

The Invisible Influencers: Understanding the Motivation, Emotions, and Well-Being of Language Teacher Educators

Sarah Mercer, *University of Graz, Austria*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2558-8149>

sarah.mercer@uni-graz.at

Carlos Murillo-Miranda, *Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica; University of Graz, Austria*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6857-7226>

carlos.murillo-miranda@edu.uni-graz.at

Dávid Smid, *University of Graz, Austria*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4484-8591>

david.smid@uni-graz.at

ABSTRACT

Language teacher educators (LTEs) play a critical role in quality education and have a considerable potential impact on pre-service teachers as well as their future pupils. Yet, there is only limited work that seeks to understand their needs and psychologies as individuals. They remain virtually 'invisible' in research terms as a population. In our study, we set out to understand the motivation, emotions, and well-being of 12 English LTEs in Austria ($n = 7$) and Germany ($n = 5$) with two different trajectories and profiles, namely, school-based ($n = 3$) and university-based ($n = 9$) drawing on semi-structured interview data. Reflexive thematic analysis revealed four main themes emerging from the data: a heterogeneity in LTEs' motivation and related career trajectories, diverse sources of positivity and negativity, issues surrounding well-being, and different experiences of the tension between researching and teaching. The paper raises questions about how LTEs can be researched as such a diverse community and the benefits of ecological perspectives, and it asks vital questions about how systems and structures need to be designed to support LTEs in their work and professional development.

Keywords: language teacher educators, qualitative research, motivation, emotions, well-being

INTRODUCTION

In 1998, Freeman and Johnson explained that language teacher education had “begun to recognize that teachers, apart from the method or materials they may use, are central to understanding and improving English language teaching” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 401). However, in their quote, the teacher referred to is the language teacher in training (pre-service teacher or student teacher). Almost 25 years later, we agree wholeheartedly with this sentence, but would argue that the teachers referred to should also equally encompass language teacher educators (LTEs) who are also a form of teacher. As Freeman and Johnson (1998, p. 401) argue, “teachers are not empty vessels,” rather, they are individuals “with prior experiences, personal values, and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classrooms.” This is also true for any teacher – whether the student teacher or the LTE. Both need to be understood as individuals with complex lives, beliefs, histories, and goals, which impact on how they experience the language teacher education process.

However, in researching that process, the LTE has been left largely in the shadows. The focus has tended to be on the student teacher, the methods used, and if at all, the LTEs have largely been considered in terms of their professional knowledge and professional development as well as research literacy (e.g., Yuan & Lee, 2022; Yuan et al., 2022). However, LTEs are people with their own complex histories and psychologies, who impact greatly on how they teach student teachers, what they believe about teaching and languages, and how they experience and enact that in their practice. Given this considerable influence on processes of learning in teacher education, it is surprising the field has devoted so little attention to understanding them as individuals, how they experience their professional lives with their own needs, wants, and well-being. As Golombek (2017, p. 15) pertinently notes,

The teacher educator in much research on second language teacher development seems at times to be like the all-powerful Oz – a mysterious force profoundly shaping instructional activities and professional development of beginning teachers. Yet who the teacher educator is in terms of his or her personal and socio-cultural history, theory of learning, and pedagogical intentions often remains hidden behind a curtain.

They are the ‘invisible influencers’ who need to be brought in from the shadows (see also Sak & Yuan, in press).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploring the Relevance of Language Teacher Psychology

In the broader field of applied linguistics, research has started to look more closely at language teachers as thinking and feeling beings with psychologies of their own, which impacts their practices in class and in terms of their professional development. However, this interest in language teacher psychology has only more recently begun to emerge in greater complexity compared to the extensive and more developed body of research examining learner psychologies and individual differences (cf. Mercer, 2018; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018). Mercer (2018, p. 504) noted,

how vitally important teachers are to successful learning processes. What they do, think, feel and believe are central to what happens in their classrooms, and, essentially, what happens to their learners. It is perhaps, therefore, surprising that the field of language learning psychology has focused so predominantly on the psychology of learners with so little attention devoted to teachers in comparison.

She went on to explain that not only are teachers worthy of being understood as individuals given the pivotal role they play in determining the content and processes of learning, but also specifically in terms of their emotions, motivation, and well-being, which are known to spread bidirectionally between teachers and learners through processes of contagion (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017; King, 2016; Mercer, 2018; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021). As Day et al. (2007, p. 1) argued, teachers matter “not just because of what and how they teach, but, because of who they are as people.” Naturally, just as for the teachers (whether in-service or pre-service), these arguments are equally as pertinent for LTEs.

In terms of what we know about language teacher psychologies, the field is still in its infancy with research in core areas remaining rather limited, but steadily expanding. However, two exceptions are the areas of identity and cognition, which comprise a much greater volume of

existent scholarship (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018). These two areas reflect the shift to more relational and socially constructed views of learning and teaching in which how the individual thinks and relates to the subject is critical to understand, especially from interpretivist and socially constructivist notions of learning. In respect to language teachers, including pre-service teachers, there are a number of studies beginning to examine aspects of their psychologies, such as their motivation (Csizér, 2020; Smid, 2022), mindsets (Haukås & Mercer, 2021, 2025; Irie et al., 2018), emotional labor (De Costa & Nazari, 2024), curiosity (Mercer & Pawlak, 2024), enjoyment (Mierzwa, 2019; Proietti-Ergün & Dewaele, 2021), and pride (Khajavy et al., 2025), and, to a larger extent, well-being (Noughabi et al., 2024; Sulis et al., 2023); the latter body of work emerged following the surge of interest in well-being during the pandemic (see, e.g., Kush et al., 2022).

Naturally, one question that must be asked is to what extent LTEs are sufficiently different to language teachers so as to merit their own branch and body of research or can we simply transfer insights from language teachers to LTEs as there are clearly parallels and overlaps with both being teachers but with different subjects and students? Given the central role they play as a cornerstone of education systems and key contributors to quality education (European Commission, 2013), it is a matter of urgency that we understand who they are, what their motives (initial and ongoing) are, what emotions they experience, and what levels of well-being they have in their personal and professional lives.

Who are LTEs?

Teacher educators (TEs) are a deeply heterogeneous group working in very diverse conditions with differing work profiles and career trajectories (Yuan, 2015, 2020). The work of a TE is associated with polycontextuality (e.g., university, school, etc.), which can pose particular challenges including the fact that the TEs are often seen as lacking by all key stakeholders, being not enough of whatever it is they prefer – practice, theory, or research. As Turner and Garvis (2023, p. 2) concluded in respect to the higher education (HE) context, “teacher educators have been negatively narrated by the media, classroom teachers, entrepreneurs, community leaders, funders, and policy

makers” and also their LTE colleagues for those working at university.

Even within HE, there are distinctions in the roles and profiles of LTEs. For instance, LTEs can have two different trajectories and profiles – those who remain split between school and university with their main work focus in school (i.e., school-based LTEs), and those who are fully employed in their role as LTEs at the university and who have the commensurate commitments in that setting (i.e., university-based LTEs). The term, *school-based LTEs* itself is relatively new (see Bullough, 2005). As is the case for many LTEs, they often take on this role with little or no training leaving many feeling unprepared; a situation which ignores that, “[b]eing a teacher educator involves much more than applying the skills of school teaching in a new (and different) context” (Loughran, 2014, p. 272). There are *university-based LTEs*, who face specific additional problems including, among others, a lack of preparation or induction for the role, the tensions of inhabiting two often conflicting worlds with competing demands – that of university with its focus on research and the pressures of the ‘publish-or-perish’ culture and the world of schooling with its focus on practice and the complexities of schooling in diverse contexts; all of which is accompanied by the relative low status of TEs compared to other scholars working in HE (Olsen & Buchanan, 2017). Additionally, there are others involved in teacher education programs in HE, such as in teaching courses on linguistics or literature, who are also TEs; however, they do not themselves identify in this way and are often not seen as inhabiting those roles by others either (White, 2019). Some of these individuals even view TEs and those directly involved in teacher education, such as those teaching education, didactics, or pedagogy courses as low-status academics or in fact not academics at all. There are also mentors, who may work solely and exclusively within schools with varying degrees of support and training for their roles (e.g., Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Lawson et al., 2015).

Finally, in terms of LTEs, another subpopulation to be considered is freelance LTEs. They work in diverse settings and with pre- and in-service teachers informally or as part of continuing professional development programs. In the world of English language teaching specifically, for example, there are also Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) tutors, who play a key role globally in teacher education and who may face challenges

in working independently without a host institution (Hasper & Barkhuizen, 2023) or also even within institutions. In sum, who identifies as an LTE and their professional profiles can vary enormously and they represent a highly diverse population. As such, any scholarship in this field needs to be explicit and clear about which group or context of LTEs they are working with.

What do we Know About LTE Psychology so far?

In respect to LTEs' psychologies, research is scarce and still in its early stages. Nonetheless, one exception is the considerable amount of work on their identities and cognition. In a striking parallel to work on language teacher psychology, these areas of LTE psychology have developed already a strong body of scholarship (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2021a, 2021b; Golombek, 2015, 2017; Yazan, 2019; Yuan & Lee, 2014). However, other psychological aspects of the professional lives and lived experiences, including motivation, emotions, and well-being, of LTEs remain underexamined.

In general education, there has been some research investigating the well-being and risk of burnout of faculty and TEs working in HE contexts (e.g., Lackritz, 2004). However, Turner and Garvis (2023) conducted a scoping review of TE well-being and concluded that, "teacher educator well-being, stress and burnout is a relatively new and under-researched area, and that there is a dearth of current evidence-based literature in this field" (p. 1). They showed that TEs face specific challenges as they struggle to meet competing demands and face a lack of respect from all sides – within the academy, they are viewed as lower status and in school contexts, they are seen as lacking practical knowledge and experience, and thus also perceived as lower status and competence. Larsen et al.'s (2024) study investigated the well-being of TEs working in Australian HE and concluded that they faced "constant pressures to meet unrealistic and ever-shifting expectations within university contexts" (p. 14) as well as additional challenges specific to the status of being a TE and the associated problems of their perceived lower discipline status.

In language teacher education specifically, Ellis et al. (2012) noted that LTEs are a "hybrid category of academic worker requiring both research and professional credibility" (p. 690): A dual responsibility that can leave them meeting

neither satisfactorily in the perspective of others. In Yuan et al.'s (2022) systematic review of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) TEs working in HE contexts, they also noted the competing and multiple roles and responsibilities LTEs must cope with as well as a range of specific challenges threatening their professional well-being, such as lack of confidence in one or more of these roles, competing sets of professional expectations, unreasonable workload, lack of support, competitive work climate, and low status or lack of recognition for various aspects of their professional work. They concluded by arguing the need for a "humanized approach to researching, understanding, and supporting TESOL teacher educators (and probably teacher educators in other disciplines) as whole people with their unique values and dispositions as well as diverse learning needs" (Yuan et al., 2022, p. 29).

Such a humanistic lens means that TEs must be seen not only in terms of their cognitions, but also in terms of their emotions, acknowledging that, "teachers' emotional experiences shape not only their professional identities and classroom practices, but also ultimately help determine their length of service, being as they are intimately linked to teacher stress burnout and attrition" (King et al., 2020, p. 288). Yet, there is very little work examining the emotional experiences of TEs, with only isolated studies, such as Hagenauer and Volet's (2014) study on emotional regulation and emotional labor and Bair et al.'s (2010) self-study exploration of TE emotions and emotional labor of minoritized TEs.

In language teacher education specifically, Yuan and Yang (2022, p. 658) argued that, "language teacher educators' professional work and development are inseparable from their emotions," and so research must also explore more deeply what emotions they experience, when, and in what ways. In a study by Smid et al. (in press), the authors used semi-structured interviews to examine the emotional experiences of five LTEs working in HE in Austria. They showed how individual psychological factors, such as personal history, values, beliefs, identities, and agency, also play a crucial role in how LTEs emotionally respond to situations at work. They also revealed that the variation in LTEs' emotions depended on the different work roles they took on board and their relationships to different aspects of their work ecologies with typically a more positive orientation to classroom life and a more negative orientation towards the institution per se.

In respect to the motivation of TEs, Richter et al. (2020) examined the motivation for becoming a TE and identified four key drives: career aspirations, social contribution, escaping routines, and coincidence. They noted that escaping routines is associated with emotional exhaustion, whereas career aspirations were linked more to gaining greater job satisfaction. Their study makes clear that motivation is often linked to experiences of well-being. Holme et al. (2016) also looked at the motivation of three teachers transitioning from schoolteacher to TE in HE and found three key motives: exploration and reinvention, key figures, and lifelong learners. For the three participants, the motives were largely intrinsic. In terms of studies of ongoing or sustained motivation of TEs, there are very few studies with some exceptions frequently in respect to TEs' motivation for their own professional learning and development (e.g., Shagrir, 2011).

In the field of language teacher education, to the best of our knowledge, there is only one study to date on LTE motivation by Banegas and del Pozo Beamud (2022), who themselves noted that, "research on the motivation of TESOL teacher educators is extremely marginal or non-existent" (p. 13). They emphasized the importance of LTEs' motivation given that personal and professional drives can "have a powerful cascading effect on teacher education effectiveness" (Banegas & del Pozo Beamud, 2022, p. 13). In their study, they investigated the motivation of 13 TESOL LTEs working in Argentina whom they distinguished according to how much experience they had working in teacher education. Many saw the shift from school to teacher education as a challenge and the next step in their professional trajectories. In terms of factors affecting their motivation negatively, at the outset, they noted frustrations with student teacher engagement, but they saw how, with increased experience, frustrations with the institution itself grew, in particular with respect to the behaviors of management and leadership. However, they sustained their motivation by gaining a sense of self-efficacy, enjoying the challenges, and appreciating the positive atmosphere within the immediate teaching program. Overall, their study also points to the benefits of taking an ecological perspective to investigating the lives of LTEs, which are impacted not only by their interactions with the students, within their program and institution, but also within wider socio-political constraints.

Research on LTEs' psychologies, specifically on well-being, emotions, and motivation, is sparse. Yet, as Yuan et al. (2022) argue, we need to understand LTEs as 'whole people' taking a holistic perspective to exploring who they are as individuals and what they bring to the teacher education process, beyond just their cognitions and approaches to professional learning. The scope of this task is considerable given that it represents an almost completely uncharted territory within the language domain specifically, but also in general education more broadly. However, given the widespread recognition of how impactful teachers' psychologies can be for their teaching practices and their students' learning process, it is a lacuna that is in an urgent need of fixing (see Sak & Yuan, in press).

The Focus of This Study

In this study, we focus on LTEs working in HE and acknowledge that this specific population has unique characteristics. We chose them partly due to our own familiarity with this work context, but also because, as Yuan and Yang (2022, p. 658) state, this group "take[s] major responsibilities for preparing and developing pre- and in-service language teachers" and are thus a vitally important population to understand and support. The participants work in the same context of language teacher education for pre-service teachers at Austrian or German universities, but have differing work profiles, areas of expertise, and job expectations. This study looks at what their motivation is, how their well-being is experienced, and what emotions they have as part of their professional roles and how this may vary across this population and their unique psychological profiles and contexts of work.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is part of a larger research project seeking to understand the psychology of LTEs (see Smid et al., in press). In line with the call for more qualitative work looking at the psychological aspects of TEs' lives, such as well-being (Turner & Garvis, 2023), it took an exploratory qualitative approach to be able to reveal nuance, complexity, and contextualized understandings (Dörnyei, 2007). The following research question guided our study: What are the characteristics, in terms of motivation, emotions, and well-being, of English LTEs in Austria and Germany?

Context, Sampling, and Participants

Our participants were English LTEs employed at universities and teacher trainer colleges in Austria and Germany. We selected these two national contexts in Europe due to the similarities in their cultures and educational systems. Potential respondents were approached using both convenience and snowball sampling (Dörnyei, 2007). Twelve LTEs ($n = 11$ female, $n = 1$ male participant) volunteered to participate altogether, seven from the Austrian and five from the German context. There

were nine participants who worked at a university full-time, and three whose primary affiliation was with a school, and thus, were employed on a part-time contract as an English LTE in a tertiary setting. In order to not compromise anyone's anonymity given the small context and easy recognizability of participants, we have deliberately chosen not to share any other sociodemographic information besides those featured in Table 1. All participants (Ps) are referred to by labels (P1–P12) to preserve their identity and ensure gender-neutrality.

Table 1. *Participants' Sociodemographic Information*

Pseudonym	Country of employment	Primary work context
P1	Austria	university
P2	Austria	school
P3	Austria	school
P4	Austria	university
P5	Austria	university
P6	Austria	school
P7	Austria	university
P8	Germany	university
P9	Germany	university
P10	Germany	university
P11	Germany	university
P12	Germany	university

Instrument and Data Collection Procedures

A semi-structured interview protocol was employed to gather empirical data. The interview guide contained sections related to LTEs' psychology, such as background/job satisfaction, emotions at work generally, emotions in the language education context, emotional labor, and well-being, and included altogether 30 questions. Data collection occurred either face-to-face or online using the Zoom platform between January 2023 and July 2024. All three authors took part in conducting the interviews, which were audio-recorded, and lasted 50 min on average. The language of the data collection was English, in which the participants were all highly competent given that it was the primary language they used at work. Prior to the interviews, the respondents were provided with an information sheet and consent form. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Ethics Committee of the University of Graz.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using the Otter transcription software, and the generated transcriptions were checked for accuracy by the authors and anonymized by removing names and identifying features. The final data pool totaled approximately 95,000 words. The analysis was carried out by one of the authors adopting reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) focusing on the themes of motivation, emotions, and well-being, which had emerged from an initial reading of the data. The data were read by all members of the team, and memos discussed to anticipate a focus for the analysis. The data were then coded line-by-line in a first wave of coding within themes. Subsequent waves of coding were conducted to tighten the focus of the codes, expanding some and refining or combining others until saturation in respect to key themes within the overarching categories of well-being, motivation, and emotions. The computer data management software Atlas.ti (Version 8) was used to manage the analysis of the data.

FINDINGS

Heterogeneity in LTEs' Motivation

Perhaps the most striking feature of the data was the heterogeneity of the educators and the diversity of this group of LTEs. There were some notable broad differences in their individual profiles, especially their motivation, depending on their specific role and context of work. In this paper, motivation is understood as a psychological force that drives LTEs to make decisions, engage in action, and maintain perseverance in their professional endeavors (see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

German University-Based LTEs

Firstly, there were the German university-based LTEs, who tended to share comparable career trajectories and work formats (P8–P12). All but one in this sample entered language teacher education through PhD positions, which meant they were primarily motivated to become LTEs by research agendas and topics or issues they wished to pursue. These motives sometimes had their origins in their own experiences in school or stemmed from observations they noted in the bigger education system or simply from topics they had an interest in. The situation is summed up well by P12, who states,

But it wasn't really a conscious decision to, to become a language educator. It was more that I was interested in research, and this is part of my work, which doesn't mean I don't enjoy it, but it's not, I would say the focus of most people who work at German universities. (P12)

The role of research in LTEs' career trajectory and motivation was interesting in the German sample in particular as, although all the German university-based LTEs got their jobs because of research, many now were in teaching-only contracts with heavy workloads. Yet, if they wished to do a habilitation (a kind of second PhD qualification needed for professorships in the German-speaking world and some other European countries) and aim for a professorship or any kind of higher position, then, it was clear that they would need to do more research and have a stronger publication record, which was felt to be near impossible with time constraints caused by many teaching

hours. It left some, such as P11, doing research as a hobby to try to keep up. P8 also complained that,

I feel like with the teaching, even though it's a lot of fun, it gets, you know, I've done it for years now. I would have liked to emphasize the research side of the job a bit more, but yeah, it's not really possible with my position, unfortunately. (P8)

P9 added that they felt this was a wider problem:

I think finding time for the amount of research we want to do and the grants we want to write and the studies we want to do is, is a problem, no matter what your teaching load, or where you are in academia. So, I think that's a general struggle. (P9)

Austrian University-Based LTEs

The second group of LTEs were the Austrian university-based LTEs, who were a more diverse group due to their differing contracts and career trajectories as well as perceived status in the local academic hierarchy (P1, P5, P7; but P4 was at a tertiary teacher training college and only responsible for teaching). All of them commented on the diversity of the job – although P4's role was primarily teaching with some supervision, but they reported enjoying having the variety of courses and theses to work on. P1 noted that the role for a university-based LTE is “multifaceted and nuanced.” However, the diversity had the potential to be a double-edged sword, and thus, both a motivator and a demotivator, for all those, who felt pulled in different directions by the multiplicity of demands and expectations. Nevertheless, P5 concluded that for everyone no matter their job, “I think we've, we've all got too much work.”

One distinct aspect concerned the criticism by two LTEs (P1 and P5) based in one university setting about the negative university culture, resistant bureaucracy, and general lack of support, all of which naturally had a toll on the participants' motivational and emotional profiles. P1 in particular had had several unpleasant and disappointing experiences with the administration and university as a structure, which left them feeling unappreciated and undervalued. They concluded that they were happy in the local ‘microcosm’ of their institute but felt very negatively towards the university as an institution. They explained,

If I think of positive things (...) Sort of people per se that I have to deal with directly, are really kind and really supportive. It's just the bigger institutional rules, regulations aspect that gets on my nerves. Yeah. And I think the less you actually have to do with that, the better it is for your own sanity. (P1)

P5 also had a more negative set of experiences within the university context and also felt their position in the perceived hierarchy played a role, too. This point was emphasized also by P1 who stated, in relation to their institution,

Yeah, just the irritation, I think it's sometimes, it's more irritating, sometimes it's less irritating. And also, powerlessness is a very strong word. But I think you know what I mean, there are always things I would like to do, but I'm not in a position to do them. (P1)

P7, in a different institution to P1 and P5, also commented on their awareness of the hierarchy in Austrian universities and how the responsibilities, but also power and respect, are distributed:

So it's, it's, I think that's been for me, the most interesting position now with being a professor is that I knew that I'd have a different a different sort of status and level (...) I feel very lucky right now, because I think I get, I finally sort of get the respect and the agency. But it's, I think where I am is a genuinely nice place. (P7)

However, P7 also noted within the university as a whole that language teacher education seems per se to have lower status, "I don't want to assume badly. But I just sometimes get this feeling we're not taken this seriously." Such negative perceptions of institutional circumstances clearly have the potential to damage the participants' motivation and job satisfaction.

Austrian School-Based LTEs

Finally, there were the Austrian school-based LTEs (P2, P3, P6), who were more homogenous as a group in terms of their profiles and motivation. All of them displayed strong teacher identities, and they typically talked more about experiences in school than at university indicating that the

focal point of their professional lives was clearly in school. P2 explained their drive as, "I'm passionate about language teaching. So that's, that's probably what led me to wanting to tell students how to do it." Interestingly, this identity was often reflected in their views of language teacher education where their role was to share their authentic teaching experiences and ideas from school with others; something often reinforced by the types and content of courses they teach. P2 explains how they view their course: "I feel it will be weird to have someone teaching them about school who's not in school or has ever been to school that. It's not authentic." P6 also sees their role as sharing advice based on their experiences in school, "passing on some, you know, tips, you know, how to handle certain situations (...) And I think it's really interesting, because they enjoy the, the ideas that you present to them, and they're very thankful for it."

In contrast to their university-based colleagues, these school-based LTEs had no specific feelings about the university per se as they had little contact with the institution as a whole, but they felt positive about their immediate colleagues and department. P2 reported, "At uni, I feel I'm trusted that firstly, with the course, you know, I know what to do. And people take me seriously, they appreciate me." Essentially, these LTEs come to university to teach but have otherwise no responsibilities or commitments to the institution.

An interesting pattern across the Austrian school-based LTE data was the additional motive to become an LTE to add new challenges and diversity to their professional lives. However, the 'boredom' of always teaching the same things and same groups was an issue raised by two of the school-based educators. P2 explained,

when I get bored, which I sometimes do of my own teaching, I just go into my, I've got my books here and I just find something new to it to motivate me. Because then I'm excited about a new thing again. (P2)

P3, too, was aware of this risk and so actively found ways to bring in variety: "And that's the kind of stuff that gives me energy, trying out something new or planning something for me. It would be really terrible to do the same project again, and again and again." In this way, it was similar to the diversity, which characterizes the university-based LTEs' jobs in that it was both an asset in keeping their work varied but also risked becoming a strain if there were too

many demands from different directions. For example, P2 took on multiple roles in school and beyond and found themselves being pulled in all directions: “This year, I was completely overworked. And I’m, I’m actually thinking of how I can improve my well-being. And I’m not sure why, but it’s my character as well, because I’m so eager and so interested in things.”

Sources of Positivity and Negativity

All of the LTEs in this study drew positive emotions from their teaching and were motivated to help future teachers and empower them to become the best teachers they can within the acknowledged constraints of the respective system. However, there were some differences in the LTEs’ reported emotional experiences, which were, in part, determined by the individual’s notion of what language teacher education programs should do and be about. In this paper, LTE emotions are understood as transient psychological processes, positive or negative in valence, that arise in response to possibilities and obstacles encountered in one’s professional lives (Reeve, 2009).

For all of the school-based LTEs and for some of those in Germany on teaching-only contracts, there was a stronger sense of helping the student teachers in very practical ways; a fact sometimes related to the type and content of the course they were teaching, and reflective of their strong teacher identities. For example, P3 summed up well the predominant identity and notion of their role as an LTE, “as a teacher educator, I feel like I’m passing on my teacher being, on my teacher experience to others.”

In contrast, some of the university-based LTEs expressed frustration at the difficulty of getting pre-service teachers to engage with theory or research; a situation exacerbated by the teacher shortage in both countries in which student teachers understandably prioritize practical advice to survive in the classroom (see, e.g., P5). In Austria, P5 explains the problem and the effects on them:

As university teachers, we think this is when they should be engaging with research and doing whatever really thinking deep thoughts about those issues. But for them, it’s just something they need to get through so that they can finally be real teachers. And I think, and I don’t enjoy this role of, I don’t enjoy being an irritation in their lives. (P5)

In Germany, similarly, P8 states, “I always felt like there is this, this problem between trying to get teachers, who actually work at school excited for our research topics because they have so many other problems.”

The positivity in respect to teaching varied in salience although every single LTE reported enjoying their teaching. For those employed on teaching-only contracts, it was clear that this was the main source of positivity. Some university-based LTEs commented on the fact that teaching can be both a source of the greatest positivity and the greatest frustrations impacting their motivation greatly. P8 explained,

And then I feel like obviously, also the students that you have in your classes contribute a lot to how motivated you are. Sometimes you have groups that ask lots of questions and are really engaged and have really cool ideas. And that’s more fun to work with. And sometimes you have classes where no one talks and you constantly have to kind of push them to get them to engage with you (...) And sometimes you walk out of the classroom and you’re like, oh God, that was horrible. (P8)

For university-based LTEs, research was another source of positivity, although this varied in terms of relative balance. For one German-based LTE, the teaching was the bigger source of pleasure and greater focus of meaning than the researching:

Going back to all the things I have as a teacher educator, right, like the administrative, the teaching, the research, I always prioritize the teaching, like, I will always prioritize my students, because that’s what I’m here for. And they are, they deserve that. (P9)

For an Austrian-based LTE, it was relatively balanced with slightly more research although there was a subtle implication of feeling that this is something they ‘should not prioritize’ over teaching: “I really like research. But I feel like I need to make sure that I don’t value that too much. I feel like I have a very strong responsibility for teaching. I’ve always felt like that’s a challenge” (P7).

For the majority of participants, there was general positivity about their experiences with the students and in their teaching. In Austria, this was reflected in a high degree of autonomy in how the LTEs, whatever their contract,

conducted and constructed their courses. P4 explained that this had its good and bad sides, but generally was seen as a positive across the LTEs:

And again, pros and cons, but that you need to make your own decisions, you can more or less create your own courses. Of course, there are some, you know, assessment criteria that we all stick to, but that's that and it's very open (...) But if there are no scripts usually, you know, you have to find your own way. (P4)

In contrast, some of the German teachers were somewhat unhappy about having to teach courses they did not agree with, felt unconfident about, or did not see as relevant. P9 explains,

I think the struggle sometimes in the teaching is the, the set curriculum for the courses for like, the first semester, second semester students (...) is basic knowledge, is foundational knowledge. And it's not necessarily tied to teaching. And I think students struggle sometimes, or a lot, to make those connections. And they wonder why we're teaching them all of these sorts of grammar and linguistic theories. (P9)

P10 was much more vehement in stating:

When I talked about this foundations course (...) that we teach, and it's meant to be like an introduction to TEFL [teaching English as a foreign language]. I find that so dull. Like, I hate teaching it with an absolute passion, I try my best to make it interesting. I've taught it three times, two times now. And I just dread it. I absolutely hate teaching it. (P10)

However, on the whole, P12 in Germany, similarly to P11, felt that, "[t]here are, of course, a couple of common things we have to do in certain seminars. But all in all, I feel that I have a lot of freedom, and no one really makes me do certain things."

Well-Being

Well-being was an issue addressed across the data as eight of the participants reported having had or were currently experiencing explicit and notable problems with their well-

being, meaning this is clearly a critical topic for this population. For this study, we define well-being as "a sense of happiness, satisfaction and meaning which emerges from the dynamic interplay of personal characteristics and socio-contextual factors" (Mercer, 2021, p. 20). It was interesting to see the different types of stressors and strains experienced, the diverse coping strategies drawn on, and the role of emotional labor. All of the LTEs recognized the importance of well-being and had individual coping strategies to manage their well-being, such as being with family and friends (e.g., P1, P9), doing sport and hobbies (e.g., P6), being in nature (e.g., P8, P12), and learning to take perspective (e.g., P5). This shows that the LTEs' well-being was heavily dependent on the interplay between their personal and professional lives. For example, P3 was also strict about setting temporal boundaries, which involved taking complete breaks during the holidays even if they found themselves working some weekends and evenings the rest of the year – again something of a double-edged sword as they did enjoy the work:

So, I noticed that some of my colleagues, they have this very clear thing, I don't work after on Friday after 3 and I turn my phone off here (...) I don't have that. But I feel I need, I enjoy my work, I want to do it well. I get, I like to get little things out of the way. I'm a kind of person who likes to just clean up stuff that is, so I answer my emails and Sunday night, I don't care (...) but I do need a nice break in holidays. And that is something that we're, I'm very strict about. So, whether it's semester break, Easter break, or Christmas or summer (...) So, I really had this big break in between the work and fill up my batteries. (P3)

Especially, for some of the university-based LTEs and some school-based LTEs who took on too many additional roles, the volume and diversity of commitments and roles risked becoming overwhelming. P5 reports,

last year was, I just took on too much so. And I hope I've learned from it. So now I would say I'm getting back to a point where I'm very busy. But that's not necessarily a negative thing. But where it's under control again. So, for me, that's a big thing. If, if I feel that I'm losing control, and if I feel that I'm not doing things well anymore (...) I have a very hard time saying, 'okay, it's good enough.' (P5)

P1 notes, “[y]ou cannot be the perfect whatever researcher, colleague, teacher all of the time and I think just knowing when you need a little break and when it’s too much. And even if you love everything that you do.” A particular comment from P9 is interesting as it perhaps characterizes the dilemma of the LTE job and the sense of pressure to do certain things, such as publish or perish and present at conferences:

And I think the vast majority, if not all of the pressure on me, comes from myself. I mean, I do think there are expectations of the job and the field of doing research that, that are obviously a pressure (...) but, but sometimes I wonder why am I putting this pressure on myself to this degree, if I don’t have to, or need to? I don’t know how much of it is cultural, personality, experiences. I know a lot of people feel pressure from the field, right, pressure to publish a certain amount or be at a certain amount of conferences or whatever (...) Like, I feel like if I’m not going to conferences presenting, being active, then am I doing the job right? That’s a, that’s sort of a field expectation. But then I’m the only one saying that to myself. Nobody else is saying I’m not doing the job right. (P9)

P7 adds another perspective that highlights the tensions and problems at work being both a source of great joy, but there is often simply too much of it and a lack of boundaries. P7 asks,

There’s, there’s so much nice about our work, there’s so much nice opportunity. There’s so much room for growth. How does it not become all consuming? Because you could also say, ‘oh, it’s the competition, it’s the market.’ But it’s like, there’s all the good things (...) Of course, there could be a healthiness to that, because it’s like, well, who am I? (P7)

Interestingly, six participants reported being engaged in emotional labor as a way of managing their emotions, especially in class with learners. However, all of them saw this as a positive thing and simply a normal part of the job. They saw it as a sign of professionalism and so not necessarily stressful. P4 explains, “[b]ut yeah, I’m just human. And of course, I have bad days as well. But I do think it’s part of being professional to give your best.” P1 stated simply that for them, “I think that emotional labor is

probably part of the deal. Being a teacher, I don’t think you can always share 100% how you feel in the moment, because you have a certain role. And that’s natural.” However, P5 commented on how one manages one’s emotions in class, but that is usually rewarded in return through positive energy from the learners:

So, sometimes it’s just a lot of work if you, you know, 8:15 on Monday morning, and you’re trying to get them going. And, of course, that’s just on. I think that’s just, it’s tiring. It’s, it takes a lot of energy. But I usually walk away from teaching. Not always. Energized. (P5)

It is worth noting that not a single LTE in any context mentioned explicit support from an institution for their well-being, and all referred only to their personal coping strategies as individuals.

Research/Teaching Tension

One issue that came up in various places throughout the data and related to the participants’ motivation, emotions, and well-being was the discourse around the supposed theory/research and practice divide as well as the practical tensions in being expected to cover both (or not). Ironically, this was problematic for most LTEs as many were left feeling there was something they did not cover. The school-based LTEs appeared to have the least problem with this as they were confident about their courses and the need for their practical/experiential knowledge to be shared. P6 explains their feelings as follows,

I don’t consider myself to be like this fully scientific person. That doesn’t sound, I hope that hasn’t done too bad. But I’m not this, like, I really like the practice of things. And this is something that I would like to pass on. (P6)

Both P2 and P3 acknowledged the role of theory and/or research as well as practical knowledge and, ideally, the blending of the two in language teacher education. This aspect may influence the motivation and emotions of LTEs as their own beliefs can shape their perceptions of both their peers and themselves. In turn, these perceptions may affect the emotional responses of other LTEs, depending on their professional backgrounds. P3 explains,

we do have people around that like, who just come from the theoretical side, and that is also necessary. But my approach is always this, I come across some new ideas or I see some flaws or weaknesses, you know, or some difficulties that my learners have. And then I look around to kind of change things and improve things. And, and I think it's this combination that has been most successful for me (...) my students appreciate it also, because they see, there is a connection between the theoretical and the practical side of it in the classroom. (P3)

A related belief that you must have taught in school in order to be an LTE came up repeatedly among school-based LTEs and those in Germany on primarily teaching contracts. P11 states,

that very strongly influences my work, because I draw on the experience I had myself when I worked as a teacher, and I feel the information is more reliable if you have really worked in this profession. And I also think it's problematic if people work as a teacher educator, and have not been a teacher themselves. (P11)

In this sample, only three LTEs (P1, P5, and P7 – all university-based in Austria) actually had research as a core part of their jobs, and all naturally reported on the importance of sharing that kind of knowledge and criticality. P5 talked about the importance of promoting “research literacy” to help educators in a long-term perspective on their careers. None of the school-based LTEs engaged in research of any kind, and among the German university-based LTEs, it varied according to contracts and future career ambitions. P8 was engaged in a number of research projects, and many of the others were working on their PhDs currently. However, one of the German university-based participants, P10 noted the tensions and pressures they feel as a university-based LTE. While they understood why a heavy emphasis on publishing is important, they argued that the main focus of teaching departments should be on teaching, and, therefore, found it frustrating to rarely have discussions about teaching methods with their colleagues. They went on to reflect on what is more valued in academia – their teaching or researching knowledge and experiences,

I doubt myself a lot. But then I have moments of, well, I have so much teaching experience, I have 20

years teaching experience. And I thought that that counted for something (...) I feel like actual classroom teaching experience is not, is not valued. I feel like what's valued is what did you publish? And what did you write? And how many talks did you give at conferences? So, that's also contributed to my cynicism I think a little bit about the state of teacher education academia. (P10)

In contrast, P9 found great harmony in being able to unite their interest in teaching and the classroom alongside their love of research and learning. They reported,

I realized a job as a teacher educator would afford me – I would still get to teach, which I love at my core. But then I would also have opportunities for research and asking these deeper questions, having these deeper conversations, going to conferences and learning what people are sort of discussing and saying in the field. And then still able to then talk to people who will be teachers and bring in all this information. (P9)

This defining feature of language teacher education was impacting all participants in terms of their motivation, emotions, and well-being and was naturally interconnected with how the aspects of research and practice were conceptualized and what beliefs predominated about the nature of language teacher education programs and subsequently how this was enacted. Clearly, there was more harmony for those with alignment between what they believe LTE programs should do, their own sense of competence, and their ability to enact this in their practice.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore the characteristics of English LTEs in Austria and Germany in terms of motivation, emotions, and well-being. The sample of the study ($N = 12$) proved to be extremely diverse despite being from similar contexts and universities. Each LTE showed to be unique because of their own identities, beliefs, motivation, roles, career path, and expertise. The diversity within these similar contexts of work, even within the same institution, highlights just how vitally important it is for LTE work to specify clearly the populations and their work contexts and, ideally, conduct work taking an ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Adopting such a lens

would better capture all the layers in LTEs' ecosystems and provide a better understanding of how these different dimensions of their professional contexts impact how they experience their work stretching from the socio-cultural context, languages being taught, institutional conditions, job contract, local power hierarchies, curricula expectations, local resources, and student populations, among others (Van Lier, 2004). Additionally, empirical research examining individuals' lives and experiences of being an LTE ($n = 1s$) (MacIntyre, 2024) would meet calls for scholarship that challenge the 'ergodic fallacy' of generalizing from group-level data and overlooking individuality (see Speelman & McGann, 2020). It would allow us to understand a 'whole person' view as called for by Yuan et al. (2022), which would reveal more of the complexity and diversity of those working in the LTE community.

A particularly salient topic throughout the data relates to the discourses surrounding research and practice. For the school-based LTEs, this was not something they engaged in although two of them recognized its value for student teachers. Nevertheless, their priority and their beliefs about what was most needed centered on practical insights from their teaching lives. This contrasted with some of the university-based LTEs who wanted to bring in more research to the teacher education program, but who felt unable to do so due to time constraints and pressures from student teachers who were already in schools – often before their studies were completed – and who were calling for 'survival tips and recipes' first and foremost. Clearly, these perspectives on the relative importance and roles of research and practical advice form a tension for many LTEs and their student teachers. It affects not only what is taught in programs, but also how competent or not a person feels to enact that sort of curriculum and course content, and thus, their motivation and well-being. This aligns with research where in some contexts, not in this study, school-based LTEs may feel pressured to engage in research and develop a researcher identity (Yuan, 2020). Similarly, university-based LTEs may feel pressured into abandoning or suppressing their researcher identity in line with a more teaching-practice oriented one (Tan, 2021).

In fact, research was only a core component for three of the LTEs. It was a source of pleasure and motivation for them although there was a sense that, while there are pressures to publish, the teaching remains a core and important aspect of the job. For others, research was an

entry point into the profession, such as through a PhD, but it ended up becoming an obstacle to further career progression given their contracts did not allow sufficient time to engage in it, yet, it was precisely research that enabled career success. Yuan et al. (2022, p. 459) comment that academia views and expects LTEs in HE to be 'supermen/superwomen' doing research in their own free time, while bearing heavy teaching workloads, supervising, carrying out administrative work, and providing professional development to in-service teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2005). This mismatch in what is expected on a day-to-day basis and what is needed for a long-term career in the profession is potentially damaging for LTE motivation and certainly likely to generate an excessive burden and strain on their well-being.

Another important aspect arising from the data was the LTEs' well-being. The LTEs showed that they were aware of coping strategies to implement to positively impact their well-being (e.g., spending time with loved ones, exercise and entertainment, nature, and setting boundaries). However, they did feel it was easy to be overwhelmed by taking on too much. For many, this stemmed from a double-edged sword of loving what they do and getting positivity from it, but also, equally, not being able to manage the volume taken on and the sheer extent of diverse tasks, roles, and activities, which were possible within the context of their jobs (the university-based LTEs) or by working at multiple institutions (the school-based LTEs). It is notable that nobody mentioned any type of institutional support for their well-being. This suggests a need to look more closely at the benefits (or the lack) of positive institutions for LTEs (see Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2024 on the role of positive institutions for well-being in the case of language teachers). Additionally, it is paramount to unpack the expectations placed on this population, whatever their role, and uncover what is affecting their well-being and what kinds of support, individual and structural, are needed to ensure they do not suffer from burnout, which is an acknowledged risk for TEs (Lackritz, 2004; Turner & Garvis, 2023).

In sum, LTEs are a hugely important and impactful population within the educational system. Not only do they directly impact wave upon wave of language teachers, but also then indirectly their years and years of learners. The potential number of people influenced directly and indirectly by LTEs is vast. Given their significance, it is critical that we know more about them as individuals, their

needs, wants, and well-being. Not only so that we can nurture them, keep them in the profession, and ensure they flourish in their professional roles, but also so they can model positive psychological states and stress their importance for themselves and their learners. As King et al. (2020, p. 290) argue, language teaching is an especially unique social practice that relies more on teacher–student interaction than other subjects, and so they conclude that, “there exists a strong case that language teachers in particular need to be emotionally competent within their classrooms if they are to achieve pedagogical goals and manage their well-being.” This applies both to language teachers and LTEs. If we want positive psychological states and behaviors to ‘cascade’ through the system, we must begin by nurturing, protecting, supporting, and engaging LTEs so we and they themselves value their well-being.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, one of the key insights from this study is that the LTE population is exceptionally diverse even within similar or even the same setting. They are diverse in their identities, motivation, beliefs about language teacher

education, emotions, and how they experience their work. All of this impacts what they do and how they do it. If we, as a community, do not understand these key stakeholders in the process, then we do not understand language teacher education. Their lives, psychologies, and perspectives impact how they teach and what they teach in language teacher education programs. Until we better understand the LTE population, it will be hard to gauge what messages – explicit and implicit – about language teaching and learning are being passed on to student teachers from the actions and psychologies of their LTEs. This paper reflects our first step at opening up our understandings of LTEs as individuals embedded in complex personal ecologies beyond identities and cognitions (Barkhuizen, 2021a, 2021b; Hasper & Barkhuizen, 2023; Yazan, 2019; Yuan, 2019). It represents a call to action urging the field to put LTEs’ psychology in all its complexity – their emotions, beliefs, motives, well-being, and sense of self – center stage for a change (Sak & Yuan, in press). Their lives and psychologies must be made more visible through both research and advocacy so that their positions and influence in the processes of language teacher education can be better understood, appreciated, valued, and supported.

Authors’ Contributions

Conceptualization: SM; data collection: SM, CMM, DS; data analysis: SM; original draft: SM, CMM, DS; review & editing: SM, CMM, DS.

Ethics Approval & Consent to Participate

Ethical approval was received from the University of Graz (Austria) and consent was obtained from all the participants.

Funding

The research herein received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

REFERENCES

- Ambrosetti, A., & Dekkers, J. (2010). The interconnectedness of the roles of mentors and mentees in pre-service teacher education mentoring relationships. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(6).
<https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2010v35n6.3>
- Bair, M. A., Bair, D. E., Mader, C. E., Hipp, S., & Hakim, I. (2010). Faculty emotions: A self-study of teacher educators. *Studying Teacher Education*, 6(1), 95–111.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17425961003669490>
- Banegas, D. L., & del Pozo Beamud, M. (2022). An exploration of TESOL teacher educators’ motivation. In R. Yuan & I. Lee (Eds.), *Becoming*

- and being a TESOL teacher educator: Research and practice* (pp. 13–31). Routledge.
- Barkhuizen, G. (2021a). *Language teacher educator identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Barkhuizen, G. (2021b). Identity dilemmas of a teacher (educator) researcher: Teacher research versus academic institutional research. *Educational Action Research*, 29(3), 358–377. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2020.1842779>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Harvard University Press.
- Bullough, R. (2005). Being and becoming a mentor: School-based teacher educators and teacher educator identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(2), 143–155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.12.002>
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2005). Teacher educators as researchers: Multiple perspectives. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21, 219–225. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.12.003>
- Csizér, K. (2020). *Second language learning motivation in a European context: The case of Hungary*. Springer Nature.
- Day, C., Sammons, P., Stobart, G., Kington, A., & Gu, Q. (2007). *Teachers matter: Connecting lives, work and effectiveness*. McGraw-Hill.
- De Costa, P., & Nazari, M. (2024). Emotion as pedagogy: Why the emotion labor of L2 educators matters. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 62(3), 1159–1168. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2024-0218>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies*. Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and researching motivation*. (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Ellis, V., McNicholl, J., & Pendry, A. (2012). Institutional conceptualisations of teacher education as academic work in England. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(5), 685–693. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.02.004>
- European Commission. (2013). *Supporting teacher educators for better learning outcomes*. European Commission. <https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2024-04/Supporting-Teacher-Educators-for-better-learning-outcomes.pdf>
- Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. E. (1998). Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(3), 397–417. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588114>
- Golombek, P. (2015). Redrawing the boundaries of language teacher cognition: Language teacher educators' emotion, cognition, and activity. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99(3), 470–484. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12236>
- Golombek, P. (2017). Innovating my thinking and practices as a language teacher educator through my work as a researcher. In T. Gregersen & P. MacIntyre (Eds.), *Innovative practices in language teacher education* (pp. 15–31). Springer.
- Gregersen, T., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2024). Language teacher well-being: an individual–institutional pact. *ELT Journal* 78(2), 179–188. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccad053>
- Hagenauer, G., & Volet, S. E. (2014). “I don’t hide my feelings, even though I try to”: Insight into teacher educator emotion display. *Australian Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 261–281. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-013-0129-5>
- Hasper, A., & Barkhuizen, G. (2023). CELTA tutors’ beliefs about online tutoring practices. *ELT Journal*, 77(4), 479–488. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccad014>
- Haukås, Å., & Mercer, S. (2021). Exploring pre-service language teachers’ mindsets using a sorting activity. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 16(3), 221–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2021.1923721>

- Haukås, Å., & Mercer, S. (2025). Experienced language teachers' mindsets regarding their own professional development. In A. Leis, Å. Haukås, N. M. Lou, & S. Nakamura (Eds.), *Mindsets in language education* (pp. 169–186). Multilingual Matters.
- Holme, R., Robb, A., & Berry, W. (2016). Becoming a teacher educator – the motivational factors. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(3), 340–354.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2016.1194391>
- Houser, M. L., & Waldbuesser, C. (2017). Emotional contagion in the classroom: The impact of teacher satisfaction and confirmation on perceptions of student nonverbal classroom behavior. *College Teaching, 65*(1), 1–8.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2016.1189390>
- Irie, K., Ryan, S., & Mercer, S. (2018). Using Q methodology to investigate pre-service EFL teachers' mindsets about teaching competences. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(3), 575–598.
<https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2018.8.3.3>
- Khajavy, G. H., Smid, D., Mercer, S., Murillo-Miranda, C., Mairitsch, A., Sulis, G., Shin, S., & Mairi, S. (2025). Professional pride in language teaching: Associations with work engagement, well-being, and burnout. [Manuscript submitted for publication].
- King, J. (2016). “It’s time, put on the smile, it’s time!”: The emotional labour of second language teaching within a Japanese university. In C. Gkonou, D. Tatzl, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *New directions in language learning psychology* (pp. 97–112). Springer.
- King, J., Dewaele, J.-M., & Gkonou, C. (2020). Concluding thoughts on the emotional rollercoaster of language teaching. In C. Gkonou, J.-M. Dewaele, & J. King (Eds.), *The emotional rollercoaster of language teaching* (pp. 288–295). Multilingual Matters.
- Kush, J. M., Badillo-Goicoechea, E., Musci, R. J., & Stuart, E. A. (2022). Teachers' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Educational Researcher, 51*(9), 593–597.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X221134281>
- Lackritz, J. R. (2004). Exploring burnout among university faculty: Incidence, performance, and demographic issues. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*(7), 713–729.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.07.002>
- Larsen, E., Barton, G., Turner, K., & Garvis, S. (2024). Enablers and constraints to teacher educator well-being amidst institutional accountability cultures: A PERMA perspective. *Australian Educational Researcher, 52*, 721–741.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-024-00738-9>
- Lawson, T., Çakmak, M., Gündüz, M., & Busher, H. (2015). Research on teaching practicum – a systematic review. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(3), 392–407.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2014.994060>
- Loughran, J. (2014). Professionally developing as a teacher educator. *Journal of Teacher Education, 65*(4), 271–283.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487114533386>
- MacIntyre, P. D. (2024, May 16–18). *Willingness to communicate: Lessons for the psychology of language teaching* [Plenary session]. Psychology of Language Learning PLL5 2024 Conference, Madrid, Spain.
- Mercer, S. (2018). Psychology for language learning: Spare a thought for the teacher. *Language Teaching, 51*(4), 504–525.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000258>
- Mercer, S. (2021). An agenda for well-being in ELT: An ecological perspective. *ELT Journal, 75*(1), 14–21.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaa062>
- Mercer, S., & Kostoulas, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Language teacher psychology*. Multilingual Matters.
- Mercer, S., & Pawlak, M. (2024). Language teacher professional curiosity: Understanding the drive for professional development. *Studies in Second*

- Language Learning and Teaching*, 14(3), 383–420. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.t.39293>
- Mierzwa, E. (2019). Foreign language learning and teaching enjoyment: Teachers' perspectives. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 10(2), 170–188. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs20192.170.188>
- Moskowitz, S., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2021). Is teacher happiness contagious? A study of the link between perceptions of language teacher happiness and student attitudes. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 15(2), 117–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2019.1707205>
- Noughabi, M. A., Yang, S., Botes, E., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2024). The effect of positive emotion on foreign language teacher engagement and well-being: A cross-cultural comparison. *Language Teaching Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688241250364>
- Olsen, B., & Buchanan, R. (2017). “Everyone wants you to do everything”: Investigating the professional identity development of teacher educators. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 44(1), 9–34. <https://doi.org/10.2307/90003616>
- Proietti-Ergün, A. L., & Dewaele, J.-M. (2021). Do well-being and resilience predict the foreign language teaching enjoyment of teachers of Italian? *System*, 99, Article 102506. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102506>
- Reeve, J. (2009). *Understanding motivation and emotion*. (5th ed.). Wiley.
- Richter, E., Lazarides, R., & Richter, D. (2021). Four reasons for becoming a teacher educator: A large-scale study on teacher educators' motives and well-being. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 102, Article 103322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103322>
- Sak, M., & Yuan, R. (in press). Language teacher educator psychology: A research agenda. *Language Teaching*.
- Shagrir, L. (2011). Professional development of the teacher educator: Orientations and motivations. *International Journal of University Teaching and Faculty Development*, 2(1), 17–32. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/286c14f24984027b44bce50e479ba3ff/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2034856>
- Smid, D. (2022). *Toward an understanding of pre-service English teachers' motivation: The case of Hungary*. Akadémiai Kiadó. <https://doi.org/10.1556/9789634548188>
- Smid, D., Mercer, S., Murillo-Miranda, C., & Yim, S. Y. (in press). Loving life in class, tolerating the institution: The interplay of psychological and social factors in language teacher educator emotions. In P. De Costa & M. Nazari (Eds.), *Language teacher educator emotions: International perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Speelman, C. P., & McGann, M. (2020). Statements about the pervasiveness of behavior require data about the pervasiveness of behavior. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, Article 594675. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.594675>
- Sulis, G., Mercer, S., Babić, S., & Mairitsch, A. (2023). *Language teacher well-being across the career span*. Multilingual Matters.
- Tan, M. Y. (2021). Discourses and discursive identities of teachers working as university-based teacher educators in Singapore. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 72(1), 100–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119896777>
- Turner, K., & Garvis, S. (2023). Teacher educator well-being, stress and burnout: A scoping review. *Education Sciences*, 13(4), 351. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13040351>
- Ur, P. (2019). Theory and practice in language teacher education. *Language Teaching*, 52(4), 450–459. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000090>
- van Lier, L. (2004). *The ecology and semiotics of language learning: A sociocultural perspective*. Springer.
- White, S. (2019). Teacher educators for new times? Redefining an important occupational group. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 45(2), 200–

213.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2018.1548174>
- Yazan, B. (2019). An autoethnography of a language teacher educator wrestling with ideologies and identity positions. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 46(3), 34–56.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1221723.pdf>
- Yuan, R. (2015). Preparing future teacher educators in higher degree programmes: A Chinese perspective. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 41(1), 97–101.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2014.992636>
- Yuan, R. (2019). A comparative study on language teacher educators' ideal identities in China: "More than just finding a middle ground." *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 45(2), 186–199.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2018.1548173>
- Yuan, R. (2020). Novice non-traditional teacher educators' identity (re)construction in higher education: A Hong Kong perspective. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 99, Article 101508.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2019.101508>
- Yuan, R., & Lee, I. (2014). Understanding language teacher educators' professional experiences: An exploratory study in Hong Kong. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 23(1), 143–149.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-013-0117-6>
- Yuan, R., & Lee, I. (Eds.). (2022). *Becoming and being a TESOL teacher educator: Research and practice*. Routledge.
- Yuan, R., & Yang, M. (2022). Unpacking language teacher educators' expertise: A complexity theory perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 56(2), 656–687.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3088>
- Yuan, R., Lee, I., De Costa, P. I., Yang, M., & Liu, S. (2022). TESOL teacher educators in higher education: A review of studies from 2010 to 2020. *Language Teaching*, 55(4), 434–469.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444822000209>