Exploring Iranian English language teachers' hope: an ecological perspective

Sedigheh Karimpour
Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran
Majid Elahi Shirvan
University of Bojnord, Bojnord, Iran, and
Mojdeh Shahnama
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Abstract
Purpose – The present study explores five Iranian English language teachers' hopes by drawing on an ecological approach as its conceptual underpinning.
Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from narrative frames and semi-structured interviews.
Findings – Analyses of our data highlighted how teacher- and student-related factors caused fluctuations in teachers' hopes. In addition, our findings indicated that while teachers' past teaching experiences increased their hope, teachers' lack of agency and economic inflation were among the most significant factors that decreased teachers' hope in their profession.
Originality/value – This study is one of the first studies in the field of language studies with an ecological perspective on language teachers' hope.

Keywords Language teachers' hope, Ecological perspective, Professional development, Pathway, Agency
Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In recent years, research on language teacher hope (e.g. Colla *et al.*, 2022; Eren, 2014; Ghadyani *et al.*, 2020; Ghasemi, 2022; MacIntyre *et al.*, 2022) has generated much attention. This body of knowledge indicates that a number of professional factors influence language teachers' hope, including sociocultural particularities, contextual parameters, institutional policy and regulations and pedagogical issues. These studies highlighted that teachers' psychological constructs, and more particularly their hope, are persistently influenced by various social and contextual factors (Colla *et al.*, 2022; Ghadyani *et al.*, 2020; MacIntyre *et al.*, 2022). Some of these social contextual factors are school climate, support from colleagues and community support, to name but a few.

Previous research has confirmed an interconnection between language teachers' hope and their coping strategies, motivation, sense of well-being and the rate of burnout (Ghadyani *et al.*, 2020; MacIntyre *et al.*, 2022). However, although hope seems to be an essential part of language teachers' professional work (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2022), little is known about the factors, including personal, contextual and social ones, contributing to the emergence of language

teachers' hope in classroom context. Therefore, the present study aims to address this gap by drawing on Bronfenbrenner's nested ecosystems framework to provide a contextualized understanding of hope among Iranian English language instructors from an emic subjective perspective. More specifically, the study unpacks how various factors influence Iranian language teachers' hope across four macro-, meso-, micro- and exo-systemic levels of ecology.

2. Literature review

2.1 Language teacher hope and professionalism

An early start has been made in the scientific conception of optimism from the theories of hope (Gallagher, 2018), particularly in the field of positive psychology (see Seligman, 2006; Snyder, 1994, 2000). Most of these theories operationally characterized hope as a unidimensional entity based on optimistic anticipation that goals can be accomplished (see Colla et al., 2022; Hiver, 2016; MacIntyre et al., 2022). The most significant body of empirical research on hope is associated with Snyder and his colleagues (Snyder et al., 1991), who developed a two-factor model of hope. The distinguishing factor of Snyder's approach lies in its cognitive-agentic dimension, setting it apart from other researchers who prioritize the emotions of hopelessness (Herth, 1992) or hopefulness (Fredrickson, 2001). While the cognitive perspective perceives hope as a precursor to action, the emotion-focused viewpoint regards hope primarily as a response to events encountered as striving toward goals. In contexts involving long-term endeavors with multiple objectives, such as language teaching, hope may assume the dual role of instigator and outcome of specific activities.

Snyder et al. (1991) defined hope as a dynamic motivating experience that is produced from two unique cognitive tools in the paradigm of goal attainment, namely pathways and agency reasoning. Snyder et al. (1991) argued that a person's hope stems from his or her perception of being able to create several flexible paths toward their objectives, allowing them to detect obstacles and devise tactics to overcome them as they work toward goal attainment (Colla et al., 2022). It is also powered by the person's feeling of agency in their pursuit of goals, which is described as goal-directed intensity or resolve to achieve success (see Snyder et al., 1991).

The teaching profession is often associated with lots of unfavorable work conditions that consequently lead to language teachers experiencing low levels of well-being (Mercer, 2021) and high levels of stress and burnout (Derakhshan et al., 2024; Mercer, 2020; Zhi and Derakhshan, 2024; Yüce, 2023), which results in language teachers leaving their profession (see Greenier et al., 2021; Kirkpatrick et al., 2024; Mercer et al., 2016; Yüce et al., 2023). Likewise, language teachers experience various types of negative emotions (see Benesch, 2017; Zembylas, 2003, 2022; Zhi et al., 2024). Therefore, such experiences may influence teachers' sense of hopefulness and their instructional practices. It is worth noting that Hiver (2016) argued that L2 teachers who are usually hopeful might lose hope in some situations. Thus, language teachers' hope seems to be comprised of both patterns of stability and situation-specific dynamicity. Despite its significance in L2 teaching (Hiver, 2016), language teachers' hope has rarely been the topic of discussion among researchers, and only a few studies have recently highlighted its importance in language educators' practices and professional development (e.g. Colla et al., 2022; Ghadyani et al., 2020; Ghasemi, 2022; MacIntyre et al., 2022). For example, MacIntyre et al. (2022) explored the role of hope in 765 language teachers' coping, stress and well-being. The study findings suggested strong and positive relationships between hope and numerous measures of successful adaptation and teacher well-being. In addition, the findings suggest that hope should be associated with positive outcomes. Relatedly, Ghadyani et al. (2020) developed a categorical conceptualization of hope for English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching in the Iranian context in order to examine language teachers' hope. Based on observations and semi-structured interviews, the study

findings indicated that "expended effort" and "internal motivations" were the most relevant factors that drove the growth of Iranian EFL instructors' hope.

The above body of knowledge highlighted that, as one type of motivational experience, language teachers' hope is a significant factor influencing their instructional practices and professional development (Colla *et al.*, 2022; MacIntyre *et al.*, 2022). In this regard, identifying the factors which put teachers at risk of hopelessness merits focal attention (Ghasemi, 2022). Given the current literature on the issue, hope is likely a significant component in second language instruction as well. However, few studies have investigated the ecology of language teaches' hope, which is the focus of this study.

2.2 Bronfenbrenner's ecological model

With respect to language instruction and acquisition within the context of the whole lives of diverse individuals, the ecological approach highlights the sociopolitical and contextual dimensions involved in teaching (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Holliday and Cooke (1982) and Duff and van Lier (1997) initially used the term "ecological" to describe different levels of language teaching. An ecological approach to teachers' psychological constructs posits that to explore the emotional nature of teaching, it is important to investigate these constructs, such as hope, at multiple levels (Schutz, 2014). By extension, in order to examine the multiple layers underpinning language teachers' related variables, the ecological approach can illustrate how the emergence of teachers' variables is tightly interwoven with several parts of their classroom environment (micro), past learning and teaching experiences (meso), institutional (exo) and social (macro) forces (Wolff and De Costa, 2017). In addition, the ecological approach can illustrate how the emergence of teachers' variables is tightly interwoven with several parts of their classroom environment (micro), past learning and teaching experiences (meso), institutional (exo) and social (macro) forces (see Liu *et al.*, 2024).

Initially proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), the ecological approach, as an ecosystem, is depicted as "a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next" (p. 22). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecosystems model is one of the applicable frameworks for ecological studies (Kruk *et al.*, 2022; Liu *et al.*, 2022; Mercer, 2021). Providing a hierarchy of four dynamics, Bronfenbrenner's ecosystems model consists of four dynamics, namely, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (see Liu *et al.*, 2022). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), a microsystem addresses a pattern of interpersonal relationships in a given setting with particular social and symbolic features permitting interaction with the environment. A mesosystem comprises "the linkages and processes between two or more settings containing the developing person" (Saghafi *et al.*, 2017, p. 4). An exosystem addresses the relationship between two or more settings. Finally, a macrosystem consists of "the overarching patterns of micro-, meso- and exosystems characteristic of a given culture," subculture or other extended social structure, with particular reference to the developmental instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in such overarching systems (Saghafi *et al.*, 2017, p. 4). That is, social norms and expectations, rooted in people's beliefs and reflected in cultural traditions, are associated with the macrosystem. Exemplification of the four ecological levels regarding the current study is presented in Table 1.

Research in education and second language teacher education has highlighted the significance of examining language teachers' hope and its significance in teachers' sense-making processes and their professional development (Colla *et al.*, 2022; Ghadyani *et al.*, 2020; Ghasemi, 2022; Hiver, 2016; MacIntyre *et al.*, 2022). However, little is known about the factors which contribute to the emergence of language teachers' hope at macro-, meso-, micro- and exo-levels. To address this gap, we adopted Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to examine the ways in which the emergence of language teachers' hope is susceptible to contextual

demands to shape teachers' experiences and professional development at four macro-, meso-, micro- and exo-levels. Such an examination offers implications for teacher educators in understanding how teachers' hope shapes their professional development. To this end, our study was guided by the following question:

(1) What factors enhance or diminish the emergence of Iranian language teachers' hope across four micro-, meso-, exo- and macro-systemic levels?

The operationalization of Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic framework and its contextual representations are presented in Table 1 below.

3. Method

3.1 Research design
Given the ecological nature of this study, we used a qualitative multi-case study with five EFL teachers in Iran via a narrative frame and semi-structured interviews.

3.2 Context and participants
This research was carried out in Iran. In the Iranian EFL context, there are typically two options for language education: formal schooling and privately run language schools. The private schools have their own unique approach, and they develop and implement their own policies. Furthermore, these schools frequently utilize materials created in English-speaking countries, whereas the state sector employs materials created by scholars from within Iran. In recent decades, private schools have emerged as a means of addressing the limitations of public schools. These shortcomings include the provision of additional language learning credits, increased allocation of time for foreign language instruction, support for students in improving their language skills during matriculation exams and assessment of candidates' technical language abilities.

L2 instructors in Iran encompass individuals with diverse educational experiences. These educators encounter an array of educational and sociocultural obstacles, spanning from

Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic levels	Operationalization	Example
Microsystem level	The classroom within which the teachers' hope was under study	Teachers' performances, teaching success, teachers' readiness, teachers' beliefs and attitudes, their students' progress and achievements, their students' involvement and participation, their students' behaviors and attitudes
Mesosystem level	The relationship between the classroom as well as other venues in which instructors participate	Teachers' past teaching experiences, teachers' past training experiences as learners and teacher training courses they have passed
Exosystem level	The interconnection between the classroom and other settings, in which the teachers are not involved but are influenced in terms of their hope	Rules and regulations of the institutes in which they work, curriculum design, teacher supervision and payment
Macrosystem level	The classroom within which the teachers' hope is under study	Educational factors, COVID-19-related issues, social, political and economic issues in Iran

Table 1.
Operationalization of teachers' hope within Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic framework

Source(s): Table by authors

limited income, uncertain job security, susceptibility to burnout, issues related to autonomy, restrictions and demands of the curriculum, to broader socioeconomic challenges. Knowing about the context, we asked five language teachers, via purposeful sampling, to participate in the study. In addition, as language teachers' psychological constructs, and more particularly the emergence of their hope, are highly context-sensitive, for this study, we recruited the teachers from different provinces of Iran to obtain a representative collection of themes regarding the emergence of their hope across different ecosystemic levels. The teachers had 8–10 years of teaching experience, and their ages ranged from 28 to 38. All of the teachers held Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. Moreover, they were teaching at the advanced level.

3.3 Instruments and data collection

We collected data from two sources: a narrative frame and semi-structured interviews. These sources aimed at aggregating the types of contextual and social factors that influenced the emergence of the teachers' hope from an emic subjective perspective. The first step of data collection involved administering the narrative frame to the teachers to explore the main factors that increased or decreased their hope in the classroom. Our understanding of narrative inquiry (here featured as the narrative frame) was in line with examining the role of context in teachers' sensemaking processes and experience of hope (see Barkhuizen and Wette, 2008; Barkhuizen and Consoli, 2021; Kayi-Aydar, 2021). Therefore, we designed the narrative frame to gain a contextualized understanding of hope among the teachers. As we collected the data during the COVID-19 pandemic, the instructors could write their answers or send their voice-format responses through WhatsApp or Telegram and in Persian (L1) or English.

After the narrative frames, we carried out semi-structured interviews with the educators. The purpose of these interviews was to serve as a retrospective-introspective resource (Mann, 2016), with the objective of acquiring comprehensive feedback concerning the contextual elements and the educators' reactions to the prior approach. In this sense, four questions were asked from the teachers regarding the factors within the environment of their classroom that give them hope, the extent to which their previous instructional practices provided them with the experience of hope, the extent to which the pre-service training courses provided hope for them and finally, how institutional rules and regulations influenced their hopefulness. The interviews lasted on average 60 min, were run in Persian, and were done via WhatsApp and Telegram.

3.4 Data analysis

After collecting the whole data, we engaged in analyzing them. Therefore, in line with the research question, our focus was to conceptualize how contextual factors influenced our language teachers' hope. To analyze the data, we used the principles of qualitative thematic analysis proposed as three Cs by Lichtman (2013), namely codes, categories and concepts. Prior to commencing the process of data analysis, we conducted a translation of the entire dataset into the English language. This approach aligned with the transcription of the interviews, which facilitated the subsequent data analysis. Following the completion of these preliminary procedures, we proceeded to develop initial codes from the data.

The constant-comparison, intersective analysis of the data from the frames and the interviews served as the fundamental guiding principle in our analysis. Through this approach, we were able to obtain refined codes, as described by Merriam (2009). This systematic procedure was consistently applied to the entire dataset, resulting in the emergence of overarching codes that formed the different categories. In addition, the categories were developed based on cross-referencing and refining the codes; thus, we engaged in peer discussions to enhance the credibility of the interpretations.

More specifically, following a thorough examination of their respective perceptions, a comprehensive discourse was conducted to delineate both the commonalities and discrepancies in their observations. This iterative procedure persisted until definitive designations were assigned to each individual code. Another important step was specifying the connections between codes. For instance, unit phrases and sentences such as *"I was given the freedom to use flexible materials in class," "I was allowed to use the materials that I saw fit in class," "I had to follow prescriptive methods of teaching in line with the institute policy"* were highlighted to create the code "Teachers' authority and flexibility." Other key concepts like *"facing strict and judgmental observations by supervisors," "being always overshadowed by controlling supervisors"* and *"receiving positive energy and sense of appreciation from our supervisors"* were gathered to create the code "supervision team". Phrases and sentences like *"we have to observe the strict clothing and hijab policy," "our clothing is more important than the quality of our teaching"* and *"I always have to argue with the authorities for my hijab"* were deemed essential in the development of the sub-theme "Work-place policies." All codes and sub-themes were systematically placed within the overarching theme of "rules and regulations within work environments." Subsequently, these themes and sub-themes were organized according to Bronfenbrenner's (1993) nested model. The collected data was segmented into four distinct ecosystems. Our analysis was guided by the constant-comparison method, which involved a thorough examination of the data derived from both the frameworks and the interviews to derive more precise codes (Merriam, 2009). This iterative process was applied to the entire dataset until the fundamental codes formed the basis of the categories.

3.4.1 Establishment of trustworthiness. Establishing trustworthiness can be achieved through determining credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability in a qualitative study (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). In this study, the transparency aspect of the data were established by documenting all the collected data thoroughly and meticulously. Although interviews were conducted through WhatsApp or Telegram, prolonged engagement and investigator triangulation were used with the participants to ensure credibility. In fact, the participants were asked to use examples to clarify and support their statements and to also give their opinions freely. Moreover, all three authors in this study were involved in coding and data analysis to reach the best interpretation decisions (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). Furthermore, to ensure reliability, defined as the consistency of data or findings over time, the three researchers engaged in data analysis. To prevent any misinterpretations, a thorough examination of the data was conducted at two separate instances. In addition, the aspect of confirmability, which pertains to neutrality, was upheld by involving multiple perspectives in the analysis process to establish the objectivity of the data and ensure reliability among raters (Tracy, 2010). Specifically, following the independent coding of all data by the third researcher, the first researcher double-coded 50% of the data randomly to assess the precision of data analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The inter-coder reliability, as indicated by the Cohen's Kappa coefficient value, was calculated to be 0.93, surpassing the 90% threshold recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994). Lastly, thick description was employed to guarantee transferability, which is linked to the applicability of the research. This entailed providing detailed descriptions of events such as participants' behaviors, context, coding and analysis procedures to facilitate judgments regarding transferability.

4. Findings

Analyses of the data revealed some themes in relation to Iranian English language teachers' hope at each level of ecology. Regarding the microsystemic level, two classroom-related themes were identified as the most influential factors in the emergence of the language teachers' hope. At the mesosystemic level, "Teachers' past teaching experiences" and

"Teachers' past learning experiences" featured as the most significant factors contributing to their level of hope. In addition, data analysis revealed "Educational system" and "Socio-economic and political factors" as the factors influencing language teachers' hope at the macrosystemic level. Finally, "Institutional rules and regulations" featured at the exosystemic level as the most significant factor influencing language teachers' hope.

4.1 The microsystemic level
4.1.1 Teacher-related factors. The most frequently teacher-related factors which were linked to language teachers' hope in the classroom were their preparedness before class, their own teaching performance in class and their beliefs and attitudes toward teaching in the classroom. Two teachers strongly believed that when they were fully prepared before class and were also equipped with a solid lesson plan, they could properly manage their classes, which increased their hope. Besides, their preparedness before class usually led to their successful teaching performance, which was also another factor increasing their hope because they felt self-satisfied professionally and could also encourage their students' participation in the given activity. As T5 mentioned:

> Every time I have a clear and pre-planned lesson plan, I know that I can manage the class perfectly and implement the session's goal successfully. This gives me the chance to try innovative ways to teach, mainly because I want to create a fun learning environment for my students. This is a win-win situation because I have had a successful teaching performance which in turn lead to my students' progress. In fact, my preparedness before class always leads to a great teaching performance which highly increases my hope. (T5, Interview)

His comments were supported by his narrative response, in which he highlighted two factors increasing his hope in the class as "pre-developed materials and use of technology in my teaching style because I believe they can expedite the fulfilment of teaching and learning objectives" (T5, Narrative), and two factors decreasing his hope mainly as "monotony and burn-out, because they preclude me to grow and achieve the established objectives of the class" (T5, Narrative). T2 also believed that her preparedness before class highly increased her hope. She believed, "when I know exactly what I'm going to do before class, I go to class hopeful because I feel I will have a successful performance which in turn will create a hopeful session for my students and myself" (T2, Interview). She also linked her preparedness before class and her successful performance to students' performance and achievements (as one of the student-related factors), believing that her preparedness before class affected her students' performance and progress, which highly increased her hope in the class. She mentioned:

> The level of my hope is strongly affected by my own readiness before class. Whenever I come to class prepared, I feel that I attract my students' attention easily and I can teach and practice the subject matter perfectly. This highly increases my hope for that session and even the following sessions because I can clearly see the students' active participation and their learning progress throughout the semester. The opposite is also true. When I don't have enough mastery on my teaching, I don't have an active and productive class which immensely decreases my hope. (T2, Interview)

Another teaching-related factor affecting language teachers' hope was the set of beliefs and attitudes they held about the teaching profession. T5 pointed out:

> I am highly optimistic about my profession. I believe that teaching is my calling and I am here to educate and nurture the next generation, even by teaching English. This belief highly increases my hope and helps me to go on with this profession. (T5, Interview)

As evident in her narrative response, T4 believed that one of the factors affecting the emergence of her hope is "when my students see me as their role model because I feel I have a meaningful job" (T4, Narrative).

4.1.2 Student-related factors. All the teachers shared the belief that students were among the key factors affecting their hope in the classroom. Three main sub-themes were assigned to this factor, including students' involvement and participation, their performance and achievements and their attitudes toward their teachers and their behaviors inside the classroom. Four teachers believed that students are the key factor fluctuating their level of hope inside the classroom. T1 commented:

> The main factor that affects my hope is my students' level of participation. Students' active participation (e.g. in-class discussions) and their high motivation increase my hope because when students actively do hands-on activities and answer my question, it will help me think outside of the box and have a successful teaching as well as a fun session. On the other hand, when I come to class prepared and I face lazy and passive students who do not back me up in my teaching, I cannot perform as planned, I feel frustrated and I do not get motivated to teach extra materials. It really affects my hope in a negative way. (T1, Interview)

His comments were supported by his narrative response, in which he also mentioned "students' hard work in obtaining their goals" (T1, Narrative) as an important factor in increasing his hope. Similarly, T4 believed that students' active involvement and participation affected the level of her involvement in class, which consequently influenced her hope in the classroom. She mentioned:

> When students are mentally and physically present in the class and pay attention to me, I get motivated to have my best performance. It also encourages me to improve my teaching style for the following sessions. Their active participation and enthusiasm give me this chance to work on extra materials and not be limited to the assigned book. Their active involvement puts up my hope. (T4, Interview)

Our analysis also highlighted the link between teachers' hopefulness and their students' achievements and progress. To some teachers, the effect of students' progress on teachers' hope is a long process. As T5 mentioned:

> I've been teaching to the same students for three consecutive semesters. Some of them had poor performance during their first semester. During each session, I tried everything to help them improve their performance. When I see they are interested in getting better, I get hopeful and I try to find new ways to help them achieve their goals. I've actually kept monitoring how they have progressed and this heightens my hope in my profession. (T5, Interview)

T2 also mentioned, "when I see that my students make good progress in their learning, I become hopeful about the future sessions of the course" (T2, Interview). Her comments were supported by her narrative response, which considered "students' progress" as a key factor in increasing her hope. In addition, our teachers considered students' attitudes and behaviors as another reason for changing their hope in class. For example, T3 commented, "when my effort in class is appreciated by my students, and when they value my methods by their active participation in the given activity, I feel hopeful to improve my teaching style and become better every session" (T3, Interview). Her belief was highlighted in her narrative responses; she regarded "being appreciated by students" as one of the most important factors in increasing her hope in her job because "when students appreciate me, I find the hope to make more attempt and be more dedicated to my job" (T3, Narrative).

4.2 The mesosystemic level
4.2.1 Teachers' past teaching experiences. Interview data revealed ways in which changes can appear in the emergence of teachers' hope with regard to their past teaching experiences. Their narratives provided more evidence of fluctuations in their hope resulting from this factor. Some teachers perceived their previous teaching experiences as a successful factor as

it provided them with gaining more knowledge about classroom management and gave them more confidence in their teaching profession, which enabled them to overcome teaching challenges and predict possible learning difficulties of their students. As T2 explained:

> My past teaching experiences usually assist me in becoming familiar with students' learning process and predicting their possible mistakes which makes teaching less challenging and more enjoyable. It also creates a mastery which helps me increase my agency, manage my class better and have higher-quality teaching. When I see I can develop my teaching skills by using my own teaching experiences, my hope for becoming more successful in my job rises. (T2, Interview)

She also referred to her sense of agency, independence and freedom as another reason for the contribution of her past teaching experiences to the emergence of her hope. She noted:

> When I gain more experience and knowledge, I become more creative and design more innovative lesson plans. This improves my reputation as a teacher and I get to work as a qualified and well-known private tutor which benefits me more. Besides, it gives you confidence to even open your own English institute in which you can implement your teaching ideas more easily. (T2, Interview)

Likewise, in her narrative response, she mainly considered *gaining more mastery and agency* and *finding herself as helpful* as two main contributing factors to the emergence of her hope. Similar to T2, T3 also found her past teaching experiences as a positive factor increasing her hope. She argued:

> During my first year as a teacher, I did not like working at the school because I did not have enough confidence in myself. However, when I look back, I see how much I have grown as a teacher and how my past experiences have helped me improve myself and my student's learning as well. In fact, now I realize that my negative experiences did not influence the sense of hope in my profession. Rather, they made me think about my weaknesses and try to overcome my teaching challenges. (T3, Interview)

T5, with only three years of teaching experience, mainly believed that his past teaching experiences have had a positive impact on his hope because his teaching style resulted in becoming a more risk-taking teacher, which in turn resulted in creating risk-taking, independent and successful learners. He pointed out:

> When I see the educational output of my classes, especially my students' achievements and high communication skills, I feel hopeful because I realize that I have set foot on the right path. This gives me the hope to search for more innovative ways of teaching, taking risks, and improving myself and my students' performances accordingly. (T5, Interview)

His narrative response also supported his comments, as he reported: "I get hopeful when I see progress in language proficiency of my current and former learners and when they become in charge of their own learning" (T5, Narrative). T4 had somehow a different opinion about her past teaching experiences. She said that her hope fluctuated a lot considering teaching experiences. During her first years, she always felt despaired because she used to think she was not made for this job. She had a lot of stress before going to class and facing her students. However, she believed that as she gained more experience, she realized that this feeling of dissatisfaction and despair can happen to anyone and she should not blame herself for facing some challenges during her first years of teaching.

4.2.2 Teachers' past learning experiences. In describing the fluctuations of their hope in their profession, teachers had different opinions about their past learning experiences, especially teacher-training courses (TTCs) they had participated in. Two teachers stated that their previous TTCs increased their hope in teaching. T3 mentioned:

> Studying in a teacher-training university has had a positive impact on my career and has increased my hope as well. My professors have taught us how to behave and teach professionally. Every time I

frustrated in class, I remember their suggestions and inspirational talks and I regain my hope. (T3, Interview)

However, not all teachers had positive views about their past training courses. T1 believed that his past TTCs, especially those held by English-language private institutes, were not well organized, informative and constructive. In particular, he maintained the main issue stems from a one-size-fits-all approach to educating teachers, ignoring teachers' past teaching and learning experiences. He noted:

My past training courses did not have any influence on my hope in teaching. These courses are not designed to cater for the teachers' needs and experiences, and do not distinguish between experienced and novice teachers. More importantly, every private language institute develops its own TTCs which are obligatory for all teachers, and to be honest with you, these TTCs are all similar and repetitive. When I see that my past teaching experiences are not acknowledged and I have to pass these repetitive training courses again, I get frustrated and even hopeless. (T1, Interview)

Other reasons for not getting hopeful when thinking about his past TTCs were the judgmental instructors, who consider every teacher as inexperienced with a lack of teaching knowledge, and prescriptive teaching courses, which avoid creativity and condemn teachers' innovations. As T1 complained:

TTC's instructors are judgmental people. They do not have appropriate professional behaviors toward teachers. They always want to make you believe that your teaching style is not good and needs improvement. They do not accept criticism, and they consider their own teaching style as the perfect example to follow. They do not allow any creativity outside their teaching framework. When I see these TTC environments, I do not receive any positive vibes mainly because these courses do not add to my knowledge and do not increase my hope as a teacher at all. (T1, Interview)

4.3 The exosystemic level

4.3.1 Institutional rules and regulations. The main factor affecting teachers' hopes was the rules and regulations of their workplace such as teachers' authority and flexibility, payment, supervision team, authorities' managements and overall workplace policies. Our analysis provided evidence about changes in teachers' hopes with regard to the language institutional setting. One of the reasons for decreasing teachers' hopes was the amount of flexibility and authority they were allowed to have in their classes. Most of them complained about the limitations they faced in their teaching. T2 pointed out: "following similar prescriptive teaching methods create similar and mechanical teachers with no flexibility in their teaching style. This highly decreases my hope" (T2, Interview). T1 mainly attributed his decrease in hope to assuming that this lack of flexibility can have a negative impact on his students. He argued: "my performance does not create enough inspiration and motivation in students to work harder and be interested in learning English" (T1, Narrative). As for authority, T1 had a rather different point of view. He explained:

Although we cannot be flexible in our teaching, we have some authority over the final evaluation of our students. I mean, we can give failing grades to low achievers and do not worry about the performance rates of the institute. This authority gives me hope because I know I can be in charge of passing and failing my students and create more homogenized classes. (T1, Interview)

His comments were supported by his narrative response, mentioning an increase in his hope because "the authorities' trust in my experiences gives me the feeling that I am helpful" (T1, Narrative). Another factor that negatively affected teachers' hope was the issue of payment. Two teachers discussed their income as one of the important factors in giving them hope and enough energy to be successful in their professional lives. T2 specifically declared:

During my first years of teaching, one of my goals that gave me hope to improve myself was to become independent financially. When I saw some experienced teachers teaching higher levels were well-paid, I was encouraged to improve myself to have higher income. I felt that this matter can also influence my social status as a teacher. (T2, Interview)

She also made a comparison between her income as a private tutor and that of a teacher in a language institute. She pointed out:

Despite high effort and experience, unfortunately, public teachers are not financially satisfied. In order to overcome this issue, they get more inclined toward private tutoring. I, myself, have lots of private classes which are financially satisfying and this really increases my hope. (T2, Interview)

In her narrative response, she highlighted "low income of institutes" as one of the main factors decreasing her hope. She also mentioned, "I feel hopeless when there is no extrinsic reward, like more payment, for teachers" (T2, Narrative). Another teacher also had similar views, complaining about her low income, which was considered a setback in her job. In her narrative responses, she highlighted her "low salary" as a dominant factor decreasing her hope. Our analysis also indicated that the attitudes of the supervisors highly decreased teachers' hope. T1 reported:

If teachers have trust and support of the supervisor, they can really improve. However, the opposite usually happens. Where I work, the strict and judgmental observations made by our supervisor negatively affect my performance and this highly decreases my hope. (T1, Interview)

T2 also had a similar view, mentioning "regular recording of the classes and strict and unconstructive observations with the purpose of finding weaknesses decreases my hope because I know they do not see my effort. They just want to see if I follow their rules" (T2, Interview). T4 also pointed out, "I usually feel that my effort is not seen by the authorities especially the supervisor. This decreases my hope and I feel no matter how much I try, I will not be good enough in their judgmental eyes" (T4, Interview). In this regard, our teachers provided evidence of the changes in their hope due to the authority management and overall policies of their work places. Some decreases in their hope were associated with poor management decisions and attitudes. T1 reflected in his interview:

One time, one of my classes was on the verge of cancellation because in the middle of semester, the management suddenly felt that the books I was using in class was not in line with the institute's objectives. This happened only because two new students had already passed that book. This created chaos in my class because students were satisfied with my methods. I really got discouraged and hopeless that semester because that rash decision ignored my creativity as a teacher. (T1, Interview)

T2 had a similar idea about financial rewards as an extrinsic motivation in her job. She said, "I am a hard-working teacher and I like to be seen and get promoted in my job. This really increases my hope" (T2, Interview). In addition, another factor that highly decreased teachers' hope was the overall policies and regulations of their workplaces. Three teachers complained that unnecessary rules like clothing, sacrificing real learning objectives over making profits, rash teacher's substitution and overpopulated classes overshadowed their efforts as teachers. T3, who is working at two different places, had different complaints about their policies. She mentioned:

In one of language schools I work, there is a strict clothing and hijab policy. You have to wear dark colors and loose clothes. It does not matter if you are an excellent teacher! If you do not follow clothing code, you will be reprimanded. (T3, Interview)

T3 attributed her decrease in hope to "lack of explicit rules for employing language institutes" and "the ones which are against my beliefs," and "I feel hopeless when I can't make changes in

the system and I have to act according to the principles set by authorities" (T3, Narrative). T5's dissatisfaction with the rule of the institute was also highlighted in his narrative response, claiming he got hopeless facing a "high number of students" (T5, Narrative).

4.4 The macrosystemic level

4.4.1 Educational system. In Iran, learning English, and especially the demand for International English Language Testing System (IELTS) for different purposes, especially immigration, has increased during the past few years. This has turned English learning into a profitable business, and many language institutes have been established accordingly. Unfortunately, the majority of these institutes mainly focus on enrolling and keeping as many learners as they can. They mainly do this by giving learners false hopes that they can fully master English in a very short amount of time. Therefore, learners are usually moved away from their main goal and are always looking for short cuts to achieve their goals. Instead of studying hard, they are mostly fantasizing about being advanced learners. As a result, they usually do not pay attention to their teachers' advice, and this overshadows teachers' efforts and teaching styles.

T1 explained:

> I have been working in different language institutes. Unfortunately, all of them have created this false illusion that they can help learners reach their goals and get their IELTS at the least amount of time. This creates arrogant and delusional learners who think they are advanced learners. This situation put an extreme pressure on teachers because no matter what they do, their efforts are diminished by learners because they are looking for short cuts to achieve their goals. (T1, Interview)

The teacher argued that when he realized that his efforts were overshadowed by the dominant educational delusion, he lost his hope, as he felt that his students do not value his experience and efforts.

4.4.2 Socioeconomic and political factors. Beside educational factors that affect teachers' hopes in their profession, our analysis showed that some external factors have also significantly affected teachers' hopes. Two teachers reported that challenging socio-economic factors (e.g. inflation, poor economic conditions, low incomes and currency depreciation) caused by political issues have extremely affected their lives. These issues cause financial instability, which leads to stress and anxiety and gradually a loss of hope for the teachers. As T2 pointed out:

> When I chose this job, I expected to progress and even make more money by getting more experienced in my own field. I also expected myself to be able to open up my own language institute in which I could implement my own educational ideas and make profit as well. However, these are unrealistic goals in Iran. The financial instability causes regress in your life. This feeling that no matter how hard you try; you cannot progress in your life especially from financial point of view negatively affects your life. (T2, Interview)

She also highlighted "financial instability as a result of political issues" as one of the factors decreasing her hope. Another external factor that negatively affected teachers' hopes was post-COVID-19 issues. Sudden conversion to online teaching without proper mental and educational preparations was stressful and depressing for most teachers. T4 said her hope highly decreased because her life balance was drastically changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said:

> During COVID-19 pandemic, the living situation got harder. We were in the middle of a crisis, but we were not prepared. It was both professionally and financially stressful. We were still making the same amount of money but we had to work double shifts, even from home. It seemed that I was constantly stuck at work. (T4, Interview)

A main factor decreasing teachers hope during and post-COVID-19 was attributed to the amount of stress and anxiety imposed on teachers. The living situation was harder, and as stress increased, teachers' hope for a financially stable job decreased.

5. Discussion

This research implemented Bronfenbrenner's model of ecosystems to acquire contextually relevant knowledge of hope among EFL teachers from a subjective perspective. Hope, a positive psychology construct, has been investigated from both emotion-based and cognitive-agentive dimensions (MacIntyre *et al*., 2022). Lazarus (1999) mainly considers hope as an emotion, while others like Snyder *et al*. (2005) view hope as a cognitive construct. This study follows the cognitive-agentic dimension of hope, which considers it an antecedent to action (Snyder, 2002), and also uses hope theory (Snyder, 2000, 2002) and positive psychology to explain hope in the English teaching profession.

At the microsystemic level, some teacher-related and student-related factors caused fluctuations in teachers' hope. Based on hope theory, goals and agency are among two key components of hope (MacIntyre *et al*., 2022). This sense of goal-directed energy gives teachers enough motivation to progress in their job (Ghadyani *et al*., 2022). Hiver (2016) suggested that since hardiness and hope are integral for learning and professional well-being, teachers' hopes are created as a result of how they direct and conduct their professional efforts. In this study, teachers' own efforts in pre-class preparations, usually followed by their successful performances in class, seemed to highly increase their hope. This, in turn, led to the emergence of hope in their teaching as the teachers were developing new planning strategies to improve their teaching styles. These findings are quite consistent with the definition of hope (Snyder *et al*., 1991). Based on this definition, hope emerges from pathways as a cognitive tool. The findings of this study indicated that the application of new strategies for the improvement of teaching quality enabled the teacher to experience hope as they could develop more suitable plans within the ecology of their classroom. The contribution of paths as useful cognitive tools for the emergence of hope, inherent in the definition of hope, was also reflected in MacIntyre *et al*. (2022), who implied that hopeful teachers used more strategies like increased planning to address difficult situations.

Furthermore, reflecting the other contributing tool underpinning the experience of hope (Snyder *et al*., 1991), the findings indicated that the emergence of teachers' hope stemmed from their sense of agency to obtain their goals as they were optimistic about their job, had faith in themselves and considered themselves as role models in class. In tandem with Ghadyani *et al*. (2022), this sense of self-efficacy and faith embedded in the teachers' sense of agency facilitated the emergence of their hope (Ghadyani *et al*., 2022). This finding corroborates those by Eren (2014), who, finding a positive link between academic hope and dispositional optimism, argued that these constructs involved positive expectancies regarding future professions concerning efficacy and outcome expectancies (Beard *et al*., 2010; Snyder, 1995). It should be noted that happiness and hope have been revealed to be highly related to an increasing sense of competence and agency (Bullough, 2011).

Other microsystemic factors that affected teachers' hopes involved students. Hope is fundamental to instructors' insights into teaching and classroom activities (Hammerness, 2003; Tirri *et al*., 1999). It was revealed that students' active participations, high achievements, progress, appropriate behaviors in class and positive attitudes toward their teachers highly increased teachers' hopes in class. These findings are in agreement with Eren (2014) and Ghadyani *et al*. (2022), who concluded that teachers' hopes were positively related to their sense of responsibility for their students' motivation, achievements and their relationships with students. Also, as reported by Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2011), hopeful teachers are highly crucial to the development of the educational system and the success of

their students (e.g. better problem-focused coping, more determination, more pathways to problem solving when blocked and an inclination to stretch and grow). However, when faced with students' disruptive behaviors, teachers' hopes significantly decreased. This finding is in line with that of Ghasemi (2022), who also indicated that students' disruptive and aggressive behaviors caused hopelessness in teachers.

At the mesosystem level, teachers' hopes were both increased and decreased with regard to their previous teaching experiences. This finding indicated that past teaching experiences usually increased the teachers' hopes in their profession because it helped them become more experienced by learning from their mistakes and facing challenges, becoming more knowledgeable in their own field, gaining more independency in their class management and becoming more creative and risk-taking teachers. This finding is consistent with that of France (2019), who believed that inexperienced teachers should make mistakes and learn from those mistakes, take risks and learn to face unpredictable challenges to become great teachers. Moreover, it reflects Hughes' (2021) finding that teachers should always view hope as a chance to grow and learn and try to transfer that attitude of hope to their students as well. This finding seems to imply that, as one of the agency factors of hope (Snyder *et al.*, 1991), using past teaching experiences can serve as a goal to become more prepared in the future. Also, in light hope theory cognitive tools, teaching experience can contribute to the emergence of teachers' hope in terms of both pathways and their sense of agency in their pursuit of goals as two ecological affordances. First, as pathways to their professional aims, the teachers' experiences, as a potential affordance, helped them to discover new goals and find suitable directions to their teaching, which in turn could lead to further learning in this field (Hiver, 2016). On the other hand, the teachers' hope experiences were the results of the actualization of their agency control over their teaching in their microsystem of the classroom, via which they could replace their sense of alienation and powerlessness with the assignment of meanings and value to their teaching (Hiver, 2016). This is in alignment with Hiver (2016), maintaining that gaining more experience can turn powerlessness into increased agency. In light of hope theory, this type of control over one's performance is positively converted into goal-directed thoughts, which in turn feed off the mechanisms of commitment and challenge to tap into pathways thinking that again enhances agency.

On the other hand, the findings showed an increase and decrease in teachers' hopes with regard to their past training courses and learning experiences. Those who believed that their past training courses increased their hope attributed this experience to the useful training and positive attitudes of their mentors, which helped them gain enough confidence to manage their own classes. Thus, it seems that mentors played an important role in the emergence of student teachers' hope. As Hiver (2016) concluded, hopelessness is contagious. Given this contagious nature of hope, hostile and cold comments of a participant's mentor about her teaching profession might lead to a decrease in her hope during her first year of teaching. The findings also revealed that some teachers believed that their previous training courses did not increase their hope because they were not being well-organized, informative and practice-oriented. These findings are in line with Borg (2003), who also asserted that teacher training programs which were not designed based on student teachers' prior beliefs and did not consider teacher cognition and practices were not effective for teachers. Furthermore, improper training can create stress and anxiety in student teachers in facing difficulties in their career (Fisher and Burrell, 2011; Ndileleni and Maphosa, 2014; Tütünis, 2014).

At the exosystem level, different rules and regulations of work places influenced the emergence of the teachers' hopes in their profession. More specifically, the findings revealed that low flexibility and authority in teaching decreased teachers' hope because, when not allowed to think outside the box, they could not be as effective as they thought they would be in their classes. This finding is in line with that of Ghasemi (2022), showing that some factors, including workplace climate, can lead to teachers' hopelessness if they are not provided with

an adequate level of social support (e.g. collegial/superior support) and a positive work environment. Olsen and Sexton (2009) warned about "threat rigidity" that negatively affected teachers' work by "centralizing and restricting the flow of information, by constricting control, by emphasizing routinized and simplified instructional and assessment practices, and by applying strong pressure for school personnel to conform" (p. 14). Olsen and Sexton (2009) reported that teachers were mostly filled with despair rather than hope, highlighting that "autonomy correlates with professional respect," which lacked in their school environment (p. 33). Following "a consistent and robust institutional commitment" highly contradicts the hope and happiness of children and their teachers (Bullough, 2011). Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2011) believed that policies like increasing teachers' autonomy should be made to increase teachers' hopes and to keep them invested in teaching because it can affect student learning as well.

Another factor decreasing teachers' hopes was the issue of payment, which did not match with their high responsibilities and long working hours. This finding is in line with that of previous studies (Ghadyani *et al.*, 2022; Ghasemi, 2022; Liu and Meyer, 2005; Nolan and Stitzlein, 2011) revealing that low payment was a main factor for teachers' dissatisfaction and attrition, while motivation for earning more money can lead to hopefulness in teaching. Justice *et al.* (2022) also asserted that teachers were not hopeful about their profession. They believed that they did not receive the respect they deserved, especially financially. Based on the findings of this study, the supervision team was another influencing factor in the emergence of teachers' hope in the environment of their classroom. The findings indicated that constant recording of the classes, undermining teachers' efforts and receiving constant negative feedback and judgmental comments decreased teachers' hope, while constructive criticism and supportive behaviors increased their hope. This finding is consistent with Olsen and Sexton (2009), who found that teachers' hope decreased for being constantly criticized by their administrators despite their hard work. In this regard, Hiver (2016) concluded that teachers experienced hope when they received acclimation and respect for their relentless struggle and hard work. In addition, other factors, based on the findings of this study that decreased teachers' hope were the overall workplace policies and the authorities' poor decisions, like the sudden changes of books, principals' obvious favoritism of some teachers and unnecessary extra responsibilities like dealing with parents. This finding corroborates previous research indicating that extra responsibilities, tiring workload and stressful interactions (e.g. with parents, students, etc.) were challenges that teachers usually experienced at work (MacIntyre *et al.*, 2022). Also, it is consistent with the findings of the previous studies reporting that favoring new teachers over the old ones without considering their efforts and experiences, changing schedules without notice or explanation and hasty and improper re-assignments caused tensions and frustration among teachers, which in turn decreased their trust and increased their resentment (Olsen and Sexton, 2009). Likewise, another reason for teachers' hopelessness has been reported to be schools' mandated reforms, which did not take teachers' hopes and happiness into account (Bullough, 2011; Day and Lee, 2011).

At the macrosystem level, some issues like economic inflation highly decreased teachers' hope in their profession. Even when teachers worked double shifts to make more money or when their wages increased, they could not keep up with the rising cost of living (Erdberg, 2022). The findings also indicated that the pandemic and post-COVID issues which caused stress, life-balance instability and changes in the educational system negatively affected teachers' hope experiences. This in line with Ghasemi's (2022) consideration of the socioeconomic status of teachers, especially the post-COVID financial issues, as an important factor underpinning teachers' hopelessness in their profession. The findings are also in agreement with Cahapay and Bangoc (2022), contending that stress, especially during the pandemic, had a negative predictive effect on teachers' hope. The findings of this study contradict the results reported by MacIntyre *et al.* (2022), who indicated that although

teachers' hope was negatively correlated with stress, they mostly used different coping strategies to alleviate the situation. Hope is connected with a sense of growth during painful circumstances and the capacity to find purpose in life, according to the combination of the agency and route components. Fullan (1997) also mentioned the concern for keeping teachers' hope under current social, economic and work conditions. One possible solution would be giving teachers enough autonomy and personal control to do what they think is best for their students. Autonomy is closely related to agency, and having control over the work life can lead to hope and happiness (Bullough, 2011; Nettle, 2005).

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicated that at the microsystemic level, teacher- and student-related factors caused fluctuations in the emergence of language teachers' hopes. At the mesosystem level, our findings indicated that past teaching experiences strengthened teachers' hope in their profession. At the exosystem level, the findings revealed how low flexibility and lack of agency in teaching decreased our participant teachers' hope, and finally, at the macrosystem level, the findings indicated that economic conditions were among the factors which highly decreased our teachers' hope in their profession. Collectively, these findings add to the literature on language teacher hope by anchoring the concept within a range of competencies and key aspects of teacher professionalism, such as agency, well-being and emotion. The findings of the study offer implications for teachers and teacher educators in better understanding the role of ecological factors that shape language teachers' hope. In addition, in-service teachers could be engaged in professional development courses in which they reflect on the factors that may influence their hopefulness so that they can establish better intrapersonal and interpersonal practices. Regarding the limitations of the study, we note that the temporal process of hope emergence in language teachers' profession was not incorporated in this study. Thus, further ecological research can focus on this emergence program through the consideration of the chronosystem. Also, qualitative longitudinal research designs (see Henry and MacIntyre, 2024) can be the focus of future research in providing deeper insights into this emergence process. More specifically, other ecological approaches such as complex dynamic systems theory and activity theory can be adopted to explore the emergence of hope in the professional environment of language teachers.

References

Barkhuizen, G. and Consoli, D.S. (2021), "Pushing the edge in narrative inquiry", *System*, Vol. 102, 102656, doi: 10.1016/j.system.2021.102656.

Barkhuizen, G. and Wette, R. (2008), "Narrative frames for investigating the experiences of language teachers", *System*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 372-387, doi: 10.1016/j.system.2008.02.002.

Beard, K.S., Hoy, W.K. and Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2010), "Academic optimism of individual teachers: confirming a new construct", *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 26 No. 5, pp. 1136-1144, doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2010.02.003.

Benesch, S. (2017), *Emotions and English Language Teaching: Exploring Teachers Emotion Labor*, Routledge, London.

Borg, S. (2003), "Teacher cognition in language teaching: a review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do", *Language Teaching*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 81-109, doi: 10.1017/s0261444803001903.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979), *The Ecology of Human Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1993), "The ecology of cognitive development: research models and fugitive findings", in Wozniak, R.H. and Fischer, K.W. (Eds), *Development in Context: Acting and Thinking in Specific Environments*, Erlbaum, pp. 3-44.

Bullough, R.V. (2011), "Hope, happiness, teaching, and learning", in Day, C. and Lee, C.-K. (Eds), *New Understandings of Teacher's Work. Professional Learning and Development in Schools and Higher Education*, Springer, Vol. 6, pp. 15-30, doi: 10.1007/978-94-007-0545-6_2.

Bullough, R.V. and Hall-Kenyon, K.M. (2011), "The call to teach and teacher hopefulness", *Teacher Development*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 127-140, doi: 10.1080/13664530.2011.571488.

Cahapay, M.B. and Bangoc, N.F. II (2022), "Hope and resilience mediate relationship between stress and satisfaction with life of teachers amid COVID-19 crisis in the Philippines", *IJERI: International Journal of Educational Research and Innovation*, Vol. 18, pp. 296-306, doi: 10.46661/ijeri.6262.

Colla, R., Williams, P., Oades, L.G. and Camacho-Morles, J. (2022), "'A new hope' for positive psychology: a dynamic systems reconceptualization of hope theory", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 13, 809053, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.809053.

Day, C. and Lee, J.C. (2011), "Emotions and educational change: five key questions", *New Understandings of Teacher's Work*, pp. 1-11, doi: 10.1007/978-94-007-0545-6_1.

Derakhshan, A., Setiawan, S. and Ghafouri, M. (2024), "Modeling the interplay of Indonesian and Iranian EFL teachers' apprehension, resilience, organizational mattering, and psychological well-being", *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 21-43, doi: 10.30466/ijltr.2024.121416.

Duff, P.A. and Van Lier, L.E.O. (1997), "Approaches to observation in classroom Research; Observation from an ecological perspective", *Tesol Quarterly*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 783-787, doi: 10.2307/3587762.

Erdberg, E. (2022), "The impact of inflation on the teacher shortage and how online education may help", *Forbes*, available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/08/03/the-impact-of-inflation-on-the-teacher-shortage-and-how-online-education-may-help/?sh=18f43ca77b95

Eren, A. (2014), "Uncovering the links between prospective teachers' personal responsibility, academic optimism, hope, and emotions about teaching: a mediation analysis", *Social Psychology of Education*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 73-104, doi: 10.1007/s11218-013-9243-5.

Fisher, J. and Burrell, D.N. (2011), "The value of using micro teaching as a tool to develop instructors", *Review of Higher Education and Self-Learning*, Vol. 4 No. 11, pp. 86-94.

France, P.E. (2019), "The value of vulnerability", *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 77 No. 1, pp. 78-82.

Fredrickson, B.L. (2001), "The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: the broaden- and-build theory of positive emotions", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 56 No. 3, pp. 218-226, doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218.

Fullan, M. (1997), "Emotion and hope: constructive conceptions for complex times", in Hargreaves, A. (Ed.), *Rethinking Educational Change with Heart and Mind*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, pp. 216-233.

Gallagher, M. (2018), "Introduction to the science of hope", in Gallagher, M. and Lopez, S.J. (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Hope*, Oxford University Press, pp. 3-8.

Ghadyani, F., Tahririan, M.H. and Afzali, K. (2020), "Conceptualization of hope for EFL teaching within the Iranian context: a grounded theoretical model", *Issues In Language Teaching (ILT)*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 27-58, doi: 10.22054/ilt.2020.54699.531.

Ghadyani, F., Tahririan, M.H. and Afzali, K. (2022), "A theoretical model of hope for teaching English language", *Language Testing in Focus: An International Journal*, Vol. 6, pp. 11-19, doi: 10.32038/ltf.2022.06.02.

Ghasemi, F. (2022), "Teachers' demographic and occupational attributes predict feelings of hopelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 13, 913894, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.913894.

Greenier, V., Derakhshan, A. and Fathi, J. (2021), "Emotion regulation and psychological well-being in teacher work engagement: a case of British and Iranian English language teachers", *System*, Vol. 97, pp. 1-18, 102446, doi: 10.1016/j.system.2020.102446.

Hammerness, K. (2003), "Learning to hope, or hoping to learn? The role of vision in the early professional lives of teachers", *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 43-56, doi: 10.1177/0022487102238657.

Henry, A. and MacIntyre, P.D. (2024), "Keeping in time: the design of qualitative longitudinal research in SLA", *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 3 No. 1, 100102, doi: 10.1016/j.rmal.2024.100102.

Herth, K. (1992), "Abbreviated instrument to measure hope: development and psychometric evaluation", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Vol. 17 No. 10, pp. 1251-1259, doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.1992.tb01843.x.

Hiver, P. (2016), "The triumph over experience: hope and hardiness in novice L2 teachers", in *Positive Psychology in SLA*, pp. 168-192, doi: 10.21832/9781783095360-008.

Holliday, A. and Cooke, T. (1982), "An ecological approach to ESP", in Waters, A. (Ed.), *Issues in ESP. Lancaster Practical Papers in English Language Education 5*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, pp. 123-143.

Hughes, M.C. (2021), "Leaning into the disposition of hope: reflections from a teacher educator", *International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 1-7, available at: https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/icctej/vol16/iss1/3

Justice, L., Williams, E. and Bravo, V. (2022), "Why teachers are leaving and why it matters", *PLD Lamplighter*, available at: https://pldlamplighter.org/news/2022/01/04/why-teachers-are-leaving-and-why-it-matters/

Kayi-Aydar, H. (2021), "A framework for positioning analysis: from identifying to analyzing (pre) positions in narrated story lines", *System*, Vol. 102, 102600, doi: 10.1016/j.system.2021.102600.

Kirkpatrick, R., Derakhshan, A., AlMutawa, H. and Wang, Y. (2024), "A cross-cultural examination of the role of enjoyment and passion in bilingual English teachers' desire for professional development: evidence from Iran and Kuwait", *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, pp. 1-21, doi: 10.1080/01434632.2024.2346572.

Korstjens, I. and Moser, A. (2018), "Series: practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: trustworthiness and publishing", *The European Journal of General Practice*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 120-124, doi: 10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092.

Kruk, M., Pawlak, M., Elahi Shirvan, M. and Shahnama, M. (2022), "The emergence of boredom in an online language class: an ecological perspective", *System*, Vol. 107, 102803, doi: 10.1016/j.system.2022.102803.

Lazarus, R.S. (1999), "Hope: an emotion and a vital coping resource against despair", *Social Research*, Vol. 66, pp. 665-669.

Lichtman, M. (2013), *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide*, 3rd ed., Sage, Los Angeles, CA.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985), *Naturalistic Inquiry*, SAGE, Los Angeles.

Liu, X.S. and Meyer, J.P. (2005), "Teachers' perceptions of their jobs: a multilevel analysis of the teacher follow-up survey for 1994-95", *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 107 No. 5, pp. 985-1003, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9620.2005.00501.x.

Liu, H., Chen, B., Li, X. and Zhou, X. (2024), "Exploring the predictive role of self-efficacy on engagement among EFL teachers in online teaching: the mediation of buoyancy", *Asian Pacific Education Researcher*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 879-888, doi: 10.1007/s40299-024-00820-x.

Liu, H., Yan, C. and Fu, J. (2022), "Exploring livestream English teaching anxiety in the Chinese context: an ecological perspective", *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 111, 103620, doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2021.103620.

MacIntyre, P., Mercer, S., Gregersen, T. and Hay, A. (2022), "The role of hope in language teachers' changing stress, coping, and well-being", *System*, Vol. 109, 10288, doi: 10.1016/j.system.2022.102881.

Mann, S. (2016), *The Research Interview: Reflective Practice and Reflexivity in Research Processes*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Mercer, S. (2020), "The wellbeing of language teachers in the private sector: an ecological perspective", *Language Teaching Research*, Vol. 27 No. 5, pp. 1054-1077, doi: 10.1177/1362168820973510.

Mercer, S. (2021), "An agenda for well-being in ELT: an ecological perspective", *ELT Journal*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 14-21, doi: 10.1093/elt/ccaa062.

Mercer, S., Oberdorfer, P. and Saleem, M. (2016), "Helping Language teachers to thrive: using positive psychology to promote teachers' professional well-being", in Gabryś-Barker, D. and Gałajda, D. (Eds), *Positive Psychology Perspectives on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching. Second Language Learning and Teaching*, Springer, Cham, pp. 213-229, doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-32954-3_12.

Merriam, S.B. (2009), *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994), *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd ed., Sage, Melbourne.

Ndileleni, P. and Maphosa, C. (2014), "Trainee teachers' experiences of being observed teaching while on teaching practice: a case of a rural-based university in South Africa", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 5 No. 16, pp. 393-402, doi: 10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n16p393.

Nettle, D. (2005), *Happiness: the Science behind Your Smile*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Nolan, C. and Stitzlein, S.M. (2011), "Meaningful hope for teachers in times of high anxiety and low morale", *Democracy and Education*, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 1-10, available at: http://democracy educationjournal.org/home/vol19/iss1/2/

Olsen, B. and Sexton, D. (2009), "Threat rigidity, school reform, and how teachers view their work inside current education policy contexts", *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 9-44, doi: 10.3102/0002831208320573.

Saghafi, K., Adel, S.M.R. and Zareian, G. (2017), "An ecological study of foreign language writing anxiety in English as a Foreign Language Classroom", *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, Vol. 46 No. 5, pp. 424-440, doi: 10.1080/17475759.2017.1367954.

Schutz, P.A. (2014), "Inquiry on teachers' emotion", *Educational Psychologist*, Vol. 49 No. 1, pp. 1-12, doi: 10.1080/00461520.2013.864955.

Seligman, M.E.P., Rashid, T. and Parks, A.C. (2006), "Positive psychotherapy", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 61 No. 8, pp. 774-788, doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.61.8.774.

Snyder, C.R. (1994), *The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There from Here*, Free Press, Detroit.

Snyder, C.R. (1995), "Conceptualizing, measuring, and nurturing hope", *Journal of Counseling and Development*, Vol. 73 No. 3, pp. 355-360, doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6676.1995.tb01764.x.

Snyder, C.R. (2000), "Hypothesis: there is hope", in Snyder, C.R. (Ed.), *The Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, and Applications*, Academic Press, pp. 3-21.

Snyder, C.R. (2002), "Hope theory: rainbows in the mind", *Psychological Inquiry: An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 249-275, doi: 10.1207/S15327965PLI1304_01.

Snyder, C.R., Harris, C., Anderson, J.R., Holleran, S., Irving, L., Sigmon, S., Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C. and Harney, P. (1991), "The will and the ways: development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 60 No. 4, pp. 570-585, doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.60.4.570.

Snyder, C.R., Rand, K.L. and Sigmon, D.R. (2005), "Hope theory: a member of the positive psychology family", in Snyder, C.R. and Lopez, S.J. (Eds), *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, pp. 257-312.

Tirri, K., Husu, J. and Kansanen, P. (1999), "The epistemological stance between the knower and the known", *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 15 No. 8, pp. 911-922, doi: 10.1016/s0742-051x(99)00034-7.

Tracy, S.J. (2010), "Qualitative quality: eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research", *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 16 No. 10, pp. 837-851, doi: 10.1177/1077800410383121.

Tütüniş, B. (2014), "İngilizce öğretiminde yöntem sorunları [Problems of English language teaching methods]", in Sarıçoban, A. and Öz, H. (Eds), *Türkiye'de yabancı dil eğitimindeeğilim ne olmalı? [What should be the trend in foreign language education in Turkey?]*, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları, Ankara, pp. 33-36.

Wolff, D. and De Costa, P.I. (2017), "Expanding the language teacher identity landscape: an investigation of the emotions and strategies of a NNEST", *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 101 No. S1, pp. 76-90, doi: 10.1111/modl.12370.

Yüce, E. (2023), "Critical thinking, autonomous learning, and academic grit among preservice EFL teachers", *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, Vol. 50, doi: 10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101382.

Yüce, E., Seitova, M. and Şentürk, B. (2023), "Online learning self-efficacy in using technology among Turkish and Kazakh EFL teachers", *Asia-Pacific Edu Res*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 857-867, doi: 10.1007/s40299-023-00784-4.

Zembylas, M. (2003), "Caring for teacher emotion: reflections on teacher self-development", *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 103-125, doi: 10.1023/A:1022293304065.

Zembylas, M. (2022), "Reframing phenomenological approaches in religious education: insights from affect theory and the aesthetics of religion", *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 1-14, doi: 10.1080/13617672.2022.2076961.

Zhi, R. and Derakhshan, A. (2024), "Modelling the interplay between resilience, emotion regulation and psychological well-being among Chinese English language teachers: the mediating role of self-efficacy beliefs", *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 59 No. 3, doi: 10.1111/ejed.12643.

Zhi, R., Wang, Y.X. and Derakhshan, A. (2024), "On the role of academic buoyancy and self-efficacy in predicting teachers' work engagement: a case of Chinese English as a foreign language teachers", *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, Vol. 131 No. 2, pp. 612-629, doi: 10.1177/00315125231222398.

Further reading

Punia, V., Miglani, P. and Singh, S.P. (2016), "Perception of pupil-teachers' regarding microteaching sessions", *World Scientific News*, Vol. 26, pp. 69-77.

Ratner, C. (2002), *Cultural Psychology: Theory and Method*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum, New York.

Corresponding author
Majid Elahi Shirvan can be contacted at: elahishmajid@gmail.com, m.elahi@ub.ac.ir