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# Justice and Injustice in English as a Foreign Language Classes: Analysis of Teachers' Conceptual Metaphors

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## Abstract

Classroom justice, an under-investigated topic in language education, has been brought under focus in this study. Employing a qualitative research design, we took conceptual metaphor as both the theoretical framework and data analysis tool. Accordingly, 51 Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers were selected via snowball sampling to express their beliefs about (in)justice by creating a metaphor/simile. The aim was to discover EFL teachers' conceptualization of metaphors of classroom (in)justice. The participants took a metaphor completion task (e.g. classroom justice is like …… because ……). Data analysis involved gathering, inductively coding, and classifying linguistic metaphors. Three elements were identified for each response, namely, the topic, vehicle, and ground. Then, conceptual categories were formed based on thematically grouping vehicles. Findings indicated reflection of the multidimensional conceptualization of classroom justice based on the organizational justice theory in many created metaphors; reference to emotional, psychological, and learning consequences of (in)justice in many other metaphors; and many pairs of opposite metaphors. These findings have implications for teacher education programs to employ metaphor as a useful tool to promote teachers' reflection about classroom (in)justice; raise awareness of second/foreign language (L2) teachers about both issues of justice and injustice and their potential consequences for students' wellbeing and educational outcomes; and train teachers for practical strategies of implementing justice principles in the instructional context as a way to address their professional development needs for becoming a quality L2 teacher and acting fairly in classroom.

***Keywords*:** Conceptual metaphors, classroom (in)justice, EFL teachers, teachers' beliefs, L2 teacher education

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## INTRODUCTION

Teachers' enactment of justice in their behavior toward students is one of the primary concerns students bring into classroom (Moore et al., 2008). This is because teaching, as a moral enterprise (Sabbagh, 2009), involves instruction of the subject matter along with democratic values of equality, fairness, and justice (Pnevmatikos & Trikkaliotis, 2012). Enactment of justice, both as an educational and a moral issue, can promote students' positive educational outcomes like learning, motivation, engagement, wellbeing, achievement, psychological need satisfaction, sense of agency, interest in a given subject, and emotional and social development (e.g. Berti et al., 2010; Chory, 2023; Grazia et al., 2021; Holmgren & Bolkan, 2014; Kaufmann, & Tatum, 2018; Molinari & Mameli, 2018; Peter et al., 2016), while its violation can bring about such adverse effects on students as engagement in cheating, bullying, academic disengagement, aggression, anger, and frustration (Chory et al., 2017; Horan et al., 2010; Lemons & Seaton, 2011; Rasooli, DeLuca et al., 2019; Santinello et al., 2011).

Following the early assertions about the necessity and dearth of research on justice in education (Tyler, 1987; Walzer, 1983), more than four decades ago, some scholars initiated studying justice, including teachers' just behavior, in the instructional context (e.g. Colquitt, 2001; Cooper et al., 1982; Chory-Assad, 2002; Dalbert & Maes, 2002; Oppenheimer, 1989; Tata, 1999; Tyler & Caine, 1981). One perspective toward classroom justice is the social psychology of justice, specifically the organizational justice theory (Kazemi, 2016; Resh & Sabbagh, 2009), conceiving justice to be enacted or violated at three dimensions of classroom distribution (e.g. grade, feedback, praise), procedures (e.g. grading criteria, attendance policy), and teacher-student interactions.

While classroom justice was initially researched and studied in the USA (Chory, 2023), over the past 20 years there has been an extensive and flourishing body of research on it in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and other parts of the globe (e.g. Bempechat et al., 2013; Čiuladienė & Račelytė, 2016;

Di Battista et al., 2014; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a; Yan, 2021). It should be, however, noted that the majority of these studies have adopted a quantitative methodology, with only few studies engaging in qualitative explorations of the topic (e.g. Bempechat et al., 2013; Chory et al., 2017; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a; Čiuladienė & Račelytė, 2016; Rasooli, DeLuca et al., 2019). Additionally, the majority of the existing literature has attended to students' perspectives toward classroom (in)justice (see Rasooli et al., 2018), and teachers' beliefs have been only studied recently in few investigations in general (e.g. Rasegh et al., 2022) and second/foreign language (L2) (e.g. Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a, 2021b) education.

Studying instructional phenomena, including classroom justice, from teachers' perspective is essential because teachers' conceptions can influence their instructional behaviors (Fives & Gill, 2015). Likewise, as Freeman (2002) posits, it is necessary to uncover the structure of teachers' conceptions if we aim to enhance their professional effectiveness. To date, the few studies exploring teachers' perceptions and experiences of classroom (in)justice have used instruments of closed/open-ended questionnaire, interview, or critical incident analysis (e.g. Berti et al., 2010; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a; Gasser et al., 2018; Sonnleitner & Kovacs, 2020). Hardly any study has used metaphor analysis to uncover teachers' conceptions about (in)justice. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1999), one of the common ways that researchers can elicit participants' conceptualizations about a phenomenon is by asking them to create metaphors. Teachers' creation of metaphors is helpful as it can raise their consciousness about a classroom problem, potentially resulting in changes in their behavior (Wan et al., 2011). Furthermore, metaphors are integral to one's conceptual system, having a prominent role in one's language, beliefs, and reasoning (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003; Reddy, 1979).

In the current study, we explored what metaphors a group of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers used to reveal their beliefs about justice and its violation in their specific language instruction context. The logic for choosing this context for studying classroom justice is that effective L2

learning and instruction are built on pillars of strong teacher-student communication and positive relationships since language is both the ends and means in this context (Mercer & Gkonou, 2020). Teacher classroom justice can be instantiated in teacher communication behaviors, significantly contributing to building desirable relationships and outcomes in L2 education (Chory, Zhaleh, & Estaji, 2022; Yang, 2021). L2 classes are inherently more social and interpersonal than other subject matter classes, with constant teacher-student communication and relationship being integral to effectiveness (Farrell, 2014; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). This relational nature of L2 learning and instruction puts a heavy burden on teachers to be just in their communication with and treatment of language learners (Yang, 2021).

In sum, despite its importance, classroom justice has been a neglected and under-researched issue in L2 education, and it has been extended to this realm only very recently through the few works conducted in L2 instructional settings (e.g. Chory et al., 2022; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a, 2021b; Lankiewicz, 2014; Yang, 2021; Sun, 2022). Accordingly, to expand this fledgling line of L2 classroom justice research, on the one hand, and use the potential of metaphors to reveal teachers' beliefs about enactment and violation of justice in the instructional context, this qualitative paper attempts to explore a group of EFL teachers' beliefs about classroom (in)justice by taking conceptual metaphor as both the theoretical framework and data analysis tool.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Metaphor Analysis to Reveal Teachers' Conceptions about Language Teaching and Learning

Responses to interviews/questionnaires with predetermined questions for investigating one's conceptions about language learning/teaching have been criticized by researchers like Barcelos (2003) as they elicit beliefs within an unnatural discourse, disjointed from actual social contexts. To resolve this issue, the discursive research on beliefs suggest to elicit stretches of writing/talk from individuals, involving analysis of causal explanations about

a phenomenon as really occurred in discourse (Kalaja, 2003). One potential way to obtain such data (i.e. language in context) from language classroom informants is metaphors (Oksanen, 2005). Metaphor refers to a comparison "that cannot be taken literally" (Bartel, 1983, p. 3). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), many instances of our actions, language use, and conceptualizations are "metaphorically structured" (p. 5). Through using metaphors, individuals can think, frame their world, and understand and interpret events (East, 2009; Oxford et al., 1998). A conceptual metaphor involves a metaphor/simile used to compare/liken a phenomenon, concept, or schema to a more palpable one (Levin & Wagner, 2006). Thus, through metaphor construction, properties of one phenomenon are mapped into another, with the aim of better conveying meaning and enhancing understanding (Kovecses, 2010).

Metaphor analysis in language education has been mainly based on, first, Vygotsky's idea of interaction between thought and language (e.g. metaphor) (Vygotsky, 1978), and second, the conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003). Accordingly, metaphors are considered mediational instruments, making interpretations of individuals' accounts of a particular social situation possible. Conceptual metaphors can provide researchers with data about what language teachers think, believe, and know (Alarcón et al., 2019). Teachers' construction of metaphors is potentially a liberating experience as through metaphors, teachers can recognize where they stand in their profession (Saban, 2010). Metaphor is a valuable tool in aiding teachers to reflect upon their practice and enhance their professional effectiveness (Low, 2003). In the same vein, once teachers explain why they chose a particular metaphor, they are prompted to reflect on the subject of the metaphor during or after their teaching (Seung et al., 2015). Analyzing metaphors can result in consciousness-raising about implicit assumptions, reflection on practice, and change in role and performance (Cameron & Maslen, 2010; Tobin, 1990; Villamil, 2002).

Conceptual metaphors have been used in the ELT context during the last four decades to explore language students'/teachers' beliefs about

teaching/learning (e.g. Alghbban et al., 2017; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Low, 2003; Oxford et al., 1998), EFL teachers and their roles (e.g. Cortazzi et al., 2015; Parvaresh, 2008; Villamil, 2000; Wan et al., 2011), and EFL teacher professional identity (Zhu et al., 2022). For instance, Oxford et al. (1998) attempted to explore metaphors on the concept of teacher. They compared metaphors created by L2 teachers and students and those found in educational books and research papers. Their results revealed that the diverse and contradictory metaphors created by the participants indicated discrepancies in their basic philosophical vantage points regarding the teacher's role and the nature of L2 education.

In a case study conducted in Iran, Parvaresh (2008) unraveled metaphorical conceptualizations of an EFL learner about his English class and teacher. Findings of the study showed that the way this participant metaphorically conceptualized his language class, learning, and teacher, was somehow the same over time which might imply the influence of the schooling system on his belief system. Likewise, Wan et al. (2011) studied metaphors created by students and teachers about EFL teacher roles. In this study, using metaphor as a cognitive tool helped bring to light inconsistencies between teachers' and students' interpretations of teachers' roles. Moreover, engagement in teacher-student interactions over the metaphors enabled both groups to take a step towards settling their belief conflicts and increased teachers' desire to improve their instructional practice.

To sum up, empirical evidence has suggested that metaphor analysis is an effective tool to unravel educational stakeholders' underlying views and beliefs about a range of educational notions and concepts (Bullough, 2015). Nevertheless, it has not been employed to better understand teachers' views about the critical issue of classroom (in)justice. This gap in the line of metaphor analysis research has prompted the conduction of the present study.

## Classroom Justice in L2 Education

To date, research on justice and fairness in L2 education has been mainly underpinned by theories about power dynamics (i.e. following Freire,

1970/2005), translanguaging (e.g. Garcia & Wei, 2013), the impact of language tests (e.g. Shohamy, 2022), equity, diversity, and inclusion (Hiratsuka et al., 2023). Nevertheless, very recently the concept of classroom justice, informed by the organizational justice theory, has been introduced in L2 education research (e.g. Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a, 2021b; Lankiewicz, 2014), which can provide a multidimensional account of students'/teachers' practices, experiences, and perceptions of (in)justice in the assessment, teaching, learning, and interactional domains of L2 classes. The organizational justice theory's real value lies in using a social psychology perspective and trying to uncover individuals' perceptions and experiences about justice, as justice is considered subjective in nature (Kazemi, 2008).

Based on this view, classroom justice involves three main elements of dimensions, principles, and domains (Rasooli, DeLuca et al., 2019). To start with, classroom justice involves three dimensions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Berti et al., 2010). Distributive justice concerns individuals' perceptions of fairness in allocating outcomes and resources (e.g. grade, feedback, attention) in the class. Procedural justice relates to individuals' perceptions of fairness in classroom processes and procedures (e.g. syllabus design, grading criteria). Interactional justice pertains to individuals' perceptions of fairness in teacher-student informational and interpersonal communication (Chory, 2007; Di Battista et al., 2014; Horan et al., 2010).

Each of these classroom justice dimensions is deemed to be realized through a number of justice principles, which are benchmarks/standards through which fairness is evaluated (Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021b). It is posited that judgments of teacher fairness hinge upon the degree to which they are perceived to implement or breach principles of justice (Rasooli, Zandi et al., 2019). Accordingly, distributive justice involves principles of *need* (i.e. distribution based on individuals' needs), *equality* (i.e. the same distribution for all), and *equity* (i.e. distribution based on individuals' contributions; Adams, 1965; Deutsch, 1975).

Procedural justice is guided by eight principles of

*voice/representativeness* (i.e. establishing procedures after hearing students' concerns), *bias suppression* (i.e. making decisions impartially), *reasonableness* (i.e. establishing sensible procedures and rules), *transparency* (i.e. clarity of rules or procedures to all), *accuracy* (i.e. procedure establishment based on accurate information), *correctability* (i.e. setting correctible standards), *ethicality* (i.e. setting rules based on moral standards), and *consistency* (i.e. invariable implementation of procedures; Cropanzano et al., 2015; Rasooli, DeLuca et al., 2019). Likewise, interactional justice is realized through principles of *caring*, *respect*, and *propriety* in teacher-student interactions, as well as *timeliness*, *justification/sufficiency*, and *truthfulness* in teacher's communication of information to students (Bies & Moag, 1986; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a). Recent theorizing has also purported that classroom justice principles can be enacted or violated in four broad classroom domains of interactions, learning, teaching, and assessment, each encompassing a wide range of subdomains (Rasooli, DeLuca et al., 2019).

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The mentioned gaps in the classroom justice literature are, namely, the existence of little empirical evidence in the L2 instructional context, the limited number of qualitative and person-centric studies, few studies on teachers' conceptions, and a paucity of research employing metaphor analysis to study the concept. To address these gaps, adopting a qualitative research design, the present study explored metaphors that Iranian EFL teachers used to conceptualize classroom (in)justice. One research question was raised in this study:

> RQ: How do EFL teachers metaphorically conceptualize justice and injustice in the classroom?

## METHOD

### Research Design

According to Riazi (2016) "phenomenological studies aim at depicting a

phenomenon as lived and experienced by participants and as described by them." (p. 236). The present research broadly shares some aspects of phenomenological research as it tries to reveal deeper insights into participants' experiential worlds and it involves textual analysis. The authors' understanding of the literature is that metaphor analysis aligns well with the objectives of the phenomenological research tradition. However, metaphor analysis is a well-established method on its own right used by many researchers (e.g. Cameron & Low, 1999; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) that can be tangentially different from the traditional practice of researchers who follow the strong version of phenomenological research. Metaphor analysis elicits exemplar metaphors, from which the researchers can generalize to the exemplified concepts (Cameron & Low, 1999). Metaphor analysis can unveil meanings individuals ascribe to the phenomena and thought patterns behind their practices or beliefs (Kram et al., 2012). Cortazzi and Jin (1999) emphasize that metaphors are not just decorative language but can reveal significant insights into how people construct and communicate their experiences. In the context of phenomenological research, their work suggests that metaphor analysis can help in uncovering the cultural and contextual dimensions of lived experiences. Cameron and Low (1999) explore metaphor as a methodological tool in educational research. They argue that metaphors are pervasive in everyday language and can serve as a window into understanding how people think, learn, and make sense of their experiences. Their work is relevant to phenomenological research as it provides a framework for systematically analyzing metaphors to reveal deeper insights into participants' experiential worlds. In conclusion, metaphor analysis shares common goals with phenomenological research methodology as metaphor analysis can serve as a powerful tool for interpreting the lived experiences of individuals and it involves textual analysis. By analyzing the metaphors that participants use, researchers can uncover the nuances of their experiences, including how they perceive challenges, relationships, or emotions. Accordingly, in this study, the teachers' real experiences about the phenomena of justice and injustice are elicited through metaphors.

## Participants

The participants were 51 EFL teachers selected through snowball sampling. Attempts were made to have a representative sample of the population of EFL teachers in Iran by selecting participants from diverse age groups (ranging from 18 to 51, Mean = 27, Median = 25), genders (males = 16, females = 35), academic levels (diploma = 20, BA = 9, MA = 18, PhD = 4), majors (English = 35, other than English = 16), and teaching experiences (less than four years = 28, four to 33 years = 23). The teachers were also selected from 12 different provinces in Iran. Additionally, 16 teachers mentioned they enrolled in a teacher training course (TTC) or a teacher education (TE) program, while 35 had already passed TE or TTC.

## Instrumentation

An online questionnaire was used in this research, which included three parts: (1) a mini-training on how to create metaphors, (2) a demographic information scale, and (3) a metaphor completion task—created following Wan et al. (2011)—as presented below:

1. A just teacher is like_____because_____.
2. An unjust teacher is like_____ because_____.
3. A just classroom is like_____because_____.
4. An unjust classroom is like_____because_____.

It should be stated that the use of the online questionnaire in this study was in line with the best practice in the studies that use metaphor elicitation and the objectives of this study. The rationale for using the online questionnaire was to explore conceptual metaphors that the participants could create for classroom justice and injustice. Therefore, the questionnaire was not a scale and did not measure anything; it was merely a means of eliciting conceptual metaphors. Furthermore, at the mini-training section of the questionnaire, the researchers clarified, through written examples and models, how the participants were expected to fill out the questionnaire. The clarification involved what the researchers meant by conceptual metaphors and how the

participants were expected to justify their responses by explaining them.

## Data Collection Procedure

Before the primary data analysis phase, the instrument was piloted with 10 participants. Having completed the questionnaire, some of the participants were asked to provide feedback regarding the instructions and task. Since they mentioned no negative points, the piloting stage data were included in the main phase data analysis. The questionnaire was developed and responded to in Persian based on the justification that it might be easier for the participants to find metaphors and express their metaphorical reasoning for (in)justice in their L1. Some excerpts from the participants were back-translated into English to be used in the results section of this study. To maintain participants' anonymity, no sensitive information such as name was asked from them, and a code was assigned to each participant (e.g. T1, T14) and was used to name him/her when necessary in the results section. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from the participants. There was no time limit for completing the questionnaire; they could write as many metaphors as they desired for each prompt. Nevertheless, on average, they spent approximately 20 minutes on the instrument. Through snowball sampling, the questionnaire was sent to 154 teachers. Ninety-four of them attempted it; however, 54% (51 teachers) submitted their answers for the analysis.

## Data Analysis

The data analysis process included gathering, coding, and classifying linguistic metaphors, generalizing based on them to the conceptual metaphors, and utilizing the results to indicate an understanding of teachers' actions and beliefs (Cameron & Low, 1999). The process also involved (1) naming/labeling, (2) eliminations and clarification (sorting), (3) categorizing, and (4) analysis of data (Saban et al., 2007). Initially, we did an inductive coding of the teachers' linguistic metaphors. Next, three elements were

identified for each response, namely, the topic (e.g. classroom, the teacher), the vehicle (i.e. the word or expression associated with the topic), and the ground (i.e. the type of association between the topic and vehicle, Wan et al., 2011). Additionally, following Wan et al. (2011), conceptual categories were formed based on thematically grouping the vehicles. Moreover, no distinction was made between simile and metaphor in the current research (see Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Marchant, 1992; Villamil, 2000). Bartel (1983) advises that metaphor is "any comparison that cannot be taken literally" (p. 3). Therefore, we excluded literal and metonymic expressions from our analysis (Saban et al., 2007; Wan et al., 2011) and presented them separately in Appendix A.

Initially, each researcher separately analyzed 20% of the data. Next, they met to discuss differences in their codes and categories. Afterward, each of them individually coded all the data. Once more, they jointly resolved discrepancies in their analyses and reached total consensus after rounds of discussion. This resulted in the inter-coder agreement coefficient of 100%.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to uncover how EFL teachers metaphorically conceptualize (in)justice in L2 classes. As Table 1 indicates, 16 conceptual categories were identified based on teachers' metaphorical conceptualizations of justice. Notably, eight categories were mentioned for conceptualizing both a just L2 teacher and just L2 classroom; four were used only to conceptualize a just L2 teacher, and the other four were employed solely to conceptualize a just L2 classroom. The exhaustive list of exemplar metaphors along with their entailments for all the just teacher and just classroom metaphor categories are presented in Appendices B and C.

*Good caregiver/caregiving* was the conceptual category with the highest metaphor frequency. This finding provides further empirical support to the existing literature, characterizing caring as a principle of interactional justice (Chory et al., 2022; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a). Furthermore, this is in line with research evidence in language teacher education, highlighting caring

as a quality of good/effective L2 teachers (e.g. Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Mullock, 2003; Tajeddin & Alemi, 2019). Within this category, EFL teachers conceptualized justice in terms of such exemplar metaphors as A GOOD GARDENER, A KIND NURSE, CARING AND HARDWORKING PARENTS, OR A LOVING MOTHER/FATHER. Some of the entailments within this category unveiled that A GOOD CAREGIVER knows how to take care of his/her care receivers and their mental state, pays attention to individuals' needs and characteristics, provides a calm environment for them, never differentiates between them, is empathetic, treats all of them equally, and loves them all. These entailments reflect the need, equality, and caring principles of justice (e.g. Adams, 1965; Rasooli, DeLuca et al., 2019). This is also in line with findings of Nazari et al. (2023) who showed that caring is essential to promoting just instruction in L2 classes. Furthermore, these entailments are in agreement with previous L2 research identifying teachers' attention to students' needs, wants, strengths, and weaknesses in addition to caring, equality, friendliness, empathy, love, understanding, and good interpersonal relationships to be necessary for providing quality L2 instruction to students and to be among the characteristics of effective L2 teachers (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Moafian & Pishghadam, 2009; Mullock, 2003; Tajeddin & Alemi, 2019).

The justice conceptual category with the second most metaphor frequency was *OBSERVING RIGHTS*. One exemplar metaphor in this category was Stadium Seats, followed by a teacher's entailment that "all chairs are not at the same height so that everyone can watch the game" (T37). This entailment reflects the equity principle of classroom justice. Another exemplar metaphor was COMPLIANCE WITH RIGHTS, followed by a teacher's entailment that "every student has the right to be taught according to his/her learning style" (T49). These entailments imply EFL teachers' attempts to attend to individuals' differences, needs, and unique characteristics for implementing justice in L2 classroom, which resonate well with the importance of providing differentiated instruction to enhance students' opportunity to learn, as highlighted in the classroom justice literature (Pnevmatikos & Trikkaliotis, 2012).

*Water* was the category with the third most metaphor frequency. Here, for instance, T16 used the metaphor of Sea to argue that a just L2 teacher should "water students sufficiently from the boundless sea of his/her knowledge and experience." This refers to the sufficiency/justification principle of interactional justice, meaning that a just teacher needs to sufficiently communicate class-related information to students (Bies & Moag, 1986). The next category with the fourth most metaphor frequency was *tools*. An example of a metaphor in this category is compass, followed by a teacher's entailment that a just L2 teacher should provide "students with authentic and valid information," like a compass (T29). This is in congruence with the existing literature that identified truthfulness as a principle to be adhered to for implementing interactional justice (Cropanzano et al., 2015).

Notably, many metaphors in this study underlined the positive consequences of implementing justice in L2 classroom (See Appendices B and C). For instance, a just L2 teacher was likened by T24 to a conductor who "produces a symphony in the classroom that makes all students shine and progress." T31 also likened a just L2 teacher to a successful president who "makes one's country progress." Similarly, T32 said a just L2 teacher was like a stout and leafy tree that "everyone can sit under its shade and enjoy." T42 metaphorically conceptualized a just L2 teacher as a guardian and savior angel whose "establishing justice increases motivation in the person." Justice in L2 classroom was also analogized by T5 to a tranquilizer that "gives language learners the mental serenity necessary for language learning to take place and helps them to be engaged in language learning without worry." These results, which point to the positive psychological, emotional, and learning consequences of justice for L2 students, support the findings of previous empirical investigations which indicated that perceived teacher justice is associated with desirable student outcomes such as increased achievement, motivation, wellbeing, engagement, learning, and psychological need satisfaction (Berti et al., 2010; Di Battista et al., 2014; Donat et al., 2016; Kaufmann, & Tatum, 2018; Molinari & Mameli, 2018; Rasooli, DeLuca et al., 2019).

**Table 1:** Conceptual categories across justice metaphors for the L2 teacher and classroom

| Categories | Just L2 teacher | Just L2 classroom | Total metaphor frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| GOOD CAREGIVER/CAREGIVING | 22 | 5 | 27 |
| OBSERVING RIGHTS | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| WATER | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| TOOLS | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| GOOD FIGURE OF AUTHORITY | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| SOMETHING ESSENTIAL | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| LIGHT | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| FOUNDATION | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| A GOOD GUIDE | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| POSITIVE EMOTION | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| SYMPHONY | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| MISCELLANY | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| ENHANCING WELLBEING | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| DIFFICULTY OF JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| PLANT | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| A GOOD COMPANION | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 53 | 43 | 96 |

According to Table 2, in total, 16 conceptual categories were identified based on EFL teachers' metaphorical conceptualizations of injustice. More specifically, seven categories were related to metaphors for both justice and injustice. Three and six categories were exclusively used to conceptualize an unjust L2 teacher and unjust L2 classroom, respectively. The list of exemplar metaphors, along with their entailments for all unjust teacher and unjust classroom metaphor categories, are presented in Appendices D and E.

*PERSON WITH NEGATIVE CHARACTER* was the category with the highest metaphor frequency. One metaphor in this category, for instance, was A MERCILESS PERSON who "considers some people superior to others" (T47). This reflects the violation of the bias suppression principle and agrees with Chory et al.'s (2022) finding, which indicated that EFL students report bias when talking about teachers' procedural injustice. *(POTENTIAL) HAZARD* was the

category with the second highest metaphor frequency. An example of a metaphor in this category was THE INCOMPLETE SPRAYING OF A WHEAT FIELD. To justify this metaphor, T7 explained that "just as the wheat that has not received enough pesticides cannot be properly resistant to pests, those L2 students who do not benefit from the teacher's attention in the classroom cannot properly handle the lessons." This reflects a violation of the equality principle in distributive justice—not providing equal opportunity to learn for all. A similar pattern was reported in Rasooli et al. (2018) and Chory et al.'s (2022) studies as distributive injustice was perceived to be perpetrated by teachers' violation of the equality principle.

*BAD FIGURE OF AUTHORITY* was the next category, including such a metaphor as An Arrogant King who "pays more attention to his/her powerful and influential people" (T29). This again indicates that an unjust L2 teacher, like an arrogant king, breaches the bias suppression principle of procedural justice (Cropanzano et al., 2015). *(CAUSING) DISEASE & INJURY* is the subsequent category in this order. Here T2, for instance, analogized injustice to POLLUTED AIR as it "affects everyone," implying a violation of the equity principle. *FIRE* is another category with such an exemplar metaphor as FIRE IN THE FOREST "burns both the dry and wet things" (T30), again violating the equity principle. Both these entailments imply teachers' punishment to all, even students who make efforts, contribute to class, or perform well. This breaching of the equity principle, which was linked to teacher unfairness in this study, is in agreement with the reports of previous studies highlighting equity and equality to be among the main concerns of many teachers (e.g. Pantić, 2017; Rasegh et al., 2022).

Some metaphors from different conceptual categories also revealed the undesirable consequences of injustice in L2 classes. For instance, T42 likened an unjust L2 teacher to THE WITCH/THE DEMON IN CHILDREN'S STORIES that "destroys all wishes and the world of learners in the blink of an eye and makes their world dark." Another teacher wrote that, like A BAD-TEMPERED NURSE, an unjust teacher "does not care about the psychological aspect of language learners, leading to their anxiety and sadness by his/her conduct"

(T5). Injustice was also conceptualized as A TILTING WALL that "will collapse in the end and will cause damage" (T6), or as Death that "destroys everything and takes away motivation from everyone" (T32). Besides, while justice was likened to A TRANQUILIZER, injustice was analogized to AN ANXIETY-INDUCING SUBSTANCE that "decreases the concentration and calmness of language learners, exposing them to tension and mental pressure, and disrupting language learning" (T5). These findings reveal that breaching justice in L2 classes can lead to students' decreased learning outcomes, lower psychological wellbeing, and negative emotional responses. Similarly, studies show that classroom injustice is linked to students' experience of dissent, disengagement, disappointment, stress, anger, negative attitudes, or behavioral problems (Horan et al., 2010; Lemons & Seaton, 2011; Rasooli, DeLuca et al., 2019; Santinello et al., 2011).

**Table 2:** Conceptual categories across injustice metaphors for the L2 teacher and classroom

| Categories | Unjust L2 teacher | Unjust L2 classroom | Total metaphor frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| PERSON WITH NEGATIVE CHARACTER | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| (POTENTIAL) HAZARD | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| BAD FIGURE OF AUTHORITY | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| VIOLATION OF RIGHTS | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| (CAUSING) DISEASE & INJURY | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| FIRE | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| BAD CAREGIVER | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| HURDLE | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| SOMETHING USELESS | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| WEAPON | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| MURDER & DEATH | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| NEGATIVE EMOTIONS & TRAITS | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| EASE OF BREACHING JUSTICE | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| NATURAL DISASTER | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| LIGHT | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| MISCELLANY | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 41 | 86 |

Furthermore, according to Table 3, many opposite pairs of metaphors were found in the data—i.e. the two metaphors represented contrasting ideas or concepts. Among the total of 32 conceptual categories identified from justice or injustice metaphorical conceptualizations, opposite directions were found between 23 of them. The exceptions were five justice conceptual categories (*A GOOD COMPANION*, *A GOOD GUIDE*, *TOOLS*, *PLANT*, and *SYMPHONY*) and two injustice categories (*HURDLE* and *PERSON WITH NEGATIVE CHARACTER*).

Regarding the pairs of metaphors which worked in an opposite direction to each other it can be explained that, for instance, while a just teacher was likened to *A GOOD FIGURE OF AUTHORITY*, an unjust teacher was analogized to *A BAD FIGURE OF AUTHORITY*. Similarly, justice was metaphorically conceptualized as *WATER*, while injustice was likened to *FIRE*.

**Table 3:** Justice and injustice metaphors which functioned as opposite pairs

| Justice Categories | Injustice categories |
|---|---|
| Good figure of authority | Bad figure of authority |
| Good caregiver/caregiving | Bad caregiver |
| Water | Fire |
| Positive emotion | Negative emotions & Traits |
| Observing rights | Violation of rights |
| Light | Light |
| Something essential; Foundation | Something useless |
| Difficulty of implementing justice | Ease of breaching justice |
| Enhancing wellbeing | Threatening wellbeing: Murder & Death; (Potential) Hazard; (Causing) Disease & Injury; Weapon; Natural disaster |

*Note: Threatening wellbeing is created as a higher-order category for the related injustice metaphors*

More importantly, *LIGHT* was metaphorically used to refer to both justice and injustice. The entailment following a metaphor indicates whether it refers to justice or its violation. For example, T26 likened injustice to sunlight as "shining on some and bestowing its blessing and light on them, while not shining on others and bringing about their decline and destruction."

Conversely, justice is resembled to SUNLIGHT as "all students are treated equally and receive the same respect. This will reduce the tensions and create a healthier class atmosphere" (T13 & T2). These findings provide further empirical evidence to the argument that when individuals complete an "A is like B …. Because …" prompt, for correctly coding the linguistic formula as a conceptual metaphor, the researcher should take a discursive approach and look into the argumentation provided after "because" in the prompt (Strugielska, 2015).

Overall, the opposite relationship among 72% of the categories imply that justice and injustice can be considered two sides of the same coin. Also, the same vehicle can be used to talk about completely opposing concepts.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study used conceptual metaphor as both the theoretical framework and the data elicitation and analysis tool to unravel EFL teachers' beliefs about (in)justice. The participants' generation of various metaphors for (in)justice signifies this concept's multidimensional and complex nature. Despite their diversity, some of these metaphors' entailments reflected the justice principles (e.g. *equality*, *caring*, *need*, *bias suppression*, etc.) within the distributive, procedural, and interactional classroom justice dimensions presented in the literature, while some other entailments referred to the consequences of classroom (in)justice. Thus, we conclude that these results are congruent with the social psychological underpinnings of classroom justice and provide supporting empirical evidence in this regard. The results also add to the existing evidence on the effectiveness of conceptual metaphors for uncovering and analyzing L2 teachers' beliefs about different aspects of L2 teaching, including classroom (in)justice.

The results of this study put forth some implications for L2 teacher education programs, teacher educators, and teachers. To start with, it should be noted that being fair or just is an essential characteristic of good language teachers (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2019; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a). Thus, teacher

education programs need to take necessary actions to foster this quality in pre-/in-service L2 teachers. To this aim, teacher educators can use metaphor as a tool to promote teachers' thinking about (in)justice. Bullough (2015) refers to the usefulness of metaphors by stating that metaphors operate at different levels and are generative as they can devise new ways of making meaning and provide new perspectives on experience. They can similarly enable comparison and simplify the experience. Besides, a metaphor and change in metaphor potentially demonstrates a change in thinking over time (Tobin, 1990); thus, metaphor can be used as an interventional strategy to modify teachers' beliefs about (in)justice. As found by Tobin (1990), the metaphors that teachers generated affected their beliefs and practices as teachers, and an intervention that resulted in the transformation of their metaphors effectively changed their instruction-related thinking and actions. Accordingly, L2 teacher education programs should identify L2 teachers' attitudes toward justice by asking them to generate metaphors. Once the metaphors are obtained, an intervention to expand/revise teachers' justice beliefs needs to be implemented, and its effectiveness can be re-evaluated through metaphor analysis.

Similarly, L2 teacher education programs can encourage prospective L2 teachers to reflect on their beliefs about (in)justice and articulate their conceptualizations through creating metaphors. Provision of an entailment, where the teacher justifies selection of a metaphor, indicates the metaphor's ability to trigger teacher's reflection about a particular facet of his/her instructional practice (Alarcón et al., 2019). Moreover, as metaphor creation involves a subconscious/indirect mechanism (Patchen & Crawford, 2011), examining the way teachers link the justice principles to their classroom practice in the constructed metaphors potentially aids teacher educators in revealing teachers' unconscious epistemological rifts. Once teachers' conceptions about (in)justice are revealed through the metaphors they constructed, workshops can be held to critically discuss them and address teachers' belief-action conflicts. Moreover, as a liberating experience (Saban, 2010), metaphors can enable teachers to change their teaching beliefs and

practices (Cameron & Maslen, 2010; Low, 2003). Therefore, through the results of this study, in-service L2 teachers are recommended to generate metaphors as a way to become aware of their implicit assumptions about (in)justice, reflect upon their justice practices, and take necessary actions to ameliorate their justice-related beliefs and behaviors.

Additionally, teachers can also construct metaphors as a transformative route for their professional development (Tait-McCutcheon & Drake, 2016; Zhu et al., 2020). As justice/fairness is essential for quality L2 teaching (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2019), it is among the teachers' continuing professional development needs. To address this need, teachers can construct (in)justice metaphors, which can promote reflection and potentially lead to the betterment of their beliefs and practices. Notably, teachers can become cognizant of the essence of justice by engaging in metaphor-based reflection. More importantly, teachers can compare their metaphors against the theory and find the aspects they are not paying attention to.

L2 teachers can regularly engage in metaphor construction to identify if the metaphors that direct their justice performance are indeed the metaphors that they desire to keep despite new instructional practices and knowledge. Cognitive dissonance between teachers' new experiences and existing metaphors can change their ideology and professional development (Zhu et al., 2020). Thus, L2 teachers are recommended to regularly re-examine their metaphors about (in)justice and modify them if they are incompatible with their ongoing knowledge base and classroom performance.

The results of the present study should be interpreted with its caveats in mind. First, the conceptual metaphors that teachers generated may not reveal their actual justice practice. Future researchers can examine potential inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs as identified from their stated metaphors and their (in)justice practices through observing what they actually do in the classroom. Additionally, due to the potential of teacher reflection for improving teachers' subsequent actions (Saban, 2010), future studies can study whether or not teachers' creation of metaphors can trigger reflection on their (in)justice practices and, consequently, result in changes in their

behaviors. As another limitation, only a questionnaire was used to gather data in this study. To enhance "the trustworthiness of the metaphor analysis" (Want et al., 2011, p. 411), future studies can engage in instrument triangulation by employing the questionnaire along with follow-up interviews to provide more profound interpretations and further explanations of the questionnaire. Next, although the authors conducted the piloting phase using 10 participants' views, they could have asked some experts in metaphor analysis to check their data collection instrument. This concern can be addressed in future studies to improve credibility of findings.

The data in this study were gathered from a sample in Iran. While measures were taken to have a representative sample of the population of EFL teachers in the country, the results should be cautiously generalized to L2 teachers worldwide. To see how teachers' creation of metaphors about (in)justice might differ cross-culturally or across L2s, future researchers can replicate this study in other geographical locations or with teachers of other target languages. Finally, in this study, only teachers were the focus of the investigation. Future researchers can engage in participant triangulation by eliciting (in)justice metaphors of multiple stakeholders in a single study (e.g. teachers, students, teacher educators, or policymakers) in order to first understand the degree and points of (in)congruence in their conceptualizations, and second, provide opportunities for interactions between different groups of stakeholders through possibly reacting to or discussing each other's perspectives on teacher (in)justice in language classes.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A. *Too Literal or Weak metaphors*

| Theme | Conceptual Categories | Exemplar Metaphors (Code Frequency) |
|---|---|---|
| **Unjust Teacher** | | |
| People | *Person with negative character* | A person with favoritism in an office (1) |
| | | Unjust referee on the football field (1) |
| | *Bad figure of authority* | King with discriminatory behavior (1) |
| | | Unjust king/leader (1) |
| **Just Teacher** | | |
| People | *Good figure of authority* | A just leader/king (1) |
| | | A just ruler (1) |
| | | A just judge (4) |
| **An Unjust Classroom** | | |
| Phenomena & Things | *Violation of rights* | Injustice in society (2) |
| | | Unjust division of food (2) |
| | | Unjust behavior of selfish masters with slaves (1) |
| | | Unequal parental attention (1) |
| | | Unfairness (1) |
| | | Favoritism (1) |
| | | Discriminatory attention (1) |
| | | Discrimination (1) |
| | | Violating people's rights (1) |
| **A Just Classroom** | | |
| Phenomena & Things | *Observing rights* | Fairness (1) |
| | | Justice in a society (1) |
| | | Dividing an apple into several equal parts (1) |

## Appendix B. "A just teacher" metaphors

| Themes | Conceptual categories | Exemplar metaphors (Frequency) | Entailments (because…) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **People** | *A good companion* | Friend (1) | Supporting one's friends in every aspect and pointing out their faults (T18) |
| | | Faithful lover (1) | Never betraying his/her beloved (T51) |
| | *A good guide* | A guide (1) | Directing and leading everyone to sincerity (T47) |
| | | Prophet among his followers (1) | Being listened to (T20) |
| | | Conductor (1) | Producing a symphony in the classroom that makes all students shine and progress (T24) |
| | *Good figure of authority* | Successful president (1) | Making one's country progress (T31) |
| | | President (1) | Being responsible for all people in a nation, not just for one part of the society (T15) |
| | | Leader of society (1) | Iidentifying the needs of each of the language learners and providing the materials and guidance relevant to those needs so that they can move in the right direction and achieve the desired result (T44) |
| | | Compassionate and wise ruler of a city (2) | Being strict and punitive with those who do not respect and break the law and being like a father to those who are honest and law-abiding (T30) |
| | | Captain of a ship (2) | If he is not present, everyone including the passengers and himself, and the ship will drown in the water (T32. Also T16) |
| | *Good caregiver* | An accurate host (1) | Knowing how to take care of all one's guests (T14) |
| | | A good gardener (1) | In a garden or greenhouse, there are different flowers with different needs, and the gardener proportionately takes care of each of them so that they finally bloom (T7) |
| | | Wise and compassionate gardener (1) | Showing attention to each person according to his/her needs and characteristics and teaching appropriate materials through appropriate methods to a class (T10) |
| | | Guardian and savior angel (1) | Sometimes, just one instance of injustice is enough for a person to lose his/her motivation to continue the path; On the other hand, establishing justice increases motivation in the person (T42) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A kind nurse (1) | | Taking care of students' mental state and trying to provide them with a calm language learning environment (T5) |
| | | Good parents | Parents (1) | Never differentiating between their children and establishing justice for each family member (T36) |
| | | | Caring and hardworking parents (1) | Not sparing anything for the progress and success of their children, improving the situation with balanced and appropriate behavior, and treating all of them equally and fairly (T13) |
| | | | Loving mother/father (1) | Loving all of his/her children, not differentiating between them, trying to respond to them based on their different needs and desires (T49) |
| | | | Caring mother (1) | Being sympathetic to all members of the class (T45) |
| | | | Kind mother (1) | Not withholding love from her children and treating them equally (41) |
| | | | Father (3) | Although a father likes all his children deeply, when necessary, he would punish them (T18. Also T33/26) |
| | | | Mother (9) | Paying equal attention to all of her students (T19. Also T40/46/40/26/17/8/3/2) |
| **Phenomena & Things** | *Tools* | Algorithm (1) | | Being influential and having a highly-acceptable charisma (T4) |
| | | Spring (1) | | Being flexible and being able to change oneself (T34) |
| | | Canopy (1) | | Providing its umbrella of knowledge and experience to students (T16) |
| | | Car fan (1) | | Managing the classroom in such a way that the teacher plays a key role like a car fan in the background, with sometimes working hard and sometimes slowly (T37) |
| | | Compass (1) | | Meeting the needs of all students equally, providing students with authentic and valid information, and ensuring their understanding of the contents of the current session (T29) |
| | *Positive emotion* | Hopefulness | A heartwarming soul (1) | Inspiring all of the students and caring about all of them without any discrimination (T50) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Something essential* | Vital body organ | Heart (1) | Directing and managing the amount of blood to be sent to each organ according to their needs (T11) |
| | *Foundation* | Class pillar (1) | | Being the basis of the teacher's work (T6) |
| | *Light* | Light lamp (1) | | Showing equal attention to all language learners, like the lamp which spreads its light equally in all directions (T21) |
| | | The sun (1) | | Shining equally on the earth and other planets (T43) |
| | | Sunlight (1) | | With its radiation, causing the development and increase of knowledge and wisdom of all students (T38) |
| | *Plant* | Ivy flower (1) | | Covering the entire wall; paying attention to everyone, and making the class more beautiful (T35) |
| | | A stout and leafy tree (1) | | Everyone can sit in its shade and enjoy (T32) |
| | *Water* | Sea (1) | | Watering students sufficiently from the boundless sea of his/her knowledge and experience (T16) |
| | | Clear water (1) | | Giving life to flowers (T27) |
| | | River (2) | | Filling a pit that is 30 centimeters, and also filling a pit that is three meters (T39) |
| | *Miscellany* | Karma (1) | | Never violating anyone's rights (T28) |
| | | A good model for students (1) | | Being influential and having a highly-acceptable charisma (T4) |

*Note: The wording represents that used by one of the participants, back translated from Persian to English.*

# Appendix C. "A Just Classroom" Metaphors

| Themes | Conceptual categories | Exemplar metaphors (Frequency) | | Entailments (because…) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phenomena & Things | *Observing rights* | Sky (1) | | Should be above all and cover everyone (T26) |
| | | Bird's eye view (1) | | Should see every student and pay enough attention to each of them (T35) |
| | | Reception of several guests (1) | | Treating every guest equally, regarding all guests as having the same rank and value, and allocating the same amount of time to each of them (T14) |
| | | Stadium seats (1) | | All chairs are not at the same height so that everyone can watch the game. (T37) |
| | | Clock (1) | | Between any two numbers (e.g., one and two or seven and eight), there are only five seconds (T38) |
| | | A scale (1) | | Meaning equality and everyone's being the same (T6) |
| | | Execution of the sentence by the judge (1) | | The fate of language learners, their motivation to continue studying a lesson, and sometimes their level of interest in the language depend on the behavior of a teacher and how the teacher treats the students' in the classroom (T44) |
| | | Dividing a flower by the mother among children (1) | | *No entailment* (T46) |
| | | People's right (1) | | The teacher should not violate the rights of the class members (T45) |
| | | Compliance with rights (1) | | Every student's having the right to be taught according to his/her learning style (T49) |
| | *Good caregiving* | Family (1) | | Although others wrongly judge from the outside that one child is preferable to another, justice is inherent in the family (T36) |
| | | Good parental behavior | Maternal behavior (1) | A mother's paying attention to all without discrimination, with inner kindness, and with an affectionate but an authoritative look (T4) |
| | | | Paternal behavior (1) | A father's observing justice among his children by differentiating between them when necessary (T39) |
| | | | Parental care (1) | All students are equally in need of attention and affection and benefiting from the events of the class in any circumstance (T29) |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Mother's mercy (1) | Mothers do not differentiate between their children, even if one child is bad-tempered or mischievous or has any other problems (T31) |
| | *Something essential* | Vital body organ | A kidney in the body (1) | Playing a very important role in the body (T8) |
| | | | Heart (1) | Just as everybody needs a heart to continue functioning, without justice, no teacher or student is able to lead the class towards the right educational goals (T15) |
| | | | Blood in the body (1) | Being vital; According to the needs of each organ, a proportional amount of blood goes to it (T11) |
| | | Critical thinking for human being (1) | | Humans' needing critical thinking to progress and pass through different stages (T7) |
| | | Sky (1) | | It should be over everyone and cover everyone; if it is not present for someone, he/she will be destroyed little by little from lack of oxygen (T26) |
| | *Foundation* | Building infrastructure (1) | | Affecting student engagement which is one of the pillars of learning (T19) |
| | | Pillar of a class (1) | | Causing students' feelings of respect and calmness, a sense of respect for themselves and the teacher, equal attention to everyone, and collective and at the same time individual understanding that the atmosphere of the class flows along with creativity; facilitating learning with more enthusiasm and pleasure, and as a result, achievement of our goals (T40) |
| | | Foundation (2) | | If foundation is present, the structures will be placed regularly on top of each other (T23) |
| | *Tools* | Camera lens (1) | | Making it possible to see more precisely and clearly (T1) |
| | | Sharp sword (1) | | Separating the oppressor from the oppressed (T51) |
| | *Symphony* | Chain attachment point (1) | | When class justice is present, harmony will be created between students (T43) |
| | | Being in a friendly group to spend a trip (1) | | All people have an effect on each other, and their cooperation and lack of cooperation makes the trip bitter or sweet; accordingly, the behavior of all people in the class has a direct impact on the class process (T25) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Symphony of music (1) | | Through justice, students are allowed to shine, learn, and grow together (T24) |
| | *Water* | Water flow (3) | | In the path of its movement, watering all the seeds and plants equally, and regardless of ups and downs of the path, continuing its movement (T41. Also T33/28) |
| | | Sea wave (1) | | Sometimes, justice is established with ease and calmness, and sometimes, it is established through making a lot of changes like a raging wave (T21) |
| | *Light* | A light in darkness (1) | | Justice should be implemented equally for students. For example, if we do not give a light to a student who is in the darkness, how will he/she be able to see us and even himself/herself (T27) |
| | | Sunlight (2) | | All students are treated equally and receive the same respect. This will reduce the tensions and create a healthier class atmosphere (T13. Also T2) |
| | *Positive emotion* | Motivation | Green road (1) | Making children more interested in learning (T22) |
| | | | Soul of motivation (1) | If this spirit dies, there will be no more motivation for students to study (T50) |
| | *Enhancing wellbeing* | Apple (1) | | Because according to the English quote saying that "eat an apple a day, keep the doctors away", we can prevent any educational and emotional damage from students by implementing justice for students (T20) |
| | | Tranquilizer (1) | | Giving language learners the mental serenity they need to learn the language and helping them to be engaged in language learning without worry (T5) |
| | *Difficulty of implementing justice* | Rules of a playfield (1) | | A teacher, like a sports coach, implements all the techniques and teaches all the principles, but each player can be successful in receiving these techniques based on his/her background, and the coach cannot consider the background of all the players as the time is limited. It is exactly like justice in the classroom as the success of the students depends on their background, but the teacher cannot consider everyone's background (T9) |
| | | Walking on a tightrope or on the edge of a cliff (1) | | Establishing justice is a difficult task for most teachers, and in most cases, their personal opinions precede justice (T42) |
| | *Miscellany* | Smile (1) | | Its presence or absence is recognizable, but its absence attracts more attention (T34) |

*Note: The wording represents that used by one of the participants, back translated from Persian to English.*

## Appendix D. "An Unjust Teacher" Metaphors

| Themes | Conceptual Categories | Exemplar Metaphors (Frequency) | Entailments (because…) |
|---|---|---|---|
| People | *Person with negative character* | Thief (2) | Stealing the student's time, energy, and money (T20. Also T49) |
| | | An unprofessional bodybuilder (1) | Such a person does not work on all his muscles equally and finally, by focusing on one part and neglecting other parts of the body that need improvement, he/she will get unfavorable results (T7) |
| | | A confused creature (1) | Specifying an invisible no-entry zone around him/her, allowing entry only to special people (T4) |
| | | Evil demon (1) | Annoying people, breaking their hearts, and finally, keeping them away from him/herself (T50) |
| | | A creature with frozen eyes (1) | Specifying an invisible no-entry zone around him/her, allowing entry only to special people (T4) |
| | | A merciless person (1) | Considering some people superior to others (T47) |
| | | Broker (1) | The one who has money is in the first line and in priority. But, she/he does not pay attention to the needy (3T6) |
| | | Corrupt (1) | Misusing all things for one's profit (T23) |
| | | A person starting a war (1) | Causing tension, conflicts, disunity, and division in the class, students' lack of trust in the teacher and some students, and other things that are very harmful for both the teacher and the future of the students (T13) |
| | | Negative cartoon characters (1) | An unfair teacher creates a feeling of lack of confidence in language learners (T44) |
| | | The witch/the demon in children's stories (1) | With injustice, destroying all wishes and the world of learners in the blink of an eye and making their world dark (T42) |
| | *Bad figure of authority* | Warder (1) | Being bad-tempered, misbehaving with all the prisoners, being always harsh, and not noticing the progress of the prisoners (T9) |
| | | Judge (1) | Bullying; thus, some people will be unhappy and some others will be satisfied (T45) |
| | | Manager of the dining hall (1) | Giving some people less food (T46) |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Garrison commander (1) | | Not understanding the situation, evaluating everyone from the same perspective, and not believing in individual observation (T39) |
| | | Arrogant king (1) | | Paying more attention to his/her powerful and influential people (T29) |
| | | Bullying ruler (1) | | Filling his cabinet (government) with his relatives and not paying attention to wise and knowledgeable people (T38) |
| | | Cruel ruler (1) | | Paying attention to those he likes and differentiating between an insignificant peasant and a rich merchant (T41) |
| | | Destructive dictator (1) | | Like a dictator who has absolute power, destroying the positive and educational atmosphere of the classroom by misusing his power (T24) |
| | *Bad caregiver* | A bad-tempered nurse (1) | | Not caring about the psychological aspect of language learners, and leading to anxiety and sadness in them by his/her conduct (T5) |
| | | Biased gardener (1) | | He pays attention to those trees with more fruits. However, if he takes care of other trees, they will also definitely grow (T31) |
| | | Bad parents | Stepmother (1) | Differentiating between children (T19) |
| | | | A bad father (1) | Destroying the family (T2) |
| | | | Biased mother (1) | Differentiating between her son and daughter (T32) |
| Phenomena & Things | *Fire* | Meteorite (1) | | It hits a point with high speed, causing damage and destruction (T35) |
| | | Fire in the forest (1) | | Burning both the dry and wet things (T30) |
| | | Matchstick spark (1) | | Burning all the fruitful trees and fertile forests (T16) |
| | | Burning fire (1) | | Burning all (T3) |
| | | Time bomb (1) | | Finally, either his/her own behavior or the students' impatience puts him/her to trouble or may even demotivate the students (T17) |
| | *Hurdle* | Stones on the roaring path of the spring (1) | | Causing unevenness and difficulty in guiding the flowing water throughout the spring (T16) |
| | | Bumpy road (1) | | Although it brings the traveler to his/her destination, it annoys him/her a lot (T18) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | A wall causing separation (1) | By discouraging students, it creates separation between students and learning the lesson (T22) |
| | | A barrier to light (1) | Not allowing permeation of light to things (T43) |
| | *(Potential) Hazard* | Jackal chasing lamb (1) | Following lamb having profit for it (T26) |
| | | Seed of chaos (1) | Growing little by little and making friends towards each other and students towards the teacher pessimistic and hostile (T33) |
| | | Meat grinder (1) | For this device, it doesn't matter if what goes into it is meat or a child's hand. In any case, it continues its fixed task of grinding meat and treats what enters it according to an instruction (T37) |
| | *(Causing) Disease & Injury* | An incurable disease (1) | Sticking in students' mind (T27) |
| | | Poisoned food (1) | May poison a large number of people (T1) |
| | | Heart disease (1) | Cannot deliver the blood properly to the organ that needs it badly, and in the end, the whole body system may be destroyed (T11) |
| | *Something useless* | A broken cup (1) | Cannot hold water (T6) |
| | | A rotten peach (1) | Can be used, but not all of its parts (T8) |
| | *Violation of rights* | Robot (1) | Working the same in all classes (T10) |
| | | Speaking with a language not understood by all (1) | *No entailment* (T34) |
| | *Light* | The Sun for the people on the Earth (1) | Giving light to some people and depriving some people who live in the other part of the Earth from it (T21) |

*Note: The wording represents that used by one of the participants, back translated from Persian to English.*

## Appendix E. "An Unjust Classroom" Metaphors

| Themes | Conceptual categories | Exemplar metaphors (Frequency) | Entailments (because…) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Phenomena & Things | *Violation of rights* | Theft (2) | Because the teacher, in case of being unfair, violates the rights of the learners willingly or unwillingly and causes discouragement (T18. Also T49) |
| | | Misalignment of scale pans (1) | Students do not equally benefit from the information taught in the class or the teacher's attention; Sometimes their presence is less attended to or even ignored (T29) |
| | | Snowfall in some places (1) | Some places become fruitful and fertile while other places are deprived of the blessing of snowfall (T38) |
| | | Crossing the red light (1) | Having consequences (T45) |
| | *(Potential) Hazard* | Chaos (1) | Messing up everything (T23) |
| | | Incomplete spraying of a wheat field (1) | Just as those wheats that have not received enough poison cannot be properly resistant to pests, those students who do not benefit from the teacher's attention and response in the classroom cannot properly handle the lessons (T7) |
| | | A ship with a hole in the bottom (1) | Ruining everything (T8) |
| | | A pest that harms crops (1) | Injustice breaks the hearts of honest students and discourages them from being honest while it encourages those who do not act properly in class to continue doing wrong and creates an unworthy character from them (T30) |
| | | A small crack in the wall (1) | Growing bigger and bigger over time and causing the wall to collapse (T24) |
| | | Drilling a hole somewhere in a ship (1) | By doing this, everyone in the class will be affected (T25) |
| | | A tilting wall (1) | It will collapse in the end and will cause damage (T6) |
| | *Weapon* | Knife (1) | Cutting the rope of communication and friendship between the teacher and students and even between the students (T22) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Dagger (1) | Creating division, a sense of hatred, or unhealthy competition among people as members of society and not just as students in the class (T4) |
| | | Iron hammer (1) | If injustice occurs in a class, it will prevent the students from providing answers in class and will prevent the teacher from understand the intelligence and open-mindedness of the students (27) |
| | | Double-edged sword (1) | Injustice may decrease the motivation of hard-working people or make those who made no effort unmotivated and lazy (T1) |
| | *Murder & Death* | Burned ant with a magnifier (1) | Paying too much attention to certain students and not paying attention to the rest of the students, and this is not beneficial to any of them (T35) |
| | | Death (1) | Destroying everything and taking away motivation from everyone (T32) |
| | | Yazid killing Imam Hussain* (1) | *No entailment* (T51) |
| | | Tragic killing (1) | Injustice destroys enthusiasm for learning and affects the student's life beyond the classroom (T50) |
| | *Negative emotions & traits* | Selfishness (1) | It drives most of the students away from the teacher, and the remaining students will not gain any benefit and will not be satisfied (T33) |
| | | Anxiety-inducing substance (1) | Decreasing the concentration and calmness of language learners, exposing them to tension and mental pressure, and disrupting language learning (T5) |
| | | Internal anxiety in an unsafe place (1) | At one moment, there is no problem; but, at another moment, with a small mistake or for no reason, the conditions and atmosphere of the class may change, and anxiety will be awakened by the existing injustice (T |
| | | Hopelessness (1) | Destroying everything and decreasing motivation (T32) |
| | *Ease of breaching justice* | As easy as ABC (1) | Doing it is very easy (T42) |
| | | Breathing (1) | The teacher does it unintentionally, and he/she should make a decision and effort to stop it (T3) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | An ant on a big stone (1) | Sometimes injustice is caused by the language learners themselves. For example, a learner many not be able to hear the teacher's voice because of a noisy classmate sitting next to him/her (T21) |
| | *Natural disaster* | Earthquake (2) | Destroying the structure of the building (T19. Also T10) |
| | | Flood (1) | Having dangerous consequences, and one should prepare him/herself for any negative consequence (T15) |
| | *Hurdle* | A dam (1) | Preventing improvement and achievement of educational goals (T43) |
| | *(Causing) Disease & Injury* | Polluted air (1) | Affecting everyone (T2) |
| | | Poison (1) | *No entailment* (T17) |
| | | Sweet poison (1) | It is sweet for those students who receive more attention, while it is poisonous because of its negative effect on the sense of sympathy, cooperation, solidarity, and cooperation, especially among younger students both at the levels of class and society (T4) |
| | | Ecchymosis (1) | Blood cannot reach the parts of the body that need it (T11) |
| | *Something useless* | Mold on fruit (1) | If not prevented early, it will grow and cause the whole fruit to rot over time (T28) |
| | | Useless thorns (1) | Thorns in the hand may cause many problems (T13) |
| | | Rotten apple (1) | No one is willing to eat it anymore (T20) |
| | *Light* | Sunlight (1) | Shining on some and bestowing its blessing and light on them, while not shining on others and bringing about their decline and destruction (T26) |
| | *Fire* | Fire (1) | Becoming more flaming from the side that more firewood is added to it (T41) |
| | *Miscellany* | Assessing driving by just providing driving textbook (1) | It is unjust to expect the best result from the student without providing useful, high-quality, and sufficient instruction to him/her (T37) |

*Note: The wording represents that used by one of the participants, back translated from Persian to English.*

** Imam Hussain is the third Imam of Shia Islam.*