



## **JALDA's Interview with Dr. Ali Derakhshan**

### **Interview by Davoud Amini**

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### **Ali Derakhshan**

He has published in accredited international journals, including *Computers and Education*, *Language Teaching Research*, *System*, *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *ELT Journal*, *Current Psychology*, *Asia Pacific Education Researcher*, *Educational Studies*, *Porta Linguarum*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, etc. His monograph *The "5Cs" positive teacher interpersonal behaviors: Implications for learner empowerment and learning in an L2 context* has appeared in 2022. His research interests are positive psychology, teacher education, learner individual differences, cross-cultural interpersonal factors in educational psychology, interlanguage pragmatics, and intercultural communication. He has joined an offline interview with Dr. Davoud Amini.

**Ali Derakhshan** is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at the English Language and Literature Department, Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran. He gained his MA in TEFL from University of Tehran and his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran. Dr. Derakhshan has been a member of the Iranian Elites Foundation since 2015. He has also been selected as a distinguished researcher by the Teaching English Language and Literature Society of Iran in 2021. His name appears in Stanford University's list of world's top 2% most influential scientists in 2021. He is the editor of *Language Related Research*, Associate editor of *Frontiers in Psychology* and *Porta Linguarum* and editorial member of *System*, *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, and *Porta Linguarum*.

**DA: --- Dear Dr. Derakhshan, I appreciate your kindness in accepting JALDA's invitation to take part in this interview. You have recently been listed**

**among the world's top most influential 2% scientists in 2021 in the field of applied linguistics and language teaching research. At the outset, let me express my congratulations on behalf of JALDA team on this celebrated achievement.**

**AD: ---** Thank you so much for your encouraging words. Being listed among the top 2% scientists requires perseverance, diligence, passion, commitment, and, of course, a clear and focused mission and vision.

**DA: ---** Your research efforts during the past few years have been centered on the educational and psychological considerations in language learning and teaching. Actually, we have witnessed a remarkable surge of interest in the psychological dimensions of ELT. As a result, the classic linguistics-based studies within the language teaching research seem to have been marginalized when compared to the studies inspired by educational psychology. How do you define ELT, as a field of study, in light of these developments?

**AD: ---** I suppose with the advent of positive psychology (PP) and its emerging trends in SLA, second/foreign language (L2) education has been regarded as one of the most emotional and challenging endeavors around the globe (Derakhshan, 2022b; Derakhshan, Dewaele, Azari Noughabi, 2022; Wang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). Such an intricate nature is due to the existence of interactions among several factors (e.g., linguistic, affective, cognitive, and socio-cultural), so we can see that linguistics-based studies have been impacted by psycho-emotional variables, or these studies have embarked on various psycho-emotional factors. To me, not only does ELT encompass linguistics-based studies, but also it needs to underscore emotions. Inasmuch as the fact that success in L2 learning and teaching depends on multifarious psycho-emotional factors and contextual drivers that balance different dimensions of one's performance and behavior.

**DA: ---** You have recently published a noteworthy monograph (Derakhshan, 2022a) on how the principal axioms of positive psychology can be reflected in teacher-student relations in the L2 learning context. You have highlighted the five qualities of clarity, closeness, credibility, confirmation, and care as being relevant to creating a positive milieu in the classroom, and you have proposed measurement instruments for these qualities. In an article, once I argued for the importance of teachers' opening their vulnerability to students in generating a humanistic and positive atmosphere (Amini, 2014). It seems that L2 research has not done justice to teachers' interpersonal behavior, and your book is an attempt to fill this gap. Would you like to share some more information about this book with our readers?

**AD: ---** The notion of 'teacher interpersonal behaviors' is a well-grounded branch of investigation in instructional communication theorizing and research. Nonetheless, not much has been conducted in terms of its theorizing, research, and

application in the domain of language teaching and learning (Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). This desideratum in L2 education needs immediate attention in the coming years because effective teacher-student relationships are conducive to successful language teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, teachers' positive communication behaviors derived from PP as well as the rhetorical/relational goal theory can influence L2 education. As you know, PP rests on three pillars of positive emotions and feelings, positive traits and characteristics of individuals, and positive institutions. Thus, I have argued that positive teacher interpersonal behaviors can be explained by drawing on these three tenets of PP because learners are more inclined to experience positive feelings and emotions if there exist positive teacher-student interactions, and they are more likely to experience a positive, caring, and friendly classroom atmosphere, which is inherent to establishing a positive institution. Moreover, rhetorical/relational goal theory foregrounds the importance of teachers' employment of various positive interpersonal communication cues to maintain quality communication and an effective interpersonal relationship with students. Teachers' positive interpersonal behaviors cover a wide range of favorable factors, five of which (i.e., clarity, credibility, care, closeness, and confirmation) are addressed in my book.

In my mixed methods study in this volume, firstly, I concluded that positive teacher interpersonal variables, including teacher clarity, credibility, relational closeness, care, and confirmation, could influence Iranian L2 students' level of empowerment. Secondly, it was found that the 5Cs could influence Iranian L2 students' behavioral, cognitive, and affective learning. Thirdly, I found that Iranian L2 students' level of empowerment could affect their level of cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning. Fourthly, it was concluded that learner empowerment could mediate the effects of teacher interpersonal behaviors, including care, clarity, credibility, confirmation, and relational closeness, on L2 students' affective, behavioral, and cognitive learning. Fifthly, I came to the conclusion that among the many teacher-focused, course-focused, and student-focused factors that can influence L2 students' empowerment, from Iranian EFL students' perspectives, teacher interpersonal behaviors could play the most influential role. Finally, the sixth conclusion was that among the many teacher-focused, course-focused, and student-focused factors that can influence L2 students' learning, from Iranian EFL students' perspectives, teacher interpersonal behaviors played the most influential role.

As the writer of this volume, I hope that it will provide my audiences with fruitful knowledge about positive teacher interpersonal behaviors and their application in L2 research and practice. I believe that this book can open new doors to novel and innovative research studies in L2 education around the globe.

**DA: --- Language teachers' personal and professional life has recently been noted in light of the inspiration from positive psychology. What kind of ramifications do you think this research framework might have on language teacher education in the Iranian EFL context?**

**AD:** I believe that many of my venerable colleagues in the Iranian EFL context and other EFL/ESL contexts have capitalized on the tenets of PP. More specifically, the findings of PP have done wonders for how teachers can engage learners in the process of learning and teaching. And, as I have suggested in my recent state-of-the-art paper on PP, future studies need to draw on emerging and innovative trends, such as Latent Growth Curve Modeling (LGCM), Retrodictive Qualitative Modeling, Time Series Analysis, Ecological Dynamic Systems Theory, Idiodynamic Method, etc.

**DA: --- You have been very closely involved in the theory and practice of TEFL in the Iranian context. In your opinion, what are the most outstanding issues of ELT to be seized on by Iranian ELT researchers?**

**AD: ---** Well, that is a very good question. I have been into pragmatics for more than a decade because my PhD dissertation was on L2 pragmatics; however, in the last four years, I have found great passion in teacher-student interpersonal factors, educational psychology, and positive psychology. So, I suppose ardent researchers need to follow their own areas of interest, but I am into integrating emotions with issues in applied linguistics.

**DA: --- Are there any final remarks you would like to share with JALDA readers?**

**AD: ---** At this time, our globe is becoming smaller and smaller with the advent of internalization and globalization. Such an irresistible trend affects not only international politics and economy but also multinational academic collaboration, so conducting cross-cultural studies on teacher-student interpersonal factors and educational psychology in L2 education has been my main mission and vision in the last four years, and I have been successful in setting such a trend as you can see from my publications (see Derakhshan, Greenier, & Fathi, 2022; Greenier et al., 2021; Wang, Derakhshan, & Azari Noughabi, 2022; Wang, Derakhshan, & Rahimpour, 2022). Although some believe that emotions are context-dependent, I argue that there exist cross-cultural commonalities and variations, which make this trend a springboard for future studies.

**DA: --- Thank you, dear Dr. Derakhshan, for taking part in this interview and sharing your invaluable insights with JALDA readers.**

**AD: ---** My pleasure.

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