological reduction and synthesis. By identifying similarities in phenomena, they could uncover more reliable instances that enhanced their understanding of translanguaging space.

As the data collection and analysis took place simultaneously, the researchers determined that data saturation was reached with eight participants. The analysis of data gathered from the eighth participant indicated that no new insights or themes were identified during this interview. To ensure the saturation, the researchers interviewed two more participants; however, no new insights were identified. Consequently, the decision was made to keep the participant count at eight, confirming that saturation had been reached. Although the sample size for this study was limited, it allowed for a thorough examination of translanguaging practices among experienced teachers in varied linguistic contexts, providing valuable and context-specific insights. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1. Participants' demographic information

Participants	Gender	Age	Field of study	Academic degree	Teaching experience	Workplace
T1	Male	37	Linguistics	Ph.D.	17	ELI[1] & University
T2	Female	23	Applied Linguistics	B.A.	5	Schools & ELI
T3	Female	22	Applied Linguistics	B.A.	5	Schools & ELI
T4	Female	30	English Translation	B.A.	11	Schools & ELI
T5	Female	28	Business Management	M.A.	10	ELI
T6	Female	22	Russian Literature	B.A.	5	ELI
T7	Female	25	Applied Linguistics	M.A.	7	ELI & Schools
T8	Male	45	Applied Linguistics	M.A.	25	Schools & ELI

T1 and T4 are multilingual speakers from Khorramabad, fluent in Luri, Persian, and English, teaching English to EMs speaking Luri and Persian. T2, from Kermanshah, and T3, from Qouchan, are bilinguals in Persian and English, teaching

---

[1] English Language Institution

English to EMs speaking Kurdish and Persian. T5 and T7 are from Tabriz. The former is a bilingual speaker of Persian and English, the latter is a multilingual speaker of Azeri, Persian, and English. T6 and T8 are both bilinguals in Persian and English who teach English to EMs speaking Gilaki and Persian in Rasht. This diversity provided an in-depth insight into how teachers from various provinces implement translanguaging in their classrooms, recognizing and valuing students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

In line with ethical standards, participants were provided with a consent form detailing the research's objectives, its potential effects on learning writing and society, as well as information on data storage and usage, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

3.2. Design

Transcendental phenomenology was used to address the aim of the study. This method is used to focus specifically on the teachers' lived experiences rather than researchers' (Usher & Jackson, 2014). Using this method, researchers were able to inform the participants about their pedagogical translanguaging practices which are deeply embedded in their consciousness (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022) and more accurate information was obtained regarding the structure and dimensions of translanguaging tasks and strategies. Firstly, the researchers focused on activating the participants' knowledge regarding their PT practices. In this stage, the researchers attempted to assist the participants by presenting examples, thereby encouraging them to engage more deeply with the topic in interviewing session. Secondly, researchers employed the phenomenological epoché (Vagle, 2018). Researchers consciously set aside their preconceived notions and biases regarding pedagogical practices by engaging in reflective practices prior to data collection. Researchers acknowledged their assumptions about translanguaging and multilingual education and documented these reflections. This process allowed them to approach the narrative interviews with an open mind, focusing solely on the participants' experiences. Thirdly, the researchers created a mental model of all existing conditions that could give rise to the phenomenon. Fourth, the researchers aimed to identify similarities among the participants through phenomenological reduction (Vagle, 2018). After conducting narrative interviews, researchers systematically analyzed the transcripts by identifying significant tasks and strategies implemented in the PT spaces. By doing so, researchers aimed to reveal commonalities and variations in their experiences while respecting the uniqueness of each participant's narrative. Also, Researchers compared and contrasted the themes identified across different participants, looking for patterns that indicated shared experiences or divergent practices. This synthesis was guided by the researchers' aim to derive general conclusions about the phenomenon while remaining faithful to the individual narratives. Finally, researchers synthesized their findings into broader conclusions about pedagogical practices that enhance EMs' writing proficiency. By triangulating data from multiple participants and contextualizing their experiences within the existing literature on translanguaging and multilingual education, researchers articulated a nuanced understanding of how teachers can utilize their students' linguistic resources in the writing classes.

3.3. Instrument

The researchers used narrative interviewing to gather participants' experiences related to the phenomenon. The interviewer guided participants in sharing their stories through semi-structured questions informed by relevant literature and expert insights, focusing on various aspects of a writing class following Cenoz and Gorter's (2021) framework. To ensure inter-rater reliability and content validity, the interview questions were reviewed by five field experts.

Despite the advantages of narrative interviewing, such as being structured, reflecting relevant experiences, and providing plausible details (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000), one of their potential limitations is that participants might find it challenging to express their stories if they are not familiar with this format. To mitigate this issue, follow-up questions were used to clarify their responses. For instance, if a participant mentioned using brainstorming in the pre-writing, the interviewer would ask for more details. The interviews lasted between 40 to 60 minutes, were conducted in Persian, and were recorded for transcription purposes. The transcriptions were then translated into English, with reliability confirmed through member checks involving a language interpreter and the lead researcher.

3.4. Data analysis

The researchers employed thematic analysis (see Seyri & Ghiasvand, 2024) to organize and interpret the data. They also employed a bottom-up strategy to thoroughly analyze the interview data, with the goal of uncovering themes related to the development of a PT space in writing classes. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework, the researchers completed several stages: (1) becoming familiar with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) identifying themes, (4) reviewing and enhancing these themes, (5) defining and labeling the themes, and (6) finalizing the report. Also, researchers organized and categorized the codes via MAXQDA software (version 2020.1). After creating a comprehensive list of codes, they aimed to group them into categories and then analyzed patterns within these categories to identify themes pertinent to the research question. For example, the theme of scaffolding emerged from several initial codes, including "peer support," "teacher support,"

and "artefact support." Through iterative coding and categorization, it became evident that these elements collectively contributed to EMs' mastery of writing. For instance, participants frequently described instances where peer support strategy led to enhanced clarity in their writing, demonstrating how collaborative interactions served as scaffolds for their learning process. By connecting this theme to the PT framework, the researchers highlight how scaffolding enhances writing and fosters a community of practice within the multilingual classroom, ultimately contributing to the development of a PT space.

4. Results

Three broad themes with regard to participants' creation of the PT space have emerged from the data analysis. In the following, researchers will outline each theme and include relevant excerpts from interviews to offer a more detailed insight into the experiences of participants.

4.1. Implementing translanguaging techniques in pre-writing stage

According to Figure 2, the current theme includes three sub-themes that are presented in detail hereunder.
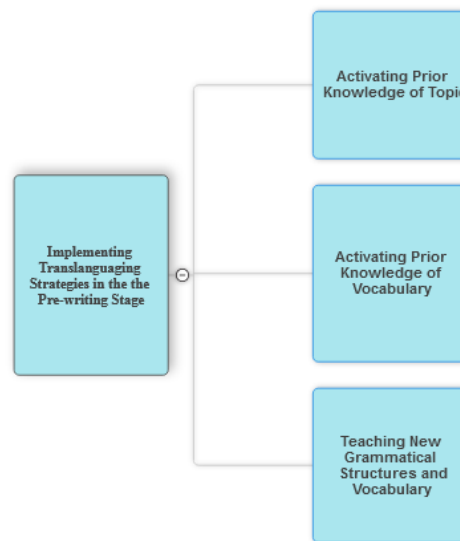

Figure 2. Sub-themes relating to implementing translanguaging strategies in the pre-writing stage.

4.1.1. *Activating prior knowledge of the topic*

Language teachers attempted to activate EMs' prior knowledge of the topic in the pre-writing stage to facilitate the writing process in later stages. In doing so, they used different forms of brainstorming. For instance, T7 used visuals to brainstorm ideas.

> "I displayed a picture on the wall and posed questions about it. Each student contributed their thoughts. During the discussion, I noted down helpful words on the board that would be beneficial in the process of their writing."

This participant posed questions regarding a visual and encouraged students to express their thoughts in any language they preferred. Furthermore, she introduced new vocabulary or related terms that would be beneficial for their writing process.

> Another teacher used videos. T1 stated:

> "I presented an animation based on a traditional story that I had previously asked them to read in its Persian version. After viewing the animation, I encouraged them to share their thoughts about the story and to write down their reflections."

Two teachers used audios. They played bilingual or monolingual audios related to the topic and then asked related questions to extract ideas.

> "I played Turkish audio about health & diet. The audio shared some information and posed some questions."

This participant used the information the audio shared about aspects of health and diet to extract their ideas.

Some participants asked questions about EMs' personal stories and allowed them to express their stories in L1. For instance, T8 stated:

"I created a relevant setting for the brainstorming task to encourage participants to share their personal stories. For those subjects where I sensed hesitation, I shared my own experiences to make the process more relatable, allowing them to express their stories in whatever language they felt comfortable."

This participant asked EMs to share stories of their personal experiences. He allowed them to use Persian, Turkish, or English to tell their narratives. He prepared EMs to write about the subject using story-telling as a brainstorming strategy. In addition, T1 used a traditional story that was familiar to most students in the storytelling strategy. She used Rostam v-a Sohrab[2] and Kuroghlu[3] which are popular stories in the local district of Gilan. Sometimes, she played a video that is related to these stories to soften the difficulties students feel when listening to or reading such stories. Afterward, she asked them to tell these stories for the class in Persian and English; then, she asked them to choose a story to write in English.

4.1.2. Activating prior knowledge of vocabulary

Some teachers engage students' prior vocabulary knowledge during the pre-writing phase. Some share visuals related to words, while others utilize videos. Additionally, some educators employ multilingual or bilingual word lists to review words. For example, T7 said:

"We reviewed vocabulary that we encountered in our readings. At times, I incorporated visuals to enhance understanding. I created a file containing images of these vocabulary words, which I shared with the group to facilitate discussions about their meanings."

T7 used pictures as a translanguaging technique, possibly because her students have a better spatial intelligence, she attempted to review words using visuals.

4.1.3. Teaching new vocabularies and grammatical structures

According to the data, one of the teachers favored introducing new vocabulary associated with the topic, allowing students to incorporate these words into their writing. She compiled a list of bilingual terms that were featured in a video she displayed. During and after the video, she taught these new words. To enhance understanding, this teacher utilized Persian and Gilaki to clarify the meanings. Moreover, one of the teachers taught new and related structures. She uplifted students to use these structures in their writing. T8 explained:

"... when introducing concepts like "there is/there are" or countable versus uncountable nouns, I would utilize pictures or gestures to illustrate the meanings of these phrases. After demonstrating these concepts, I would write the sentences generated by the students on the board. Following this activity, I would encourage them to describe what they see in their homes or along their route for the next session."

This participant employed grammatical structure frames to enhance writing production among students. She utilized the structures "there is/are" to prompt students to write a sentence. To support comprehension, she incorporated various translanguaging tools, including pictures, body language, and realia. The decision to introduce new vocabulary and structures likely stems from the perception that the lesson's subject matter was too straightforward, leading to a belief that generating ideas was unnecessary.

4.2. Employing PT as scaffolding support in the while-writing phase

As portrayed in Figure 3, this theme included two general parts presented in detail hereunder.

---

[2] The tale of a great warrior and his fleet-footed horse, Rakhsh.
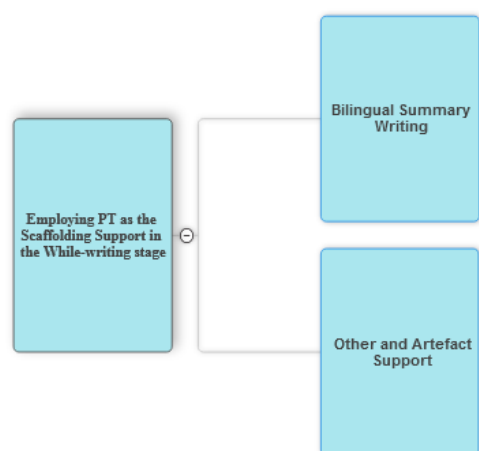[3] The blind man.

Figure 3. Sub-themes relating to employing pt as scaffolding support in the while-writing phase

4.2.1. *Bilingual summary writing*

In the bilingual summary writing strategy, teachers encourage EMs to compose summaries of reading texts in English, allowing the integration of Persian whenever necessary. This practice exemplifies a translanguaging strategy, enabling students to leverage their entire linguistic repertoire to articulate their understanding of the text. Participants reported that this task not only fostered a sense of confidence among students but also significantly increased their motivation to engage with the writing task. For example, T6 reported:

> *"... I taught a twelfth-grade class, anxious about their low proficiency levels. To prepare them for the final exam, I encouraged them to write about their understanding of the texts we read in Persian, hoping to boost their confidence for our next session. After a few classes, I prompted them to share the words they had learned. Gradually, they progressed to forming sentences in English."*

This participant employed composing summaries in Persian based on their understanding of the texts. Initially, she used Persian to motivate them and create a safe environment, as they felt frustrated when comparing themselves to more proficient English learners. She noted that after a few sessions, they were able to communicate to the teacher the vocabulary acquired through this process. Subsequently, the teacher encouraged the inclusion of English sentences in their summaries, indicating that the participant had progressed to a level where they could write two to three sentences in English.

4.2.2. *Other (peer or teacher) artefact support*

The other, including peer and teacher, and artefacts support, including technology and the internet, were used to support EMs' writing. Two participants gave EMs hints and prompts or corrective feedback to consider in the revising stage. T7 reported:

> *"During the free writing phase, some students inevitably encounter challenges. I monitor their writing during the first draft and provide individual feedback. If I notice errors in their use of specific structures, I encourage them to study those particular rules. Additionally, I address their errors indirectly by offering hints and prompts. However, if I see that they are struggling to correct their mistakes, I will directly guide them to address those specific errors."*

During the first draft, this participant provided EMs with hints and prompts, as well as negative metalinguistic feedback, in both their L1 and L2 whenever they made mistakes. Instead of correcting them directly, she encouraged them to search the specific structures in question, allowing them to recognize and understand their errors more effectively.

Another teacher integrated listening and writing. She allowed students to include Persian in the note-taking process.

> *"Sometimes, I played an audio recording and asked the students to take notes. I didn't require them to use only English for this task; instead, I encouraged them to write in Persian if it helped them capture their thoughts more*

quickly. While they took notes in Persian, the final assignment had to be completed in English. I also allowed using smartphones during the writing process."

This participant used translanguaging in the note-taking phase to scaffold EMS to write effectively. This teacher allowed them to use all their linguistic repertoire to take notes for later English writing. This strategy enabled them to create better English content, as their Persian notes served as a helpful reference. Ultimately, the final product was presented in English.

Furthermore, two teachers mentioned that they allowed EMs to use Google Translate application to change their Persian thoughts to English. They allowed using this as artefact scaffolding. This excerpt highlights their explanation:

"I asked the students to write down one of their funniest memories. During this time, I allowed them to use Google Translate. Once they finished, I asked them to summarize their memories briefly in English. I encouraged them to collaborate and correct each other's mistakes. I believe that the less I interfere, the better the outcome will be."

This teacher allows students to use Google Translate as a translanguaging strategy, enabling them to express their thoughts in English freely. However, it is evident that Google Translate can produce numerous errors. During the revision phase, the teacher actively monitors the groups and provides hints to correct mistakes. In contrast, other teachers implement peer scaffolding in larger classes, which helps them save time and energy while facilitating collaborative learning among students. This excerpt mentions their notes:

"I asked the students to read their writings in groups and correct errors. Afterward, I requested that they send me one piece for selective review. Given the size of the class, I implemented peer scaffolding, assigning each student a proofreader. This approach also served as a valuable reading task."

They asked a peer to proofread their group mate's writing. They suggested that this could serve as both a reading and a writing task. By implementing peer proofreading as a translanguaging strategy, they created a space for knowledge construction, allowing the use of either L1 or L2 for giving feedback.

One teacher implemented a multilingual research technique as a translanguaging task to enhance vocabulary acquisition. She encouraged students to investigate various topics, after which they wrote their findings in English and presented them to the class. During these presentations, the teacher and students engaged in discussions about the vocabulary students discovered. Furthermore, they explored the similarities and differences among the grammatical structures of all students' languages to provide additional scaffolding support, helping students become more aware of the grammar they would use in their writing. The following excerpt highlights the example she provided.

"I help my students to understand the subject/object concept in Persian, as many of them are not proficient enough in Persian. Once I confirm their understanding, I explain in Persian where the object position is in English, indicating whether it is here or there."

This teacher used previous knowledge of EMs toward grammatical structures in their L2 to teach grammatical structures in English. She relied on the EMs' L2 because their L1, Gilaki, is unwritten, and they were not taught its grammar.

4.3. Developing EMs' connected growers (listening, reading, grammar, and writing) through PT strategies

According to Figure 4, the third theme includes four parts presented in detail hereunder.

4.3.1. Bilingual writing

One of the teachers noted that learning to write in English could enhance EMs' writing skills in Persian.

"Practicing Persian writing can negatively impact English writing skills. This is because Persian writing often lacks a clear topic sentence, leading to a more arbitrary structure. Unlike English writing, where each paragraph is organized around a specific topic, Persian writing may appear disorganized, with multiple ideas presented within a single paragraph..."

He explained that writing in Persian tends to be less organized than writing in English. In this sense, he believed relying on practices in Persian writing could be detrimental to English writing. Conversely, by practicing English writing, EMs would be better equipped to write effectively in both languages. He emphasized that, in this context, the strategies used in the additional language writing can significantly improve L2 writing skills. He provides arguments for his claim as follows:

"Several years ago, a scholar investigated the differences between the poetry and proses of Hafez Shirazi[4] with those of English poets. He found that Hafez Shirazi's poems contain multiple topic sentences within each sonnet. In addition, Hafez Shirazi tended to present his poetry in prose form, which can be seen as redundant in English writing, where redundancy is generally avoided. This contrasts with Persian literature, which frequently employs redundancy and utilizes numerous synonyms. Students often apply the Persian writing system in their English compositions, which can lead to further stylistic discrepancies."
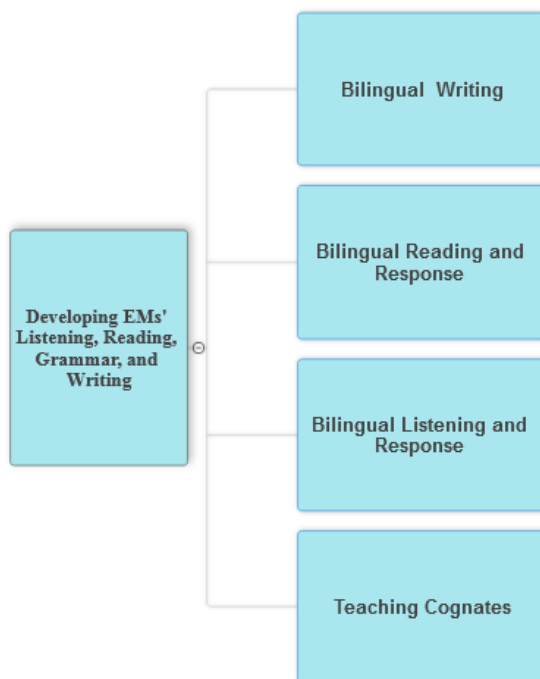

Figure 4. Sub-themes relating to developing EMs' listening, reading, grammar, and writing

He referred to a scholar who investigated the Persian literary texts full of redundancy and believed that the Persian writing system is disincentive when applied to English writing. Also, he explained that learning English writing can enhance Persian writing.

"By learning the English writing framework, students can enhance their writing skills in Persian ... Many of these learners have already engaged with English texts, which means they are familiar with the specific framework used in English writing, including a topic sentence, supporting body paragraphs, and a conclusion. This familiarity allows them to apply the same structure when composing in Persian."

He believed that once EMs learn the conventions and frameworks of English writing, they will be able to write more structurally in Persian. Based on the dynamic system theory and complete interconnectedness (De Bot et al., 2007), the interconnectedness of writing in two languages shows that change in English writing will have an impact on Persian and other languages that are parts of the linguistic repertoire.

Another teacher reported that she used a task in which EMs write bilingually and cross-culturally. She stated that:

"... I instructed them to discuss cultural issues specific to Iran in Persian and those of the target country in English. For instance, the student highlighted the significance of salah-e-rahem[5] in Iran, noting that while there are multiple occasions for salah-e-rahem throughout the year, in the U.S., people tend to have less frequent interactions with their relatives ... Additionally, the student mentioned ta'arof[6], which has no direct equivalent in American culture.

---

[4] A Persian lyric poet whose collected works are regarded by many Iranians as one of the highest pinnacles of Persian literature ("Hafez," 2024).

[5] It is to have affection and love with relatives and friends. "Salah" in the word means benevolence and friendship, and it means the "kindness" of relatives.

[6] It is a Persian word that refers to a kind of civility or art of etiquette that emphasizes both deference and social rank.

Unfortunately, some texts have misinterpreted ta'arof as merely a form of compliment, which overlooks its deeper social implications and nuances."

She asked her students to write about an Iranian cultural issue in Persian and a target cultural issue in English. Her examples highlighted two native cultural concepts, ta'arof and salah-e-rahem, in Persian, which has no counterpart in American culture. Additionally, writing about local culture in Persian not only preserves the nuances of the language but also helps prevent misinterpretations that may arise from cultural differences. The students also addressed target cultural issues in English, resulting in a bilingual text. The teacher believed that this approach would enhance their writing skills in both languages. Actually, she utilized multicultural aspects in the linguistic repertoire as a dynamic system to enhance EMs' cultural identity and writing in both languages. It has been reported that EMs felt empowered by expressing their cultural identity in Persian, particularly through cultural practices such as ta'arof, while also addressing the target culture in English.

4.3.2. Bilingual reading and response

Some teachers used bilingual reading and response to improve reading and writing in second and additional languages as connected growers. T2 reported that:

"... Focusing on bilingual readings significantly enhances writing skills in an additional language. Gaining knowledge about various topics in L2 can also be advantageous when writing in L3. I provided students with bilingual texts to help them grasp the meaning more effectively. After reading, I asked them to write about the same topic in English. I observed that their topical knowledge improved through bilingual reading, which in turn allowed them to write more effectively in L3 ..."

This participant provided EMs with bilingual texts and then asked them to write about the topic in English. This strategy helps EMS deepen their understanding of the text's meaning while enhancing their content knowledge, which is a crucial factor in effective writing. By utilizing bilingual texts alongside a writing response task, she aimed to improve both reading and writing skills simultaneously in both languages.

4.3.3. Bilingual listening and response

One participant used bilingual listening and writing task to improve EMs' listening and writing of both languages as connected growers. She reported:

"I played a Persian listening audio and asked the students to follow the written text in their books. Afterward, I asked them questions to encourage discussion. Next, I played the English version of the same audio and asked the students to write a summary or response in English. This strategy not only improves their pronunciation but also enhances their understanding of the subject matter and their summary writing skills."

This participant provided EMs with bilingual listening audio and instructed them to follow the written text simultaneously. Afterward, they were asked to write a summary of the text in English. The teacher reported that this task led to simultaneous improvements in the EMs' pronunciation, content knowledge, and writing skills, as elements of linguistic repertoire as a dynamic system, in the additional language.

4.3.4. Teaching cognates

Some teachers used translanguaging tasks to improve grammar and vocabulary knowledge as connected growers to writing production. For example, T6 stated:

"For twelfth-grade students, the content of the final exam is indeed based on Vision 3[7]. However, it is essential for them to have a strong foundation in English. So, I taught vocabulary from word walls for review and introduced some new terms. I encouraged them to explore and compare the usage and meanings of these words in both their L2 and L3."

This participant teaches vocabulary of both languages as connected growers to writing English in her writing classes. First, she introduced some new vocabulary and asked them to compare their L2 and L3 counterparts in terms of usage and meaning. She added that Understanding vocabulary and its applications is crucial for writing fluent sentences in their written assignments.

Another participant mentioned that she tried to improve grammar as a connected grower to writing. She reported that:

---

[7] The English book of twelve-grade high school students in Iran.

"As the students concentrated on the grammatical structures in the text before moving into the writing phase, I encouraged them to discuss the structure of specific sentences, including tense and time. They demonstrated a greater understanding when I taught structures they had encountered in previous phases of my instruction."

This teacher focused on grammar structures that students had encountered in reading texts. After teaching these grammar concepts, she compared them with their equivalents in the students' L2. This strategy aimed to enhance grammar and writing skills by fostering a deeper connection between the two languages.

Also, another participant mentioned that she asked her students to focus on word order structure whenever they read a text.

"... In my language classes, I emphasize the importance of sentence structure, particularly recognizing the subject and object. This foundational knowledge greatly benefits students. For example, they learn that adjectives convey specific meanings and typically precede nouns in sentences, as evidenced in their reading materials. They also grasp the placement of adverbs related to time, place, and repetition. This understanding has significantly improved their writing skills."

This teacher drew on her personal experience when preparing for the Iranian B.A. university entrance exam to enhance her teaching of word order. She recalled that while studying Arabic, she focused on identifying the part of speech in every sentence she encountered. By applying this method into her classroom, she observed significant improvements in her students' writing. They began to construct sentences that were more appropriate, correct, and effective, demonstrating a better grasp of grammatical structure. To facilitate this learning process, she provided texts in their second and additional languages and tasked her students with identifying the part of speech for each word.

5. Discussion

This study reveals how Iranian students' diverse linguistic backgrounds, such as Kurdish, Azeri, Luri, and Gilaki, contribute to teachers' practices. By investigating how teachers create pedagogical translanguaging spaces that leverage these indigenous languages, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of multilingual education in Iran. Furthermore, the findings facilitate the integration of indigenous languages to not only support students' writing proficiency in Persian and English but also validate their cultural identities. This approach diverges from traditional monolingual educational policies that often marginalize indigenous languages, thereby providing a framework for inclusive educational practices that honor the linguistic diversity present in Iranian classrooms. In fact, this study not only aligns with but also expands upon Cenoz and Gorter's (2021) frameworks by situating them within the unique sociolinguistic context of Iran, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to enhance multilingual education in similarly diverse settings.

As an integral part of any language classroom to prevent cognitive problems (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021), various strategies and tasks are assigned to activate prior knowledge in this study. It has been revealed that teachers implement multimodal brainstorming in the pre-writing stage. Although Espinosa et al. (2016) emphasize the value of interviews or multilingual research to gather information about the topic, in the current study, this activity is used to promote connected growers outside of the classroom. This activity serves dual purposes: it can be utilized as a homework assignment while also fostering collaborative growth among students. Given that it occurs outside of regular class hours, it effectively integrates into students' homework, allowing for meaningful engagement with the material in both contexts.

Moreover, the results indicated that teachers review vocabulary and grammatical structures and teach new vocabulary and grammatical structures in pre-writing sessions, using non-linguistic semiotics, such as body language, visuals, realia, and videos, which is in line with previous studies. For example, Pablo-Wrzosek (2017) reported that teachers used Spanish to teach similar English grammatical structures such as adjectives and transitional phrases and vocabulary in pre-writing. By implementing these strategies, EMs can benefit almost fully from all the resources available to generate ideas. Based on the purpose of writing, teachers can choose each of these translanguaging techniques to implement in pre-writing.

Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2020, 2021) emphasized that translanguaging pedagogy must integrate strategies that leverage students' prior knowledge of pragmatics and discourse. This study partially supports their assertion, as teachers assigned tasks related to local and target cultures, such as shekast-e nafsi and ta'arof. However, the understanding of pragmatics, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, among teachers in multilingual contexts is limited, which impedes effective instruction. Therefore, enhanced professional development is essential to improve teachers' awareness of the pragmatic dimensions of writing skills.

The findings revealed that teachers employed bilingual summary writing to help amotivated and demotivated students to participate in writing sessions. They reported that even those students who were unable to write an English sentence wrote three or more sentences after some sessions. It is a kind of affective scaffolding (Tajeddin & Kamali, 2020), which makes EMs more confident and provides a comfortable situation. It can also be used as a reading assessment technique (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016).

Further, teacher scaffolding seems to appear when teachers and students speak the same L1 or L2. Instead, peer scaffolding, which is a form of interactional scaffolding, appeared to be a valuable technique whenever the languages spoken by students and teachers differ. In addition, peer scaffolding can be used by bilingual and multilingual teachers speaking EMs to enhance their engagement, affirm their cultural identity, and improve collaborative learning in the process of writing (Motlhaka, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that teachers asked students to use Google Translate application to write their first draft, as artefact scaffolding. Chen and Tsou (2023) and Rowe (2022) claim that using the Google Translate in writing sessions is an effective translanguaging tool. Also, Rowe (2022) elaborated on the deficiency of using this application, through which so many errors happened, and teachers should spend much more time correcting those errors. However, in the current study, teachers mentioned that to overcome this deficiency, they provide corrective feedback to EMs to revise their writing.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the tasks assigned by teachers aimed to enhance the listening, reading, writing, and grammar skills of EMs across all their linguistic resources. For example, one specific task involves having EMs write about local cultural norms in Persian alongside target cultural norms in English. These skills in L2 and L3 can be classified as connected growers as described by De Bot et al. (2007). This claim is supported by Serai's (2022) research in the Algeria context, which demonstrates that bilingual and bicultural writing can significantly improve EMs' writing abilities across all their languages.

Nevertheless, the results indicated that students use similar strategies in the organization of content and in the structure of compositions written in Persian and English. Other studies support this argument even if languages do not share the same writing system (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). However, it is claimed that the Persian writing style is detrimental to English writing. Practicing and learning English writing frameworks can enhance Persian writing skills. Therefore, they are not growers in a reciprocating motion but in a one-way motion from the third language to the second language only. Further empirical research is needed to provide evidence to approve or reject this claim. Also, teachers did not mention anything about the relationship between speaking and writing abilities as connected growers. This may be because of the limited English-speaking ability of EMs (Alemi & Khatoony, 2020). As Cenoz and Gorter (2011) and Leonet and Saragueta (2023) argued there are a few boundaries among Basque, Spanish, and English speaking and writing abilities that one can consider all as connected growers, further research is needed to indicate whether Persian or other Iranian indigenous languages and English speaking and writing abilities are connected growers or not.

5.1. Practical applications for teacher training programs

Results suggest that teacher training programs should incorporate translanguaging tasks, such as bilingual summary writing, listening in L3 and taking notes in L2, bilingual writing, bilingual reading and response, bilingual listening and response, and writing composition using cognates and false cognates, and strategies, such as brainstorming, bilingual story-telling, providing hints and prompts in L2, encouraging peer and artefact scaffolding, and cross-linguistically teaching cognates and false cognates, which have been shown to improve writing and engagement among EMs. For instance, it is recommended to conduct workshops that encourage bilingual or multilingual story-telling, as a translanguaging strategy, a teacher plays a video of a popular story. After viewing, the teacher encouraged EMs to retell the story in either Persian or English. Subsequently, the students were asked to write their retelling in English. Teacher training programs may offer workshops centered on this teaching approach, allowing educators to develop bilingual and multilingual activities (e.g., David et al., 2021) while also exploring the theoretical foundations of PT (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021). These strategies enhance not only English writing skills but also Persian writing, as teachers have noted that EMs encounter significant challenges.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers can create a PT space by leveraging students' unified linguistic repertoire through multilingual tasks and strategies to enhance the writing skills of all languages in the repertoire. Promoting inclusion and valuing diverse linguistic backgrounds can be accomplished by integrating translanguaging into educational policies. Institutional support plays a vital role in the successful implementation of translanguaging practices, which involves shifting policies to acknowledge and utilize students' complete linguistic abilities. Additionally, it is essential to prioritize professional development for educators, equipping them with the skills needed to incorporate this teaching approach into their methods. Such support can empower teachers to cultivate more dynamic learning environments that reflect Iran's rich linguistic diversity. Further, policymakers can establish incentives for schools that implement bilingual education programs. This could include allocating dedicated funds for teachers who are proficient in multiple languages or for schools that prioritize multilingual curricula. Further experimental research is necessary to demonstrate the effectiveness of translanguaging practices. Lastly, like any research endeavor, this study has its limitations, particularly the lack of observational data. We anticipate that future studies will address this gap.

7. References

Alemi, M., & Khatoony, S. (2020). Virtual reality assisted pronunciation training (VRAPT) for young EFL learners. *Teaching English with Technology*, *20*(4), 59-81. http://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.23223081.1399.11.6.16.5

Alhazmi, A. A., & Kaufmann, A. (2022). Phenomenological qualitative methods applied to the analysis of cross-cultural experience in novel educational social contexts. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.785134

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Canagarajah, S. (2011). Translanguaging in the classroom: Emerging issues for research and pedagogy. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *2*, 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110239331.1

Celic, C. M., & Seltzer, K. (2013). Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators. *New York: Cuny-Nysieb*.

Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2011). Focus on multilingualism: A study of trilingual writing. *The Modern Language Journal*, *95*(3), 356-369. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01206.x

Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2017). Minority languages and sustainable translanguaging: Threat or opportunity?. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural development*, *38*(10), 901-912. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2017.1284855

Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2020). Teaching English through pedagogical translanguaging. *World Englishes*, *39*(2), 300–311. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12462

Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2021). *Pedagogical translanguaging*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009029384

Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2022). Pedagogical Translanguaging and Its Application to Language Classes. *RELC Journal*, *53*(2), 342-354. https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221082751

Cenoz, J., & Santos, A. (2020). Implementing pedagogical translanguaging in trilingual schools. *System*, *92*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102273

Cenoz, J., Leonet, O., & Gorter, D. (2022). Developing cognate awareness through pedagogical translanguaging. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *25*(8), 2759-2773. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2021.1961675

Chen, F., & Tsou, W. (2023). Raising translingual awareness toward self-directed learning: an exploratory study of college writing using google translate. *English Teaching & Learning*, *48*, 669-695. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42321-023-00161-w

David, S. S., Shepard-Carey, L., Swearingen, A. J., Hemsath, D. J., & Heo, S. (2021). Entry points and trajectories: Teachers learning and doing translanguaging pedagogy. *TESOL Journal*, *3*(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.603

De Bot, K., Lowie, W., & Verspoor, M. (2007). A dynamic systems theory approach to second language acquisition. *Bilingualism: Language and cognition*, *10*(1), 7-21. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728906002732

Espinosa, C., Ascenzi-Moreno, L., & Vogel, S. (2016). *A translanguaging pedagogy for writing: A CUNY-NYSIEB guide for educators*. New York: The City of New York University.

Gagalang, J. L. (2020). Assessing deficiencies in composition writing: A case of Filipino College freshmen learners. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, *17*(1), 307-316. https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/2516

García, O. & Otheguy, R. (2020). Plurilingualism and translanguaging: Commonalities and divergences. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 23*, 17–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2019.1598932

García, O., & Li, W. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Pivot London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385765

García, O., & Sylvan, C. E. (2011). Pedagogies and practices in multilingual classrooms: Singularities in pluralities. *The Modern Language Journal, 95*(3), 385-400. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01208.x

García, O., Johnson, S. I., Seltzer, K., & Valdés, G. (2017). *The translanguaging classroom: Leveraging student bilingualism for learning*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon.

Hafez. (2024, October 21). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafez

Hoominfar, E. (2014). *Challenges of monolingual education.* Master's thesis, Bowling Green State University.

Jovchelovitch, S., & Bauer, M. W. (2000). Narrative interviewing. In M. W. Bauer, & G. Gaskell (Eds.). *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound: a practical handbook for social research*. SAGE Publications eBooks. https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/8031

Kashi, H., Afraz, S. & Samimi, F. (2024). The impact of an already-proposed problem-based model of writing on Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. *Iranian Evolutionary Educational Psychology Journal, 6* (3), 73-90. https://doi.org/10.22034/6.3.73

Kayaalp, F., Meral, E., & Namli, Z. B. (2022). An analysis of the effect of writing-to-learn activities regarding students' academic achievement and self-regulation skills in writing. *Participatory Educational Research, 9*(1), 324-348. https://doi.org/10.17275/per.22.18.9.1

Khonamri, F., Yaqubi, B., & Sokhandan, E. (2023). The potential of translanguaging pedagogy for promoting Iranian bilingual students' English development. *MEXTESOL Journal*, *46*(4). https://doi.org/10.61871/mj.v46n4-1

Kiramba, L. K. (2017). Translanguaging in the writing of emergent multilinguals. *International Multilingual Research Journal, 11*(2), 115-130. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2016.1239457

Leonet, O., & Saragueta, E. (2023). The case of a pedagogical translanguaging intervention in a trilingual primary school: the students' voice. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *21*(4), 2112–2130. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2023.2224009

Lewis, G., Jones, B., & Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: Origins and development from school to street and beyond. *Educational research and evaluation, 18*(7), 641-654. https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2012.718488

Llurda, E. (2014). Native and non-native teachers of English. In C. Chapelle, (ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1-5). Wiley, London.

Mbirimi-Hungwe, V. (2016). Translanguaging as a strategy for group work: Summary writing as a measure for reading comprehension among university students. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, *34*(3), 241-249. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2016.1250352

Motlhaka, H. (2021). Use of WhatsApp in higher education for teaching and learning: Sociocultural perspective of learning. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(7), 49-72. https://www.tojqi.net/index.php/journal/article/view/4983

Naghdipour, B. (2016). English writing instruction in Iran: Implications for second language writing curriculum and pedagogy. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 32*, 81–87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2016.05.001

Nazari, M., & Karimpour, S. (2023). "Teacher, Man Mitoonam…?": Translanguaging and English language teacher emotion labor. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *6*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2023.2167206

Pablo-Wrzosek, M. J. (2017). *Translanguaging and student funds of knowledge as a teacher resource*. [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Calgary, Calgary, AB. http://dx.doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/5256

Rowe, L. W. (2022). Google Translate and biliterate composing: Second graders' use of digital translation tools to support bilingual writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, *56*(3), 883-906. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3143

Salimi, E. A., Tian, Z., & Ghasempour, A. (2024). Exploring EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about translanguaging

pedagogy: A qualitative study from Iran. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *7*(3), 2120. https://doi.org/10.29140/ajal.v7n3.2120

Schumacher, R., & Stern, E. (2023). Promoting the construction of intelligent knowledge with the help of various methods of cognitively activating instruction. *Frontiers in Education*, *7*. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.979430

Serai, S. (2022). *Translanguaging in Algerian university EFL classrooms: practices and attitudes*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Portsmouth].

Seyri, H., & Ghiasvand, F. (2024). Emotions at the heart of tensions: A transcendental phenomenology of Iranian EFL teachers' intra- and interpersonal emotional tensions and regulation strategies. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12655

Tajeddin, Z., & Kamali, J. (2020). Typology of scaffolding in teacher discourse: Large data-based evidence from second language classrooms. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *30*(2), 329-343. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12286

Tian, Z. (2022). Translanguaging design in a third grade Chinese language arts class. *Applied Linguistics Review, 13*(3), 327-343. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2021-0024

Usher, K., & Jackson, D. (2014). Phenomenology. In *SAGE Publications, Inc. eBooks* (pp. 181–198). https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473920163.n11

Vagle, M. D. (2018). Crafting phenomenological research. In *Routledge eBooks*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315173474

Velasco, P., & García, O. (2014). Translanguaging and the writing of bilingual learners. *Bilingual Research Journal, 37*(1), 6-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2014.893270

Wang, D. (2019). Translanguaging in Chinese foreign language classrooms: students and teachers' attitudes and practices. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 22*(2), 138–149. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1231773

Windfuhr, G. (2009). Dialectology and topics. In G. Windfuhr. (Ed.), *The Iranian languages* (pp. 5-42). Routledge, London.

Yuzlu, M. Y., & Dikilitas, K. (2022). Translanguaging in the development of EFL learners' foreign language skills in Turkish context. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 16*(2), 176-190. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2021.1892698

Original Article

Exploring the Perceptions of EFL Teachers on the Implementation of Critical Dialogue in Language Education: An Ethnographic Grounded Theory Approach

Seyyed Mohammad Reza Adel[1,2*] iD
Behzad Ghonsooly[3] iD
Ehsan Nikpouya[4] iD

[*1]Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran
[*2]Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran
[3]Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran
[4]M.A. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

E-mail: m.adel@um.ac.ir

ABSTRACT

Critical pedagogy places a significant emphasis on dialogue due to its transformative potential within educational settings. This approach fosters critical thinking, self-reflection, and empowerment among students, encouraging them to engage deeply with the material and question underlying assumptions. While research in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts has delved into the application of critical dialogue, there has been a notable gap in understanding how teachers perceive and implement this approach in their classrooms. This study seeks to address this gap by collecting data through ethnographic interviews with 22 teachers over three months. Data analysis was then conducted using a constructivist grounded theory methodology. Results showed that for critical dialogic teaching to be effective, two essential conditions should be met: (1) the presence of a critical dialogical teacher who embodies characteristics such as openness, mediation, and the ability to create a supportive environment, and (2) the use of specific strategies, such as authentic tasks, group work, and technology, to foster engagement and diverse perspectives. These findings have significant implications for language education, highlighting the need for teacher training that supports the development of dialogical teaching practices, promotes inclusive classroom environments, and empowers students to engage critically with both language and content. The study also underscores the importance of addressing the cultural and contextual factors that influence how critical dialogue is perceived and implemented by teachers in EFL settings.

KEYWORDS: Critical dialogue; Critical pedagogy; Critical thinking; Ethnography; Grounded theory; Motivation; Mediation; Technology

1. Introduction

Bakhtin's dialogism emphasises the role of dialogue in shaping meaning and fostering authentic communication, where genuine exchange encourages new perspectives and mutual understanding (Bakhtin, 1981, 1999). A related concept in education is critical dialogue, which Freire (1970) defines as an approach that engages students in conversations promoting questioning, reflection, and exploration of diverse perspectives. This pedagogical approach plays a crucial role in fostering active learning environments, empowering students to challenge assumptions, interrogate societal norms, and co-construct knowledge (Kaufmann, 2010).

In EFL classrooms, where learners navigate both language acquisition and cultural complexities, integrating critical dialogue is particularly valuable. It not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also nurtures critical consciousness, encouraging students to become more reflective and socially aware individuals (Scotland, 2022). While previous research has examined critical pedagogy and dialogue in various educational contexts, there remains a significant gap in understanding how EFL teachers, particularly in non-Western settings, perceive and apply critical dialogue. Existing studies predominantly focus on theoretical frameworks or student-centred perspectives, leaving limited insight into teachers' beliefs, instructional practices, and the challenges they encounter in facilitating critical dialogue (Borg, 2003; Johnson, 2009).

This gap is especially relevant in Iran, where sociocultural and political factors shape educational practices. Despite the potential of critical dialogue to enhance both language proficiency and sociocultural awareness, little empirical research has explored how Iranian EFL teachers perceive and implement this approach in their classrooms. This study aims to address this gap by examining how 22 experienced Iranian EFL teachers conceptualise critical dialogue, the challenges they face in integrating it into their teaching, and the strategies they employ to foster it.

The research is guided by two key objectives: (1) to investigate the factors shaping Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of critical dialogue and how these perceptions influence their pedagogical approaches, and (2) to identify the strategies teachers use to effectively implement critical dialogue, with the goal of informing teacher professional development initiatives. By offering deeper insights into these issues, this study seeks to contribute to the broader field of EFL pedagogy, particularly in non-Western contexts, and to advance inclusive, transformative, and socially conscious language education (Bouali, 2021). To achieve these objectives, this study adopts an ethnographic grounded theory approach, which facilitates an in-depth exploration of teachers' lived experiences and instructional practices.

2. Literature Review

Dialogue in education encompasses both classroom instructional dialogues and broader societal conversations that shape educational policies and practices. As a foundational concept in pedagogical theory, dialogical education has been extensively explored by theorists such as Bakhtin (1981), who emphasised the social and dynamic nature of language. His concept of dialogism underscores how dialogue facilitates meaning-making, fosters authentic communication, and allows for the continuous evolution of perspectives. Genuine dialogue, as Bakhtin (1999) asserted, requires openness to diverse viewpoints and engagement in reciprocal meaning construction rather than the unilateral imposition of ideas.

Dialogue has been recognised as a crucial element in educational settings, extending beyond classroom discussions to influence broader educational policies and practices. Bohm (2004) highlighted the significance of creating inclusive dialogic spaces where multiple perspectives are not only acknowledged but actively engaged. Such spaces facilitate intellectual exchange, challenge preconceived ideas, and contribute to the development of democratic and inclusive learning environments (Giroux, 2007). This perspective aligns with the argument of Dewey (1916) that education is not merely the transfer of knowledge but a means of cultivating democratic thinking through collaboration and dialogue. hooks (1994) further emphasised that dialogue serves as a tool for empowerment, enabling students to question, critique, and co-construct knowledge rather than passively receiving information. By embedding dialogue into pedagogical practices, educators can create dynamic learning environments that promote equity, critical thinking, and active citizenship (Brookfield, 2004).

Research indicates that engaging students in meaningful discussions enhances both their language skills and their ability to critically engage with sociocultural contexts (Hashemnezhad, 2020). Critical dialogue aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasises authentic, interactive, and contextually relevant language use (Celce-Murcia, 2013). By participating in discussions that challenge assumptions and encourage exploration of diverse perspectives, students develop a deeper understanding of language and its role in shaping discourse and identity.

The role of critical dialogue in EFL learning extends beyond oral proficiency. Studies have shown that it enhances writing skills by fostering active classroom participation and peer collaboration (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Dobao, 2012). Additionally, it supports language comprehension by encouraging students to negotiate meaning and analyse linguistic structures (Dobao, 2016; Kim & McDonough, 2008). Critical dialogue is also instrumental in vocabulary acquisition, pragmatic awareness, and intercultural competence, all of which contribute to a holistic language-learning experience (Ahmadian & Tajabadi, 2020; Taguchi & Kim,

2016). Furthermore, research highlights its positive impact on listening skills and metacognitive awareness, both of which are essential for effective language learning (Bozorgian & Alamdari, 2018; Cross, 2009). By integrating critical dialogue into EFL instruction, educators can foster deeper cognitive engagement and enhance students' ability to construct meaning in diverse communicative settings (Hashemnezhad, 2020; Jocuns, 2021; Wertsch, 2006).

Despite its pedagogical benefits, the implementation of critical dialogue in EFL classrooms faces several challenges. For example, variability in teachers' instructional strategies and learners' receptivity to dialogue significantly affects its efficacy (Dongyu et al., 2013). Research suggests that fostering an inclusive classroom atmosphere is essential for successful dialogue-based instruction, yet this requires deliberate efforts by educators to create safe and stimulating learning environments (Jocuns, 2021; Sybing, 2023). An additional challenge lies in selecting intellectually engaging topics that encourage student participation—an aspect that many educators find difficult to navigate.

Eliciting equal participation from all students also presents a considerable obstacle, particularly in non-Western educational contexts where cultural norms influence classroom interactions. For instance, in Confucian-influenced societies such as China, students often exhibit reserved behaviour and a reluctance to engage in public discussions (Cui & Teo, 2024). This cultural dynamic complicates the facilitation of open and student-led discussions. Furthermore, effectively integrating critical dialogue into language instruction demands substantial professional development for teachers, as they must acquire the skills necessary to guide discussions, manage diverse viewpoints, and sustain meaningful interactions (Crookes & Lehner, 1998).

While research indicates the potential for implementing critical dialogue in EFL classrooms, institutional constraints and varying levels of English proficiency among students remain significant hurdles. For example, Shin and Crookes (2005) found that Korean EFL learners benefited from dialogical approaches when supported by institutional policies that encouraged communicative engagement. However, for beginner-level students, limited language proficiency often impedes their ability to fully participate in critical discussions. These barriers suggest that successful implementation of critical dialogue requires tailored strategies that consider both linguistic and contextual factors.

The literature on critical dialogue in EFL education provides valuable insights into its benefits, challenges, and theoretical foundations. Research underscores its role in enhancing language proficiency, fostering critical thinking, and developing intercultural competence. However, gaps remain in understanding how teachers perceive and implement critical dialogue, particularly in non-Western educational contexts. Existing studies have primarily focused on student-centred approaches, leaving limited exploration of teachers' experiences, beliefs, and instructional strategies. Additionally, while research has examined the impact of dialogue on various language skills, fewer studies have investigated the institutional and cultural factors that influence its practical application.

This study seeks to address these gaps by exploring the perspectives of experienced Iranian EFL teachers on critical dialogue. By examining how they conceptualise, facilitate, and navigate challenges related to dialogical instruction, this research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of critical dialogue in diverse EFL contexts. The findings will offer insights into how teachers can be better supported in integrating dialogical practices, ultimately enhancing language education through more inclusive, student-centred pedagogical approaches. This study is based on the following research questions:

1. What characteristics should EFL critical dialogical teachers possess to effectively incorporate critical dialogue into their language education curriculum?

2. What strategies do EFL teachers employ to effectively incorporate critical dialogue into their language education curriculum?

3. Methodology

This study employs a constructivist grounded theory approach within an ethnographic framework to explore how experienced Iranian EFL teachers perceive and implement critical dialogue. Grounded theory provides a systematic approach to data collection and analysis, allowing the study to develop theories based directly on participants' experiences rather than relying on pre-existing frameworks (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Ethnography complements this by offering a contextual and participatory perspective, ensuring that teachers' beliefs and classroom practices are examined within their lived realities (Fetterman, 2019). The combination of these methodologies is particularly suited to this study's aims. The iterative process of grounded theory, where data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, allows for a deep and evolving understanding of teachers' perspectives on critical dialogue (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Ethnographic methods, including prolonged engagement and in-depth interviews, help capture the complexities of how teachers experience and facilitate critical dialogue in their classrooms (Timmermans & Tavory, 2007).

This methodological approach ensures that findings emerge directly from participant narratives, enhancing their validity and relevance (Charmaz, 2014). Additionally, recognising the potential for researcher bias, reflexivity was maintained throughout the study to minimise preconceptions influencing data interpretation (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). By integrating

ethnography with grounded theory, this study provides a nuanced, empirically grounded exploration of critical dialogue in EFL education.

3.1. Participants

This study utilised the theoretical sampling of grounded theory approach and involved 22 experienced Iranian EFL teachers, evenly split between genders, with teaching experience in public and private educational settings in Iran. All of them were at least 24 years old, had at least 5 years of experience in teaching English, and held at least a BA in a field related to English language teaching. Initially, teachers provided consent through a consent form to take part in the research. Subsequently, they were interviewed during their free time. Following the grounded theory approach, data collection persisted until reaching data saturation, where no new categories emerged (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

3.2. Instruments

This study utilised a methodological approach focused on semi-structured interviews conducted through various means, including face-to-face meetings, Skype calls, and both oral and written formats. To gather detailed data and nuanced insights from participants, the research aimed to facilitate in-depth discussions and produce rich qualitative data for thorough analysis and interpretation. Since ethnographic interviews take place over an extended period of time (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019; Spradley, 2016), this study adhered to that principle by conducting interviews over the course of three months, rather than at a single point in time. This approach helped build rapport and made the interviewees more comfortable sharing their perceptions. After each interview, we maintained contact with the interviewees over the three months to clarify any ambiguous or incomplete responses and to observe whether their perceptions had changed or remained consistent. Prolonged and consistent engagement within a research environment, as seen in ethnographic studies, is essential for the formation of grounded theories (Timmermans & Tavory, 2007).

3.3. Procedure

The interviews began with personal background questions (Dörnyei, 2007), covering participants' education, teaching experience, and classroom contexts. Following this, 10 open-ended questions were asked, aligned with the study's research objectives (see Appendix). Interviews were conducted in multiple phases. The first phase consisted of face-to-face interviews at participants' workplaces. The subsequent phases were conducted online, allowing for follow-ups, clarifications, and additional insights. This longitudinal approach ensured a deeper understanding of participants' evolving perspectives (Gobo, 2008). Prolonged engagement also fostered trust and rapport, leading to richer and more candid responses (Emerson et al., 2011).

3.4. Data analysis

This study employed constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) to systematically analyse the interview data. Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously, following the iterative process of grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

The analysis proceeded through three coding phases:

1. Open Coding – Initially, 86 codes were identified through a detailed review of interview transcripts, capturing key themes and recurring patterns.

2. Axial Coding – These codes were then categorised into 14 broader themes, focusing on relationships between concepts.

3. Selective Coding – The final phase distilled the data into two core categories:

   • Characteristics of a Critical Dialogical Teacher

   • Strategies for Reinforcing Critical Dialogue in the Classroom

An example of this process is that among the 86 codes, some codes such as "Supportive Environment," "Positive Reinforcement," "Energetic Classroom," "Student Choice," "Openness to Innovation," "Technology," and "Fun and Interactive Lessons" were combined to form the code "Motivator." This code became one of 14 codes that was subsequently included in one of the two core categories. To ensure rigor and reliability, constant comparison was applied throughout the coding process, refining categories and verifying interpretations. Memo-writing was also utilised to document analytical reflections and emerging patterns (Charmaz, 2014).

4. Results and discussion

We are focusing on two main categories identified through selective coding: the characteristics of a critical dialogical teacher and the strategies to enhance critical dialogue in the EFL classroom. Here we offer the insights of teachers (T) supported by relevant literature.

4.1. Characteristics of a critical dialogical teacher

4.1.1. Motivation and support

An English teacher plays a crucial role as a motivator, fostering an environment that encourages all students to actively engage in dialogue. According to Brown (2014), effective language instructors create a supportive classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions. Similarly, Dörnyei (2001) emphasised that teachers who employ positive reinforcement and create interactive activities can significantly enhance students' willingness to participate in discussions. In this regard, Nima (T) pointed out,

It's essential to also take into account the psychological aspects when designing a classroom environment. Creating a space that is vibrant and full of energy is crucial for fostering a sense of motivation among students. When a classroom is lively and engaging, it encourages students to actively participate in discussions.

Arash (T) also stated, "A teacher who excites students creates a class where they share ideas and debate, which helps them think and improve their language skills."

English teachers play a pivotal role in fostering dialogue and cultivating a respectful and supportive classroom environment, necessitating a strong foundation of empathy and rapport. As highlighted by the meta-analysis of Hattie (2008), positive teacher-student relationships significantly enhance student engagement and achievement, emphasising the importance of interpersonal connections in the learning process. Matin (T) believed, "When a teacher cares for the class and guides them well, students feel safe to question and share ideas. This openness makes their discussions deeper and more meaningful." Moreover, Pianta (1999) asserted that teachers' empathy facilitates understanding students' perspectives, leading to more effective communication and conflict resolution. By nurturing empathy and rapport, English teachers can create a safe space where students feel valued, heard, and empowered to express themselves, thereby enriching the learning experience and promoting mutual respect (Chick et al., 2012). This aligns with the perception of Bahar (T) that stated,

Establishing a classroom environment characterised by supportiveness and respect fosters student engagement in critical dialogue. When educators prioritise cultivating a culture of mutual respect and encouragement within the classroom, students have more passion to express their thoughts and ask questions.

4.1.2. Critical thinking and open-mindedness

English teachers must embody critical thinking and open-mindedness, challenging conventional norms to foster a dynamic learning environment. According to Facione (2011), critical thinking involves analysing and evaluating evidence to make reasoned judgments, an essential skill for educators to develop in their students. Furthermore, hooks (2010) emphasises the importance of questioning societal norms and embracing diverse perspectives in teaching, enabling students to critically engage with texts and the world around them. Such an approach not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares students for thoughtful and informed citizenship in a complex, interconnected world. With regard to this perspective, Nima (T) nicely asserted, "There is no critical dialogue without critical thinking, and there is no critical thinking without critical dialogue." Mojtaba (T) also proposed, "It is essential to approach every aspect of teaching with an open mind. This openness allows for an inclusive language learning environment where diverse perspectives are welcomed and explored."

4.1.3. Mediation

English teachers must act as mediators and intervene in conflicts of dialogue when necessary to foster a respectful and inclusive classroom environment. By stepping in during contentious discussions, teachers can model effective communication skills, ensuring that all students feel heard and valued, thus promoting a positive learning atmosphere (Johnson, 2012; Richards & Burns, 2012). This proactive approach not only helps to resolve immediate conflicts but also teaches students critical conflict resolution skills essential for their future interactions. With regard to this point, Mona (T) emphasised, "When I observe students going off-topic or engaging in conflicts during dialogue, I step in to address and resolve these issues, ensuring that the conversation stays focused and productive." Atefeh (T) posited, "I always ensure that all students have a chance to speak, clarify misunderstandings, and keep the conversation focused. This helps students engage more deeply, question each other's views, and build stronger arguments."

4.1.4.   Diversity responsiveness

The role of an English teacher extends beyond language proficiency to encompass a deep understanding of cultural diversity and sensitivity to students' backgrounds. As asserted by Byram (1997), fostering intercultural dialogue requires educators to possess comprehensive knowledge of their students' cultural backgrounds, enabling them to create inclusive learning environments. Arash (T) suggested, "We should recognise and value the different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of our students. This openness leads to richer discussions where students learn from each other." Additionally, Cummins (2000) highlighted the importance of considering students' varying proficiency levels and linguistic backgrounds, advocating for differentiated instruction to ensure equitable participation and engagement in the classroom. Thus, an English teacher equipped with cultural awareness and a commitment to addressing students' diverse needs can effectively cultivate meaningful dialogue and promote mutual understanding among learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Regarding this, Bahar (T) mentioned,

When I observe a student within the class who may be marginalised or overlooked, I actively engage by intervening and encouraging their participation in discussions. Additionally, in conducting my needs analysis, I take into account the diverse needs of all students, ensuring inclusivity and equity in the learning environment.

4.1.5.   Needs analysis

Needs analysis is vital in English language education as it enables educators to tailor instruction to learners' specific requirements, ensuring relevance and efficacy. By identifying linguistic, communicative, and situational needs, educators can design curriculum and select materials effectively (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), fostering learner autonomy, motivation, and engagement (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Additionally, it helps recognise and address gaps in language proficiency, enhancing learning outcomes (Long & Crookes, 1993). Thus, needs analysis is crucial for personalised and effective language education. Hamed (T) rightly stated on the importance of needs analysis in critical dialogue, "It's all about needs analysis. I always do that and consider it the most important part of my teaching." Mehdi (T) also mentioned,

When I conduct needs analysis in class, I gather valuable insights into students' interests, challenges, and strengths. This process allows me to tailor discussion topics that are relevant and engaging for them. As a result, students are more inclined to share their perspectives and question ideas, which leads to a richer and more dynamic critical dialogue.

4.1.6.   New possibilities

The English teacher's role encompasses being both a researcher and a technophile, fostering dialogue in the classroom through openness to new possibilities. This aligns with the study of Hockly and Clandfield (2010) on integrating technology in language education for enhanced engagement, and the recommendation of Kumaravadivelu (2006) for dynamic, research-oriented approaches to language teaching that encourage collaboration and critical thinking. One of the interviewees, Elham (T), pointed out,

I seek out trending topics online to spark interest in my students and constantly research innovative strategies for engaging them in discussions. Utilising the television in the English language institute where I teach, I incorporate movies, songs, and podcasts into lessons, prompting students to discuss and analyse them critically. I believe this multimedia approach fosters critical dialogue and enhances the overall learning experience in the classroom.

Matin (T) also believed,

When I embrace new methods, topics, and student-led discussions, the classroom becomes a space where diverse perspectives are valued. For example, if students propose an unexpected angle on a debate topic, I encourage them to explore it rather than sticking to a fixed plan. This flexibility allows students to ask deeper questions.

4.2. Strategies for fostering critical dialogue

4.2.1.   Dynamic discussion

Witherspoon et al. (2016) noted that teachers incorporate discussions in the classroom to enhance their students' skills. By fostering a supportive environment, teachers can ensure that classroom discussions are meaningful. Mona (T) said "I make our class interesting by talking about things that happen in real life. I also bring up topics that matter to them, so we can have meaningful conversations." Simin (T) extended this point by saying,

In my classroom, I like to create discussions by bringing up challenging topics that spark debate and differing opinions

among the students. This approach helps make the classroom environment more engaging and dynamic. I make sure to involve all of my students in these discussions, ensuring that everyone has the chance to share their thoughts and contribute to the conversation.

4.2.2. Technology assisted

To foster dynamic and engaging dialogue in the classroom, English teachers must embrace technology and multimedia. Utilising these resources can help bring texts to life, making complex literary concepts more relatable and understandable (Blake, 2013). This approach not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares students for the increasingly digital world (Miller, 2019). Atefeh (T) pointed out, "Using video conferencing tools, students can engage in virtual debates with peers from different cultures. For example, an online exchange with EFL learners from another country can expose them to diverse viewpoints, encouraging deeper questioning and more critical discussions." Walker (2018) argued that digital media serve as tools that enable dialogue and transformation, ensuring that students' voices are acknowledged and that everyone participates. The freedom of expression provided by digital media is fundamental to fostering a creative and inclusive teaching environment. With regard to this, Mojtaba (T) expressed,

We can improve critical dialogue by holding online panel discussions. Additionally, we can use a wide range of multimedia resources to enrich these conversations. For example, we can watch movies, listen to songs, look at pictures, and listen to podcasts. After engaging with these materials, we can have in-depth discussions about them, exploring various viewpoints and analysing their content.

4.2.3. Authentic tasks

Using authentic tasks in English language teaching fosters classroom dialogue by providing real-world contexts that engage students in meaningful communication. These tasks, such as project-based activities, require natural language use, enhancing confidence, motivation, and involvement (Brown & Lee, 2015; Nunan, 2004). Nima (T) supported this in practice by claiming,

I use real-life tasks in my teaching, and I believe these tasks help me create an engaging and inclusive environment which fosters critical dialogue. For example, I start by talking about daily news, and then I want my students to participate in the discussion.

Mohsen (T) gave an example of an authentic task by stating,

For example, if students research global environmental issues and interview environmentalists, they must then analyse responses, compare viewpoints, and discuss their findings in class. This process encourages them to use critical thinking and ask deeper and more challenging questions.

4.2.4. Group working

Tsui (2001) asserted that in contrast to teacher-led activities, pair work and group work offer learners greater chances to foster and manage the interaction, create a wider range of speech acts, and participate more in dialogue. Simin (T) posited, "Working in groups will make the classroom more inclusive and encourage critical dialogue." Hamed (T) further explained,

I organise the students into small groups of 3 to 5 people each. I give each group a topic to discuss and encourage them to talk about it together. As I walk around and listen, if I notice that the conversations are starting to fade or if students seem to be running out of things to say, I begin to merge the groups. I combine the small groups into larger ones gradually, until eventually, the entire class is discussing the topic together as one big group.

4.2.5. Literature circle

Literature circles promote active participation and democratic dialogue, empowering participants to express their perspectives and engage in respectful discourse (Moreillon, 2007). An illustration of literature circles involves integrating short stories into the discussion framework. Collie and Slater (1987) believed that the implementation of short stories in educational environments facilitates concentrated analysis and dialogue, making them particularly suitable for classroom activities and independent learning. Tahereh (T) mentioned a related example,

While discussing *Animal Farm*, one student might argue that Napoleon represents only dictatorship, while another challenges this by pointing out moments where he manipulates ideology for control. This debate encourages students to think critically, justify their ideas with evidence, and refine their perspectives through discussion.

Spack (1985) suggested that short stories introduce learners to a variety of cultural viewpoints and literary techniques, thereby enhancing critical thinking skills and intercultural awareness. This comprehensive method contributes to the overall

development of learners' language proficiency (Lazar, 1993). With respect to this point, Reza (T) claimed, "After reading a chosen story together, I prompt my students to engage in conversation about various aspects of the narrative. This approach not only stimulates critical thinking but also encourages active participation."

4.2.6. Role play

Richards and Rodgers (2014) emphasised that role play promotes the integration of language skills, such as speaking, listening, and negotiation, thereby facilitating holistic language development. Integrating role play activities into English language instruction enhances students' linguistic and communicative abilities while making learning enjoyable and effective. Pertaining to this, Elham (T) mentioned,

Engaging in role play activities is enjoyable and attractive for students. It captures their interest and draws them into active participation. By immersing themselves in different roles, every student gets involved, making the learning experience more dynamic. This interactive approach encourages critical dialogue among students as they explore various perspectives and engage in discussions while embodying different characters or scenarios.

Reza (T) also stated,

When students act out scenarios related to current events, they are challenged to understand different sides of an issue. For example, during a discussion on immigration, some students might represent government officials, while others take on the roles of immigrants. This approach encourages them to consider multiple perspectives, challenge each other's viewpoints, and engage in deeper and more reflective dialogue.

4.2.7. Gamification

Su and Cheng (2015) and Buckley and Doyle (2016) provide evidence of the positive impact of gamification on student outcomes, highlighting its potential as an effective pedagogical tool in language education. It significantly enhances student engagement and motivation by integrating game-like elements into learning activities. Mona (T) argued,

An effective way to encourage students to engage in critical discussions is to use gamification tailored to their specific needs. By understanding what motivates each student, teachers can design activities and discussions that are not only educational but also fun and engaging. This approach can make the learning experience more interactive and appealing, ultimately encouraging critical dialogue.

Mojtaba (T) gave a related example by saying, "In a classroom activity where students work in teams to create a persuasive argument on a controversial topic, they could earn points for presenting strong evidence or for asking thought-provoking questions to challenge the opposing team."

4.3. The core theory

The findings of this study converge to propose a theoretical framework for the role of the critical dialogical teacher in EFL settings. At the core of this framework is the interplay between teacher characteristics and instructional strategies, which together create an environment conducive to critical dialogue. A critical dialogical teacher is not merely an instructor but a facilitator of intellectual and social engagement, fostering motivation, inclusivity, and open inquiry. The process begins with the teacher's ability to establish a supportive learning atmosphere, in which students feel both encouraged and challenged to participate in dialogue. This motivational foundation, coupled with critical thinking and mediation skills, enables teachers to navigate classroom discussions productively, ensuring that differing perspectives are explored and conflicts are managed constructively. The teacher's responsiveness to diversity further enriches the learning space, as it validates students' experiences and perspectives, thereby reinforcing their agency in the dialogical process.

Beyond these individual characteristics, the theory highlights how instructional strategies serve as the operational mechanisms that activate critical dialogue. Dynamic discussions, technology-assisted learning, and authentic tasks are not isolated techniques but interconnected components that scaffold student engagement. By structuring classroom interactions through collaborative group work, literature circles, and role-play activities, teachers provide students with opportunities to construct and deconstruct knowledge in ways that extend beyond language acquisition. These strategies create iterative cycles of questioning, reflection, and response, positioning dialogue as both the means and the outcome of the learning process. Furthermore, the incorporation of gamification and digital media introduces new dimensions of engagement, ensuring that critical dialogue remains relevant to students' lived experiences and contemporary social issues.

This framework extends existing theories of critical pedagogy by illustrating how teachers actively shape and sustain dialogical spaces within the constraints of EFL contexts. Unlike traditional models that emphasise the role of students as

primary agents of dialogue, this study foregrounds the teacher's role as both a catalyst and a co-participant in dialogical meaning-making. Moreover, by synthesising the personal, instructional, and contextual dimensions of teaching, the framework presents a holistic view of critical dialogue as an evolving practice rather than a static methodology. In doing so, this study not only refines theoretical understandings of teacher agency in critical pedagogy but also offers a pragmatic model for integrating dialogical practices into EFL instruction, particularly in non-Western educational settings.

5. Conclusion

This study has highlighted the essential characteristics and strategies necessary for fostering critical dialogue in the EFL classroom. By examining the insights of experienced teachers and relevant literature, we identified several key traits of a critical dialogical teacher, including being a motivator, supportive, a critical thinker, mediator, needs analyst, diversity responsive, and open to new possibilities. These traits collectively contribute to creating a classroom environment that encourages student engagement, mutual respect, and critical thinking.

Moreover, the study explored effective strategies to enhance critical dialogue, namely incorporating discussions, utilising technology, engaging in authentic tasks, promoting group work, implementing literature circles, using role play, and applying gamification techniques. These strategies provide practical approaches for teachers to facilitate meaningful and inclusive dialogues, enabling students to develop their language skills in a supportive and dynamic setting. The findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach in EFL teaching, where the teacher's role extends beyond language instruction to include fostering a positive, inclusive, and stimulating learning environment. By integrating these characteristics and strategies, teachers can significantly enhance the quality of critical dialogue in the classroom, thereby improving students' overall learning experiences and outcomes.

6. References

Ahmadian, M., & Tajabadi, A. (2020). Collaborative dialogue: Opportunities and challenges in vocabulary acquisition and retention of threshold EFL learners. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *58*(2), 133-160. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2017-0175

Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the zone of proximal development. *The Modern Language Journal*, *78*(4), 465-483. https://doi.org/10.2307/328585

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.; M. Holquist, Ed.). University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1999). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (C. Emerson, Ed. & Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.

Blake, R. J. (2013). *Brave new digital classroom: Technology and foreign language learning*. Georgetown University Press.

Bohm, D. (2004). *On dialogue*. Routledge.

Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, *36*(2), 81-109. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444803001903

Bouali, A. (2021). 'Bloometizing' the EFL literature classroom through a dialogic model: A barometer for academic change. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume*, *12*. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no3.13

Bozorgian, H., & Alamdari, E. F. (2018). Multimedia listening comprehension: Metacognitive instruction or metacognitive instruction through dialogic interaction. *ReCALL*, *30*(1), 131-152. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344016000240

Brookfield, S. D. (2004). *The power of critical theory: Liberating adult learning and teaching*. Jossey-Bass.

Brown, H. D. (2014). *Principles of language learning and teaching: A course in second language acquisition*. Pearson.

Brown, H. D., & Lee, H. (2015). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Pearson.

Bryant, A., & Charmaz, K. (2007). *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory*. Sage Publications.

Buckley, P., & Doyle, E. (2016). Gamification and student motivation. *Interactive Learning Environments*, *24*(6), 1162-1175.

https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2014.964263

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.

Celce-Murcia, M. (2013). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. Heinle ELT.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. Sage Publications.

Chick, N. L., Haynie, A., & Gurung, R. (2012). *Exploring more signature pedagogies: Approaches to teaching disciplinary habits of the mind*. Routledge.

Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). *Literature in the language classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities*. Cambridge University Press.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2014). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage Publications.

Crookes, G., & Lehner, A. (1998). Aspects of process in an ESL critical pedagogy teacher education course. *TESOL Quarterly*, *32*(2), 319-328. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587586

Cross, J. (2009). Effects of listening strategy instruction on news videotext comprehension. *Language Teaching Research*, *13*(2), 151-176. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168809103446

Cui, R., & Teo, P. (2024). Dialogic instruction in a Chinese EFL classroom: A practitioner perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, *58*(1), 114-137. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3215

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan Publishing.

Dobao, A. F. (2012). Collaborative writing tasks in the L2 classroom: Comparing group, pair, and individual work. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *21*(1), 40-58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2011.12.002

Dobao, A. F. (2016). Peer interaction and learning. In M. Sato & S. Ballinger (Eds.), *Peer interaction and second language learning: Pedagogical potential and research agenda* (pp. 33-61). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/lllt.45.02fer

Dongyu, Z., Fanyu, B., & Wanyi, D. (2013). Sociocultural theory applied to second language learning: Collaborative learning with reference to the Chinese context. *International Education Studies*, *6*(9), 165-174. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v6n9p165

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.

Facione, P. A. (2011). Critical thinking: What it is and why it counts. *Insight Assessment*, *1*(1), 1-23.

Fetterman, D. M. (2019). *Ethnography: Step-by-step*. Sage publications.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Continuum.

Giroux, H. A. (2007). *Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education*. Routledge.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2017). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.

Gobo, G. (2008). *Doing ethnography*. Sage Publications.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2019). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. Routledge.

Hashemnezhad, H. (2020). Applying Freire's critical pedagogy to Iranian EFL bilingual and monolingual speaking performance. *Journal of Language and Education*, *6*(4), 90-104. https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2020.10349

Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge.

Hockly, N., & Clandfield, L. (2010). *Teaching online: Tools and techniques, options and opportunities*. Delta Publishing Stuttgart.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

hooks, b. (2010). *Teaching critical thinking: Practical wisdom*. Routledge.

Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centered approach*. Cambridge University Press.

Jocuns, K. F. (2021). Dialogic teaching as a way to promote students' English language use in EFL classroom. *PASAA*, *62*, 173-203.

Johnson, D. (2012). *Reaching out: Interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualization*. Pearson.

Johnson, K. E. (2009). *Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective*. Routledge.

Kaufmann, J. J. (2010). The practice of dialogue in critical pedagogy. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *60*(5), 456-476. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713610363021

Kim, Y., & McDonough, K. (2008). The effect of interlocutor proficiency on the collaborative dialogue between Korean as a second language learners. *Language Teaching Research*, *12*(2), 211-234. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168807086288

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod*. Routledge.

Lazar, G. (1993). *Literature and language teaching: A guide for teachers and trainers*. Cambridge University Press.

Long, M. H., & Crookes, G. (1993). Units of analysis in syllabus design: The case for task. In G. Crookes & S. Gass (Eds.), *Tasks and language learning: Integrating theory and practice* (pp. 9-54). Multilingual Matters.

Miller, C. H. (2019). *Digital storytelling: A creator's guide to interactive entertainment*. Routledge.

Moreillon, J. (2007). *Collaborative stategies for teaching reading comprehension*. American Library Association.

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Pianta, R. C. (1999). *Enhancing relationships between children and teachers*. American Psychological Association.

Richards, J. C., & Burns, A. (2012). *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Scotland, J. (2022). Exploring the relationship between collaborative dialogue and the learning of L2 form. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, *3*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2021.100121

Shin, H., & Crookes, G. (2005). Exploring the possibilities for EFL critical pedagogy in Korea: A two-part case study. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies: An International Journal*, *2*(2), 113-136. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15427595cils0202_3

Spack, R. (1985). Literature, reading, writing, and ESL: Bridging the gaps. *TESOL Quarterly*, *19*(4), 703-725. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586672

Spradley, J. P. (2016). *The ethnographic interview*. Waveland Press.

Su, C. H., & Cheng, C. H. (2015). A mobile gamification learning system for improving the learning motivation and achievements. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *31*(3), 268-286. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12088

Sybing, R. (2023). Dialogic validation: A discourse analysis for conceptual development within dialogic classroom interaction. *Classroom Discourse*, *14*(1), 88-104. https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2022.2079693

Taguchi, N., & Kim, Y. (2016). Collaborative dialogue in learning pragmatics: Pragmatic-related episodes as an opportunity for learning request-making. *Applied Linguistics*, *37*(3), 416-437. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu039

Timmermans, S., & Tavory, I. (2007). Advancing ethnographic research through grounded theory practice. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 493-512). Sage Publications.

Tsui, A. B. (2001). Classroom interaction. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 120-125). Cambridge University Press.

Walker, D. (2018). 'Getting our spirits out', letting youth spirits and life worlds into the classroom through youth radio arts for transnational students. *Ethnography and Education*, *13*(3), 286-307. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2018.1441042

Wertsch, J. V. (2006). Generalized collective dialogue and advanced foreign language capacities. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Advanced language learning: The contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky* (pp. 58-71). Continuum.

Witherspoon, M., Sykes, G., & Bell, C. (2016). Leading a classroom discussion: Definition, supportive evidence, and measurement of the *ETS*® National Observational Teaching Examination (NOTE) assessment series. *Educational Testing Service*.

7. Appendix

Interview Questions

1. How do you define critical dialogue in the context of language education, and what role does it play in enhancing students' language learning outcomes and critical thinking skills?

2. What do you believe are the key benefits and challenges of incorporating critical dialogue into language teaching?

3. How have your personal experiences, cultural background, and any professional development influenced your views on the importance and implementation of critical dialogue in your teaching practice?

4. In what ways do institutional policies, educational systems, or societal beliefs impact your ability to implement critical dialogue in the classroom?

5. How do you assess the effectiveness of critical dialogue in promoting language proficiency and fostering student engagement, and what feedback do you gather to shape your teaching approach?

6. What strategies do you use to overcome resistance from students, colleagues, or institutional constraints when integrating critical dialogue into your practice?

7. How do you navigate language proficiency levels, cultural differences, and potential biases in your classroom when facilitating critical dialogue?

8. Can you describe a lesson or activity in which you successfully integrated critical dialogue, and how did you select topics or materials to facilitate these discussions?

9. How do you create a safe and inclusive environment for students to engage in critical dialogue and ensure active participation and reflection during these activities?

10. Looking towards the future, how do you envision the role of critical dialogue in language education evolving, and how do

you measure its impact on students' development over time?

An Emotional Geography Model of EFL Teachers' Transitional Emotions from Real to Online Classes

Hussein Meihami[1*] iD
Sajad Froughi[2] iD

[*1]Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language Teaching, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran
[2]M.A. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language Teaching, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran

ABSTRACT

Emotions are important in the educational processes, influencing teachers' interactions while trying to teach in real and online classes. Therefore, this study investigated the transitional emotions experienced by English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers as they shifted from real/in-person classroom settings to online teaching, using an emotional geography model. Moreover, we aimed to explore the emotion regulation strategies that they used during their transitioning. Following a descriptive narrative design, we probed the transitional emotions of 10 Iranian EFL teachers while transitioning from real to online classrooms. The findings of the thematic analysis showed five key themes. First, physical geography may enhance cognitive change, resulting in positive emotions. Second, issues with the internet negatively impact classroom quality, leading to negative emotions. Third, situational modifications may help teachers adapt and meet their instructional needs amidst online challenges. Fourth, attentional deployment may serve as a strategy for improving professional geography. Lastly, situation selection and response modulation may aid in the development of moral and socio-cultural geography. These themes illustrate the interconnection between emotion regulation strategies and geographical models of emotions, highlighting their importance in transitioning from real to online teaching. Therefore, we concluded that emotion regulation strategies were helpful in solving the challenges that EFL teachers faced concerning their transitional emotions.

KEYWORDS: EFL teachers; Emotional transition; Emotional geography model

1. Introduction

Teachers' emotions are regarded as critical in the teaching process, particularly within the EFL context, where evaluative reactions are intertwined (Derakhshan et al., 2024). These emotions include various psychological and physical subsystems, which are especially important in specific events and social settings (Frenzel et al., 2021; Schutz & Lanbert, 2002). Teachers need to collaborate with students, parents, and colleagues to fulfill a diverse range of responsibilities. Their tasks include ensuring that classrooms run smoothly, promoting student engagement and success, maintaining supportive relationships with parents, and fostering satisfaction and cooperation among colleagues (Haj Seyed Javadi & Meihami, 2024). All such interactions have impacts on teachers' emotions. Schutz et al. (2006, p. 344) defined teachers' emotions as "socially constructed and personally enacted ways of being that emerge from conscious and/or unconscious judgments regarding perceived successes at attaining goals or

maintaining standards or beliefs during transactions as part of social-historical contexts." Managing these emotions is essential for effective teaching (Lee & Yin, 2011; Richards, 2022), especially in online classes (Meihami, 2025).

EFL teachers must be able to transition between real/in-person and online classes, especially in response to emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic forced teachers to quickly adapt to online learning, posing challenges in technology use and pedagogy (Tafazoli & Meihami, 2023). The shift from real to online classes has significantly impacted teachers' emotions, particularly for EFL teachers who had to quickly adapt to online teaching. This sudden change presented challenges, such as mastering new technology and altering their pedagogical approaches (Kaplan-Rakowski et al., 2021). Without a well-designed syllabus for online instruction, teachers faced both internal barriers (like beliefs about pedagogy and technology) and external barriers (cultural and contextual factors), which influenced their emotional responses during this transition (Bruggeman et al., 2022).

Not understanding the transitional emotions of EFL teachers when they abruptly terminate their real classes and start online classes may lead to some problems. First, the transition from real to online classes and how it influences teachers' emotions is somehow ambiguous and needs clarification. Second, teachers often struggle to adapt to their roles in an ever-changing educational space (Beck, 2020). One factor contributing to understanding these challenges may be the emotion regulation strategies they employ when transitioning between different teaching and learning contexts, such as from real to online classes. Therefore, it is essential to understand these emotion regulation strategies in order to improve our EFL teacher education programs effectively. Third, we lack a clear understanding of the challenges EFL teachers faced while transitioning from in-person to online classes, making it difficult to develop educational policies that could ease this transition.

One critical issue that makes exploring the transitional emotions of EFL teachers from real to online classes worthwhile in a post-COVID-19 era is the preference of EFL learners for learning English through online facilities, which requires EFL teachers to become well-oriented in how to regulate their emotions (Meihami & Esmaeili, 2024). While our experiences during COVID-19 were more akin to emergency remote teaching rather than structured online classes we experienced after COVID-19, there are still instances in the post-COVID-19 period where EFL teachers face the need for an abrupt transition from in-person to online classes. This situation mirrors the conditions we encountered during the pandemic, making this study significant. Moreover, the never-ending advancement of technology forces teachers, including EFL teachers, to be in constant transition from real to online classes, which may present critical incidents for them regarding regulating their emotions in online classes (Yang & Du, 2024). Thus, the findings of this study on the emotion regulation strategies used by EFL teachers are crucial for providing ongoing support in in-service teacher education. By understanding these strategies, we can assist teachers in managing their emotions, helping to reduce negative emotions and promote positive emotions as they transition to online classes.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the EFL teachers' transitional emotions from real/in-person classes to online classes. One more objective was to address the challenges that EFL teachers experienced during their transitional emotions from real to online classes. Finally, we explored emotion regulation strategies that EFL teachers used to address transitional emotions from real to online classes. It is crucial to note that the study aimed to capture experiences during COVID-19. Therefore, we employed narrative inquiry to activate the EFL teachers' autobiographical memories (Smorti, 2011) related to the study's main objectives. This study was guided by the following research questions to address the objectives of the study:

1. What are the transitional emotions experienced by EFL teachers from real to online classes during COVID-19?

2. What are the challenges that EFL teachers experienced during their transitional emotions from real to online classes at the time of COVID-19?

3. What are the emotion regulation strategies used by EFL teachers to address the transitional emotions from real to online classes during COVID-19?

4. How do EFL teachers utilize emotion regulation strategies to address transitional emotions from real to online during COVID-19?

2. Literature Review

2.1. EFL teachers' emotions

Teachers' emotions are important in shaping their beliefs and actions (Benesch, 2012). Influenced by social and historical contexts, these emotions exist within cultural and power structures (Zembylas, 2007). Teachers learn to express positive emotions like empathy while managing negative ones such as anger and anxiety. This emotional landscape significantly impacts their sense of identity and decision-making in the classroom (Nias, 1996). Emotions affect how teachers react to challenges and opportunities, with individual responses often linked to their self-perception and the reactions of colleagues (Hargreaves, 2005). While negative emotions can hinder teaching effectiveness and motivation, positive emotions can inspire creativity and problem-solving (Tajabadi & Meihami, 2024).

The emotional dynamics among colleagues can also influence job satisfaction and perceptions of institutions, with positive relationships fostering support and negative feelings stemming from perceived isolation (Cowie, 2011). Teachers often seek collaboration within the broader EFL profession due to inadequate institutional support (Mendzheritskaya & Hansen, 2019). Benesch (2018) emphasized the need for research on teacher emotions in language teaching, suggesting that awareness of these emotions can lead to pedagogical transformation. By providing EFL teachers with opportunities to explore and articulate their emotions, the transition to effective teaching practices can be better understood.

2.2. Emotion regulation strategies

Emotion Regulation refers to the extrinsic and intrinsic processes that individuals go through in order to evaluate, change, or control their emotions for specific purposes and life's goals (Thompson, 2008). In this study, emotion regulation refers to different types of physical, psychological, and cognitive processes that EFL teachers use to regulate their emotions in order to carry out their duties (Gong et al., 2013). These emotion regulations are achieved through some strategies. Gross (1998) proposed a model for antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies that contain five families of emotions: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. These strategies may cause different changes in the way individuals express their emotions (Webb et al., 2012).

A situation selection is concerned with choosing situations on the basis of whether or not emotions are expected in a particular situation (Gross, 2015). It is possible to approach or avoid situations based on the individuals' expectation that, in any given situation, they will be faced with either pleasure or unpleasant emotions. This strategy helps to understand the occurrence of different emotions in various situations based on the level of complexity of the situations. However, the selection of the situation depends on the successful change in life and the facilitation of positive life experiences (Kober & Bolling, 2014).

Situation modification refers to the changes made by individuals to regulate the impacts of emotions (Gross, 2015). It could lead to a new situation based on how much of the current situation is modified. Therefore, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between the change and the choice of situations. Sutton (2004) argued that situation modification is changing the lesson plan when it is not going as planned to handle misbehaving students. Moreover, attention deployment refers to the use of external or internal focus to change emotional responses (Gross, 2015). In doing so, the focus of attention may be diverted to another aspect of the situation or a completely different one. Distractions can be obtained through external factors by shifting attention away from a stimulus that triggers emotions or internally by recalling a neutral and enjoyable experience (Bennett et al., 2007). Teachers have indicated that they utilize distraction techniques to enhance their moods, such as concentrating on positive thoughts prior to class or overlooking the disruptive actions of students (Sutton, 2004).

Another emotion regulation strategy used by teachers is changing the perceptions of individuals about how they think about the emotional impacts of a situation; that is called cognitive change (Gross, 2015). Reappraisal is a type of cognitive change that decreases the intensity of negative emotions (Gross, 1998). When these negative emotions are decreased, the degree of their influence on memory also decreases (Richards & Gross, 2000). Reappraisal is mostly used by teachers to reassess the importance of student misconduct (Sutton, 2004).

Furthermore, response modulation is another emotion regulation strategy that focuses on changing the physiological, experiential, or behavioral aspects of the emotional response (Gross, 2015). Inhibitory suppression is a type of response modulation that aims at inhibiting the psychomotor expression of a feeling emotion (Gross, 2015). The experience of suppressed positive but not suppressed negative emotions has been found to be reduced by express suppression (Gross, 1998; Gross & Levenson, 1997). Faking is a second form of responsiveness modulation in which the act of behavioral expression of an unfeeling emotion is observed (Grandey, 2000).

2.3. Emotional geography

Hargreaves (2000, 2001, 2005) used the term emotional geography to refer to the emotional understanding and misunderstanding of teachers. The emotions teachers experience about themselves, other teachers, or the world relate to the closeness or distance in human interactions and relationships. The term geography is how people interact with and in the places that they walk through on a daily basis, which is influenced by their emotional lives (Crewe et al., 2014). Individuals' emotions can be influenced by the way space is organized and the places it shapes. Emotional geography tries to describe the patterns of closeness and distance regarding individuals' interactions that shape their emotions while they are interacting with each other and with the world around them (Hargreaves, 2001). The emotional geography model has five aspects (Hargreaves, 2001). These five components are physical geography, moral geography, sociocultural geography, professional geography, and political geography.

Physical geography is a term describing individuals' closeness and distance created by time and space. Teaching is stressful because teachers have limited time to work with each other. This is made possible through the time and space a learning community provides, giving each other an emotional understanding of their work (Denzin, 1984). The absence of these opportunities can lead to a lack of understanding of the various aspects of education. Cooperation among teachers can be an

important factor for EFL teachers since it allows them to negotiate their difficulties regarding teaching and learning. In this study, regarding this aspect of emotional geography, we explored whether teachers work together to overcome the difficulties they may face in an online teaching environment concerning their emotions.

Another aspect of emotional geography is moral geography, which could be described as the closeness and distance created by different purposes and senses of achievement in the field of professional practice. When EFL teachers enter a new phase in their career that is considered a virtual environment, they need to deconstruct their beliefs and adopt new ideologies to understand new moral legitimacy. When EFL teachers are in a new environment, such as online classes, they might have different emotions, such as guilt, shame, and doubt, which require continuous emotional work and management (Zembylas, 2007). Moreover, sociocultural geography is how differences in gender, race, ethnicity, language, and culture create distance or closeness among teachers, including EFL teachers (Hargreaves, 2001). The EFL teachers may have different backgrounds regarding their cultural and social values, genders, and perspectives toward teaching. This difference can be manifested through their interactions with students, colleagues, and parents; teachers react differently based on the situation.

Professional geography is defined in terms of the closeness and distance formed by various understandings concerning professionalism and occupational practices (Hargreaves, 2001). There are different cultures of teaching, learning, and professional practice in various cultures, and standards are defined in various ways. Teachers can not apply one teaching method to all of their classes. Because of this, they may have to deal with different emotions like frustration, anxiety, and stress. This is related to the EFL teachers who transitioned from real to online classes during COVID-19 since they might have problems with the methods they could use to teach in online classes.

Finally, political geography refers to the fact that different understandings of power result in a degree of closeness and distance (Hargreaves, 2001). A power structure, which determines the sequence of interaction and practice, underpins professional communities. EFL teachers are part of a community, and being part of this community requires them to understand the roles and identify their own identities in this community. Misunderstanding these concepts can lead to negative emotions like guilt, shame, and embarrassment from themselves and others. Therefore, we tried to understand this emotional geography while they had an abrupt transition from real to online classes during COVID-19.

2.4. Third space

The third space was created to overcome the boundaries and deal with system dynamics such as education systems (Beck, 2020). Bhabha (1994, p. 37) introduced the concept of third space as a homogenizing equalizer, which "challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a unifying force". There is a contradiction in the third space; each individual is in both spaces at the same time. Consequently, individuals on both sides of the equation are prevented from establishing their identities through participation in this space (Bhabha, 2012). Rubin (2020, p. 5) explained that the third space is "a space of in-betweeness, a borderline, neither here nor there". The third space theory re-conceptualizes human interaction's first and second spaces (Moje et al., 2004). The binary space comprises two distinct categories, often competing to allow for physical and social interaction. The third space merges the first and second spaces that produce new forms of knowledge, discourse, and literacy. While teachers are in the transition from real classrooms to virtual classes, they are in the space called the third space. Bhabha (1994) originally defined the third space as a place of hybridity. Specifically, the person is neither in the first space nor the second one. This may change the feelings of a person experiencing this environment and form the person's recognition.

The features of the third space can help individuals "begin with new forms emotions and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Bhabha, 2012, pp. 1-2). When EFL teachers are transitioning to online classes, they are in the third space and experience different kinds of emotions. Somehow, they still have emotions from the first space, which is taught in real classes, and they are experiencing new emotions while transitioning to the second space. Bhabha (1994) explained that negotiation tensions exist between the two areas owing to incommensurable tension within the first and second zones. To manage tension, resisting in the third dimension may be helpful to enable individuals to move more easily across this transition zone.

2.5. Emperical studies on EFL teachers' emotion in real and online environment

The literature review of the current study on EFL teachers' emotions in a real and online environment is done in the following paragraphs. Makhwathana et al. (2017) studied teachers' emotions in teaching and learning English in real and online classes. The research sought to explain the emotions teachers experience during teaching and learning. A qualitative method was employed for this study, involving six primary teachers. Data were gathered using open-ended questions and analyzed by identifying themes. The results indicated that positive emotions enhance teaching effectiveness, while negative emotions can lead teachers to yell, lose control, and act carelessly in their communication.

Park and Ryu (2019) investigated the teachers' emotional experiences when interacting within a virtual scenario-based teacher-training system. In their study, there were three types of interaction: no interaction, unexpected interaction, and expected

interaction. The participants of the study were fourteen preservice teachers who had four years of experience. The Emotient software was used to collect data on participants' emotional expressions. The results of the study indicated that participants were exposed to unexpected interactions. They experienced higher positive and neutral emotions, higher emotional engagement, and higher feelings of joy than when they were exposed to expected interactions or no interactions.

Naylor and Nyanjom (2020) studied the emotions of educators involved in the transition to online teaching. Teaching has a strong connection with one's beliefs, values, commitments and relationships with students. These deep and intimate connections might be disturbed by changes in pedagogical practices and teaching methods, giving rise to a passionate response. In this investigation, the researchers applied Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The outcomes of the study revealed that emotions facilitate the way educators adapt themselves to new situations, such as the online environment.

Pham and Phan (2023) conducted a study on Vietnamese university language teachers' emotions in online teaching. The study examined the emotional orientations of ESL teachers in Vietnam and their reactions to online learning environments during COVID-19. The participants of the study were seven ESL teachers in Vietnam. The findings of the study indicated that features of online classes caused great challenges, and teachers experienced new emotions and came up with new strategies to cope with different emotions. The study highlights the role of institutions in teachers' transitions to online teaching.

Although the studies reported thus far have contributed to our understanding of teachers' emotions during COVID-19, there remains a significant gap in research concerning the transitional emotions experienced by teachers, particularly EFL teachers. Additionally, there is a lack of research on the emotion regulation strategies that EFL teachers employ to cope with the challenges of transitioning from in-person to online classes. Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by 1) Exploring the transitional emotions experienced by EFL teachers as they shifted from in-person to online classes, 2) Investigating the challenges that EFL teachers faced during this transition, 3) Examining the emotion regulation strategies employed by EFL teachers to manage the challenges associated with transitional emotions from in-person to online classes, and 4) Exploring how teachers utilized these emotion regulation strategies during the transition to online teaching amidst COVID-19.

2.6. Conceptual framework

We created a space for EFL teachers who were forced to change the environment of their classes. These EFL teachers were teaching online classes. In the third space, we used the emotional geography model to explore the transitional emotions of EFL teachers from real to online classes. As seen in Figure 1, there is a transitional space where EFL teachers struggle with transitional emotions since they are in between spaces and their emotions are vague. The emotions that these EFL teachers experienced were unclear to them. EFL teachers were those who teach general English in public schools, and due to COVID-19, they were forced to switch to online classes. In between, a transition happens between real and online classes. This study aimed to analyze how EFL teachers' emotions were in transition through the emotional geography model.
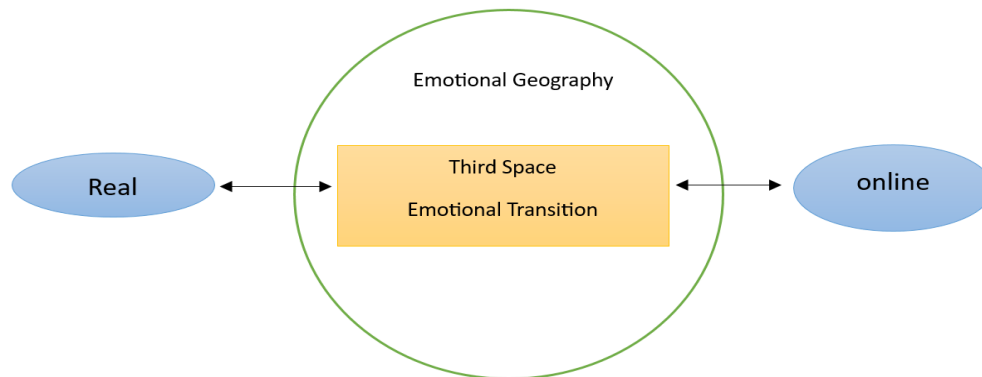

Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the study

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design: Descriptive narrative inquiry

In order to fulfill the study's objectives, we used a descriptive narrative design. The descriptive design entails the explanation of the following characteristics: (a) narration of what happens in individual's lives by individuals, (b) the setting or

circumstantial factors supporting the phenomena, (c) the interaction between individual stories and the culture they are happening within, (d) how certain life experiences impact individual's storyline. The nature of certain events and the definition of what is available to participants in relation to their experiences are thus subject to descriptive design (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017).

The first stage of descriptive narrative design is to identify a phenomenon: in this study, we examined the EFL teachers' transitional emotions from real to online classes. To identify the phenomenon (transitional emotions), we reviewed the literature to find a comprehensive overview. The second stage is to use purposeful sampling: the participants of this study were EFL teachers transitioning from real to online classes during COVID-19. Consequently, they had the required life stories related to the topic. The third stage is to collect stories. To address this stage, we collected the narratives of each EFL teacher's experiences about their transition. The fourth stage is about re-storying and re-telling. In this stage, we were trying to re-tell their stories, aiming to prepare the narratives for analysis. The fifth stage is about cooperation with the participants to validate the data. We went through this stage by giving the re-told stories to the participants to see if they verified them. In this stage, we worked with participants to clarify the ambiguous points in the narratives. In the sixth stage, we wrote a story about the experiences of the participants, created a narrative and observed the participants' experiences. In order to develop the study's credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability, the final stage is to validate the accuracy of the narrative account that we addressed the study's rigorousness.

3.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 10 EFL teachers who had the experience of transitioning from real to online classes. These teachers were selected from the public educational system and private institutions. The participants were both male (N=6) and female (N=4). They had a different range of ages from 23 to 40. These EFL teachers participated in this study with their consent. As Ary et al. (2018) mentioned, the sample size is rather small in qualitative studies because of the depth and extent of information. Data saturation is to cease sampling when new participants do not provide new information. Consequently, it should be stated that the first group of participants were eight teachers; when the 8th teacher repeated the previous points provided by the seven teachers, the two other teachers were asked to participate in the study, and they provided the same information, so the data saturation was confirmed.

3.3. Data sources

3.3.1. Autobiographical narrative

The autobiographical narrative is one of the most personal types of data collection. The participants were asked to write essays about their experiences and how their emotions changed during this phase. Autobiographical narratives were about participants' own experiences, helping to activate their autobiographical memory about the topic (Smoriti, 2011). Since emotions are a trait, only the person who is experiencing them can fully talk about how those emotions affect the way they teach. Autobiographical narrative refers to a portal through which their experience of the situation affects their personal lives. They explained their experiences through stories (Clandinin, 2006). They brought stories of how they feel as teachers and how they feel when they are in transition.

3.3.2. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study as one of the data sources. In this data collection method, the first author prepared some questions in advance. These were questions that had been scheduled but not planned. Semi-structured interviews are a mix of structured and unstructured interviews. The second researcher asked some open-ended questions that were also flexible. It was difficult for the participants to ask questions that were not prepared, making them uncomfortable in the interview. These interviews were recorded with the participant's consent and were analyzed by MAXQDA 24.

3.4. Data analysis

We used thematic analysis to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify, analyze, and report patterns in the data. We followed deductive-inductive thematic analysis to address the objectives of the study. The deductive thematic analysis helped us associate EFL transitional emotions with emotional geography and emotion regulation strategies. The inductive thematic analysis was helpful in obtaining the challenges of transitional emotions and answering how EFL teachers used emotion regulation strategies.

4. Results

4.1. Research question 1: The transitional emotions experienced by EFL teachers from real to online classes

We used the Code Matrix Browser in MAXQDA 24 to see the transitional emotions experienced by EFL teachers while transitioning from real to online classes. This is a matrix obtained by assigning segments represented by each code to the related codes. Figure 2 shows the Code Matrix Browser results.
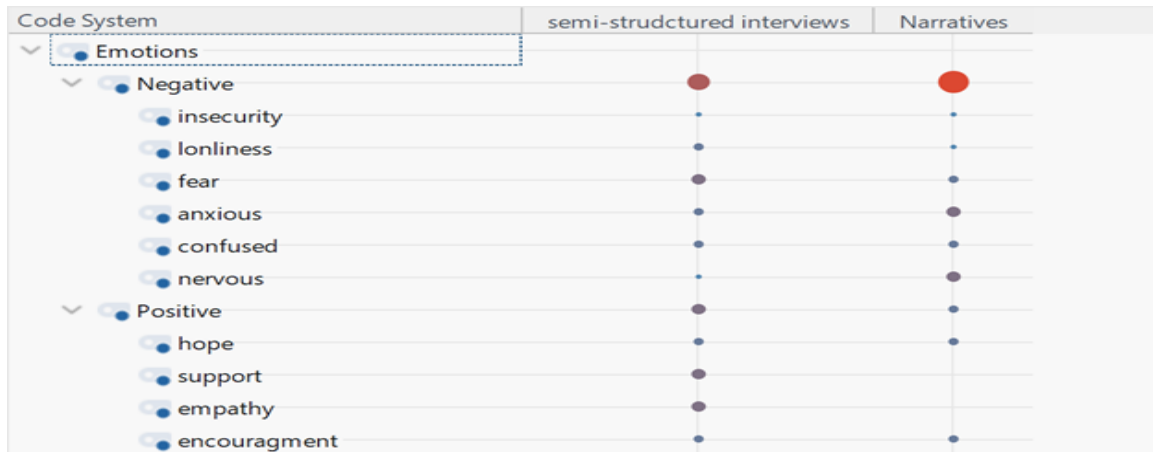
Figure 2. Code matrix browser: The transitional emotions experienced by efl teachers

Since EFL teachers were in transition from real to online, their emotions were also in transition. The transitional emotions that EFL teachers have are positive and negative. EFL teachers had problems letting go of their past. They were nervous, confused, and anxious to deal with the new environment. They thought that they were not ready enough to handle the problems of the new situation. Some of the teachers were reluctant to be here since this was an unknown environment for them, and this stimulated negative emotions like fear, loneliness, and insecurity. EFL teachers were in this together. They used each other's advice and help. They benefitted from this communication, which stimulated their positive emotions toward this environment. These positive emotions were encouragement, empathy, support, and hope. EFL teachers found it extremely hard to adapt themselves to the new environment, and they did not have enough knowledge to deal with the challenges. They stated, *"[they] experienced anxiety as [they] navigated the challenges of adapting to a new environment … This led to increased stress as [they] struggled with uncertainties* and constantly strategized on how to address potential issues that may arise".

Some challenges caused these EFL teachers to be unsatisfied with what they did and feel nervous. Since teachers were unable to regulate these emotions, they totally avoided online classes. EFL teachers were confused about how to manage the class, what they should teach, and how to find suitable strategies to deal with this unfamiliar environment. The positive emotions that teachers had were the result of regulating their negative emotions. When they are new to the environment, they feel overwhelmed and confused; after a matter of time, it will be easier to regulate negative emotions and change them into positive ones. The negative emotions of these EFL teachers changed into positive ones.

4.2. Research question 2: The challenges experienced by EFL teachers while transitioning from real to online classes

We utilized the Code Matrix Browser in MAXQDA 24 to see the challenges that EFL teachers face from real to online based on an emotional geographical model. Figure 3 shows the code Matrix Browser Results.

Figure 3. Code matrix browser: The challenges based on emotional geography model

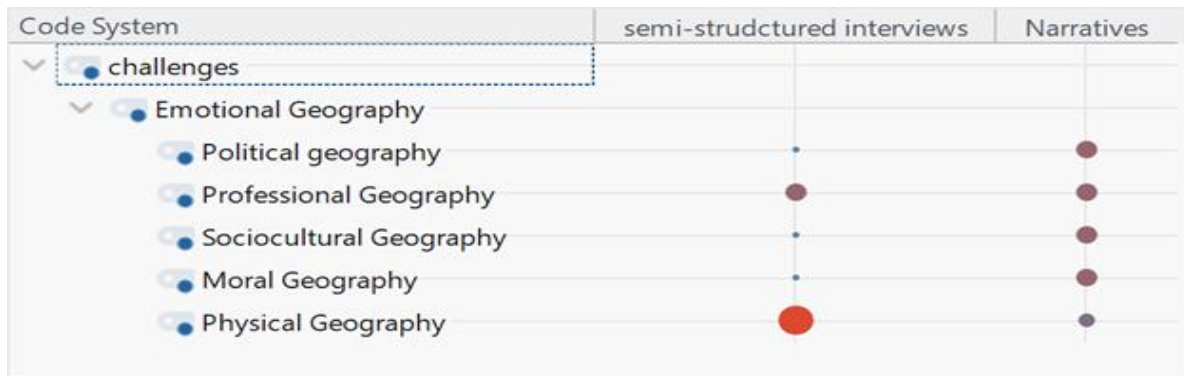The challenges that EFL teachers face in this transition are based on the components of the emotional geography model presented in the second chapter. These five sub-categories shaped the emotions of EFL teachers in relation to themselves, their colleagues, and the world around them. EFL teachers had challenges in regulating these emotions. These five components are physical geography, moral geography, sociocultural geography, professional geography, and political geography. Each of the components is discussed below.

As shown in Figure 3, one of the primary difficulties faced by EFL teachers is related to the subject of physical geography. The start of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a shift to online classes, resulting in teachers feeling isolated and navigating an unfamiliar teaching environment independently. Therefore, lack of communication and collaboration is a significant challenge in this new setting. Engaging in discussions and interactions with colleagues can aid in enhancing their comprehension of the circumstances. One of the participants stated,

"*prior to the transition to online classes, [he] had established strong connections with [his] colleagues ... They were supportive and provided valuable feedback on [his] teaching methods and approaches. However, the shift to online classes disrupted this connection, leading to a significant loss of communication and interaction with my colleagues. Therefore, [he] was left alone in this unknown environment*".

One of the challenges teachers faced concerning their transitional emotions was related to professional geography. The professional geography of teachers is related to professionalism and occupational practices. Teaching, learning, and professional practices vary across cultures, each with its own set of standards. Teachers must adapt their teaching methods to suit the specific needs of each class, leading to a range of emotions such as frustration, anxiety, and stress. One participant stated, *"... however, there were many obstacles in choosing a suitable teaching method for online classes; some of these methods were not practical in real classes. Therefore, [she] was totally frustrated to choose the best method for my online classes, especially since there was no real feedback in online classes ...".*

Moreover, teachers' challenges are related to political geography. Political geography is within professional communities, and a power structure shapes the dynamics of interaction and behavior. EFL teachers are integral members of such communities, necessitating an understanding of their roles and identities within this framework. Misinterpretation of these concepts can evoke negative emotions such as guilt, shame, and embarrassment, both internally and externally. A participant mentioned, "*since [he] thought [he was] the only one who was struggling with problems, [he was] ashamed to ask my colleagues or communicate with them about [his] problems ... The embarrassment of expressing my feelings was so much that [he] tried to solve all [his] problems by [himself].*

Figure 3 also showed that there were some challenges concerning the moral and sociocultural geographies when EFL teachers were in transition from real to online classes. The moral challenges were related to the sense of guilt and shame due to their inability to construct an effective classroom environment in terms of teaching materials. They stated, " *...due to the abrupt transitions, we were unable to become fully oriented about how to teach in online classes, making us feel guilty ...".* Furthermore, concerning the sociocultural geography, it was revealed that the EFL teachers had problems managing the cultural incidents in online classes. This was due to the fact that they did not know how to address and deal with cultural issues in online classes. They stated, " *... students have their own conceptualization of online classes, sometimes not based on the cultural norms of the educational definitions; thus, we were of different cultural sides. ... we try to teach, they [student] to evade the instructions …".*

4.3. Research question 3: Emotion regulation strategies used by EFL teachers to address transitional emotions from real to online classes

The emotions EFL teachers experienced while transitioning to online classes were, to some degree, challenging for them. These emotions make them feel overwhelmed and baffled about this new situation. In this study, teachers utilized emotion regulation strategies to regulate their emotions to carry out their duties. The emotion regulation strategies that EFL teachers use affect various points in the emotion-generative process, resulting in different immediate and long-term effects of social, cognitive or affective factors. As it is shown in Figure 4, all the codes of emotion regulation strategies are available within the collected data.

Figure 4. Code matrix browser: The emotion regulation strategies used by efl teachers

Situation modification refers to a change in a situation in order to adjust the emotional impact. EFL teachers were trying to modify the class rules or change the lesson plan if needed. Sometimes, unexpected incidents happen in the class, and teachers need to change the situation. In this study, teachers used mostly situation modification to regulate their emotions. A participant stated, *"...but I tried all the methods, and nothing worked. Therefore, I decided to allocate most of the grade to class activities..."*

Another strategy that teachers can use to regulate emotions is situation selection. Individuals can approach or avoid situations based on their expectations of experiencing either pleasure or unpleasant emotions. This strategy involves predicting the emotions likely to arise in a given situation, which can be challenging due to the complexity of the situation. Teachers are likely to use this strategy to avoid any negative emotions. One of the strategies that is extremely helpful for teachers to regulate their emotions is attentional deployment. Teachers may focus on positive thoughts before class and ignore all the negativity. Therefore, they can improve their moods. These distractions are helpful for teachers since they can focus all their attention on the lesson plan and other things that are related to the class. A participant mentioned in his narrative that *"... one of the ways that helped me a lot was when I got angry in class, I would turn off my microphone and drink water to calm myself and have a better class ... These thoughts helped me to ignore the negative emotions and embrace all the positive ones because of my students..."*. Cognitive change refers to the reappraisal of a whole situation. When teachers assess the situation all over again, they may realize the intensity of negative emotions decreased. Therefore, they may use this method to reassess the students' misconduct. The teachers in this study used the method to regulate their negative emotions and look at situations differently. Response modulation is the act of modifying the emotions that are fully generated. In this current study, teachers try to fake positive emotions, or they modify these emotions to have a better experience and ignore all the negative emotions. One of the participants was talking about her experience in class. She said, "although [she] *was stressed and anxious about teaching in online classes, [she] tried to hide those emotions so that [her] emotions do not influence [her] students' experience of online classes***."**

Although Code Matrix Browser helped us understand that EFL teachers utilized these strategies to regulate their emotions, it fails to show how codes are related and happened together to construct the themes. Therefore, we used a Code Map to achieve this goal.

4.4. Research question 4: How EFL teachers utilized emotion regulation strategies to address transitional emotions from real to online

After we confirmed the presence of codes related to the emotion regulation strategies within the data, we employed the thematic analysis that was introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006) with the help of Code Map. This Code Map represents how codes happen together through different clustering. The intersections among the segments of the data form these clusters. Therefore, we understood how EFL teachers utilized emotion regulation strategies to regulate their emotions. Based on the Code Map, codes within the same cluster have stronger relationships and are more related. The researcher discovered five themes according to the co-occurrences of the components of emotion regulation strategies and emotional geography from real to online.
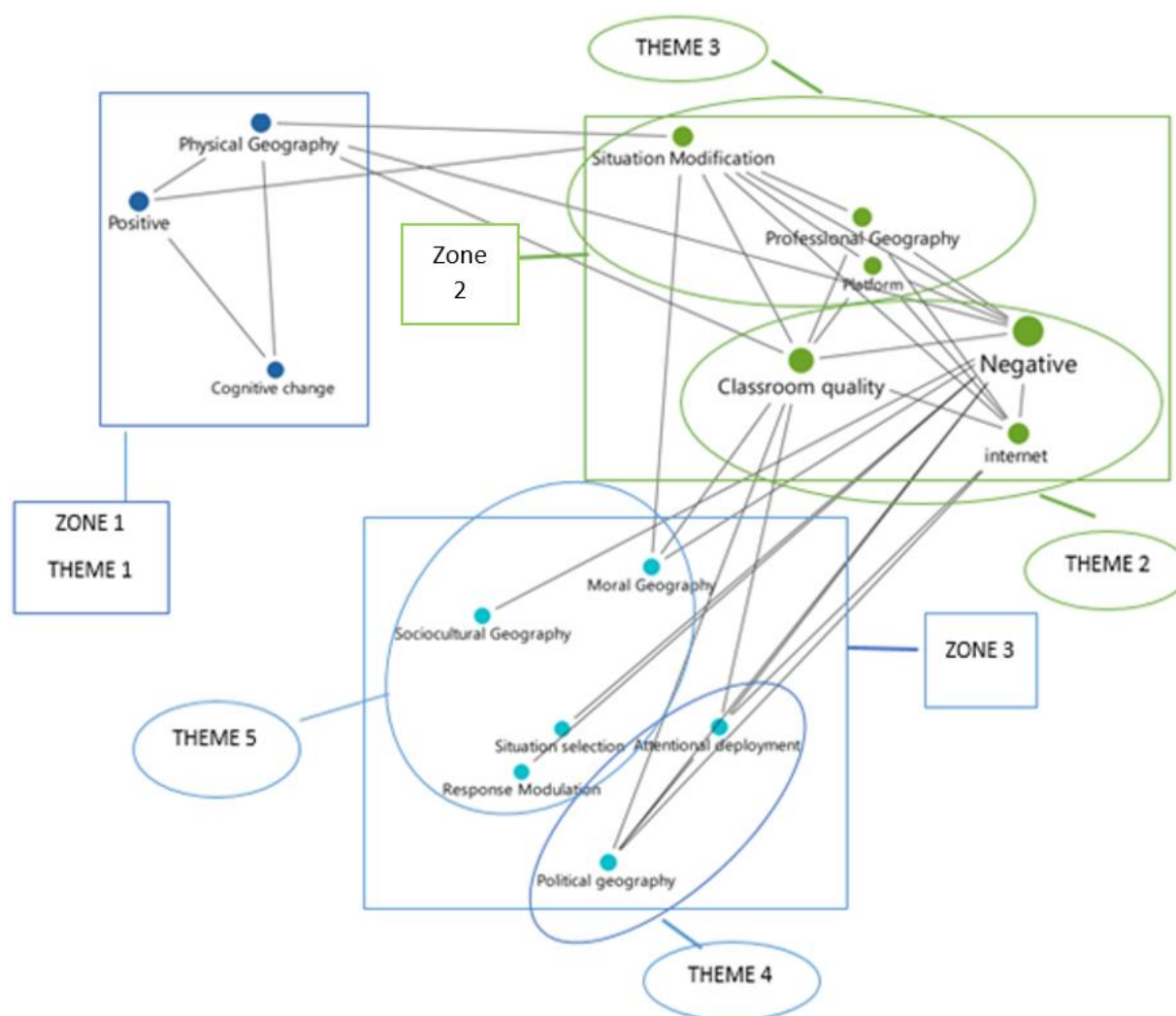
Figure 5. *Code map: How EFL teachers used emotion regulation strategies*

As it is shown in Figure 5, these codes are divided into three different zones. The zones are based on the clustering provided by MAXQDA 24 according to the co-occurrences of the codes. Each of these zones is divided into different themes. In the first zone, which is also the first theme of the current study, we found a close relationship between physical geography and cognitive change that leads to positive emotions. This theme was found based on the co-occurrences of these sub-codes of emotion regulation strategies and the emotional geography model. This theme is called "*physical geography helps teachers to develop cognitive change which results in positive emotions*". The participants stated, *"... [they were] thinking to [themselves] that [they] could not do this individually. [they] felt lost, like [they were] in the middle of nowhere, which led to disappointment and discouragement toward the new situation*".

In the second zone, two themes are created. The first one is the connection between classroom quality and the internet, which leads teachers to have negative emotions; that is, the internet causes classroom quality to decrease, which results in negative emotions. This theme is named teachers who had a problem with the platform since it affected their professional geography, which was solved by situation modification. Since choosing a suitable platform is essential for online classes and affects professional geography, EFL teachers utilized situation modification to fix the problem. The teachers mentioned, *"... online classes rely heavily on internet connectivity ... despite [their] efforts to address internet issues daily, students, particularly children, did not make similar attempts to resolve connectivity problems ... despite these efforts, there were days when [they were] unable to connect to the class, leading to class cancellations*".

The third zone consists of two themes. The first one is that teachers utilize attentional deployment to develop their political geography. The teachers stated, *"... the lack of knowledge in this situation was a real burden for [them]. [they] could not communicate with students. When [they were] talking to in the class, it felt like [they] talking to [themselves]*". The second theme of the third zone is about how situation selection and response modulation help teachers develop moral geography and

sociocultural geography. The participants believed that *"[D]espite feeling angry, frustrated, and desperate, [they] chose to conceal these emotions from [their] students by pretending to be happy and energetic. Over time, this act of faking [their] emotions led [them] to internalize and reflect on these feelings, ultimately reshaping [their] perspective on online teaching"*.

5. Discussion

The thrust of this study was to explore the EFL teachers' transitional emotions from real to online classes during COVID-19. The findings of the study revealed that teachers can regulate their transitional emotions through emotion regulation strategies. The findings of this study are in line with previous studies about the regulation strategies that are beneficial for teachers in managing their emotions (Ngo, 2021). In the current study, we derived five themes from the Code Map generated by MAXQDA 24, showing how EFL teachers regulate their transitional emotions from real to online classes.

5.1. Physical geography helps teachers to develop cognitive change, which results in positive emotions

Emotions are an important part of being a teacher, and they affect the way teachers teach in the classroom (Nias, 1996). The teachers find ways to boost positive emotions to have better classes. Based on the conceptual framework, while teachers are in the third space, they feel different emotions. Cooperation among colleagues helps them to negotiate their problems, their understanding of online classes, and their difficulties concerning their emotions (Hargreaves, 2005). Based on this theme, teachers worked together to overcome the difficulties they may face in the online teaching environment. This cooperation led to the development of cognitive change that resulted in positive emotions. The participants of the study explained in their narrations how cooperation with colleagues had a role in developing their cognitive change and boosting their positive emotions (Hargreaves, 2001).

As seen in Figure 5, physical geography has co-occurrences with cognitive change. Physical geography helps teachers to develop cognitive change that results in positive emotions (Hargreaves, 2005). When teachers talk to each other, they can utilize each other's expertise, ideas, and experiences to overcome the challenges (Hargreaves, 2001). The teachers developed their cognitive change, and this feature helped them decrease the intensity of negative emotions (Gross, 1998). When their negative emotions toward online teaching decrease, they become more optimistic toward these online classes and boost their positive emotions.

5.2. Internet caused classroom quality to decrease, which results in negative emotions

The Internet is a crucial aspect of online education. Both students and teachers encountered difficulties in establishing a reliable server connection and accessing classes, leading to varied emotional responses. Technical issues can prevent students from accessing materials and submitting assignments, potentially heightening feelings of anxiety (Paul & Jefferson, 2019). Poor internet connection has an impact on the quality of the classroom and the emotions of both teachers and students. When students are faced with challenges regarding internet reliability, the ability to effectively engage in virtual learning activities is compromised, which affects the educational outcome and the emotions of the individuals involved. The participants narrated that the problems with internet connection decreased the classroom quality and caused negative emotions.

Based on the findings of this study, classroom quality and the internet have co-occurrences that are connected to negative emotions. Teachers' emotions are essential to working with students and having a class with the best quality (Farouk, 2012). The inability to have a stable internet connection disrupts the flow of the class, which leads to difficulties in participating in class, having good communication and accessing resources. All of these problems lead teachers and students to have anxiety, stress and frustration that decreases the classroom quality.

5.3. Teachers had a problem with the platform since it affected their professional geography, which was solved by situation modification

Teachers face various challenges when using online platforms for classes. There is a variety of platforms that teachers can choose from. The struggle between choosing a suitable platform for students and the class was hard. They were unfamiliar with the platform features, and teachers struggled with adapting their teaching methods to suit an online environment and ensuring that all students have equal access to resources and support. Teachers were anxious, frustrated and stressed about all these changes. As Sutton (2004) argued, situation modification is changing the lesson plan when it is not going as planned. Teachers struggled to modify the situation, which led to a new outcome.

The findings of the study indicated that the aspects of emotional geography and emotion regulation strategies have a close relationship. The challenges teachers had with the platform were addressed through situation modification. Teachers

adjusted their teaching strategies to deal with these challenges. Through these modifications, teachers were able to enhance their professional geography by expanding their reach, engaging with students in innovative ways, and creating a more inclusive and interactive learning experience (Gross, 2015).

5.4. Teachers utilized attentional deployment to develop their political geography

Teachers utilized attentional deployment to develop their political geography by focusing on key aspects of their professional environment and relationships (Gross, 2015). Teachers are part of a community, and they need to direct their attention to power dynamics within educational institutions. Teachers experienced emotions like shame, guilt, and embarrassment while understanding their roles in this community. Attentional deployment helped them to better understand these concepts. Teachers use external or internal focus to change emotional responses (Gross, 2015). The teachers were avoiding situations that triggered their emotions (Bennett et al., 2007). Through intentional attentional deployment, teachers were able to strengthen their political geography and contribute to a more equitable and socially responsible educational system.

5.5. Situation selection and response modulation help teachers to develop moral geography and sociocultural geography

Teachers choose situations based on whether or not emotions are expected in a particular situation (Gross, 2015). First of all, they tried to approach situations that were more pleasant for themselves and did not trigger any negative emotions. If they were in a situation that was not based on their expectations or they felt any negative emotions, these teachers failed to be happy and satisfied with the situation. Teachers have different backgrounds, years of experience, and perspectives on the situation they are currently dealing with experiences (Kober & Bolling, 2014). These emotion regulation strategies helped them to deconstruct any negative feelings and adopt new ideologies to understand the practice's new moral legitimacy.

Based on the findings of this study, situation selection and response modulation play an important role in helping teachers develop their moral geography and sociocultural geography. By carefully choosing the situations in which they engage and modifying their responses accordingly, teachers can navigate ethical dilemmas and cultural differences effectively experiences (Kober & Bolling, 2014). This process involves making conscious decisions about how to approach challenging situations, considering the impact on students' moral development and cultural awareness (Richards & Gross, 2000). Through thoughtful reflection and intentional actions, teachers can cultivate a strong moral compass and foster a supportive sociocultural environment in their classrooms. By incorporating these strategies into their teaching practices, educators can enhance their professional growth and create a more inclusive and empathetic learning community.

6. Conclusion and implications

The purpose of this study was to explore EFL teachers' transitional emotions from real/in-person classes to online classes, addressing the challenges they experienced during this transition. Additionally, we aimed to examine the emotion regulation strategies that EFL teachers employed to manage their feelings during the shift from real to online classes. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that EFL teachers' use of emotion regulation strategies was helpful in solving the challenges they faced and addressing transitional emotions. When teachers experience different emotions and face different challenges, these emotion regulation strategies aid them in experiencing more positive emotions and dealing with challenges.

The findings of the current study have implications for EFL teacher education programs. These programs can use regulation strategies to regulate the transitional emotions of EFL teachers. As shown in the findings of the study, the factors of emotion regulation strategies helped EFL teachers regulate their transitional emotions. When there is a transition, teachers experience different emotions and face different challenges. They can benefit from these factors of regulation strategies. The emotional well-being of teachers is crucial to understand, especially while they are in transition, and it leads to better support systems for teachers, promoting their mental health and job satisfaction. Institutions need to consider implementing mental health resources or counseling services for each teacher. The findings of this study highlighted the need for professional development that helps teachers acquire skills relating to technology and their field of work. Workshops can focus on teachers' emotional status, digital pedagogy, and stress management. The insights from this study suggest that curriculum designers consider the emotional aspects of teaching when developing online materials.

This study has its limitations. First, our findings focus on the transitional emotions of EFL teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research could replicate this study in a post-COVID-19 context. Additionally, the participants were drawn from both public and private schools/institutions. Other researchers may wish to differentiate between these two groups to determine if there are any differences in their transitional emotions. Moreover, further research is needed to explore the differences in transitional emotions between novice and experienced teachers.

7. References

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Irvine, C. K. S., & Walker, D. (2018). *Introduction to research in education*. Cengage Learning.

Beck, J. S. (2020). *Cognitive behavior therapy: Basics and beyond*. Guilford Publications.

Benesch, C. (2012). An empirical analysis of the gender gap in news consumption. *Journal of Media Economics*, *25*(3), 147-167. https://doi.org/10.1080/08997764.2012.700976

Benesch, S. (2018). Emotions as agency: Feeling rules, emotion labor, and English language teachers' decision-making. *System*, *79,60-69.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.03.015

Bennett, P., Phelps, C., Brain, K., Hood, K., & Gray, J. (2007). A randomized controlled trial of a brief self-help coping intervention designed to reduce distress when awaiting genetic risk information. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, *63*(1), 59-64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2007.01.016

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *Anxious nations*. States.

Bhabha, H. K. (2012). *The location of culture*. Routledge.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bruggeman, B., Garone, A., Struyven, K., Pynoo, B., & Tondeur, J. (2022). Exploring university teachers' online education during COVID-19: Tensions between enthusiasm and stress. *Computers and Education Open*, *3*, 100095. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeo.2022.100095

Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, *27*(1), 44-54. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X060270010301

Cowie, N. (2011). Emotions that experienced English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers feel about their students, their colleagues and their work. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(1), 235-242. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.006

Crewe, B., Warr, J., Bennett, P., & Smith, A. (2014). The emotional geography of prison life. *Theoretical Criminology*, *18*(1), 56-74. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480613497778

Denzin, N. K. (1984). *On understanding emotion*. Transaction Publishers.

Derakhshan, A., Wang, Y., & Ghiasvand, F. (2024). "I never make a permanent decision based on a temporary emotion": Unveiling EFL teachers' perspectives about emotions in assessment. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *15*(6), 2659-2684. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2023-0089

Edmonds, W. A., & Kennedy, T. D. (2017). *An applied guide to research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*. Sage Publications.

Farouk, S. (2012). What can the self-conscious emotion of guilt tell us about primary school teachers' moral purpose and the relationships they have with their pupils?. *Teachers and Teaching*, *18*(4), 491-507. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2012.696049

Frenzel, A. C., Daniels, L., & Burić, I. (2021). Teacher emotions in the classroom and their implications for students. *Educational Psychologist*, *56*(4), 250-264. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2021.1985501

Gong, S., Chai, X., Duan, T., Zhong, L., & Jiao, Y. (2013). Chinese teachers' emotion regulation goals and strategies. *Psychology*, *4*(11), 870. http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/psych.2013.411125

Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*(1), 95.

Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology*, *2*(3), 271-299. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271

Gross, J. J. (2015). Emotion regulation: Current status and future prospects. *Psychological Inquiry*, *26*(1), 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2014.940781

Gross, J. J., & Levenson, R. W. (1997). Hiding feelings: the acute effects of inhibiting negative and positive emotion. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 106*(1), 95-103. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.106.1.95

Haj Seyed Javadi, Y. S., & Meihami, H. (2024). An ecological perspective into the role of case-based instruction in developing EFL student-teachers' agency. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, *23*(4), 405-427. https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-04-2024-0059

Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: Teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *16*(8), 811-826. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00028-7

Hargreaves, A. (2001). The emotional geographies of teachers' relations with colleagues. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *35*(5), 503-527. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-0355(02)00006-X

Hargreaves, A. (2005). Educational change takes ages: Life, career and generational factors in teachers' emotional responses to educational change. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *21*(8), 967-983. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.06.007

Kaplan-Rakowski, Y., R., Yang, J., Conan, J., Kinard, W., & Daughrity, L. (2021). Examining K-12 teachers' feelings, experiences, and perspectives regarding online teaching during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *69*, 2589-2613. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-021-10008-5

Kober, H., & Bolling, D. (2014). Emotion regulation in substance use disorders. In J. Gross (Ed), *Handbook of Emotion Regulation* (pp. 428-46). Guilford Publications.

Lee, J. C. K., & Yin, H. B. (2011). Teachers' emotions and professional identity in curriculum reform: A Chinese perspective. *Journal of Educational Change*, *12*, 25-46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-010-9149-3

Makhwathana, R. M., Mudzielwana, N. P., Mulovhedzi, S. A., & Mudau, T. J. (2017). Effects of teachers' emotions in teaching and learning in the foundation phase. *Journal of Psychology*, *8*(1), 28-35.

Meihami, H. (2025). Situated learning in CALL teacher preparation programs: an ecological perspective to student-teachers' agency. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *38*(1-2), 235-261. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2023.2173614

Meihami, H., & Esmaili, S. (2024). TAFL and TEFL teachers' emotional vulnerability and emotion regulation strategies in online classes. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-023-00804-3

Mendzheritskaya, J., & Hansen, M. (2019). The role of emotions in higher education teaching and learning processes. *Studies in Higher Education*, *44*(10), 1709-1711. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1665306

Moje, E. B., Ciechanowski, K. M., Kramer, K., Ellis, L., Carrillo, R., & Collazo, T. (2004). Working toward third space in content area literacy: An examination of everyday funds of knowledge and discourse. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *39*(1), 38-70. https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.39.1.4

Naylor, D., & Nyanjom, J. (2021). Educators' emotions involved in the transition to online teaching in higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *40*(6), 1236-1250. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1811645

Ngo, T. C. T. (2021, January). EFL teachers' emotion regulation in response to online-teaching at Van Lang University. In *Proceedings of the AsiaCALL International Conference* (Vol. 533, pp. 80-87). https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210226.010

Nias, J. (1996). Thinking about feeling: The emotions in teaching. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *26*(3), 293-306. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764960260301

Park, S., & Ryu, J. (2019). Exploring preservice teachers' emotional experiences in an immersive virtual teaching simulation through facial expression recognition. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction*, *35*(6), 521-533. https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2018.1469710

Paul, J., & Jefferson, F. (2019). A comparative analysis of student performance in an online vs. face-to-face environmental science course from 2009 to 2016. *Frontiers in Computer Science*, *1*, 7-17. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomp.2019.00007

Pham, L. T. T., & Phan, A. N. Q. (2023). "Let's accept it": Vietnamese university language teachers' emotion in online synchronous teaching in response to COVID-19. *Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *40*(1), 115-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/20590776.2021.2000321

Richards, J. C. (2022). Exploring emotions in language teaching. *RELC Journal*, *53*(1), 225-239. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220927531

Richards, J. M., & Gross, J. J. (2000). Emotion regulation and memory: the cognitive costs of keeping one's cool. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*(3), 410.

Rubin, J. C. (2020). Third spaces and tensions: Teacher experiences in an international professional development program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *95*, 103141. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103141

Schutz, P. A., & Lanehart, S. L. (2002). Emotions in education. *Educational Psychologist*, *37*(2), 67-68. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3702_1

Schutz, P. A., Hong, J. Y., Cross, D. I., & Osbon, J. N. (2006). Reflections on investigating emotions among educational contexts. *Educational Psychology Review*, *18*(4), 343-360. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-006-9030-3

Smorti, A. (2011). Autobiographical memory and autobiographical narrative: What is the relationship? *Narrative Inquiry*, *21*(2), 303-310. https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.21.2.08smo

Sutton, R. E. (2004). Emotional regulation goals and strategies of teachers. *Social Psychology of Education*, *7*(4), 379-398. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-004-4229-y

Tafazoli, D., & Meihami, H. (2023). Narrative inquiry for CALL teacher preparation programs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic: Language teachers' technological needs and suggestions. *Journal of Computers in Education*, *10*(1), 163-187. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40692-022-00227-x

Tajabadi, H., & Meihami, H. (2024). "The more, the merrier; the more ideas, the better feeling": Examining the role of creativity in regulating emotions among EFL teachers. *Open Education Studies*, *6*(1), 20240007. https://doi.org/10.1515/edu-2024-0007

Thompson, R. A. (2008). Early attachment and later development: Familiar questions, new answers. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 348-365). Guilford.

Webb, T. L., Miles, E., & Sheeran, P. (2012). Dealing with feeling: a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of strategies derived from the process model of emotion regulation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *138*(4), 775.

Yang, X., & Du, J. (2024). The effect of teacher self-efficacy, online pedagogical and content knowledge, and emotion regulation on teacher digital burnout: a mediation model. *BMC Psychology*, *12*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01540-z

Zembylas, M. (2007). Emotional ecology: The intersection of emotional knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *23*(4), 355-367. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.12.002

Original Article

English Language Teachers' Burnout, School Climate, Satisfaction and Efficacy: A Predictive Mediation Model

Parvaneh ShayesteFar[1*] iD
Ashraf Mirheydari[2] iD

[*1]Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language Teaching, Farhangian Teacher Education University, Tehran, Iran
[2]Assistant Professor of Educational Administration, Department of Educational Sciences, Farhangian Teacher Education University, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

Research on stress-causing variables in the teaching profession often documents an interplay between teacher burnout and its correlates. This study brings forth concerns about the contribution of teacher/school climate, job satisfaction and self-efficacy as the hypothesized predictors of occupational burnout among EFL teachers. Using multiple regression analyses, a descriptive correlational model was examined against the survey data collected from a sample of 198 Iranian EFL teachers. The results showed significant inverse relations between dimensions of teacher/school climate and dimensions of burnout, showing teacher/school climate as a significant negative predictor of burnout (p <.05, R2=.20, β=-.447). The results also revealed the significant role of teacher satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy in predicting aspects of burnout (p <.05). The two variables were also found as mediator of the effect of teaching climate on dimensions of burnout, showing a perspective of interaction between contextual factors and individual resources. Given the effects of teacher/school contextual stressors and their direct or indirect influence on teachers' vulnerability to burnout syndrome, the implications of the findings are discussed in view of teacher training and intervention programs.

KEYWORDS: Teacher/school climate; Job satisfaction; Self-efficacy; Occupational stressors; Burnout

1. Introduction

Research studies have consistently shown that prolonged exposure to emotionally demanding jobs and frequent interactions with service users can significantly increase occupational stress (e.g., Alonso-Tapia & Ruiz-Díaz, 2022; Li, et al., 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2020; Zakariya, 2020). It has been acknowledged that service providers, such as teachers and healthcare workers, are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to various occupational stressors (Maslach et al., 1996; Schaufeli et al., 2009). According to the *work stress theory* (Devereux et al., 2009), job demands and related stressful conditions are significant indicators of increased burnout among employees (Dermouti et al., 2001). That is, burnout has emerged as a psychologically chronic response to the cumulative negative impact of job stressors. This unique type of stress syndrome (Jacquet et al., 2015) and its related issues (e.g., predictors and consequences) once marginal within the broader scope of research is now attracting the attention of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in both educational and non-educational settings alike.

When applied in teaching profession, burnout is considered a significant possible negative outcome. Teachers face higher levels of perceived stress, distress, turnover, and lower levels of satisfaction in their helping services industry (Evers, et al., 2004; Pizam, 2004). Given such significant difficulties, it is evident that the job of language teaching is particularly stressful due to the demands and peculiarities of language teaching context where teachers are required to have a repertoire of different behavioral strategies, interventions, methodology and additional academic efforts. These stress-causing sources, in turn, pose different social, psychological and educational problems for language teachers. Due to its significance in education, burnout syndrome has been highlighted in recent research (e.g., Akbari & Tavassoli, 2011; Navidinia et al., 2023; Rostami et al., 2015). However, language teacher burnout, together with its contextual and personal precursors, has not been fully addressed in educational research.

Educational burnout, such as teacher burnout, is an important index of psychological, physical, physiological, attitudinal, and psychosocial disorders (Burke & Richardsen, 1993; Pienaar & Willemse, 2008). In other words, burnout dimensions such as the ones originally suggested by Maslach et al. (2001) indicated to be hypothetically true of language teachers, in particular, foreign language teachers who face multitudes of variables at play in the contexts of foreign language teaching. For instance, English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers are candidates of burnout as long as they encounter an array of new and unique stressors such as subject matters, students' low levels of motivations and achievement, negative or neutral attitudes toward language learning; time demands, classroom management problems and students' misbehaviors; and inadequate access to English language teaching and learning facilities (see e.g., Chang et al., 2022; Cheng, 2022, Safari, 2022). The costly consequence of such strains prevailing in teaching contexts, has linked teacher burnout to reduction in job satisfaction, and consequently, to their eroded performance (Burke et al., 1996; Leithwood et al., 1999; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Empirical evidence indicates a significant negative relation between language teacher burnout and teacher job satisfaction (e.g., Kara, 2020; Safari, 2020), revealing teachers with higher job satisfaction reported lower levels of burnout. Likewise, teacher/school climate dimensions (such as teacher-student relations, student factors, teacher support, and teacher instructional management) have been reported to be negatively related to teacher burnout (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). These findings emphasize the critical role of a supportive and positive environment in lowering teacher burnout. Representative research has thus grown a literature indicating that despite underlying job stressors, some contextual and individual preventives can mitigate the effects of stressors (Garrosa, et al., 2008; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). In this vein, teacher self-efficacy emerges as a key factor. The relevant research evidenced that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy are less likely to experience burnout (Aloe et al., 2014). Self-efficacy also mediates the relationship between contextual variables such as teacher/school climate and burnout (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Similarly, some studies have found a mediating function for teachers' sense of satisfaction (Yurt, 2022).

Positive or negative contribution of individual and contextual factors to burnout have been well addressed in the literature (Green et al., 2014; Navidinia, et al., 2023). However, when joined, they strengthened the relationship between teachers and the whole community (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). There has been paucity of research regarding examining burnout precursors and preventatives in ELT contexts. Research on the interactive role of language teachers' factors and environment serves to help further explore and explain educational burnout among these teachers. Taking this view, the present study was carried out on determinants of burnout among EFL teachers to further understand the most prominent burnout correlates or predictors in their teaching context. The study, therefore, addressed the question of the predicting role of three variables (i.e., *teacher/school climate, job satisfaction*, and *self-efficacy*) as well as the mediating roles of *teacher satisfaction*, and *self-efficacy* between *teaching climate* and *teacher burnout*.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical and empirical studies

Burnout, defined as "…a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding" (Harrison, 1999, p. 25), has been a recurrent research topic since 80s. As an operational definition, given by Leiter and Maslach (2001), burnout can be characterized by three primary constructs of emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and reduced professional accomplishment (PA). Emotional exhaustion envisages depletion of emotional resources of an individual leaving him/her without resources and energy to perform the job. Depersonalization describes a state where individuals hold cynical, negative, callous and uncaring attitudes toward others or toward those to whom they render a service. Finally, reduced personal accomplishment refers to a process whereby perception of job performance and job efficacy diminishes (Leiter & Maslach, 2001; Maslach, et al., 2001). As one of the consequences of professional stress, social service burnout stems from individual's experience of negative psychological state including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced professional accomplishment.

Building on a booming perspective of job-related psychology during the 1970s, there was a substantial interest in job-related burnout (e.g., Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). Job burnout has been well documented to be present in professionals of the assisting services such as social services, education, and health (Agyapong, et al., 2022; Ozdemir, 2006; Patton & Goddard, 2003; Kirk-Brown, 2004; Garrosa, et al, 2008). The existing evidence shows that excessive

emotional demands on personal resources of staff members who experience frequent and lengthy contact with recipients, are the genesis of harmful stress and pathogenic pressure. These strains and stresses, in turn, influence the development and perpetuation of the core element of burnout syndrome, that is symptom of exhaustion. A growing concern with the knowledge of burnout has linked the syndrome to apathy, indifference in personal relationships, detachment and a sense of helplessness and hopelessness (Ozdemir, 2006). Drained energy, developed dehumanization, and diminished personal accomplishment are ramifications which correspond to dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001).

Over the past three decades, a body of research has focused on the negative resultants of burnout among teachers. In early 1990s, Borg et al. (1991) and Capel (1991) indicated that high percentages of teachers are aware of stress in their occupations. In general, symptoms such as headache, fatigue, tension, and cardiovascular symptom have been reported by burned-out teachers (Schonfeld, 2001). In specific, possible negative effects of burnout on the quality of teaching and teacher-student relation, also on managing disruptive students or controlling aversive, antisocial, and oppositional behaviors have also been documented as critical stressors (e.g., Kokkinos, et al., 2005). EFL teaching contexts are not free of these prevalent stressors including, for instance, students' low levels of motivation, attitudes, and subject-specific knowledge; learning standards and expectations; teachers' professional knowledge, and standards imposed on them by the national language learning policies, as few among many (e.g., Cheng, 2022; Safari, 2022). Other variables reported as having an impact on teacher burnout are parental expectations (McCormick, 1997), imposition of measurable goal-achievement standards on teachers (Tatar & Horenczyk, 2003), physical environment issues (Friedman, 1991), teachers' relationships with their colleagues; conflicting values, and teachers' commitments (Coladarci, 1992), and teachers' classroom management problems (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). The severity of these stressful sources in contexts where English is not learned as a native language accelerates language teachers' onset of burnout and the quality of their performance.

Empirical research indicates that teacher burnout is affected by several interconnected and interrelated factors. In an earlier study, for instance, Brouwers and Tomic (1998) found that lower levels of self-efficacy were associated with lower levels of efforts and job performance but higher levels of burnout which, consequently, lead to higher levels of students' disruptive behaviors but lower levels of teacher management. In their later study, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) found teacher efficacy as having a significant positive effect on personal accomplishment and a significant negative effect on emotional exhaustion. These findings are consistent with Tschannen-Moran et al.'s (1998) cyclic model of teacher efficacy which posited a positive association between teacher sources of efficacy and their commitment, persistence and instructional behavior.

Similarly, research studies have been conducted on other interrelated factors such as teacher or school climate (Kalkan, & Dağlı, 2021), and teacher job satisfaction (Smetackova, et al., 2019.) and burnout psychological symptoms. These findings suggest these variables have an impact on teacher burnout. School climate, for instance, plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' experiences and outcomes. A positive teacher/school climate is a negative predictor of burnout. Within this climate, workload, the degree of supervisors and peer support, administration and management problems, conflict with others or students, and opportunity to participate in decision making on the job, exacerbate the levels of teacher burnout (Grayson, 2006). These relationships highlight the importance of addressing factors that contribute to teacher burnout, such as working conditions (e.g., teacher/school climate), workload, satisfaction and support (e.g., job satisfaction), and efficacy values (e.g., self-efficacy) to improve psychological well-being among language teachers (Kalkan & Dağlı, 2021).

Adopting a *sociological* perspective to teacher/school teaching climate, addressing how a teacher's well-being is influenced by the environment surrounding him/her, some researchers found a strong association between EE dimension of burnout with dimensions of teacher/school teaching climate, in particular, with the two dimensions of 'parent/community relations', and 'student/peer relations' (e.g., Grayson, 2006; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008, Sağlam et al., 2023). A significant association was also found between PA and DP dimensions and teacher/school climate components (Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2010). These findings imply that it is the distal hierarchy of school organization factors, such as power and struggles with school administration, feeling of inequity, or the policy pressures, that exert strains on teachers. As a result, teachers' effort to mitigate the job stressors is reduced (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Within the EFL context, EFL teachers often face heavy workloads (e.g., lesson planning, instructional tasks, etc.,), lack of support from their institutions (e.g., insufficient resources), classroom management challenges (e.g., managing classroom with diverse learners), emotional labor (e.g., managing their emotions and providing emotional support to their students), and low salary or job security (Chang et al., 2022, Cheng, 2022). While these factors significantly impact the mental and physical health of EFL teachers, leading to burnout, other factors such as teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction can play a significant role in mitigating burnout by enhancing teachers' confidence in their abilities to manage challenges (see Li, 2023, Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Self-efficacious teachers often experience higher job satisfaction which can buffer against feelings of exhaustion and frustration (Bartosiewicz, 2022).

In the view of the above arguments, this study adopted a conceptual model that includes both individual and contextual stressors of Iranian EFL teachers to (a) investigate the differential predictive roles in affecting burnout syndrome, and (b) explore the mediating role of the factors of teacher satisfaction and efficacy on the relationship between a contextual factor (antecedent) and burnout (outcome). There is now little evidence as to which predictors contribute the most to EFL teachers' psychological outcome (i.e., burnout in this study).

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

Showing their consent, a total of 198 EFL teachers, from EFL classes in Tehran and Isfahan provinces of Iran, participated in the study, comprising a sample of 148 (74.5%) females and 50 (25.5%) males, respectively. The overall age mean of the participants was 28, ranging from 23 to 56 years old. The mean length of their teaching career was 5 years with time spans between 1 and 28 years. Regarding their academic degrees, 139 teachers had BA., 52 had MA. and 7 held PhD. in TEFL. All teachers were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. These randomly selected participants answered the questions which measured teacher/school climate, teacher job satisfaction, teacher efficacy, and burnout. A total of 220 surveys were dispersed to all participants, and 90% of the surveys were completed and returned. This result is satisfactory when keeping in mind the length of the questionnaires (35-45 minutes to complete). Of note, teachers from all high school grades were included in the present sample.

3.2. Instruments, procedures, and analysis

The data for the study were obtained from a battery of questionnaires including four survey instruments, all have been extensively used in research. Each instrument consisted of structured items covering several constructs and demographic information. They went through piloting process first. Respondents' suggestions and comments on any problematic, ambiguous, or context-irrelevant items were also obtained. Teachers were provided with the researchers' e-mail address and phone numbers to make any contact once they opted for further information.

The following instruments were used in this study:

a) *Teacher/school Climate Measure (adapted by Grayson & Alvarez, 2008)*

b) *Job Satisfaction (adapted by Grayson & Alvarez, 2008)*

c) *Teacher Self-efficacy (*Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001*)*

d) *Burnout (Maslach et al., 1996)*

In piloting round, the battery was first given to 30 EFL teachers to determine any ambiguity, cultural-irrelevant, or any problem in the instruments' items. The obtained remarked showed favorable instruments. They asked for more clarification on a few items (i.e., item related to music in teacher climate measure, also on two items in burnout instrument). Modifications were done and the outcomes were re-examined by the researchers, indicating no serious problems of misunderstanding

3.2.1. Teacher climate measure (TCM)

In their attempts to assess school environment aspects, Grayson (2006) and two years later Grayson and Alvarez (2008) revised and used the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environment (CASE) instrument. The CASE included two self-report scales: Teacher Climate Measure (TCM) and Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS), both were used in the present study.

The Likert-type TCM has items assessing teacher's general perceptions of eight dimensions/factors, including *Teacher-student relations (12 items), student-behavioral values (3 items), instructional management (7 items), administration (6 items), students' academic orientation (4 items), student-peer relationships (3 items), parent and community-school relationships (4 items, and students' activities (4 items).* The multifaceted nature of the instrument together with its content validity was found by some earlier studies (see Halderson et al., 2001). Test-retest reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, ranging from .73 to .91 across the scales, with the coefficient of .88 for all items, have been reported. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for the subscales generally ranged from .70 to .87, and was .81 for the total items which is a satisfactory index of reliability. For the purpose of this study, and in alignment with Grayson (2006), '*Teacher support*' subscale was formed by calculating the means of the two dimensions/constructs of parent/community school relation, and administrative support constructs. Additionally, four constructs of academic orientation, students-behavioral values, student-peer relations, and students' activities formed the general factor of '*Student factor*'.

3.2.2. Teacher satisfaction scale (TTS)

Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS), another Likert scale of the CASE, is a self-report measure defining teachers' levels of satisfaction with a specific situation or condition. Originally developed by the National Association of Secondary Schools Principles and University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1982, the scale was later adapted and reviewed by Grayson (2006) which

finally included items measuring *administration (8 items), student responsibility, and discipline (5 items), co-workers (7 items), parent and community (5 items), compensation (5 items), school buildings (7 items), and communication (7 items)*. Extensive factor analyses assumed to measure multifactor of this 5-point Likert scale (Grayson, 2006). Reliability of the original instrument was reported to be .88, ranging from .80 to .93 for the subscales. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha for the total instrument was .94 which is a satisfactory consistency index. Coefficients ranged from .89 to .93 across the subscales.

3.2.3. *Maslach burnout inventory educators survey (MBI: educators survey)*

EFL teachers' intensity of burnout was measured by administrating the 22-item MBI which is the most frequently used instrument for assessing professional burnout. MBI instrument has been validated by several researchers (De Beer et al., 2024; Enzman et al., 1998; Schuttle et al., 2000; Wang et al., 2024). The items from the Educators Survey assess teachers' frequency of attitudes and feelings on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 'Every day' (6) to 'Never' (0). Psychometric analyses run for exploring construct validity of the instrument revealed three dimensions underlying the scale: EE (feeling of over-exhausted: 9 items), DP (unfeeling response toward others: 5 items), and PA (feeling of competence and successful achievement: 8 items). Aluja et al., (2005) reported the 3-factor structure, accounting for 43.4% of the variance. Using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, reliability assessment revealed .90, .79, and .71 for three subscales of EE, DP, and PA respectively. In the present study, alpha coefficient was .70 for total items. Coefficients of the dimensions were found to be .83, .78, and .62 for EE, DP, and PA subscales respectively, as compared to .88, .80. and .64 found in Grayson's study (2006). The total score (0-132) is obtained using a sum of EE, DP, and score reversal of PA. Summed scores greater than or equal to 27 on EE, 14 for PA, and at or below 35 on PA demonstrate high burnout (Maslach et al., 1996).

3.2.4. *Teacher efficacy scale (TES)*

EFL teachers' perceived efficacy was measured by administrating the 24-item Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) which was originally developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) to assess a broad range of capabilities that are considered important in good teaching. TES includes items with three different distinct dimensions (*engagement, instruction, and management*) on a 9-likert scoring format. The instrument has been subjected to a series of factorial testing and validation processes by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy and the results reveal that the instrument measures: a) *efficacy for students' engagement* (8 items), b) *efficacy for instructional strategies* (8 items), and c) *efficacy for classroom management* (8 items). Specifically, TES is useful to explore both task- and context-specific nature of teachers' beliefs in their efficacy. TES revealed a superb total reliability index (.94). In the present study, the internal consistency indices using *alpha* Cronbach, were found to be .83, .50, and .82 for instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement subscales, and revealed .82 for the total instrument. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy reported a valid 3-dimension instrument, with reliability co-efficient of .91, 90, and .87 for instruction, management and engagement, respectively.

3.3. Data analysis

Prior to main analyses, the assumptions such as descriptive analyses and Inter-correlation of each dependent and independent variable were checked. All data were analyzed through SPSS program, estimating means, standard deviations, correlation and multiple regression analysis.

4. Results

Examination of Table 1 puts forward that EFL teachers perceived their efficacy levels, their work conditions as well as their teaching/school climate as moderately above the average ($\overline{x}$=3.74, 3.62 and 3.62 for TCM, TSS and TES, respectively). The mean score for the MBI scale is the lowest ($\overline{x}$=1.45) among other variables making it clear that teachers perceived degrees of burnout but the lower levels while managing their classroom.

As to the associations between the main variables of the study, a number of Bivariate correlations were carried out (see Table 2). As Table 2 shows, all variables significantly correlated with burnout (p<.05). The table shows significant negative correlations between teacher/school climate (i.e., TCM) and teacher burnout (i.e., MBI). Teacher burnout was also negatively correlated with teacher job satisfaction (i.e., TSS) and teacher efficacy (i.e., TES). These relationships reveal that as teachers' perceptions obtained through TCM and TSS increase, there is a notable increase in TES, and a corresponding decrease in MBI. It was found that TCM, TSS, and TES are significantly and satisfactorily interrelated. As to burnout dimensions, the three subfactors of burnout were significantly related to teacher/school climate, teacher satisfaction and teacher efficacy. The patterns of negative relationship between MBI subscales with TCM, TSS and TES revealed as teachers' perceptions of context climate satisfaction, and beliefs about their competence decrease, all three dimensions of teacher burnout, i.e., EE, DE, and lack of PA increase. Specifically, EE dimension of burnout had highest negative correlation with TSS (p<.01).

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and errors for measures

	Scales and subscales/dimensions	N	Means	SD	Skewness
1.	**Teacher Climate Measure (TCM total)**	198	**3.74**	1.14	-1.24
	Teacher-student relations		4.02	0.58	-1.32
	Student factors		3.01	.791	-0.64
	Teacher support		4.01	.902	-1.26
	Instructional management		3.91	.663	-0.593
2.	**Teacher Satisfaction Scale (TSS total)**	198	**3.62**	0.56	-0.79
	Administration		3.84	.84	-1.02
	Student responsibility and discipline		2.67	1.07	.385
	Co-workers		3.51	.839	-.836
	Parents and community		3.93	.69	-.784
	Compensation		4.06	1.51	-.141
	School buildings		3.45	.92	-.779
	communication		3.86	.70	-1.07
3.	**Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)**	198	**3.61**	-1.11	0.756
	Instructional strategies		4.81	1.03	-1.71
	Classroom management		4.86	1.42	3.27
	Student engagement		4.80	1.02	-1.29
4.	**Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)**	198	**1.45**	.087	-0.81
	Emotional Exhaustion (EE)		1.81	1.16	0.90
	Depersonalization (DP)		1.03	0.999	1.47
	(Lack of) Personal Accomplishment (PA)		1.32	1.09	0.88

Table 2: Two-tailed correlations among variables/measures

Scales	TCM	T. Support	T-S relations	S. factors	Instr. Mangt	TSS	MBI	MBI EE	MBI DP	MBI PA
T. Support	.827*									
T-S relations	.767*	.507*								
S. factors	.894*	.675*	.520*							
Instr. Mangt	.691*	.393*	.485*	.550*						
TSS	.719*	.635*	.517*	.645*	.435*					
MBI	-.448*	-.362*	-.371*	-.373*	-.329*	-.518*				
MBI EE	-.346*	-.299*	-.271*	-.319*	-.213*	-.454*	850*			
MBI DP	-.336*	-.251*	-.351*	-.247*	-.267*	-.355*	.730*	.540*		
MBI PA	-.373*	-.298*	-.290*	-.301*	-.312*	-.383*	.840*	.399*	.388*	
TES	.445*	-.268*	.426*	.345*	.437*	.339*	-.432*	-.245*	-.329*	-.462*

Note: T=Teacher; S=Student; Instr. Mangt=Instructional Management

After testing the significant relationships between the variables, multiple regression analysis was run to check the predictive power of the variables on teacher burnout. Separate hierarchical regression analyses were performed to identify the relative contribution of environmental factors, teacher satisfaction, and teacher efficacy to burnout and its dimensions. Prior to this, Bivariate correlation analyses evaluated the prediction of all variables for inclusion in mediation analyses (See Table 2). Subsequently, in the first step of hierarchical multiple regression analysis, teacher/school climate was added to the model explaining 20% (R^2) of the variance in teacher burnout (p <.01). This indicated that the global TCM and its constructs significantly predicted burnout scores. The significant correlations between TCM and MBI evidenced that both *student factor* and *teacher-student relations* were negative predictors of the global burnout *(p <.01*; r=-.373 and -.371).

Test of mediation was also done to explore TSS as mediator between total TCM factors and burnout relationship. As to this aim, total TCM was entered into the regression equation first and TSS at the next phase. During the second step, TSS was thus added to the model resulting in a significant change in the total effect (ΔR^2=.074; p <.01), meaning that the mediator (i.e., TSS) carried parts of the effect of the global TCM to the total MBI (β=-.529; R^2=.273; p <.01). Therefore, the two variables

(TCM & TSS), when combined, accounted for 27.3% of the total variance in MBI.

Further analyses were also run for teacher efficacy (TES). Prior to this, Bivariate correlations indicated that TES and all its three dimensions were related to burnout negatively, but positively to TCM and TSS. When TES was hierarchically added to model, the two variables (i.e., TCM & TES) were found to account for 26.5% of the variance in total MBI (R^2=.264; p <.01). This implies that the entered variable (TES) significantly changed the total effect of the main variable (TCM), supporting the significant effect of the mediating variable (ΔR^2=.068; p <.01) on the relationship between TCM and MBI.

In the next phase, additional analyses were run to examine the predictive model for the underlying dimensions/subfactors of MBI too. The results reported TSS as a significant mediator between the relationships of TCM and two of the MBI subscales. Overall, TSS served as a significant mediator between the relationships of TCM and burnout. The most significant change was detected for EE, meaning that the prediction of EE was mediated by TSS. The variables combined accounted for 21% (R^2) of the total variance. An increase in TSS resulted into more increase in EE than DP and PA. However, when TES was concerned, the variable did not significantly account for the most change in β drop (p >.05) in EE dimension of MBI. On such a basis, positive ratings in TCM, related to TES increase, resulted only in a decrease in DP, and reduced PA (ΔR^2=.112; p <.01). Therefore, the two variables (TCM & TES), when combined, accounted for 11.2% of the total variance in PA. (See Tables 4-6).

Table 3. Regression analyses predicting burnout (DV: MBI; IDV: TCM, TSS and TES)

Model	Step	DV: MBI	β	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Model 1	Step 1	TCM	-.447	.000	.199	
	Step 2	TCM-TSS	-.529	.000	.273	.074
Model 2	Step 1	TCM	-.442	.000	.196	.068
	Step 2	TCM-TES	-.513	.000 .000	.264	

Table 4. Regression analyses predicting burnout dimensions

Model	Step	DV: MBI-EE	β	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Model 1	Step 1	TCM	-.346	.000	.120	
	Step 2	TCM-TSS	-.454	.000	.207	.087
Model 2	Step 1	TCM	-.341	.000	.116	
	Step 2	TCM-TES	-.356	.145	.127	.011

Table 5. Regression analyses predicting burnout dimension

Model	Step	DV: MBI-DP	β	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Model 1	Step 1	TCM	-.336	.000	.113	
	Step 2	TCM-TSS	-.374	.016	.140	.027
Model 2	Step 1	TCM	-.333	.000	.111	
	Step 2	TCM-TES	-.389	.004	.150	.039

Table 6. Regression analyses predicting burnout dimension (reduced PA)

Model	Step	DV: MBI-PA	β	p	R^2	ΔR^2
Model 1	Step 1	TCM	-.373	.000	.139	
	Step 2	TCM-TSS	-.408	.033	.167	.028
Model 2	Step 1	TCM	-.369	.000	.133	
	Step 2	TCM-	-.495	.001	.245	.112

TES

5. Discussion

Academic burnout, often viewed as a unique type of stress syndrome, has significantly impacted many teachers in different educational sectors (Einav et al., 2024; Lackritz, 2004; Li, 2023). Understanding and addressing such a syndrome is especially crucial for maintaining the overall health of the education system. Research in this area provides valuable insights that can guide the development of effective support mechanisms for educators. The present study aimed to investigate the phenomenon of burnout through an integrative interrelated framework of predictors (e.g., institutional-level stressors and individual traits) within the EFL context of Iran.

In this study, an interplay of stressors in the teaching occupation (i.e., teacher/school climate, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy) was examined in association with teachers' global burnout. In addition, further analyses were performed to examine the role of the targeted factors in predicting different dimensions of burnout to better understand personal and professional correlates of the syndrome. The regression results revealed significant relations between the predictors and teacher burnout. Teachers who reported a positive teacher/school climate ($\overline{x}$= 3.74), characterized by teacher-student relations, student factors, teacher support and instructional management, reported lower levels of burnout ($\overline{x}$= 1.45, on a scale of 1 to 6). Other strong inverse relationships were also found between teacher job satisfaction and efficacy and burnout. Teachers with higher job satisfaction scores and higher levels of efficacy reported lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The estimated coefficients between job satisfaction, efficacy and burnout were -.52 and .43 (p <.01) respectively, indicating significant negative correlations between the variables.

In the next phase, Multivariate Regression analyses confirmed the significance of the predictors. Teacher/school climate, job satisfaction, and teacher efficacy collectively explained almost 44% of the variance in burnout levels (p < 0.01). Though each predictor contributed to the model, teachers' satisfaction, highlighting perceiving a safe environment, appeared as the most substantial contributor to changes in teacher burnout. The beta weight change when teacher efficacy was added to the model (model 2: TCM-TE) was almost near to that of the first model (model 2: TCM-TSS) showing that teacher efficacy emerged as a significant mediator of burnout too. This implies that teachers who believed in their ability to impact student learning positively had lower burnout levels. Findings of the present study corroborate the previous findings that identified burnout as a multidimensional, multifaceted phenomenon. Given such a nature of burnout syndrome, further analyses were performed to examine the associations between the predictors and dimensions or subfactors of burnout (i.e., EE, DP, PA).

As to the components, teacher/school climate factors of *teacher-student relations*, *student factor*, and *teacher support* were significantly related to EE dimension. The correlations of these job aspects with EE support the assertion that *workplace factors* that relate to working with students and environment (Lindblom, et al., 2006) are associated with burnout. The extent to which teachers are overwhelmed by their academic context, including their students' behaviors, students' relationships, the types of activities they engage in, among many, affects teachers' perceptions, attitudes and their subsequent behaviors. Such student- and teaching climate-level stressors are exhausting particularly in demanding climate such as EFL teaching climate where teachers have to assist and guide their students through English language development in a non-English context such as Iran. To respond to students' needs, whether academic or psychological, these teachers often feel role strain. According to Van Dick and Wagner (2001), teachers' too much involvement and workload are critical predictors of stress and tension. It is likely that such a condition would lead to degrees of exhaustion, in particular, when support and administration are poor, a condition which exerts a critical toll on teachers (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Split et al., 2011).

As to the components contributed to DP subscale, *teacher-student relations* was the best predictor. This component is characterized by teachers' efforts and willingness to help learners, understand their goals and values, meet their needs, and treat them fairly. Regarding EFL contexts, extra effort is needed by EFL teachers in establishing positive relationships in their classrooms due to students' varying values, goals, needs, willingness and motivation for learning, often not easily captured by teachers. Consequently, in a bi-directional way, uninterested, unmotivated, disruptive or misbehaving learners may negatively affect teachers (Kokkinos et al, 2005). Teachers with lower levels of motivation for teaching, less support from peers and principals, and reduced sense of community within their school become emotionally detached, uncaring, indifferent toward their students, and depersonalized. Teacher depersonalization can lead to classroom disruptions and negatively impact student behavior. To mitigate DP, it is worthwhile to foster positive relationships between teachers and students which is valuable for reducing DP. The reported depersonalization rate by the present teachers might be attributed to their lack of satisfaction with decisions and degrees of support by school administrators or lack of sense of connectedness.

While EE and DP were explained by TCM and TSS, 11% of PA variance was explained by the second model with a personal factor (i.e., TES) as its important predictive variable. A noteworthy personal factor in explaining the impact of chronic symptom was, therefore, teachers' sense of efficacy. Findings of the present study support the argument that teachers' sense of efficacy can be a significant predictor of burnout outcomes (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Indeed, results reveal that an important amount of variance in burnout can be explained by teacher efficacy with a reverse relationship between EE, DP, and

reduced PA. This aligns with the available studies demonstrating teachers' doubt about their efficacy triggers burnout process (Chwalisz, et al., 1992) and its core elements, EE, DP and reduced PA. One possible explanation for this finding is the *sources* of efficacy beliefs such as teachers' experience, capabilities, and assessment of their classroom management that will likely decrease with job stress and affective arousals. In the same token, EFL teachers' beliefs and confidence in their professional capabilities and classroom management skills can be undermined by a combination of increased job stressors and emotional responses to the stressors.

The results indicated that teacher efficacy, when added to the model, played an important mediating role in explaining PA (see Table 6). One possible explanation about this role comes from the pattern of relation between TCM, TES and PA. PA component of burnout was closely correlated with *instructional management* component of TCM, a finding which aligns with the available literature (e.g., Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). The instructional management dimension was assessed by items determining whether teachers believe in a *clear set of rules in institutions or schools, amount of time spent on activities, and the extent of outside interruptions*. Grayson and Alvarez (2008), for instance, argued that with an increase in the amount of time provided and spent on activities, and any decrease in outside interruptions, teacher-rated performance tend to positively increase. This implies that teachers' judgment of their performance and ability to organize and execute the given types of performance as well as their judgment of the consequences of such performance increase their sense of being efficacious. On the other hand, teachers' doubt in their ability to maintain classroom order or solve classroom problems can lead to decreased levels of confidence and feeling of effectiveness (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). This, in turn, causes teachers to experience feeling of failure in their performance, as a result, their rated feelings of efficacy and PA diminish. In the present study, the participating EFL teachers rated themselves higher in PA. Overall, this finding is in line with the findings by Bardach et al. (2022) and Zee and Koomen (2016) who explained teachers' beliefs in their professional success are linked to lower levels of stress, and higher levels of personal accomplishment.

In addition to the mediatory role of TEE, TSS results also supported the mediator relationship as job satisfaction accounted for a significant relationship between TCM and MBI. Specifically, the combination of the variables accounted for an important portion of variance in EE which is the most sensitive burnout subscale. This finding is similar to the finding by Grayson and Alvarez (2008) who found mediator relationship between TCM and EE. Both TSS and TES were most positively related to instructional management and most negatively to burnout and its dimensions. Their mediation roles can be important particularly when causing intervention and helping teachers to treat the stressors. Although negative school climate increases teachers' stress and burnout, teachers' satisfaction and, in particular, their efficacy can affect the degree they are influenced by increasing negativity. For instance, those EFL teachers who feel confident in their instruction, management, and student engagement, or are interrupted less by outside resources are less vulnerable to negative stressors.

Corroborating the existing literature, findings of the present study provide empirical evidence for the premise that occupational contexts expose teachers to serious stressors as precursors of burnout. Notwithstanding most empirical studies have investigated the effect of contextual stressors of occupations, some other have recently emphasized the effect of personal resources on burnout process (see Zeijen et al., 2024). Even though emphasis remains on contextual factors, susceptibility depends on individual's resources as well (Garrosa et al., 2008). Put in another word, different individuals may react differently to negative stressors in their work climate as they perceive and interpret stressors differently. Given the importance role of perceptions in evaluation of teaching- and learning-related factors (Kiany & ShayesteFar, 2011), it is, therefore, crucial to consider both contextual and individual resources when addressing teacher burnout. Tailored strategies that enhance personal resilience, self-efficacy, and coping mechanisms, while simultaneously improving the work environment, can help mitigate the negative impact of stressors.

6. Conclusion

Over the past two decades, an emerging trend in research on teacher-related factors has focused on exploring the interaction and interrelation of teacher contextual and individual factors. Aligned with this, the present study assessed Iranian EFL teachers' burnout affected by contextual factors, teacher satisfaction and their efficacy beliefs. Since teacher burnout is clearly a major problem which, directly or indirectly, influences the quality and quantity of teacher performance, and subsequently, the quality and quantity of the education students receive, a close examination of the syndrome and its predictors is of specific importance in academia. Insights from identifying and understanding the syndrome predictors can not only contribute to academic discourse but also inform policy-makers to develop targeted interventions which can support teachers, foster a healthier and more resilient teaching workforce, and ultimately enhance a sustainable and productive teaching profession. This process, in turn, can lead to improvement of teacher retention and enhancement of student outcome.

Understanding the underlying factors or predictors such as teaching contextualized climate (showing a significant predictive role in this study, for instance) has implications for developing effective strategies to increase positive environment and reduce the stressors negative influence. On the basis of the present results, it is important to develop intervention programs that reduce the pressure and demands in teaching/school climate. We need teachers who maintain positive feelings about themselves, their students, and their jobs (Schwab, 2001). To this aim, intervention programs can be centered at increasing the

contextual resources of the professionals. Initiations must be, therefore, done on a macrosocial level to improve working conditions, and reduce the pressure and stress in teaching climate.

Likewise, the findings have implications in informing policy-making that targets enhancing individual factors such as positive perceptions and appraisals of self-efficacy through intervention policies. In other words, because of the propensity for a positive change through feelings of self-efficacy, not only the direct effects but indirect effects of workplace factors on burnout (through mediators) are especially considered when setting the policies for intervention plans. According to the present findings, the mediating function of teacher efficacy can trigger more intervention initiatives. As to the interplay of institutional and individual factors, implementing intervention plans with the aim of increasing positive climate and enhancing relationships (through targeting student factors, teacher-student factors, and teacher support) will contribute to reduced burnout through individual factors such as teacher efficacy. For instance, to prevent exacerbation of burnout among EFL teachers, it is valuable to foster supportive climate, reduce student-driven or teacher-student driven stressors, and prompt the implementing of classroom management strategies. Due to its mediating function, any intervention strategies that empower teachers to assess their effectiveness in managing classroom positively will lead to higher personal accomplishment (PA), and lower levels of emotional disturbance and affective arousals among EFL teachers. Much work is, however, needed to develop and evaluate the interventions in teacher education policy and implementation programs. Further studies may focus on qualitative approaches to explore the experiences and challenges faced by teachers in enhancing their efficacy within diverse educational settings.

7. References

Agyapong, B., Obuobi-Donkor, G., Burback, L., & Wei, Y. (2022). Stress, burnout, anxiety and depression among teachers: A scoping review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(17), 10706. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191710706

Akbari, R., & Tavassoli, K. (2011). Teacher efficacy, burnout, teaching style, and emotional intelligence: Possible relationships and differences. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 14* (2), 31-61. http://ijal.khu.ac.ir/article-1-16-fa.html

Aloe, A.M., Amo, L.C., & Shanahan, M.E. (2014). Classroom management self-efficacy and burnout: A multivariate meta-analysis. *Educ Psychol Rev.,* 26, 101–126. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648013-9244-0

Alonso-Tapia, J. & Ruiz-Díaz, M. (2022). School climate and teachers' motivational variables: Effects on teacher satisfaction and classroom motivational climate perceived by middle school students. A cross-cultural study. *Psicología Educativa, 28*(2), 151-163. https://doi.org/10.5093/psed2022a4

Aluja, A., Blanch, A., & Garcia, L.F. (2005). Dimensionality of the Maslach burnout inventory in school teachers. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 21*(1), 67-76. https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759.21.1.67

Bardach, L., Klassen, RM., Perry, NE. (2022). Teachers' psychological characteristics: Do they matter for teacher effectiveness, teachers' well-being, retention, and interpersonal relations? An integrative review. *Educ Psychol Rev., 34*, 259-300. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-021-09614-9. 37

Bartosiewicz, A., Łuszczki, E., Zaręba, L., Kuchciak, M., Bobula, G., Dereń, K., & Król, P. (2022). Assessment of job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and the level of professional burnout of primary and secondary school teachers in Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PeerJ, 10*, e13349.

Borg, M. G., Riding, R. J., & Falzon, J. M. (1991). Stress in teaching: A study of occupational stress and its determinants, job satisfaction and career commitment among primary schoolteachers. *Educational Psychology*, *11*, 59–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144341910110104

Brouwers, A., & Tomic, W. (1998, July). *Student disruptive behavior, perceived self-efficacy in classroom management and teacher burnout.* Paper presented at the ninth European Conference on Personality, University of Surrey.

Brouwers, A., & Tomic, W. (2000). A longitudinal study of teacher burnout and perceived self-efficacy in classroom management. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*(2), 239–253. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(99)00057-8

Burke, R. J., & Richardsen, A. M. (1993). Psychological burnout in organizations. In R. T. Golembiewski, (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational behavior* (pp. 263-297). New York: Marcel Dekker.

Burke, R. J., Greenglass, E. R., & Schwarzer, R. (1996). Predicting teacher burnout over time: Effects of work stress, social

support, and self-doubts on burnout and its consequences. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping: An International Journal*, *9*(3),1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/10615809608249406

Capel, S. A. (1991). A longitudinal study of burnout in teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 61*(1), 36-45. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8279.1991.tb00961.x

Chang M-L., Gaines, R.E., & Mosley, K.C. (2022). Effects of Autonomy Support and Emotion Regulation on Teacher Burnout in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Front. Psychology, 13*, 846290. http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.846290

Cheng, Y. (2022). Investigating Factors Responsible for Teacher Burnout in English as Foreign Language Classes. *Front. Psychology, 13*, 876203. http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.876203

Chwalisz, K., Altmaier, E. M., & Russell, D.W. (1992). Causal attributions, self-efficacy cognitions, and coping with stress. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *11*(4), 377-400. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.1992.11.4.377

Coladarci, T. (1992). Teachers' sense of efficacy and commitment to teaching. *Journal of Experimental Education*, *60*, 323-337. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1992.9943869

De Beer, L. T., van der Vaart, L., Escaffi-Schwarz, M., De Witte, H., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2024). Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey: A systematic review and meta-analysis of measurement properties. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 40*(5), 360–375. https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000797

Dermouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*, 499–512.

Devereux, J.M., Hastings, R., Noone, S., Firth, A., & Totiska, V. (2009). Social support and coping as mediators of the impact of work stressors on burnout in intellectual disability support staff. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 30*, 367-377. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2008.07.002

Einav, M., Confino, D., Geva, N., & Margalit, M. (2024). Teachers' Bburnout: The role of social support, gratitude, hope, entitlement and loneliness. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology, 9*, 827–849. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-024-00154-5

Enzmann, D., Schaufeli, W. B., Janssen, P., & Rozeman, A. (1998). Dimensionality and validity of the Burnout Measure. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, *71,* 331-350. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1998.tb00680.x

Evers, W., Tomic, W., & Brouwers, A. (2004). Burnout among teachers: Students' and teachers' perceptions compared. *School Psychology International, 25*(2), 131-148. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034304043670

Evers, W., Tomic, W., & Brouwers, A. (2004). Burnout among teachers: Students' and teachers' perceptions compared. *School Psychology International, 25*(2), 131-148. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034304043670

Friedman, I. A. (1991). High- and low-burnout schools: School culture aspects of teacher burnout. *Journal of Educational Research*, *84*, 325–333.

Garrosa, E., Moreno-Jimenz, B, Liang, Y. & Gonzalez, J. L. (2008). The relationship between socio-demographic variables, job stressors, burnout, and hardy personality in nurses: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, *45*, 418-427. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2006.09.003

Grayson, J. & Alvarez, H. (2008). School climate factors related to teacher burnout: A mediator model. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(5),1349-1363. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.06.005

Grayson, J. (2006). *An assessment of teacher burnout levels as associated with contextual and diversity factors in rural Appalachian school districts.* Unpublished thesis, Ohio University.

Green, A. E., Albanese, B. J., Shapiro, N. M., & Aarons, G. A. (2014). The roles of individual and organizational factors in burnout among community-based mental health service providers. *Psychological Services, 11*(1), 41-49.

https:///doi.org/10.1037/a0035299

Halbesleben, J. B., & Buckley, M. R. (2004). Burnout in Organizational Life. *Journal of Management*, *30*(6), 859-879. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jm.2004.06.004

Halderson, C., Kelley, E. A., Keefe, J. W., & Berge, P. (2001). *Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments: Technical manual for school climate survey*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Harrison, B. J. (1999). Are you destined to burn out? *Fund Raising Management, 30*(3), 25–27.

Jacquet, A., Grolleau, A., Jove, J., Lassalle, R., Moore, N. (2015). Burnout: evaluation of the efficacy and tolerability of TARGET 1® for professional fatigue syndrome (burnout). *J Int Med Res., 4*3(1), 54-66. https://doi.org/10.1177/0300060514558324

Kalkan, F., & Dağlı, E. (2021). The relationships between school climate school belonging and school burnout in secondary school students. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research, 8*(4), 59-79. https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.878682

Kara, S. (2020). 'Investigation of job satisfaction and burnout of visual arts teachers', *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, 6(1), 160-171. https://doi.org/10.46328/ijres.v6i1.817

Kiany, G. R., ShayesteFar, P. (2011). High school students' perceptions of EFL teacher control orientations and their English academic achievement. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *81*(3), 491–508. https://doi.org/10.1348/000709910X522177

Kirk-Brown, D. (2004). Predicting burnout and job satisfaction in workplace counselors. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, *41*, 29-37. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.2004.tb00875.x

Kokkinos, C.M., Panayiotou, G., & Davazoglou, A.M. (2005). Correlates of teacher appraisals of student behaviors. *Psychology in the Schools, 42*(1), 79-89. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20031

Lackritz, J. R. (2004). Exploring burnout among university faculty: incidence, performance, and demographic issues. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *20*, 713-729. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.07.002

Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2001). Burnout and quality in a speed-up world. *Journal for Quality & Participation*, *24*, 48–51.

Leithwood, K.A., Menzies, T., Jantzi, D., & Leithwood, J. (1999). Teacher burnout: A critical challenge for leaders of restructuring schools. In R. Vandenberghe & A.M. Huberman (Eds.), *Understanding and Preventing Teacher Burnout: A Sourcebook of International Research and Practice* (pp.1-13). New York: Cambridge University Press. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1017/CBO9780511527784.006

Li, S. (2023). The effect of teacher self-efficacy, teacher resilience, and emotion regulation on teacher burnout: a mediation model. *Journal of Educational Research, 150*, 123-140. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1185079

Li, S., Li, Y., Lv, H., Jiang, R., Zhao, P., Zheng, X., Wang, L., Li, J., Mao, F. (2020). The prevalence and correlates of burnout among Chinese preschool teachers. *BMC Public Health, 20*, 160. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-8287-7

Lindblom, K.M., Linton, S.J., Fedeli, C., Bryngelsson, I.L., (2006). Burnout in the working population: relations to psychosocial work factors. *International Journal Behavior Medicine, 13*, 51–59. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327558ijbm1301_7

Malinen, O.-P. S., & Savolainen, H. (2016). The effect of perceived school climate and teacher efficacy in behavior management on job satisfaction and burnout: A longitudinal study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *60*, 144-152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.08.012

Maslach, C. (1982). *Burnout: The cost of caring*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Maslach, C., & Leiter, M.P. (1997). *The Truth about Burnout: How Organizations cause Personal Stress and What to do about it.* Josses-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Maslach, C., & Schaufeli, W. B. (1993). Historical and conceptual development of burnout. In W. B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach, and T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 1–16). Wahington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

Maslach, C., Jackson, S.E., & Leiter, M.P. (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual* (4th ed.). Menlo Park, CA: Mind Garden, Inc.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 397–422. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397

McCormick, J. (1997). Occupational stress of teachers: Biographical differences in a large school system. *Journal of Educational Administration, 35*, 18–38. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578239710156962

Navidinia, H., Gholizadeh, F. Z., & Chahkandi, F. (2023). EFL teachers' burnout during the Covid-19 pandemic: Can teaching context make a difference? *Applied Linguistics Inquiry, 1*(1), 34-49. http://doi.org/10.22077/ali.2023.6087.1010

Ozdemir, S. (2006). Burnout Levels of Students with AD/HD in Turkey. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *29*(4), 693-709. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42900559

Patton, W. & Goddard, R. (2003). Psychological distress and burnout in Australian service workers. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, *40(1), 2-16*.

Pienaar, J, & Willemse, S. (2008). Burnout, engagement, coping and general health of service employees in the hospitality industry. *Tourism Management*, *29*, 1053-1063. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.01.006

Pizam, A. (2004). Are hospitality employees equipped to hide their feelings? *Hospitality Management*, *23*, 315–316. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/j.ijhm.2004.08.001

Rostami, S., Ghanizadeh, A., & Ghonsooly, B. (2015). External factors affecting second language motivation: The role of teacher burnout and family influence. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 18*(2), 165-187.

Safari, I. (2020). A study on the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction of Iranian EFL teachers working in universities and schools**.** *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science*, *13*(4), 164-173. https://doi.org/10.7160/eriesj.2020.130401

Sağlam, M. H., Göktenürk, T., Demir, İ., & Yazıcı, E. (2023). Environmental factors for the advancement of teachers' self-efficacy in professional development. *Journal of Intelligence*, *11*(2), 34. https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11020034

Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2009). Burnout: 35 years of research and practice. *The Career Development International, 14*(3), 204–220. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430910966406

Schonfeld, I.S. (2001). Stress in first-year women teachers: the context of social support and coping. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs, 127*(2), 133-167. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.127.2.133

Schutte, N., Toppinnen, S., Kalimo, R., & Schaufeli, W.B. (2000). *The factorial validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey* across occupational groups and

Schwab, R.L. (2001). Teacher burnout: Moving beyond "psychobabble". *Theory Into Practice*, *22*(1), 21-27. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405848309543033

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2010). Dimensions of teacher burnout: Relations with potential stressors at school. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*(5), 1051-1060. http://10.1016/j.tate.2009.11.001

Skaalvik, E.M., & Skaalvik, S. (2020). Teacher burnout: Relations between dimensions of burnout, perceived school context, job satisfaction and motivation for teaching. A longitudinal study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*, 602–616. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2021.1913404

Smetackova, I., Viktorova, I., Pavlas Martanova, V., Pachova, A., Francova, V., & Stech, S. (2019). Teachers between job satisfaction and burnout syndrome: What makes difference in Czech elementary schools. *Front. Psychol. 10*, 2287. http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02287

Smetackova, I., Viktorova, I., Pavlas Martanova, V., Pachova, A., Francova, V., & Stech, S. (2019). Teachers between job satisfaction and burnout syndrome: What makes difference in Czech elementary schools. *Front. Psychol. 10*, 2287. http://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02287

Split, J., Koomen, H. & Thijs, J. (2011). Teacher wellbeing: The importance of teacher-student relationships. *Education Psychology Review, 23*, 457-477. http://dare.uva.nl/document/463929

Tatar, M., & Horenczyk, G. (2003). Diversity-related burnout among teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 19*(4), 397-408. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(03)00024-6

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(7), 783-805. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(01)00036-1

Tschannen-Moran, M., Woolfolk Hoy, A., & Hoy, W. K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research, 68*(2), 202-248. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543068002202

Van Dick, R., & Wagner, U. (2001). Stress and strain in teaching: A structural equation approach. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *71*, 243–259. https://doi.org/10.1348/000709901158505

Wang, A., Duan, Y., Norton, P. G., Leiter, M. P., & Estabrooks, C. A. (2024). Psychometric properties and measurement invariance of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey 9-item short version (MBI-GS9) across age, gender, and continent**.** *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *29*(1), 22-37. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1439470

Wright, T. A., & Cropanzano, R. (1998). Emotional exhaustion as a predictor of job performance and voluntary turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *83*, 486–493.

Yurt, E. (2022). Collective teacher self-Efficacy and burnout: The mediator role of job satisfaction. *International Journal of Modern Education Studies, 6*(1), 51-69.

Zakariya, Y. F. (2020). Effects of school climate and teacher self-efficacy on job satisfaction of mostly STEM teachers: A structural multigroup invariance approach. *International Journal of STEM Education, 7*(1), 1– 12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-020-00209-4

Zee, M., & Koomen, H. M. Y. (2016). Teacher self-efficacy and its effects on classroom processes, student academic adjustment, and teacher well-being: A synthesis of 40 years of research. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(4), 981-1015. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626801

Zeijen, M. E. L., Brenninkmeijer, V., Peeters, M. C. W., & Mastenbroek, N. J. M. (2024). The Role of Personal Demands and Personal Resources in Enhancing Study Engagement and Preventing Study Burnout. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology, 27*, e10, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1017/SJP.2024.10

Evolving Role of Culture in Language Studies in the (Post)Digital Revolution Era: Reviewing Applications of Sharifian's Cultural Linguistics

Hossein Heidari Tabrizi[1*] (ID)
Azizeh Chalak[2] (ID)

*[1,2]Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran
*[1,2]Visiting Scholar at English Department, Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

ABSTRACT

The study of the symbiotic relationship between language and culture, along with the call for a rigorous theory and systematic investigative framework, has been a longstanding pursuit. In the past decade or so, Sharifian's Cultural Linguistics (CL) has demonstrated its potential as a robust theoretical framework and a sharply honed investigative, analytical instrument with a multidisciplinary origin (including English as an International Language (EIL) to explore the interplay between language and culture. The present paper aimed at reviewing the applications of the CL approach and methodology in language-related studies. Arguing for the evolving role of culture in language education and research in the era of (post)digital revolution, this paper attempted to demonstrate the insights the theoretical and analytical frameworks of CL could bring to the realm of language teaching and learning. In so doing, as a starting point, the paper provides a concise overview of the principles and practices of the relatively novel interdisciplinary field of CL. First, the theoretical frameworks of the CL approach are described. This is followed by an explanation of the analytical frameworks of the CL methodology. Finally, some critical reflections on the CL's approach and methodology are offered. This synopsis is then followed by a state-of-the-art account of the application of CL in language-related studies in the era of (post)digital revolution. The paper concludes with the future directions in such an interdisciplinary venture.

KEYWORDS: Cultural conceptualization (CC); Cultural linguistics (CL); English as an international language (EIL); Language studies; (Post)digital revolution

1. Introduction

In the present era, the landscape of language education and research has witnessed a transformative evolution in its linguistic, cognitive, and cultural dimensions as a result of the integration of innovative, inspiring theoretical frameworks within the domain of language-related studies. This evolution is primarily shaped by the emergence of challenging paradigms such as English as an International Language (EIL) (Sharifian, 2009, 2014, 2017c) or English as a Lingua Franca (House, 2024; Mair, 2024) and World Englishes (Mair, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2023; Sharifian, 2015b; Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019; Sharifian & Sadeghpour, 2020, 2021). On one hand, the former mainly deals with the widespread use of English as the dominant, "obvious transitional lingua franca" (Mair, 2024, p. 255) for intercultural communication across the globe, commonly known as globalization.

The advent of recent waves of "globalisation, and in particular the "three M-s" –migration, media and mobility— have profoundly changed the world's language ecology over the past three decades" (Mair, 2017, p. 83). In fact, according to Mair (2021), "no analysis of global English is satisfactory unless it takes into account the multilingual contexts in which the global language is used" (p. 28). On the other hand, the latter celebrates diverse local variations and varieties of English produced by the so-called 'non-native' speakers through the process of localization. In other words, English is "employed 'globally' to negotiate various systems with speakers of World Englishes, and simultaneously used to interact 'locally' with associates of the same cultural background" (Heidari Tabrizi & Chalak, 2025). The consensus between these two perspectives can be encapsulated best in the illustrious ethos: Think globally, act locally. This dual and concurrent phenomenon of localization stemming from globalization aligns with what Sharifian (2018a) echoes as 'glocalization.' Reconciling the two ends of a continuum, he argues, the process of glocalization involves interacting with the "modification of a global product to meet local needs and norms" (p.1).

The decisive transition from English as a Foreign or Second Language (EFL/ESL) to the paradigm of ELI inevitably called for revisiting the role of culture in language learning and language-related studies. In other words, as Mair (2021) proclaims, "most heated language-ideological debates revolve around lingua-franca uses of English" (p. 28). With the most extensive chances of cross-cultural interactions on the rise due to more global mobility, Sharifian (2013c, 2013d, 2018b, 2018c) argues that the focus has shifted towards prioritizing intercultural communication generally and, more specifically, to developing intercultural competence. As the ultimate goal of ELT curricula, this competence, when acquired by language learners, can enable them to act as "effective and strategic translanguaging users of English in multilingual communication contexts" (Xu, 2017, p. 704). This has resulted in emergence of two competing or complementary roles for teaching globalized versus localized English. According to Chen and Le (2018), "This paradox of the double-functions of foreign-language education leads to the perplexing issue of how to deal with the relations between home culture and foreign culture" (p. 1).

The third millennium has also witnessed a paradigmatic major shift in language as well as translation studies "away from text- and linguistically-oriented approaches to socially and culturally oriented ones" as a result of what is usually known as the 'cultural turn' where "one does not translate languages but cultures" (House, 2015, p. 6). The term 'cultural turn' (or 'cultural shift') is employed in language studies to recognize the significance of culture as an integral part of all language activities. EIL has developed a rich body of research to study the cultural features and facets of the intercultural communication process. Moreover, the emergence of social networks has brought people together, interconnecting them as members of one global community (in the words of Noam Chomsky, 'international integration'). Thanks to technology-facilitated mass communication, nowadays, people can be 'connected' to and be in contact with individuals and locales across diverse cultural and geographical contexts. The unstoppable growth, as well as the ubiquity of new communication technologies, has resulted in ever-increasing interactions among individuals who do not understand one another's language or culture. In effect, language has transformed from a typical means of communication into a barrier among human beings living in the so-called 'global village.' The dynamic and ever-changing globalized digital environment demands the involvement of language-related studies in a novel, diverse array of emerging contexts and scenarios. In the present globalized world, any communication across cultures is always mediated by language. In fact, in an era characterized by expanding migratory networks and transnational residency, citizens in their daily lives are much more in demand of immediate better intercultural communications to help them overcome the barriers caused by not only linguistic but also cultural differences across many contents, contexts and channels. In addition, as Heidari Tabrizi and Chalak (in press) explained, "In recent two decades, by massive spread and proliferation of Social Networking Services (SNS) and the ever-increasing use of social media, a virtual dimension has been added to the daily face-to-face interactions" in human intra/intercultural communications.

As a result, various cultural models can now be found in the literature for teaching culture within the paradigm of EIL. These models are often influenced by the context in which English is being taught and learned. Accordingly, two prominent, ground-breaking cultural frameworks are particularly shaped and advanced by Michael Byram and his advocates in the context of the UK and by Claire Kramsch and her proponents within the US setting, contributing significantly to the EIL pedagogy (Chen & Le, 2018). Both models aim to respect cultural diversity and foster intercultural competence among learners, enabling them to communicate successfully and navigate cultural differences in English-speaking contexts. In short, effective EIL pedagogy tailor English instruction to meet the diverse educational priorities, needs, and backgrounds of learners, often drawing on elements from different cultural models. Accordingly, modern, alternative, more sophisticated approaches and methodologies are needed to study the relation of language and culture, considering these new concepts and contexts. In the new millennium, one such approach is the relatively young interdisciplinary approach of Cultural Linguistics (CL) proposed by Sharifian (2011, 2015a, 2015b, 2017a, 2017d). In fact, in the past decade or so, CL has demonstrated its potential as a robust theoretical framework and a sharply honed investigative, analytical instrument with a multidisciplinary origin (including the EIL) to explore the interplay between language and culture, stressing the dynamic nature of the latter (For a comprehensive account of Sharifian's contributions, see Heidari Tabrizi & Chalak, 2023).

Thus, the present paper aimed at reviewing the applications of the CL approach and methodology in language-related studies. Revisiting the role of culture in language education and research in the era of (post)digital revolution, this paper attempted to demonstrate the insights the theoretical and analytical frameworks of CL could brought to the realm of language teaching and learning. In so doing, as a starting point, it is more convenient to provide a concise overview of the principles and practices of the relatively novel interdisciplinary field of CL. First, the theoretical frameworks of the CL approach are described. This is followed

by an explanation of the analytical frameworks of the CL methodology. Finally, some critical reflections on the CL's approach and methodology are offered. This synopsis is then followed by a state-of-the-art account of the application of CL in Language Studies in the era of (post)digital revolution. The paper concludes with the future directions in such an interdisciplinary venture.

2. Cultural Linguistics: an overview

The study of the symbiotic relationship between language and culture, along with the call for a rigorous theory and systematic investigative framework, has been a longstanding pursuit. Historically, research inquiries into the interplay of language and culture, as "the two major factors of 'soft power'" (in the words of Mair, 2021, p. 28), faced challenging criticisms stemming from several reasons. The foremost issue is that definitions of culture are vague due to the intricate ontological and epistemological inherent complexity and the abstract nature of the elastic term 'culture,' which have led to varying interpretations among scholars. In fact, any attempt to define culture both theoretically and practically has fostered divergent conceptualizations and posed significant challenges. This vagueness often led to the formation of stereotypes, the tendency to make broad generalizations, and the risk of "essentializing speakers" (Sharifian, 2017a). Furthermore, within the scope of such investigations, culture is often conceptualized and approached as a fixed set of facts shared uniformly among language users, perpetuating a static perspective. Palmer's (1996) "theory of cultural linguistics" stands out among the pioneer contributions in studying the "uncontested duo" (in the words of Kramsch, 2015) to transcend this perceived problem. Palmer's theory, employing a cognitive-oriented perspective, primarily revolves around the concept of 'culturally constructed and defined imagery.' Nowadays, Palmer is widely credited with laying the groundwork for what has evolved into the internationally renowned domain of study known as cultural linguistics.

Against such a background, Sharifian (2011, 2017a, 2017b, 2017d) advanced the discipline further and developed his burgeoning field of Cultural Linguistics (CL) (with capital initials), where the term is employed in a more precise sense. Drawing on the language-thought-culture paradigm, CL can be construed as an emerging domain of study that deals with "understanding the relationship between language, culture and conceptualization" (Sharifian & Sadeghpour, 2021, p. 28). In an attempt to avoid the ambiguous, nebulous term 'culture,' Sharifian employs a more dynamic, adaptable view of Cultural Conceptualizations (CCs) as a process of meaning construction, replacing the abstract, static portrayal of culture as an inflexible analytical instrument. Within the CL framework, language is posited to be "firmly grounded in a group-level cognition that emerges from the interactions between the members of a cultural group" (Sharifian, 2013b, p. 1). In the following sections, the CL theoretical as well as analytical frameworks are explained followed by some critical reflections on its approach and methodology.

2.1. CL approach and its theoretical frameworks

2.1.1. Cultural cognition/conceptualization and language

In essence, CL's theoretical frameworks are mainly built on 'cultural cognition and language.' In an attempt to avoid the ambiguous, nebulous term 'culture,' Sharifian employs a more dynamic, adaptable view of CCs as a process of meaning construction, replacing the abstract, static portrayal of culture as an inflexible analytical instrument. Within the CL framework, language is posited to be "firmly grounded in a group-level cognition that emerges from the interactions between the members of a cultural group" (Sharifian, 2013b, p. 1). In short, cultural cognition is aptly described as "networks of distributed representations across the minds in cultural groups" (Sharifian, 2011, p. 5). Frank (2015) explains further that cultural cognition is "a form of cognition that ... is not represented simply as some sort of abstract disembodied 'between the ears' entity" (p. 494). As a dynamic notion that continually undergoes negotiation and renegotiation, cultural cognition "embraces the cultural knowledge that emerges from the interactions between members of a cultural group across time and space" (Sharifian, 2015a, p. 476). Sharifian (2017a) positions cultural cognition as a key feature of CL, where language, as one strategic aspect of cultural cognition, serves simultaneously both as a "collective memory bank" and "a fluid vehicle for the (re-)transmission of cultural cognition" (p. 2).

As a relatively young multidisciplinary field of inquiry, CL has both gained advantages from and made substantial contributions to diverse fields, intersecting with disciplines such as English as an International Language, World Englishes, cross-cultural pragmatics, intercultural communication, and political discourse analysis, eventually enriching and being enriched by these engagements (Sharifian 2011, 2017a, 2017d, 2018b, 2018c, Sharifian & Sadeghpour, 2021). Just like other cognitive sciences, including cognitive linguistics, CL views culture as a cognitive system intricately linked to language. This connection, in turn, originates from the conceptual faculties inherent in human beings who use language as a means of expression. However, Sharifian (2013d) argues that CL is different in terms of the much greater importance it gives to "the cultural construction of the conceptualisations that serve as the basis for particularly the semantic and pragmatic components of language" (p. 5). He illuminates that at the heart of CL lies the concept of 'meaning as conceptualization.'

By emphasizing heterogeneously disseminated, culturally-built conceptualizations (rather than culture itself), according to Sharifian and Sadeghpour (2021), CL "explores how features of human languages and language varieties are entrenched in

cultural conceptualisations" (p. 1), exhibiting diversity between and within groups as well as individuals. Sharifian (2013a) advocates for embracing such diversity (i.e., language users' varieties and variations) in CCs, particularly in the context of English as an International Language, viewing them "as assets rather than liabilities" (p.111). Underscoring the diversity in cultural understanding and cognition across language speakers within a social community, the advocates of this perspective reject the notion of homogeneously- and uniformly- shared, absolutely defined cultural norms as putative universals, advocating instead for recognition of the diversity of cultural understandings and access to CCs by language users. Instances of miscommunication in intercultural encounters signal the cross-cultural variations in the ways in which culturally heterogeneous interlocutors conceptualize their feelings, thoughts and experiences. By so doing, Xu (2017) argues that CCs act as "a dynamic, ongoing, and interactive process of cultural cognition, (re)schematisation, and (re)negotiation among members of cultural communities" (p. 705). CCs are typically indexed by many forms and features of human languages. The more CCs are shared by the individuals involved in intercultural communication, the more likely it would be for them to read between the lines (or even behind/beyond the lines) and to make indirect inferences and conjectures, and the less the likelihood of miscommunication.

Sharifian (2013d) explains further that CCs usually "feed into the semantic and pragmatic levels of meaning, providing speakers with pools of meaning which are to some extent shared across the community of speakers" (pp. 6-7). Within the CL framework, CCs are typically manifested, embodied, and mirrored in several aspects and forms of natural languages or cultural creations, including religious rituals, paintings, and literature. Nevertheless, these instantiations are not limited to verbal forms; they can also be embedded in non-verbal forms (e.g., in silence) using paralinguistic devices. For instance, in ELT textbooks, CCs are entrenched in texts as well as illustrations (Heidari Tabrizi & Chalak, 2025). In sum, the chief theoretical units of CL are brought together in the collective term CC to refer to the outcomes of human cognition processing (Sharifian, 2011, 2017a, 2017d).

2.1.2. *Metacultural competence*

As an essential part of the CL theoretical framework, metacultural competence is defined as the ability to navigate and mediate between multiple cultural conceptual systems (Sharifian, 2013c, 2013d, 2018b, 2018c). This competence involves understanding, managing, and applying different cultural frameworks, perspectives, and practices in communication and interaction in various contexts. It goes beyond surface-level cultural knowledge to include several key components such as cultural awareness (recognizing the existence and significance of cultural differences and similarities), cultural sensitivity (being sensitive to the impact of cultural differences on communication and interactions), cultural reflexivity (the ability to critically reflect on one's own cultural assumptions and those of others) and cultural adaptability (the capability to adjust one's behavior and communication strategies according to the cultural context). Sharifian (2018b) explains that "unlike very broad and binary notions of culture (source culture versus target culture), the concept of metacultural competence focuses on a dynamic and pluralistic view of cultural encounters and experiences" (p. 262), focusing on CCs rather than culture itself. Metacultural competence "develops as a result of exposure to and familiarity with various cultural conceptualizations associated with English." (Sharifian, 2018c, p.2). In effect, he argues that the concept of metacultural competence, as an offspring of the CL approach, can be regarded as a new element of the revisited and expanded notion of language proficiency. Within the perspective of the EIL paradigm, the primary aim of English language instruction is to foster the acquisition of abilities that empower language learners to engage effectively and adaptably with diverse speakers during intercultural interactions.

Among these interwoven proficiencies stands Sharifian's metacultural competence, which enables language users to navigate intercultural communications smoothly while also being aware of their own cultural identity and biases. Thereby, the landscape of language literacy and proficiency in EIL contexts is enriched by this additional competence. By nature, metacultural competence is dialogical and pluralistic; that is to say, it involves frequent and recurring negotiations and discussions among language users about heterogeneous CCs and other interculturally-constructed meanings. Metacultural competence goes beyond simply being culturally aware or sensitive; it involves a deeper level of self-awareness and introspection. Metaculturally adept language users possess the ability to communicate flexibly and appropriately in intercultural interactions and demonstrate proficiency in introducing, expounding, negotiating, and elucidating cultural concepts seemingly unfamiliar to their conversational partners. Such individuals are able to recognize the complexities and nuances of intercultural interactions and are skilled at bridging cultural gaps, managing misunderstandings, and building meaningful connections across maximally heterogeneous contexts. In essence, alongside individuals' linguistic and communicative skills, metacultural competence emerges as a fundamental, strategic requirement for acting effectively in intercultural communication within EIL environments. According to Sharifian and Jamarani (2013), this competence is potentially acquired through adequate "exposure to different systems of cultural conceptualizations, either explicitly, for example, through training, or implicitly through extended engagement in intercultural communication" (p. 7).

Sharifian (2018c) further explains that metacultural competence encompasses awareness of conceptual variations, strategies for explication, and negotiation. Awareness of conceptual variations is an essential aspect of metacultural competence, which "develops from the awareness that one language can be used by different speech communities to express differing cultural conceptualizations and is further consolidated as a result of growing familiarity with the different systems of cultural conceptualizations used by interlocutors" (Sharifian, 2013c, p. 74). Metacultural competence extends beyond mere

awareness-raising to encompass the development of abilities necessary for successful intercultural communication, such as employing strategies like explication and negotiation. Explication strategy involves intentional efforts made by speakers to elucidate strange, 'foreign' CCs for other interlocutors engaged in cross-cultural communication. This strategy mainly aims to describe the CCs by explanation. The complement to the explication strategy is negotiation, such as pursuing clarification of CCs, which enhances the smoothness and effectiveness of interaction among language users involved in intercultural communications. This could be illustrated by requesting elucidation of seemingly obvious concepts and expressions, which conceal much deeper layers of meaning. Figure 1 depicts the principal elements of metacultural competence as articulated by Sharifian.

Figure 1. Key components of metacultural competence (adopted from Schluer, 2021, p. 209)

Sharifian (2011) demonstrates the efficacy of employing specific metacultural strategies as a means to mitigate misunderstandings arising from the clash of divergent networks of CCs. He goes on to illustrate how a commonly presumed universal schema (for instance, friendship, privacy) can be interpreted divergently by language users coming from varied cultural contexts. According to Sharifian (2011), while such cultural schemas can best be described as "a category with specific culturally defined boundaries," they can evidently be associated with "widely different cultural conceptualisations and hence expectations depending on the culture in question" (p. 97). In addition to this, it is pertinent to consider how individuals may associate particular conceptual frameworks with corresponding linguistic expressions influenced by their personal beliefs and life experiences. All in all, through the standpoint of the CL theory, metacultural competence "specifies intercultural communication under awareness and strategies, including awareness and anticipation of different cultural conceptualisations by different speakers of Englishes and strategies of clarification, asking for clarification, and negotiations" (Dinh & Sharifian, 2021, p. 18). It "does not only involve students' multicultural knowledge but also their intercultural presence and academic stance through intercultural explanation and negotiation" (Xu, 2017, p. 718). In conclusion, Sharifian (2018c) emphasized that metacultural competence is still in its nascent phase, requiring further theoretical exploration, empirical investigations, and refinement of data analysis methods to enhance its depth.

2.2. Analytical frameworks of CL methodology

Within the framework of CL, the principal analytical tools of CCs encompass three closely interlocked, strategic concepts: cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural metaphors. These tools pave the ground to explore the multifaceted connections between language and CCs.

2.2.1. Cultural schemes

As the first key component of the CCs, cultural schemas are defined by Sharifian (2021) as "beliefs, norms, rules, and expectations of behaviour as well as values relating to various aspects and components of experience" (p. 10). These schemas, endlessly negotiated and renegotiated from one situation to another, are cognitively developed at the level of the cultural groups, not individuals. In fact, they emerge as a consequence of the interactions among the minds forming the cultural community. In short, according to Sharifian and Sadeghpour (2021), these macro-level "cultural schemas capture encyclopaedic meaning that is culturally constructed for lexical items of human languages" (p. 3). For instance, the cultural schema of FRIENDSHIP is the interconnected networks of ideas delineating 'friendship' in regard to diverse settings and variables. Every individual also collects and internalizes the cultural schemas by interacting with other members of a cultural community. Cultural schemas are not picked up in a homogeneously dispersed way. As explained by Sharifian (2017b), "some, but not all, components of a cultural schema" (p.61) are acquired by each member of the same cultural community. In other words, cultural schema internalization is a process that is partly shared and partly idiosyncratic. Sharifian concludes that "cultural schemas capture pools of knowledge that provide a basis for a significant portion of semantic and pragmatic meanings in human languages" (p. 480).

Sharifian (2011) contends that cultural schemas should not be seen as if they are fixed, universally shared repositories of knowledge. As a major category of CCs, he argues, they have a 'more or less' nature that "does not lend itself to such reductionist accounts" (p. 11). An extensive description of various categories of cultural schemas can be found in one of the earlier works of Sharifian (2011, pp. 8-11). He specifically refers to event schemas, role schemas, image schemas, proposition schemas, and emotion schemas. Additionally, context schema, procedure schema, and strategy schema can also be incorporated into his taxonomy. Various speech acts are also carried out and interpreted on the basis of cultural schemas (Sharifian, 2018b). Table 1 provides an overview of the classification of different types of cultural schemas, detailing their meanings, unique features, and common examples.

Table 1. A classification of cultural schemas (adopted from Heidari Tabrizi & Chalak, 2025, originally based on Sharifian, 2011)

Cultural Schemas			
#	Types	Short Definition	Example
1	Event	Abstraction from an individual's experience of certain events	Birthday; Funeral; Wedding
2	Role	Abstraction from behaviors expected of individuals in particular social roles or positions	Mother; Friend; Secretary; Teacher; Bus Driver
3	Image	Intermediate readily-imagined abstractions related to physical or social experiences	Building image schema; straight/circular/spiral path
4	Proposition	Abstraction serving as representations of thoughts and behavior	MARRIAGE IS ENDURING; WORDS CAN KILL
5	Emotion	Abstract association of a particular feeling or emotional state with certain activities/people	Shame; Shekasteh-nafsi (modesty); Ta'arof

2.2.2. *Cultural categories*

As another analytical tool, CCs employ cultural categories defined by Sharifian (2011) "as patterns of distributed knowledge across the cultural group" (p. 5), entailing "those culturally constructed conceptual categories that are primarily reflected in the lexicon of human languages" (Sharifian, 2017b, p. 4). Categorization represents a cornerstone cognitive function inherent to all human beings. In so doing, objects, events, and human experiences are classified into culturally-loaded cognitive categories. These categories, built around diverse domains such as age, relationship, and food, contribute to the formation of networks and hierarchies, with linguistic lexical items acting as labeling terms for the categories and their instances. In fact, the lexico-grammatical system of a language typically encodes cultural categories. For example, the words 'food' and 'fast food' denote a category and its subcategory, and instances of that category can be words like hamburger, pizza, and pasta. However, it is important to note that cultural categorizations, as employed earlier, are not merely labels; instead, they are associated with specific linguistic as well as behavioral expectations and standards. Language users with various cultural backgrounds may have the same or different sets of CCs for a given cultural category. That is to say, even in situations where food items are shared between two different cultures, categorization can vary, potentially being regarded as specialized knowledge within one culture while considered general, common knowledge within another.

2.2.3. *Cultural metaphors*

Another component of CCs is the concept of cultural conceptual metaphor, which has its roots in cultural systems. Within the CL framework, cultural metaphor holds significant importance as it directs attention toward investigating the cultural underpinnings of metaphorical expressions. Sharifian (2017b) aptly describes cultural metaphors as instances of "cross-domain conceptualizations that have their conceptual basis grounded in cultural traditions" (p. 4). He defines them as "cognitive structures that allow us to understand one conceptual domain in terms of another" (Sharifian (2013a, p. 1591). For instance, in societies shaped by clock and calendar systems, time is characteristically perceived as money, which is represented in linguistic metaphorical expressions such as saving, spending, wasting, or budgeting one's time. Another example is the instantiations of human body parts employed for culturally mediated conceptualizations of an individual's emotions and beliefs, known as embodiment (THE HEART AS THE SEAT OF LOVE). Likewise, Chalak (in press) argues that taboos, as culture-specific and culturally loaded lexical items, and their suitability or "inappropriateness can be interpreted differently by its users in different sociocultural settings"; moreover, "due to the changes in the language and culture and globalization, the concept of taboo is changing in different societies among the new generations."

Sharifian (2015a) argues that "many aspects of human languages are closely linked with cultural metaphors" (p. 482). To him, "in terms of their cognitive and linguistic status and… processing" (Sharifian, 2017b, p.18), these metaphors are best treated along a continuum (moving from the worldview-metaphor end to the most rhetorical, figure-of-speech end). These conceptual structures help language speakers understand a variety of culturally determined encounters. The process of

interpreting one domain in terms of another through analogy is shaped by culturally negotiated and cognitively constructed factors, and it evolves through social interaction over time and within specific contexts. In other words, the analogous relationships between particular lexical items and their associated meanings are not universal but culture-specific. In sum, these cross-domain conceptualizations, rooted in cultural belief systems, traditions, and practices, shape language users' interpretations and behaviors in social interactions, both within and across cultures. These cultural systems encompass worldviews, sociocultural norms, practices in ethno-medicine (folk medicine), and spiritual religious systems (beliefs and values). Figure 2 concludes this section by summarizing the elements of the CL's theoretical and analytical frameworks, illustrating how CCs embody various linguistic features and levels and, in turn, how they are reflected, indexed, and entrenched by language. These frameworks pave the ground for exploring CCs and their manifestation in language.
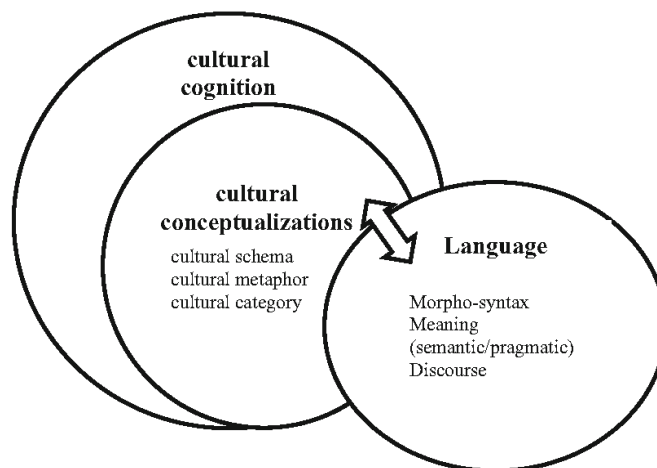
Figure 2. CL's theoretical and analytical frameworks (based on Sharifian, 2017b, p. 6)

2.3. Challenges CL faces: some critical reflection

The CL approach and methodology offer valuable insights into the intersection of language and culture, emphasizing that linguistic meaning is often culturally situated rather than universally shared. Through analyzing cultural schemas, metaphors, and categories, CL helps uncover subtle, culturally specific meanings that might otherwise go unnoticed. However, CL also faces some controversial issues and should cautiously be employed. Most scholars have used the CL approach and methodology in their empirical studies; recent improvements have been found in the analytical tools. We expect the number of CL analytical tools to increase. To the best of our knowledge, however, major theoretical advancement has not happened yet beyond Sharifian's seminal works (and especially after his sad demise). We believe that CL theoretical and analytical frameworks should be extended and expanded in order to tackle the following challenges. We encapsulate our critical evaluation in the following major concerns.

As mentioned earlier, in the CL approach, culture is seen as a cognitive system intricately interconnected to language. One may argue that as language, culture, and communication fundamentally represent social constructs indeed, how would it be feasible to confine them within a cognitive framework? While this statement is true, this does not preclude them from being understood through a cognitive lens. In CL, culture is viewed not merely as a set of social norms or practices but as a cognitive system that influences how individuals perceive and interact with the world. This aligns with the notion that our understanding of language is grounded in our embodied experiences, which are shaped by cultural contexts. We acknowledge that reducing language and culture solely to cognitive systems can be limiting. However, CL aims to bridge this gap by examining the dynamic interplay between cognitive processes and social constructs. Thus, while CL emphasizes cognition, it does not ignore the broader social dimensions of language use; in fact, CL sees these two constructs as interdependent. Sharifian (2011) argued that cultural cognition, as an emergent system, is the direct result of "the interactions between the members of a cultural group across time and space" (p. 21). In sum, we intended to highlight how CL provides valuable insights into the cognitive underpinnings of cultural phenomena while recognizing their social nature. We believe that this dual perspective enriches understanding of language as a tool for both individual cognition and collective cultural expression.

Our major conceptual concern is related to CCs as the cornerstone of the CL approach; we believe that Sharifian did not adequately elaborate on where CCs originate from or whether they are linked to or grounded in the values upheld by a group. Sharifian's writings, as well as contributions made to his approach, have not provided a comprehensive analysis of the exact nature of the interplay between CCs and values, though it is generally known that cultural values crucially account for cultural differences.

Moreover, the CL analytical framework apparently consists of three interconnected mechanisms that overlap with each other. Each of these analytical tools also has its sub-classes, which, in turn, are interrelated with each other, thus forming complex networks of CCs. For example, Sharifian and Tayebi (2017) argue that "the cultural schema of *adab* [politeness] is an over-arching macro schema that includes several lower-level cultural [sub]-schemas" (p. 395) encompassing *ta'arof* (the language of politeness and praise)*, rudarbâyesti* (modesty)*, sharmandegi* (the feeling of being ashamed)*, shekasteh-nafsi,* and *âberu* (honor). That said, we think that some criteria are missing within the CL frameworks to determine which ones are schemas, categories or metaphors and which ones are not and then recognize them in a given culture. For instance, how can we determine whether *mehmannavazi* (hospitality) is a cultural schema or not?

Our main methodological concern is that the CL frameworks lack rigorous empirical grounding and highly rely on inevitably subjective interpretations of CC. That is to say, intuitive knowledge often overshadows empirical evidence due to a lack of logical coherence in the methodologies employed within the CL frameworks. We think that some tools should be developed to establish intersubjective agreement for determining and classifying CCs. Similarly, it is clear how much data is required for a given schema, category or metaphor to reach empirical adequacy in order to be documented as a CC. In addition, should we explore CCs using a bottom-up, inductive method or a top-down, deductive one?

We think that another controversial issue is related to challenges CL may face with regard to cross-cultural applicability and globalization. With increased intercultural interaction and the global spread of ideas, languages are constantly borrowing and adapting cultural concepts from one another. This fluidity can challenge CL's ability to clearly delineate culture-specific meanings, especially in multilingual or cosmopolitan settings. For instance, cultural metaphors may not remain stable as languages interact and communities adopt words or concepts from one another, reshaping meanings along the way. It can be argued that this approach may struggle to explain how shared meanings evolve in such hybrid cultural contexts. We can also question whether the theoretical constructs of CL can adapt to these cross-cultural, global influences. Addressing these concerns requires flexible, context-sensitive approaches that balance the study of shared cultural meanings with an awareness of individual and cross-cultural variation. This balance helps CL remain a relevant and valuable framework in our increasingly interconnected world (for a detailed discussion of the challenges CL faces, see Shahi, 2023).

3. CL and its applications in language-related studies

The past decade has proved that CL can serve as a viable, fully-fledged theoretical and analytical framework to explore the intertwined association between language and CCs in different fields of study. In brief, the majority of research employing the CL framework is centered around the three key dimensions of CCs: cultural schemes, categories, and metaphors. Sharifian (2015a) asserts that applying the CL framework has "enabled fruitful investigations of the cultural grounding of language in several applied domains" (p. 473) across neighboring disciplines. He claimed that generally speaking, "any area of inquiry that involves the interaction between culture and language will significantly benefit from adopting the framework of Cultural Linguistics" (p. 488). Above all, Sharifian's (2017c) ground-breaking edited book, *Advances in Cultural Linguistics*, approves this claim. It collects into a single volume a vast panoply of 30 studies spanning a diverse range of subjects, "from the very conceptualization of life and death to conceptualisations of emotion, body, humour, religion, gender, kinship, ageing, marriage and politics" (Sharifian, 2017b, p. 26).

Most recently, *The handbook of Cultural Linguistics* (edited by Korangy, 2024 in honor and memory of Professor Farzad Sharifian) covers a kaleidoscope of diverse contributions organized in 45 chapters, which are allocated to theory and trends of CL as well as empirical studies mainly on Persian and global CL. As it is promoted in its blurb, the handbook provides "a comprehensive introduction to issues in cultural linguistics, addressing the peculiarities of the field under the rubric of localized studies, and speaking to the possibilities." Likewise, Wolf et al. (2017), in their editorial to the special issue of *International Journal of Language and Culture on CL Contributions to World Englishes*, affirm that "with a broad range of applicability and a rich array of methodological approaches…, Cultural Linguistics provides much meeting ground for scholars working within various frameworks and from different perspectives" (p. 121). These applied domains of investigation in the realm of language studies may include, but are not limited to, EIL pedagogy and practice, World Englishes, and intercultural communication, among others.

For instance, to explore intercultural communication, CL offers a theoretical-analytical framework which is strongly interpretive and meaning-oriented in nature, as Sharifian (2013c) has illustrated. In fact, the term 'intercultural communication' has gained an expanded definition and conceptualization in the new millennium as a result of the ever-increasing processes of globalization, digitalization (technological advances including online social media platforms and networks as well as interactive, virtual, telecollaborative, web-based tools) and international mobilization. According to Sharifian (2018c), these processes have brought with them a transformative shift in the contexts, the channels, and the contents of intercultural communication, making it "the default context of communication in everyday life" (p. 260). As such, for many people, especially those living in multicultural settings, intercultural communication competence is not just an asset but rather a must; that is, "an integral component of global citizenship in the twenty-first century" (p. 266). Thus, considering these expanded novel definitions and uses of intercultural communication, which entails a promising "meeting place" (Sharifian, 2015a, p.

487) or point for various cultural systems at conceptual level, CCs, as a core element to the CL framework, may offer a basis for analyzing intercultural meanings which are eventually constructed, interpreted, recognized, and negotiated in terms of their CCs in intercultural communications among language users with different cultural background (Sharifian, 2013c). He offers examples that impede mutual understanding and, more often than not, result in detrimental miscommunication between speakers in intercultural encounters due to their unfamiliarity with different systems of CCs. In the same manner, Schroder (2021) applied the CL framework to study Brazilian Portuguese Jeitinho as a CC in German-Brazilian multimodal intercultural interactions.

In a similar vein, some scholars have developed an interest in the potential contributions the CL theory and methodology may have for lexicographic studies. For instance, Cummings and Wolf (2011) used the CL approach in compiling the entries in a dictionary of Hong Kong English. Sharifian (2015a) regards this approach as a revolutionary one, "for it allows readers to become familiar with the cultural conceptualizations underlying certain expressions in the given language or the language variety… in many cases, the underlying conceptualizations themselves have their roots in older cultural traditions" (p. 848). Similarly, Carls et al. (2017) employed the CL framework in developing a dictionary of Indian English, which is characterized by the systematic treatment of Indian English with word-formation processes in focus.

Not much has been done to study the interplay between language and CCs in the field of ELT curriculum in general and materials preparation and evaluation in particular. Traditionally speaking, many studies can be found in the related literature exploring the role of culture as an abstract notion and cultural presentations in ELT textbooks. Among the most recent ones, to name but a few, are Ghasemi and Chalak (2017), Gheitasi et al. (2020), Mizbani and Chalak (2017a, 2017b), Tajeddin and Abolhassani Chime (2021), Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015), and Torki and Chalak (2017). In the last couple of years, however, the attention of some scholars, including Sharifian himself, was attracted to the analytical tools of CL as effective mechanisms to explore CCs, which can be mainly instantiated in verbal discourse as well as visuals of ELT instructional materials at a profound level. In a set of cutting-edge research, Dinh and Sharifian (2017, 2021) and Dinh (2017) reported the findings of their CC analyses from a multimodal perspective, as reflected in the reading materials and visuals of locally produced English textbooks used in high schools in Iran and Vietnam. Dinh and Sharifian (2021) elaborated on the potential contribution the CL framework may have to the EIL curriculum, pedagogy, and instructional materials, including textbook preparation as well as evaluation.

More recently, other researchers have also been attracted to studying different facets and features of the ELT curricula (such as instructional materials and textbook evaluation) through the lens of the CL framework. As an example, Peters and Mundt (2021) introduced some "novel applications of the cultural linguistic paradigm in the pedagogy of languages, expanding the scope by contributing insights that are built upon a solid empirical basis" (p. 16). In this edited collection, Schluer (2021) used a video-based cooperative approach to explore the crucial role of L2 metacultural competence in interpreting, elucidating and negotiating CCs in a receptive language skill (English reading). Most recently, Alemi and Tajeddin (2025) edited a collection of empirically-based studies, all framed by the CL approach, that deals with the ELT curriculum and textbooks. In the same collection, for example, Heidari Tabrizi and Chalak (2025) explored CCs of friendship as included in the verbal and visual contents of locally produced English textbooks used in Iranian ELT institutes. Some other studies employing the CL-oriented framework to ELI pedagogy and practice include, among others, Dabbagh and Atai (2022), Dinh (2017), Dinh and Sharifian (2017, 2021), Mohebbi and Rahimi (2019), Sahraee Juybari and Bozorgian (2020), and Xu (2017).

During the last couple of years, the CL methodology has begun to garner attention within the Translation Studies community, too, as the application of CL to different areas of Translation Studies seems to be promising (Heidari Tabrizi & House, 2025a, 2025b). In one of the pioneer studies, Heydon and Kianbakht (2019) proposed a model of analysis based on the CL framework and its CCs for translating humor as a culturally built concept to arrive at a taxonomy of culturally loaded conceptual structures. In another study, Kianbakht (2020), for the first time, employed the framework to address the much-debated concept of equivalence through the lens of CCs. He suggested the 'cultural conceptual model of equivalence,' which he claims "is capable of capturing, unpacking, and analysing *cultural conceptualisations* underlying lexical items in the source text, and deconstructing them into the new linguistic reality of the target text" (p. 139). Likewise, Hrystiv (2020) explored, from the perspective of Ukrainian BA students of English translation, the extent to which ethnolinguistic-positioned metacultural competence was useful in teaching translation and training translators. The findings of these pioneer research explorations are certainly inchoate, immature, and inconclusive at best, showing the urgent need for further research studies. Most recently, Heidari Tabrizi and Mair (2025) demonstrated the common grounds between the two disciplines and the potential capacity CL approach and methodology has in enriching Translation Studies.

4. Paper's contributions

This paper hopefully contributed to the field of CL and its applications in language-related studies in several ways. The authors provided a state-of-the-art review of how Sharifian's CL framework has been applied in various language-related domains, particularly in the context of the (post)digital revolution. They attempted to synthesize insights from diverse studies, offering a consolidated understanding of CL's theoretical and analytical frameworks. By revisiting the role of culture in language

education and research, the paper highlighted the dynamic and emergent nature of CCs and their role in meaning-making. It positioned CL as a robust interdisciplinary framework for addressing challenges in intercultural communication and globalized language use. As for future directions, the authors tried to identify critical gaps in the current CL framework, proposing future research directions, such as integrating CL with digital communication, multilingualism, and AI-powered language learning. The paper emphasized the need for interdisciplinary approaches to expand CL's applicability in emerging contexts. These contributions hopefully underscore the paper's role in advancing theoretical and practical discussions in CL and language studies.

5. Conclusion remarks and future directions

As mentioned earlier, Sharifian (2015a) believed that the CL theory and model are substantially and undeniably valuable for any field of study exploring the complex interplay between language and cognition and CCs. According to Yu (2007), CL "maintains that language is a cultural form and that conceptualizations underlying language and language use are largely formed or informed by cultural systems" (p. 65). Contemporary language education and research, as a field of study that examines the role of language as a cultural mediation in intercultural communication in the present globalized digital world, definitely falls among such fields. At the macro-level, the CL theory can inform policymakers and curriculum designers involved in developing language programs on the significance of incorporating metacultural competence in language curricula for undergraduate and graduate studies. At the more practical level, the CL analytical framework can be used by practitioners in the field to address a wide range of issues and problems. All in all, the CL approach introduces a comprehensive and unified model to the interdisciplinary field of language education and research to explore various existing issues systematically by appreciating the underlying CCs embedded within linguistic elements.

As the literature shows, the contents of ELT curricula and the instructional textbooks are "relatively devoid of pluralistic culture pedagogy, cultural diversity, and cultural dialogism" (Heidari Tabrizi & Chalak, 2025). They promoted a rather biased, Anglophone-dominated cultural 'monologism' which is in full contrast with the EIL and World Englishes paradigms, which highly acclaim the representation of a diversity of cultures in ELT textbooks, "highlighting English as a pluricentric entity attached to a multitude of cultures" (Dinh & Sharifian, 2021, p. 13). This lack of diversity, together with the full alienation of learners from cultural variances, creates a cultural gap that definitely hinders the process of learning EIL and certainly leads to cultural misunderstandings for the learners when they try to interact in real-life situations with people from different cultural backgrounds. Left unprepared and unequipped for such intercultural communication events, ELT learners are highly vulnerable to contextual misapprehensions and confusion. According to Sharifian (2017c, p. 3), the "risk is heightened when a common language is used to encode different conceptualizations, rendering these differences almost invisible." Another possible consequence for ELT learners is "a loss of self-esteem in expressing their own cultural identity" (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015, p. 191).

By delving into the cultural nuances embedded within language, language users can do their job more effectively, accounting for sociocultural norms and CCs, as well as the cultural connotations associated with them, that may otherwise be lost in intercultural communications. The CL framework transcends the constraints of conventional linguistic analysis in dealing with the role of language in intercultural encounters by exploring the interplay of different facets of cultural cognition and their realizations in language, employing CCs instead. This approach fosters greater cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, transcending mere linguistic transfer to encompass the broader context in which language and culture systems operate. In sum, the CL approach can make prospective inroads into language-related studies.

The future directions in the multifaceted interplay between CL and language-related studies are poised to explore deeper connections between language, culture, and cognition, emphasizing the dynamic and emergent nature of meaning-making in general and CCs in particular. There is also growing interest in applying Cultural Linguistics to address global challenges, such as fostering cross-cultural understanding and mitigating linguistic biases. Scholars are likely to focus on expanding the framework to incorporate emerging fields such as digital communication, multilingualism, AI-powered language learning, and intercultural pragmatics, where cultural conceptualizations play a critical role in shaping interactions. They may explore how cultural schemas, categories, and metaphors evolve in multilingual and multicultural contexts, particularly in response to globalization and (post)digital revolution. Interdisciplinary approaches integrating the empirical methodologies with theoretical insights from cognitive science, anthropology, and sociolinguistics will further illuminate how cultural conceptualizations shape language use and vice versa. Additionally, advancements in corpus linguistics and computational methods will enable large-scale analysis of cultural-linguistic patterns across diverse languages and communities. Offering transformative perspectives, applied studies may also expand into areas such as intercultural communication, language education, and translation, fostering greater cross-cultural understanding and uncovering new dimensions of how cultural cognition is encoded in language. Ultimately, this interplay will continue to highlight the inseparable relationship between language and culture, offering new insights into human cognition and social interaction. These directions highlight the more-than-ever interdisciplinary nature of modern digitalized language studies, emphasizing the need to consider cultural, social, cognitive and technological factors in the process of intercultural communications and interactions.

In conclusion, the exploration of CL in language-related studies in general and CCs in particular underscored the importance of understanding cultural nuances in language education, as it influences how individuals communicate, form relationships, and navigate social interactions. As EIL curriculum developers strive to create inclusive and culturally relevant learning materials, acknowledging and embracing diverse cultural perspectives is of paramount importance. By promoting a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding, language education can serve as a powerful vehicle for fostering meaningful connections and enriching global dialogue. In a 'global village' where language is strongly instrumental in fostering communication across cultures and shaping perceptions and worldviews, the importance of culturally informed language studies cannot be overstated. In fact, in an increasingly globalized and multicultural world, characterized by escalating advancements in technological innovations and an ever-growing demand for more and better intercultural communication, there is an urgent need to develop novel frameworks such as CL for discussing and conceptualizing language related issues that comprehensively address the profound changes within the digital domains and spheres. As globalization continues to bring different cultures closer to each other, the role of CL in language-related studies will become increasingly vital in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. Future research and practical implementations will further illuminate the best practices for incorporating CL into different subfields of language education and research.

6. References

Alemi, M., & Tajeddin, Z. (Eds.). (2025). *Cultural Linguistics and ELT curriculum*. Springer.

Carls, U., Lucko, P., Peter, L., & Polzenhagen, F. (2017). *A dictionary of Indian English with a supplement on word-formation patterns*. Leipziger Universitätsverlag.

Chalak, A. (in press). Unveiling the speech act of taboo: A critical synthesis and systematic review of Iranian research articles. In Z. Ghane & R. Falahati (Eds.), *Handbook of Persian discourse studies*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.22108/jrl.2025.142547.1868

Chen, S., & Le, T. T. (2018). *Teaching of culture in English as an international language: An integrated model*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351027182

Cummings, P. J., & Wolf, H. G. (2011) A dictionary of Hong Kong English: Words from the Fragrant Harbor. Hong Kong University Press.

Dabbagh, A., & Atai, M. R. (2022). Exploring cultural conceptualizations and metacultural competence in local EAP textbooks: A semiotic approach. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 19*(1), 141-162. http://dx.doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2022.19.1.9

Dinh, T. N. (2017). Cultural Linguistics and ELT curriculum: The case of Vietnamese textbooks. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *Advances in Cultural Linguistics* (pp. 721-745). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6_32

Dinh, T. N., & Sharifian, F. (2017). Vietnamese cultural conceptualisations in the locally developed English textbook: A case study of 'Lunar New Year'/'Tet'. *Asian Englishes, 19*(2), 148-159. https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2017.1279763

Dinh, T. N., & Sharifian, F. (2021). EIL and Cultural Linguistics approach to ESP/EAP/GE textbook analysis: Examples from locally developed English lessons in Iran and Vietnam. In Z. Tajeddin & Z. Abolhassani Chime (Eds.), *Interface between culture and English for academic purposes* (pp. 9-22). SAMT.

Frank, R. M. (2015). A future agenda for research on language and culture. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and culture* (pp. 493–512). Routledge.

Ghasemi, B. & Chalak, A. (2017). A critical discourse analysis of four advanced ELT Textbooks based on Fairclough's framework. *Research in Applied Linguistics,* Special Issue, 60-66. https://doi.org/10.22055/rals.2017.12869

Gheitasi, M., Aliakbari, M., & Yousofi, N. (2020). Evaluation of culture representation in Vision English textbook series for Iranian secondary public education. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, *12*(26), 145-173. https://doi.org/10.22034/elt.2020.11471

Heidari Tabrizi, H., & Chalak, A. (2023). In memory of Professor Farzad Sharifian (1964-2020): A selected bibliography. *Research in English Language Pedagogy, 11*(3), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.30486/relp.2023.705494

Heidari Tabrizi, H., & Chalak, A. (2025). Cultural conceptualizations of friendship in locally developed English textbooks for

Iranian ELT institutes. In M. Alemi & Z. Tajeddin (Eds.), *Cultural Linguistics and ELT curriculum* (pp.). Springer.

Heidari Tabrizi, H., & Chalak, A. (in press). Violation of Gricean maxims in social media context: Exploring Persian vs. English Instagram posts. In Z. Ghane, & R. Falahati (Eds.), *Handbook of Persian discourse studies*. Springer.

Heidari Tabrizi, H., & House, J. (2025a). Moving beyond conventional tests: Performance-based assessment as an alternative for evaluating students' academic translations. *Contrastive Pragmatics*, 6(1), 1-34. https://doi.org/10.1163/26660393-bja10139

Heidari Tabrizi, H., & House, J. (2025b). Rethinking translation evaluation in academic contexts: Performance-based assessment as an alternative practice. *Journal of Language and Translation*, 15 (1).

Heidari Tabrizi, H., & Mair, C. (2025). Exploring the potential contributions of Cultural Linguistics to Translation Studies: Bridging concepts and contexts. *Journal of Researches in Linguistics*, 17(2). 15-28. https://doi.org/10.22108/JRL.2025.142547.1868

Heydon, G., & Kianbakht, S. (2020). Applying cultural linguistics to translation studies: A new model for humour translation. *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies*, 8(3), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.8n.3p.1

House, J. (2015). *Translation as communication across languages and cultures*. Routledge.

House, J. (2024). *Translation: The basics* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Hrystiv, N. M. (2020). Metacultural competence within ethnolinguistics and translation: Students' viewpoint. *Collection of Scientific Papers "New Philology", 80*(1), 140-148. https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2020-80-1-23

Kianbakht, S. (2020). Translation equivalence theory meets cultural linguistics: A cultural conceptual model of equivalence. *Transletters: International Journal of Translation and Interpreting, 4*, 139-159.

Korangy, A. (Ed.). (2024). *The handbook of Cultural Linguistics*. Springer.

Kramsch, C. (2015). Language and culture in second language learning. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and culture* (pp. 403-416). Routledge.

Mair, C. (2016). Englishes beyond and between the three circles: World Englishes research in the age of globalization. In E. Seoane, & C. Suárez-Gómez (Eds.), *World Englishes: New theoretical and methodological considerations* (pp. 17-36). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/veaw.g57.02mai

Mair, C. (2017). Crisis of the "Outer Circle"? – Globalisation, the weak nation state, and the need for new taxonomies in World Englishes research. In M. Filppula, J. Klemola, A. Mauranen, & S. Vetchinnikova (Eds.), *Changing English: Global and local perspectives* (pp. 5–24). De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110429657-002

Mair, C. (2018). When all Englishes are everywhere: Media globalisation and its implications for digital corpora and World English Studies. In A. Zwierlein, J. Petzold, K. Boehm, & M. Decker (Eds.), *Anglistentag 2017 Regensburg: Proceedings* (83-90). Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. https://doi.org/10.22108/jrl.2025.142547.1868

Mair, C. (2020). World Englishes in cyberspace. In D. Schreier, M. Hundt, & E. W. Schneider (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of World Englishes* (pp. 360–383). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108349406.016

Mair, C. (2021). From methodological nationalism to a global perspective. In B. Schneider, T. Heyd, & M. Saraceni (Eds.), *Bloomsbury World Englishes, Volume 1: Paradigms* (pp. 27-45). Bloomsbury.

Mair, C. (2023). The study of World Englishes: Impulses from beyond linguistics. *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik/Agenda: Advancing Anglophone Studies*, 48(1), 15-35. https://doi.org/10.24053/AAA-2023-0001

Mair, C. (2024). English in Germany as a foreign language and as a lingua franca. *World Englishes*, 43(2), 244-258. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12641

Mizbani, M. & Chalak, A. (2017a). Analyzing listening and speaking activities of Iranian EFL textbook Prospect 3 based on Bloom's revised taxonomy. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies,* 8(3), 38-43. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.8n.3p.38

Mizbani, M. & Chalak, A. (2017b). Analyzing reading and writing activities of Iranian EFL textbook Prospect 3 based on Bloom's revised taxonomy. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 4(2), 13-27.

Mohebbi, A., & Rahimi, E. (2019). Situating L1 cultural conceptualizations in reading tasks of domestically designed English textbooks: Linking Cultural Linguistics theories to materials development praxis. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 19(2), 28-47.

Palmer, G. B. (1996). *Toward a theory of cultural linguistics*. University of Texas Press.

Peters, A., & Mundt, N. (2021), *Cultural Linguistics applied: Trends, directions and implications*. Peter Lang. https://doi.org/10.3726/b17907

Sadeghpour M., & Sharifian F. (2019) World Englishes in English language teaching. *World Englishes. 38*, 245–258.

Sahraee Juybari, M., & Bozorgian, H. (2020). Cultural Linguistics and ELT curriculum: The case of 'Prospect' English textbooks in Iran. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 30(3), 479-496. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12301

Schluer, J. (2021). Exploring L2 readers' metacultural competence through a video-based cooperative approach. In A. Peters & N. Mundt (Eds.), *Cultural Linguistics applied: Trends, directions and implications* (pp. 205-234). Peter Lang.

Schroder, U (2021). Jeitinho as a cultural conceptualisation in Brazilian Portuguese: A cultural linguistics' approach to talk-in-interaction. In A. Peters & N. Mundt (Eds.), *Cultural Linguistics applied: Trends, directions and implications* (pp. 31-59). Peter Lang.

Shahi, M. (2023). Some reflections on Sharifian's approach to cultural linguistics. *Intercultural Pragmatics, 20*(2), 199–207. https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2023-2004

Sharifian, F. (2009). Cultural conceptualisations in English as an international language. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *English as an international language: Perspectives and pedagogical issues* (pp. 242-253). Multilingual Matters.

Sharifian, F. (2011). *Cultural conceptualisations and language: Theoretical framework and applications*. John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/clscc.1

Sharifian, F. (2013a). Cultural conceptualisations in learning English as an L2: Examples from Persian-speaking learners. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 1(1), 90-116.

Sharifian, F. (2013b). Cultural Linguistics. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1-6). Blackwell.

Sharifian, F. (2013c). Cultural Linguistics and intercultural communication. In F. Sharifian & M. Jamarani (Eds.), *Language and intercultural communication in the new era* (pp. 74-94). Routledge.

Sharifian, F. (2013d). Globalisation and developing meta-cultural competence in learning English as an international language. *Multilingual Education, 3*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1186/2191-5059-3-7

Sharifian, F. (2014). English as an international language: A multilingual and pluricentric perspective. In J. Hajek, & Y. Slaughter (Eds.), *Challenging the monolingual mindset*, (pp. 49-62). Multilingual Matters.

Sharifian, F. (2015a). Cultural Linguistics. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and culture* (pp. 473-492). Routledge.

Sharifian, F. (2015b). Cultural Linguistics and world Englishes. *World Englishes*, *34*(4), 515-532. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12156

Sharifian, F. (2017a). *Cultural Linguistics: Cultural conceptualisations and language*. John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/clscc.8

Sharifian, F. (2017b). Cultural Linguistics: The state of the art. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *Advances in Cultural Linguistics* (pp. 1–28). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6_1

Sharifian, F. (2017c). English as an international language. In Y. Y. Kim & K. L. McKay-Semmler, (Eds.). *The international encyclopedia of intercultural communication* (1-5). Wiley.

Sharifian, F. (Ed.). (2017d). *Advances in Cultural Linguistics*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6

Sharifian, F. (2018a). Glocalization of English. In J. I. Liontas & M. DelliCarpini (Eds.), *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching* (pp.1-12). Wiley.

Sharifian, F. (2018b). Learning intercultural competence. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to learning English as a second language* (260-268). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009024761.036

Sharifian, F. (2018c). Metacultural competence in English Language Teaching (ELT). In J. I. Liontas & M. DelliCarpini (Eds.), *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching*, (pp.1-6). Wiley.

Sharifian, F. (2021). Cultural Linguistics and religion. In H. G. Wolf, A. Finzel & D. Latić (Eds.), *Cultural-Linguistic explorations into spirituality, emotionality, and society* (pp. 9-22). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/clscc.14.02sha

Sharifian, F., & Jamarani, M. (2013). Language and intercultural communication: From the old era to the new one. In F. Sharifian and M. Jamarani (Eds.), *Language and intercultural communication in the new era*. Routledge.

Sharifian, F., & Sadeghpour, M. (2020). World Englishes and intercultural communication. In J. Jackson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication* (2nd ed., pp. 299-311). Routledge.

Sharifian, F., & Sadeghpour, M. (2021). Cultural Linguistics and world Englishes: An overview. In M. Sadeghpour & F. Sharifian (Eds.), *Cultural Linguistics and world Englishes* (pp.1-14). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4696-9_1

Sharifian, F., & Tayebi, T. (2017). Perceptions of impoliteness from a Cultural Linguistics perspective. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *Advances in Cultural Linguistics* (pp. 389-409). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6_18

Tajeddin, Z, & Abolhassani Chime, Z. (Eds.). (2021). *Interface between culture and English for academic purpose*. SAMT.

Tajeddin, Z., & Teimournezhad, S. (2015). Exploring the hidden agenda in the representation of culture in international and localized ELT textbooks. *Language Learning Journal, 43*(2), 1-14. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2013.869942

Torki, F. & Chalak, A. (2017). An evaluation of English textbooks used in Iranian High schools: Teachers' and learners' attitudes. *RELP, 5*(1), 52-60.

Wolf, H. G., Polzenhagen, F., & Peters, A. (2017). Cultural linguistic contributions to World Englishes: Introduction to the special issue. *International Journal of Language and Culture*, *4*(2), 121-126. https://doi.org/10.1075/ijolc.4.2.001wol

Xu, Z. (2017). Developing meta-cultural competence in teaching English as an international language. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *Advances in cultural linguistics* (pp. 703-720). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6_31

Yu, N. (2007). The Chinese conceptualization of the heart and its cultural context: Implications for second language learning. In F. Sharifian & G. B. Palmer (Eds.), *Applied cultural linguistics* (pp. 65-85). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/celcr.7.06yu

Original Article

Politeness Strategies Used in the Correspondence of L1 and L2 User Interpol Police Officers

Rasoul Mohammad Hosseinpur[1*] (iD)
Mojtaba Abiri[2] (iD)

[*1]Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, University of Qom, Qom, Iran
[2]M.A. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, University of Qom, Qom, Iran

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

E-mail: r.mohammadhosseinpour@qom.ac.ir

ABSTRACT

The dynamic world of international policing necessitates seamless communication between officers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Interpol, the world's largest international police organization, exemplifies this environment. Understanding how politeness strategies are employed within this context is crucial for fostering effective collaboration and information exchange. Due to this significance, the present study investigated the politeness strategies used in emails of L1 and L2 user English-speaking police officers of Interpol. To this end, 100 emails composed by L1 and L2 police officers were obtained from the Interpol office in Tehran, Iran, and the frequency of politeness strategies was calculated by two professional raters. The Chi-square test did not reveal a statistically significant difference in the overall application of politeness strategies between L1 and L2 officers. However, the analysis of individual strategies highlighted some clear variations in usage patterns: L1 user officers employed more politeness strategies than their L2 user counterparts. In addition, the findings revealed that both groups used negative politeness strategies more often than positive strategies. The findings of this study can help police training centers develop a better scope on what structures to focus on in their lesson plans to make their cadets ready to work in the international arena.

KEYWORDS: Politeness strategies; Police; Interpol; L1 user; L2 user

1. Introduction

In our fast-paced, interconnected world, communication is the lifeblood of daily interaction. Effective communication skills are no longer just a plus; they are a cornerstone of success, enabling us to forge deeper understanding and maintain vital connections with those around us. This is particularly true for police officers, where clear and concise communication between them across the globe can be the razor's edge between apprehending a suspect and losing a critical lead. Therefore, the dynamic world of international policing necessitates seamless communication between officers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Interpol, the world's largest international police organization, exemplifies this environment. The lack of effective police communication in an international context could culminate in failure and poor performance. For example, Mekonnen (2018) investigated the challenges Ethiopian police officers encountered in their peacekeeping operations in the United Nations due to their poor English language ability. The study reported that the main reason for the failure and poor performance of the Ethiopian police officers was the lack of ability to communicate successfully the English language. Therefore, it seems that effective communication skill of police officers is one of the key factors to their success in their organizational activity. One of the ways through which police officers

communicate with each other is by writing emails. In this regard, understanding how politeness strategies are employed within this context is crucial for fostering effective collaboration and information exchange.

Politeness theory has been extensively studied in intercultural communication, and scholars like Brown and Levinson (1987) have proposed the seminal positive politeness and negative politeness frameworks. Positive politeness strategies focus on building rapport and maintaining social harmony, while negative politeness strategies aim to minimize imposition and respect the addressee's autonomy (Mugford, 2022). Drawing upon Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies, several studies (e.g., Jansen & Janssen, 2010; Mohammad Hosseinpur & Mosavy, 2021; Shehadeh, 2017; Spencer-Oatey, 2023) probed the different facets of politeness phenomenon in different contexts and languages. Recent contributions by Ahmadi and Weisi (2023) have further expanded our understanding of politeness in different cultural contexts, emphasizing the role of cultural norms and dynamics in shaping communication styles and interpreting the concept of politeness. Additionally, Brown and Kim (2025) provide valuable insights into the nuances of politeness in cross-cultural interactions, highlighting the importance of adapting strategies to specific contexts.

Regardless of their fruitful findings, it seems that some areas, in which politeness strategies play a key role, have gone unnoticed. For instance, the situation of politeness phenomenon in the police genre is quite unknown, and most of the studies done in the field of written products have probed the application of politeness strategies in business letters. Therefore, this study is an attempt to shed some light on the status of politeness strategies in police correspondence and add a piece to the yet incomplete puzzle of politeness application in written communication across cultures.

2. Literature Review

2.1. What is politeness

What is politeness in sociolinguistics and conversation analysis? This is the question that many scholars have tried to answer for many years. In the view of Leech (1980), politeness was "strategic conflict avoidance" which "can be measured in terms of the degree of effort put into the avoidance of a conflict situation" (p. 19). Leech considers politeness a kind of behavior that allows people to engage in a social interaction within a relative harmony (Rasmussen, 2010). Watts (2003) believed that politeness is a form of "human interaction" in which "forms of linguistic usage in any language community could be observed and analyzed as helping to construct and reproduce politeness" (p. 49). Richards and Schmidt (2013) believed that politeness can be defined in two ways, first as a way to "express the social distance between speakers" and second as a means for establishing, maintaining, and saving face among the speakers of a community (Richard & Schmidt, 2013, p. 442). Building on these foundational definitions, Brown and Kim (2025) argue that politeness is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a socio-cognitive process influenced by power dynamics, cultural values, and contextual factors. Their work underscores the fact that the negotiation of language choice is closely linked to the inherently contested nature of im/politeness in intercultural settings.

2.2. Theories of linguistic politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987) considered politeness in the area of conflict avoidance, but their concepts were quite different from those of Lakoff (1975). They mostly focused on "rationality" and "face", which were believed to be two universal features. While rationality was seen as the means-end reasoning or logic, face was considered to consist of two subcategories: Positive face and Negative face. By the positive face, they meant that people should be approved by others, and by the negative face, they claimed that everyone's actions and thoughts must be unimpeded by others (Wanger, 2004). In their argumentations, Brown and Levinson believed that in most speech acts, the facial wants of either the speaker or hearer are threatened. Thus, to avoid those face threats, or at least to mitigate them, people tend to use some strategies that can be defined under an umbrella term called "politeness".

Brown and Levinson (1987) believed that there are two main choices in human communication –in which Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) are inevitable: Either to do the FTA or not to do the FTA. If you don't do the FTA, it is obvious that there wouldn't be any harm to the hearer's face. But if you intend to do the FTA, you need to do it in such a way that a minimum amount of threat is posed in the hearer's face. Then, you will have two more options ahead: Whether to pronounce your FTA or to apply it. Based on this, Brown and Levinson defined four face-saving strategies: *Bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness,* and *off-record politeness.* The following figure outlines a vivid picture of Brown and Levinson's face-saving strategies:
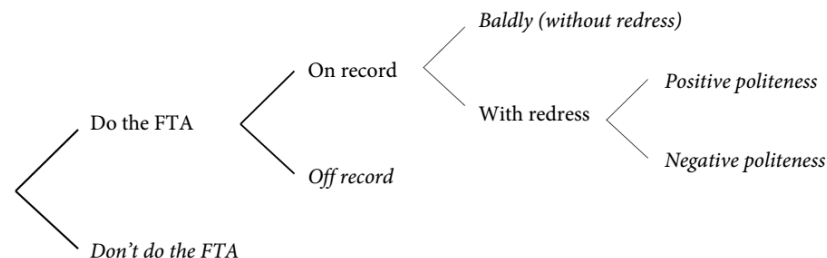
```
                                                    Baldly (without redress)

                                On record
                                                              Positive politeness
                                                With redress
              Do the FTA                                      Negative politeness

                                Off record


        Don't do the FTA
```

Figure 1. Communicative choices (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 60)

In the situation of using bald on-record politeness strategies, the speaker does not try to lower the threats to the hearer's face, rather, like giving advice in an unbiased way, s/he tries to minimize the face-threatening acts implicitly (Goldsmith & MacGeorge, 2000). Although this type of politeness strategy may cause some kind of embarrassment or shock on the side of the hearer, it is mostly used among those who have a close relationship with each other. The situations where this strategy is used can be in urgent situations (e.g., Watch out!) or task-oriented situations (e.g., Pass me that spanner).

By positive politeness, they meant those actions that speakers take to attend to the positive face wants of the hearer, which results in the hearer feeling good about themselves, their interests, or their possessions. Examples can be using in-group markers, being optimistic, being inclusive, avoiding disagreement, etc. They regarded negative politeness as those actions that speakers take to attend to the negative face wants of the hearer and to avoid imposition on the hearer so the hearer can remain autonomous. Examples can be using hedges and questions, being indirect, being pessimistic, using plural pronouns, etc. The last politeness strategy which was outlined by Brown and Levinson is off-record politeness. In this strategy, people tend to insinuate a request instead of stating that directly so that the speaker avoids any explicit imposition.

Despite the claims against Brown and Levinson's politeness theory being controversial and problematic, many researchers believe that it is still the most reliable means to compare politeness patterns in different cultures. Janney and Arndt (1993), for example, state that "with respect to the issue of empirical testability, it is important to realize that Brown and Levinson's framework ultimately represents, analyzes and accounts for highly reduced, idealized, *models* of speech activities" (Janney & Arndt, 1993: 19) (italics in original). Kasper (1994) asserts that the politeness theory meets the required criteria like explicitness, parsimony, and predictiveness for empirical theories. Moreover, Whaley and Samter (2007, P. 257) advocate Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and assert that "most scholars agree there are many strengths that make it worthwhile to know the theory and to continue to study the concepts and phenomena addressed in the theory". Finally, drawing upon the literature on politeness research, Goudarzi et al. (2015) conclude that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is "a widely applied" and "the most influential" framework for studying linguistic politeness.

Therefore, considering the prominence and popularity of this framework and due to the comparative nature of this study, it was employed in this study. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory consists of 15 positive politeness strategies and 10 negative politeness strategies. However, to make the task of data analysis more manageable, the researchers of the current study delimited themselves just to the most frequently observed politeness strategies in the emails of the police officers, and they conducted the study with the following eight positive and negative politeness strategies that will be elaborated upon in the following section:

Negative politeness strategies

    (1) Apologize
        a.   Admit the impingement
        b.   Give overwhelming reasons
    (2) Go on record as incurring a debt
    (3) Be pessimistic
    (4) Be indirect
    (5) Give deference

Positive politeness strategies

    (1) Show interest
    (2) Offer a contribution or a benefit
    (3) Be optimistic

When the interlocutors have no other way to do the FTA, the speaker may *apologize* to show his unwillingness to offend the hearer's negative face. There are four ways to apologize, among which we focus on two of them here: *Admit the impingement* and *Give overwhelming reasons.* In the former, the speaker admits that s/he is going to impinge on the hearer's face. (Note: all the examples have been taken from the police officers' emails)

- *We know that your judiciary system was waiting for our answer but ...*

- *We are aware of your organizational limitations, however, ...*

In the latter, the speaker, due to compelling reasons, may be forced to do the FTA. To redress the negative face of the hearer, s/he may provide overwhelming reasons or explanations:

- *The trainers' schedule is very busy as they travel around the world, so...*

- *As we are examining resources available to accommodate the various requests, ...*

Another negative politeness strategy, in which the speaker tries to redress an FTA is *going on record as incurring a debt*. In this case, the speaker claims his/her indebtedness usually through expressions of gratitude to the hearer.

- *[NATIONALITY] police appreciate your cooperation in this case and ...*

- *We would be highly thankful if you could possibly arrange another time to ...*

In the third negative politeness strategy, i.e., *to be pessimistic*, the speaker expresses his/her doubtfulness about the appropriateness of doing the FTA.

- *This might be against your regulations, but ....*

- *Although this can lead to longer hearing sessions, ...*

Concerning the fourth strategy in this subcategory, namely *being indirect*, the speaker uses conventional indirectness to convey his FTA indirectly.

- *Is there any other opportunity to arrange the meeting?*

- *Please let us know about your decision on the meeting time ...*

Finally, *in giving deference*, the speaker acts in a way that shows the hearer is of higher social status. This can be achieved by two means, either the speaker can humble and belittle himself, or he can pay the hearer a positive face and raise him to show that the hearer's wants are more important than those of the speaker. The best way to give deference is by using honorifics. The speakers of English prefer to show deference by using the words like *sir* in their conversations.

- *Sir, you are cordially requested to...*

- *I cannot find the right words to apologize, but you are kindly asked to ...*

Three positive politeness strategies were observed more frequently than other strategies in the correspondence of the L1 and L2 user Interpol police officer**s**: *Show interest*, *offer a contribution or a benefit,* and *be optimistic.* In *showing interest*, the speaker should notice the conditions of the hearer. Generally, this can be done by paying attention to the recognizable changes in the hearer, new possessions of the hearer, or anything that the hearer would like to be recognized by the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

- *It was a pleasure to meet you at the recent Interpol Conference...*

- *It is very useful for airport police who are required to make quick identity assessments of arrivals ...*

To mitigate the inherent threat of FTAs, the speaker may *offer a contribution or a benefit* to the hearer. By doing so, the speaker can help the hearer with whatever he/she wants. In this strategy, the speaker tries to show his/her "good intentions in satisfying Hearer's positive-face wants" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 125).

- *[NATIONALITY] Police offer to extradite future criminals to your country.*

- *This may also provide an opportunity to follow up on the agreed outcomes of your upcoming visit to [COUNTRY] next week.*

The last positive politeness strategy, in which the speaker shows his/her willingness that the hearer will cooperate with him/her, is called *be optimistic.* In this strategy, the expression of FTA is done presumptuously or optimistically to emphasize their shared interests. (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In this strategy, optimistic statements show that the speaker feels sure to be successful.

- *I believe our situation may have improved by that time.*

- *I hope we can continue a similarly productive working relationship.*

Recent developments in the field, as discussed by Andersson (2024), emphasize the need to integrate newer perspectives, such as Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, into traditional frameworks. This integration allows for a richer analysis of politeness in professional genres, including police correspondence. Furthermore, articles published in some leading journals on politeness such as the *Journal of Politeness Research* over the past few years have highlighted the growing importance of examining politeness in digital and institutional contexts, providing valuable methodological tools for future research.

2.3. Linguistic politeness in written materials

Considering the significance and popularity of Brown and Levinson's positive and negative politeness strategies, many researchers (e.g., AlAfnan, 2014; Goudarzi et al., 2015; Jansen & Janssen, 2010; Maier, 1992; Mohammad Hosseinpur & Mosavy, 2019) have drawn upon this framework as a base for their studies to probe the different facets of politeness phenomenon in different contexts and languages.

Among the others, Maier (1992) was the first scholar who focused on the usage of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy in business letters. In her study, Maier considered 18 participants, 8 L1 users and 10 L2 users, who were asked to write a mail to the manager of a hypothetical company and, in addition to explaining to them why he/she missed the interview session, persuade them to give him/her a second chance. Then, the researcher compared the L1 user data with the L2 user data to find similarities or differences between the two sets of data. Also, to make the task of data analysis more manageable, she limited herself to some of the politeness strategies that were originally proposed by Brown and Levinson. The reason behind this selection, however, was that these strategies "appeared most frequently in the letters" (Maier, 1992; p. 194). The results revealed that negative politeness strategies were used more by L1 users. On the contrary, L2 users applied more risky politeness strategies and regarding the use of these strategies, they were generally more informal and direct.

Few studies have explored the application of politeness strategies by police officers. Farinde et al. (2015) targeted the interrogation discourse in police-suspect interrogation in Nigeria. They found that positive politeness strategies had more frequency than negative politeness strategies in the discourse of interrogator-suspect. They reported that the police officers used frightening and coercive language. In this case, social order and the manner of discourse between interrogator and suspect should be considered. These kinds of discourses are straightforward and the interrogators generally want to imply their higher social order to the suspect. In another study, drawing upon Scollon's discourse approach, Rattanapian (2015) examined police officers' language in Thailand and explored the politeness strategies they employed in their encounters with foreign tourists. The results of the study revealed that a combination of independence politeness strategies, involvement politeness strategies, and bald-on-record strategies were the main politeness strategies that the participant police officers took advantage of in their encounters with foreign tourists.

Farinde et al. (2015) and O'Driscoll and Haugh (2024) conducted a review of politeness strategies in institutional communication, identifying key trends and gaps in the literature. Their findings suggest that while much attention has been paid to business and educational settings, the domain of law enforcement remains relatively underexplored. They call for greater attention to the role of politeness in fostering trust and cooperation in international organizations such as Interpol.

It seems that the investigation of politeness strategies in some contexts such as the correspondence of police officers is an under-explored area that needs further attention. Thus, the following research question was used as a guide throughout this study:

Is there any significant difference between the application of politeness strategies in the emails composed by L1 and L2 user Interpol police officers?

3. Methodology

Since the current study intended to accurately and systematically describe a phenomenon and shed light on the frequency of the occurrence of the politeness strategies used in the correspondence of L1 and L2 user Interpol police officers, it could be regarded as a descriptive study. In this study, the researchers tried to understand and investigate the existence and frequency of the occurrence of politeness strategies in a corpus of police letters. These letters were the natural written product of L1 and L2 user Interpol police officers. Due to the fact that the composers of letters were unaware of being observed, the behaviors exhibited are more credible because they occurred in a real, typical context. In addition, mathematical methods and frequency analyses were employed to explore the emails to find answers to the research questions. Therefore, this study is quantitative and corpus-based in nature as well.

The present study was done on the final product of police officers. Since the researchers obtained the letters from a web database, there was not much access to the identity, gender, and background of the police officers who composed the letters. Thus, the composers are quite unknown to the researchers.

3.1. Materials and Instruments

Interpol branches around the world are connected by a web-based secure system called I-24/7. Every message sent or received from any Interpol office around the world is stored in a network-based data center in the heart of the I-24/7 communication system. The materials used in this study were the letters sent/received from English and non-English-speaking countries to the NCB Tehran (National Central Bureau of Interpol in Tehran) between January 2018 and January 2019. Due to some limitations, the researchers had only access to the Australian letters as L1 user samples and Italian, Chinese, French, and Iranian letters as L2 user ones. Namely, 50 letters from an L1 user country (i.e., Australia) and 50 letters from L2 user countries (Italy, China, France as well as Iran) were used in this study. The L1 corpus consisted of 4631 words, and the corpus of the L2 users comprised 4322 words. Due to security reasons, some key or confidential pieces of information (such as names, dates, places…) were removed from the body of the letters, and the researchers are not allowed to reveal any information on the content of the emails.

The following negative and positive politeness strategies were the most frequently observed strategies in the data. They were used to analyze the application of politeness strategies in the emails. Each of these strategies was compared for the L1 and L2 user emails.

Negative politeness strategies

(1) Apologize.
    a. Admit the impingement.
    b. Give overwhelming reasons.
(2) Go on record as incurring a debt.
(3) Be pessimistic.
(4) Be indirect
(5) Give deference.

Positive politeness strategies

(1) Show interest.
(2) Offer a contribution or a benefit.
(3) Be optimistic.

Brown and Levinson (1987)

3.2. Data collection procedure

In the first step, to determine the frequency of the aforementioned strategies among L1 and L2 user emails, they were read and analyzed line by line. To ensure the reliability of the data, the letters were read and analyzed by two professional raters. Then, to find the answer to the first and second research questions, the frequency of each politeness strategy and also the total frequency of each group (L1 and L2 users) were calculated by the use of descriptive statistics. Finally, the results of the two groups were compared to find answers to the third research question.

To analyze the status of the application of politeness strategies in the two groups, all the emails obtained from the Interpol office in Tehran (received/sent between 2018 and 2019) were read and rated line by line by the authors. Then, the total relative frequency of each strategy was calculated, and the results were tabulated. By the use of bar charts, the relative frequencies of negative and positive politeness strategies were compared between the two groups. Also, to ensure the reliability of the ratings, two sets of results were compared with each other, and inter-rater reliability was calculated. The inter-rater reliability yielded an acceptable agreement level between the ratings, $(r = .88)$ and $(r = .77)$ for L2 and L1 user groups, respectively. Then, the total frequency of each strategy in L1 and L2 user groups was calculated. Finally, to explore the difference between the two groups, a Chi-square test was run.

4. Results

After examining the letters by the two raters, the results were sorted into two tables for each L1 and L2 user group. The results of each group were classified into negative and positive politeness strategies. Table 1 shows the total frequency of negative and positive politeness strategies in the L1 user group.

Table 1. Total frequency of politeness strategies in L1 user group

Strategy	Frequency
Negative politeness strategies	

admit impingement	6
give overwhelming reasons	9
go on record as incurring debt	2
be pessimistic	22
indirectness	5
give deference	33
Positive politeness strategies	
show interest	16
offer contribution	17
be optimistic	17

Also, Table 2 demonstrates the total frequency of negative and positive politeness strategies in the L2 user group.

Table 2. Total frequency of politeness strategies in L2 user group

Strategy	Frequency
Negative politeness strategies	
admit impingement	1
give overwhelming reasons	2
go on record as incurring debt	0
be pessimistic	13
indirectness	18
give deference	22
Positive politeness strategies	
show interest	9
offer contribution	11
be optimistic	20

In addition, Figure 2 illustrates the compared frequency of negative politeness strategies between L1 and L2 user groups.
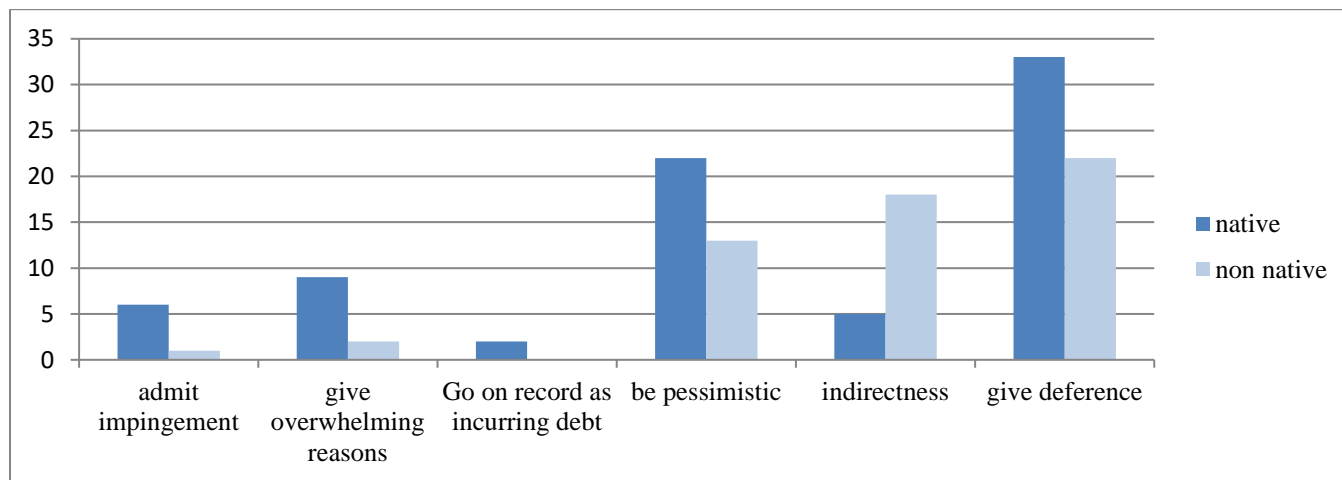

Figure 2. Frequency of negative politeness strategies between L1 and L2 user groups

As can be seen, both L1 and L2 user police officers employed the strategy *give deference* more than other negative politeness strategies, however, L2 user police officers took advantage of this strategy less than their L1 user colleagues. It can also be perceived from the above figure that L2 user police officers used the negative strategy *indirectness* much more than L1 user police officers. Besides, in their emails, L2 user police officers didn't use the negative politeness strategy *Go on record as incurring debt*, in contrast with the L1 user police officers who used it twice in their correspondence. Considering the frequency of negative politeness strategies, *give deference*, *be pessimistic,* and *give overwhelming reasons* were respectively the most frequent strategies utilized by the L1 user police officers. This pattern, however, is not the same for L2 users. They took advantage of *give deference, indirectness,* and *be pessimistic* strategies, respectively, more than other negative strategies. Figure

3 depicts the compared frequency of positive politeness strategies between L1 and L2 user groups.
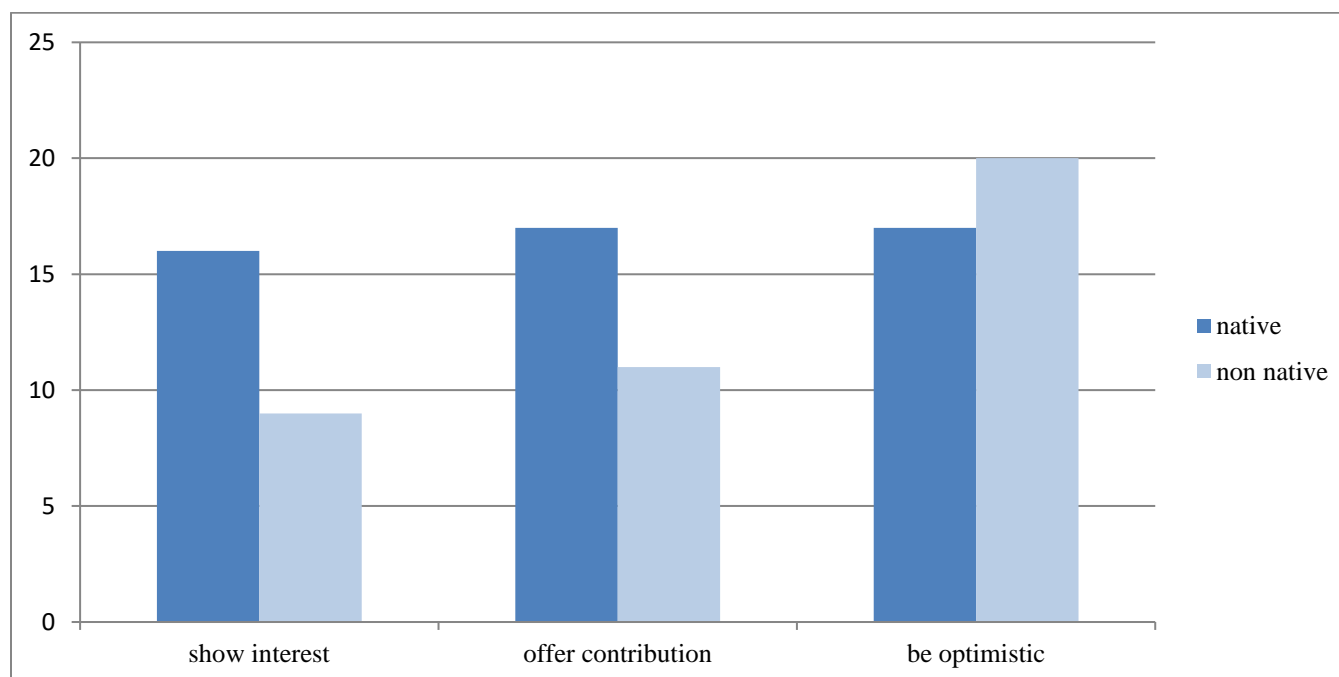

Figure 3. Frequency of positive politeness strategies between L1 and L2 user groups

Based on the information illustrated in Figure 3, the most frequent positive politeness strategy among both groups was *be optimistic*. In this regard, L2 user police officers utilized this strategy more than L1 user police officers. In contrast, L1 user police officers employed the other two positive politeness strategies (i.e., *show interest* and *offer contribution*) more than the L2 user police officers.

Concerning the frequency of the positive politeness strategies, *offer contribution, be optimistic,* and *show interest* were somehow equally employed by the L1 user police officers. This pattern does not hold for their L2 user counterparts: They were inclined to *be optimistic, offer contribution,* and *show interest* patterns.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the ratings of the authors on the use of politeness strategies were compared with each other and the results of the inter-rater reliability demonstrated a satisfactory agreement index between the ratings. Table 3 demonstrates the results of the inter-rater reliability:

Table 3. Inter-rater reliability index

	Percent Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha
L2 users (rater 1 & 2)	88.88	0.87	0.87	0.88
L1 users (rater 1 & 2)	77.77	0.74	0.75	0.76

The results of the above table show that the ratings were, to a large extent, homogeneous, and thus the results of the first rating by the researcher can be regarded as reliable.

Finally, a Chi-square test was run to investigate the differences between the two groups. Table 4 shows the results of the Chi-square test about the frequency of negative and positive politeness strategies in L1 and L2 user groups.

Table 4. Chi-square test results for L1 and L2 user groups

	Positive politeness	Negative politeness	*Marginal Row Totals*	Positive politeness
L1 users	50 (51.26) [0.03]	77 (75.74) [0.02]	127	L1 users
L2 users	40 (38.74) [0.04]	56 (57.26) [0.03]	96	L2 users
Marginal Column Totals	90	133	223 (Grand Total)	*Marginal Column Totals*

$\chi^2 = 0.120,$ $df = 1,$ $\chi^2/df = 0.12,$ $p\text{-value } (\chi^2 > 0.120) = 0.7293$

Based on the above table, the Chi-square statistic is 0.120 and the p-value is about 0.73. The Chi-square test did not reveal a statistically significant difference in the overall application of politeness strategies between L1 and L2 officers. However, the analysis of individual strategies suggests that even though their overall politeness is similar, their specific ways of being polite are slightly different: while both L1 and L2 officers are overall polite, they tend to favour different politeness tactics.

5. Discussion

The present study was done to investigate the employment of politeness strategies by L1 and L2 user police officers of the Interpol organization in their correspondence. To this end, a set of politeness strategies, observed frequently in the data, was selected to be considered in this study. In an attempt, the frequency of politeness strategies used by the two groups was calculated and compared.

A Chi-square test was run to compare the data obtained from L1 and L2 user police officers. The results revealed that there was not a significant difference in the use of politeness strategies between L1 and L2 speakers of the English language. However, the analysis of individual strategies highlights some clear variations in usage patterns. These findings suggest that L1 and L2 officers, while maintaining a similar level of overall politeness, exhibit subtle preference differences in the specific politeness strategies they employ. This finding is not in line with Maier (1992) who claimed there were some differences between L1 and L2 users in terms of using politeness strategies.

In light of the theoretical contributions by Ahmadi and Weisi (2023) and Brown and Kim (2025), the current findings underscore the importance of considering both linguistic competence and cultural awareness in training programs for international police officers. Furthermore, the results align with recent trends identified in the *studies conducted on politeness (e.g., Brown & Kim, 2025; Cao, 2024;* Hodeib, 2024), which emphasize the need for adaptive strategies in multilingual and multicultural environments. Future research should explore the impact of these strategies on interpersonal relationships and organizational effectiveness in global policing networks.

Comparing the frequency of the use of the same strategy, the results indicated that sometimes L1 user police officers employed some strategies more frequently than L2 user police officers, and sometimes L2 users surpassed the L1 users in utilizing a strategy. In addition, the results of this study demonstrated that both L1 and L2 officers utilized *give deference* as the most frequent negative politeness strategy.

The following examples illustrate some of these uses:

L1 user: *Yes, sir. It's my pleasure to inform you that I have discussed this matter with the Ambassador, and we propose to reconsider the training for later in (YEAR).*

L2 user: *Would you please give me your suggestion for the meeting time, sir?*

This finding aligns with expectations in intercultural communication, where deference is essential for maintaining respectful interactions (Kaur, 2023). However, L2 officers exhibited a lower usage of *give deference* compared to their L1 counterparts. This might suggest that L2 officers feel slightly less confident in asserting their opinions or requests due to potential language limitations. Another reason could be the notion of hierarchy in police organization, which has been dominated by the behavior of police staff. Since the composers of the emails didn't know the rank and the identity of the receivers, and because they didn't want to threaten the face of the reader, giving deference and presuming the other person as higher might be an unintentional choice which was reflected in the written behavior of police officers in both groups.

Being pessimistic was also among the most frequent negative politeness strategies of the two groups. It was the second most frequent negative politeness strategy among L1 users and the third most frequent negative politeness strategy among L2 users.

L1 user: *This might be against your regulations, but I would appreciate it if you could provide a brief CV or biography of Brigadier [NAME].*

L2 user: *Although this can lead to longer hearing sessions, it can clarify many things.*

This phenomenon can also reflect the mind of police officers who consider the right of decision for their superiors. So, when they presume the other person is higher, they would relay the right of decision to their reader. They might think that their reader can reject their request and therefore they express their wants in a pessimistic manner.

Also, Maier (1992) contended that L2 speakers of English were not inclined to use some politeness strategies in their correspondence which was parallel to the findings of this study: In the L2 user group, nobody used the strategy *Go on record*

as incurring debt which can suggest strategy avoidance. This strategy avoidance could be traced back to two reasons: It could be arisen from cultural differences or it could be the result of unawareness about such a strategy. It is worth mentioning here that, this strategy was used only 2 times by L1 user police officers, which is the least frequent politeness strategy among other strategies.

> **L1 user:** *…. [NATIONALITY] police highly appreciate your cooperation in this case and …*

> **L1 user:** *I will be very grateful if you arrange a time to meet you at the recent Interpol conference with my colleague Mr. [NAME].*

In both groups, negative politeness strategies were more frequent than positive politeness strategies. This finding supports the results of Pilegaard (1997) and Nickerson (1999) who claimed the writers of business letters mostly used negative politeness strategies. In addition, this study revealed that similar to the L1 user police officers, L2 user police officers used negative politeness strategies more often than positive ones which supports the findings of Shams (1997). This phenomenon could show that the English language relies on negative politeness strategies as the major politeness device. However, this is in contrast with Farinde et al. (2015) who investigated the use of politeness strategies in police interrogations in Nigeria. They found that positive politeness strategies had more frequency than negative politeness strategies in the discourse of interrogator-suspect. In this case, social order and the manner of discourse between interrogator and suspect should be considered. These kinds of discourses are straightforward and the interrogators generally want to imply their higher social order to the suspect. Therefore, the contradiction of findings of Farinde, et al. (2015) with the current study is logical.

In contrast with the findings of Guodong and Jing (2005) who compared the use of politeness strategies between American and Chinese students, the data in this study revealed that L1 speakers used more politeness strategies (127 times) than L2 speakers (96 times). However, in another study, Goudarzi et al. (2015) found that the frequency of strategies used by L2 user participants was more than that of L1 users.

6. Conclusion

This study was done to add a piece to the yet incomplete puzzle of the application of politeness strategies in written communication. In this regard, the use of politeness strategies in police written communication was compared between L1 and L2 user police officers of the Interpol organization.

The research highlights the nuanced use of politeness strategies by L1 and L2 officers. L2 officers favored indirectness more, suggesting a potential cultural influence on communication styles. This reinforces the importance of considering language background when interpreting politeness in intercultural interactions.

The findings suggest a need for training programs that equip officers with an understanding of how politeness strategies can vary across cultures. This can help improve communication clarity and cooperation in international police collaborations. L2 officers may benefit from language instruction that emphasizes not just grammatical accuracy but also culturally appropriate expressions of politeness within professional contexts.

Also, regarding the analysis of the results of this study, it can be said that the notion of hierarchy in police organizations can be traced in the written production of police officers. Police officers in both groups used the *give deference* strategy more often than other strategies. By using this politeness strategy, both groups assumed the reader to have a higher social or occupation position. Also, both groups used the *be pessimistic* strategy to grant the right of decision to their reader (which was considered their superior).

Future research directions include expanding the scope of analysis to include spoken interactions, incorporating insights from newer theoretical frameworks, and exploring the role of digital communication technologies in shaping politeness practices. Additionally, given the increasing globalization of law enforcement, further studies should investigate the applicability of these findings to other varieties of English and non-English-speaking contexts.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge limitations such as sample size and focus on written communication. Future research could explore these dynamics in spoken interactions and with larger, more diverse samples. Furthermore, the level of language proficiency, age, gender, and rank of police officers were unknown to the researchers in this study. Another study can be done in a controlled situation to see if the results are consistent or not. Finally, it should be noted that the findings of this study represent the tendencies typical only for Australian variety of English and cannot be generalized to all other varieties. Other interested researchers can consider other varieties of English in their study.

7. References

Ahmadi, R. & Weisi, H. (2023). Grand strategy of politeness in new social networks: revisiting Leech's politeness theory among Iranian EFL learners using Telegram. *Journal of Politeness Research*, *19*(2), 415-

438. https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2022-0003

AlAfnan, M. A. (2014). Politeness in business writing: The effects of ethnicity and relating factors on email communication. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics, 4,* 275-289. http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2014.42022

Andersson, M. (2024). E-mpoliteness – creative impoliteness as an expression of digital social capital. *Journal of Politeness Research*, *20*(2), 227-248. https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2022-0009

Brown, L. & Kim, S. (2025). Intercultural Im/politeness: perceptions of language choice and translanguaging in the Korean community in Australia. *Journal of Politeness Research*, *21*(1), 193-220. https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2023-0079

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813085

Cao, J. (2024). Prosody influence on (im)politeness perception in Chinese-German intercultural communication. *Journal of Politeness Research*, *20*(2), 483-506. https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2022-0043

Farinde, R. O., Olajuyigbe, O. A., & Matthew, A. (2015). Discourse control strategies in police-suspect interrogation in Nigeria. *International Journal of English Linguistics,5*(1), 146-158. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v5n1p146

Goldsmith, D., & Macgeorge, E. (2000). The impact of politeness and relationship on perceived quality of advice about a problem. *Human Communication Research, 26*(2), 234-263. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2000.tb00757.x

Goudarzi, E., Ghonsooly, B., & Taghipour, Z. (2015). Politeness strategies in English business letters: A comparative study of native and non-native speakers of English. *Psychology of Language and Communication*, *19*(1), 44-57. https://doi.org/10.1515/plc-2015-0004

Guodong, L. & Jing, H. (2005). A contrastive study on disagreement strategies for politeness between American English & Mandarin Chinese. *Asian EFL Journal*, *7*(1), 1-12.

Hodeib, C. (2024). Conceptualizations and evaluations of (im)politeness in Syrian Arabic. *Journal of Politeness Research*, *20*(2), 297-318. https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2020-0016

Janney, R. W. & Arndt, H. (1993). Universality and relativity in cross-cultural politeness Japanese. *Multilingua*, 8(2), 207–221.

Jansen, F., & Janssen, D. (2010). Effects of positive politeness strategies in business letters. *Journal of Pragmatics, 42*(9), 2531-2548. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.02.013

Kasper, G. (1994). Politeness. In R. E. Asher & J. M. Y. Simpson (Eds.), *The Encyclopedia of linguistic politeness* (pp. 223–248). Multilingua.

Kaur, J. (2023). (Mis/non) understanding in intercultural interactions. In I. Kecskes (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of intercultural pragmatics* (pp. 164-187). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108884303

Lakoff, R. (1975). Linguistic theory and the real world. *Language Learning, 25*(2), 309-338. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1975.tb00249.x

Leech, G. N. (1980). *Explorations in semantics and pragmatics*. Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/pb.i.5

Maier, P. (1992). Politeness strategies in business letters by native and non-native English speakers. *English for Specific Purposes, 11*(3), 189-205. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0889-4906(05)80009-2

Mekonnen, Y. K. (2018). The importance of English communication skills for Ethiopian military observers and police officers in international peacekeeping missions. *Communication and Linguistics Studies, 4*(4), 99-107. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.cls.20180404.11

Mohammad Hosseinpur, R. & Mosavy, Z. (2019). Gratitude speech act on Instagram: The emergence of a particular genre of language? *Language Horizons, 3*(1), 21-41. https://doi.org/10.22051/lghor.2019.26470.1133

Mohammad Hosseinpur, R., & Mosavy, Z. (2021). Politeness on Instagram: The employment of gratitude speech act by male and female English and Persian users. *Research in English Language Pedagogy, 9*(1), 1-23. https://doi.org/10.30486/relp.2020.1897275.1197

Mugford, G. (2022). *Towards a new pedagogy for teaching foreign language politeness: Halliday's model and approaches to politeness*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003326052

Nickerson, C. (1999). The use of politeness strategies in business letters written by native speakers of English. *Discourse in Professional Contexts*, 127-142

O'Driscoll, J. & Haugh, M. (2024). 20 years (further) on: whither politeness studies now? Opening up the binaries. *Journal of Politeness Research*, *20*(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2023-0085

Pilegaard, M. (1997). Politeness in written business discourse: A text linguistic perspective on requests. *Journal of Pragmatics, 28*(2), 223-244. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0378-2166(96)00084-7

Rasmussen, S. L. (2010). *To define and inform an analysis of information provided in dictionaries used by learners of English in China and Denmark*. Cambridge Scholars.

Rattanapian, S. (2015). *Politeness and miscommunications in service encounters at tourist police centers in Thailand* (Doctoral dissertation). Thammasat University, Thailand.

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (2013). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. Rutledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315833835

Shams, M. R. (1997). *Gender, socioeconomic status, and politeness strategies.* (Unpublished master's thesis). Esfahan: Esfahan University.

Shehadeh, M. (2017). Politeness strategies of the provisional agreement document. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 8*(1), 227-232. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.8n.1p.227

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2023). *Politeness and rapport management.* In I. Kecskes (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of intercultural pragmatics* (pp. 484-509). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108884303

Wagner, L. C. (2004). Positive and negative politeness strategies: Apologizing in the speech community of Cuernavaca, Mexico. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, *13*, 19-28.

Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511615184

Whaley, B. B., & Samter, W. (2007). *Explaining communication: contemporary theories and exemplars*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Beauty in the Minds of Language Learners: A Portray of the Nexus between AI Psychological Flow, Grit Tendencies, Mental Health, and Critical Thinking

Tahereh Heydarnejad[1*] (iD)
Behruz Lotfi Gaskaree[2] (iD)
Sajjad Zahedi Moghaddam[3] (iD)
Ali Mavaddat Kakhki[4] (iD)

[*1]Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Gonabad, Gonabad, Iran
[2]Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Zabol, Iran
[3]M.A. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Zabol, Zabol, Iran
[4]M.A. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

E-mail: heydarnejad@gonabad.ac.ir

ABSTRACT

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into language development has garnered considerable interest, especially within the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Psychological flow is regarded as a pivotal element that affects learning outcomes; however, its significance in the context of AI-assisted language learning has yet to be thoroughly investigated. This study examines the relationship between psychological flow induced by AI, tendencies of fortitude, mental health, and critical thinking among 214 university students enrolled in EFL programs who utilized AI-integrated language learning aids. Data were gathered via structured online surveys, and the relationships among the variables were examined utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings suggest that the psychological flow induced by AI has a substantial impact on learners' levels of fortitude, mental well-being, and critical thinking. The findings indicate that when learners engage in AI-assisted language learning and experience a state of flow, they exhibit elevated levels of perseverance, improved mental well-being, and enhanced critical thinking. These outcomes underscore the dual function of flow in AI-assisted language learning, as it not only augments learners' cognitive engagement but also fosters positive emotional states that are conducive to improved mental health and enhanced problem-solving abilities. The findings of the study possess significant pedagogical implications, indicating that AI-based platforms ought to be developed to promote a state of fluidity by integrating personalized learning trajectories, real-time feedback mechanisms, and engaging features.

KEYWORDS: AI psychological flow; Grit tendencies; Mental health; Critical thinking; EFL learners

1. Introduction

The integration of AI in language education has sparked a growing interest in understanding its impact on learners' psychological and cognitive processes (Wang & Xue, 2024; Xiao et al., 2024). A notable concept that has gained prominence in this context is AI psychological flow, a state of deep immersion and intrinsic motivation that enhances learning experiences (Norsworthy et al., 2023; Zhai et al., 2024). AI-assisted language learning (AIALL) has the potential to facilitate psychological flow by providing personalized and adaptive learning environments allowing learners to engage in meaningful and enjoyable tasks (Payant & Zuniga, 2022). However, the effectiveness of AIALL in fostering psychological flow is contingent on various individual and contextual factors, including grit tendencies, mental health, and critical thinking skills (Zhai et al., 2024).

Grit, characterized by perseverance and passion for long-term goals, has been identified as a crucial determinant of success in educational settings (Duckworth et al., 2007). In the realm of language learning, grit has been linked to sustained motivation, engagement, and achievement (Zhang et al., 2022). Language learners with high levels of grit are more likely to persist in their studies despite challenges, demonstrating resilience and a strong commitment to their goals (Namaziandost et al., 2024). The interplay between grit and AIALL presents an intriguing avenue for exploration, as the adaptive nature of AI tools may either enhance or hinder learners' perseverance depending on their individual tendencies (Zhai et al., 2024).

In addition to grit, mental health is a critical factor influencing language learning outcomes. Positive mental health contributes to academic success, while poor mental health can hinder cognitive functioning and motivation (Chen & Kim, 2024). The pressures of language learning, coupled with the challenges of adapting to AI-driven environments, may exacerbate mental health issues such as anxiety and stress (Wu, 2023). Nevertheless, AI technologies offer opportunities for mental health support through personalized interventions and virtual companions, which can alleviate some of the psychological burdens faced by learners (Long & Lin, 2023).

Critical thinking (CT), another essential component of effective language learning, involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information (Halpern, 2003). The development of CT skills is vital in AI-assisted learning environments, where learners should navigate vast amounts of information and engage with interactive technologies in meaningful ways (Namaziandost et al., 2023). Studies suggest that AI tools, when used appropriately, can enhance critical thinking by providing learners with opportunities to engage in problem-solving, debates, and self-directed learning (Liu & Wang, 2024; Shen & Teng, 2024). However, concerns have been raised regarding the potential for AI to foster passive learning and reduce opportunities for deep cognitive engagement (Wang & Xue, 2024).

Notwithstanding the increasing corpus of studies on AI in education, understanding the interactions among psychological and cognitive factors in the framework of AIALL still lags. The present study aims to bridge this gap by exploring how AI psychological flow interacts with learners' grit tendencies, mental health, and CT, ultimately shaping their language learning experiences and outcomes. This choice of factors is based on their direct connection to the motivating and cognitive states of learners, which are essential for maximizing the results of language learning. The incorporation of these factors is also affected by their potential to direct the design of AIALL settings. By critically examining these relationships, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and technology developers, ensuring that AIALL environments are designed to optimize learners' psychological and cognitive well-being. A nuanced understanding of these factors will contribute to the development of more effective, engaging, and supportive AI-driven language learning experiences. Keeping these stands points in the mind, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: Does AI psychological flow among EFL learners affect their grit tendencies in the voyage of AI-assisted language learning?

RQ2: Does AI psychological flow among EFL learners affect their mental health in the voyage of AI-assisted language learning?

RQ3: Does AI psychological flow among EFL learners affect their CT skills in the voyage of AI-assisted language learning?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. AI psychological flow

Csíkszentmihályi first described the concept of flow in the book "Beyond Boredom and Anxiety" and has since explored it across various domains, such as art, sports, and work (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Furthermore, Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009) describe flow as the "subjective buoyancy of experience when skillful and successful actions seem effortless, even when a great deal of physical or mental energy is exerted" (p. 137). Psychological flow can play a significant role in language learning. Second-language researchers have investigated the interaction between second-language classroom dynamics and a diverse array of individual difference factors and language tasks, both in traditional classroom settings and online environments, employing various implementation variables (Amini et al., 2016; Ibrahim, 2020; Norsworthy et al., 2023; Payant & Zuniga, 2022). Moreover, Zuniga

(2023) confirmed that high school students who reported frequent flow experiences were more likely to develop skills and perform better in activities related to art, music, athletics, math, and science. Studies in language learning indicated that reaching a flow state can significantly improve language acquisition and retention. Individuals who regularly experience flow are more inclined to immerse themselves in the material, resulting in enhanced proficiency and increased satisfaction with the learning experience (Ibrahim, 2020). Amini et al. (2016) discovered a positive correlation between flow experiences and vocabulary knowledge gains. Similarly, Engeser et al. (2005) found positive correlations between flow experiences during a French L2 class and results on a final exam.

2.2. Grit tendencies

Grit, defined as perseverance toward long-term goals despite setbacks (Duckworth et al., 2007), is critical in language learning's iterative nature. Duckworth's model emphasizes two components: Perseverance of Effort, which is a sustained practice despite challenges, and Consistency of Interest, which is a stable commitment to fluency goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). The Triarchic Model of Grit (Datu et al., 2018) expands this by integrating resilience and psychological capital. AI tools have the potential to scaffold grit through adaptive reminders, progress visualizations, and encouragement, fostering resilience and self-efficacy (Datu et al., 2018). Overall, grit could reinforce flow by maintaining effort during challenging tasks and indirectly buffer mental health by promoting a growth mindset. In recent years, a growing body of research has begun to explore the significance of grit in language development. Furthermore, Shafiee Rad and Jafarpour (2022) found that efficient emotion management positively impacts grit, emotion control, and resilience in the process of learning English. Similarly, Ghanbari and Abdolrezapour (2021) discovered that positive emotions and perseverance of EFL learners in L2 were beneficial to their academic development. Researchers have also found that individuals with high levels of grit tend to have a positive attitude in their working life (Lan, 2022) and higher ability to focus on their goals and try harder to achieve them (Hejazi & Sadoughi, 2022). Additionally, the literature suggest that grit is a strong predictor of motivation to study, engagement with learning, and success in the English language (Wei et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2022; Zhao & Wang, 2023). Gao et al. (2024) and Zhai et al. (2024) have underlined that learners exhibiting more significant levels of grit are more inclined to consistently engage with learning technologies, suggesting that grit may play an essential role in the adoption and effective utilization of AI-driven language learning tools.

2.3. Mental health

Mental health is a fundamental aspect of human well-being, encompassing a holistic state where individuals can realize their potential, cope with life's stresses, work productively, and contribute to their communities (Newson et al., 2024). Mental health in AI-ALL can be framed through the Task-Orientation vs. Self-Orientation dichotomy (Rogers, 1961). Task-oriented learners focus on goal-driven activities, which enhance self-efficacy, whereas self-orientation correlates with anxiety over perceived inadequacies (Rogers, 1961). Positive mental health could enable flow states, sustain grit, and create a safe environment for critical thinking. Although Tucker and Leriche (1964) mentioned that defining mental health is complex and subjective, this multifaceted construct is characterized by positive feelings about oneself and life, resilience in the face of adversity, and the ability to maintain healthy relationships (Manderscheid et al., 2010). Positive mental health is widely recognized as a crucial factor in coping with adversity and promoting positive developmental outcomes (Moore et al., 2023).

Despite its importance, millions of individuals worldwide struggle with mental health issues (Wu, 2023). This challenge is particularly prevalent among college and university students, whose emotional and mental well-being is closely linked to their academic performance, course completion, and overall success in higher education (Cage et al., 2018). The prevalence of mental health issues among students, mainly EFL learners, can be attributed to several interrelated factors. A significant concern is academic pressure, where high levels of anxiety, depression, and stress are reported, with study-related worries being the most impactful (Thang et al., 2022). Additionally, the problematic use of social media has been linked to increased foreign language anxiety and academic burnout, further exacerbating mental health challenges (Shu, 2023). Furthermore, barriers to accessing mental health support within university settings contribute to the persistence of these issues (Cage et al., 2018).

Moreover, various research has identified several factors that contribute to or exacerbate mental health issues among university students. These include the academic pressures of studying, the culture and systems within educational institutions, and the overall stress associated with the university experience (Neves & Hillman, 2019; Lee & Kim, 2018; Winzer et al., 2018). Furthermore, Chen and Kim's (2024) study found a strong correlation between students' mental health scores and their English language achievement, highlighting the interconnectedness of emotional well-being and academic success. As technology continues to advance, the landscape of mental health support for college students is also evolving. One emerging trend is the integration of AI into the field of mental health care (Wu, 2023). Additionally, AI-powered online psychological counseling services can provide students with access to mental health support at any time and from any location, addressing the challenges of limited on-campus resources and the stigma associated with seeking help (Moore et al., 2023).

2.4. Critical thinking

CT is a complex and multifaceted construct that has been the subject of extensive research and theoretical frameworks. Socrates is widely recognized as the first philosopher to conceptualize and promote critical thinking as a fundamental component of human cognition and learning (Paul, 1988). Halpern (2003) defines CT as a type of higher-order thinking that results from cognitive mechanisms and mental practices. This emphasis on cognitive skills and dispositions underscores the importance of CT in modern education, as it prepares students for the evolving job market, enhances informed citizenship, and addresses the gap between employer demand and graduate preparedness, particularly in the context of increasing AI-driven job automation. Theoretically, CT encompasses a range of cognitive skills, including problem-solving, inference formulation, probability assessment, and decision-making (Li & Heydarnejad, 2024). The assessment of the cognitive process, the rationale underlying the conclusions reached, and the multiple aspects considered during decision-making are also central to the conceptualization of CT (Halpern & Dunn, 2023). The integration of AI introduces a new layer of complexity to the study of CT. Studies have indicated that AI-driven interventions, such as using generative AI for interactive quizzes and debates, can lead to statistically significant improvements in CT abilities compared to traditional methods (Heydarnejad & Çakmak, 2024; Liu & Wang, 2024). Additionally, the interplay between CT, self-directed learning, and AI-assisted writing highlights the importance of fostering independent learning to mitigate over-reliance on AI tools (Shen & Teng, 2024). Furthermore, the responsible integration of generative AI in language teaching necessitates clear guidelines to ensure that these technologies enhance rather than replace CT and human interaction (Cogo et al., 2024).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and settings

This survey included 214 university students, and the data was collected in the second semester of the 2024 academic year. The sample included students from three major academic disciplines: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Translation Studies, and English Literature at the MA level at universities of Khorasan Shomali, Khorasan Razavi, and Tehran. The students were chosen using a non-random, convenience selection technique. All participants confirmed their active use of AI-assisted language learning tools throughout their education, based on responses from a pre-study questionnaire and course records. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years (136 female, 78 male), predominantly identifying as non-native English speakers. They were in the first or second year of their Master's program and hailed from various ethnic backgrounds, including Persian, Kurdish, and other prevalent ethnic groups in the region. Socioeconomic status was diverse, with students from both urban and suburban regions. The research sought to encompass a diverse array of learners about their academic and cultural experiences.

3.2. Instruments

The AI Psychological Flow Scale (AIPFS) was implemented by Norsworthy et al. (2023) to evaluate the emotions and thoughts that students may have encountered during the application of AI. This scale comprised nine items in a seven-point Likert scale: Absorption, Intrinsic Reward, and Effort-less Control. The grit inclinations of the students were assessed using the language-domain-specific grit scale (LDSGS), which was developed by Teimouri et al. (2020). This scale comprises 12 items: six items to evaluate perseverance of effort and six items to evaluate the consistency of interest on a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me). The Mental Health Quality of Life Questionnaire (MHQoL) evaluates the participants' mental health and quality of life (van Krugten et al., 2022). The MHQoL consists of seven items that address self-image, independence, mood, relationships, daily activities, physical health, and future outlook, organized into 26 items rated on a six-point Likert scale. The CT of the participants was evaluated using the Watson–Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal Form A, developed by Watson and Glaser (1980). This scale has five sections: inference (16 items), detecting assumptions (16 items), making deductions (16 items), interpretation (16 items), and assessment (16 items). The reliability and validity of the applied instruments were assessed and reported on Table 1.

Table 1. Report on construct reliability and validity

Constructs		Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
AI Psychological Flow	Absorption	0.786	0.872	0.922
	Effort-less Control	0.694	0.890	0.929
	Intrinsic Reward	0.793	0.881	0.925
	total	0.758	0.758	0.892
L2 Grit	Consistency of Interest	0.728	0.815	0.889
	Perseverance of Effort	0.653	0.821	0.882
	total	0.685	0.773	0.898

Mental Health	Self-image	0.749	0.889	0.923
	Independence	0.651	0.821	0.881
	Mood	0.593	0.705	0.816
	Relationships	0.610	0.729	0.826
	Daily Activities	0.631	0.819	0.872
	Physical Health	0.631	0.724	0.825
	Future	0.579	0.749	0.808
	total	0.635	0.760	0.879
Critical Thinking	Inference	0.505	0.920	0.931
	Recognizing Assumptions	0.528	0.894	0.904
	Making Deductions	0.502	0.932	0.939
	Interpretation	0.546	0.814	0.798
	Evaluation	0.511	0.848	0.869
	total	0.518	0.738	0.808

Table 1 presents critical reliability and validity indicators for the constructs used in the investigation. The AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability values are displayed for each construct and its related components, offering insight into the internal consistency and convergent validity of the metrics. The components of the AI Psychological Flow construct—Absorption, Effortless Control, and Intrinsic Reward—exhibit robust dependability, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.872 to 0.890, signifying good internal consistency. The Composite Reliability ratings go from 0.922 to 0.929, indicating a high level of consistency among the components. The overall AVE for this construct is 0.758, signifying strong convergent validity. The L2 Grit construct, consisting of Consistency of Interest and Perseverance of Effort, has an overall Composite Reliability of 0.898 and a total AVE of 0.685, which is satisfactory although somewhat inferior to that of AI Psychological Flow. Cronbach's Alpha scores demonstrate robust internal consistency across the components, ranging from 0.773 to 0.821. The Mental Health construct's constituent components, including Self-image, Independence, and Mood, exhibit good to moderate reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values between 0.705 and 0.889, and Composite Reliability scores ranging from 0.808 to 0.872. The overall AVE of 0.635 signifies satisfactory convergent validity. The CT construct's individual subscales—Inference, Recognizing Assumptions, Making Deductions, Interpretation, and Evaluation—exhibit high Cronbach's Alpha values, between 0.814 to 0.932, indicating exceptional internal consistency.

3.3. Data collection

Data was gathered over the course of three months in the second semester of the 2024 school year. Participants in the research were given access to an online survey platform via their course teachers. The study included a set of standardized questions assessing AI psychological flow, grit inclinations, mental wellness, and critical thinking abilities. Each of the instruments were developed to evaluate students' self-reported experiences with AI-assisted language acquisition and their corresponding psychological states.

3.4. Data analysis

The data were analyzed using Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares), a statistical software that is frequently employed to analyze data with non-normal distributions, as a result of the non-normality of the data distribution. The selection of Smart PLS was based on its capacity to estimate the parameters of the model using the Partial Least Squares method, which is robust in situations where data deviate from normality, and to manage intricate relationships between variables. The relationships among AI psychological flow, grit tendencies, mental health, and critical thinking skills were tested using SEM via Smart PLS in the study. The SEM model was developed to investigate the direct and indirect effects between the constructs. The procedure of analysis consisted of various stages: Using indices such as Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE), the validity and dependability of the constructs were evaluated.

4. Results

To decide about the appropriate data analysis procedure, firstly, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied.

Table 2. Kolmogorov-smirnov test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Absorption	0.179	0.000
Effort-less Control	0.121	0.000

Intrinsic Reward	0.115	0.000
AI Psychological Flow	0.064	0.034
Consistency of Interest	0.099	0.000
Perseverance of Effort	0.112	0.000
L2 Grit	0.074	0.007
Self-image	0.094	0.000
Independence	0.081	0.002
Mood	0.090	0.000
Relationships	0.081	0.002
Daily Activities	0.092	0.000
Physical Health	0.159	0.000
Future	0.206	0.000
Mental Health	0.157	0.000
Inference	0.085	0.001
Recognizing Assumptions	0.105	0.000
Making Deductions	0.072	0.008
Interpretation	0.142	0.000
Evaluation	0.070	0.013
Critical Thinking	0.152	0.000

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test findings (Table 2) indicate that most variables display non-normal distributions, suggesting the necessity of nonparametric statistical approaches for subsequent analysis.

Table 3. Report on the t-statistics and factor loadings

		Questions	Original Sample	T -Statistics
AI Psychological Flow	Absorption	A1	0.898	30.185
		A2	0.845	53.551
		A3	0.915	74.121
	Effort-less Control	A4	0.664	15.934
		A5	0.825	26.650
		A6	0.980	66.992
	Intrinsic Reward	A7	0.750	19.715
		A8	0.949	51.274
		A9	0.957	60.985
L2 Grit	Consistency of Interest	S1	0.874	56.422
		S2	0.882	49.384
		S3	0.802	24.277
	Perseverance of Effort	S4	0.753	22.803
		S5	0.876	46.160
		S6	0.851	33.586
		S7	0.743	15.233
Mental Health	Self-image	M1	0.866	37.516
		M2	0.897	69.259
		M3	0.849	29.828
		M4	0.850	47.393
	Independence	M5	0.762	17.173
		M6	0.809	21.203
		M7	0.857	37.766
		M8	0.796	20.399
	Mood	M9	0.702	13.082
		M10	0.894	54.364
		M11	0.837	33.231
		M12	0.616	14.252
	Relationships	M13	0.651	14.323
		M14	0.814	18.490
		M15	0.806	21.220
		M16	0.839	29.669
	Daily Activities	M17	0.839	26.452
		M18	0.788	17.743
		M19	0.767	14.147
		M20	0.781	19.293

Physical Health	M21	0.671	15.140
	M22	0.862	31.049
	M23	0.785	22.518
	M24	0.845	32.568
Future	M25	0.833	32.368
	M26	0.746	21.957
	M27	0.674	11.108
	M28	0.782	22.799
Critical Thinking			
Inference	C1	0.630	11.428
	C2	0.722	27.124
	C3	0.698	16.539
	C4	0.817	31.500
	C5	0.626	14.583
	C6	0.769	26.270
	C7	0.639	15.713
	C8	0.696	14.915
	C9	0.556	13.831
	C10	0.742	26.234
	C11	0.709	23.907
	C12	0.812	38.157
	C13	0.821	31.567
	C14	0.734	26.571
	C15	0.750	29.001
	C16	0.579	5.034
Recognizing Assumptions	C17	0.727	23.445
	C18	0.756	23.648
	C19	0.886	33.967
	C20	0.817	28.910
	C21	0.729	24.985
	C22	0.590	13.039
	C23	0.658	16.832
	C24	0.758	23.253
	C25	0.704	20.388
	C26	0.661	15.334
	C27	0.806	30.581
	C28	0.795	23.105
	C29	0.603	13.195
	C30	0.895	42.811
	C31	0.573	8.138
	C32	0.542	7.148
Making Deductions	C33	0.666	13.906
	C34	0.773	24.134
	C35	0.783	26.903
	C36	0.724	24.593
	C37	0.668	13.105
	C38	0.706	20.590
	C39	0.798	24.324
	C40	0.782	24.531
	C41	0.708	21.115
	C42	0.654	14.205
	C43	0.677	13.989
	C44	0.623	13.650
	C45	0.720	24.550
	C46	0.737	24.129
	C47	0.672	13.690
	C48	0.604	13.846
Interpretation	C49	0.685	15.541
	C50	0.811	32.965
	C51	0.796	22.726
	C52	0.694	11.890
	C53	0.832	42.685
	C54	0.698	12.719
	C55	0.607	12.449
	C56	0.836	41.770
	C57	0.824	40.549

C58	0.788	33.469
C59	0.543	8.595
C60	0.748	20.526
C61	0.620	11.135
C62	0.899	40.378
C63	0.563	10.351
C64	0.765	20.624
C65	0.810	40.114
Evaluation	C66	0.833	35.376

	C66	0.833	35.376
	C67	0.773	22.143
	C68	0.830	37.461
	C69	0.619	11.705
	C70	0.732	17.534
	C71	0.550	7.765
	C72	0.672	14.436
Evaluation	C73	0.669	12.803
	C74	0.635	11.954
	C75	0.716	15.204
	C76	0.758	26.180
	C77	0.730	19.589
	C78	0.694	18.796
	C79	0.771	35.242
	C80	0.564	10.746

Table 3 displays the T-statistics and factor loadings for items associated with psychological dimensions, including AI Psychological Flow, Intrinsic Reward, L2 Grit, Mental Health, and CT, among others. Each item is assessed for its contribution to its particular construct via T-statistics, with elevated T-values signifying greater associations between the item and the underlying component. In AI Psychological Flow, all three items (A1, A2, A3) have exceptionally high T-statistics, ranging from 30.185 to 74.121, demonstrating their substantial significance to the construct. Likewise, Effort-less Control and Intrinsic Reward have significant factor loadings, with T-statistics between 15.934 and 66.992, so affirming the strength of the association between the items and their corresponding constructs. The L2 Grit construct is effectively represented, with Consistency of Interest items (S1, S2, S3) exhibiting T-statistics between 24.277 and 56.422, and Perseverance of Effort items (S4, S5, S6, S7) displaying T-values from 15.233 to 46.160, all of which are statistically significant.

The Self-image items (M1, M2, M3, M4) under the Mental Health construct have significant T-statistics, ranging from 13.082 to 69.259, whilst the Independence items (M5, M6, M7, M8) likewise present elevated T-values between 17.173 and 37.766. The Mood items (M9, M10, M11, M12) and Relationships items (M13, M14, M15, M16) have comparable robust correlations, with T-statistics predominantly over 13, indicating their significant contributions to their respective variables. The Daily Activities and Physical Health variables have substantial loadings, with T-statistics between 11.108 and 32.568, affirming their significance in the model. The Future components (M25, M26, M27, M28) have T-values ranging from 11.108 to 32.368, further demonstrating their contribution to the construct. Within the CT domain, questions pertaining to Inference, Recognizing Assumptions, Making Deductions, Interpretation, and Evaluation display a variety of T-statistics, predominantly characterized by elevated T-values, exemplified by C12 (38.157) and C30 (42.811).

Table 4. Correlation analysis

	AI Psychological Flow	Social Isolation	Mental Health	Critical Thinking
AI Psychological Flow	0.871			
L2 Grit	0.640**	0.917		
Mental Health	0.747**	0.523**	0.766	
Critical Thinking	0.821**	0.578**	0.540**	0.801

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed) **

Table 4 presents the correlation matrix for four constructs: AI Psychological Flow, L2 Grit, Mental Health, and CT. The correlation values provide insights into the strength and direction of the relationships between these constructs, with significant correlations noted at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). The AI Psychological Flow construct shows strong positive correlations with L2 Grit (r = 0.640) and CT (r = 0.821). These significant correlations suggest that higher levels of psychological flow are associated with greater grit and CT abilities. Additionally, AI Psychological Flow is moderately

correlated with Mental Health (r = 0.747), indicating a strong positive relationship between psychological flow and mental well-being. L2 Grit has a very strong correlation with CT (r = 0.917), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of grit tend to display better CT skills. It is also positively correlated with Mental Health (r = 0.523), though this correlation is somewhat weaker compared to its relationship with CT. The Mental Health construct shows moderate positive correlations with both CT (r = 0.540) and AI Psychological Flow (r = 0.747), highlighting that individuals who are mentally healthier tend to engage more in psychological flow and perform better in critical thinking tasks.
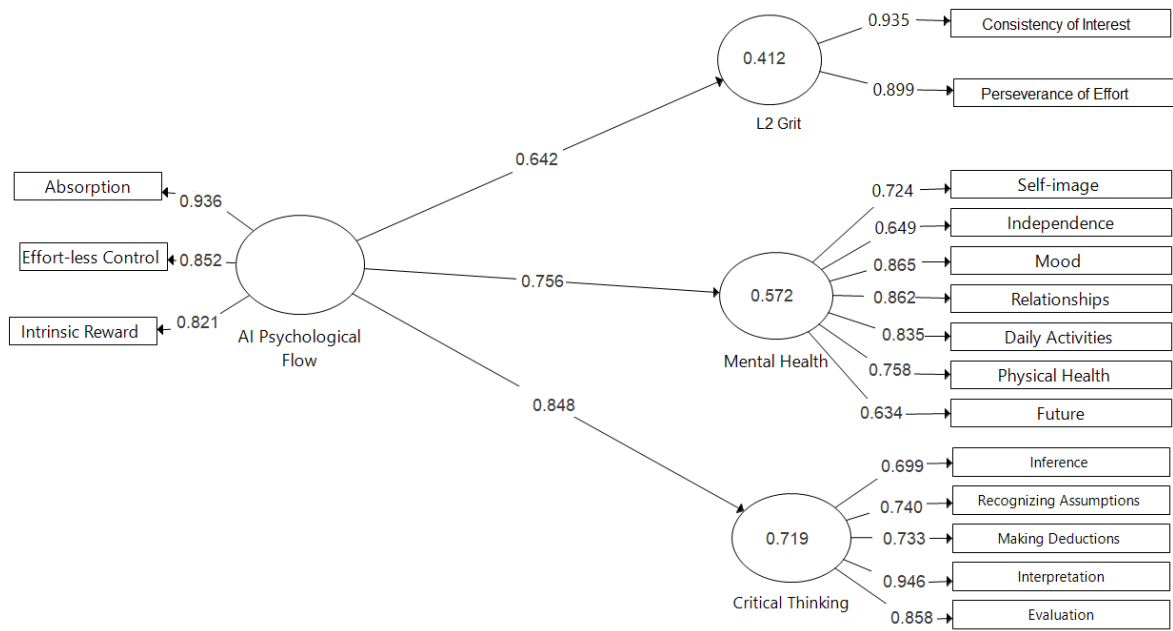
Figure 1. Factors coefficients and path coefficient of the first research model
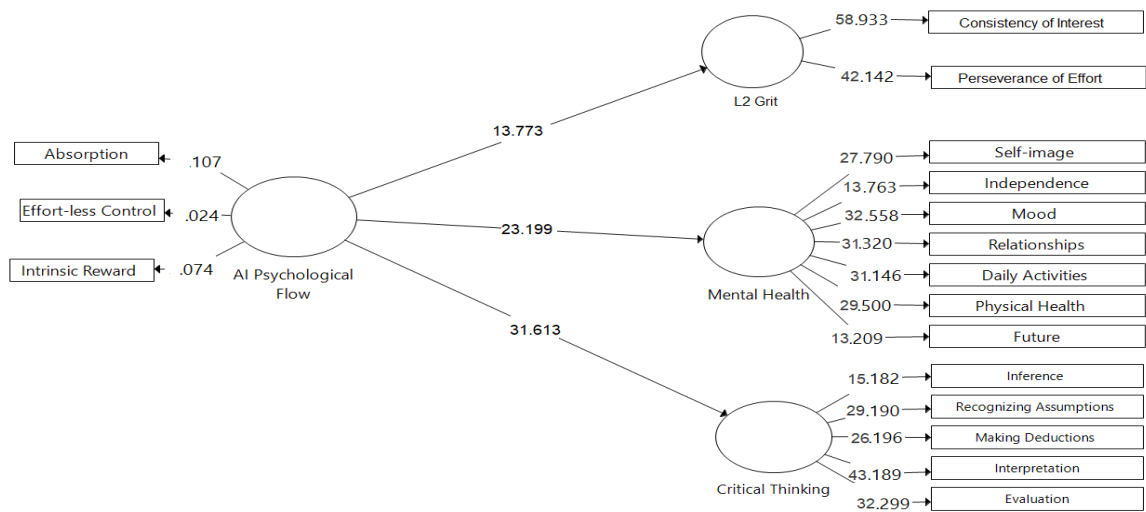
Figure 2. The value of the first research model's path coefficients

Table 5. The report on path coefficients and test results

Paths	Path coefficient	T Statistics	Test results

AI Psychological Flow	→	L2 Grit	0.642	13.773	Supported
AI Psychological Flow	→	Mental Health	0.756	23.199	Supported
AI Psychological Flow	→	Critical Thinking	0.848	31.613	Supported

Based on Figures 1 and 2 as well as Table 5, the path coefficient from AI Psychological Flow to L2 Grit is 0.642, with a highly significant T-statistic of 13.773. This result indicates a strong and statistically supported positive relationship between AI Psychological Flow and L2 Grit, suggesting that greater engagement in psychological flow is associated with higher levels of grit. Similarly, the relationship between AI Psychological Flow and Mental Health has a path coefficient of 0.756, with a T-statistic of 23.199, indicating a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship. This suggests that higher levels of psychological flow are strongly linked to better mental health outcomes. The path from AI Psychological Flow to CT shows an even stronger path coefficient of 0.848, with an impressive T-statistic of 31.613, confirming a highly significant and positive relationship.

Table 6. The model fit indexes (model 1)

	R^2	Q^2
L2 Grit	0.412	0.252
Mental Health	0.572	0.284
Critical Thinking	0.719	0.331

GOF=$\sqrt{0.707 * 0.568}$ =0.634

Table 6 displays the R² and Q² values for the domains L2 Grit, Mental Health, and Critical Thinking, in addition to the Goodness of Fit (GOF) assessment. These metrics provide insights into the model's explanatory capacity and predictive usefulness. The R² values indicate the percentage of variance elucidated by the model for each construct. The R² score for L2 Grit is 0.412, indicating that around 41.2% of the variation in grit is accounted for by the model. The R² score for Mental Health is 0.572, indicating that 57.2% of the variation in mental health is explained by the model. The CT component has the highest R² value of 0.719, indicating that the model accounts for 71.9% of the variation in critical thinking. The Q² values evaluate the model's predictive relevance, with higher values indicating superior predictive ability. L2 Grit has a Q² of 0.252, indicating modest predictive significance. Mental Health has a Q² of 0.284, indicating a somewhat enhanced predictive significance. The CT construct has the highest Q² value of 0.331, indicating that the model possesses the most robust predictive relevance for CT. The GOF is determined by taking the square root of the product of the mean R² and Q² values. The GOF is computed as $\sqrt{0.707 * 0.568} = 0.634$. A GOF value over 0.36 is seen indicative of a satisfactory fit, indicating that the model exhibits an acceptable overall alignment.
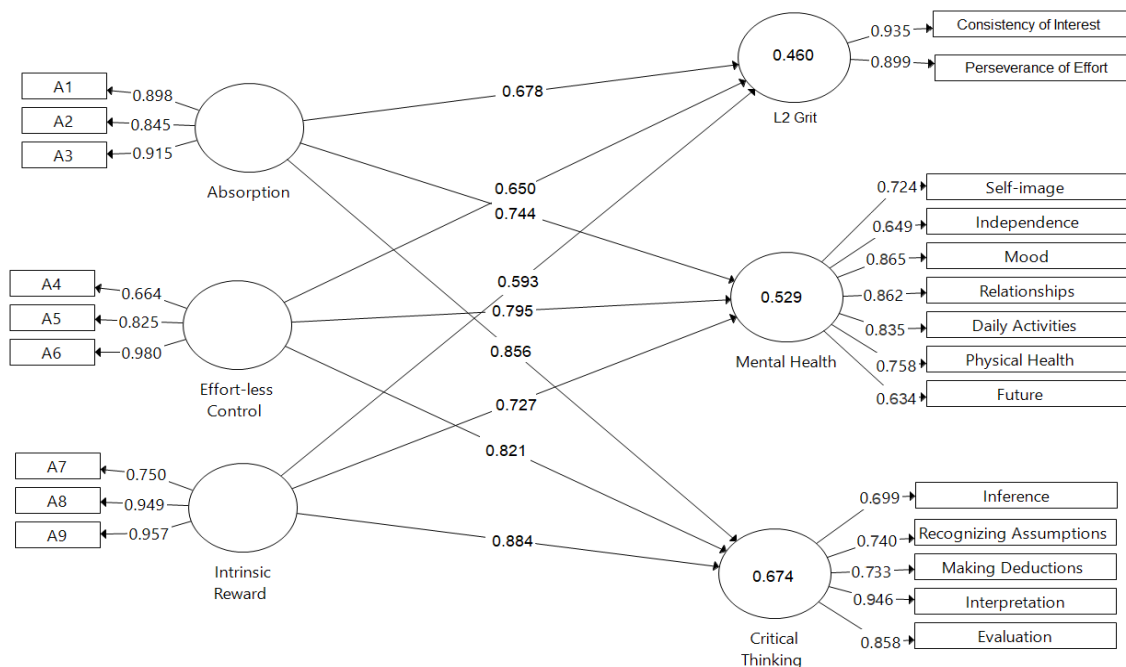
Figure 3. Factors coefficients and path coefficient of the second research model
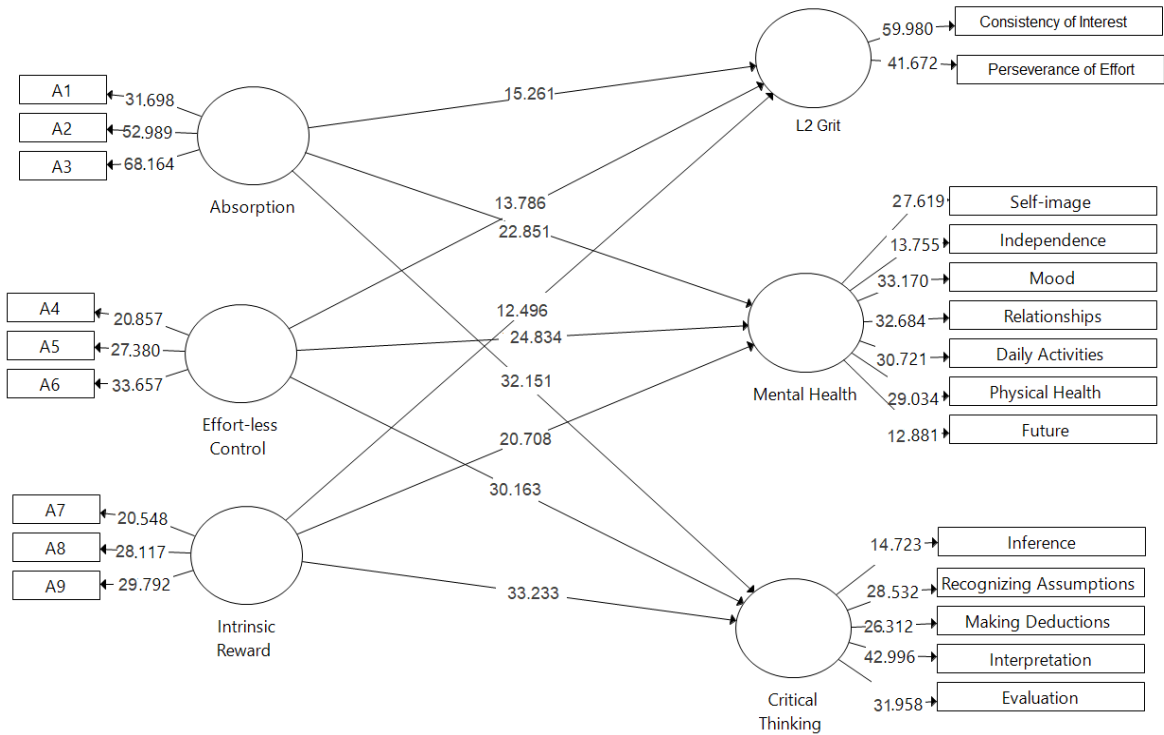

Figure 4. The value of the second research model's path coefficients

As shown in Figures 3 and 4, this report analyzes the connections between L2 grit, mental health, and critical thinking and absorption, effort-less control, and intrinsic reward. Strong impacts of these conceptions on the measured outcomes are suggested by the data's substantial path coefficients and T statistics. Starting with the association between absorption and L2 grit, the path coefficient of 0.678 suggests a strong correlation, suggesting that higher levels of grit are associated with deeper activity involvement. This assertion is supported by the T statistic of 15.261, which shows a statistically significant impact. Likewise, effort-less control has a path coefficient of 0.650 and a T statistic of 13.786, highlighting the fact that people who feel in control of their work are more likely to be persistent and determined. A path coefficient of 0.593 and a T statistic of 12.496 demonstrate the significant contribution of intrinsic reward to the development of L2 grit. The importance of internal motivation in accomplishing long-term objectives is further supported by this study, which implies that the intrinsic pleasure gained from activities encourages consistent effort and devotion. With a route coefficient of 0.744 and a T statistic of 22.851, absorption once again plays a critical part in the study of mental health outcomes, showing that immersive experiences may greatly improve mental health. With a path coefficient of 0.795 and a T statistic of 24.834, effort-less control has an even greater impact, emphasizing how crucial feeling in control is to preserving mental health. With a path coefficient of 0.727 and a T statistic of 20.708, intrinsic reward also has a favorable impact on mental health, highlighting the importance of internal drive. Moreover, absorption significantly improves CT skills, as shown by absorption's path coefficient of 0.856 and T statistic of 32.151. Strong beneficial effects are also shown for intrinsic reward and effort-less control, with T statistics of 30.163 and 33.233 and path coefficients of 0.821 and 0.884, respectively.

Table 7. The model fit indexes (model 2)

	R^2	Q^2
L2 Grit	0.460	0.259
Mental Health	0.529	0.278
Critical Thinking	0.674	0.305

GOF=$\sqrt{0.724 * 0.554}$ =0.633

Based on Table 7, the R² values show how well the model explains the variation for each construct. The R² score for L2 Grit is 0.460, indicating that the model explains 46% of the variation in grit. The model explains 52.9% of the variation in mental health, as shown by a somewhat lower R² value of 0.529. The model explains 67.4% of the variation in critical thinking (R²=0.674). The R² values indicate that the model has moderate to high explanatory power, especially for CT. The Q² values evaluate the model's predictive relevance, with higher values suggesting more predictive potential. L2 Grit has a Q² score of 0.259, indicating modest predictive significance. Mental health has a Q² value of 0.278, suggesting somewhat higher predictive importance. CT has the greatest Q² of 0.305, indicating that the model best predicts CT. In this model, GOF is determined as $\sqrt{0.724 * 0.554}$= 0.633. A GOF score more than 0.36 indicates a strong model fit, and a value of 0.633 suggests that the model is adequate for expressing the connections between the components.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the associations between AI psychological flow, grit inclinations, mental health, and CT abilities in EFL learners, emphasizing the impact of these aspects on the efficacy of AI-assisted language development. To this end, a SEM analysis was conducted among EFL university students. The results of the initial study question indicate a substantial positive correlation between AI psychological flow and grit tendencies in EFL learners. Specifically, learners who experience psychological flow when utilizing AI technologies are more inclined to exhibit elevated levels of grit—characterized by tenacity and love for long-term objectives—during their language development process. These findings correspond with theoretical frameworks that highlight the significance of emotional involvement and intrinsic motivation in promoting sustained effort and determination in learning (Duckworth et al., 2007; Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Psychological flow denotes a mental state in which individuals are completely engrossed in a task, characterized by experiences of delight, challenge, and mastery. In AI-assisted language learning, flow is achieved when AI technologies customize assignments to align with the learner's proficiency, providing an ideal challenge that boosts engagement while avoiding irritation.

The flow experience is crucial in AI-assisted learning as it fosters an environment that enhances intrinsic motivation and profound cognitive engagement .This corroborates the findings of the present study, which indicate that AI psychological flow enhances grit tendencies. Specifically, learners who attain a state of flow are more inclined to demonstrate endurance, a fundamental component of grit, when confronted with obstacles in language acquisition (Namaziandost et al., 2024). The results of this research align with studies regarding the significance of grit in educational environments. In 2024, Zhai, et al. discovered that grit substantially enhanced students' resilience in online and AI-driven learning settings, especially when learners exhibited elevated levels of engagement and flow. This suggests that AI systems that facilitate flow can significantly contribute to cultivating grit, allowing learners to remain dedicated to their long-term language acquisition objectives. The practical implications of these findings indicate that AI-assisted language learning tools ought to be developed with an emphasis on fostering psychological flow. Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) posits that learners excel when confronted with challenges that slightly exceed their existing abilities, yet remain attainable with appropriate assistance. In accord to these findings, Halkiopoulos and Gkintoni (2024) discovered that real-time feedback systems in AI language learning platforms resulted in increased learner engagement and perseverance, especially among students who attained flow states.

Furthermore, the results of this study demonstrate that AI psychological flow significantly impacts the mental health of EFL learners during AI-assisted language learning sessions. It implies that students who experience psychological flow exhibit enhanced mental health outcomes, including less anxiety, greater emotional well-being, and lowered stress levels. Upon achieving this equilibrium, learners encounter positive feelings and intrinsic motivation, which correlate with enhanced mental well-being. AI tools that provide personalized and autonomous learning experiences enable learners to perceive themselves as more in command of their educational journey and proficient in mastering the requisite tasks. Furthermore, in the realm of AI-assisted learning, the pleasure and involvement linked to the state of flow can foster the development of psychological resources that serve as a protective barrier against adverse emotions, including anxiety and tension, thereby enhancing overall mental health.

The findings of this research are consistent with those of other recent studies that suggest AI-mediated flow may have a beneficial emotional impact on learners and minimize language development-related stress. For instance, the individualized characteristics of AI tools guarantee that learners are neither inundated nor insufficiently stimulated, hence fostering a favorable emotional experience and enhanced mental well-being (Lin & Chen, 2024). In a comparable vein, a study by Qu and Wu (2024) revealed that AI applications aimed at fostering a state of flow in language development significantly alleviated feelings of frustration. This, in turn, contributed to enhanced emotional well-being and cultivated more favorable attitudes toward the learning process.

Moreover, the finding that AI psychological flow positively influences CT skills among EFL learners can be expanded upon through a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes involved in flow and CT. In AI-assisted language learning, when learners are engaged in activities that induce flow, they are often required to assess and adapt their strategies in real time, which inherently promotes CT. Thus, the experience of psychological flow can act as a catalyst for the development of these advanced cognitive skills. Furthermore, AI-driven platforms, often using adaptive learning systems, offer learners with

activities that require CT and creative problem-solving. These platforms may modify the difficulty level according to learners' performance, therefore sustaining an ideal challenge that fosters engagement. As learners attain elevated levels of flow, they are prompted to investigate many linguistic and conceptual avenues, therefore enhancing their cognitive flexibility. This corresponds with the results of Shen and Teng (2024), who observed that adaptive AI learning systems promote CT by necessitating that learners interact with knowledge at several levels of complexity, so improving their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Higher cognitive engagement results from the process of seeing and assessing many answers to a problem in a flow state, so CT is naturally included into the educational process. AI-driven language platforms that facilitate a state of flow are particularly adept at maintaining learners' motivation, as they present tasks that are both engaging and suitably challenging. When learners exhibit motivation to remain engaged in these tasks, they are more inclined to actively employ CT skills in the resolution of problems and the analysis of language usage.

Taken together, the findings of this study underscore the profound impact that AI psychological flow can have on learners' cognitive and emotional development in AI-assisted language learning environments. AI systems that successfully induce flow can foster greater perseverance, improve mental health, and enhance CT skills, all of which are crucial for effective language development. These results offer important insights for the design and implementation of AI-driven learning platforms, suggesting that personalized, adaptive, and engaging tasks that promote flow are vital for optimizing both language learning and the development of key cognitive and emotional skills. In conclusion, this study provides compelling evidence that AI psychological flow is a pivotal factor in supporting learners' grit, mental health, and CT, making it a powerful tool in the language learning process.

6. Conclusion

This research sought to investigate the correlation between AI-induced psychological flow, grit characteristics, mental health, and CT abilities among EFL learners in AI-enhanced language learning contexts. The results demonstrate that AI psychological flow significantly enhances grit, mental health, and CT among EFL learners. The research revealed that EFL learners who experience flow during AI-assisted learning exhibit increased tenacity, improved mental health, and heightened CT skills. The favorable results indicate that psychological flow is a crucial factor in enhancing engagement and cognitive advancement in language acquisition. In summary, the ability of AI systems to facilitate a state of flow through appropriately challenging tasks, personalized feedback, and interactive learning experiences creates an optimal environment for learners to thrive. As learners become progressively engaged in their language development endeavors, they not only surmount challenges but also cultivate the cognitive flexibility essential for CT and problem-solving.

The study's results have significant pedagogical implications for instructors and developers of AI-assisted language learning systems. As AI keeps evolving educational methods, understanding the psychological processes that drive student performance, such as the idea of psychological flow, becomes more important. For instructors, using flow-inducing tactics may greatly improve student motivation, engagement, and overall language learning success. To promote flow, educators and developers should emphasize the design of learning assignments with an appropriate amount of complexity. In addition to increasing engagement, AI-assisted platforms should include learners' emotional well-being. As flow experiences improve mental health results, AI systems should include stress and anxiety-reduction characteristics. This may be accomplished by encouraging students, ensuring that they are confident in their talents, and giving them a feeling of control over their learning experience. Creating an emotionally supportive learning environment may help reduce frustration and exhaustion, resulting in greater language retention and a more pleasurable overall learning experience.

To successfully incorporate AI psychological flow into language development, many pragmatic ways may be used by educators and platform developers. Personalizing the learning experience is one of the most successful ways. Personalized learning enhances engagement and guarantees that learners operate within their ideal difficulty zone, essential for sustaining flow. AI-driven systems have to be engineered to provide customized learning trajectories aligned with each learner's ability, requirements, and preferences. AI systems can facilitate a learning environment that constantly achieves flow by dynamically altering task complexity in accordance with the learner's progress. Moreover, AI systems may include interactive components including gamification and scenario-based learning. Gamification components such as badges, leaderboards, and awards may enhance motivation, whilst scenario-based assignments or simulations can engage learners in authentic language problems. Another essential element for encouraging flow and cultivating CT is real-time feedback. AI systems need to provide students prompt, helpful feedback so they can recognize their errors, hone their tactics, and advance their language proficiency. AI platforms may challenge learners' thinking and broaden their language comprehension by fostering collaboration among them and exposing them to a variety of viewpoints. Finally, AI platforms ought to incorporate mindfulness tools or stress-reduction activities, such as guided meditation or brief intermissions, to assist learners in managing anxiety and maintaining concentration on their tasks. By providing emotional support to learners, AI systems can cultivate a harmonious educational atmosphere that promotes both cognitive and emotional growth.

Notwithstanding its merits, this study is not without certain shortcomings: This research concentrated on a particular cohort of 214 university students enrolled in EFL programs who utilized AI in their academic pursuits. Future research

endeavors may aim to broaden the sample population to encompass a more diverse array of learners representing various educational levels and cultural contexts. This would facilitate a more thorough comprehension of the impact of AI-induced psychological flow on diverse learner profiles and enhance the generalizability of the results. Comparative studies conducted across diverse cultural contexts may elucidate the influence of culture on learners' experiences with AI. Additionally, the study did not take into consideration the particular characteristics of the AI tools utilized by the learners, nor the pedagogical approaches implemented within the context of AI-assisted language learning. Future research endeavors should investigate the particular attributes of AI tools that most effectively facilitate psychological flow and enhance learner outcomes. Researchers may examine which characteristics, such as adaptive learning algorithms, interactive simulations, or real-time feedback, are most efficacious in promoting a state of flow. Furthermore, subsequent research could investigate the influence of various instructional methodologies and explore how educators might incorporate AI tools into their pedagogical practices to augment the flow of learning and enhance student engagement.

7. References

Amini, D., Ayari, S., & Amini, M. (2016). The Effect of Flow State on EFL Learners' vocabulary learning. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, *3*(5), 9. https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v3i5.54

Cage, E., Stock, M., Sharpington, A., Pitman, E., & Batchelor, R. (2018). Barriers to accessing support for mental health issues at university. *Studies in Higher Education*, *45*(8), 1637–1649. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2018.1544237

Chen, X., & Kim, H. K. (2024). The relationship between emotional intelligence, mental health, and the English achievement of college students based on big data statistical analysis. *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies*, *19*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.4018/ijwltt.338716

Cogo, A., Patsko, L., & Szoke, J. (2024). Generative artificial intelligence and ELT. *ELT Journal*, *78*(4), 373-377. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccae051

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). *Beyond boredom and anxiety*. Jossey-bass.

Datu, J. a. D., Yuen, M., & Chen, G. (2018). The triarchic model of grit is linked to academic success and well-being among Filipino high school students. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *33*(3), 428–438. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000234

Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *92*(6), 1087–1101. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1087

Engeser, S., Rheinberg, F., Vollmeyer, R., & Bischoff, J. (2005). Motivation, Flow-Erleben und Lernleistung in universitären Lernsettings 1Dieser Beitrag wurde unter der geschäftsführenden Herausgeberschaft von Joachim C. Brunstein akzeptiert. *Zeitschrift Für Pädagogische Psychologie*, *19*(3), 159–172. https://doi.org/10.1024/1010-0652.19.3.159

Gao, Y., Wang, X., & Meng, Y. (2024). How do Praxis-Oriented themes inform the unity of language teachers' beliefs, practices, and identities? A narrative inquiry. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *47*(1), 83–100. https://doi.org/10.1515/cjal-2024-0106

Ghanbari, N., & Abdolrezapour, P. (2021). Using emotional intelligence in an EFL integrated writing assessment. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *70*, 101017. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2021.101017

Halkiopoulos, C., & Gkintoni, E. (2024). Leveraging AI in E-Learning: Personalized Learning and Adaptive Assessment through Cognitive Neuropsychology—A Systematic Analysis. *Electronics*, *13*(18), 3762. https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics13183762

Halpern, D. F. (2003). Thinking critically about creative thinking. *Hampton Press*. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2003-02671-008

Halpern, D. F., & Dunn, D. S. (2023). *Thought and knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*. Taylor & Francis.

Hejazi, S. Y., & Sadoughi, M. (2022). How does teacher support contribute to learners' grit? The role of learning enjoyment. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *17*(3), 593–606. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2022.2098961

Heydarnejad, T. & Çakmak, F. (2024). Keep the ball rolling in AI-Assisted language teaching: Illuminating the links between

productive immunity, work passion, job satisfaction, occupational success, and psychological well-being among EFL teachers. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning,* 25(3), 245–270. https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v25i3.7760

Ibrahim, Z. (2020). Sustained flow: affective obsession in second language learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10.* https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02963

Lan, Y. (2022). The role of teachers' grit and motivation in self-directed professional development. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.922693

Lee, E., & Kim, Y. (2018). Effect of university students' sedentary behavior on stress, anxiety, and depression. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, *55*(2), 164–169. https://doi.org/10.1111/ppc.12296

Li, L., & Heydarnejad, T. (2024). May I come in? A probe into the contributions of self-esteem, teacher support, and critical thinking to anxiety and shyness in language classes. *BMC Psychol,* 12, 7. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01501-y

Lin, H., & Chen, Q. (2024). Artificial intelligence (AI) -integrated educational applications and college students' creativity and academic emotions: students and teachers' perceptions and attitudes. *BMC Psychol* 12, 487. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01979-0

Liu, W., & Wang, Y. (2024). The effects of using AI tools on critical thinking in English literature classes among EFL learners: an intervention study. *European Journal of Education*, *59*(4). https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12804

Long, J., & Lin, J. (2023). Empowering English language learning and mental health using AI and Big data. *Education and Information Technologies*, *29*(10), 12703–12734. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-12267-6

Manderscheid, R. W., Ryff, C. D., Freeman, E. J., McKnight-Eily, L. R., Dhingra, S., & Strine, T. W. (2010). Evolving definitions of mental illness and wellness. *PubMed*, *7*(1), A19. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20040234

Moore, L., Larkin, F., & Foley, S. (2023). Mental health professionals' experiences of adapting mental health interventions for autistic adults: A Systematic review and thematic synthesis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *54*(7), 2484–2501. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-023-06006-6

Namaziandost, E., Çakmak, F., Heydarnejad, T., & Rezai, A. (2024). The predictive effects of learner autonomy and academic engagement on willingness to communicate, foreign language learning self-esteem, and L2 grit in an EFL context. *Acta Psychologica.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104528

Namaziandost, E., Rezai, A., Heydarnejad, T., & Kruk, M. (2023). Emotion and cognition are two wings of the same bird: Insights into academic emotion regulation, critical thinking, self-efficacy beliefs, academic resilience, and academic engagement in Iranian EFL context. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 50, 101409. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101409

Neves, J., & Hillman, N. (2017). Student academic experience survey. *Higher Education Policy Institute and Higher Education Academy*, *12*, 47-48.

Newson, J. J., Sukhoi, O., & Thiagarajan, T. C. (2024). MHQ: constructing an aggregate metric of population mental wellbeing. *Population Health Metrics*, *22*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12963-024-00336-y

Norsworthy, C., Dimmock, A. J., Nicholas, J., Krause, A., & Jackson, B. (2023). Psychological flow scale (PFS): Development and preliminary validation of a new flow instrument that measures the core experience of flow to reflect recent conceptual advancements. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-023-00092-8

Paul, R. (1988). Critical thinking in the classroom. *Teaching K-8*, 18, 49–51.

Payant, C., & Zuniga, M. (2022). Learners' flow experience during peer revision in a virtual writing course during the global pandemic. *System*, *105*, 102715. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102715

Qu, K., & Wu, X. (2024). ChatGPT as a CALL tool in language education: A study of hedonic motivation adoption models in English learning environments. *Educ Inf Technol* 29, 19471–19503. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12598-y

Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On becoming a person*. Houghton Mifflin.

Shafiee Rad, H. S., & Jafarpour, A. (2022). Effects of Well-being, grit, emotion regulation, and resilience interventions on L2 learners' writing skills. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *39*(3), 228–247. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2022.2096517

Shen, X., & Teng, M. F. (2024). Three-wave cross-lagged model on the correlations between critical thinking skills, self-directed learning competency and AI-assisted writing. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *52*, 101524. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2024.101524

Shernoff, D. J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2009). Flow in Schools: Cultivating engaged learners and optimal learning environments. In *Handbook of Positive Psychology in Schools* (pp. 149–164). https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203884089-20

Shu, J. (2023). EFL learners' problematic use of social media usage, classroom anxiety, perfectionism, and language attainment: correlations and perceptions. *BMC Psychology*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01419-5

Teimouri, Y., Plonsky, L., & Tabandeh, F. (2020). L2 grit: Passion and perseverance for second-language learning. Language Teaching Research. *Advance online publication.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820921895

Thang, N. T., Linh, D. T. D., Anh, T. N., Phuong, N. T., Giang, N. D., Long, N. X., Nhung, D. T. C., & Long, K. Q. (2022). Severe symptoms of mental disorders among students majoring in foreign languages in Vietnam: a Cross-Sectional study. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.855607

Tucker, D. K., & leriche, W. H. (1964). Mental health: the search for a definition. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 90(20), 1160–1166.

van Krugten, F.C.W., Busschbach, J.J.V., Versteegh, M.M. & Brouwer. W. B. F. (2022). The Mental Health Quality of Life Questionnaire (MHQoL): development and first psychometric evaluation of a new measure to assess quality of life in people with mental health problems. *Qual Life Res* 31, 633–643. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-021-02935-w

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* Harvard University Press.

Wang, Y., & Xue, L. (2024). Using AI-driven chatbots to foster Chinese EFL students' academic engagement: An intervention study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *159*, 108353. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2024.108353

Watson, G., & Glaser, E. (1980). *Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal Manual*. Psychological Corporation.

Wei, H., Gao, K., & Wang, W. (2019). Understanding the relationship between grit and foreign language performance among middle school students: the roles of foreign language enjoyment and classroom environment. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01508

Winzer, R., Lindberg, L., Guldbrandsson, K., & Sidorchuk, A. (2018). Effects of mental health interventions for students in higher education are sustainable over time: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *PeerJ*, *6*, e4598. https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.4598

Wu, L. (2023). Students' foreign language learning adaptability and mental health supported by artificial intelligence. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *54*(10), 3921–3932. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-023-06097-1

Xiao, T., Yi, S., & Akhter, S. (2024). AI-Supported online language learning: Learners' Self-Esteem, Cognitive-Emotion regulation, academic enjoyment, and language success. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *25*(3), 77–96. https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v25i3.7666

Zhai, X., Zhao, R., Jiang, Y., & Wu, H. (2024). Unpacking the dynamics of AI-based language learning: flow, grit, and resilience in Chinese EFL contexts. *Behavioral Sciences*, *14*(9), 838. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14090838

Zhang, C., Mao, L., Li, N., & Gu, X. (2022). Chinese EFL students' Social-Emotional Competence, grit, and academic engagement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.914759

Zhao, X., & Wang, D. (2023). Grit, emotions, and their effects on ethnic minority students' English language learning achievements: A structural equation modelling analysis. *System*, *113*, 102979. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.102979

Zuniga, M. (2023). The correlates of flow in the L2 classroom: Linking basic L2 task features to learner flow experiences. *Modern Language Journal*, *107*(3), 650–668. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12865

Adaptability and Student Engagement among Iranian EFL Learners: The Mediating Role of Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence

Zahra Bayat[1*] iD
Farhad Ghorbandordinejad[2] iD

*[1]Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran
[2]Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language Teaching, Baskent University, Ankara, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Despite extensive research on factors influencing student engagement (SE) from a positive psychology perspective, the connection between adaptability and SE has been underexplored. The present study investigates the relationship between learners' adaptability, plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC), and SE in second language acquisition, guided by the PERMA model, which posits that well-being consists of Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2018). The researchers employed stratified random sampling to collect data from 599 male and female Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. These students then completed questionnaires, including the PPC scale (Galante, 2022), the adaptability scale (Feng et al., 2005), and the SE scale (Lam et al., 2014). Findings have shown that adaptability significantly predicts enhanced PPC, which in turn fosters greater SE. However, analysis of covariate variables revealed that gender and age were not significant predictors of PPC. Grade was a significant predictor of engagement, and language background was a significant predictor of PPC. These results underscore the importance of integrating adaptability training and PPC development into EFL curricula to cultivate culturally responsive learning environments and enhance SE. Further research is needed to determine the moderating roles of demographic variables. This will contribute to a more engaged, adaptable, and globally competent student body, better prepared for success in diverse contexts.

KEYWORDS: Adaptability; Plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC); Student engagement (SE); Iranian EFL learners

1. Introduction

The notion of SE is a complex concept that includes behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions, highlighting its dynamic and context-dependent nature (Hastie et al., 2022; Reeve and Tseng, 2011). To explain their description, the behavioral dimension of SE involves observable actions such as regular attendance, active participation in class discussions, and timely completion of assignments, which demonstrate a learner's physical involvement in educational activities. The cognitive and emotional components complement this by encompassing mental processes like focused attention and strategic thinking (cognitive), alongside positive feelings towards learning such as enjoyment or interest (emotional). Additionally, the social

dimension emphasizes interactions with peers and teachers through collaboration or feedback exchange, which supports learning by creating an environment that encourages mutual support and shared understanding.

Factors influencing SE include interpersonal relationships, motivation, and institutional practices (Granziera et al., 2024; Kuh, 2009; Xerri et al., 2018; Kahu, 2013). However, defining and measuring SE remains complex due to its variability across different educational contexts (Boulton et al., 2019; Gourlay, 2015; Kahu, 2013). Engagement strategies involve communication, governance, active faculty and teaching assistant interactions, blended learning models, and social support (Bedi, 2023; Chowdhury, 2023; Bryson & Hand, 2007; Wilson, 2020; Baranova et al., 2019; Vayre & Vonthron, 2017; Chiu, 2021). Various factors, including behavioral and psychological aspects, influence engagement levels (Hastie et al., 2022). Monitoring student activity via learning management systems (LMS) and machine learning can enable timely interventions (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2018). High engagement is linked to better academic performance and critical thinking skills (Stang & Roll, 2014).

Despite these insights, it is concerning that many students remain disengaged in EFL classes in Iran (Derakhshan & Gao, 2025; Derakhshan et al., 2021; Salimi & Karimabadi, 2020). Understanding the reasons behind varying levels of learner engagement in second language acquisition is crucial for educators. In this regard, Modarresi (2022) found that task-based collaborative activities, such as debating and dictogloss, elevate SE in writing tasks. Debate-based instruction was particularly effective, showing a greater increase in engagement compared to dictogloss. In similar works, Hamedi et al. (2020) revealed that reading engagement plays a mediating role in the relationship between reading emotions and reading comprehension. Additionally, it was found that both reading emotions and engagement are significant predictors of reading comprehension. In this regard, Fathi et al. (2021) found that teachers' individual self-efficacy was a more powerful predictor of work engagement than their collective efficacy. Both factors uniquely contributed to work engagement, with individual self-efficacy having a greater impact. In extensive classes, effective teaching strategies, individual motivation, and influential teacher-student partnerships are essential for sustaining SE (Fang & Hsu, 2017; Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

In addition, adaptability is the ability to effectively adjust to changing circumstances, particularly in education, where it fosters flexibility and open-mindedness among educators and students. This ongoing learning and cultural responsiveness are vital for creating inclusive environments. Adaptability allows individuals to modify their skills and motivations in response to various challenges, serving as a crucial mental resource, especially for students transitioning to high school or employees in dynamic workplaces (Elphinstone et al., 2019; Kodden, 2020; Holliman et al., 2022). It is a predictor of success in contexts requiring continuous learning and development (Kodden, 2020).

It is noteworthy that several components influence adaptability, including personality traits, social support, and psychological flexibility, all of which affect how individuals respond to change. Research indicates that higher levels of adaptability are connected with improved psychological well-being, as individuals are better able to accept negative experiences while pursuing their goals (Kharkhurin et al., 2023; Xerri et al., 2018; Zhang & Liu, 2024). However, excessive adaptability may lead to stress or burnout if individuals struggle to maintain personal values and boundaries. Hence, adaptability is not only critical for personal well-being but also paramount for enhancing cognitive and behavioral engagement in educational settings (Holliman et al., 2022).

Moreover, PPC emphasizes the integration of language skills and cultural understanding, reflecting their interdependence (Galante, 2022). This competence encompasses various language abilities, literacies, and intercultural experiences, enhancing communication and learning. Factors influencing PPC include language repertoire, multicultural experiences, and educational frameworks like FREPA and CEFR (Strasser & Reissner, 2022; Piccardo, 2019). Additionally, comprehension strategies that help individuals understand languages not formally studied are crucial for developing PPC (Santos Alves & Mendes, 2006). It is consequently recommended by recent research that PPC fosters a diverse knowledge base essential for effective interaction in multicultural contexts (Galante, 2025; Oksana & Ruzana, 2021).

In the modern interconnected society, possessing PPC is essential for effective communication and cultural understanding (Galante & dela Cruz, 2024; Martinez, 2025; Strasser & Reissner, 2022). Educational institutions globally recognize the importance of teaching PPC to prepare students for diverse interactions. Proficiency in multiple languages enhances both speaking and comprehension capabilities, leading to richer cultural exchanges within language classes (Eren, 2024). Recognizing the necessity of adaptability for nurturing PPC underscores the need for further exploration of how adaptability facilitates these critical learning processes, which still remain relatively underexplored in current scholarly discourse.

To explain, PPC offers numerous benefits, including improved learning outcomes, social cohesion, and enhanced creativity. By manipulating existing language skills, PPC fosters an ecological approach to language teaching, guiding superior educational achievements (Chen & Hélot, 2018). It also promotes social cohesion by respecting cultural diversity and improving composite social identities within multilingual contexts (Santos Alves & Mendes, 2006). Furthermore, PPC enhances creativity via encouraging flexibility, originality, and fluency in divergent thinking, consequently contributing to a comprehensive educational experience (Kharkhurin et al., 2023).

Considering the recent findings about the role of PPC, especially in connection with adaptability and SE (Galante, 2025; Kharkhurin et al., 2024; Martinez, 2025; Woll & Paquet, 2025; Zaidi et al., 2025), the development of PPC would be essential for navigating today's diverse learning environments, rendering them valuable assets in both educational and social contexts. This study targets to investigate how PPC influences the relationship between adaptability and SE in an EFL context, providing insights for educators and policymakers to formulate effective strategies that bolster students in varied learning environments and ultimately enhance educational outcomes. The rationale behind this study lies in its potential to bridge a gap by exploring how PPC mediates between adaptability and SE, which are crucial factors influencing student success in complex educational settings. By examining this interplay and regarding the prior research (Collie et al., 2017; Galante, 2025; Granziera et al., 2024; Seligman, 2018), this research contributes significantly by offering actionable recommendations for educators to foster a supportive environment that promotes psychological well-being alongside academic achievement, thereby enhancing overall educational effectiveness.

2. Literature review

2.1. Student engagement

In the framework established by Hiver et al. (2024), SE refers to the quantity and quality of learners' active participation in language acquisition tasks. According to Reeve and Tseng (2011), SE includes behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions, emphasizing its dynamic and context-dependent nature. Engaged learners demonstrate commitment and active involvement, which are crucial for meaningful learning outcomes. Additionally, SE reflects the level of interest and connection students have with their learning experiences, classes, institutions, and peers (Axelson & Flick, 2010).

Past research has illuminated the role of SE in educational contexts. A study found that self-efficacy fully mediates the relationships between interpersonal relationships (with parents, peers, and teachers) and the four dimensions of SE among high school students in Malaysia. These findings underscore the importance of fostering positive interpersonal relationships to enhance students' self-efficacy (Benlahcene et al., 2024). However, the extent to which these findings are generalizable to other cultural contexts, particularly the other Asian contexts, remains an open question. Additionally, Wang et al. (2023) illustrated that learning adaptability positively predicts English academic engagement among middle school students in China, with foreign language anxiety and English learning self-efficacy serving as sequential mediators in this relationship.

Moreover, precedent studies highlight the importance of positive teacher-student interactions (Li, 2023), mindfulness and resilience (Liu et al., 2022), and nonverbal immediacy with teacher credibility (Derakhshan, 2021) in enhancing SE in foreign language education. From this prespective, Modarresi's study (2025) demonstrated that dictogloss and debating could elevate SE in writing, noting that the debate-based instruction could improve SE in writing more than the dictogloss instruction. Pishghadam et al. (2021) also discovered that teacher stroke, as an example of teacher interpersonal communication behaviors, raises motivation for learning a foreign language.

2.2. Adaptability

There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of adaptability in education (Liu & Wan, 2024; Parsons & Vaughn, 2016; Wu & Yu, 2024; Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang & Liu, 2024). Martin et al. (2013) define adaptability as the ability to make cognitive, behavioral, and emotional adjustments in response to uncertainty and novelty in educational settings. Adaptability helps students adjust to new challenges, promoting positive engagement and improving academic performance by enhancing persistence and reducing disengagement, leading to greater academic success (Collie et al., 2017).

Concerning former research, Wu and Yu (2024) uncovered that personality traits like extroversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness enhance e-learning engagement, while neuroticism has a negative effect. Enjoyment and adaptability mediate this relationship. Zhang and Liu (2024) developed a self-adaptive platform that highlights learning adaptability through flexibility, individuality, initiative, and reflection to improve student comprehension in intelligent education frameworks.

Furthermore, Liu et al. (2023) confirmed a positive correlation between professional identity and career adaptability among Chinese engineering students, with learning engagement mediating this relationship. Professional interest and satisfaction were key factors in this adaptability. Mohammad Hosseini et al. (2022) discovered that cultural self-confidence and foreign language enjoyment predict SE among Iranian EFL learners, with enjoyment being the stronger predictor.

In the same vein, Zhang et al. (2021) noted that adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic enhances SE by promoting positive academic emotions and reducing negative ones. Sabbaghi et al. (2020) identified correlations between academic optimism, competence, and engagement, while negative emotions inversely affected engagement. Adaptability also mitigates failure dynamics by improving control and reducing anxiety among students (Martin et al., 2015).

2.3. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC)

The concept of PPC has gained significant attention in recent years due to its importance in fostering effective communication across diverse linguistic and cultural environments (Eren, 2024; Galante, 2025; Kharkhurin et al., 2024; Martinez, 2025; Trenchs-Parera & Pastena, 2024; Zaidi et al., 2025). In this regard, Galante (2025) has defined PPC as an individual's ability to navigate and utilize multiple languages and cultural contexts effectively, bolstering a nuanced understanding of linguistic diversity and intercultural communication. In the realm of foreign language education, PPC is often undervalued in foreign language education, limiting recognition of its cognitive benefits and the ecological approach to diverse linguistic repertoires (Chen & Hélot, 2018; Galante, 2022). This raises concerns about the potential for educational systems to inadvertently perpetuate linguistic and cultural biases, hindering the development of truly global citizens.

Recent studies like Nguyen (2025) and Duarte and Günther-van der Meij (2025) and have elucidated critical components for designing effective multilingual and multicultural events for primary school students. Although university students acknowledged the potential of such events to improve children's plurilingualism and global competence, they often maintained static views of culture, pointing to the necessity for a dynamic understanding and careful consideration of cultural representations to avoid stereotypes (Kantelinen et al., 2024). This highlights the challenge of promoting PPC in a way that avoids stereotyping cultures, emphasizing the need for critical reflection and intercultural dialogue.

In another scientific inquiry, Trenchs-Parera and Pastena (2024) found that intercultural friendships and familial plurilingualism foster transcultural competence in multilingual university settings, promoting a complex identity. Kharkhurin et al. (2024) also discovered that neuroticism enhances the link between plurilingualism and creativity, while extraversion boosts intercultural competence and divergent thinking skills.

Eren (2024) explored that plurilingual awareness predicts intercultural communicative competence, with practices like code-switching enhancing multilingual learning. Galante and dela Cruz (2024) additionally identified a gap in PPC scores among Montreal participants, highlighting the need for minority language recognition. Moreover, Piccardo (2019) and Muñoz-Basols (2019) advocated for dynamic approaches to plurilingualism and multilingual education.

The theoretical framework of this article is grounded in positive psychology (Seligman, 2002), particularly the PERMA model developed by Martin Seligman, which outlines five essential elements of well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2018). Our model is particularly relevant to the proposed mediation model as it emphasizes how adaptability can enhance SE through the development of PPC. By fostering adaptability, students are likely to experience increased positive emotions and engagement in learning contexts, aligning with Seligman's assertion that these elements are crucial for achieving a flourishing life (Seligman, 2018). Moreover, the role of PPC in augmenting engagement reflects the idea that meaningful relationships and accomplishments in educational settings contribute to overall well-being (Forgeard et al., 2011). Thus, the integration of adaptability and PPC within this framework not only supports SE but also promotes effective second language acquisition outcomes, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach to education that nurtures psychological well-being alongside academic success.

By addressing the following research questions, this study aims to contribute to a more focused understanding of the complex interplay between adaptability, PPC, and SE, and to inform the development of interventions that promote student success in diverse educational settings.

1. What are the relationships between adaptability, plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC), and student engagement (SE)?

2. How does adaptability predict PPC?

3. How does plurilingual and pluricultural competences (PPC) predict student engagement (SE)?

4. How does adaptability predict student engagement (SE), either directly or through the mediation of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC)?

Furthermore, we sought to investigate the influence of covariate factors, specifically gender, age, language background, and grade level, within the context of the proposed mediation model.

In the hypothesized mediation model presented in Figure 1, we propose that adaptability significantly influences SE through the mediating role of PPC. Specifically, we suggest that students who exhibit higher levels of adaptability are more likely to develop robust PPC, which in turn enhances their engagement in language learning contexts. This model accounts for additional demographic variables, including gender, age, language background, and grade level, which may also impact SE. By elucidating these relationships, the model underscores the importance of fostering adaptability and PPC in educational settings to promote greater SE, thereby contributing to more effective second language acquisition outcomes.
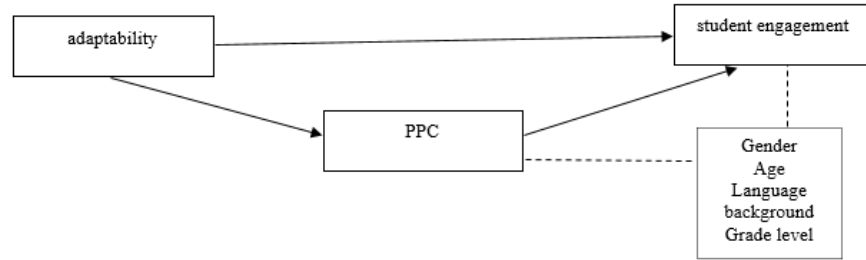
Figure 1. The proposed model

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

In the existing analysis, data were primarily collected from five provinces in Iran: Tehran, Razavi Khorasan, Ardabil, Golestan, and Khuzestan. Utilizing a stratified random sampling method, the researchers gathered data from a total of 599 Iranian EFL learners, specifically both male and female participants. The demographic characteristics of the EFL learners are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Student participant profile

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	204	34.5%
	Female	395	65.5%
Age	12 years	35	5.8%
	13 years	116	19.4%
	14 years	117	19.5%
	15 years	104	17.4%
	16 years	110	18.4%
	17 years	20	3.3%
	18 years	97	16.2%
Language background	Persian	349	58.2%
	Turkish	250	41.8%
Grade	Grade7	141	23.5%
	Grade8	102	17.0%
	Grade9	84	14.0%
	Grade10	127	21.2%
	Grade11	80	13.3%
	Grade12	65	10.8%
Total		599	100%

As table 1 shows, the data offered a diverse demographic representation, including a significant number of females and a wide age range, which empowers the potential for nuanced insights into gender-specific and age-related trends. Likewise, the inclusion of participants from different language backgrounds and educational levels provided a rich context for cultural and educational comparisons, strengthening the overall research findings.

3.2. Instruments

Data were collected using online questionnaires (Google Forms) with three standardized instruments. Researchers collaborated with teachers to distribute links via communication platforms, enhancing sample size and efficiency across Iran's provinces. The questionnaires assessed adaptability, PPC, and SE using established scales starting with demographic information.

3.2.1. Student engagement (SE) scale

For assessing the engagement of EFL learners, the SE scale developed by Lam et al. (2014) was utilized in this study. This instrument comprises 20 items rated on a 4-point scale, ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), and includes four key components: cognitive engagement, affective engagement, behavioral engagement, and agentic engagement. The SE scale is recognized for its reliability and validity in measuring EFL learners' engagement, demonstrating strong internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.7$) (Lam et al., 2014). In the current project, the Cronbach's alpha was reported as 0.884, with construct validity discussed in the results section.

3.2.2. Adaptability scale

To evaluate the learning adaptability of EFL learners, the adaptability scale developed by Feng et al. (2005) was employed. This scale consists of 29 items rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) and encompasses five essential components: learning motivation, teaching mode, learning ability, learning attitude, and environmental factors. It is recognized as a reliable and valid instrument for assessing the adaptability of EFL learners, exhibiting strong internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.7$) (Feng et al., 2005). In the existing research route, the reliability coefficient was reported as 0.833, and its construct validity was confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), as detailed in the results section.

3.2.3. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) scale

Galante's (2022) PPC scale was employed to evaluate Iranian EFL learners' self-assessments of their PPC. This instrument consists of 22 items rated on a 4-point scale, ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The scale positions PPC as a singular component, highlighting the interrelationship between culture and language. The reliability of the scale has been established with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.782, and its validity was confirmed through CFA, as detailed in the results section. Furthermore, Galante (2022) asserted that her newly developed instrument, which demonstrates a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.84$, is a valid tool for future research and pedagogical practices in plurilingual and pluricultural contexts.

3.3. Data collection procedure

All participants were fully informed about the primary objective of this study and asked to sign an electronic consent form. It was recognized that quantitative data would enhance and expand upon the new insights gained from this project. To collect data, three electronic questionnaires were used: the SE scale (Lam et al., 2014), the adaptability scale (Feng et al., 2005), and the PPC scale (Galante, 2022), all administered via Google Forms. The first section consisted of a demographic questionnaire designed to gather details on gender, age, language background, and grade level. Participants received comprehensive information about the instruments used in the study as well as its purpose. The questionnaires were primarily in English with Persian translations provided where necessary. Completing these questionnaires took approximately 20 minutes per participant in one session, while the entire data collection process spanned two months from November to December 2023. Participants received a link to access and fill out these forms.

3.4. Data analysis

A comprehensive descriptive statistical analysis was performed to explore the profile trends associated with each variable, employing key measures such as the *mean (M)*, *standard deviation (SD)*, and the range of item averages, which included both minimum and maximum values. Moreover, correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between adaptability, PPC, and SE. To delve deeper into the relationships between the variables, mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS version 26 based on the recommendations by Hayes and Rockwood (2017). This analysis purposed to uncover the intricate dynamics between the variables, providing insights into their interconnectedness.

In advance of the primary analysis, CFA was executed to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement instruments utilized in the study. Also, the internal consistency of the measures was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a reliability threshold set at 0.7, as recommended by Tabachnick et al. (2013). This rigorous approach ensured that the measurement tools were both valid and reliable, laying a strong foundation for subsequent analyses.

4. Results

4.1. Preliminary analysis

4.1.1. CFA for instruments

Simultaneously with descriptive and correlations analyses, we performed a CFA for each instrument to evaluate their construct validity. This evaluation not only provided insights into the validity of the constructs but also simplified the exploration of potential enhancements to the scale's structure. Furthermore, the reliability of each factor within the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, ensuring a thorough judgement of the measurement instruments.

Concerning Kline (2023) and Meyers et al. (2008), the PPC scale exhibited vigorous psychometric properties, evidenced by a Normed Chi-Square (NC) value of 2.1, a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.975, a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.051, and a Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of 0.04. The model retained 22 items, each of which showed significant loading factors above 0.5, ranging from a minimum of 0.52 to a maximum of 0.88. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.782, indicating strong internal consistency among the items. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) coefficient was calculated at 0.66, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.50. The outcomes of the descriptive validity test conducted with Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) analysis generated a coefficient value of 0.797. These results jointly support the conclusion that the constructs of the scale fulfill the criteria for both reliability and validity.

The five-factor adaptability scale portrayed strong psychometric properties, evidenced by a NC of 1.79, a CFI of 0.981, a RMSEA of 0.049, and a SRMR of 0.07. The model effectively retained 29 items, with each item demonstrating significant factor loadings exceeding 0.5, ranging from a minimum of 0.54 to a maximum of 0.89. The scale's trustworthiness was solid, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.833, which reflects excellent internal consistency. Furthermore, the AVE coefficient was determined to be 0.71, exceeding the ideal threshold of 0.50. The assessment of discriminant validity produced favorable outcomes, as shown by the HTMT analysis. The HTMT values were below the 0.85 threshold, specifically at 0.67, demonstrating adequate discriminant validity. Overall, these results affirm that the constructs in the scale adhere to recognized criteria for both reliability and validity.

The model fit for the SE scale demonstrated well-built psychometric properties, with a NC of 1.82, a CFI of 0.982, a RMSEA of 0.046, and a SRMR of 0.06. The model successfully retained 20 items, each exhibiting significant loading factors greater than 0.5, ranging from a minimum of 0.57 to a maximum of 0.83. The scale's reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.884, indicating excellent internal consistency. Additionally, the AVE coefficient was calculated at 0.68, surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.50. The HTMT values were 0.44, which is below the 0.85 threshold, designating adequate discriminant validity. These results collectively demonstrate that the constructs of the scale meet the established standards for both reliability and validity.

4.1.2. *Descriptive data and the relationship between factors (responses to the first research question)*

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the study variables, including the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, as well as measures of skewness, kurtosis, and bivariate correlations. The descriptive analysis of the dataset reveals significant insights into the various factors influencing SE and motivation. The mean scores for Adaptability (*Mean* = 87.71, *SD* = 11.94) indicate a strong adaptability among participants, which may correlate positively with other engagement measures. In contrast, the mean for Learning Attitude (*Mean* = 10.95, *SD* = 2.04) suggests a more moderate level of positive disposition towards learning. The skewness and kurtosis statistics for most variables, such as PPC (Skewness = 0.06, Kurtosis = 0.80) and Learning Motivation (Skewness = -0.53, Kurtosis = 0.14), suggest relatively normal distributions, although some variables like Behavioral Engagement (Skewness = -1.31, Kurtosis = 2.02) exhibit significant negative skewness, indicating a concentration of higher values and potential outliers that could affect interpretations.

As shown in table 2, the relationships between the factors, as indicated by Pearson correlation coefficients, highlight several noteworthy associations. For instance, the strong correlation between Adaptability and Learning Motivation ($r = 0.906$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that higher adaptability is closely linked to increased motivation levels, which could enhance overall engagement. Similarly, Cognitive Engagement shows a robust correlation with SE ($r = 0.805$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that cognitive processes significantly influence students' engagements in learning environments. Likewise, the correlation between Teaching Mode and Learning Ability ($r = 0.483$, $p < 0.01$) underscores the importance of instructional strategies in shaping learners' capabilities. These findings emphasize the interconnectedness of various factors in educational settings and the potential for targeted interventions to improve student outcomes by strengthening specific areas such as adaptability and cognitive engagement.

Table 1. Descriptive data and correlation between the factors

Variables/Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.PPC (V)	1	.285**	.343**	.265**	.196**	.241**	.111**	.152**	.340**	.187**	.211**	.250**
2.Adaptability (V)		1	.776**	.906**	.821**	.799**	.474**	.276**	.619**	.629**	.583**	.412**
3.Student Engagement (V)			1	.739**	.635**	.646**	.305**	.128**	.805**	.781**	.672**	.662**
4.Learning Motivation				1	.711**	.680**	.358**	.095**	.616**	.584**	.578**	.372**
5.Teaching Mode					1	.483**	.398**	-.051	.449**	.548**	.614**	.231**
6.Learning Ability						1	.181**	.240**	.577**	.526**	.321**	.400**
7.Learning Attitude							1	-.101*	.215**	.269**	.391**	.070
8.Environmental Factors								1	.117**	.085*	-.045	.210**
9.Cognitive Engagement									1	.435**	.388**	.475**
10.Affective Engagement										1	.401**	.347**
11.Behavioral Engagement											1	.136**
12.Agentic Engagement												1
Mean	60.16	87.71	60.54	25.41	21.27	18.50	10.95	11.61	14.99	15.14	17.12	13.12
SD	5.52	11.94	8.27	4.37	4.29	3.50	2.04	2.38	2.74	3.27	3.74	2.67
Min	40.00	46.00	29.00	8.00	7.00	6.00	4.00	4.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Max	79.00	114.00	79.00	32.00	28.00	24.00	16.00	16.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	19.00
Skewness	0.06	-0.32	-0.29	-0.53	-0.43	-0.58	-0.21	-0.32	-0.31	-0.71	-1.31	-0.22
Kurtosis	0.80	-0.15	0.04	0.14	-0.07	0.82	0.53	0.18	-0.01	0.25	2.02	-0.14

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.2. Mediation analysis

To scrutinize the mediatory role of PPC in the relationship between adaptability and engagement, we implemented the PROCESS macro in SPSS version 26 (Hayes & Rockwood, 2017). This analysis also incorporated several covariate variables, including gender, age, language background, and grade level. The results of this comprehensive analysis are presented in Table 2, spotlighting the intricate mechanisms between these variables. The developed model, along with its associated coefficients, is depicted in Figure 2.
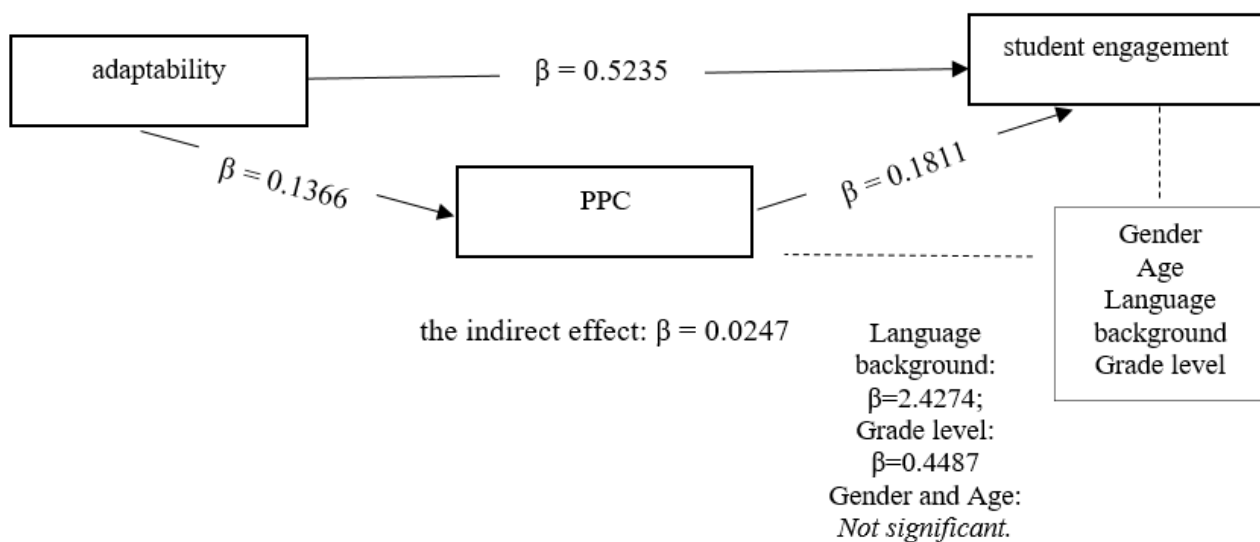

Figure 2. Mediation model of PPC in terms of the relationship between adaptability and SE

4.2.1. The possible predictors of PPC and SE (responses to the second and third research questions)

Regarding the second research question on how adaptability predicts PPC, the analysis indicated that adaptability is a significant predictor of PPC ($\beta = 0.1366$, SE = 0.0204, t = 6.6863, p < 0.001). This suggests that for each unit increase in adaptability, PPC increases by approximately 0.1366 units. In addressing the third research question about how PPC predicts SE, the results demonstrated that PPC is a significant predictor of SE ($\beta = 0.1811$, SE = 0.0463, t = 3.9084, p < 0.001). This indicates that an increase in PPC is associated with an increase in SE by approximately 0.1811 units.

4.2.2. The direct/indirect role of PPC (responses to the fourth research question)

Finally, for the fourth research question examining how adaptability predicts SE both directly and through mediation by PPC, the direct effect of adaptability on SE was found to be significant ($\beta = 0.5235$, SE = 0.0210, t = 24.8830, p < 0.001). The indirect effect of adaptability on SE through PPC was also significant (indirect effect $\beta = 0.0247$, SE = 0.0081). These findings highlight that adaptability not only directly influences SE but also does so indirectly through its effect on PPC (Table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of covariate variable

Outcome Variable	Coeff	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
OUTCOME VARIABLE: PPC						
Constant	45.3391	2.4194	18.7397	.0000	40.5843	50.939
Adaptability	0.1366	0.0204	6.6863	.0000	0.0965	0.1768
Gender	0.3736	0.5687	0.6570	.5115	-0.7440	1.4912
Age	-0.0758	0.0888	-0.8539	.3936	-0.2503	0.0987
Language background	2.4274	0.5551	4.3729	.0000	1.3365	3.5184
Grade	0.0242	0.1870	0.1295	.8970	-0.3433	0.3917
OUTCOME VARIABLE: engagement						
Constant	-0.4589	3.1716	-0.1447	.8850	6.6920	5.7742
Adaptability	0.5235	0.0210	24.8830	.0000	0.4822	0.5649
PPC	0.1811	0.0463	3.9084	.0001	0.0900	0.2722
Gender	0.8219	0.5587	1.4711	.1420	-0.2761	1.9199
Age	0.1157	0.0873	1.3266	.1853	-0.0557	0.2872
Language background	-0.2069	0.5566	-0.3718	.7102	-1.3008	0.8869
Grade	0.4487	0.1836	2.4438	.0149	0.0879	0.8096
Direct and Indirect Effects of X on Y						
Direct Effect of X on Y	0.5235	0.0210	24.8830	.0000	0.4822	0.5649
Indirect Effect of X on Y (PPC)	0.0247	0.0081			0.0106	0.0419

Note. Coeff is the Coefficient Value of each variable; LLCI stands for Lower Level Confidence Interval; ULCI stands for Upper Level Confidence Interval

4.2.3. The influence of covariate factors (gender, age, language background, and grade level)

A supplementary analysis using the PROCESS macro in SPSS version 26 identified significant relationships between various variables and the outcomes of interest with regard to the project by Hayes and Rockwood (2017). For the outcome variable PPC, the model showed a moderate effect ($R^2 = 0.1404$, p < 0.0001), with adaptation having a strong positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.1366$, p < 0.0001) and language background also contributing positively ($\beta = 2.4274$, p < 0.0001), while gender and age were not significant. In contrast, the analysis for SE revealed a strong model fit ($R^2 = 0.6334$, p < 0.0001), with adaptability again showing a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.5235$, p < 0.0001) and PPC positively contributing ($\beta = 0.1811$, p < 0.0001).

To summarize, adaptability significantly predicts both PPC and SE directly, and it also influences SE indirectly through PPC. These findings underscore the importance of adaptability in ameliorating PPC and, consequently, SE, providing valuable insights for educational interventions aimed at improving student outcomes.

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the relationships between adaptability, PPC, and SE, particularly in the context of EFL education in Iran. Considering the nature of SE, this research journey also conducted to elucidate how adaptability can enhance SE through fostering the development of PPC focusing on a proposed model.

Focusing on the first research question, a positive association between adaptability and PPC has been identified, suggesting that students with higher adaptability are better equipped to develop effective communication skills and navigate

diverse cultural contexts. This aligns with Kahu's (2013) findings that adaptable students engage more actively in their learning, resulting in improved academic outcomes. Prior research supports this, indicating that adaptability involves flexibility, individuality, initiative, and reflection, all of which contribute to navigating diverse contexts (Zhang & Liu, 2024). Additionally, Research confirms that PPC enhances self-efficacy through cultural competence, not just linguistic skills (Kantelinen et al., 2024; Trenchs-Parera & Pastena, 2024). PPC's correlation with heightened SE underscores the importance of cultural awareness and linguistic proficiency for active participation. In some studies, (Liu et al., 2023; Mohammad Hosseini, 2022; Zhang et al., 2021) the interconnectedness of adaptability and language competence in boosting SE in plurilingual environments is highlighted, contrasting with previous separate examinations

The results of the second research question uncovered a meaningful relationship between adaptability and PPC, suggesting that students with higher adaptability are more likely to develop effective communication skills and cultural understanding. The findings are in agreement with Kahu's (2013) assertion that adaptability predicts SE and supports Liu et al. (2023) and Wang et al. (2023), who emphasized its role in enhancing emotional and cognitive investment in learning. Specifically, personality traits such as extroversion and openness, which are components of adaptability, positively influence e-learning engagement (Wu & Yu, 2024). While previous studies examined adaptability and PPC separately, this research highlights the interconnectedness of adaptability and PPC, demonstrating that adaptability facilitates PPC development and enriches learning by promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, advocating for an integrated approach in language education.

The third research question confirmed a positive correlation between PPC and SE, suggesting that students with advanced PPC levels are more likely to engage actively in their educational environments. It is consistent the outcomes by Liu et al. (2022), who found connections between cultural competence and SE in EFL contexts. Further supporting this, Eren (2024) found that higher plurilingual awareness predicts better intercultural communicative competence. Importantly, this research extends prior literature by showing that Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence (PPC) not only correlates with but also predicts self-efficacy (SE), emphasizing the importance of fostering cultural and linguistic skills to enhance SE and participation, contrasting with earlier studies like Mohammad Hosseini et al. (2022) and Trenchs-Parera & Pastena (2024).

The findings illustrated that adaptability predicts SE both directly and indirectly through the mediation of PPC, highlighting a meaningful interrelationship in student involvement in learning. Adaptability positively affected engagement and enhances it by developing PPC levels, aligning with Kahu's (2013) emphasis on adaptability's role in promoting active participation and positive educational outcomes. This research builds on Liu et al. (2022), which linked SE to psychological factors like resilience and mindfulness, positioning PPC as a crucial mediator. Zhang et al. (2021) also demonstrated that adaptability enhances SE, particularly by fostering positive academic emotions and reducing negative ones. Unlike prior studies by Wang et al. (2023) and Mohammad Hosseini et al. (2022) that examined adaptability and engagement separately, this study underscores PPC's critical role in their interplay, advocating for a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that support effective language education.

The final phase of the study revealed that factors like gender, age, language background, and grade level do not significantly moderate the relationships between adaptability, PPC, and SE. Specifically, gender and age were not significant predictors of PPC and grade was a significant predictor of engagement. Also, language background was a significant predictor of PPC. These findings are consistent with research showing that language background influenced PPC development (Liu et al., 2022), and familial plurilingualism contribute to transcultural competence (Trenchs-Parera & Pastena, 2024). Overall, this comprehensive examination emphasized the importance of considering demographic and contextual variables in analyzing SE, advocating for tailored educational strategies that address diverse learner characteristics.

The results of this research conform to the PERMA model (Seligman, 2018) by showing that adaptability and PPC enhance self-efficacy in EFL contexts. Adaptable students develop PPC, boosting engagement levels and fostering a positive learning environment (Kahu, 2013). As Seligman (2018) asserts, adaptability increases positive emotions and engagement, which are crucial for a flourishing life. Moreover, the predictive capacity of PPC regarding SE highlights its role in creating meaningful educational experiences that resonate with Seligman's emphasis on relationships and accomplishment (Seligman, 2018).

The study also signals that demographic factors such as gender and age moderate these relationships, suggesting that educational strategies should be tailored to address these variables to optimize SE. Overall, this research not only reinforces existing literature on adaptability and PPC but also expands the understanding of their interconnectedness within the framework of positive psychology, advocating for an integrated approach to language education that prioritizes these constructs for improved academic outcomes.

The current examination emphasized the crucial role of SE in EFL education, showing that adaptability enhances engagement directly and indirectly through PPC. Students proficient in navigating cultural contexts and developing PPC are more actively involved in learning. The research builds on previous theories and highlights the importance of factors like gender, age, language background, and grade level in shaping these dynamics. It advocates for an integrated educational approach that fosters adaptability and PPC to improve SE and academic outcomes in plurilingual settings.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the intricate relationships between adaptability, PPC, and SE within an Asian EFL context. The findings reveal that higher levels of adaptability significantly predict enhanced PPC, which in turn fosters greater SE both directly and indirectly. This dual influence underscores the importance of cultural competence and effective communication skills in promoting active participation in language learning. Additionally, the research identifies covariate factors, particularly gender and age, as not influential on PPC while grade level is a significant element for engagement, suggesting that educational strategies should focus on enhancing adaptability and PPC to improve SE across diverse learning environments. This study emphasizes the importance of adaptability and PPC in fostering SE among EFL learners. Future research should explore these dynamics across diverse cultural contexts to refine teaching practices. By integrating these findings into educational policies, educators can create more inclusive environments that prepare learners for global success.

The findings of this study highlight a crucial route for educators to consider when designing inclusive curricula: by prioritizing adaptability training and peer support systems, educators can create more supportive learning environments that meet diverse student needs. Future studies could further explore how technology integration might amplify these effects by providing personalized feedback mechanisms and adaptive assessments tailored to individual learners' requirements. It is noteworthy that higher-level cognitive processes could reinforce deeper engagement, so specific courses offer learners valuable opportunities for interactive reflection and refinement of their engagement effectively. Ultimately, fostering a culture of inclusivity through adaptable teaching methods will be pivotal in maximizing SE and success in EFL settings worldwide.

The implications of this research are profoundly significant for educators and policymakers, particularly in EFL settings, as they strive to create more inclusive and effective learning environments. By integrating adaptability training and PPC development into educational curricula, EFL instructors can foster SE, contributing to a more culturally responsive educational framework. This approach not only enhances EFL learners' language skills and cultural awareness but also supports broader educational goals by cultivating a more engaged, adaptable, and resilient student body. Consequently, it aligns with the overarching objective of modern education: creating an environment where students feel supported while developing essential life skills such as adaptability and cultural competence. By embracing these strategies, educators play a pivotal role in shaping future generations that are proficient in foreign languages and adept at navigating diverse social contexts effectively.

The present project offers valuable insights, yet it also highlights several limitations that necessitate further investigation. The sample of 599 Iranian EFL learners might not accurately represent other educational contexts due to cultural differences and the diverse ethnic groups within Iran, as well as the unique characteristics of Iranian private language institutes. To gain a deeper understanding of how adaptability and PPC develop over time and their lasting effects on engagement, longitudinal studies are essential. Moreover, relying solely on self-reported data may introduce biases, suggesting that future research should incorporate observational or performance-based assessments to provide more objective findings. Extensive exploration of these themes is crucial for refining effective teaching strategies that foster intercultural understanding and active participation among learners. By addressing these limitations, future studies can validate and build upon these findings, finally enriching our comprehension of the factors contributing to SE in diverse educational settings.

To conclude, incorporating adaptability training and PPC development into educational systems, particularly in EFL contexts, helps establish a nurturing environment where learners feel appreciated, inspired, and empowered to excel in today's globalized society. As educators face the challenges of diverse cultural landscapes within international EFL environments, adopting these approaches will be vital for cultivating a new generation of flexible and engaged EFL learners who are well-equipped to flourish in culturally diverse settings.

7. References

Ahmadi, G., Mohammadi, A., Asadzandi, S., Shah, M., & Mojtahedzadeh, R. (2023). What are the indicators of student engagement in learning management systems? a systematized review of the literature. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *24*(1), 117-136. https://dx.doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v24i1.6453

Axelson, R. D., & Flick, A. (2010). Defining student engagement. *Change: The magazine of higher learning*, *43*(1), 38-43. https://dx.doi.org/1080/00091383.2011.533096

Baranova, T., Khalyapina, L., Kobicheva, A., & Tokareva, E. (2019). Evaluation of students' engagement in integrated learning model in a blended environment. *Education Sciences*, *9*(2), 138. https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/educsci9020138

Bedi, A. (2023). Keep Learning: Student Engagement in an Online Environment. *Online Learning*, *27*(2), 119-136. https://dx.doi.org/10.24059/olj.v27i2.3287

Benlahcene, A., Mohamed Abdelrahman, R., Ahmed, M., & Aboudahr, S. M. F. M. (2024). A pathway to engagement: the

mediating role of self-efficacy between interpersonal relationships and academic engagement. *Cogent Psychology*, *11*(1), 2330239. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2024.2330239

Boulton, C. A., Hughes, E., Kent, C., Smith, J. R., & Williams, H. T. (2019). Student engagement and wellbeing over time at a higher education institution. *PloS one*, *14*(11), e0225770. https://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0225770

Bryson, C., & Hand, L. (2007). The role of engagement in inspiring teaching and learning. *Innovations in education and teaching international*, *44*(4), 349-362. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14703290701602748

Chen, Y. Z., & Hélot, C. (2018). The notion of plurilingual and pluricultural competence in the teaching of foreign languages in France. *Integration of Education, 25*(4), 544-561. https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/handle/18452/19771

Chiu, T. K. (2021). Digital support for student engagement in blended learning based on self-determination theory. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *124*, 106909. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106909

Chowdhury, Q. H. (2023). ELT and development in Bangladesh: A critical overview. In *Local Research and Glocal Perspectives in English Language Teaching: Teaching in Changing Times*, 17-30. https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6458-9_2

Collie, R. J., Holliman, A. J., & Martin, A. J. (2017). Adaptability, engagement and academic achievement at university. *Educational Psychology*, *37*(5), 632-647. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2016.1231296

Derakhshan, A. (2021). The predictability of Turkman students' academic engagement through Persian language teachers' nonverbal immediacy and credibility. *Journal of Teaching Persian to Speakers of Other Languages, 10*(1), 3-24. https://dx.doi.org/10.30479/jtpsol.2021.14654.1506

Derakhshan, A., & Gao, X. (2025). "I Am Excessively Pressed by Classroom Tasks": A cross-cultural study on the sources and solutions of Chinese and Iranian EFL students' academic disengagement in online classes. *Psychology in the Schools*. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.23374

Derakhshan, A., Kruk, M., Mehdizadeh, M., & Pawlak, M. (2021). Boredom in online classes in the Iranian EFL context: Sources and solutions. *System*, *101*, 102556. https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102556

Duarte, J., & Günther-van der Meij, M. (2025). An integrated approach toward using multilingualism in primary education. In M. Christison & A. M. Krulatz (Eds.), *Promoting multilingual practices for linguistically diverse learners in global contexts* (pp. 28–48). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003397625-3

Elphinstone, B., Whitehead, R., Tinker, S. P., & Bates, G. (2019). The academic benefits of 'letting go': The contribution of mindfulness and nonattachment to adaptability, engagement, and grades. *Educational Psychology*, *39*(6), 784-796. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2019.1588228

Eren, Ö. (2024). Towards multilingual turn in language classes: plurilingual awareness as an indicator of intercultural communicative competence. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *21*(2), 783-801. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2090568

Fang, S. C., & Hsu, Y. S. (2017). Understanding science teachers' enactments of a computer-based inquiry curriculum. *Computers & Education*, *112*, 69-82. https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2017.05.004

Fathi, J., Nourzadeh, S., & Saharkhiz Arabani, A. (2021). Teacher individual self-efficacy and collective efficacy as predictors of teacher work engagement: The case of Iranian English teachers. *Journal of Language Horizons, 5*(2), 167-186 https://dx.doi.org/10.22051/LGHOR.2021.33184.1366

Feng, W., & Yang, J. (2005). A Comparative study on the learning adaptability of higher vocational college students and ordinary college students. *Chinese Journal of Special Education, 11*(5), 151-166.

Forgeard, M. J., Jayawickreme, E., Kern, M. L., & Seligman, M. E. (2011). Doing the right thing: Measuring wellbeing for public policy. *International journal of wellbeing*, *1*(1). https://dx.doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v1i1.15

Galante, A. (2022). Plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) scale: The inseparability of language and

culture. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *19*(4), 477-498. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1753747

Galante, A. (2025). Plurilingual and pluricultural competence: origins, current trends, and future directions. *The Handbook of Plurilingual and Intercultural Language Learning*, 333-347. https://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781394165957.ch24

Galante, A., & dela Cruz, J. W. N. (2024). Plurilingual and pluricultural as the new normal: an examination of language use and identity in the multilingual city of Montreal. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *45*(4), 868-883. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1931244

Gourlay, L. (2015). 'Student engagement'and the tyranny of participation. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *20*(4), 402-411. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2015.1020784

Granziera, H., Collie, R. J., Martin, A. J., & Caldecott-Davis, K. (2024). Adaptability and buoyancy: investigating their unique associations with students' wellbeing and academic achievement. *Educational Psychology*, 1-19. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2024.2418637

Hamedi, S. M., Pishghadm, R., & Farhadi, J. S. (2020). The contribution of reading emotions to reading comprehension: The mediating effect of reading engagement using a structural equation modeling approach. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 19*(2), 211-238. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10671-019-09256-3

Hastie, P. A., Stringfellow, A., Johnson, J. L., Dixon, C. E., Hollett, N., & Ward, K. (2022). Examining the concept of engagement in physical education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *27*(1), 1-18. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2020.1861231

Hayes, A. F., & Rockwood, N. J. (2017). Regression-based statistical mediation and moderation analysis in clinical research: Observations, recommendations, and implementation. *Behaviour research and therapy*, *98*, 39-57. https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2016.11.001

Hiver, P., Al-Hoorie, A. H., Vitta, J. P., & Wu, J. (2024). Engagement in language learning: A systematic review of 20 years of research methods and definitions. *Language teaching research*, *28*(1), 201-230. https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/13621688211001289

Holliman, A. J., Revill-Keen, A., & Waldeck, D. (2022). University lecturers' adaptability: examining links with perceived autonomy support, organizational commitment, and psychological wellbeing. *Teaching Education*, *33*(1), 42-55. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2020.1803822

Hussain, M., Zhu, W., Zhang, W., & Abidi, S. M. R. (2018). Student engagement predictions in an e-Learning System and their impact on student course assessment scores. *Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience*, *2018*(1), 6347186. https://dx.doi.org /10.1155/2018/6347186

Kahu, E. R. (2013). Framing student engagement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *38*(5), 758-773. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.598505

Kantelinen, R., Kautonen, M., Kang, M., Koivistoinen, H., & Zarra-Nezhad, M. (2024). Multilingual and multicultural events for children: university students' and primary school pupils' perspectives. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 1-12. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2024.2355809

Kharkhurin, A. V., Koncha, V., & Charkhabi, M. (2023). The effects of multilingual and multicultural practices on divergent thinking. Implications for plurilingual creativity paradigm. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, *26*(3), 592-609. https://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s1366728922000864

Kharkhurin, A. V., Koncha, V., & Charkhabi, M. (2024). The effects of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism on divergent thinking: Testing the moderating role of personality traits. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *27*(6), 772-792. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2023.2232521

Kline, R. B. (2023). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. Guilford publications.

Kodden, B. (2020). The ability to adapt. *The Art of Sustainable Performance: A Model for Recruiting, Selection, and*

Professional Development, 25-30. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46463-9_4

Kuh, G. D. (2009). What student affairs professionals need to know about student engagement. *Journal of College Student Development*, *50*(6), 683-706. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0099

Lam, S. F., Jimerson, S., Wong, B. P., Kikas, E., Shin, H., Veiga, F. H., ... & Zollneritsch, J. (2014). Understanding and measuring student engagement in school: the results of an international study from 12 countries. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *29*(2), 213. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000057

Li, H. (2023). Perceived teacher-student relationship and growth mindset as predictors of student engagement in foreign student engagement in foreign language learning: the mediating role of foreign language enjoyment. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1177223. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1177223

Liu, L., & Wan, L. (2024). Innovative models for enhanced student adaptability and performance in educational environments. *Plos One*, *19*(9), e0307221. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0307221

Liu, W., Gao, Y., Gan, L., & Wu, J. (2022). The role of Chinese language learners' academic resilience and mindfulness in their engagement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 916306. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.916306

Liu, X., Ji, X., Zhang, Y., & Gao, W. (2023). Professional identity and career adaptability among Chinese engineering students: The mediating role of learning engagement. *Behavioral Sciences*, *13*(6), 480. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13060480

Martin, A. J., Nejad, H. G., Colmar, S., & Liem, G. A. D. (2013). Adaptability: How students' responses to uncertainty and novelty predict their academic and non-academic outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *105*(3), 728. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032794

Martin, A. J., Nejad, H., Colmar, S., Liem, G. A. D., & Collie, R. J. (2015). The role of adaptability in promoting control and reducing failure dynamics: A mediation model. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *38*, 36-43. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2015.02.004

Martin, F., & Bolliger, D. U. (2018). Engagement matters: Student perceptions on the importance of engagement strategies in the online learning environment. *Online learning*, *22*(1), 205-222. https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v22i1.1092

Martinez, H. (2025). Plurilingual Learning Competence. *The Handbook of Plurilingual and Intercultural Language Learning*, 473-481. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394165957.ch33

Meyers, L.S., Gamst, G.S., & Guarino, A. J. (2008). *Applied multivariate research: design and interpretation.* Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071802687

Modarresi, G. (2022). The impact of task-based collaborative output activities on learner engagement in writing tasks. *Journal of Language Horizons*, *6*(2), 81-101. https://doi.org/10.22051/lghor.2021.35238.1453

Modarresi, G. (2025). The Role of Motivational Self-Regulatory Strategies in EFL Learners' Involvement in Writing Skills: A Mixed-Methods Study. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills, 44*(1), 77-96.

Mohammad Hosseini, H., Fathi, J., Derakhshesh, A., & Mehraein, S. (2022). A model of classroom social climate, foreign language enjoyment, and student engagement among English as a foreign language learner. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 933842. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.933842

Muñoz-Basols, J. (2019). Going beyond the comfort zone: multilingualism, translation and mediation to foster plurilingual competence. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *32*(3), 299-321. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2019.1661687

Nguyen, H. T. T. (2025). Challenges to the Development of Intercultural Communication Competence: A Study from the Tertiary Students' Perspectives. *Journal of Social and Scientific Education*, *2*(1), 22-23. https://doi.org/10.58230/josse.v2i1.292

Oksana, P., & Ruzana, G. S. (2021). Sustainable higher education via telecollaboration: Improving plurilingual and pluricultural competence. *Интеграция образования*, *25*(4), 544-561. https://doi.org/10.15507/1991-9468.105.025.202104.544-561

Parsons, S. A., & Vaughn, M. (2016). Toward adaptability: Where to from here? *Theory into Practice*, *55*(3), 267-274. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1173998

Piccardo, E. (2019). Mediation for plurilingual competence: Synergies and implications. In *Mediation as Negotiation of Meanings, Plurilingualism and Language Education*, (pp. 27-52). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003032069-2

Pishghadam, R., Derakhshan, A., Jajarmi, H., Tabatabaee Farani, S., & Shayesteh, S. (2021). Examining the role of teachers' stroking behaviors in EFL learners' active/passive motivation and teacher success. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 707314. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.707314

Reeve, J., & Tseng, C. M. (2011). Agency as a fourth aspect of students' engagement during learning activities. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *36*(4), 257-267. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2011.05.002

Roorda, D. L., Koomen, H. M., Spilt, J. L., & Oort, F. J. (2011). The influence of affective teacher–student relationships on students' school engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic approach. *Review of Educational Research*, *81*(4), 493-529. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311421793

Sabbaghi, F., Karimi, K., Akbari, M., & Yarahmadi, Y. (2020). Predicting academic engagement based on academic optimism, competency perception and academic excitement in students. *Iranian Journal of Educational Sociology*, *3*(3), 50-61. https://doi.org/10.52547/ijes.3.3.50

Salimi, E. A., & Karimabadi, M. (2020). The efficacy of classroom flipping on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' engagement and their perception of the flipped classroom model. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills, 39*(3), 143-180. https://doi.org/10.22099/jtls.2021.38824.2901

Santos Alves, S., & Mendes, L. (2006). Awareness and practice of plurilingualism and intercomprehension in Europe. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *6*(3-4), 211-218. https://doi.org/10.2167/laic248.0

Seligman, M. (2018). PERMA and the building blocks of well-being. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *13*(4), 333-335. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2018.1437466

Seligman, M. E. (2002). Positive psychology, positive prevention, and positive therapy. *Handbook of positive psychology*, *2*(2002), 3-12. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195135336.003.0001

Stang, J. B., & Roll, I. (2014). Interactions between teaching assistants and students boost engagement in physics labs. *Physical Review Special Topics-Physics Education Research*, *10*(2), 020117. https://doi.org/10.1103/physrevstper.10.020117

Strasser, M., & Reissner, C. (2022). Plurilingual and pluricultural competence: The EVAL-IC model of intercomprehension competence. *AILA Review*, *35*(1), 38-59. https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.22008.str

Tabachnick, B. G., Fidell, L. S., & Ullman, J. B. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics* (6th ed.). Pearson. https://doi.org/10.1037/e676252012-088

Trenchs-Parera, M., & Pastena, A. (2024). Exploring transcultural competence in the internationalised university classroom: the role of intercultural friendships and plurilingualism in the construction of a transcultural identity. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *45*(2), 209-223. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1874391

Vayre, E., & Vonthron, A. M. (2017). Psychological engagement of students in distance and online learning: Effects of self-efficacy and psychosocial processes. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, *55*(2), 197-218. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633116656849

Wang, X., Liu, Y. L., Ying, B., & Lin, J. (2023). The effect of learning adaptability on Chinese middle school students' English academic engagement: The chain mediating roles of foreign language anxiety and English learning self-efficacy. *Current Psychology*, *42*(8), 6682-6692. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02008-8

Wilson, D. (2020). The Role of Teaching Assistants and Faculty in Student Engagement. In *2020 ASEE Virtual Annual Conference Content Access*. https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--35365

Woll, N., & Paquet, P. L. (2025). Developing crosslinguistic awareness through plurilingual consciousness-raising tasks. *Language Teaching Research*, *29*(1), 63-87. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211056544

Wu, R., & Yu, Z. (2024). Relationship between university students' personalities and e-learning engagement mediated by achievement emotions and adaptability. *Education and Information Technologies*, *29*(9), 10821-10850. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-12222-5

Xerri, M. J., Radford, K., & Shacklock, K. (2018). Student engagement in academic activities: a social support perspective. *Higher Education*, *75*, 589-605. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0162-9

Zaidi, R., Moura, G. D. C., & Cruz, F. R. (2025). Critically Engaged Language and Literacy Workshops as a Disruptive Pedagogy in Plurilingual Classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *60*(1), e597. https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.597

Zhang, H., & Liu, X. (2024). Exploration of College Students' Learning Adaptability Under the Background of Wisdom Education. *International Journal of Information Technology and Web Engineering (IJITWE)*, *19*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.4018/ijitwe.336486

Zhang, K., Wu, S., Xu, Y., Cao, W., Goetz, T., & Parks-Stamm, E. J. (2021). Adaptability promotes student engagement under COVID-19: the multiple mediating effects of academic emotion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*, 633265. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.633265

Delving into Teacher Stroke, Time Perspective and Creativity: Insights from EFL Students' Perceptions

Ehsan Taghdisi[1] ID
Ghasem Modarresi[2*] ID

[1]M.A. in Applied Linguistics, Department of English, Quchan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Quchan, Iran
[*2]Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English, Quchan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Quchan, Iran

ABSTRACT

The present study, using a sequential mixed-methods design, mainly aims at determining the extent to which teacher stroke and teacher time perspective contribute to teacher creativity. In doing so, the participants consisted of 110 EFL students from English private institutes in the quantitative phase of the study, and a pool of eight learners were selected to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. A number of instruments were used to measure teacher stroke, time perspective, and creativity. To analyze the data, the Pearson moment-to-moment correlation, multiple regression, content-based categorization, and inter-coder reliability were used. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant association between teacher stroke and teacher creativity as well as between teacher time perspective and teacher creativity. Furthermore, the results of multiple regression determined that teacher time perspective was the most possible predictor of teacher creativity since this variable provided the most robust contribution to explaining teacher creativity. The results elicited from the responses to the interviews with the students provided nine themes including: positive feelings, energizer, motivation, time management, involvement, fun, active participation, self-confidence, and trying something new. Finally, a number of practical implications are offered from EFL teachers and students and some further suggestions are made.

KEYWORDS: Stroke; Time perspective; Creativity; Energy; Motivation; Involvement

1. Introduction

Research on second language (L2) achievement has recently concentrated on social-psychological perspectives, investigating the factors that contribute to learning and teaching a new language (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Heiran & Navidinia, 2015; Pishghadam, et al. 2023). It seems that the feelings experienced by teachers in the classroom influence other emotional factors. Actually, prior research has demonstrated that positive emotions exert more significant influence than negative emotions (Chang, 2009). In this respect, Berne (1964, p. 14) proposed the concept of "recognition-hunger" to describe stroke, and Stewart and Joines (1987) classified possible forms of strokes such as verbal, nonverbal, positive, negative, and unconditional. For example, positive emotions encompass sensations such as pleasure and accomplishment (Frenzel, 2014). In their study, Keller, et al. (2014) discovered a negative correlation between happy emotions and burnout and a positive correlation between negative emotions and burnout. More specifically, Pishghadam and Farkhondefal (2017) scrutinized the notion of stroke in both psychology and second language teaching and they outlined different kinds of strokers and strokees. Later, Ebrahimi et al. (2022) highlighted

the role that stroke play in students' academic success in L2 contexts. Nevertheless, the association of stroke with some important factors such as discipline and creativity is still needed to be clarified.

According to Francis-Smythe and Robertson (1999), research into individual differences traces back to the early 1990s. Indeed. according to Bergadaa (1990), time can be considered a social construct subjectively influenced by collective and individual variables. Levine (1997) argued that the cultural values of a community can be discerned by examining its norms and beliefs regarding the concept of time, establishing time as a social construct. However, it is crucial to recognize that time is not only a physical occurrence but also a psychological construct. In this respect, Baird et al. (2021) remarked that time perspective is related to important factors such as goal monitoring, academic success, and self-regulatory ability. Therefore, people have different perceptions and reactions to time, resulting in various attitudes and behaviors toward time (Francis-Smythe & Robertson, 1999). Hence, the psychological basis of time consists of multiple elements that are also related to individual differences. Meanwhile, further theoretical frameworks about time have been suggested by Naji et al. (2019), highlighting time perspective as a crucial element in the psychological formation of time, which encompasses the individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward their past, present, and future. More especially, Meidani et al. (2021) highlighted the linkage between teachers' time perspective and emotions that they experience. Actually, gaining a more profound comprehension of the potential connection between stroke and time perspective with other determining factors such as creativity can provide further insight into teacher professionalism.

Furthermore, effective teaching necessitates the inclusion of several vital components. A key area of focus in the domain of psychology of language instruction is the notion of teacher creativity, as emphasized by Pishghadam (2011). Over the past few decades, there has been a notable increase in the importance of creativity and innovation in teacher instruction and modern technology (Chien & Hui, 2010; Modarresi & Jeddy, 2018). Moreover, the creationistic approach has become relevant in contemporary psychology and pedagogy, connoting that humans can be creative (Karwowski, et al., 2007). Given the importance of creative thinking as a vital skill in today's world, experts prioritize the development of this fundamental ability by supporting educators, educational institutions, and educational systems (see Fisher, 2004). To clarify, creative teachers use non-conformists, avoid repetitions, make use of a wide ranges of strategies and techniques, pause to re-think, and make use of fantasy (Richards, 2013). In the same vein, Navidinia et al. (2023) highlighted that psychological factors such as motivation, behavior, and autonomy are conducive to teaching success.

Indeed, teacher creativity should gain momentum in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) since encouraging creativity can be helpful in increasing desirable emotions and decreasing undesirable emotions. However, it seems that much of the related literature in psychology of education has paid particular attention to the cognitive psychology rather than the emotional psychology. Additionally, classroom instructions in English courses have not adequately considered the growing importance of time perspective in teaching agenda. That is why there is not sufficient research into the association of teacher stroke and time perspective with creativity. Thus, the present study tried to fill the gap by examining the potential contributions of teacher stroke and temporal perspective to their creativity in second language education, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, to bring about transformation in educational settings. The rationale for choosing these variables is the significance of the underrated concepts of stroke and time perspective in SLA.

2. Literature review

2.1. Stroke and learning a new language

The existing literature acknowledges the remarkable influence of stroke on learning a new language (e.g., Wright et al., 2012; Rathel et al., 2014; Pishghadam, et al., 2019). The notion of stroke can help understand teacher praise and feedback in educational psychology (Wright et al., 2012; Rathel et al., 2014). As concluded by Burnett and Mandel (2010), teacher praise refers to the positive words about the students' behaviors and performance. Previous studies have shown that praise and feedback can effectively increase motivation in the students (Kirkland & Cunningham, 2012); therefore, it is reasonable to assume that stroke, a form of recognition, can have a similar impact on motivation. In this respect, stroke, as defined by Francis & Woodcock (1996), is directly linked to motivation. As reviewed by Hattie and Timperley (2007), it is essential to differentiate between stroke, feedback, and praise; stroke is about recognizing a person's presence by others, while feedback is a response to someone's actions, and praise is a form of positive feedback.

Meanwhile. According to Kusluvan (2003), people need to receive sufficient positive strokes to increase their inspiration. Actually, feedback about the self is strongly connected with the notion of stroke since it is individualistic and directed towards the self (Pishghadam & Khajavy, 2014). Moreover, research has shown a significant inverse relationship between absences and academic performance, suggesting that grades decline as the number of absences increases in the classroom (e.g., Brocato, 1989; Friedman et al., 2001; Gump, 2004). More recently, Noorbaksh et al. (2018) found that, from the students' perspectives, there was a significant relationship between teacher stroke and teacher success in second language teaching. Just recently, Khorsand and Modarresi (2023) found a significant association between strokes, teachers' emotions, and academic success in the Iranian context. However, although the incorporation of psychological concepts into language education is a matter of heated discussion in SLA, it seems that the affective-temporal bond can be regarded as a more novel strand of research in teacher professionalism.

2.2. Time perspective in L2 classroom context

Previous literature witnesses a favorable relationship between balanced temporal perspective and other important factors such as mental health and emotional intelligence (Stolarski et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2013). To elaborate, Boyd and Zimbardo (2005) argued that a state of equilibrium exists between our past, present, and future perspectives, known as balanced time perspective. Furthermore, the existing literature acknowledges that a negative perspective on the past is associated with a range of psychological conditions, naming depression, anxiety, discontent, low self-esteem, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999; Stolarski et al., 2011; Abbasian & Modarresi, 2022). Conversely, a past-positive mindset, as concluded by Bryant et al. (2005), is strongly linked to high levels of self-confidence, vitality, satisfaction, and happiness (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999; Zhang & Howell, 2011).

According to Zimbardo and Boyd (2015), individuals with a future perspective desire to achieve future goals and rewards; they exhibit anticipatory behavior and have trust in their ability to accomplish their goals in the future. In this line of research, temporal intelligence is a significant factor contributing to success across various cultures (Hunt, 1995). Clemens and Darlyrmple (2005) concluded that time-related factors are determining in leadership, and as further conceptualized by Doyle and Francis-Smythe (2008), this concept comprises self-referenced time personality and follower-referenced temporal activities. Indeed, individuals who achieve higher scores on tests tend to exhibit tremendous success across several domains, while those who obtain lower scores on tests tend to experience less success (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994). Alasmari et al. (2021) found that teachers' lack of time management as a classroom management strategy can hinder their self-efficacy and teaching effectiveness. Meidani et al. (2021) concluded that language teachers having a negative outlook on the past seemed to feel emotional exhaustion whereas those with past positive, were more likely to experience personal success in their career. More recently, Rahimi and Modarresi (2023) found a significant association between teacher emotions, energy, time perspective, and teacher success. Nevertheless, there are other important factors such as innovation and creativity that have not been sufficiently explored by professionals in the domain of SLA.

2.3. Teacher creativity

Historically, Rhodes (1961) classified over 50 definitions of creativity into four levels, using a qualitative technique; the 4-Ps concept comprises four levels: person, process, press, and products suggesting that persons who possess specified traits demonstrate a greater level of creativity than others. There is a differentiation between "big C" and "small c" creativity; the former substantially impacts society, whereas the latter centers around the manifestation of creativity in daily existence (see Maley, 1997; Craft, 2001). In this respect, Pennycook (2001) provides a perceptive analysis of the role of a critical teacher educator, introducing the term practicum to describe the integration of theory and practice to generate fresh and creative insights into the TESOL practicum. McDonald and Zeichner (2008) examined the transition from multicultural education to social justice, fostering teachers' awareness and creativity in critical teacher education. Burton (2010) concluded that creative teachers make use of student-centered, interaction-based, and open-ended elements to fortify creative thinking on the part of students. Navidinia et al. (2015) found that personality traits are related to teachers' self-concept including factors such as risk-taking and competence which are qualities of creative teachers. Modarresi et al. (2021) focused on the role of assessment-oriented literacy in elevating the level of positive feedback and engagement for creative teachers. Just recently, Mohammadi and Modarresi (2023) found a significant relationship between teaching motivation, conceptions of intelligence, and teacher creativity in the Iranian context.

Whereas the relationship between emotional factors and cognitive factors such as creativity has already been investigated to some extent in the Iranian context, the present study offers some important insights into the literature because the attention to the interplay between emotions, temporal, and cognitive issues would provide L2 teachers with valuable sources of information based on which they can create the most favorable emotional atmosphere in their classes for the students to participate more effectively and become fully engaged in accomplishing the learning tasks.

The present study followed the guidelines by Pishghadam (2011), who proposed the concept of applied English language teaching including a new responsibility for teachers to integrate real-life topics such as positive emotions and different kinds of intelligence into the school curriculum, fostering teachers to possess a deeper understanding of sense-induced emotions and to monitor their beliefs, motivation, and creativity connected to teaching and learning. Taken together, the present study, focusing on the students' perspectives, aimed at (1) investigating the significant association of teacher stroke and time perspective with their creativity; (2) identifying the potential predictors of creativity in stroke and time perspective; and (3) finding out the role of stroke and time perspective in enhancing creativity.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

The researchers employed a sequential mixed-methods research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) beginning with a quantitative approach performing a correlational design to find out the linkage between the three variables, including teacher stroke, teacher time perspective, and teacher creativity, and then, complemented by interview methods to capture the salient aspects of stroke and time perspective in enhancing creativity.

3.2. Participants

The sample comprised 110 EFL learners (females: n=78, 70.9%; males: n=32, 29.1%; Mean age=21.69 SD=2.64) who were selected from a number of private English institutes in Quchan, located at the northeast of Iran, based on convenience sampling. However, initially, their scores on Oxford placement test (OPT) were measured for homogeneity purposes. The researchers only considered students whose scores on the OPT were at the intermediate level so that the sample was as representative as possible with respect to their overall language knowledge. To be more exact, out of 142 participants, the number of learners whose scores were at the intermediate level was reduced to 110 learners. Moreover, in the qualitative phase of the study, the researchers chose eight learners (females: n=5, 62.5%; males: n=3, 37.5%; Mean age=21.12, SD=1.32) based on purposive sampling. The pertinent information was collected to the point that no new information was emerged from the responses.

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. OPT

Initially, OPT was employed, as a standardized test of overall language knowledge, which includes 60 vocabulary and grammar questions in a multiple-choice format. The scoring rubric classifies the participants into five groups: elementary (1-14), pre-intermediate (15-29), intermediate (30-44), upper intermediate (45-50), and advanced (51-60). The volunteers who were categorized at the intermediate level joined the present study.

3.3.2. The student stroke scale

The Student Strokes Scale (SSS), developed and validated by Pishghadam and Khajavy (2014), was utilized to assess the instructional strokes provided by the teachers to their learners within the classroom setting. The questionnaire items were designed based on the primary attributes of stroke, including positive, negative, verbal, and non-verbal manifestations. Learners were required to provide their responses to 18 items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, which encompasses a range from 1 (indicating never) to 5 (indicating always). The estimated reliability for the whole items was reported as .88.

3.3.3. The time perspective inventory

The Time Perspective Inventory (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999) as the most frequently-used scale on time perspective, was utilized to measure time perspective. The scale is composed of a total of 56 items with five subscales: past negative (consisting of 10 things), past positive (composed of 9 items), present hedonistic (composed of 15 items), present fatalistic (consisting of 9 pieces), and future (composed of 13 items). Participants were requested to provide answers to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale from very uncharacteristic (1) to very characteristic (5). The reliability coefficient as estimated by Cronbach's alpha was 0.71. In this study, the questionnaire was adapted by replacing the pronoun "I" with the pronoun "he/she" so that the students could respond to the items focusing on their teachers' time perspective. The reliability of the adapted questionnaire was 0.77.

3.3.4. The teacher creativity scale

To measure English language teacher creativity, the language teacher creativity scale, developed and validated by Pishghadam, et al. (2012), was used. The scale includes 63 items on a 5-likert scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always). The reliability of the scale was estimated by the Rasch model (r=.91).

3.3.5. Semi-structured interview questions

Four semi-structured open-ended questions were designed by the researchers to explore the role of stroke and time perspective in improving teacher creativity. The contents of the questions centered around the familiarity of the students with the concepts of stroke and time management as well as their teachers' mastery over positive strokes and optimal use of class time, and more specifically, how these variables are reflected in their creativity including the extent to which these factors are effective in empowering creative minds. Three experts who were faculty members of English language teaching checked the validity of

the contents of the questions. Having received the feedback provided by the experts, the researchers rechecked and revised the validity of the questions.

3.4. Procedure

The researchers collected the relevant data from 110 participants in six weeks from August 1402 to October 1402 during the regular class time. During the first week, the researchers distributed the OPT to the students for homogeneity purposes. In the second week, the students' stroke scale was distributed to the students. They received clear and comprehensive instructions regarding the allotted time and the way to respond to the items. During the third week, the time perspective questionnaire was distributed to the students, again providing clear instructions to accomplish the task. In the fourth week, the students were provided with the teaching creativity questionnaire with clear instructions. During the fifth and sixth weeks, the researchers conducted interviews to collect the students' perceptions of the influence of teacher stroke and time perspective on their creativity. The interview questions were formulated in English; however, the participants were free to provide precise responses to these questions in either Persian or English language.

The researchers performed statistical methods, entailing descriptive and inferential statistics, to find the answers to the research questions. Using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, the researchers determined whether there was any significant association between stroke, time perspective, and creativity among EFL intermediate students. As for the second research question, multiple regression was performed to determine the best possible predictor of teacher creativity in stroke and time perspective. Finally, the researchers employed "theme-based categorization" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 245) to provide codes for the information elicited from the learners' responses. The inter-rater reliability for coded transcripts was taken into consideration.

4. Results

4.1. Teacher stroke, time perspective, and creativity

The first objective of the study was to examine the significant relationship of teacher stroke and time perspective with their creativity. Before running Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, the researchers, initially, inspected the assumptions of normality for the scores. The scatterplot displayed a positive relationship because the points were close.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for teacher stoke, time perspective, and creativity

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Stroke	110	61.21	8.77	-.52	.23	-.30	.45
Time perspective	110	200.37	17.26	-.66	.23	-.73	.45
Creativity	110	252.53	16.30	-.75	.23	-.04	.45
Valid N (listwise)	110						

As shown in Table 1, initially, the assumptions of normality were checked, and the results reported no violation since the amount of skewness and kurtosis was between +2 and -2. The means and standard deviations of the scores were reported as follows: teacher stroke (M=61.21; SD=8.77), time perspective (M=200.37; SD=17.26), and creativity (M=252.53, SD=16.30).

Table 2. Correlations of teacher stroke and time perspective with creativity

		Teacher creativity
Stroke	Pearson Correlation	.31**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	110
Time perspective	Pearson Correlation	.43**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	110

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As displayed in Table 2, there was a significant correlation between teacher stroke and creativity [r=.31, n=110, p<.05], and between teacher time perspective and creativity [r=.43, n=110, p<.05].

4.2. The predictors of teacher creativity in stroke, and time perspective

The second objective of the study concerned with the possible predictors of teacher creativity in stroke and time perspective. The researchers ran multiple regression to obtain statistical results. As of multicollinearity, the correlation between stroke and time perspective in the model was satisfactory since it was above 0.30 and below 0.90. Moreover, the multicollinearity assumption was not violated since the tolerance value for each independent variable was not less than .10. Likewise, the VIF value was found to be less than 10 which was an indication of normality of data. The normal probability plot of the regression standardized residuals was also checked, and the results showed that the points were placed in a reasonably straight diagonal line from bottom left to top right which was an indication of no significant deviations from normality. Additionally, the number of independent variables in this study was two, and following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2001) guidelines, the critical value must be less than 13.82, and since it was 8.86, there was no violation. The results of model summary showed that the model (which included scores on stroke and time perspective) explained 21 percent of the variance in creativity scores, and the results of ANCOVA showed that the model attained statistical significance (F=15.00, Sig = .00, p<.05).

Table 3. The predictors of teacher creativity in stroke and time perspective

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	158.52	17.23		9.20	.00		
1 Stroke	.33	.16	.18	2.04	.04	.93	1.06
Time perspective	.36	.08	.38	4.39	.00	.93	1.06

As indicated in Table 3, the most significant beta coefficient was .38 which was for teacher time perspective, indicating that this variable had the most substantial contribution to explaining teacher creativity when the variance by all other variables was controlled. The beta value for stroke was also significant since the significant value for it was less than .05 so that it could also significantly contribute to the prediction of creativity. Thus, as for the second objective of the study, teacher time perspective was the best predictor of teacher creativity.

4.3. The results from students' responses to the interviews

As for the third research question of the study exploring the students' perceptions of the influence of stroke and teacher time perspective on teacher creativity, the researchers conducted interview sessions with the participants, using the data saturation approach. Initially, the participants were asked to provide an introduction of themselves. Based on the results of the interviews, the students believed that teachers who provide positive reinforcement and are dedicated to their job greatly influence their students' motivation and desire to become engaged in learning. They remarked that putting sufficient time and effort by the teacher help build their confidence and increase their willingness to attend class and to participate in class discussion. To them, creative teachers are knowledgeable and follow their intuitions so that they hold us accountable for our progress. One of the students said:

> *Those teachers who emphasize the significance of time in enhancing our English language are more positive and energetic. However, some teachers express concern that the limited amount of time allocated for English language, with only two weekly sessions, needs to be increased.*

The students noted that some teachers waste the class time since they put too much attention to reading the roll and unfortunately, mostly speak in Persian language as the class proceeds and they focus more on translation and grammatical exercises. To them, these are teachers who follow the routines and they do not create surprises to make the task of learning a new language enjoyable and these behaviors bring about dissatisfaction and demotivation for us. Another student mentioned:

> *This year, I had a teacher who applied greater diligence and became an energizing force, making our class inspirable and dynamic, resulting in our enthusiastic attendance.*

Actually, students feel that effective factors such as the level of their involvement, motivational density, and desire to learn are interwoven to their teachers' positive emotional support, up-to-date knowledge, effort, and novelty in establishing a positive attitude towards learning and teaching the English language. Another student said:

Teachers should be cautious and avoid being impulsive, which can lead to dire consequences. I had a teacher who tended to be impatient and taught the lessons quickly without adequate attention to us. Despite his active presence in the classroom and frequent whiteboard use, I did not find the class effective and enjoyable.

Students believed that teachers who use a blend of methods and actively study new findings about pedagogical matters and do research exhibit higher levels of creativity. They stated that some teachers repetitively teach the same subjects to pupils for many years, needing more teaching experience since they lack original thought. Another student noted:

Some teachers reteach what they initially delivered during their early years of teaching, whether at the high school or private English institutes. However, there are teachers who avoid repetition and we get good vibes from their actions. They are also motivated not only by external factors but also by their desire and internal drive. Among these teachers, some clever individuals create valuable textbooks and articles.

Subsequently, the researchers calculated the inter-coder reliability of the codes emerged from the interviews with the students regarding their thoughts on the role of teacher stroke and time perspective in their creativity. The first author encoded the data and subsequently shared it with the second author. Then, the second researcher categorized the responses by discovering the shared factors and produced similar results with slight variations. Since both coders reached the same result, the inter-coder agreement about the findings was ensured. Initially, the researchers followed the guidelines proposed by Campbell et al. (2013) to divide the number of coding agreements by the total number of agreements and disagreements. As a result, they obtained an inter-rater reliability of 75 percent. There was a total of 12 recurring themes identified by at least one of the researchers. Out of these, there were nine instances where both coders had identified alike. Hereafter, the total inter-coder reliability was 75 percent (9/12 = .75). Some of the instances of the responses provided by the students with the corresponding codes are presented below:

Table 4. Some excerpts emerged from the interviews

Participants	Excerpts	Themes
Interviewee A	Teachers' attention to positive emotions can facilitate the process of learning.	positive feelings
Interviewee B	I am more willing to attend the class when the teacher energetically works with us on the learning tasks.	energizer
Interviewee C	What galvanized me to pursue my studies was the teacher who attended to me and pushed me pretty hard.	motivation
Interviewee D	To me, understanding the importance of time and knowing how to manage and make use of it is a key factor for evaluating the success of a teacher.	time management
Interviewee E	I am interested in teachers who are committed to helping their learners succeed because they can involve us behaviorally and cognitively.	involvement
Interviewee F	I like those teachers from whom I get good vibes and positive support and feedback. This makes me participate fully in the class.	active participation, fun
Interviewee G	I would like to interact with creative teachers since they have self-assurance and avoid doing repetition and this boost my confidence.	self-confidence
Interviewee H	I think that teachers who are creative make use of new activities and materials such as social media or ChatGPT.	Trying something new

As indicated in Table 4, to address the third objective of the study, the learners' commonalities were categorized into nine themes including positive feelings, energizer, motivation, time management, involvement, fun, active participation, self-confidence, and trying something new.

5. Discussion

The findings of the current study unveiled enlightening findings within the Iranian context. The results indicated a significant relationship between teacher stroke, time perspective, and creativity, from the students' perceptions. Furthermore, the study findings indicated that teacher time perspective was the most possible predictor of teacher creativity as it had the most significant contribution to explaining teacher creativity. Finally, after calculating inter-coder reliability, the detailed analysis of the themes revealed nine themes.

As for the first and second research objectives of the study, the findings of the present research are aligned with the research undertaken by Churches and Terry (2007) who found that teachers' attention and positive feelings positively impact students' academic advancement. Moreover, the obtained results are in agreement with the earlier research by Francis and Woodcock (1996) who confirmed a close linkage between stroke subscales and motivation, indicating a significant association among the constructs. This highlights the importance of establishing a stronger connection between positive emotions, time,

and academic achievement in our educational system. In the same vein, the obtained results are in line with the research work by Fried, et al. (2015) who concluded that teacher emotions directly influence students' cognitive processes and emotional experiences. Similarly, the findings are parallel to the findings by Zimbardo and Boyd (2015) who found that time perspective is associated with future academic goals and rewards. Likewise, Clemens and Darlyrmple (2005), focusing on the concept of temporal intelligence, tried to draw attention to the significance of time-related factors in leadership and management which is also an important issue in classroom management. In the same vein, Pishghadam et al. (2021) found that students' willingness to attend class can be predicted by their perceptions of stoke, credibility, and success on the part of the teachers. Likewise, Alipour and Modarresi (2024) found that time and effort, as the key elements of investment, are determining in students' academic success. Therefore, teachers' attention to emotional and temporal issues are conducive to both their own and their students' success.

As for the third research objective of the study, the findings of the study revealed that actively providing students with positive strokes and making the best use of time in class motivate them to learn and involve them in learning tasks. Similarly, the study by Stewart and Joines (1987) confirmed that factors such as attentiveness to homework, engaging in class discussions, and asking questions contribute to learning development. In the same vein, the results of the study conducted by Jalilzadeh et al. (2020) and Rouhani and Modarresi (2023) support the importance of engagement in teaching and learning success. The results of the study also highlight the view of teacher creativity both a product with a focus on a particular lesson or task and as a process with an emphasis on thinking processes and decisions that a teacher make (Jones, 2012; Richards, 2013). Additionally, increasing student motivation has been identified as a determining element in reducing the amount of school dropout among learners (e.g., Christenson & Reschly, 2010; Wang & Fredricks, 2014). Likewise, increased levels of learners' behavioral and emotional involvement have a substantial impact on reducing the prevalence of depression (Li & Lerner, 2011). Furthermore, the earlier research by Liu and Jackson (2008) showed that learners who lacked motivation were not inclined to engage in communication, suggesting that a lack of motivation in language learning strongly predicted students' reluctance to willingness to participate in class. Moreover, the results of the interviews are parallel to the research conducted by Krause (2014) who found that good behavior could generate fun and laughter, making it not only a source of motivation for students but also a catalyst for creating a more relaxed and cheerful classroom environment conducive to learning. The results of the interviews highlighted the role of time management in students' success, and similarly, Meidani et al. (2021) found that language teachers with a negative outlook on the past seem to carry negative emotions while those with a positive outlook on the past and also future time perspectives seem to have positive emotions regarding their academic achievement. Similarly, Zargaran (2024) concluded that creative teachers are metacognitively aware and knowledgeable.

Taken together, this study revealed that the concepts of teacher stroke and time perspective are significantly related to teachers' creativity from the students' viewpoints so that the use of socio-psychological factors such as positive strokes by the teacher help the students become more engaged in accomplishing the tasks which is in agreement the previous research by Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) who came to the conclusion that engagement in accomplishing the language tasks fortifies the language ability of the students. Moreover, this study corroborates the three-facet model of life-wise language teaching perceptions, developed by Tavakoli et al. (2017), that accentuating the symmetry between emotion and cognition. Therefore, employing positives strokes and making the best use of time can bring about an energetic environment for the students. Finally, the findings of the study support the viewpoint that there should be a notable movement in language instructions towards a more wholistic approach in English language classrooms, focusing on both emotional feedback and temporal issues rather than just paying due attention to the formerly dominant cognitive viewpoint in teacher professionalism, drawing on how teachers can apply creativity in their teaching by making the most of teaching moments.

6. Conclusion

The results of the present research provide compelling evidence for the need to broaden the scope and adopt a future-oriented approach to teachers' personalities, explicitly focusing on how creativity can be applied and supported in L2 contexts. For example, language courses, such as those focused on conversational skills, can provide students with engaging and interactive opportunities to talk about the capacity to be creative in learning and in life. Classroom teachers can serve as instructional scaffolders, helping students to become fully engaged in class activities while assisting students in fully engaging in class while identifying the variables contributing to a better society. Moreover, the focus on teacher time management in second language classes is precious because it enables them to effectively engage students in learning tasks by integrating their behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and social involvement into doing the learning tasks and solving their problems. Actually, higher engagement with the activity is associated with excitement and inventiveness, facilitating students' ability to think creatively and analytically.

The results of this study provide new and valuable information to the existing body of research by expanding our understanding of how specific pleasant experiences can provide learners with inspiration to develop more creative problem-solving and risk-taking skills. In our context, most classes are teacher-centered, meaning that teachers hold authority and maintain a distance from students whereas teachers can bridge this gap and create a more engaging classroom environment by dedicating more time to students, involving them in class discussions, and assisting them in their development. This approach

would encourage the students to actively participate in learning tasks and improve their receptive and productive skills. These findings emphasize the potential value of time-related factors and temporal intelligence in shaping teachers' current and future success.

Successful teachers are recommended to incorporate certain aspects of stroke since their positive strokes can facilitate their students' integration into the EFL learning environment and can assist them in self-regulating their motivation and progress. EFL teachers are responsible for providing creative activities which can involve them in problem-solving activities and foster a positive attitude towards learning English. They are expected to participate in pre-service and in-service training programs to learn more about the features of creativity and refine their perspectives of the concept of time. When it comes to EFL students, they should treat their teachers with utmost respect and benefit from the positive feedback and the time that teachers invest in them. They are expected to attend to their teachers' strokes and focus on positive feelings like pride and enjoyment while avoiding negative feelings that negatively influence motivation and grit. They can model their creative teachers as exemplary persons to develop the capacity to be creative in learning and in life.

Whereas the present study offers some intriguing insights, it is exposed to several limitations. First, researchers are required to be highly cautious of the external generalizability because the target participants are not typical of all intermediate EFL learners. Furthermore, more longitudinal research with a longer duration can examine the extent to which stroke and time perspective can improve teachers' novelty and creativity from the students' perspectives. The current study examined the correlation of teacher stroke and teacher time perspective with teacher creativity. Further research is required to replicate the study to establish its validity within the school and university settings. In addition, research must be conducted to determine the correlation between stroke and time perspective with other important factors such as teacher credibility, grit, and active motivation. Further research could investigate the degree to which these factors differ based on the teachers' sociocultural and socioeconomic background. Finally, more research is needed to delve into the concept of teacher creativity using qualitative methods such as metaphor elicitation.

7. References

Abbasian, M., & Modarresi, G. (2022). Tapping into software for oral communication: A comparative study of Adobe Connect and Skype. *Journal of Business, Communication & Technology, 1*(2), 34-43. https://doi.org/10.56632/bct.2022.1204

Alasmari, N. J., & Althaqafi, S. A. (2021). Teachers' practices of proactive and reactive classroom management strategies and the relationship to their self-efficacy. *Language Teaching Research, 28*(6). https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211046351

Alipour, M., & Modarresi, Gh. (2024). Investment, teacher credibility and academic achievement: A mixed-methods study. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 21*(3), 688-697. http://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2024.21.3.11.688

Baird, H. M., Webb, T. L., & Sirios, F. M. (2021). Understanding the effects of time perspective: A meta-analysis testing a self-regulatory framework. *Psychological Bulletin, 147* (3), 233-267. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000313

Bergadaa, M. M. (1990). The role of time in the action of the consumer. *The Journal of Consumer Research, 17*(3), 289-302. https://doi.org/10.1086/208558

Berne, E. (1964). *Games people play: The psychology of human relationships.* New York: Grove Press.

Boyd, J. N., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2005). *Time perspective, health and risk taking*. Lawrence Erlbaum: Mahwah.

Brocato, J. (1989). *How much does coming to class matter? Some evidence of class attendance and grade performance*. Educational Research Quarterly.

Burnett, P. C., & Mandel, V. (2010). Praise and feedback in the primary classroom: Teachers' and students' perspectives. *Australian Journal of Education and Developmental Psychology*, *10*, 145-154.

Burton, P. (2010). Creativity in Hong Kong schools. *World Englishes*, *29*(4), 493-507. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2010.01677.x

Campbell, J. L., Quincy, Ch., Osserman, J., & Pedersen, O. K. (2013). Coding in-depth semi-structured interviews: Problems of unitization and inter-coder reliability and agreement. *Sociological Methods & Research, 42*(3), 294-320. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124113500475

Chang, M. L. (2009). An appraisal perspective of teacher burnout: Examining the emotional work of teachers. *Educational Psychology Review, 21* (3), 193-218. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-009-9106-y

Chien, C, & Hui, AN. (2010). Creativity in early childhood education: Teachers' perceptions in three Chinese societies. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 5,* 49-60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2010.02.002

Christenson, S. L. & Reschly, A. L. (2010). Check and Connect: Enhancing school completion through student engagement. In E. Doll, & J. Charvat (Eds.), H*andbook of prevention science* (pp. 327-348). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37285-9-5

Churches, R., & Terry, R. (2007). *NLP for teachers: How to be a highly effective teacher*. Crown House Publishing.

Clemens, J. K., & Dalrymple, S. (2005). *Time mastery: How temporal intelligence will make you a stronger, more effective leader*. New York: Amacom Books.

Craft, A. (2001). An analysis of research and literature on creativity in education. *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority*, *51*(2), 1-37.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Doyle, A., & Francis-Smythe, J. (2008). Development of the temporal intelligence questionnaire. Paper presented at the British Academy of Management Annual Conference, Harrogate.

Ebrahimi, S., Tabatabaeian, M. S., & Al Abdwani, T. (2022). Enhancing the communicative skills of normal and mentally-challenged learners through emo-sensory textbooks. *Journal of Business, Communication and Technology, 1*(2), 1-12. http://dx.doi.org/10.56632/bct.2022.1201

Fisher, R. (2004). What is creativity? In R. Fisher & M. Williams (Eds.), *Unlocking creativity: Teaching across the curriculum* (pp. 6-20). New York: Routledge.

Francis, D., & Woodcock, M. (1996). *The new unblocked manager: A practical guide to self-development*. Gower Publishing, Ltd.

Francis-Smythe, J., & Robertson, I. (1999). Time-related individual differences. *Time & Society, 8*(2), 273-292. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X99008002004

Frenzel, A. C. (2014). Teacher emotions. In L. Linnenbrink-Garcia & R. Pekrun (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions in education* (pp. 494-519). New York: Routledge.

Frenzel, A. C., & Stephens, E. J. (2013). Emotions. In N. C. Hall & T. Goetz (Eds.), *Emotion, motivation, and self-regulation: A handbook for teachers* (pp. 1-56). Emerald.

Fried, L., Mansfield, C., & Dobozy, E. (2015). Teacher emotion research: Introducing a conceptual model to guide future research. *Issues in Educational Research, 25*(4), 415-441. https://doi.org/34584161

Friedman, P., Rodriguez, F., & McComb, J. (2001). Why students do and do not attend classes: Myths and realities. *College teaching*, *49*(4), 124-133. https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2001.10844593

Gump, S. E. (2004). Keep students coming by keeping them interested: Motivators for class attendance. *College Student Journal*, *38*, 157-160.

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research, 77*, 81-112. https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487

Heiran, A. & Navidinia, H. (2015). Private and public EFL teachers' level of burnout and its relationship with their emotional intelligence: A comparative study. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies, 3*(3), 01-10.

Herrnstein, R. J., & Murray, C. (1994). *The bell curve*. New York: Free Press.

Hunt, E. (1995). The role intelligence in modern society. *American Scientist*, *83*(1), 356-369.

Jalilzadeh, K., Modarresi, Gh., & Rouhani, H. (2020). A Comparative study of instruction types and reading comprehension for young learners. In H. H. Uysal (Ed.), *Political, pedagogical and research insight into early language education* (123-132). Cambridge Publishing Press.

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jones, R. (Ed.). (2012). *Discourse and creativity*. Harlow: Pearson.

Karwowski, M., Gralewski. J., Lebuda, I., & Wisniewska, E. (2007). Creative teaching of creativity teachers: Polish perspective. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 2*, 57-61. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TSC.2006.10.004

Keller, M. M., Chang, M.-L., Becker, E. S., Goetz, T., & Frenzel, A. C. (2014). Teachers' emotional experiences and exhaustion as predictors of emotional labor in the classroom: An experience sampling study. *Frontiers in Psychology, 5*, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01442

Khorsand, M., & Modarresi, Gh. (2023). The relationship between teachers' emotions, strokes and academic achievement: the case of BA English-major students. *Language and Translation Studies*, *56*(2), 71-107. https://doi.org/10.22067/lts.2023.81620.1179.

Kirkland, T., & Cunningham, W. A. (2012). Mapping emotions through time: how affective trajectories inform the language of emotion. *Emotion*, *12*(2), 268-282. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024218

Krause, K. (2014). *Male beauty: postwar masculinity in theater, film, and physique magazines*. Suny Press.

Kusluvan, S. (2003). *Managing employee attitudes and behaviors in the tourism and hospitality industry*. Nova Publishers.

Levine, R. (1997). *A geography of time: The temporal misadventures of a social psychologist*. Basic Books.

Li, Y., & Lerner, R. M. (2011). Trajectories of school engagement during adolescence: Implications for grades, depression, delinquency, and substance use. *Developmental Psychology*, *47*, 233–247. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021307

Liu, M., & Jackson, J. (2008). An exploration of Chinese EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. *Modern Language Journal,* 92, 71–86. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00687.x

Maley, A. (1997). Creativity with a small 'c'. *The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning and Teaching, 4,* 1-11.

McDonald, M., & Zeichner, K. M. (2008). Social justice teacher education. In Ayers W., Quinn T., Stovall D. (Eds.), *Handbook of social justice in education* (pp. 595-610). Routledge.

Meidani, E.N., Pishghadam, R. & Shakeebaee, G. (2021). The role of time perspectives in language teachers' burnout. *Current Psychology, 40*, 5145-5155. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00456-x

Mercer, S., & Dörnyei, Z. (2020). *Engaging language learners in contemporary classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.

Modarresi, G., & Jeddy, A. (2018). The association between dynamic assessment of grammar and fluid intelligence: A case of undergraduate EFL students. *International and Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences, 7*(3), 297-321. https://doi.org/10.17583/rimcis.2018.3881.

Modarresi, Gh., Jalilzadeh, K., Coombe, K., & Nooshab, A. (2021). Validating a test to measure translation teachers' assessment literacy. *The Journal of Asia TEFL, 18*(4), 1503-1511. https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2021.18.4.31.1503

Mohammadi, J., & Modarresi, Gh. (2023). Conceptions of intelligence, teaching motivation and teacher creativity: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Cognition, Emotion & Education, 1*(2), 47-58. https://doi.org/ 10.22034/cee.2023.174746

Naji Meidani, E., Pishghadam, R., & Shakeebaee. G. (2019). The role of time perspectives in Language Teachers' Burnout. *Current Psychology*. Online Publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00456-x

Navidinia, H., Gholizadeh, F. Z., & Chahkandi, F. (2023). EFL teachers' burnout during the Covid-19 pandemic: Can teaching context make a difference? *Applied Linguistics Inquiry, 1*(1), 34-49. https://doi.org/10.22077/ali.2023.6087.1010

Navidinia, H., Zangooei, A., & Ghazanfari, M. (2015). Uncovering the relationship between EFL teachers' big five personality traits and their self-concept. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies, 7*(2), 177-204.

Noorbakhsh, Z., Pishghadam, R., & Saboori, F. (2018). Stroke and gender identity in teacher success: From learners' viewpoints. *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, 41*(1), 39-48. https://doi.org/10.4038/sljss.v41i1.7591

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pishghadam R. (2011). Introducing Applied ELT as a new approach in second/foreign language studies. *Iranian EFL Journal, 7*(2), 8-14.

Pishghadam R., & Farkhondehfal, E. (2017). From navazesh (physical strokes) to navazeh (mental strokes): A look into the concept of stroking in teaching a second language. *Language and Translation Studies*, *49*(4), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.22067/lts.v49i4.62725

Pishghadam, R., & Derakhshan, A., Zhaleh, K., & Al-Obaydi, L. (2021). Students' willingness to attend EFL classes with respect to teachers' credibility, stroke, and success: A cross-cultural study of Iranian and Iraqi students' perceptions. *Current Psychology, 40,* 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01738-z

Pishghadam, R., & Khajavy, G. H. (2014). Development and validation of the Student Stroke Scale and examining its relation with academic motivation. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *43*, 109-114. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2014.03.004

Pishghadam, R., Baghaei, P., & Shayesteh, Sh. (2012). Construction and validation of an English language teacher creativity scale (ELT-CS). *Journal of American Science, 8*(3), 497-508.

Pishghadam, R., Derakhshan, A., & Zhaleh, K. (2019). The interplay of teacher success, credibility, and stroke with respect to students' willingness to attend classes. *Polish Psychological Bulletin, 50*(4), 284-292. https://doi.org/0.24425/ppb.2019.131001

Pishghadam, R., Derakhshan, A., Zaleh, K., & Al-Obaydi, L. H. (2023). Students' willingness to attend EFL classes with respect to teachers' credibility, stroke, and success: A cross-cultural study of Iranian and Iraqi students' perceptions. *Current Psychology, 42,* 4065-4079. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01738-z

Pishghadam, R., Ebrahimi, S., & Al Abdwani, T. (2023). Development and validation of the teacher energy scale: A movement toward metapathy. *Language and Translation Studies*, *56*(1), 1-38. https://doi.org/10.22067/lts.2022.78969.1160.

Rahimi, M., & Modarresi, G. (2023). Teacher emotions, energy, and time perspective in teacher success: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Cognition, Emotion, & Education, 2*(1), 40-54. https://doi.org/10.22034/cee.2023.412453.1010

Rathel, J. M., Drasgow, E., Brown, W. H., & Marshall, K. J. (2014). Increasing induction-level teachers' positive-to-negative communication ratio and use of behavior-specific praise through e-mailed performance feedback and its effect on students' task engagement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *16*(4), 219-233. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300713492856

Rhodes, M. (1961). An analysis of creativity. *The Phi delta kappan*, *42*(7), 305-310. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20342603

Richards, J. C. (2013). Creativity in language teaching. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 1*(3), 19-43.

Rouhani, H., & Modarresi, Gh. (2023). The role of translation-based, meaning-based, and hint-based instructions in vocabulary acquisition: A mixed-methods study. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies, 15*(1), 83-100. https://doi.org/10.22111/ijals.2023.38276.2156.

Schutz, P. A., & Pekrun, R. (2007). Introduction to emotion in education. In P. A. Schutz & R. Pekrun (Eds.), *Emotion in education: A volume in educational psychology* (pp. 3-10). Academic Press, Elsevier Inc.

Stewart, I., & Joines, V. (1987). *TA today: A new introduction to transactional analysis.* Life space.

Stolarski, M., Bitner, J., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2011). Time perspective, emotional intelligence and discounting of delayed awards. *Time & Society*, *20*(3), 346-363. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X11414296

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2001). *Using multivariate statistics* (4th ed.). Harper Collins.

Tavakoli, M., Zabihi, R. & Ghadiri, M. Response, resistance, or restraint: A triadic model of pre-service teachers' perceptions on the (f)utility of educational therapy and life skills education in ELT. *Asia-Pacific Educational Research, 26*, 341–349 (2017). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-017-0353-2

Wang, M.T., & Fredricks, J. A. (2014). The reciprocal links between school engagement, youth problem behaviors, and school dropout during adolescence. *Child Development, 85*, 722–737. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12138

Wright, M. R., Ellis, D. N., & Baxter, A. (2012). The effect of immediate or delayed video-based teacher self-evaluation on Head Start teachers' use of praise. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 26*, 187-198. https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2012.657745

Zargaran, Z. (2024). Predicative role of metacognitive awareness in teachers' cognition on noticing concept. Applied Linguistics Inquiry, *2*(1), 123-134. https://doi.org/10.22077/ali.2024.7455.1034

Zhang, J. W., & Howell, R. T. (2011). Do time perspectives predict unique variance in life satisfaction beyond personality traits? *Personality and Individual Differences*, *50*(8), 1261-1266. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.02.021

Zhang, J. W., Howell, R. T., & Stolarski, M. (2013). Comparing three methods to measure a balanced time perspective: The relationship between a balanced time perspective and subjective well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *14*(1), 169-184. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-012-9322-x

Zimbardo, P. G., & Boyd, J. N. (1999). Putting time in perspective: A valid, reliable individual differences metric. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*(6), 1271-1288. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.77.6.1271

Zimbardo, P. G., & Boyd, J. N. (2015). Putting time in perspective: A valid, reliable individual-differences metric. In M. Stolarski, N. Fieulaine, & W. Van Beek (Eds.), *Time perspective theory; review, research and application* (pp. 17-55). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-07368-2-2

Translators' Motivations for Title Selection in Iran: A Quantitative Study of the Role of Contextual and Professional Factors

Sima Ferdowsi[1*] iD
Saeed Ameri[2] iD

[*1]Assistant Professor of Translation Studies, Department of Foreign Languages, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran
[2]Assistant Professor of Translation Studies, Department of English Language, University of Birjand, Birjand, Iran

ABSTRACT

This paper acknowledges the importance of translators' motivations in selecting titles for translation and argues that the interplay between their contextual and professional backgrounds and their decision-making processes regarding title selection has been relatively underexplored in translator studies. To address this notable research gap, the present quantitative research examines whether translators' contextual and professional backgrounds—such as the number of translated books, educational degrees and fields of study—significantly contribute to their motivations in selecting titles for translation in contemporary Iran. This study recruited 248 professional translators to complete a self-report questionnaire that gathered their professional demographics and assessed their preferences based on various book selection motivations, including socio-cognitive considerations, externally driven motivations, factors guaranteeing success, translators' authority and agency, internally driven motivations, and publishers' authority and agency. The results indicated that only translators' educational background, number of translated books, and field of study significantly influenced their book selection preferences. Further analysis provided insights into which specific book selection motivations are driven by these contextual and professional factors. Overall, the article highlights that translators' choices are shaped by a dynamic interplay of professional experience, academic background, and external market pressures, indicating that effective translator support demands consideration of both individual and systemic aspects.

KEYWORDS: Book selection; Translators; Sociology; Motivation; Professional experience;

1. Introduction

The sociological turn in translation studies marked a shift toward viewing translation as a socio-cultural activity. Sociology of translation, as (Chesterman, 2017) mentions, embraces three branches of the sociology of translation as a product, the sociology of translation as a process, and translators' sociology. Examining translators as social agents involved in the translation process highlights their roles, motivations, power relations and societal status (see also Chesterman, 2021). Different aspects of translators as social agents, such as agency (Kinnunen & Koskinen, 2010), identity (Yoo & Jeong, 2017), power (Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002), ideology (Díaz-Cintas, 2012) and status (Dam & Zethsen, 2010) have been thoroughly examined in translation studies. Although translator-centered aspects have received scholarly attention over the past two decades from both sociological and

historical perspectives or a combination of the two, there are still some avenues of further research, which may help to gain deeper insights into translator decision-making processes. Indeed, the need for exploring translator-centered aspects among contemporary translators persists in the field. Issues surrounding book selection and how goals and motivations drive these selections have seen less scholarly interest insofar as Chesterman (2009) argues, in sociological studies, "the teloi [i.e., motivation or goal] of translators (and of course interpreters) might make worthwhile contributions to a better understanding of their attitudes and personal goals and ethics" (p. 17). For Buzelin (2007), the reason governing the selection of titles for translation is not straightforward but complex since "selection is always done according to the needs of the receiving polysystem" (Ben-Ari, 2013, p. 146).

This does not ignore past research that tried to understand this matter from a historical perspective. For example, some studies relying on archival data have explored translators' book selection goals/motivation at different periods in various regions (Poland, Iran & Finland) (Fornalczyk-Lipska, 2021; Haddadian-Moghaddam, 2014, 2015; Paloposki, 2007, 2009). Translator or publisher's motivation for book selection has also been well-studied when it comes to the issue of 'retranslation', as scholars have attempted to underpin reasons and motivations behind retranslations (Deane-Cox, 2014; Saeedi, 2020; Zanotti, 2015). Researchers of retranslation have aimed to offer insights into "why certain texts are repeatedly translated while others are translated only once" (Gürçağlar, 2020, p. 484). This deals with translators and publishers' goals and motivations behind retranslating certain works. Overall, researchers have attempted to historicize questions concerning translator motivation through various sources, including archives of correspondence. Indeed, Folaron (2018, p. 132) rightly asks "what values motivate translation (material, economic, or symbolic) and how do they create or inspire the genesis of communities of practice?".

Although countless factors have a role to play in the book selection process in translation, including translator's agency and power imbalances between languages, research has not empirically examined these factors and failed to understand whether these factors really encourage translators towards a particular choice or not. Interestingly, new lines of research in translation studies have investigated the influence of the translator's personality traits on their performance (e.g., Hubscher-Davidson & Lehr, 2021); however, the influence of professional factors in the book selection process in translation has remained virtually underexplored. The extant literature, therefore, does not offer a clear understanding of book selection criteria or motivations and goals behind the translator's choice, especially when it comes to contemporary translators. Therefore, this study was carried out to bridge this gap in the literature by exploring whether professional and contextual factors, such as university-level training or income affect translators' book selection motivations/goals. By identifying these associations, this research sought to enhance the understanding of the factors driving translators' book selection motivations, and provide valuable insights for both practicing and prospective translators, enabling them to make more informed and strategic choices. The study also provides valuable insights into the current mechanisms of title selection within the translation market, which can potentially mitigate the risk of poor and ill-advised decisions. Taken together, this paper addresses the following questions:

1. Is there a significant association between the number of translated books and various dimensions of book selection motivations?

2. Is there a significant association between the means of income and various dimensions of book selection motivations?

3. Is there a significant association between the publication status and various dimensions of book selection motivations?

4. Is there a significant association between the educational degree and various dimensions of book selection motivations?

5. Is there a significant association between the field of study and various dimensions of book selection motivations?

2. Multi-dimensionality of translator motivations/goals in title selection

2.1. A survey of motivation in translation studies

One way to conceptually understand why translators may choose a specific title for translation is probably to equate decision-making choices to *skopos* theory, introduced by Hans Vermeer. This is because *skopos* determines and guides the translator's choices, decisions and actions; yet, it is more concerned with the text (Chesterman, 2017). In the words of Nord, the goal of translation specifies translation procedures (Nord, 2011, p. 125); a similar critique can be seen in Schlager's views "skopos usually refers to more immediate levels such as a text or a translation task" (Schlager, 2021, p. 204). This has led to the introduction of a new concept called "telos" by Andrew Chesterman (Chesterman & Baker, 2008), emphasizing the overall purpose of the translator and describe "the personal motivation of translators [and] the reasons why they work in this field in general, and also the reasons why they translate a given text" (Chesterman, 2009, p. 11). Since the introduction of the concept, it received scant attention even though researchers have been working on translators' motivation in diverse domains, including training (Ameri & Ghahari, 2018), non-professional and voluntary translation (Lee, 2022; Olohan, 2014) and sociology (Haddadian-Moghaddam, 2015).

From a social perspective, motivations behind choosing and translating a title can be analyzed through the lens of two models developed within the translation studies discipline. Touching on the issue of agency—defined as "the ability to exert power in an intentional way" (Buzelin, 2011, p. 6)—Paloposki (2007) argues that translator motivations and criteria for choosing a title can be explored through 'extratextual agency' which is enabled through the study of translator's notes, drafts, personal diaries,

etc. Haddadian-Moghaddam (2015) criticizes this model as "it says little about agents' decisions in selecting texts for translation, their motivations, and the context that, for better or for worse, affects their agency" (p. 147). Being aware of the translator and publisher agency in choosing titles for translation, Haddadian-Moghaddam (2014) proposes a tree-tier model so as to compensate for the shortcomings of Paloposki's model which disregarded agents' motivations and decision-making. He links the motivations for translation to Bourdieu's capitals, namely, economic, symbolic, social and cultural. In other words, each translator, as a social actor, is seeking a specific or a combination of capitals when they decide which title—cultural goods in Bourdieu's words (Bourdieu, 1986)—is worth translating. All these choices are constrained by "various social problems or censorship" (Haddadian-Moghaddam, 2014, p. 26). Relevant to this matter are 'preliminary norms' in Gideon Toury's theory. It specifically deals with the translation policy and directness of translation. The former determines which texts and titles should be chosen for translation; in other words, translators and publishers' text selection criteria (Zwischenberger, 2020). For example, Kruger (2011) highlights the complex interplay of educational cultural and aesthetic factors that shape the selection norms in translating children's books in South Africa. Thus, as can be seen, the research has so far focused on past translating agents and has largely ignored contemporary translators.

2.2. Goal-framing theory

The concept of goal is not new in translation studies as it is known that functional approaches have discussed it in terms of '*skopos*', especially when it comes to Holz-Mänttäri's 'translatorial action' where translation is described as a goal-oriented activity (Nord, 2013). Once again, these theories have predominantly centered on the text itself, rather than on the goals or motivations of translators (Chesterman, 2009). The present paper builds on Lindenberg and Steg's (2007) 'goal-framing theory' to properly understand the motivations and reasons behind translator's decision-making behavior in choosing titles for translation. In other words, this study examines motives through the lens of goals, given that the potential of goals lies in their capacity to regulate and shape cognitive and motivational processes, as well as to influence individuals' interests. More specifically, goals serve as drivers of human behavior, shaping thought processes in specific contexts and, consequently, influencing individuals' reactions (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007, 2013).

With roots in cognitive social psychology (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007), the goal-framing theory suggests that goals direct "what people attend to, what knowledge and attitudes become cognitively most accessible, how people evaluate various aspects of the situation, and what alternatives are being considered" (Lindenberg & Steg, 2013, p. 49). As a matter of fact, this theory is based on three types of motives: hedonic, gain and normative.

Hedonic motives arise from the pleasure and positive emotions associated with a given task, such as translation, or from the avoidance of effort. The underlying goal is the attainment of pleasurable sensations or the satisfaction of personal needs. As a matter of fact, the agent would like to gain gratification and seek pleasure or avoid unnecessary efforts. Thus, they give priority to personal enjoyment and excitement resulting from the act of doing the activity (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007, 2013). In translation terms, the translator (or agent) chooses a specific title for translation as the book content or the author is more pleasurable and captivating. To give a real-life example, Maryam Meftahi, an Iranian literary translator, elaborates on her translation of *The Coral Island*—by the Scottish author R. M. Ballantyne—: "I will definitely translate a book that I enjoy reading, and since I read this book translated by Abbas Yamini Sharif in my teenage years and became very interested in the subject of the book, I decided to translate this book into a more modern language." (Bagheri, 2021, September 27).

In a gain goal frame, the actor is concerned with guarding and improving personal resources, such as monetary outcomes, social status or even power and knowledge (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007, 2013). The cost has always been a decisive factor in the translation industry; neither the publisher nor the translator cannot take financial risks by choosing and translating a book with little or no financial return; therefore, they prioritize economic motives but also consider their good and bad experiences with title selection in the past. Besides this, literary translation has often been associated with prestige, reputation, respect or credit. For Khojasteh Kayhan, who is well-known for her translation of Paul Auster and Virginia Woolf, Iranian (literary) translators "enjoy a high level of social prestige, higher than elsewhere, and this leaves no room for complaining" (Haddadian-Moghaddam, 2014, p. 170). In contrast, the findings of an empirical study on Iranian practicing translators show that two capitals, namely, "Income and Social Status"—which include social respect and salary— and "Improvement Opportunities"—which include any opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills—have not been well-received by the Iranian translators (Kafi et al., 2015). Relying on their empirical data, Kafi et al. (2018) claim that "translation is not recognised as an established profession [in Iran]" (p. 95).

Finally, normative motives concern the perceived appropriateness of actions, emphasizing the agent's tendency to behave in accordance with prevailing norms or a sense of obligation within a given context. Here, what is appropriate is subject to debate; however, the agent chooses the norm which is more advantageous in terms of gain (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007, 2013). Both translators and publishers know that the acceptance or rejection of the translations by the regulatory forces depends on the content of the book; therefore, they should choose the title very carefully. They have to perform appropriate exemplary translation behavior, acting according to norms governing translation norms and conventions in society. To demonstrate the importance of this motive, we can refer to Khojasteh Kayhan's interview, who is well-known for her translation of Paul Auster

and Virginia Woolf. She cites censorship and cultural considerations as a motive for ignoring some works: "For example, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence is one of the most famous literary works in the world and one of my favorite novels, but due to the current situation, I have refrained from translating it and I usually translate books that do not focus on eroticism. Because being faithful to the book and translating the spirit of the work are very important to me." (Karimi, 2005, October 12). Bahman Farzaneh, known for his Persian translation of novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, is of the same opinion and argues that Iranian translators should choose works which may not demand considerable censorship; for example, Henry Miller's novels which revolve around erotism, should not be translated into Persian (Karimi, 2005, October 12).

2.3. Book selection criteria in Iran

Despite the lack of any systematic local and international study on translators' goals and motivations for choosing titles for translation, this section briefly reviews Iranian translators' interviews in magazines and journals to contextualize the study. An issue worth discussing here is who is in charge of book selection in Iran. Our review of both empirical and magazine articles suggests that both publishers and translators can propose books for translation. For instance, the manager of Nashr Mahi, a prolific Iranian publisher specializing in translating foreign books, asserts that it is mainly the translator who chooses or proposes the title for translation even though it is not supersizing that the publisher may propose a title to a translator (Esmaieli, 2016). Emami (1999) is also of the view that this is the translator who has a significant role in selecting or proposing literary titles for the translation. A couple of case studies have also evidenced the primary agency of translators in selecting works for translation (Haddadian-Moghaddam, 2015).

Delzendehrooy et al. (2019), whose research focused on Iranian translators' agency in the late 1880s, however, report that translators had almost no role in picking up the books for translation, simply because "each and every book had to be approved by the Shah or it would be banned even if the translation had already been printed and distributed to bookshops" (p. 4). In the post-revolution era of Iran—which happened after the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1978—"large publishers with an institutional mechanism or smaller publishers with educated managers started to play a part in the selection of works" (Haddadian-Moghaddam, 2014, p. 119). This, however, does not negate the role of translators themselves in book selection; however, this process, as Haddadian-Moghaddam (2014, p. 119) maintains, appears to be regulated and governed mainly by the publisher. Perhaps because, as Wolf (2007) argues, translation "is inevitably implicated in social institutions, which greatly determine the selection, production and distribution of translation and, as a result, the strategies adopted in the translation itself" (p. 1).

As far as translators' goals and motivations in book selection are concerned, Amini's interviews with a couple of well-known Iranian literary translators show that various factors contribute to the selection of books for translation, which in addition to translators' personal judgment and values, may include if the writer is already famous in Iran or not (Amini, 2005). In another writing titled "Translators and Criteria for Selecting Books for Translation", Abdollah Kowsari, a renowned Iranian translator, enumerates reasons for *not* translating a literary title:

- the translator's disinterest in the book

- the socio-political issues revolving around translation (say, censorship)

- the title being deeply rooted in the original culture, which demands considerable footnotes and hinders readers' flow in the text

- the target society needs and expectations (Kowsari, 2005)

The manager of *Nashr Mahi* also maintains that they do not have any written policy concerning book selection for translation and a combination of factors comes to play a role. For example, they are not interested in handling Western best-sellers since many other Iranian publishers quickly start translating them to earn substantial revenues. They also assert that sales figures are not a primary selection criterion for this publisher (Esmaieli, 2016).

To complement these, the celebrated Iranian translator Daghighi (2022) is of the opinion that when choosing a title for translation, the translator should consider the taste of their audience in translation so as to fulfill their expectations thoroughly. She also argues how the socio-political issues of society can affect the translator criteria for choosing a book. Thus, certain norms—be it governed by personal judgement or imposed by the socio-political constraints of society—are at work in selecting titles for translation. In his study of the selection of feminist literary works for Persian translation, Bolouri (2017) concludes that this process is by no means random and arbitrary since the socio-political climate of the society are at work and have the final say in book selection. For Buzelin (2007), the reasons governing the selection of titles for translation are not straightforward but complex, and "selection is always done according to the needs of the receiving polysystem" (Ben-Ari, 2013, p. 146).

This survey of the scant literature on title selection reveals the myriad personal and professional factors contributing to translators' motivations in choosing books to translate. Despite the multidimensionality of professionalism and extensive

research on this topic (Liu, 2021), the relationship between various aspects of professionalism (e.g., university-level training or past experience) and translators' motivations for title selection remains largely unexplored. Empirical research specifically addressing translators' motivations and goals in title selection is notably scarce, particularly concerning contemporary translators. While historical and sociological studies have explored these issues in past contexts, the present paper focuses on the professional and contextual factors influencing book selection motivations among contemporary Iranian professional translators.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design and participants

This paper comes to fill in a gap of knowledge by investigating book selection motivations and the influence of professional and contextual factors among contemporary Iranian translators, using an online questionnaire survey. This study is quantitative and followed a 5 (independent variables) × 6 (dependent variables) factorial design. More specifically, the dependent variables are the factors derived from the questionnaire, developed and validated in Ferdowsi et al. (2023), while the independent variables are the professional and contextual factors of the sample (Table 1).

Table 1. Variables of the study

Independent variables	Dependent variables
Number of translated books	Socio-cognitive considerations
Means of income	Externally driven motivations
Publication status	Success guarantee factors
Educational degree	Translators' authority and agency
Field of study	Internally driven motivations
	Publishers' authority and agency

A total of 251 Iranian translators voluntarily participated in the present study. The translators were chosen based on a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The inclusion criteria were that they must have published one written translation, irrespective of its genre or text type. Persian must be one of the language pairs they typically work in; for example, this can be Persian-English, Russian-Persian, etc. Translation directionality was not considered. To increase the sample size, those who attended the study were asked to assist the researchers in identifying other potential translators. After data screening for outliers and missing values, three participants were removed, and 248 (146 females, M_{age}=37.61) remained for further analysis. Of the participating translators, 88.7% reported translating between Persian and English. The remaining (10.3%) sample translated either between Persian and other languages (i.e., French, German, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, Kurdish, and Russian) or a combination of three languages.

3.2. Instruments

A researcher-made 34-item questionnaire was used to gather the data. A detailed description of the questionnaire's construction and validation, along with the identified subconstructs affecting Iranian translators' book selection, is reported in another publication (Ferdowsi et al., 2023). The questionnaire, named the *Translators' Book Selection Criteria* (TBSC) scale, consists of two parts (See Ferdowsi et al., 2023). The first part includes 34 items, which are responded to on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), measuring translators' book selection criteria and motivation. The second part covers 14 items addressing demographic information, such as age, gender, translation experience, educational degree, means of income, etc. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated to be .74, which is acceptable. The six subconstructs of the TBSC checklist are:

- **Subscale 1:** socio-cognitive considerations

- **Subscale 2:** externally driven motivations

- **Subscale 3:** success guarantee factors

- **Subscale 4:** translators' authority and agency

- **Subscale 5**: internally driven motivations

- **Subscale 6**: publishers' authority and agency

3.3. Data collection and analysis

The researchers decided to use an Iranian survey platform (https://survey.porsiline.ir/) to create a web-based questionnaire to reach broader respondents. The time required for questionnaire completion was not longer than 20 minutes and it was in Persian matching the respondent's mother tongue. Additionally, a progress indicator was included in the online questionnaire to indicate how much more time it might take to finish the survey. Potential translators were invited through various social media networking platform (WhatsApp groups, Telegram channels, Instagram pages and Email correspondences). The data were imported into SPSS for descriptive and inferential statistics. The reliability analyses were performed in SPSS and multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were analyzed to address the research questions. Several one-way between-groups MANOVAs were conducted to examine the differences across the five independent variables and the six dependent ones. MANOVA is a test comparing two or more groups' mean scores on a set of dependent variables. As it allows for the inclusion of multiple dependent variables, it is preferred over ANOVA to minimize the possibility of inflated Type 1 error. The reason is that by performing several simple analyses, it is more likely to arrive at significant, yet false or fake, differences in the groups (Type 1 error). Moreover, the present data met the critical assumption of MANOVA, which requires the existence of some logical and conceptual association among the dependent variables (as they are all the subscales of the same checklist here). In what follows, the detailed analysis and interpretation of the findings are offered.

4. Results

4.1. Preliminary analyses

Before the primary analysis, the preliminary tests were conducted to check for multivariate outliers, linearity, multicollinearity, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices and equality of variances.

4.1.1. Multivariate normality

In order to examine the occurrence of any strange pattern of scores across the dependent variables, Mahalanobis distance analysis was performed. The comparison of the obtained Mahalanobis values with the chi-square value of 22.46 (critical value in studies with six dependent variables) resulted in removing three participants from the data pool due to incomplete or extremist responses.

4.1.2. Linearity

MANOVA assumes a linear or straight-line relationship between each pair of dependent variables. The assumption was examined using legacy dialogs and generating a matrix of scatterplots between each pair of variables. Since the plots did not show any evidence of non-linearity, the assumption of linearity was satisfactorily met.

4.1.3. Multicollinearity

One of the critical assumptions of MANOVA is multicollinearity, requiring that the dependent variables be highly correlated. In cases where there are low correlations among them, separate univariate analyses of variance should be run for the dependent variables (i.e., singularity). As all the dependent variables here were the subscales of the same checklist, and consequently, highly correlated, univariate analyses were unnecessary and the multicollinearity assumption was satisfied.

4.1.4. Homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices

The assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was examined by conducting Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices. As the significance values of all the independent variables were larger than .001 (Table 2), it was concluded that the assumption was not violated in the whole data set.

Table 2. Results of box's test of equality of covariance matrices

	Variables	Box's M	F	df	P value
1	Number of translated books	77.30	1.13	63, 18994.63	.21
2	Means of income	21.52	.99	21, 143544.87	.46
3	Publication status	22.43	1.04	21, 221476.19	.40
4	Educational degree	78.74	1.07	63, 2886.24	.32

5	Field of study	31.52	1.46	21,218223.30	.07

4.1.5. Equality of error variances

Finally, Levene's test of equality of error variances was performed per variable in order to examine the assumption of equality of variance. As the results displayed no significant values for the variables, equal variances were assumed.

4.2. Primary quantitative findings

4.2.1. MANOVA results

Since the data did not show any serious violations in sample size and normality, Wilks' Lambda in multivariate tests table was a robust statistic to be reported. Moreover, as Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) recommend, Bonferroni adjustment was applied in interpreting between-subjects effects in order to reduce the chance of Type 1 error. By so doing, the effects were considered significant only if the p-value was less than .008, instead of the conventional .05. In Table 3, multivariate tests results of the five independent and six dependent variables are summarized. This suggests that *Number of Translated Books*, *Educational Degree*, and *Field of Study* significantly influence translators' title selection motivations. Importantly, the partial η² values, which indicate the effect size, help to understand the magnitude of these relationships. According to Cohen's (1992) guidelines, partial η² values of around .01 represent small effects, .06 medium effects, and .14 large effects. Based on these benchmarks:

- Number of Translated Books (partial η^2 = .04) falls within the small-to-medium effect range, implying a modest influence.

- Educational Degree (partial η^2 = .05) reflects a medium effect, suggesting a medium influence on title selection.

- Field of Study (partial η^2 = .08) represents a medium-to-large effect, indicating a stronger impact compared to Educational Degree.

Table 3. Summary of the multivariate tests results

		Value	F	df	P value	Partial η^2
1	Number of translated books	.86	1.94	18,676.47	.01	.04
2	Means of income	.96	1.66	6,241	.13	.04
3	Publication status	.98	.48	6,241	.81	.01
4	Educational degree	.84	2.38	18,676.47	.00	.05
5	Field of study	.91	3.66	6,241	.00	.08

4.2.2. Number of translated books

To address the first research question, the number of translated books was measured based on the total books participants had translated at the time of data collection. This factor served as an indicator of their professionalism, with a higher number of translated books reflecting a stronger professional identity. It was categorized into four levels: 1 book (12.5%), 2–3 books (27.01%), 4–5 books (8.46%), and more than 6 books (52.01%). The multivariate test results indicated that the number of translated books had a significant effect on translators' book selection motivations ($F(18, 676.47) = 1.94$, $p = .01$; $\Lambda = .86$; $\eta p^2 = .04$), explaining 4% of the variance, which represents a small effect size. When the between-subjects effects were examined (Table 4) with the Bonferroni adjustment applied ($p < .008$), a significant association emerged between the subscale 3 (success guarantee factors) and the number of translated books, accounting for 8% of the variance, which indicates a large effect size. Although the subscale 2 initially showed a significance ($p = .009$), it did not meet the stricter Bonferroni-adjusted threshold and was therefore not considered statistically significant.

Table 4. The results of tests of between subjects effects for number of translated books (df=3)

Source	DV	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P value	Partial η^2

	Subscale1	6042.84	2014.28	1.19	.313	.01
	Subscale2	68184.41	22728.13	3.93	.009	.04
Number of translated books	Subscale3	139494.53	46498.17	7.73	.000	.08
	Subscale4	8433.01	2811.00	.42	.738	.00
	Subscale5	51068.36	17022.78	2.25	.083	.02
	Subscale6	6718.30	2239.43	.43	.725	.00

The results of the one-way ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffé test indicated significant differences in success guarantee factors based on the number of translated books. Specifically, significant differences were observed:

- Between translators with 1 book and those with more than 6 translated books ($MD = 45.47$, $p = .03$), and

- Between translators with 2–3 books and those with more than 6 translated books ($MD = 49.70$, $p < .001$).

The estimated marginal means showed that translators with more than 6 translated books ($M = 371.18$, $SE = 6.82$) were substantially and significantly less concerned with success guarantee factors when selecting books compared to those with 1 book ($M = 416.66$, $SE = 13.92$) and those with 2–3 books ($M = 420.89$, $SE = 9.47$).

4.2.3. Means of income

To answer the second research question, through a dichotomous question, the participants were asked whether or not translation was their only means of income. For 94 of them (37.9%), translation was the only paid job, whereas for the remaining 154 (62.09%) it was not. Thus, the number of those for whom translation was not the only income source almost doubled that of those who earned a living through translation only. As Table 3 shows, means of income did not significantly affect the two groups' choice of books for translation ($F (6, 241) = 1.66$, $p = .13$; $\Lambda = .96$; $\eta p^2 = .04$).

4.2.4. Publication status

As to the third research question asking whether all their translations were published or not, the responses of 121 translators (48.79%) were positive and those of the remaining 127 (51.2%) were negative. The multivariate tests results in Table 3 displayed no significant differences between the two groups in their book selection motivation ($F (6, 241) = 0.48$, $p = .81$; $\Lambda = .98$; $\eta p^2 = .01$). Given the balanced sample distribution, these results appear reliable. However, as this was beyond the scope of the present study, future research is encouraged to further investigate translators' publication profiles and their impact on selection criteria and choices.

4.2.5. Educational degree

To address the fourth research question, the participants were divided into four groups of B.A./B.Sc. (26.61%), M.A./M.Sc. (52.82%), Ph.D. (16.93%), and others (3.62%). As Table 3 reveals, this factor had a significant effect on the translators' book selection motivations ($F (18, 676.47) = 2.38$, $p < .001$; $\Lambda = .84$; $\eta p^2 = .05$). It accounted for 5% of the variance, which is viewed as a medium effect size. When the results were considered per dependent variable and the Bonferroni adjustment was applied ($p < .008$), it was indicated that subscales 2, 3 and 6 were significantly different across the four educational levels, accounting for 6%, 7%, and 6% of the variance, respectively, all with a moderate effect size (Table 5). Other subscales (1, 4, and 5) did not reach statistical significance after applying the Bonferroni correction, indicating that educational degree does not significantly influence these factors.

Table 5. The Results of Tests of Between Subjects Effects for Educational Degree (df=3)

Source	DV	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P value	Partial η^2
	Subscale1	18950.13	6316.71	3.86	.010	.04
	Subscale2	98998.08	32999.36	5.84	.001	.06
Type of contracts	Subscale3	126217.94	42072.64	6.93	.000	.07
	Subscale4	25051.96	8350.65	1.26	.287	.01
	Subscale5	12289.13	4096.37	.53	.662	.00
	Subscale6	75550.16	25183.38	5.22	.002	.06

The one-way ANOVA and Post Hoc Scheffé test for the subscale 2 (externally driven motivations) revealed significant differences between B.A./B.Sc. translators and those with other degrees ($MD = 77.41$, $p = .04$), as well as between M.A./M.Sc.

translators and those with other degrees ($MD = 93.06$, $p < .001$). The estimated marginal means table showed that both B.A./B.Sc. ($M = 336.14$, $SE = 9.25$) and M.A./M.Sc. ($M = 351.79$, $SE = 6.56$) translators were significantly more externally motivated than those with other degrees ($M = 258.73$, $SE = 25.04$).

For the subscale 3 (success guarantee factors), significant differences were observed between B.A./B.Sc. ($M = 383.33$, $SE = 9.58$, $MD = 88.88$, $p = .01$), M.A./M.Sc. ($M = 408.39$, $SE = 6.80$, $MD = 113.95$, $p < .001$), and Ph.D. ($M = 386.50$, $SE = 12.01$, $MD = 92.06$, $p = .01$) groups, compared to those with other degrees ($M = 294.44$, $SE = 25.95$). The estimated marginal means table revealed that participants with these three degrees were significantly and comparably more concerned with success guarantee factors when selecting books for translation.

Finally, the results of the one-way ANOVA, Post Hoc tests, and marginal means table for the subscale 6 (publishers' authority and agency) indicated a significant difference between B.A./B.Sc. ($M = 405.05$, $SE = 8.54$) and M.A./M.Sc. ($M = 443.51$, $SE = 6.06$) translators, with M.A./M.Sc. translators being more inclined to respect or reserve publishers' authority and agency ($MD = 38.46$, $p < .001$).

Overall, these findings suggest that educational background plays a critical role in shaping the motivations and decision-making processes of translators in choosing titles, with those holding higher degrees generally placing greater emphasis on external factors, success guarantees, and publishers' authority. However, as the sample distribution was relatively unbalanced across the educational degrees, the results must be interpreted with caution.

4.2.6. Field of study

Field of study was another independent variable, treated as a dichotomous categorical variable, distinguishing between translators with a major in translation and those with a major in other fields. Of the participating translators, 118 (47.58%) had studied translation as their university major, while the remaining 52.41% had majored in various other disciplines, including Information Technology, English Literature, Cinema and Theatre, Art, Linguistics, Engineering, Political Science, English Teaching, and several other fields.

According to Table 3, the field of study had a significant effect on translators' book selection motivations ($F (6, 241) = 3.66$, $p < .001$; $\Lambda = .91$; $\eta p^2 = .08$), explaining 8% of the variance, indicating a medium effect size. After applying the Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons, the results of the between-subjects effects tests (Table 6) revealed a significant association between the subscale 2 (external motivating factors) and the translators' field of study, accounting for 5% of the variance (small effect). The estimated marginal means table showed that translators who majored in translation ($M = 357.99$, $SE = 6.92$) were significantly more externally motivated than those who majored in other fields ($M = 320.76$, $SE = 6.59$). Given that the two groups were balanced in sample size, this result can be considered reliably significant.

Table 6. The Results of Tests of Between Subjects Effects for Field of Study (df=1)

Source	DV	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P value	Partial η^2
	Subscale1	7344.05	7344.05	4.40	.037	.01
	Subscale2	85694.25	85694.25	15.15	.000	.05
Field of study	Subscale3	36617.08	36617.08	5.74	.017	.02
	Subscale4	33089.49	33089.49	5.07	.025	.02
	Subscale5	5993.45	5993.45	.78	.378	.00
	Subscale6	22167.47	22167.47	4.43	.036	.01

5. Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to enhance the understanding of how professional and contextual factors influence Iranian translators' book selection criteria and motivations. The results suggested that various factors significantly shape translators' title selection preferences or criteria. Specifically, it was found that the number of translated books, educational degrees and fields of study play a key role in determining the criteria and motivations behind translators' title selections. Additionally, while the number of translated books shows some influence, educational degree and field of study stand out as more substantial factors, with the latter having the strongest impact on translators' title selection preferences.

The analysis of the number of translated books in relation to translators' book selection motivations revealed that a large proportion of participants (52.01%) had translated more than six books, indicating a highly experienced group. The number of translated books significantly influenced translators' book selection motivations, albeit with a small effect size, implying that factors other than experience may also play a role in affecting how translators select titles. Further analysis suggested that this professional factor significantly contributed to factors ensuring success. However, it was observed that more

experienced translators—those who had translated more than six books—were less concerned with success-assurance factors in their book selection compared to their less experienced counterparts. Success-assurance factors include considerations such as consulting with experts or prioritizing the translation of newly published books (Ferdowsi et al., 2023). This finding suggests that their professional identity and confidence in their abilities may enable them to make more independent choices when selecting books for translation. It is important to note that success-assurance factors are only one aspect of the broader picture. As discussed in the sociology of translation, translators enter the field with various forms of capital (competitive assets) and compete with other translators or agents for a prominent position (Hanna, 2016). Consequently, translators with substantial competitive assets may place less emphasis on success-assurance factors, as their assets are likely to play a decisive role in the success of their translations. This aligns with the idea that, as experienced translators, their professional identity and the capital they have built (such as reputation or social networks) offer them more freedom in decision-making. They no longer need the assurance that less experienced translators may require, such as ensuring a book's success by following familiar norms or consulting with others. In light of goal-framing theory (Lindenberg & Steg, 2013), with experience, these experienced translators may feel more confident in their ability to ensure success on their own, allowing them to pursue projects that might be more personally meaningful or challenging rather than focusing on traditional markers of success.

The analysis of educational degrees in relation to translators' book selection motivations sheds light on the significant role that academic background plays in shaping their decision-making processes. This means that translators with different degrees tend to have different reasons for choosing the books they translate. The study identified three specific factors that were significantly influenced by educational degree, external motivations, success guarantee factors and publishers' authority. In fact, translators with a master's or bachelor's degree were more inclined to consider external motivations when selecting titles for translation, potentially driven by the need for commercial success with award-winning books or books highly recommended in the original and receiving culture (Ferdowsi et al., 2023). This aligns with both gain and normative goal frames because the translators are making decisions that are expected to result in tangible rewards. By following established success markers (e.g., choosing award-winning books or those that are widely recommended), these translators are likely adhering to the norms of the industry or professional expectations.

Also, translators with higher educational degrees tended to place more weight on factors that signal a higher likelihood of success, such as translating newly published books or books with established reputations across different cultures. It was also found that translators with a master's degree may be more likely to follow publishers' guidelines or defer to their expertise when making translation decisions, potentially viewing publishers as key authorities in the book selection process.

When it comes to the field of study as an independent variable, it was found that it plays a significant role in shaping translators' book selection motivations, with a particular focus on external motivating factors. Translators with a major in translation were found to be significantly more externally motivated in their book selection titles compared to those with a major in other fields. This suggests that translators who specialize in translation at the university level are more influenced by external factors, such as translating award-winning books or the payment or books recommended in the original and receiving cultures. Therefore, translators with other degrees showed a comparatively lower level of external motivation, and translators with specialized training in translation may be more sensitive to such factors when choosing titles for translation. Translators with a translation degree may be more attuned to the professional demands of the field. They may be more aware of market trends, client expectations, and the need to be competitive in the translation industry. This could lead them to prioritize external factors when selecting books to translate.

These findings also underscore the importance of educational background in shaping the decision-making processes of translators and highlight the different ways in which external motivations can impact their book selection choices. These findings, explained through self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and goal-framing theory (Lindenberg & Steg, 2013), suggest that Iranian translators, driven by extrinsic motivational factors and a desire to gain advantages in the translation market, sought external rewards such as increased publications, fame, and recognition. To fulfill their need for social connection within the translation market, they adopted controlled behaviors in their book selection.

Finally, the non-significant results regarding *means of income* and *publication status* can be attributed to the greater influence of other factors, such as educational background and professional experience, which likely overshadow any subtle effects these variables might have. Additionally, book selection may be driven more by intrinsic motivations, such as personal interest and intellectual challenge, rather than extrinsic factors like income or publication success. For many translators, passion for the subject matter and its cultural significance may outweigh financial considerations or the desire for publication. Ultimately, to gain deeper insight into translators' motivations behind selecting books, an array of political, cultural and logistical factors, as Pugsley (2005) notes, should be examined.

This paper explored whether various dimensions of book selection motivations are associated with professional and contextual factors; however, the study suffers from certain limitations, which can pave the way for more research in this area. First, considering the small sample size, the results should be cautiously generalized. The translation genre was neither investigated nor controlled in the present study. However, researching translators' material selection in different genres or areas would be a promising area for further research. Moreover, since motivating factors are determined by "biological, social and

cultural conditions" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 3), the present findings are limited to the social context of translation in Iran. However, it could be a starting point to explore translators' book selection motivation in other cultures and contexts to see how translators' decision-making is affected by "varied types of motivational regulation and the condition that foster them" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 4). Future studies can also address translators' selection of books within different periods in the same country. On a final note, extensive research is essential to gain a deeper understanding of how translators' professionalism influences book selection motivations. To achieve this, qualitative and case studies are necessary to offer in-depth insights.

6. References

Ameri, S., & Ghahari, S. (2018). Developing a motivational framework in translation training programs: a mixed methods study following self-determination and social capital theories. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, *12*(2), 227-243. https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2018.1465678

Amini, M. (2005). Translation and the difficulties of choice. *Azma*, *35*, 26-27.

Bagheri, R. (2021, September 27). I translate a book that I enjoy reading/ The necessity of re-translating classic works for the new generation. *Saba*.

Ben-Ari, N. (2013). An open system of systems: Itamar Even-Zohar and the polysystem theory. In C. Millán & F. Bartrina (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation studies* (pp. 144-150). Routledge.

Bolouri, M. (2017). The effects of women policies adopted by two administrations on the selection and non-selection of feminist literary works for translation into Persian. *Language and Translation Studies (LTS)*, *50*(3), 29-47. https://doi.org/10.22067/lts.v50i3.63487

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

Buzelin, H. (2007). Translations "in the making". In M. Wolf & A. Fukari (Eds.), *Constructing a sociology of translation* (pp. 135-170). John Benjamins.

Buzelin, H. (2011). Agents of translation. In Y. Gambier & L. v. Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 2, pp. 6-12). John Benjamins

Chesterman, A. (2009). The name and nature of translator studies. *Hermes*, *42*, 13-22.

Chesterman, A. (2017). *Reflections on translation theory: Selected papers 1993 - 2014*. John Benjamins.

Chesterman, A. (2021). Translator studies. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 5, pp. 241-246). John Benjamins.

Chesterman, A., & Baker, M. (2008). Ethics of renarration: Mona Baker is interviewed by Andrew Chesterman. *Cultus*, *1*(1), 10-33.

Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, *112*(1), 155-159.

Daghighi, M. (2022). A conversation with Mojdeh Daghighi about the challenges of translation with translators.. *Radio Zamaneh*. https://www.radiozamaneh.com/714729/

Dam, H. V., & Zethsen, K. K. (2010). Translator status: Helpers and opponents in the ongoing battle of an emerging profession. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, *22*(2), 194-211.

Deane-Cox, S. (2014). *Retranslation: Translation, literature and reinterpretation*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Delzendehrooy, S., Farid, A. K., & Khoshsaligheh, M. (2019). Despotism and translation in Iran: The case of Naseri House of Translation as the first state translation institution. *Intralinea*, *21*.

Díaz-Cintas, J. (2012). Clearing the smoke to see the screen: Ideological manipulation in audiovisual translation. *Meta*, *57*(2), 279-293. https://doi.org/10.7202/1013945ar

Emami, K. (1999). The role of publishers in the ups and downs of literary translation. *Motarjem*, *31*, 8-20.

Esmaieli, N. (2016). The relationship between the translator and publisher. *Motarjem*, *25*, 39-44.

Ferdowsi, S., Hadipour, H., & Razmi, M. H. (2023). Developing and validating translators' book selection criteria scale: The case of translators in Iran. *Translation & Interpreting*, *15*(1). https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.115201.2023.a08

Folaron, D. A. (2018). Circulation and spread of knowledge. In L. D'hulst & Y. Gambier (Eds.), *A history of modern translation knowledge: Sources, concepts, effects* (pp. 135-142). John Benjamins.

Fornalczyk-Lipska, A. (2021). Translators of children's literature and their voice in prefaces and interviews. In K. Kaindl, W. Kolb, & D. Schlager (Eds.), *Literary translator studies* (pp. 183-198). John Benjamins.

Gürçağlar, Ş. T. (2020). Retranslation. In M. Baker & G. Saldahna (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (pp. 484-489). Routledge.

Haddadian-Moghaddam, E. (2014). *Literary translation in modern Iran*. John Benjamins.

Haddadian-Moghaddam, E. (2015). Agency in literary translation: the case of women translators in Iran. In A. Ankit & S. Faiq (Eds.), *Agency and patronage in Eastern translatology* (pp. 143-172). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Hanna, S. (2016). *Bourdieu in translation studies: The socio-cultural dynamics of Shakespeare translation in Egypt*. Routledge.

Hubscher-Davidson, S., & Lehr, C. (2021). *Improving the emotional intelligence of translators: A roadmap for an experimental training intervention*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Kafi, M., Khoshsaligheh, M., & Hashemi, M. R. (2015). Typology of capitals expected and received by Iranian translators. *SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation*, *9*(1), 26-43.

Kafi, M., Khoshsaligheh, M., & Hashemi, M. R. (2018). Translation profession in Iran: current challenges and future prospects. *The Translator*, *24*(1), 89-103. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2017.1297693

Karimi, M. (2005, October 12). Why and how do literary translators living abroad publish books in Iran? *ISNA*.

Kinnunen, T., & Koskinen, K. (2010). *Translators' agency*. Tampere University Press.

Kowsari, A. (2005). Translators and criteria for selecting books for translation. *Azma*, *35*, 18-19.

Kruger, H. (2011). Preliminary norms in the selection of children's books for translation in South Africa. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, *29*(3), 293-311. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2011.647492

Lee, J. (2022). Quantitative research on what motivates Korean TED translators to translate. *Perspectives*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2022.2074798

Lindenberg, S., & Steg, L. (2007). Normative, gain and hedonic goal frames guiding environmental behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*, *63*(1), 117-137. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2007.00499.x

Lindenberg, S., & Steg, L. (2013). Goal-framing theory and norm: Guided environmental behavior. In H. C. M. v. Trijp (Ed.), *Encouraging sustainable behavior* (pp. 37-54). Routledge.

Liu, C. F.-m. (2021). Translator professionalism in Asia. *Perspectives*, *29*(1), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2019.1676277

Nord, C. (2011). Functionalist approaches. In Y. Gambier & L. v. Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 1, pp. 120-128). John Benjamins.

Nord, C. (2013). Functionalism in translation studies. In C. Millán & F. Bartrina (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation studies* (pp. 201-211). Routledge.

Olohan, M. (2014). Why do you translate? Motivation to volunteer and TED translation. *Translation Studies*, *7*(1), 17-33. https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700.2013.781952

Paloposki, O. (2007). Translators' agency in 19th century Finland. In Y. Gambier, M. Shlesinger, & R. Stolze (Eds.), *Doubts and directions in translation studies. Selected contributions from the EST Congress, Lisbon 2004* (pp. 335-346). John Benjamins.

Paloposki, O. (2009). Limits of freedom: Agency, choice and constraints in the work of the translator. In J. Milton & P. Bandia (Eds.), *Agents of translation* (pp. 189–208). John Benjamins.

Pugsley, P. C. (2005). Literary text as cross-cultural exchange: The selection of Australian Literature for the Chinese book market. *Asian Studies Review*, *29*(4), 383-394. https://doi.org/10.1080/10357820500398333

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68-78. https://doi.org/10.1037110003-066X.55.1.68

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Publications.

Saeedi, S. (2020). New perspectives on retranslation: the case of Iran. *TranscUlturAl: A Journal of Translation and Cultural Studies*, *12*(1), 27-46.

Schlager, D. (2021). Translators' multipositionality, teloi and goals. In K. Kaindl, W. Kolb, & D. Schlager (Eds.), *Literary translator studies* (pp. 212). John Benjamins.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Experimental designs using ANOVA*. Brooks/Cole

Tymoczko, M., & Gentzler, E. (2002). *Translation and power*. University of Massachusetts Press.

Wolf, M. (2007). Introduction: The emergence of a sociology of translation. In M. Wolf & A. Fukari (Eds.), *Constructing a sociology of translation* (pp. 1-36). John Benjamins.

Yoo, T., & Jeong, C. J. (2017). Consolidating the professional identity of translators: The role of citizenship behaviors. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, *29*(3), 361-387.

Zanotti, S. (2015). Analysing redubs: Motives, agents and audience response. In R. B. Piñero & J. Diaz-Cintas (Eds.), *Audiovisual translation in a global context* (pp. 110-139). Palgrave Macmillan.

Zwischenberger, C. (2020). Norms. In M. Baker & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (pp. 375-380). Routledge.

Predictive Role of EFL Teachers' Resilience on Their Work Engagement: Focus on Teaching Experience

Maryam Sadeghzadeh[1] (iD)
Fatemeh Karimi[2*] (iD)
Ehsan Rezvani[3] (iD)

[1]Ph.D. Candidate of Applied Lingustics, English Department, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran
[*2,3]Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, English Department, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.

ABSTRACT

Teacher resilience and work engagement are critical factors in enhancing educational effectiveness and fostering a positive learning environment in today's rapidly evolving landscape of education. The present study aimed to find whether teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support) predict experienced Iranian EFL teachers' work engagement (i.e., cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement with students). For this purpose, 200 novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers were selected randomly, and the data were collected by the Engaged Teachers Scale and the English Language Teacher Resilience Instrument and analyzed by standard multiple regression. The regression analysis results for experienced teachers indicated that cognitive-physical engagement was predicted by internal motivation; emotional engagement was predicted by internal motivations, social skills, and pedagogical skills; and contextual support predicted the experienced teachers' social engagement with colleagues. For novice teachers, internal motivations, social skills, and contextual support predicted cognitive-physical and emotional engagement. Furthermore, internal motivations and contextual support predicted their social engagement with students, and social engagement with colleagues was explained by social support. These results suggest that enhancing teacher resilience can lead to increased engagement levels, ultimately benefiting student learning experiences. Besides, the findings underscore the importance of providing support structures in educational settings to bolster teacher well-being and effectiveness. This study highlights the need for targeted interventions that focus on developing teachers' resilience and engagement, which could have lasting positive effects on the education system.

KEYWORDS: Resilience; Work engagement; Novice teachers; Experienced teachers

1. Introduction

It is widely recognized that organizations need individuals who demonstrate dedication and exert their full capacity and potential within their respective organizations, and educational institutions are not exempt from this requirement (de Freitas Langrafe, et al., 2020). Teachers have a leading role in enhancing the quality of education and facilitating the advancement of students eager to change (Gardinier, 2012). This crucial undertaking necessitates teachers to actively invest themselves physically, emotionally,

and cognitively in their professional endeavors. In other words, teachers ought to possess work engagement, a state of mind characterized by positivity, fulfillment, and a strong engagement in their career (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Teachers who cannot effectively cope with work-related challenges are susceptible to experiencing a range of negative emotional stated, such as stress, anxiety, apprehension, and boredom, which, in turn, could lead to their disconnection from their professional roles (Xie, 2021), dissatisfaction with their job (Polat & İskender, 2018), burnout (Fathi et al., 2021; Zhaleh et al., 2018), and attrition (Liu & Li, 2020).

The work engagement of teachers, characterized by their intense passion and wholehearted commitment, demonstrates their dedication to their professional responsibilities (Türk & Korkmaz, 2022). This profound investment of their emotions, intellect, and personal resources signifies their wholehearted involvement in their occupation. Consequently, the work engagement displayed by teachers is pivotal in successfully attaining educational institutions' objectives (Rasheed, 2020). To ensure organizational effectiveness and enhance productivity, employees should possess a distinctive approach to their work, thereby elevating the overall quality of their professional lives and augmenting the well-being of the workforce (Köse & Uzun, 2018).

Understanding resilience across various disciplines offers significant conceptual foundations for investigating resilience in educators. Previous studies (for example, Gu & Day, 2013; Gu, 2014) demonstrated that teacher resilience possesses three distinct features. Firstly, it is contingent upon the context, as teacher resilient potentials can be better comprehended by considering "the more proximal individual school or classroom context" and "the broader professional work context" (Beltman et al., 2011, p. 190).

Secondly, the resilience of educators is also specific to their role, as it is closely connected to the strength and determination of their vocational dedication. Indeed, this intrinsic inclination to educate and their unwavering commitment to serving others sets teaching apart from numerous other occupations and professions (Hansen, 1995). In his examination of teachers employed in US urban high schools, Brunetti (2006) described resilience of teachers as "a quality that enables teachers to maintain their commitment to teaching and teaching practices despite challenging conditions and recurring setbacks" (p. 813).

Thirdly, the concept of a resilient teacher goes beyond merely recovering efficiently and quickly from troubles. Besides the everyday strains and inevitable doubts that characterize the work and lives of many teachers, necessitating resilience every day (Day & Gu, 2014), they also encounter problems of different phases of their career journey. Gu and Li's (2013) investigation of school teachers, for instance, revealed that while the nature of the situations they faced at each milestone of their professional and personal lives might vary, the level of physical, emotional, and intellectual energy requisite for handling them could be remarkably similar.

In general, it can be inferred that studying the predictive role of EFL teachers' resilience on their work engagement is crucial because it can unveil the complex interrelationships that impact teachers' motivations and overall effectiveness in the classroom. Understanding this connection not only informs strategies for enhancing teacher well-being and professional development but also contributes to improved student outcomes and a more supportive educational environment.

2. Literature review

2.1. Teacher resilience

According to Mansfield et al. (2016), resilience is conceptualized as an inherent characteristic that empowers educators to effectively navigate and address the obstacles and complexities associated with the teaching profession rather than merely enduring them. Resilient instructors are posited to display enhanced motivation, demonstrate commitment to professional growth, and be dedicated to enhancing their pedagogical practices. Consequently, they function as a key factor in upholding and ensuring the provision of quality education (Zhang, 2021). These educators possess the essential skills to thrive in challenging circumstances, excel in instructional leadership, foster positive rapport with their students, experience job satisfaction, display dedication to vocation, and derive personal gratification and accomplishment from their professional endeavors (Chu & Liu, 2022). Furthermore, it is worth noting that students who are taught by resilient teachers more probably attain their preferred educational outcomes (Derakhshan et al., 2022).

The theoretical framework regarding teacher resilience, which has been adapted for this study, was originally articulated by Mansfield et al. (2012), who undertook qualitative interviews with both graduating and early-career educators to elucidate their perceptions surrounding the concept of teacher resilience. The findings from these interviews yielded 23 distinct facets of teacher resilience and subsequently classified these facets into four overarching dimensions. The *profession-related dimension* within their framework encompassed elements pertinent to the pedagogical practice, including "organization, preparation, utilization of effective teaching strategies, and reflective practices" (Mansfield et al., 2012, p. 362). The *social dimension* pertained to interpersonal interactions within the educational milieu, such as the cultivation of a support network, soliciting assistance, and heeding advice. The *internal motivation* factor pertains to the intrinsic drives and commitments that sustain teachers' perseverance in their professional trajectories. Possessing intrinsic motivations to engage in teaching is regarded as "a significant professional asset for educators". Elements such as the teachers' self-efficacy, confidence, perseverance, and professional aspirations are closely

associated with motivation. Ultimately, the *contextual support* component encompasses the affection and assistance of family and friends, the support of colleagues, and the nurturing relationships fostered by administrators (Mansfield et al., 2012).

The research revealed that teachers' resilience can accurately predict various pedagogy aspects. To illustrate this point, Liu and Chu (2022) and Tait (2008) identified that resilience could predict teachers' professional accomplishments, commitment to their organization, retention, and enthusiasm. These researchers posit that teachers capable of facing educational challenges and adapt to different learning and teaching contexts can more probably continue their career and accomplish in their job. Additionally, Ergün and Dewaele (2021) asserted that teachers' resilience assists them in preserving a sense of well-being and enjoyment in their teaching endeavors. Similarly, Beltman et al. (2011) argued that resilience encourages teachers to teachers "to thrive rather than just survive in the profession" (p. 188). They emphasize the significance of resilience in enabling teachers to flourish in their vocation. Similarly, Gu and Day (2013) state that teacher resilience significantly enhances their level of job satisfaction, a crucial factor for their pedagogical effectiveness. Moreover, it is worth noting that resilience has also been found to have positive implications for student-related variables (Li et al., 2019). According to Li et al. (2019), the resilience of instructors in classrooms substantially affects students' engagement in academic activities, motivation, and learning.

Resilience of teachers can be examined from varied perspectives and might be attributed to different aspects (Beltman, 2020). In her research, Beltman (2020) delineated four viewpoints of teacher resilience: the Person-focused Perspective, the Process-focused Perspective, the Context-focused Perspective, and the System-focused Perspective. The person-focused perspective encompasses profession-related, social, emotional, and motivational aspects. The emotional dimension addresses teachers' sense of humor and ability to recover and regulate their positive and negative emotions. As the second component of the person-focused perspective, the social dimension deals with interpersonal skills of teachers. The dimension of motivation is linked to teachers' tenacity, tolerance, perseverance, self-worth, and self-confidence. Lastly, the dimension related to profession pertains to expertise, teaching abilities, and classroom management of teachers (Beltman, 2020).

In relation to the process-focused perspective, resilience is located where the teacher and the classroom context meet. At this point, teachers utilize various techniques to remove challenges and retain their well-being and engagement (Mansfield et al., 2014). On the other hand, from the context-focused perspective, resilience involves agency and the ability to utilize personal and contextual resources (Gu & Li, 2013). Lastly, the system-focused perspective suggests that "processes that lead to resilience clearly involve many systems within the individual as well as many systems outside the individual" (Masten, 2014, p. 170).

2.2. Teacher work engagement

Even though teaching is a highly demanding profession (McIntyre et al., 2017), a large number of teachers are so enthusiastic about their work and devote all their lives to teaching, which is called work engagement and denotes the "positive, fulfilling and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption dimensions" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 75).

Teacher engagement is a construct that pertains to teachers' motivation and involves the voluntary provision of teachers' physical, cognitive, and emotional resources to activities related to teaching (Klassen et al., 2012). The construct of teacher engagement, as the theoretical framework of the present study, is based on a multi-faceted concept suggested by Klassen et al. (2013), encompassing *social*, *cognitive-physical*, and *emotional* dimensions. Cognitive-physical engagement refers to the degree to which instructors focus on and putt all their energy into their work responsibilities. Emotional engagement denotes the positive emotional responses of teachers to their work. Lastly, social engagement includes both the colleagues and students' issues and pertains to teachers' perception of their relationship with and concern for both. While Klassen et al. (2013) acknowledge that their teacher engagement concept is based on various models of work engagement, they do not depict how this is done. However, the dimensions defined in Klassen et al.'s (2013) model can be merged with present literature on work engagement and teacher-relatedness (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Klassen et al., 2013).

Policymakers and researchers in education have recently started to show increased interest in teacher engagement for several reasons. Firstly, a substantial body of evidence proves that teachers' effectiveness is the primary factor influencing the variation in students' achievements (Hindman & Stronge, 2009). Additionally, it has been established that engagement is closely associated with effectiveness of teachers (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Therefore, policymakers and teachers are highly motivated to comprehend how to promote work engagement of teachers to enhance their effectiveness. Secondly, engaged teachers are less susceptible to burnout and related health issues (Hakanen et al., 2006). Consequently, the engagement level is linked to attrition of teacher. In other words, engaged teachers less probably leave the job or need expensive support for problems related health. Lastly, work engagement is connected to productivity and active participation in the workplace, indicating that engaged teachers are more inclined to participate in the school community and hold no additional responsibilities beyond the school context (Parker & Martin, 2009). A deeper understanding the engagement of teachers at school may provide insights into strategies to enhance their well-being and improve their classroom effectiveness.

Furthermore, it appears that work engagement of teachers can lead to various results, including performance-related outcomes, personal, emotional, social (such as being socially active), and motivational outcomes (Schweitzer, 2014). Research

demonstrated that engaged teachers outperform their non-engaged counterparts, demonstrate higher productivity, and maintain a healthy social life outside work. Kahn (1990) suggested that engaged teachers are socially connected to their colleagues, psychologically available for engagement, active and present in their work, and able to display their preferred selves. Bakker and Bal (2010) presumed that the levels of the weakly engagement of teachers is positively correlated with their career performance. Another study conducted by Skinner and Belmont (1993) found that the involvement of their teachers determines students' emotional engagement. When children perceive their teachers as warm and affectionate, they sense more happiness and enthusiasm in the classroom.

Teacher engagement has been examined with regard to the duration of instructional experience, gender, and status of teachers. For example, Topchyan and Woehler (2021) reported that permanent teachers had notably higher overall work engagement and greater job satisfaction than temporary teachers. Nonetheless, the duration of the teaching experience was not associated with work engagement and job satisfaction. Conversely, Faskhodi and Siyyari (2018) demonstrated that the more teaching experience of English teachers was significantly related to increased work engagement, and from the perspective of teaching online, Obrad and Circa (2021) reported that motivation and perceived learner engagement were significant factors influencing teaching engagement.

2.3. Resilience and work engagement

Resilience plays a crucial role in the teachers' well-being, mainly in difficult educational situations, and might affect engagement of teachers (Chen & Chi-Kin Lee, 2022). Specifically, teacher resilience helps educators effectively navigate challenges and difficulties in their workplace, leading to an enhanced ability to contemplate their practices and boost their work engagement. Put differently, the relationship between teacher work engagement and resilience indicated that teachers who can handle the teaching challenges effectively find greater satisfaction in their profession, which, in turn, fosters their increased engagement (Mansfield et al., 2016; Polat & İskender, 2018).

The link between teacher resilience and work engagement was examined by Ugwu and Amazue (2014). Their findings indicated that teacher resilience significantly explained teachers' work engagement level. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, Xie (2021) investigated the predictive function of emotion regulation (expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal) and resilience of Chinese English teachers. The findings demonstrated a moderate relation between cognitive reappraisal and work engagement. However, expressive suppression did not predict work engagement. Additionally, resilience significantly predicted work engagement. Semi-structured interviews also identified external factors (such as relationships with colleagues and administrators, high levels of support, and students' achievement, engagement, and motivation) and internal factors (such as a feeling of accomplishment, accountability, and resilience in the workplace) as contributing factors to the work engagement of English teachers.

Although several studies have investigated the relationship between teacher work engagement and resilience (e.g., Xie, 2021; Heng & Chu, 2023), research specifically targeting English teachers remains sparse. Previous literature has primarily concentrated on general teacher populations, with limited attention given to the unique challenges and contexts faced by EFL teachers. Moreover, while some studies acknowledge the significance of various components of teacher resilience—such as internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support—very few have thoroughly examined how these specific components interact with different dimensions of work engagement, including cognitive-physical, emotional, and social engagement with colleagues and students.

In addition, the majority of existing research primarily employed correlational methods, which may not fully capture the causal relationships or the complexities inherent in these dynamics. Notably, the literature lacks comparative analyses between novice and experienced EFL teachers, thus leaving a critical gap in understanding how levels of resilience and work engagement may vary according to teaching experience. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no studies have explored these dimensions within the context of Iran, thereby limiting the applicability of findings to similar educational settings. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by investigating both the predictive role of English teachers' resilience on their work engagement and the differences between novice and experienced teachers in an Iranian context. Therefore, the present study is to respond the following questions.

1. Can teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support) predict experienced Iranian EFL teachers' work engagement (i.e., cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement-students)?

2. Can teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support) predict novice Iranian EFL teachers' work engagement (i.e., cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement-students)?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

A descriptive survey research design was utilized in the present study. This design type is applied in studies that necessitate the establishment of a precise depiction or account of participants' attributes concerning behaviors, opinions, competencies, beliefs, and knowledge without the alteration of outcomes (Neuman, 2000). As articulated by Creswell and Creswell (2017), a survey denotes an investigation that employs a representative sample. Survey research designs encompass procedures within quantitative research wherein researchers administer a survey to either a sample or the entirety of the population to delineate their attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics (Polit & Beck, 2017). The data were collected from both novice and experienced Iranian EFL teachers in Isfahan, Iran.

3.2. Participants

The participants were 200 Iranian female and male English language institute teachers in Isfahan, Iran, selected by convenience sampling. Opting for a convenience sampling procedure benefits the researcher by relying on those available participants during the research process and saving time as another significant point in research (Mackey et al., 2006). The teachers, including novice and experienced ones, were Persian speakers; none had the experience of living and teaching in an English-speaking country. Harmsen et al. (2018) state that novice teachers have no to three years of teaching experience. Accordingly, three years of teaching experience was set as a criterion for grouping the participants into experienced and novice teachers. Demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Demographics		N	Percentage
Age	23-31	81	40.5
	32-40	74	37
	41-50	45	22.5
Gender	Male	83	41.5
	Female	117	58.5
Level of education	Bachelor's	88	44
	Master's	94	47
	PhD	18	9
Years of teaching experience	3<	87	43.5
	3>	113	56.5

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. Engaged Teachers Scale ((ETS; Klassen et al., 2013)

The ETS aims to assess four dimensions of teachers' work engagement: cognitive-physical engagement (CE), emotional engagement (EE), social engagement with colleagues (SEC), and social engagement with students (SES). It also yields a total or global score of teacher engagement. ETS includes 16 items, and the responses are ranked on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*), with each dimension including four items. The internal consistency and divergent and convergent validity of the scores are confirmed by Klassen et al. (2013). Its reliability, estimated by Cronbach's alpha, was .9 in the present study.

3.3.2. English Language Teacher Resilience Instrument (ELTRI; Shirazizadeh & Abbaszadeh, 2023)

It is designed to assess English teachers' resilience by the four components of internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support. ELTRI also provides a total or global score of teacher resilience and includes 30 items. The responses are rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 6 (*strongly agree*). The convergent and divergent validity and internal consistency and of the scores are confirmed by Shirazizadeh and Abbaszadeh (2023). The Cronbach's alpha reliability of this instrument was .87 in the present study.

3.4. Procedure

The data were collected from 200 Iranian EFL teachers of English language institutes in Isfahan. For this purpose, the participants were notified about the research goals and requested to complete the instruments. The instruments were distributed manually. Additionally, the phone number and email address of the first researcher of this study were given to the participants so they could contact her if they had any questions about these instruments. It should be noted that the participants signed the consent form, and the objectives and aims of the study were clarified to them both orally and in written form.

4. Findings

Standard multiple regression was run to predict experienced EFL teachers' work engagement (i.e., cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement-students) by the teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support), whose results are as follows. It is noteworthy that multiple regression assumptions such as normality and linearity were checked, and none was violated.

Table 2. Summary of model for predicting experienced teachers' work engagement by resilience components

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Cognitive-physical engagement	.46	.21	.18	2.84
Emotional engagement	.53	.28	.25	3.02
Social engagement with colleagues	.51	.26	.23	3.91
Social engagement-students	.33	.11	.07	2.99

As can be seen in Table 2, the R square of the model for cognitive-physical engagement is .21, indicating that resilience components predict 18% of the changes in cognitive-physical engagement. Regarding emotional engagement, the R square of the model is .28; that is, resilience components predict 25% of the changes in emotional engagement. About social engagement with colleagues, the R square of the model is .26, denoting that resilience components predict 23% of the changes in social engagement with colleagues. Finally, 7% of the changes in social engagement with students are predicted by resilience components. In general, emotional engagement and social engagement with colleagues were more strongly predicted by the resilience components.

The details of the analysis of each of the teachers' work engagement components (i.e., cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement-students) by the teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support) are presented in the following.

The results of the analysis of variance of the model are presented in Table 3, whose aim was to find whether the resilience components could significantly predict the components of teacher work engagement.

Table 3. Analysis of variance results for predicting experienced teachers' work engagement components by resilience components

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Cognitive-physical engagement	Regression	235.54	4	58.88	7.27	.00
	Residual	874.61	108	8.09		
Emotional engagement	Regression	394.81	4	98.7	7.27	.00
	Residual	987.71	108	9.14		
Social engagement with colleagues	Regression	598.64	4	149.66	9.74	.00
	Residual	1658.9	108	15.36		
Social engagement with Students	Regression	121.92	4	30.48	2.01	.12
	Residual	969.29	108	8.97		

The regression models as a whole were statistically significant (p< .05) (Table 3) for work engagement components except for social engagement with students. In other words, the teacher resilience components could significantly predict cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, and social engagement with colleagues of experienced teachers. Standardized and unstandardized coefficients of the work engagement components are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Coefficients of experienced teachers' resilience components predicting work engagement components

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Cognitive-physical engagement	internal motivation	.14	.07	.26	1.97	.03
Emotional engagement	internal motivation	.41	.07	.66	5.33	.00
	social skills	-.19	.09	-.24	-2.05	.04
	pedagogical skills	.2	.09	.21	2.14	.03
Social engagement with colleagues	contextual support	.36	.11	.36	3.19	.00

The effect of internal motivation was statistically significant (p=.03), and 26% of the variance in cognitive-physical engagement of experienced teachers was explained by their internal motivation. Regarding emotional engagement, the effects of three components of teacher resilience, namely internal motivation, social skills, and pedagogical skills, were statistically significant. Of these three components, 66% of the variance in emotional engagement was explained by internal motivation, 24% by social skills, and 21% by pedagogical skills. Finally, the effect of contextual support was statistically significant (p=.00), and internal motivation explained 36% of the variance in social engagement with colleagues of experienced teachers.

Another standard multiple regression was run to predict novice Iranian EFL teachers' work engagement (i.e., cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement-students) by the teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support), whose results are as follows.

Table 5. Summary of model for predicting novice teachers' work engagement by resilience components

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Cognitive-physical engagement	.58	.34	.31	2.32
Emotional engagement	.62	.38	.35	3.3
Social engagement with colleagues	.51	.26	.23	4.41
Social engagement-students	.56	.31	.28	3.21

As shown in Table 5, the R square of the model for cognitive-physical engagement is .34, indicating that resilience components predict 31% of the changes in cognitive-physical engagement. Regarding emotional engagement, the R square of the model is .38. That is, resilience components predict 35% of the changes in emotional engagement. Regarding social engagement with colleagues, the R square of the model is .26, denoting that 23% of the changes in social engagement with colleagues are predicted by resilience components. Finally, 28% of the changes in social engagement with students are predicted by resilience components. In general, emotional engagement and cognitive-physical engagement were more strongly predicted by the resilience components. The results of the analysis of variance of the model are presented in Table 6, whose aim was to find whether the resilience components can significantly predict EFL teachers' work engagement.

Table 6. Analysis of variance results for predicting novice teachers' work engagement components by resilience components

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Cognitive-physical engagement	Regression	231.06	4	57.76	10.68	.00
	Residual	443.41	82	5.4		
Emotional engagement	Regression	559.62	4	139.9	12.79	.00
	Residual	896.44	82	10.93		
Social engagement with colleagues	Regression	580.5	4	145.12	7.43	.00
	Residual	1600.59	82	19.51		
Social engagement with Students	Regression	388.66	4	97.16	9.38	.00
	Residual	849.14	82	10.35		

The regression models were statistically significant (p< .05) (Table 6) for work engagement components, i.e., the teacher resilience components could significantly predict cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement with students of novice teachers. Standardized and unstandardized coefficients of the work engagement components are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Coefficients of novice teachers' resilience components predicting work engagement components

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Cognitive-physical engagement	internal motivation	.1	.04	.27	2.28	.02
	social skills	.33	.09	.45	3.6	.00
	contextual support	-.16	.07	-.26	-2.16	.03
Emotional engagement	internal motivation	.29	.06	.53	4.54	.00
	social skills	.31	.13	.29	2.39	.01
	contextual support	-.27	.1	-.29	-2.51	.01
Social engagement with colleagues	social skills	.63	.17	.48	3.63	.00
Social engagement with students	internal motivation	.26	.06	.52	4.17	.00
	contextual support	-.28	.1	-.33	-2.7	.00

The effect of internal motivation, social skills, and contextual support was statistically significant (p<0.5), and 27%, 45%, and 26% of the variance in cognitive-physical engagement of novice teachers was explained by these three resilience components, respectively. Regarding emotional engagement, the effects of three components of teacher resilience, namely internal motivation, social skills, and contextual support, were statistically significant. Among these three components, 53% of the variance in emotional engagement was explained by internal motivation, 29% by social skills, and 29% by contextual support. For the third component, the effect of social skills was statistically significant, and 48% of the variance in social engagement with colleagues of novice teachers was explained by their social skills. Finally, 52% and 33% of the variance in novice teachers' social engagement with students was explained by internal motivation and contextual support, respectively.

5. Discussion

The current study aimed to find whether teacher resilience components (i.e., internal motivations, social skills, pedagogical skills, and contextual support) predict experienced Iranian EFL teachers' work engagement (i.e., cognitive-physical engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement with colleagues, and social engagement with students). The regression analysis results for experienced teachers indicated that cognitive-physical engagement was predicted by internal motivation; emotional engagement was predicted by internal motivations, social skills, and pedagogical skills; and contextual support predicted the experienced teachers' social engagement with colleagues.

For novice teachers, internal motivations, social skills, and contextual support predicted cognitive-physical and emotional engagement. Furthermore, internal motivations and contextual support predicted their social engagement with students and colleagues was explained by social support.

Cognitive-physical engagement denotes how teachers physically and cognitively devote their attention, energy and time to teaching undertakings. In other words, teachers invest energies into work roles. The results revealed that internal motivation predicted the cognitive-physical engagement of novice and experienced teachers. In explaining this finding, it can be stated that devoted workers view their jobs as worthy and meaningful and feel pride when engaging in work-related activities. Individuals fully engrossed in their job, allocate cognitive resources and concentrate on work-related activities (Klassen et al., 2013). As stated by Nias (1999), teachers' "missionary zeal" and "moral values" function as inner emotional and psychological incentives for them, motivating them to be dedicated and committed to their vocation and profession.

Given the importance of investing physical resources in teachers' professional roles, burnout has been found to be a predictor of teachers' intention to leave the field (Weisberg & Sagie, 1999). Han et al. (2020) also affirmed that teachers who consistently display enthusiasm in carrying out their duties can mitigate the risk of workplace stress and decrease the inclination to change jobs. Additionally, Fitriasari and Ummah (2020) elucidate that the enthusiasm derived from high levels of energy and resilience in task performance protects teachers against adversity. Similarly, Seligman (2011) contends that teachers who exhibit higher levels of emotional engagement in their profession tend to be devoted, work actively, and are fascinated by the educational settings. These assertions can support the finding of the present study that internal motivation (i.e., persistence in facing challenges, self-confidence, enthusiasm, and commitment) predicted novice and experienced teachers' mental and physical engagement with the teaching profession.

Besides internal motivation, novice teachers' cognitive-physical engagement was explained by their contextual support and social skills. Contextual support includes family and friends' love and help, colleagues' assistance, and administrators' supportive relationships (Shirazizadeh & Abbaszadeh, 2023). Similarly, social skills denote interpersonal capabilities in forming relations (Dempsey et al., 2020). Previous studies highlighted the importance of contextual support and social skills as protective factors that assisted the teachers in continuing and face challenges (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019; Morettini et al., 2020). As novice teachers experience more challenges than experienced ones in the teaching profession (Van Leeuwen et al., 2015), and novices have less access to support since it seems that they are not commonly provided with the

opportunities to take part in professional learning or be in touch with supervisors or experienced teachers (Nicholas & Wells, 2016), they might need more contextual support from colleagues, friends, etc.; therefore, contextual support can affect novice teachers' cognitive-physical engagement, i.e., to be devoted, committed and energetic.

The second work engagement component investigated in the present study was emotional engagement. As stated above, the emotional engagement of novice and experienced teachers was similarly influenced by their internal motivation and social skills, while pedagogical skills also determined experienced teachers' emotional engagement. Emotional engagement denotes positive emotional responses of teachers to their profession (Klassen et al., 2013). Consistent with the present study findings regarding emotional engagement and internal motivation, Pourtousi and Ghanizadeh (2020) investigated English teachers' motivation, commitment (as an indicator of internal motivation), and work engagement. The findings indicated that English teachers' motivation positively and significantly predicted their job commitment and work engagement, and work engagement had a positive effect on job commitment.

Regarding the connection between social skills and contextual support (i.e., interpersonal skills, networks of relationships with colleagues, friends, etc.) and emotional engagement, having support from colleagues and friends can provide teachers with a sense of belonging and validation. This support can come in the form of encouragement, empathy, and understanding, which can help teachers navigate the challenges and stressors that come with the teaching profession (Wolgast & Fischer, 2017). Knowing they have a network of people who understand and empathize with their experiences can help teachers feel more emotionally connected to their work and motivated to continue positively impacting their students.

Finally, the pedagogical skills of experienced teachers predicted their emotional engagement. Pedagogical skills refer to teaching strategies that help teachers deal with various challenges (Silva et al., 2018). When teachers possess better and more pedagogical skills (due to being experienced), they are more likely to feel confident and competent in effectively delivering instruction and supporting student learning. This sense of competence enhances the feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment in their role as educators (Burić & Moe, 2020).

Social engagement with colleagues was the third engagement component, which was predicted by contextual support (for experienced teachers) and social skills (for novice teachers). It reflects energetically investing in career and being in touch and keeping relations with other teachers (Klassen et al., 2013). This finding seems quite reasonable as social skills and contextual support (i.e., interpersonal skills, networks of relationships with colleagues, friends, etc.) facilitate social engagement with colleagues. Teachers with strong social skills are better able to communicate effectively, build positive relationships, and collaborate with their colleagues (Bronstein & Abramson, 2003). This can increase engagement in professional development activities, team teaching, and other collaborative efforts within the school community.

Last but not least, social engagement with students was the last engagement component predicted by internal motivation and contextual support of novice teachers. Klassen et al. (2013) posit that social engagement with students denotes the extent of teachers' energy investment in being related with their students. When teachers are internally motivated, they are more likely to be passionate about their work and genuinely care about the well-being and success of their students (Yin & Lee, 2012). Students can feel this passion and care, which can help create a classroom environment which is positive and supportive.

6. Conclusion

It is argued that educators with higher levels of resilience encounter reduced stress levels, leading to a heightened sense of belonging, involvement, and increased confidence in their ability to meet classroom expectations. Put differently, teachers who demonstrate elevated levels of resilience experience less fatigue and weariness, exhibit higher job satisfaction and possess a greater capacity to foster fruitful collaboration with their peers. Educators who exhibit greater resilience experience diminished occupational stress, thereby decreasing the probability of burnout (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Considering the importance of resilience in predicting teachers' engagement in their work, teacher trainers should guide and instruct novice and experienced language instructors on effectively navigating the challenges and difficulties inherent in the teaching profession.

This study contributes to the value of teacher professionalism since well-motivated teachers who possess social and pedagogical skills will better engage in the teaching profession. Teacher engagement is crucial in nurturing a dynamic, contented, and effective learning environment. Moreover, this study makes a substantial contribution to the literature related to the determinants of teacher engagement during this era, wherein a thorough comprehension and identification of each constituent is imperative for all stakeholders within the field of education.

Despite its contribution, this study was limited by using self-report measures, while interview or observational data might facilitate a deeper and more comprehensive examination of the variables under study; therefore, future researchers are recommended to include other sources of data collection. Moreover, data obtained from other stakeholders, e.g., principals and school staff, would further clarify the issues of teacher resilience and work engagement.

7. References

Ainsworth, S., & Oldfield, J. (2019). Quantifying teacher resilience: Context matters. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 82*, 117–128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.03.012

Bakker, A. B., & Bal, P. M. (2010). Weekly work engagement and performance: A study among starting teachers. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 83*, 189–206. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317909X402596

Beltman, S. (2020). Understanding and examining teacher resilience from multiple perspectives. In: Mansfield, C.F. (Eds.), *Cultivating teacher resilience: International approaches, applications and impact* (pp. 11–26). Springer Nature.

Beltman, S., Mansfield, C., & Price, A. (2011). Thriving not just surviving: A review of research on teacher resilience. *Educational Research Review, 6*(3), 185-207. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2011.09.001

Bronstein, L. R., & Abramson, J. S. (2003). Understanding socialization of teachers and social workers: Groundwork for collaboration in the schools. *Families in Society, 84*(3), 323-330. https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.110

Brunetti, G. J. (2006). Resilience under fire: Perspectives on the work of experienced, inner city high school teachers in the United States. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22*(7), 812-825. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.04.027

Burić, I., & Moe, A. (2020). What makes teachers enthusiastic: The interplay of positive affect, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 89,* 103008. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.103008

Chen, J., & Chi-Kin Lee, J. (2022). Teacher resilience matters: a buffering and boosting effect between job driving factors and their well-being and job performance. *Teachers and Teaching, 28*(7), 890-907. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2022.2116574

Chu, W., & Liu, H. (2022). A mixed-methods study on senior high school EFL teacher resilience in China. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 865599. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.865599

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017*). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Sage publications.

Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2014). Response to Margolis, Hodge and Alexandrou: Misrepresentations of teacher resilience and hope. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 40*(4), 409-412. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2014.948707

de Freitas Langrafe, T., Barakat, S. R., Stocker, F., & Boaventura, J. M. G. (2020). A stakeholder theory approach to creating value in higher education institutions. *The Bottom Line, 33(*4), 297-313.

Dempsey, H., Mansfield, C. F., & MacCallum, J. (2020). Early career casual teachers: The role of relationships with colleagues in negotiating a teacher identity and developing resilience. In C. F. Mansfield (Ed.), *Cultivating teacher resilience* (pp. 211–227). Springer Nature.

Derakhshan, A., Greenier, V., & Fathi, J. (2022). Exploring the interplay between a loving pedagogy, creativity, and work engagement among EFL/ESL teachers: A multinational study. *Current Psychology, 42*(26), 22803-22822. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03371-w

Ergün, A. L. P., & Dewaele, J. (2021). Do well-being and resilience predict the foreign language teaching enjoyment of teachers of Italian? *System, 99,* 102506. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102506

Faskhodi, A. A., & Siyyari, M. (2018). Dimensions of work engagement and teacher burnout: A study of relations among Iranian EFL teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 43*(1), 78-93.

Fathi, J., Greenier, V., & Derakhshan, A. (2021). Self-efficacy, reflection, and burnout among Iranian EFL teachers: the mediating role of emotion regulation. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 9*(2), 13-37. https://doi.org/10.30466/ijltr.2021.121043

Fitriasari, B., & Ummah, R. (2020, January). *Self-efficacy in terms of work engagement and affective commitment among teachers.* In 5th ASEAN Conference on Psychology, Counselling, and Humanities (ACPCH 2019) (pp. 74-76).

Atlantis Press.

Gardinier, M. P. (2012). Agents of change and continuity: The pivotal role of teachers in Albanian educational reform and democratization. *Comparative Education Review, 56(*4), 659-683. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/667396

Gu, Q. (2014). The role of relational resilience in teachers' career-long commitment and effectiveness. *Teachers and Teaching, 20*(5), 502-529. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2014.937961

Gu, Q., & Day, C. (2013). Challenges to teacher resilience: Conditions count. *British Educational Research Journal, 39*(1), 22-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2011.623152

Gu, Q., & Li, Q. (2013). Sustaining resilience in times of change: Stories from Chinese teachers. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 41*(3), 288-303. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2013.809056

Hakanen, J. J., Bakker, A. B., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2006). Burnout and work engagement among teachers. *Journal of School Psychology, 43*, 495–513. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2005.11.001

Han, J., Yin, H., Wang, J., & Zhang, J. (2020). Job demands and resources as antecedents of university teachers' exhaustion, engagement and job satisfaction. *Educational Psychology* 40(3): 318–335. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2019.1674249.

Hansen, D. T. (1995). *The call to teach*. Teachers College Press.

Harmsen, R., Helms-Lorenz, M., Maulana, R., & Van Veen, K. (2018). The relationship between beginning teachers' stress causes, stress responses, teaching behaviour and attrition. *Teachers and Teaching, 24*(6), 626-643. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2018.1465404

Heng, Q., & Chu, L. (2023). Self-efficacy, reflection, and resilience as predictors of work engagement among English teachers. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 1160681. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1160681

Hindman, J., & Stronge, J. (2009). The $2 million decision: Teacher selection and principals' interviewing practices. *ERS Spectrum, 27,* 1–10.

Howard, S., & Johnson, B. (2004). Resilient teachers: Resisting stress and burnout. *Social Psychology of Education*, 7(4), 399-420. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-004-0975-0

Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 491-525. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693

Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*(4), 692-724. https://doi.org/10.5465/256287

Klassen, R. M., Perry, N. E., & Frenzel, A. C. (2012). Teachers' relatedness with students: An underemphasized component of teachers' basic psychological needs. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 104,* 150-165. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0026253

Klassen, R. M., Yerdelen, S., & Durksen, T. L. (2013). Measuring teacher engagement: Development of the Engaged Teachers Scale (ETS). *Frontline Learning Research, 1*(2), 33-52.

Köse, A., & Uzun, M. (2018). The relationship between work engagement and perceived organizational justice. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 24*(3), 483-528. https://doi.org/10.14527/kuey.2018.012

Li, Q., Gu, Q., & He, W. (2019). Resilience of Chinese teachers: Why perceived work conditions and relational trust matter. *Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspectives*, *17*(3), 143-159. https://doi.org/10.1080/15366367.2019.1588593

Liu, H. & Li, Z. (2020). High school teacher retention. In L. Ovenden-Hope, T., Passy, & R., (Eds.), *Exploring teacher recruitment and retention* (pp. 176- 184). Routledge.

Liu, H., & Chu, W. (2022). Exploring EFL teacher resilience in the Chinese context. *System, 105*, 102752. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102752

Mackey, A., Gass, S. M., & Margolis, D. P. (2006). *Second language research: Methodology and design.* Rutledge.

Mansfield, C. F., Beltman, S., & Price, A. (2014). 'I'm coming back again!' The resilience process of early career teachers. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 20*(5), 547–567. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2014.937958

Mansfield, C. F., Beltman, S., Broadley, T., & Weatherby-Fell, N. (2016). Building resilience in teacher education: An evidenced informed framework. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 54,* 77–87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.11.016

Mansfield, C. F., Beltman, S., Price, A., &McConney, A. (2012). "Don't sweat the small stuff": Understanding teacher resilience at the chalkface. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(3), 357–367. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.11.001

Masten, A. S. (2014). *Ordinary Magic: Resilience in Development*. Guilford Press.

McIntyre, T., McIntyre, S., & Francis, D. (2017). *Educator stress*. Springer.

Morettini, B., Luet, K., & Vernon-Dotson, L. (2020). Building beginning teacher resilience: Exploring the relationship between mentoring and contextual acceptance. *The Educational Forum, 84*(1), 48–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2020.1679933

Neuman, W. L. (2000). *Social research methods*. Allyn & Bacon.

Nias, J. (1999). Teachers' moral purposes: Stress, vulnerability, and strength. In R. Vandenberghe, & A. M. Huberman (Eds.), *Understanding and preventing teacher burnout: A sourcebook of international research and practice* (pp. 223–237). Cambridge University Press.

Nicholas, M., & Wells, M. (2017). Insights into casual relief teaching: Casual relief teachers' perceptions of their knowledge and skills. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 45*(3), 229–249. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2016.1169506

Obrad, C., & Circa, C. J. A. E. (2021). Determinants of work engagement among teachers in the context of teleworking. *Amfiteatru Econ, 23,* 718-735.

Parker, P. D., & Martin, A. J. (2009). Coping and buoyancy in the workplace: Understanding their effects on teachers' work-related well-being and engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25,* 68–75. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.06.009

Polat, D. D., & İskender, M. (2018). Exploring teachers' resilience in relation to job satisfaction, burnout, organizational commitment and perception of organizational climate. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies, 5*(3), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.17220/ijpes.2018.03.001

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2017). *Resource manual for nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practise*. Wolters Kluwer Health.

Pourtousi, Z., & Ghanizadeh, A. (2020). Teachers' motivation and its association with job commitment and work engagement. *Psychological Studies, 65*(4), 455-466. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-020-00571-x

Rasheed, L. (2020). The role of social support and work engagement in enhancing job performance among secondary school teachers: A quantitative study in Lahore District. *Journal of Policy Options*, *3*(4), 124-129.

Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 3*, 71-92. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015630930326

Schweitzer, M. J. C. (2014). *Predictors of work engagement among teachers in Regina and Saskatoon.* The University of

Regina.

Seligman, M. E. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Simon and Schuster.

Shirazizadeh, M., & Abbaszadeh, A. (2023). EFL teacher resilience: Instrument development and validation. *Reflective Practice, 24*(3), 375-388. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2023.2200926

Silva, J. C., Pipa, J., Renner, C., O'Donnell, M., & Cefai, C. (2018). Enhancing teacher resilience through face-to-face training: Insights from the ENTREE project. In M. Wosnitza, F. Peixoto, S. Beltman, & C. Mansfield (Eds.), *Resilience in education: Concepts, contexts and connections* (pp. 255–274). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76690-4_15

Skinner, E. A., & Belmont, M. J. (1993). Motivation in the classroom: Reciprocal effects of teacher behavior and student engagement across the school year. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 85*(4), 571. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-0663.85.4.571

Tait, M. (2008). Resilience as a contributor to novice teacher success, commitment, and retention. T*eacher Education Quarterly, 35*(4), 57–75.

Topchyan, R., & Woehler, C. (2021). Do teacher status, gender, and years of teaching experience impact job satisfaction and work engagement? *Education and Urban Society, 53*(2), 119-145. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124520926161

Türk, E. F., & Korkmaz, Ö. (2022). Teachers' levels of dedication and commitment to their professions and attitudes to their professions. *Participatory Educational Research, 9*(5), 1-25. http://dx.doi.org/10.17275/per.22.101.9.5

Ugwu, F. O., & Amazue, L. O. (2014). Psychological ownership, hope, resilience and employee work engagement among teachers in selected mission schools. *European Journal of Business and Management, 6*(10), 98-106.

Van Leeuwen, A., Janssen, J., Erkens, G., & Brekelmans, M. (2015). Teacher regulation of cognitive activities during student collaboration: Effects of learning analytics. *Computers & Education, 90*, 80-94. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.09.006

Weisberg, J., & Sagie, A. (1999). Teachers' physical, mental, and emotional burnout: Impact on intention to quit. *The Journal of Psychology, 133*(3), 333-339. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223989909599746

Wolgast, A., & Fischer, N. (2017). You are not alone: Colleague support and goal-oriented cooperation as resources to reduce teachers' stress. *Social Psychology of Education, 20*, 97-114. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-017-9366-1

Xie, F. (2021). A study on Chinese EFL teachers' work engagement: The predictability power of emotion regulation and teacher resilience. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12,* 735969. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.735969

Yin, H. B., & Lee, J. C. K. (2012). Be passionate, but be rational as well: Emotional rules for Chinese teachers' work. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(1), 56-65. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.08.005

Zhaleh, K., Ghonsooly, B., & Pishghadam, R. (2018). Effects of conceptions of intelligence and ambiguity tolerance on teacher burnout: A case of Iranian EFL teachers. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics, 9*(2), 118-140. https://doi.org/10.22055/rals.2018.13796

Zhang, M. (2021). EFL/ESL teacher's resilience, academic buoyancy, care, and their impact on students' engagement: a theoretical review. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12,* 731859. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.731859