

# The Relationship among Language Teacher Immunity, Reflective Teaching, and Work Motivation in EFL Context

Seyed Mohammad Reza Amirian\* 

*Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran*

Tahereh Heydarnejad 

*Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, University of Gonabad, Gonabad, Iran*

Saeed Abbasi-Sosfadi 

*Ph.D. Candidate in Applied Linguistics, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran*

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## Abstract

Teachers have the power to change their students' lives for the better; therefore, teachers should be armed with some skills to be effective. Reflective teaching, as one of these skills, empowers teachers to observe and evaluate themselves. Although research on reflective teaching has a long tradition, little is known about whether it could be a significant predictor of language teacher immunity and work motivation as two important factors determining the success or failure of teachers, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Thus, the present study aimed at examining the possible associations among reflective teaching, language teacher immunity, and work motivation through path analysis. To this end, English Language Teacher Reflective Inventory (ELTRI), Language Teacher Immunity Instrument (LTII), and Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) were administered to 320 Iranian EFL teachers. Data analysis results revealed that teachers with higher reflective teaching practices are more immunized and motivated. Moreover, the significant role of language teacher immunity in work motivation was discovered. The implications of the present study may shed new light on the significance of incorporating reflective approach into teacher development programs as a core subject.

**Keywords:** EFL teachers, Language teacher immunity, Path analysis, Reflective teaching, Work motivation.

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\*Corresponding author's email: [sm.amirian@hsu.ac.ir](mailto:sm.amirian@hsu.ac.ir)

## INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the architects who qualify the future of education. They set the tone of their classrooms, build a healthy environment, nurture students, look for signs of trouble, become role models, and facilitate learning. Thus, the well-being of society depends on having educated, committed, engaged, and responsible teachers who know how to engage students in thinking critically and creatively. Key to the discussion, such critical occupation fraught with potential vicissitudes deserves more attention from different aspects.

In ever-changing and challenging teaching contexts, teachers' reflection contributes to a more critical evaluation of teaching experiences (Richards & Lockhart, 1996), self-awareness, and self-regulation (Akbari, 2007), self-efficacy (Zheng et al., 2022), as well as enhancing resilience (Ayoobiyan & Rashidi, 2021). Furthermore, reflective teaching as a metacognitive skill opens up opportunities for using intuition, insight, and artistry (Hinett, 2002; Shirazizadeh et al., 2019). This vital shield can protect and immune teachers in the face of plights. According to Rudd (2007), reflection as a problem-solving tool provides a significant opportunity for teachers to look back and forth to react in every demanding situation; hence, teacher reflection can facilitate teacher immunity.

The metaphor of teacher immunity, tracing back to Hiver and Dörnyei (2017), is a key on the road to language teachers' professional growth. They describe language teacher immunity as a defensive mechanism that protects teachers against high-intensity chaos and complexities of educational settings. This novel concept has two faces: productive and maladaptive (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). Productive immunity enhances teachers' well-being and functions as a protective armor against stress, failure, burnout, and other negative teachers' conflicts. On the other end of the spectrum, maladaptive immunity, which has crippling consequences, mirrors fossilization in teaching. It is associated with undesirable consequences, such as resistance to change or innovation (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2011). In effect, not being equipped with productive and robust teaching immunity

results in callous teacher resistance and avoidance-oriented behaviors (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017).

As Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) as well as Azari Noughabi, et al. (2022) stipulated, language teachers may not outlast in their profession without being armed with protective immunity. That is, language teacher immunity not only protects teachers against different constraints in the language teaching context but also affords effective teaching and facilitates teacher reflection (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017; Rahmati et al., 2019). In the same vein, teacher reflection as an awareness-raising shield encourages sound teaching practice. Reflective thinking embedded with continuous self-developing processes holds great values that provide higher levels of thinking. Reflection as an informative and evaluative device puts teachers in a situation where they contemplate and reflect on their teaching experiences to maximize teaching effectiveness.

Teacher motivation is another crucial determinant of teachers' effectiveness leading to learners' success (Gobena, 2018; Pelletier et al., 2002). This is because learners are most influenced by the quality of their teachers. Different challenges teachers face in the classroom may lead to teachers' motivation or demotivation. Some factors may improve motivation or may hamper progress and cause a sense of incompetence. When teachers are motivated, they are encouraged to act more productively. That is, motivation reenergizes teachers to survive and function effectively. However, it is less known teacher whether immunity could facilitate or inhibit one of the most important factors determining the success or failure of teachers, i.e., work motivation.

Despite the importance and potential role of reflective teaching, teacher immunity, and work motivation in educational fields, particularly in the domain of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), there remains a paucity of evidence on the extent and direction of the relationship among them and possible influences that they may exert over teaching profession. This study set out to fill in this educational gap by answering the following research questions:

- 1) How does EFL teachers' reflective teaching affect their immunity and work motivation?
- 2) How does EFL teachers' immunity affect their work motivation?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Teacher Immunity

Immunity originates from the Latin word *Immunis*, specifies the resistance condition or exemption from something, and refers to the defensive system that fights against pernicious, undesirable, or detrimental effects of the external environment (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). Immunity, as a known concept in biology, refers to a protective system that activates naturally occurring antibodies and plays down infection through biochemical reactions (Janeway et al. 2005).

According to Hiver (2015), teacher immunity is a defensive and adaptive mechanism dealing with different conflicts experienced in classes. In other words, teacher immunity is an amalgam of key factors: motivation to teach, psychological well-being, and openness to change on one end and teaching pressures, burnout, attrition on the other end (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). For the vitality of the language teacher immunity, Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) emphasized two dimensions of this issue. Firstly, teacher immunity, like biological, immunity functions as a defensive and protective response in an emergency, which helps teachers enhance their teaching effectiveness. Secondly, it shapes teachers' professional identity to protect against future attacks.

Moreover, Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) highlighted the importance of identity, the individuals' thinking, and acting in social contexts in the formation and the function of teacher immunity. Based on Hiver and Dörnyei (2017), immunity is the neglected dimension of language teacher motivation and identity. Identity is a combination of past, present, and future experiences and the ever-shifting interpretations that every person forms of conditions (Benthien, 2017) and forms teachers' effort,

effectiveness, commitment, and psychological well-being (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Furthermore, professional identity is crucial for teachers' motivation and commitment, enthusiasm, effort, and effectiveness (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

In the face of adverse conflicts, language teacher immunity functions in two major forms: productive (positive) and maladaptive (negative). The positive form, the productive immunity, results in hope, commitment, enthusiasm, resilience, and motivation, while the negative form, the maladaptive immunity, similar to its biological parallel, is the cause of apathy, conservatism, cynicism or resistance to change (Hiver, 2015; Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). Leafing through the literature on teacher immunity reveals that the formation of this novel term is based on self-organization theory that is adapted from complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2012). Self-organization refers to a process through which the complete function of a dynamic system alters through the interaction of different parts of that system (Larsen-Freeman, 2012).

Furthermore, Hiver (2015) categorized language teacher immunity into four manifestations: productively immunized, maladaptively immunized, immunocompromised, and partially immunized. Productively immunized refers to a vigorous form of teacher immunity, while maladaptive immunity is the counterproductive form of teacher immunity. Immunocompromised means having not developed any coherent form of teacher immunity and partially immunized refers to halfway features of teacher immunity.

Thus far, there are few empirical studies (Hiver, 2015, 2017; Haseli Songhori et al., 2018; Rahimpour et al., 2020) and only one theoretical study (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017) that have explored the idea of language teacher immunity. In a pioneering study, Hiver (2015) investigated the self-concept and motivational stability of four L2 teachers working across various sectors. He identified different aspects of language teacher immunity via this case study: burnout, attrition, openness to change, teaching efficacy, and motivation to teach (productive function).

In a recent study via a mixed-methods approach, the dominant type of Iranian English teachers and how these teachers might have developed their immunity type were investigated (Haseli Songhori et al., 2018). As their findings show, maladaptive immunity was a dominant type of immunity among Iranian English teachers since their mean scores. Also, content analysis of their interviews revealed that Iranian English teachers followed the four stages of self-organization, namely, triggering, coupling, realignment, and stabilization, in forming their immunity. Through a path-analysis study, Rahimpour et al. (2020) attempted to develop a model on the factors predicting language teacher immunity. In so doing, they utilized the previous literature and proposed a theoretical model in which job insecurity and reflective teaching, as well as four personality traits of emotionality, extroversion, agreeableness, and openness to change, were considered as predictors of language teacher immunity. However, their revised model indicated that in the sample of their study, language teacher immunity is indirectly influenced by agreeableness, extroversion, and emotionality through job insecurity and reflective teaching. They also found that job insecurity negatively affects both reflective teaching and language teacher immunity.

Similarly, Azari Noughabi et al. (2022) focused on the association between autonomy, emotions, engagement, and immunity of experienced in-service teachers in the EFL context of Iran. According to the results of their multiple regression analysis, language teacher immunity could be significantly predicted by teachers' autonomy, emotions, and engagement. Of the three predictors, teacher autonomy was found to be the strongest predictors of experienced EFL teachers' immunity. Consequently, they concluded that the three aforementioned variables must be taken into account in the development of EFL teachers' productive immunity. The evidence presented in this section suggests that, despite its central role in teaching efficiency, language teacher immunity is still an unexplored area of the field that deserves considerable attention. To date, much of the research on language teacher immunity is restricted to the discussions of its

constituents and predictors. Therefore, there seems to be a need to collect data that are more empirical on the role language teacher immunity plays in the success and failure of practitioners, particularly their work motivation. As shown in the literature, language teacher immunity is a neglected dimension in the discussions of teachers' work motivation. It was hypothesized in the present study that productive and maladaptive forms of immunity could have significant influences on EFL teachers' work motivation.

## **Reflective Teaching**

Due largely to the changes in language teachers' professional growth, wisdom, self-awareness, and professional well-being in the post method era, language teaching has been re-conceptualized (Estaji & Dezfoolian, 2018; Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Richards, 2002). Instead of focusing on a set of pre-established, prescriptive teaching methods, teachers are more encouraged to engage in higher-order thinking skills (i.e., critical thinking) and reflective practices.

Reflection as a compass enables teachers to find appropriate solutions to various problems they encounter in the teaching and learning process (Loughran, 1996). The root of reflection in the light of the existing literature traces back to Dewey (1933) and his influential book 'How we think: a re-statement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educational process'. According to Dewey, reflection refers to "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed forms of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it" (p. 9). In an attempt to elaborate more on reflection, Schön (1983) coined two new concepts in reflective thinking: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action happens when teachers confront a problem during teaching practice. On the contrary, reflection-on-action as the most common type of reflection is a posteriori practice of looking back at teaching (Akbari et al., 2010).

Reflection, which is in contrast with impulsive and routine action

(Farrell, 2016), immunize and improve education programs. In the planning phase, reflection contributes to more efficient education programs. In the action phase, reflection arms teachers with a mass of useful information that help them become aware of the class progress. In the evaluation phase, reflection provides an opportunity for teachers to evaluate their own and learners' progress (Hung & Thuy, 2021, Krause, 2004). Put it another way, it is a perfect way through which teachers can collect formative diagnostic feedback about the quality of both teaching and learning. In a similar vein, Farrell (2015) pointed out that reflection takes teachers away from typical method-based behavior and turns them into intelligent and professional teachers who possess more in-depth understanding of teaching. As a means of professional development in teaching, reflection is divided into five components for reflective teaching practices (Akbari et al., 2010). First, the affective component has to do with teachers' reflecting on their learners' affection and emotional responses in the classroom (Estaji & Shafaghi, 2018; Hillier, 2005; Richards & Farrell, 2005). Second, the cognitive construction, the second component improves teachers' performance concerning reflection (Bandura, 1997). Another component, critical cognition, refers to teachers' reflection on the socio-political, moral, and historical context of teaching (Valli, 1990). The practical component, which is believed to be linked with reflective teaching practices, is the last one.

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on the benefits of reflective teaching in foreign language teaching. For instance, through a mixed-method study, Shirazizadeh et al. (2019) indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between Iranian EFL teachers' reflective teaching and resilience. Similarly, Aliakbari et al. (2020) demonstrated that the relationship between job satisfaction, teacher autonomy, and reflective practice is significantly positive. Moreover, Malmir and Mohammadi (2018) found out that reflective teaching is a predictor of teachers' professional success. The beneficial role of reflective teaching in the development of critical thinking abilities and understanding



of possible teaching challenges has also been reported (Farrell, 2016). Furthermore, Azari Noughabi (2022) concluded that the explicit teaching of reflection boosts teachers' reflective practices. In a quite different vein, some scholars have explored the negative relationship reflective teaching might have with teacher burnout (e.g., Rashtchi & Sanayi Mashhour, 2019; Ghasemzadeh et al., 2019).

## **Teacher Work Motivation**

Motivation is a crucial factor in a person's psychological well-being and affects the way individuals behave. Due to its elusive and multifaceted nature, there seems to be no consensus over a unified definition of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). For instance, in Brophy's words motivation is a concept to describe "the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of behavior, especially goal-directed behavior" (Brophy, 2004, p. 3). Along the same line of inquiry, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) considered motivation as an influential artifact that determines why, how long, and how hard people are willing to sustain their activities. Inevitably, teachers' motivation is in close relationship with their effectiveness in the classrooms (Carson & Chase, 2009). That is, teaching effectiveness, which is studied in terms of teaching styles, teaching practice, and instruction behaviors, as well as teachers' approaches to teaching, are all inspired by motivational factors (Butler & Shibaz, 2014).

The well-established theories applied extensively in the study of motivation are as followed: Achievement Goal Theory, Self-efficacy Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory, and Attribution Theory. In achievement goal theory, the role of achieving a sense of competence that activates individuals to acquire certain activities is mirrored (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). The second theoretical perspective, self-efficacy theory, emphasizes the role of people's beliefs about their abilities in achieving success. Self-efficacy is based on the individuals' judgments of his/her capabilities; the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience they have in achieving those goals (Bandura,

1997). Expectancy Value Theory, the third theory that explains teachers' motivation, refers to individuals' expectancy of achievement in a particular task and the values the person puts on the task (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Beliefs of competence are the central focus of this theory. The fourth theory, attribution theory, deals with past successes and failures as significant factors influencing actions in the future; the central focus of this theory is perceived control over competence (Weiner, 1982).

Teacher motivation is a fundamental component to enhance student motivation. In the studies related to the influence of teachers' motivation on students' motivation, self-determination theory (SDT) has been extensively employed. This theory categorizes motivation into three broad types that lie along a continuum: amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002). Amotivation refers to a state in which there is resistance to engage in an activity, a complete lack of motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to self-generated factors such as responsibility, autonomy, competence, and achievement. Extrinsic motivation is affected by external factors such as salary, professional advancement, and promotion.

Several work motivation scales have been developed based on SDT. The newest one (which is used in this study), the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS), was validated in seven languages and nine countries measures seven factors (amotivation, material external regulation, social external regulation, introjected regulation, identified, intrinsic motivation, and external regulation (Gagné et al., 2015). A large and growing body of literature has been published on motivation. The concept has been investigated from different aspects and following different theories. However, far too little attention has been paid to how language teachers' work motivation is affected by their reflective practice and immunity. Put it differently, there is still very little scientific understanding of the predictors of language teachers' work motivation. Therefore, the present study aims at filling the gap by uncovering the possible influences of reflective teaching and language teacher immunity

on work motivation, which plays a very significant role in the success and failure of EFL teachers.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Although the literature on the merits of reflective teaching in the field of TEFL is rather ample and convincing, there seems to be a lack of sufficient evidence on the extent and direction of its relationship with work motivation and language teacher immunity. In other words, much less is known about how reflective teaching influences work motivation and language teacher immunity in the EFL context of Iran. Hence, the present study aimed at filling this gap via path analysis.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

The participants of this study are 320 Iranian EFL teachers teaching at intermediate to upper-intermediate levels in different cities of Iran. The participants were selected following convenience or opportunity sampling procedures, and they were ensured that their responses were entirely anonymous. To ensure generalizability, it was attempted to consider the following criteria in selecting the participants: variability in age groups, years of teaching experience, variability in genders, and variability in cities where teachers work. The teachers' profile goes as follows: 320 participants aged between 25 and 48 with 2 to 24 years of teaching experience. Out of 320 teachers, 172 were females and 138 were males from different socio-economic backgrounds.

### **Instrumentation**

#### ***English Language Teacher Reflective Inventory (ELTRI)***

The English Language Teacher Reflective Inventory (ELTRI) proposed by Akbari et al. (2010) is an instrument with 29 items comprises 5 sub-

components on a 5-point response scale: practical, cognitive, learner (affective), meta-cognitive, and critical elements (see Appendix 1). In their study, Akbari et al. (2010) reported acceptable validity and reliability of ELTRI. To measure the internal consistency of the reflective teaching questionnaire used for this study, Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated and reported to be .895. The reliability of each sub-component was as following: practical (7 items;  $\alpha = .786$ ), cognitive, learner (affective) (7 items;  $\alpha = .875$ ), meta-cognitive (7 items;  $\alpha = .774$ ), and critical elements (7 items;  $\alpha = .886$ ) that is an acceptable reliability index for each sub-component.

### ***Language Teacher Immunity Instrument (LTII)***

Language Teacher Immunity Instrument (LTII) designed and validated by Hiver (2017) was used to assess the participants' immunity. This instrument was composed of 39 items on a 6-point response scale (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree). Based on the findings of Hiver (2017), the validity and reliability of LTII were acceptable. LTII includes 7 subscales (See Appendix 1) and in the present study they presented acceptable internal consistency as following: Teaching self-efficacy (7 items;  $\alpha = .812$ ), Burnout (5 items;  $\alpha = .879$ ), Resilience (5 items;  $\alpha = .824$ ), Attitudes toward teaching (5 items;  $\alpha = .859$ ), Openness to change (6 items;  $\alpha = .796$ ), Classroom affectivity (6 items;  $\alpha = .865$ ), and Coping (5 items;  $\alpha = .787$ ). The total Cronbach alpha of this questionnaire was .889, which is an acceptable reliability index for the scale.

### ***The Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS)***

The Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS; Gagné et al., 2010) is a scale with 19 items rooted in self-determination theory (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The MWMS includes six sub-scales on a 7-point Likert scale: Amotivation (3 items), Extrinsic Material regulation (3 items), Extrinsic social regulation (3 items), Introjected regulation (4 items), Identified regulation (3 items), and Intrinsic motivation (3 items) (See Appendix 1). In

a cross-contextual analysis, Gagné et al. (2014) evidenced acceptable validity and reliability of MWMS. The total Cronbach alpha of this questionnaire was .892, which is an acceptable reliability index for the scale. The reports of Cronbach alpha for each of the subscales was acceptable: Amotivation ( $\alpha = .793$ ), Extrinsic Material regulation ( $\alpha = .811$ ), Extrinsic social regulation ( $\alpha = .768$ ), Introjected regulation ( $\alpha = .819$ ), Identified regulation ( $\alpha = .824$ ), and Intrinsic motivation ( $\alpha = .784$ ).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The process of data collection was started in February and ended in December, 2019. The questionnaires were distributed both electronically through a web-based platform and in paper and pencil format. To receive reliable data, we acquainted the participants with the aims of the instruments and ensured that strict confidentiality would be maintained in all respects. Moreover, numerical coding was applied and the questionnaires were answered anonymously by the participants in 20 minutes. They were merely asked to provide their demographic information including gender, age, teaching experience, and educational level. To motivate the participants, they were given a chance to receive feedback on their responses.

### **Data Analysis**

The reliability values of the questionnaires were checked by Cronbach's alpha formula. To test the normality distributions of the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was utilized. Further, descriptive statistics were used to describe the data. Lastly, as the data were normally distributed, Linear structural relations (Lisrel) 8.80 was employed to analyze the data.

## **RESULTS**

In the following, the results of the statistical analysis computed on the variables are reported to gauge the possible association among reflective

teaching, language teacher immunity, and work motivation. The descriptive statistics of Iranian EFL teachers' reflective teaching (ELTR), Language Teacher Immunity (LTI), and Multidimensional Work Motivation (MWM) are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics

<b>Inventory</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>ELTR</b>	320	3.756	0.772	1.414	4.897
<b>LTI's Subscales:</b>					
<b>Teaching self-efficacy</b>	320	4.212	1.086	1.200	6.000
<b>Resilience</b>	320	4.443	0.907	1.400	6.000
<b>Attitudes toward teaching</b>	320	4.403	1.034	1.200	6.000
<b>Coping</b>	320	4.499	1.055	1.200	6.000
<b>Openness to change</b>	320	4.166	1.065	1.167	6.000
<b>Classroom affectivity</b>	320	3.840	1.102	1.000	6.000
<b>Burn out</b>	320	3.820	1.014	1.167	5.833
<b>MWM 's Subscales</b>					
<b>Intrinsic motivation</b>	320	5.528	1.089	1.670	7.000
<b>Identified regulation</b>	320	5.141	1.062	2.000	7.000
<b>Introjected regulation</b>	320	5.155	1.128	2.000	7.000
<b>Extrinsic regulation-social</b>	320	5.144	1.151	1.670	7.000
<b>Extrinsic regulation-material</b>	320	5.097	1.057	1.330	7.000
<b>Amotivation</b>	320	5.018	1.126	1.670	7.000

According to Table 1, the mean score of English Language Teacher Reflective Teaching is  $M = 3.756$ . Furthermore, among Language Teacher Immunity subscales, coping ( $M = 4.499$ ,  $SD = 1.055$ ) and resilience ( $M = 4.443$ ,  $SD = 0.907$ ) show the highest mean scores. The other subcomponents get the following mean score respectively: Attitudes toward teaching ( $M = 4.403$ ,  $SD = 1.034$ ), Teaching self-efficacy ( $M = 4.212$ ,  $SD = 1.065$ ), Openness to change ( $M = 4.166$ ,  $SD = 1.065$ ), Classroom affectivity ( $M = 3.840$ ,  $SD = 1.102$ ), and Burn out ( $M = 3.820$ ,  $SD = 1.014$ ). Moreover, among Multidimensional Work Motivation subcomponents, Intrinsic

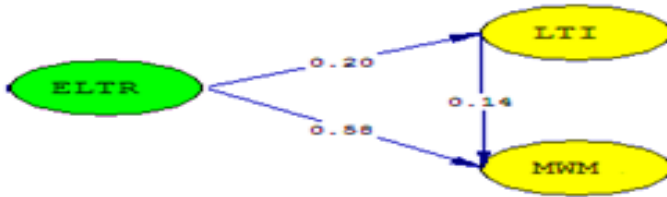
motivation ( $M = 5.528$ ,  $SD = 1.089$ ) presents the highest mean score and the rest are as follows: Introjected regulation ( $M = 5.155$ ,  $SD = 1.128$ ), Extrinsic regulation-social ( $M = 5.144$ ,  $SD = 1.151$ ), Identified regulation ( $M = 5.141$ ,  $SD = 1.062$ ), Extrinsic regulation-material ( $M = 5.097$ ,  $SD = 1.057$ ), and Amotivation ( $M = 5.018$ ,  $SD = 1.126$ ).

To check normality distributions of the variables, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was utilized. Based on the results, the data were normally distributed ( $LTI = .969$ ,  $ELTR = 1.257$ ,  $MWM = .757$ ), therefore it can be concluded that the parametric methods can be applied for testing the related research hypotheses. In this regard, the LISREL 8.80 statistical package was applied to test the structural relations in the proposed model. To evaluate the model fit, the chi-square magnitude, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the normed fit index (NFI) were employed. Table 2 presents the acceptable criteria for fit indices.

**Table 2:** Fit indices

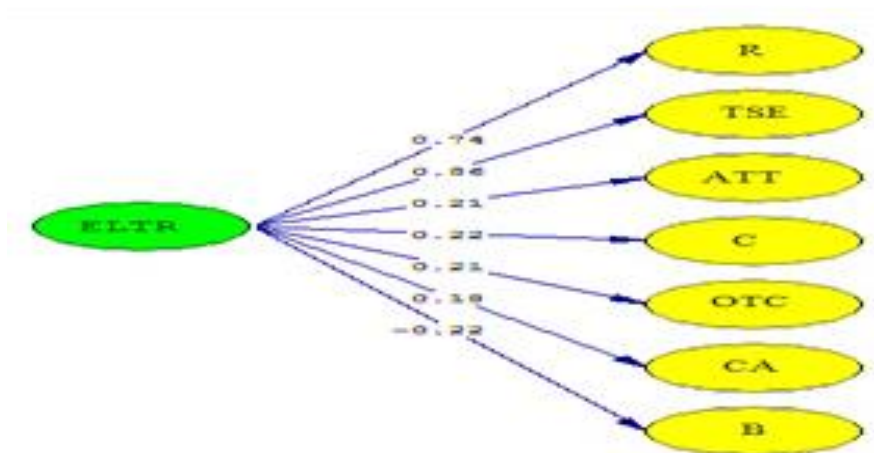
<b>Model</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chi-square <math>\chi^2</math></b>	2506.2	363.84	689.26
<b>Chi-square/df ratio</b>	2.80	2.75	2.86
<b>Df</b>	895	132	246
<b>RMSEA</b>	0.075	0.074	0.075
<b>CFI</b>	0.91	0.92	0.94
<b>NFI</b>	0.92	0.93	0.92

Based on figure 1 (model 1), ELTR has significantly positive effects on LTI and MWM. Also, the influential role of LTI on MWM was concluded. That is, ELTR significantly and positively influences LTI ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $t = 2.91$ ) and MWM ( $\beta = .58$ ,  $t = 9.45$ ). This also applies for the influential role of LTI on MWM ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $t = 2.37$ ). In what follows, the detailed schematic representation of model 1 is shown in model 2 and model 3.



**Figure 1:** Path coefficient values for ELTR, LTI, and MWM (Model 1)

In figure 2 (model 2), the significant impact of ELTR (English Language Teacher Reflective Teaching) on LTI's (Language Teacher Immunity) subcomponents are illustrated. As it is shown, ELTR had a significant positive effect on Resilience (R;  $\beta = 0.74$ ,  $t = 10.57$ ), Teaching Self-efficacy (TSE;  $\beta = 0.86$ ,  $t = 12.36$ ), Attitudes toward Teaching (ATT;  $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $t = 3.23$ ), Coping (C;  $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $t = 3.5$ ), Openness to Change (OTC;  $\beta = 0.21$ ,  $t = 3.35$ ), Classroom affectivity (CA;  $\beta = 0.18$ ,  $t = 2.65$ ). Yet, the impact of ELTR on Burnout is negative (B;  $\beta = -0.22$ ,  $t = -3.32$ ).

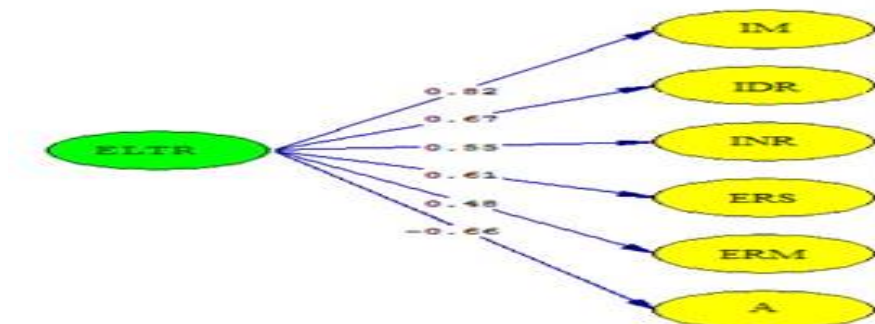


**Figure 2:** Path coefficient values for the effect of ELTR on LTI ' subscales (Model 2)

According to figure 3 (model 3), ELTR (English Language Teacher Reflective Teaching) influences MWM (Multidimensional Work Motivation) subscales positively as following: Intrinsic Motivation (IM;  $\beta = 0.82$ ,  $t = 7.6$ ), Identified Regulation (IDR;  $\beta = 0.67$ ,  $t = 8.59$ ), Introjected



Regulation (INR;  $\beta = 0.55$ ,  $t = 2.00$ ), Extrinsic Regulation-Social (ERS;  $\beta = 0.61$ ,  $t = 7.24$ ), Extrinsic Regulation-Material (ERM;  $\beta = 0.48$ ,  $t = 6.20$ ), but about Amotivation, the influence is negative (A;  $\beta = -0.66$ ,  $t = -7.28$ ). To investigate the relationship among LTI, ELTR, and MWM, a Pearson product-moment correlation was run (Table 3).



**Figure 3:** Path coefficient values for the effect of ELTR on MWM ' subscales (Model 3)

As seen in Table 3, ELTR correlated significantly positively with LTI ( $r = .339$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Likewise, the relationship between ELTR and MWM is significantly positive: ( $r = .370$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that English language teacher reflective approach plays a significant role in promotion of language teacher immunity and work motivation.

**Table 3.** The correlation coefficients among LTI, ELTR, and MWM

	LTI	ELTR	MWM
LTI	1		
ELTR	.339**	1	
MWM	.370**	.485**	1

## DISCUSSION

As stated earlier, the present study aimed at delving into the possible influences of Iranian EFL teachers' reflectivity on their immunity and work

motivation. Moreover, attempts were made to investigate the effects of language teacher immunity on work motivation as an unexplored area. To do so, 320 Iranian EFL teachers were recruited from different cities of Iran. The results demonstrated that, generally, reflective teaching is a significant predictor for both EFL teachers' immunity and work motivation (see model 1). That is, reflective and critical analysis of teaching practice can lead to productive teacher immunity, and this in turn, brings about hope, commitment, enthusiasm, resilience, and motivation (Hiver, 2015; Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). On the other hand, lack of reflection may give rise to maladaptive teacher immunity, which is debilitating in nature. Therefore, teachers are more likely to survive in the face of chaos and complexities of educational settings if they opt for more critical and reflective approaches. These findings are in line with those of Rahimpour et al. (2020), who found a close theoretical relationship between reflective teaching and language teacher immunity. However, the present study provided a more transparent picture of how significantly different sub-factors of language teacher immunity could be predicted by reflective teaching. Furthermore, unlike some recent studies (e.g., Rahimpour et al., 2020), this investigation was not merely restricted to investigating the hypothesized predictors of language teacher immunity; rather, it also focused on how immunity can predict EFL teachers' work motivation, which is at the heart of success in foreign language teaching. It would also be interesting to see how immunity may correlate with other new and unexplored factors such as emo-educational divorce (Pishghadam, 2022), and what effects such correlations can have on teachers' motivation at work.

A detailed inspection of the model revealed that reflective teaching has significant positive effects on teachers' self-efficacy, resilience, attitude toward teaching, coping, openness to change, and classroom affectivity (see model 2). What these results suggest is that since reflective teachers view teaching as a dynamic, situated, and multifaceted phenomenon in which they utilize coping strategies that increase perseverance and productive immunization, they are able to show remarkable resilience and are not

defeated by the difficulties. As a result, these teachers are capable of adjusting their teaching relative to the changes and challenges they face. The potential of this approach is tremendous in that it helps teachers to form a positive attitude toward teaching and thus develop efficacious beliefs in their capabilities of successfully undertaking various teaching tasks. Although numerous studies have been published on the benefits of reflective teaching in the domain of foreign language teaching (e.g., Ayoobiyan & Rashidi, 2021; Farrell, 2016; Li et al., 2022; Shirazizadeh et al., 2019), much of them considered its effects on some dependent variables separately and thus little was known about how it might influence the novel construct of language teacher immunity as a composite variable. This study brought to light a comprehensive picture of how each single constituent of language teacher immunity is under the influence of EFL teachers' reflection. Another significant output regarding the influences of reflective teaching on language teacher immunity is its negative relationship with teacher burnout. The more EFL teachers plan, monitor, regulate, and evaluate their teaching strategies, the less chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, feeling of ineffectiveness, and lack of accomplishment they experience. This argument is consistent with other existing studies on the negative relationship between reflective teaching and teacher burnout (e.g., Ghasemzadeh et al., 2019; Li et al., 2022; Rashtchi & Sanayi Mashhour, 2019).

With regard to the effects of reflective teaching on work motivation, this study indicated that the two variables are significantly related. To be precise, it was found out that EFL teachers' engagement in reflective practices leads to a marked increase in work motivation. A possible explanation for this improvement might be that when teachers critically and reflectively analyze their practices, they are able to identify their teaching strengths and weaknesses, and this in turn, aids them in making significant progress toward a more successful practice. As a result, they develop a highly positive motivation toward their teaching profession. Somewhat similar results can be traced in the study by Aliakbari et al. (2020), where they reported a positive relationship between teachers' reflective practice,

job satisfaction, and teacher autonomy; however, no evidence was directly mentioned regarding teachers' work motivation. As can be seen in model 3, among the sub-components of work motivation measured in this study, amotivation is negatively influenced by reflective teaching. Hence, it could be conceivably hypothesized that reflective teaching drastically decreases teachers' resistance to engage in different teaching activities through constant monitoring, planning, and evaluation procedures that enable them to overcome barriers. Moreover, the model demonstrated that teachers' reflectivity affects intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, and extrinsic regulation both significantly and positively. These findings add to the rapidly expanding discussions of the role reflective teaching plays in the success and failure of EFL teachers.

Interestingly, work motivation was discovered to be significantly affected by language teacher immunity as well. According to these data, it can be inferred that quite apart from its direct influences, reflective teaching appears to bring about some significant variations in work motivation indirectly through teacher immunity. That is to say, teachers' engagement in reflective practice can positively guide actions and responses to the contextual demands of their teaching. In line with this finding, Namaziandost et al. (2023) provide evidence that engaged teachers are those who have high levels reflective teaching and emotion regulation. Through reflection, teachers can monitor, evaluate, and productively immunize their teaching and form a strong sense of self-assessment and self-regulation in acquiring a professional identity that serves as a rigorous aid to survive in the face of maladaptive immunity. Consequently, they can develop a relatively positive work motivation that paves the way for stability in the teaching profession. Therefore, teacher immunity is an integral part of a language teacher's professional identity (Hiver, 2017). That is, language teachers are subject to an alliance of factors in teacher immunity, including teaching efficacy, motivation to teach, psychological well-being, openness to change, and its dark side resilience from teaching pressures, burnout, and attrition (Hiver, 2015), all have crucial roles in language teachers' identity,

success, and motivation to work.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Although it is generally accepted that reflective teaching has numerous benefits for language teachers, little is known about how it interacts with the two other important constructs, i.e., language teacher immunity and work motivation. Furthermore, the effect of immunity on work motivation in an EFL context has not been sufficiently investigated. Considering these issues, the main goal of the current study was to determine the possible association among reflective teaching, language teacher immunity, and work motivation. This investigation highlighted the significant contribution of reflective teaching to language teacher immunity and work motivation, and provide strong empirical confirmation that through reflection, teachers can ameliorate their practice in the face of teaching chaos and complexities. This leads to a positive attitude toward teaching profession which heightens success instead of failure. In addition, the present study showed that the effect of immunity on work motivation is also significant. Taken together, these findings suggest a vital role for reflective teaching in promoting productive immunity and work motivation.

The implications drawn from the current study assist language teacher educators in developing more productive pre-service and in-service programs by incorporating the findings like these into their studies. Besides, language teachers are highly recommended to take action to resolve to develop a reflective approach to language teaching so that they can be aware of strengths and weaknesses of both teaching and learning. Last but not least, policy makers are invited to consider these results in order to have a comprehensive picture of factors that contribute to the success and failure of teachers and programs. Since language teacher immunity is relatively a new construct, educators, teachers, and policy makers need to become aware of its central role in the field. Therefore, studies like the present investigation provide useful insights for those involved in language teaching profession.

The results of the present study need to be interpreted in light of the following two limitations which are worth studying in the future. Firstly, this study lacks qualitative, data-driven conceptualization of teachers and educators' perspectives; thus, future investigations can take more mixed-method approaches to inspect the studied association here more precisely. Secondly, demographic variables such as teachers' cultural and socioeconomic background, major, mastery experience, and pedagogical training were not explored in the current study. Future research can explore the possible impacts of demographic variables on language teacher immunity, reflective teaching, and work motivation. Furthermore, like any other academic study, the results of the current work should be replicated in other EFL contexts so that trainers, educators, and practitioners have more promising and abundant evidence to take such results into account. It is also recommended that future investigations hypothesize a theoretical model in which the possible interrelationships among the studied constructs here and newer concepts, such as emo-educational divorce (Pishghadam, 2022; Pishghadam et al., 2022) could be inspected. It seems that delving into such correlations particularly the ones among language teacher immunity, motivation, and emo-educational divorce can shed light on the causes of teachers' demotivation and burnout. Researchers are invited to take these suggestions into account and make contributions to a better understanding of teacher-related factors.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### **ORCID**

Seyed Mohammad Reza Amirian



<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3719-3902>

Tahereh Heydarnejad



<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0011-9442>

Saeed Abbasi-Sosfadi



<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5901-8315>

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## **APPENDIX: Sample items of each sub-component of the instruments.**

### **The English Language Teacher Reflective Inventory (ELTRI):**

Practical (e.g., “I ask my peers to observe my teaching and comment on my teaching performance.”), cognitive (e.g., “I talk to my students to learn about their family backgrounds, hobbies, interests, and abilities.”), learner (affective) (e.g., “I think about my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher.”), metacognitive (e.g., “I think about the ways gender, social class, and race influence my students’ achievements.”), critical elements (e.g., “I think about instances of social injustice in my own surroundings and try to discuss them in my classes.”).

### **The Language Teacher Immunity Instrument (LTI):**

Teaching Self-efficacy (e.g., “I feel I am positively influencing my students’ lives through my teaching.”) (7 items), Burnout (e.g., “There are days at school when I feel vulnerable.”) (5 items), resilience (e.g., “Failures double my motivation to succeed as a teacher.”) (5 items), Attitudes toward Teaching (e.g., “Teaching is my life and I can’t imagine giving it up.”) (5 items), Openness to Change (e.g., “I get frustrated when my work is unfamiliar and outside my comfort zone as a teacher.”) (6 items), Classroom Affectivity (e.g., “Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me in the classroom than bad.”) (6 items), and Coping (e.g., “When things get really stressful, I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.”) (5 items).

### **The Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS)**

Amotivation (e.g., I do little because I don’t think this work is worth putting efforts into.), Extrinsic Material regulation (e.g., Because others will respect me more (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients ...)), Extrinsic social regulation (e.g., Because others offer me greater job security if I put enough effort in my job (e.g., employer, supervisor ...)), Introjected regulation (e.g., Because otherwise I will feel ashamed of myself.), Identified regulation (e.g., Because I personally consider it important to put efforts in this job.), and Intrinsic motivation (e.g., Because what I do in my work is exciting.).