Editorial: Language Teacher Education Research – Key Trends, Challenges, and Questions

Jaber Kamali*
Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul, Turkey
Donald Freeman
University of Michigan, Michigan, USA
Diane Larsen-Freeman
University of Michigan, Michigan, USA
Bonny Norton
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
Thomas S. C. Farrell
Brock University, Ontario, Canada

Correspondence
Email: jaber.kamali@ihu.edu.tr

Abstract
In this editorial, we introduce the Language Teacher Education Research (LTER) Journal as a new venue dedicated to researchers and practitioners in the field of language teacher education, providing a space to share, showcase, and advance their scholarly and practical contributions. This editorial serves as a guide to the journal's objectives, providing an overview of its mission to contribute to the advancement of research and practice in Language Teacher Education (LTE). It contextualizes LTE within the broader landscape of contemporary research, offering insights into its evolving scope and interdisciplinary connections. The editorial explores significant trends shaping the field and addresses pressing challenges. Finally, the editorial poses thought-provoking questions to inspire future research, encouraging scholars to explore critical issues, generate innovative solutions, and push the boundaries of knowledge in LTE.

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[1]Introduction

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Language Teacher Education Research (LTER), a journal dedicated to fostering scholarly advancements in the field of language teacher

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[1] The order of authors reflects their respective contributions to this editorial.

education (LTE). It is both an honor and a significant responsibility to introduce this platform, which aspires to address both research and practice in this dynamic and continually evolving discipline. To provide a foundational understanding of Language Teacher Education Research (*LTER*) – the title and focus of this journal – it is essential to examine its constituent elements. The term *Language* in *LTER* refers to the broad spectrum of languages that are subjects of pedagogy, extending beyond commonly taught modern languages to include heritage languages (Austin, 2019), ancient languages such as Latin (Murphy, 1980), and sign languages used by Deaf communities worldwide (Scheetz & Martin, 2008). This inclusive perspective acknowledges the diversity of linguistic contexts in which language teaching and learning occur, emphasizing the importance of addressing the unique needs and challenges associated with each language type within teacher education research. The concept of *Teacher Education* in our journal is a superordinate term to the notion of teacher training since it comprises two processes: training and development (Freeman, 1983). Training focuses on equipping teachers with specific skills, strategies, and techniques required for effective classroom performance, often guided by prescribed methodologies. In contrast, development emphasizes a broader, reflective approach aimed at fostering professional growth, critical thinking, and adaptability in diverse educational contexts (Freeman, 1989; Larsen-Freeman, 1983). Lastly, the term *Research* signifies systematic and rigorous scientific inquiry aimed at formulating questions and proposing evidence-based solutions or insights. Therefore, LTER seeks to strike a balance by welcoming both research-driven studies and practice-based inquiries, fostering a dynamic interplay between theoretical exploration and practical application (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Accordingly, the journal welcomes submissions highlighting teachers' reflective retrodictions – insights and adaptations grounded in their lived classroom experiences (see Freeman, 1998; Larsen-Freeman, 2009) – as well as those engaging with theoretical perspectives and predictive models, fostering a holistic approach that encompasses both practice and theory. All in all, in an era where globalization, technological advancements, and sociopolitical changes continue to reshape education, language teachers and teacher educators must be well-prepared for new challenges and opportunities. LTER aims to provide a space for critical discussions, innovative methodologies, and diverse perspectives that can inform and transform LTE practices worldwide. As we embark on this journey, our mission is to create a forum where researchers, practitioners, and policymakers can engage in meaningful dialogue, share insights, and contribute to the development of effective, equitable, and contextually relevant teacher education practices. This editorial outlines the goals of the journal, situates LTE in the research context, highlights key trends and challenges in the field, and proposes questions, by topic area, to consider in research, practice and theory-building in LTE.

Language Teacher Education

Teacher education has long been recognized as a cornerstone of educational reform (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2013). In the context of language education, the demands placed on teachers have become increasingly complex. Various types of knowledge have been attributed to language teachers (see, for example, Richards, 2010). Richards (2010) emphasized the importance of understanding various knowledge domains, such as practical teaching skills, contextual knowledge, and personal teaching beliefs, in shaping effective language teachers. The demands of the new era, such as the integration of technology (Stockwell, 2009), the rise of multilingualism and multiculturalism (Kramsch & Zhang, 2018), and the emphasis on 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and collaboration (Lorencová et al., 2019) require LTE programs to prepare teachers who are not only knowledgeable but also adaptive and reflective.

Current trends in LTE include a growing focus on teachers' (and even teacher educators') cognition (Borg, 2003; Woods, 1996), identity formation (Barkhuizen, 2021; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Norton, 2016), transnational perspectives (Abraham, 2021; Kamali & Nazari, 2023), coaching and mentorship (Kamali & Javahery, 2024; Nguyen, 2017), emotions (Herrera, 2024; Kubanyiova, 2012), well-being (Greenier et al., 2021; Mercer & Gregersen, 2020), critical pedagogy (Canagarajah, 2005; Hawkins & Norton, 2009), assessment and evaluation (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004; Walsh, 2003), and agency (Nazari & Kamali, 2024; Tao & Gao, 2021), to name a few. In addition to conventional approaches, research has also highlighted the importance of fostering reflective practices among teachers (Farrell, 2018; Farrell & Farrell, 2024), enabling them to critically examine their own beliefs, assumptions, and teaching strategies. With the rapid advancement of technology, the integration of AI tools and digital platforms in LTE has emerged as a critical area, emphasizing the need for equipping teachers with technological competencies to enhance classroom teaching and learning (Al-khresheh, 2024; Crompton et al., 2024; Kamali et al., 2024a; Kamali et al., 2024b; Karataş et al., 2024; Law, 2024; Moorhouse, 2024; Sperling et al., 2024). At the same time, the role of LTE in addressing broader societal issues, such as social justice (Banegas & Sanchez, 2023; Hawkins, 2011), equity (Feifei, 2024; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018), and sustainability (Arikan & Zorba, 2024; Edwards & Burns, 2016) has gained prominence.

Despite these advancements, significant challenges remain. A persistent and much-discussed issue is the negotiation between theory and practice in different aspects of LTE. This tension is hardly new and has been theorized in different ways, as cultural-historical contradictions (Engeström, 1999) for example. Recently, informed by a Hegelian dialectical frame, Larsen-Freeman (2023) has suggested that the tension can

be viewed not merely as a juxtaposition of opposing forces but as a dynamic process of synthesis wherein the thesis of theoretical constructs and the antithesis of practical application converge. The result in this view would be a higher-order integration that both critiques and enhances the evolution of pedagogical theory and practice. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological innovation has outpaced the ability of many institutions to integrate digital tools effectively into teacher preparation (Hanna, 2018). Finally, in line with the rapid advancements in technology, multilingualism and multiculturalism are expanding at an unprecedented pace, necessitating a thoughtful consideration of the distinctive characteristics of this emerging context (Kamali & Alpat, 2025). These challenges underscore the need for ongoing research and dialogue, which LTER aims to facilitate.

Vision for the Future
As we look to the future, *LTER* aims to be more than just a repository of research; we envision it as a catalyst for change and innovation in LTE. Our long-term goals include fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, amplifying underrepresented voices, and supporting emerging scholars in the field. We also hope to build a global community of researchers and practitioners who are committed to advancing equitable and contextually relevant LTE practices.

One particularly critical area we hope to explore in future issues is the intersection of LTE and social justice (Hawkins, 2011; Kubota & Lin, 2006). How can LTE programs prepare teachers to address issues such as systemic inequality, discrimination, and environmental sustainability? These questions demand a deeper investigation into culturally responsive teaching practices, strategies for fostering inclusive classroom environments, and methods to empower teachers to become advocates for marginalized communities. Additionally, the intersection of language education with global citizenship education provides a pathway to examine how LTE can promote a sense of responsibility and action toward global challenges (Hadjeris, 2024).

Multilingualism and its diverse perspectives can be another avenue of research for LTE (Gao & Yang, 2023). Although multilingualism is expanding due to globalization, it should be noted that it is essential to recognize the importance of practicing *glocalization,* which highlights the need to adapt what our teacher-learners gain from our courses to align with their unique local teaching contexts (Yep, 2007; Feng & Kim, 2023). Undoubtedly, any knowledge, strategies, or methodologies introduced must be practical and relevant within their specific environments. As Robertson (1994) suggests, there is a valid argument against the uncritical exportation of Western teaching methods to other parts of the world, emphasizing the need for context-sensitive approaches in education.

Another important focus will be the role of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies in LTE (Kamali et al., 2024a; Stockwell, 2009). As these tools continue to evolve, it is essential to critically examine their implications for teaching and learning. For instance, how can AI-driven platforms support personalized teacher training, and what ethical concerns might arise from their use? Furthermore, research could delve into the integration of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies in LTE, exploring their potential to create immersive learning experiences and develop practical teaching skills. Emerging technologies also prompt questions about data privacy, accessibility, identity, and the digital divide, which warrant rigorous scholarly attention (Stranger-Johannessen & Norton, 2017).

Equally significant is the exploration of teachers' mental health and well-being (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020) within LTE programs. How can these programs address the increasing stress and burnout faced by teachers in training and their subsequent careers? Studies focusing on resilience-building, mindfulness practices, and the incorporation of emotional intelligence into teacher preparation curricula can shed light on effective strategies to promote teacher well-being. Additionally, the evolving dynamics of hybrid and remote learning environments offer a rich area for investigation, particularly in understanding their impact on the preparation and professional development of teachers in diverse contexts.

Language teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Norton, 2013; Norton & De Costa, 2018) and related issues represent another pivotal area of inquiry for LTE research. Identity formation, particularly in transnational and multilingual contexts, is intricately tied to teachers' professional practices and their evolving expertise in diverse educational landscapes. What constitutes a "good" language teacher must be understood with reference to wider educational practices, policies, and relations of power (De Costa & Norton, 2017). Investigating how teachers negotiate their identities within varied sociocultural and institutional settings can reveal deeper insights into their agency, resilience, and reflective capacities (Barkhuizen, 2017). Moreover, the intersection of identity with emotions, beliefs, and values provides a nuanced understanding of the factors that shape teachers' professional journeys, ultimately informing more holistic LTE practices (Afreen & Norton, 2024). Of increasing interest is language teachers' "investment" in the language practices of their classrooms and communities and how teacher investment is indexical of identity, capital, and ideology (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2016).

Reflective practice is another area worth exploring in LTE, enabling teachers to critically assess and challenge their assumptions while engaging in continuous learning and unlearning. Since Dewey's seminal contributions, numerous frameworks

have been developed to embed reflective practice within teacher education, with notable applications in LTE (e.g., Johnson, 1998; Rodgers, 2020). One such framework is Farrell's (2015, 2022) holistic reflective practice framework, which models L2 teacher education through five interconnected dimensions: identity, philosophy, principles, theory, and practice, extending reflection beyond the classroom to consider different aspects of teachers' being like their inner lives (Anani Sarab & Mardian, 2023). Future research could explore the long-term impact of reflective practice on teacher development and student outcomes, examine the framework's applicability across diverse contexts, and investigate how emerging technologies can support reflection. Additionally, studies could focus on integrating reflective practices more effectively into teacher preparation programs.

Finally, professional development (Freeman, 2023; Richards & Farrell, 2005) continues to be a cornerstone of effective LTE. With teacher attrition rates for early career teachers at all time highs post pandemic (i.e. in the USA, it is estimated that 40% of all teachers will leave the profession), it becomes vitally important to be able to better prepare language teachers for a smoother transition from their teacher education programs to the reality of their practice in real schools (Farrell, 2025). Recently, Farrell (2024) has proposed, as others have documented (e.g., Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017), that language teacher educators have a crucial role in supporting their graduates beyond initial teacher education, ensuring they not only survive but thrive in their early careers. This involves acting as ongoing mentors, fostering resilience, promoting well-being, and extending the reflective practice processes introduced during teacher training. Future research could explore innovative models of professional development for early career teachers who engage in mentorship networks and reflective inquiry approaches that foster collaborative learning and sustained growth among early career language teachers. By focusing on both pre-service and in-service teacher development, *LTER* can contribute to a deeper understanding of teachers' professional growth and development.

These topics are just a glimpse of the wide-ranging and interconnected areas of inquiry that we hope to feature in *LTER*. While we have highlighted a few key domains, the scope of the journal is not limited to these. We warmly welcome submissions that address any innovative or emerging aspects of LTE, ensuring that the journal remains a dynamic and inclusive platform for advancing research and practice in the field. In the next section, we discuss potential questions that align with these themes and encourage further exploration.

Questions to Consider
Many important questions come to the fore, as we are to explore the aforementioned topics and address key issues in LTE. Among them, some examples include:

Social Justice
1. How can LTE programs integrate social justice principles to prepare teachers for addressing linguistic and cultural inequalities in diverse classrooms?
2. What are language teachers' perceptions of their role in promoting social justice, and how does this influence their pedagogical practices?
3. To what extent do LTE curricula address systemic discrimination, equity, and inclusion issues in multilingual educational contexts?
4. How do pre-service and in-service language teachers navigate and respond to social justice challenges in contexts of linguistic marginalization and educational inequality?
5. What role does critical pedagogy play in shaping language teacher identity and fostering advocacy for social justice in language education?

Professional Development
1. How do professional development programs inform language teachers' reflective practices?
2. What role does peer mentoring play in the professional growth of novice language teachers?
3. How "effective" are online teacher training programs compared to face-to-face sessions?
4. What challenges do in-service language teachers face in integrating AI tools in their teaching practices?
5. How does participating in different social structures and formats enhance language teachers' pedagogical skills?
6. What is the role of reflective teaching portfolios in promoting self-directed professional development?

Identity and Thinking
1. How do language teachers' identities evolve in multicultural and multilingual teaching contexts?
2. What are the key factors influencing novice language teachers' professional identity development?
3. How do teacher beliefs and thinking about "language" align with their classroom practices?
4. How does teaching in a transnational context shape language teachers' professional identity?

5. What is the role of critical incidents in shaping language teachers' identities and pedagogical beliefs?
6. What is the relationship between language learner identity and language teacher identity?
7. To what extent have digital innovations helped to transform language teacher identities?

Classroom Pedagogy

1. How do language teachers perceive the "effectiveness" of task-based language teaching (TBLT) or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)?
2. How do reflective practices influence the development of trainee language teachers?
3. What strategies do teachers use to scaffold language learners' output in multilingual classrooms?
4. How do language teachers address the challenges of teaching pragmatics?
5. How can collaborative reflection improve teachers' instructional strategies?
6. What are the best practices for incorporating culturally responsive teaching in language classrooms?
7. How do teachers of English as a foreign language design lessons to promote critical thinking?
8. How can LTE programs better narrow the perceived gap between theory and practice?

Technology Integration

1. What is the impact of AI tools on language teachers' lesson planning strategies?
2. How do language teachers use technology to support learner autonomy?
3. What challenges do language teachers face in integrating blended learning models?
4. How does virtual reality influence language teachers' approaches to teaching pronunciation?
5. What is the role of mobile-assisted language learning in reshaping teacher roles?

Multilingualism and multiculturalism

1. How can LTE programs prepare teachers to effectively support multicultural and multilingual learners in diverse educational settings?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities language teachers encounter in fostering multiculturalism and multilingualism in monolingual-dominated curricula?
3. How does multilingualism influence language teacher identity, and how can LTE programs address this in their training?

4. What pedagogical strategies are deemed "most effective" in equipping language teachers to leverage students' multilingual repertoires in the classroom?
5. How do teacher beliefs and thinking about multilingualism shape their approaches to language instruction, and how can these beliefs be transformed through LTE?

Assessment and Feedback
1. How do language teachers perceive the role of peer feedback in their professional development?
2. What are the challenges language teachers face in implementing formative assessment?
3. How do language teachers' feedback strategies align with students' learning preferences?
4. How do teacher beliefs about assessment influence their evaluation practices in language classrooms?
5. What is the role of reflective feedback in improving teachers' classroom performance?

Teacher Motivation and Well-being
1. What factors contribute to burnout among language teachers, and how can they be mitigated?
2. How does teacher motivation affect classroom practices in language teaching?
3. What are the coping strategies of language teachers working in under-resourced contexts?
4. How does participation in "professional learning communities" (PLCs) impact teacher well-being?
5. What are the effects of job satisfaction on the retention of language teachers?

Language Policy and Curriculum
1. How does the notion of "native speakerism" (Holliday, 2006) influence the perceptions and practices of language teacher educators in preparing non-native English-speaking teachers?
2. In what ways can LTE programs challenge and deconstruct the ideals of "native speakerism" to promote more inclusive and diverse teaching practices?
3. How do language teachers negotiate the demands of national language policies in their classrooms?
4. What role do language teachers play in curriculum development for bilingual education programs?
5. How do language teachers respond to the inclusion of local languages in the curriculum?

6. What are the implications of standardized testing on language teachers' instructional practices?
7. How do language teachers perceive the "effectiveness" of communicative language teaching policies?

Teacher Research
1. How does engagement in action research enhance language teachers' professional practices?
2. What are the challenges language teachers face in conducting classroom-based research?
3. How does narrative inquiry contribute to understanding the experiences of language teachers?
4. How do language teachers balance their dual roles as practitioners and researchers in the context of LTE?
5. How can autoethnography serve as a transformative tool for teachers to critically reflect on their identity and practice within diverse educational contexts?

Cultural and Sociolinguistic Dimensions
1. How do language teachers address sociolinguistic variations in English in multilingual classrooms?
2. What strategies do language teachers use to promote intercultural competence among learners?
3. How do language teachers navigate the challenges of teaching English as a global language?
4. How do teachers' cultural backgrounds influence their teaching styles in language classrooms?
5. How does classroom cultural diversity shape language teachers' classroom management strategies?

These questions are only a starting point and represent some of the many possibilities for exploring various aspects of LTE. We hope this list provides inspiration and sparks new questions and ideas that align with our audience's interests and research contexts. The interconnected nature of this field allows for countless avenues of inquiry, offering opportunities to explore both established and emerging areas of study.

Call to Action
We invite researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to join us in this endeavor by contributing articles, engaging in discussions, and collaborating on special issues. Whether you are an experienced scholar or a novice researcher, your voice and perspective are invaluable. *LTER* is committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive

environment where diverse ideas and approaches can flourish. We aim to create a vibrant community that welcomes both theory and practice, providing opportunities for meaningful dialogue and shared learning. By connecting global and local perspectives, we hope to highlight innovative solutions and address the pressing challenges faced by language teachers and teacher educators worldwide. Your contributions will not only enrich the academic discourse but also have a lasting impact on the future of LTE.

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ORCID
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4018-7597
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7472-7251
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1033-9860
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7449-3598
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8588-3516

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