

Language Teachers' Emotional Dynamics in Technology-Based Contexts

Mostafa Nazari
Editor

Language Teachers' Emotional Dynamics in Technology-Based Contexts

Editor

Mostafa Nazari
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hong Kong, China

ISBN 978-981-95-2568-3 ISBN 978-981-95-2569-0 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-95-2569-0>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2025

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

If disposing of this product, please recycle the paper.

Foreword

People sometimes ask me why I am so interested in the role of emotions in language learning and teaching. If the person is a language professional, I will say something about the well-documented impact of our internal state on external outcomes, such as academic achievement in the case of learners or job satisfaction and general wellbeing in the case of teachers. When the person is not a language expert, I often share with them a personal story, which I will relay here.

In 1995, I was a student of Arabic and Hebrew at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. As part of the programme, we were expected to spend the first semester of our second academic year at the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo, so as to be immersed in the local culture and language. Like my classmate (yes, there was only one other student remaining by the second year out of an initial 21 who had started) and those from other universities who had travelled to Egypt, I struggled to get accustomed to the cacophony and mayhem that make up this magnificent metropolis. I struggled even more with the language. For those of you not familiar with the linguistic landscape in the Arabic-speaking world, each country/region has its own dialect, which can be quite distinct from that of neighbouring countries. For example, a Moroccan speaking their dialect would struggle to be understood by an Egyptian and vice versa. In addition to the locally-spoken languages, there is a pan-Arabic, referred to as Modern Standard Arabic. This is the language used for most written communication and is the language you will hear in formal contexts, such as on the TV news or in official speeches. Another important form of Arabic is that used in the Holy Qur'an, which is quite different from all others. It was mainly the latter two that we had been taught in the Netherlands. This meant that when we arrived in Cairo, to given an anglophone analogy, we would have sounded to locals as if we were speaking in a mixture of Shakespearean and biblical English. Not ideal for making friends.

For the first two months, it felt like I did not improve at all, despite spending 8 hours a day at the Institute and up to 10 hours a day studying and attempting to practise the language outside. I surrounded myself with Arabic magazines, attempted to watch local TV shows (of which I understood very little), went to the theatre, ate at the local corner restaurant and I even played Arabic music while I was sleeping, in

the hope that this would help me learn through osmosis. All to no avail. I had simply accumulated a corpus made up of a jumble of words and grammar from three vastly different sources of Arabic, but not actually developed a coherent or usable working repertoire. I felt dumb and ashamed not to be the excellent language learning I liked to think I was. I definitely did not tell my friends or family about how things were really going.

Things did not improve for some time. In fact, they seemed to get worse. I would struggle, for example, with word order and connecting clauses, things that I had not found difficult before. It felt as if every bit of knowledge of the language was being atomised instead of integrated. I knew I had a lot of knowledge, I just wasn't able to access it in the way I needed, especially in everyday spoken communication.

All that would change overnight. Literally, overnight.

I had spent the day like every other, studying at the Institute from early morning until closing time. At night I attempted to read books and watch a soap drama. I was particularly moody when I went to bed. More time wasted, another day without any real progress. Frankly, I felt ready to give up.

Just after 05:00, I heard the muezzin's call to fajr (the early morning prayer). Normally, I would sleep through this but on this day, I lay in bed in a hypnagogic state (the transitional state between wakefulness and sleep). My body was asleep but my mind was (somewhat) awake. I was aware of a strange sensation in my head. Not quite a headache, more like the experience you get when someone massages a sore muscle; it hurts but it also opens up the tissue and you know it is restorative. As this happened, I could see colours in front of my (closed) eyes and visual representations of language. Not individual words, more like blocks or containers. These were shifting and clicking onto other blocks. As these clicks happened, I could feel a particularly sharp tingling or almost searing deep inside my head. This went on for what felt like quite some time. As this was unfolding in front of my eyes, I had the distinct realisation that what I was observing was the process of coming together of disparate units of knowledge. I knew then that something fundamental had changed. I also knew that from that time onward, I would be able to speak the language. I fell back asleep and got up a couple of hours later. When I woke up the second time, I vividly remembered what had happened and could still feel a light sensation in my head. I was now confident that things would not be the same again.

I went out to buy bread at the local market and spoke in a new voice. One that was stronger, more heavily intonated and that used more air. It was still my voice but it modulated differently. I confidently placed my order and exchanged some pleasantries. It was the first real conversation I felt I'd had up to that moment. This continued in the days and weeks to come. I rapidly made progress and by the time I had developed a strong sense of conversational confidence and my competence improved by leaps and bounds.

In the 30 years since that time, I have had similar experiences with other languages, but never that vivid. I have also met other people who have had similarly odd experiences (although none exactly like mine).

Perhaps something actually changed physiologically. Neurologically speaking, for example, there are some similarities with the ways seizures affect connections

in the brain, and maybe this happened to me in a beneficial sense. However, it is equally possible that the episode was entirely affective; a belief that something had shifted, led to increased confidence, which led to faster retrieval and greater fluency, which led to more production, which led to more understanding on the part of my interlocutors, resulting in more interaction, which resulted in more learning and thus confidence on my part, and so on in a virtuous cycle. I will never know.

And that is part of the beautiful mystery that is language. It taught me that there are depths to our experiences that cannot be fathomed. It also taught me later to sympathise more with my own students. And finally, it taught me the importance of acknowledging our affective gestalt; the reality that we are emotional beings, operating in ways that we cannot always immediately understand.

This is why the current volume is so interesting. It sheds some light on the experiences of teachers in a wide range of contexts. From discussions of identity, to emotional labour, to wellbeing and student support, together the chapters in this book place teacher emotions where they belong: at the centre. Part of me hopes this will help us to demystify the language phenomenon, while a small part of me secretly hopes it will not.

Hayo Reinders
Anaheim University
Anaheim, Australia

Contents

1	Introduction: Language Teachers' Emotional Dynamics in Technology-Based Contexts	1
	Mostafa Nazari	
Part I Emotion as Self-Study		
2	Exploring the Role of Emotional Capital in Online Teaching: A Poly-Ethnography of TESOL Teacher Educators	15
	Agni Connor, Vincent Greenier, and Ishrat Rehman-Feltell	
3	Social Presence and Emotions in Online Teaching: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Vulnerability	39
	Juyoung Song	
4	Enhancing Instructors' Emotional Reflection in Online Classroom Instruction	55
	Nasibeh Bagherpour, Alireza Navid, and Kaveh Jalilzadeh	
Part II Intersections of Emotion and Teacher Characteristics		
5	Exploring the Role of Emotional Challenges in Language Teachers' Identity Construction in Online Setting: An Ecological Perspective	77
	Sedigheh Karimpour and Ismail Xodabande	
6	"I Was Always Checking My Bank Account": The Role of Payment in Iranian English Language Teachers' Emotions and Wellbeing in Digital Settings	93
	Zahra Keshvari and Maryam Kogani	
7	A Scoping Review of Language Teacher Emotions in Online Education: Taking a Step Back to Move Forward	117
	Robert Kirkpatrick, Ali Panahi, and Hassan Mohebbi	

Part III Emotion as a Force for Navigating Online Education

8 Teaching behind the Screen: Emotional Labor of Iranian Language Teachers in Online Classes	141
Tahereh Boroughani, Hector Rivera, and Ismail Xodabande	
9 Emotional Labour in Online Teaching for University Lecturers After the February 2023 Kahramanmaraş and Hatay Earthquakes: A Narrative Inquiry	163
Ferhat Karanfil and Amanda Yeşilbursa	
10 Online Teaching during the Pandemics: Emotions of an English Teacher in Brazil	179
Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos and Vagner Peron	
11 Boredom of Turkish EFL Teachers in Online Teaching: An Ecological Perspective	201
Erkan Yüce	
Afterword	221