

Positioning loving pedagogy in heart of second/foreign language research and practice: Theorization and implementation

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Undoubtedly, teaching a second/foreign language is one of the most emotionally tense professions in the world given the simultaneous interplay of an array of linguistic, psychological, social, cultural, affective and physiological factors. For a long time, cognitive and linguistics perspectives had ruled over L2 education, yet with the rise of a new trend in educational psychology dubbed as “Positive Psychology” (PP) the criticality and power of positive emotions in developing one’s performance, sense of wellbeing and development have gained momentum. Given its emotional essence, L2 education has been fertile ground in the past decade for spreading the seeds of PP. The results of a growing body of research corroborate the impact of caring for and considering EFL/ESL teachers’ and students’ inner states and emotions on their academic performance and success rate. Out of numerous positive emotions proposed by PP, the concept of love has recently gained scholarly attention in language education research and practice. Love has long been and still is a sensitive term to be used in the educational arena due to its cultural and religious connotations. Its usage has been limited to romantic relationships and familial environments. Nevertheless, in the past couple of years some pioneering studies have been carried out in EFL/ESL contexts to break the taboo in using the concept of love in education leading to a new concept known as “loving pedagogy” or “a pedagogy of love”. Based on its theorizations, love can go beyond romantic relationships and encompass professional care and empathy toward students’ feelings and needs in a safe way. To position this line of inquiry in the body of knowledge concerning the connection between emotions and L2 education, theoretical and conceptual studies have been done by Asian researchers to offer a working agenda for researching and practicing loving pedagogy in EFL/ESL classes. The results of several studies indicated that this heart-centered approach to L2 education can generate many positive academic outcomes such as improved motivation, autonomy, agency, well-being, engagement, achievement, self-esteem, critical thinking, academic success, positive interpersonal behaviors, creativity and many more [1-6]. Despite promising insights obtained in this research domain, to date, most of the existing studies have taken either theoretical or correlational approaches to glean data and make contributions. However, empirical and qualitative studies on how to actually apply loving pedagogy in L2 classes are scant in the pertinent literature. To take one of the first steps in this regard, the present study aims to introduce a number of pedagogical practices that EFL/ESL teachers can use to inject loving pedagogy into their classes. Such practices are driven by PP and approaches that care for students’ emotions. Among them, the use of practices that develop EFL/ESL students’ interpersonal communication skills, multi-media literacy, positive classroom rapport and strengths are more penetrating. Based on this study, it is contended that loving pedagogy is an applicable approach to L2 education provided that EFL/ESL teachers are trained and knowledgeable enough to implement it properly. The use of learner-oriented approaches and practices is the main precondition for applying a pedagogy of love in L2 class.

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Given these initiatives the present study can be momentous for EFL/ESL teachers, trainers, students, program designers, language policy-makers and researchers, who can develop their awareness of loving pedagogy and its numerous implications for research and practice.

Keywords: Loving Pedagogy, Positive Psychology, EFL/ESL Teachers, EFL/ESL Students, L2 Education.

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Biography

Ali Derakhshan received his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran. He is currently Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at English Language and Literature Department, Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran. He has published in both accredited international journals (e.g., *Computers and Education*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Language Teaching Research*, *System*, *ELT Journal*, *Current Psychology*, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *Intercultural Pragmatics*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, etc.) and various local journals. His research interests are Teacher Education, Learners' Individual Differences, Interlanguage Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics.

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