Research Paper

English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Immunity and Motivation: Public Schools vs. Private Institutes

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Abstract

Recent research has identified many factors influencing language teachers' motivation (e.g., vision, immunity, learners' achievement, teachers' self, job satisfaction, social relationship). Language teachers' immunity is a relatively novel concept and there has been little research to address its connection with motivation. Therefore, the present mixed methods study was set out with the purpose of examining the possible relationship between EFL teachers' motivation and their immunity in two different contexts (public vs. private). To this end, a three-section questionnaire was distributed electronically among Iranian EFL teachers in the two contexts (N = 157) to elicit quantitative data on the possible relationship between immunity and motivation. As for qualitative phase of the study, seven EFL teachers from each context (N = 14) were interviewed, using an interview protocol to find the disturbing and motivational factors among teachers in the path of immunity formation. The results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation indicated a small (r = 0.21) positive relationship between immunity and motivation. Triggering disturbances of language teacher immunity and coupling strategies related to them as well as teachers' motivational factors elicited through interviews are discussed in the paper.
Keywords*:* Coupling strategies, EFL teacher, Language teacher immunity, Motivation, Private institutes, Public schools

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English as a Foreign Language …

1. Introduction
1.1 Background

The history of learning languages is as old as the history of human beings. Since ancient times, people have been involved in teaching and learning languages. For many remote years, Latin was the dominant language of science, education, religion, and government and it was replaced many years later by other European languages such as French. It was by the end of the 16th century that English came to be used as a language of instruction. And it was not before the end of 18th century that studying modern languages attracted scholars' attention. Since then, there have been many ups and downs in the history of language teaching; and experts in the field have proposed and examined a variety of methodologies in teaching the language to reach the desired results (Brown, 2000). Whereas once attention was on discovering the right method to teach the language (GTM, ALM, SW, TPR, Suggestopedia, etc.), the focus later on shifted to learners (humanistic approaches). As the literature in the field suggests, in all these years the focus has primarily been on teaching methods and language learners, and only recently does the trend seem to be moving towards language teachers as one of key players in language education (Rahmati, 2018). As such, there have been few studies on language teachers' emotions and feelings compared to those on learners and this necessitates that teachers be placed under the scrutinizing lens of recent studies.

Language teachers, as one of influential factors in the process of language learning, have come to be regarded as technicians in language classroom research. The vital role played by language teachers became obvious when the *Modern Language Journal* devoted its special issues in 2015 and 2017 to

language teachers. However, there were numerous questions to be answered: "who really are language teachers?" and "what motivates language teachers to continue their profession?"; therefore, *language teacher identity* studies attempted to provide a reply to the former question (Ostovar Namaghi, 2009; Pavlenko, 2003; Varghase, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnston, 2005) and those dealing with aspects of teacher motivation, to the latter (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Dörnyei, 1994; Hiver, Kim, & Kim 2018). In comparison to research on learner motivation, it seems that research on teacher motivation is still in its infancy (Urdan, 2014, p.228). As far as teacher motivation is concerned, different researchers have tackled different aspects of the construct.

While motivation is defined as willingness to get involved in an activity by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) and McDonough (2007), three key elements of motivation (i.e., reason, duration, and effort) taken to accomplish an activity have been highlighted by Dörnyei (2001a). Numerous studies done on the field have categorized the concept of motivation into instrumental-integrative or intrinsic-extrinsic. As noticed, it seems that EFL teacher motivation is a combination of initial reasons to join the field of teaching, the willingness to keep on working, and the desire to engage in professional development (Rahmati, et al., 2018).

In this regard, Hiver et al. (2018) also attempted to answer four key questions related to teacher motivation in their work:

"What motivates individuals to choose the teaching career? What motivates teachers in the classroom? How is teacher motivation linked to teacher development? How does teacher motivation influence the dynamics of classroom practice?" (p. 5)

It seems that based on self-determination theory (Roth et al., 2007), the desire to become a teacher originates from intrinsic and extrinsic motivation ranging from external regulation, to introjected regulation (i.e., internalization

English as a Foreign Language …

of external forces of control), identified regulation (i.e., achieving internalized personal value), and integrated regulation (i.e., expressing one's identity by accomplishing an activity). In addition, pro-social or altruistic values of teaching were also found influential in driving people to teaching profession (Richardson & Watt, 2014). Factors such as passion and love, commitment to help society and contribution to people and community and striving for justice are among these values. Sociocultural context (immediate social and physical context in which people live) still seems to be considered another factor in forming a person's initial teaching motivation, and although intrinsic factors seem primary, external factors such as job security, social status and payment play a vital role in motivating or demotivating teachers in some contexts (Visser-winjveen et al. 2014). Evidence shows that when a classroom is considered, agency which is suggested by social cognitive theory (which is proposed by Bandura in 1986 as an extension to his social learning theory, to mean that when a model performing a behavior and its consequences are observed, sequence of behavior is remembered and used as a guide for future activities) can be another factor in affecting teacher motivation (Bandura, 1999). Accordingly, teachers who are able to make decisions and practice control over what they do with high level of confidence and those with individual and collective self-efficacy beliefs are more motivated teachers (Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Similarly, achievement goal theory proposed by Bulter (2012), which is considered a productive motivational theory to explore teacher motivation, suggests that goal pursuit is another element in the path of teacher motivation and development (Retelsdorf et al., 2010). In this regard, Bulter (2007) found relational and mastery strivings, that is, trying to reach appropriate relationship with learners and to develop competence respectively, as two main teacher motivational goals. While the first one mostly contributes to teachers' socio-

emotional support for his students, the latter seems to be associated with learner interest and cognitively stimulating teaching.

However, as Alexander (2008) highlighted the complex task of teaching can influence quality of teacher motivation throughout her professional life. While studies have shown that professional development, leadership aspirations, and career satisfaction (Richardson & Watt, 2016) have positive relationship with teacher motivation, feelings of inadequacy and incompetence, and low self-efficacy (Shaalvik & Shaalvik 2010), lack of social recognition, low income, inadequate facilities, high number of students and their lack of interest (Yaghoubinejad, Zarrinabadi, & Nejadansari 2017) show reverse relationship with teacher motivation.

Other teacher-related topics such as teacher cognition (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Lim, 2015), professional development (Kubanyiova, 2012; Macià & Garcià, 2016), self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Wyatt, 2010, 2016), burnout (Saboori & Pishghadam, 2016; Sadeghi & Khezrlou, 2016), identity formation (Pennington & Richards, 2016; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013), credibility and metacognitive awareness (Karimi & Ziaabadi, 2019), emotional intelligence (Pourbahram & Hajizadeh, 2018) are among the topics investigated by numerous researchers in the last decade. However, emergence of new terms such as language teacher immunity (Hiver, 2015) offers new horizons for research on language teachers. Coined by Hiver (2015), teacher immunity is a term which has appeared as a result of an interdisciplinary approach and must be studied in detail to help detect the reasons for teachers' maintenance or resignation in their profession.

Teacher well-being and effectiveness or as Hiver (2015) calls it immunity is not a trait-like disposition, rather it is a situated construct that emerges in response to the problems specific to classroom practice. Immunity provides teachers with a form of "professional homeostatic equilibrium, which permits

teachers to bend but not to break" (Hiver, 2017, p.15). While immunity is an essential aspect of human organism, just like a defense system protecting an organism, it can also be counterproductive, threatening survival of the organism. To put it in simple words, teachers' experiences can be processed in a variety of ways. While reflecting on negative experiences and being open to criticism and improvement can lead to productive teacher immunity outcome, negative perspective on challenges and dealing with them can create maladaptive narrative outcomes. Therefore, forming a productive immunity seems essential for a teacher's survival (Hiver, 2017). Hiver's protective mechanism includes four stages: triggering, linking, realignment, and stabilization.

Triggering stage includes a destabilizing event which interrupts the stable functioning of the system (here the teacher) and puts the system in a state of disequilibrium. The example can include managing a disruptive student behavior or evaluation by a supervisor. The linking stage includes the coping or coupling strategies that the teacher utilizes to tackle the specific disturbances. These coping techniques help teachers to focus on their productive practice and the established constructive ties between the disturbances take back the system into the direction of equilibrium. The third stage, realignment, allows the teacher to return to productivity, although the teacher still has uncertain experiences. In other words, although the teacher still experiences some upheavals, she can control the situation which she was unable before. In the last stage of this process, stabilization, the teacher solidifies the outcomes into her professional identity, and by using the experience and narratives, an immunized teacher identity is formed (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2015).

1.2 Empirical Studies

Considering language teacher motivation, in a study by Alavi and Mehmandoust (2011) sources of motivation of Iranian language teachers in public and private language schools were examined. After administering a questionnaire to 200 teachers, the researchers found a hierarchy of sources (i.e., intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, and subject matter motivation) which influence teacher motivation and can affect language learning.

A comprehensive literature review by Rahmati et al. (2018) indicates that EFL teachers' motivation originates from intrinsic (interest in English and teaching), extrinsic (a previous encouraging language teacher, job security, parental encouragement) and altruistic (helping the society) sources. A study by Igawa (2006) also identified love of English, women-friendliness nature of English teaching, and student support as the main motives for language teachers to enter the field.

Attempting to establish a relation between immunity, motivation, and possible selves, Ordem (2017) examined a Turkish teacher's immunity and motivation by conducting semi-structured interviews, using a diary, and students' online feedback. Her case study clearly manifested the negative influence of students' demotivation on the teacher and how it led to the teacher's maladaptive behavior and low motivation. The results also showed constant reflection of the teacher on her previous actions and possible ideal self in the classroom context.

Language teacher immunity as a predictor of teachers' behavior at uncertain times was also studied by Haseli, Ghonsooly, and Afraz (2018). Using a mixed-methods approach, the study aimed at finding the type of language teacher immunity, which was dominant among teachers. The data obtained through the questionnaires, interviews, and content analysis indicated

English as a Foreign Language …

dominance of maladaptive immunity among Iranian English language teachers.

In a very recent study by Rahimpour, Amirian, Adel and Zareian (2020), a model of factors predicting language teacher immunity was examined. In their study on a good number of teachers in Iran (N=483), they found that job insecurity (especially in private sector) directly led to maladaptive immunity and reflective teaching improved adaptive immunity. The results also suggested indirect influence of emotionality, extrovertness, and agreeableness on language teacher immunity.

Although some studies (Kissau, Davin, & Wang, 2019; Tao, Zhao, & Chen, 2019) have been done on language teachers' motivation, it seems that only few studies have considered the change in motivation throughout the teaching career. While it seems that most teachers enter the profession for a variety of intentions and motivations, Yuan and Zhang (2017) emphasize the significant role of beliefs and educational context, especially the training and the support that teachers receive, on language teachers' motivation. That is, the positive/negative perspective that the teachers gain through composing narratives and adaptive/maladaptive immunity seems to play a role in their motivation.

As experienced language teachers in various contexts themselves, the researchers have encountered many colleagues who are not satisfied with their teaching jobs or who react negatively to any proposed changes. Statistics also show that more than 45% of the teachers leave their teaching jobs in their first five years of teaching. This runs in counter to the anecdotal claim that many enter the profession with lots of enthusiasm and motivation (Hiver & Dörnyeii, 2017). Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to understand how and why English teachers lose immunity and become demotivated in their profession so as to equip them with the techniques and strategies to make their professional life more enjoyable and help them survive the profession by

getting involved in professional development activities. The findings of the study are hoped to assist teacher trainers in considering the personal aspect of teaching as well in their teacher training courses, where they can arouse teachers' interest in hard work to take responsibility for their personal professional growth.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to focus on possible relationship of teachers' immunity system and motivational path. Considering the above-mentioned goals, the following research questions are posed.

1. Is there any significant relationship between EFL teachers' immunity and motivation in public vs. private schools?
2. What are the triggering disturbances of language teacher immunity in public vs. private EFL context?
3. What are the coping strategies adopted by the private vs. public EFL teachers to deal with those triggering disturbances?
4. What are the most effective strategies, as viewed from the EFL teachers' perspective, to positively influence the development of language teachers' immunity?

2. Methods

2.1 Context and Participants

Foreign language courses in Iran are offered in public (junior and senior) high-schools and also in private language centers (from much earlier ages). The present study was set to compare English language teachers in these two different contexts in terms of language teacher motivation and immunity. It is worth mentioning that teachers who work in public schools are mostly graduates of *Farhangian University* and usually pass a two-month to two-year course prior to teaching at school. They usually need to teach fixed amount of time in schools full of students, with the books and syllabus which are provided by the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, teachers at private language centers are BA and MA holders of TEFL from different universities, which pass short TTCs (Teacher Training Courses) before starting their profession. Not all school students attend language courses in private institutes; therefore,

English as a Foreign Language …

the classes in this context are not packed with students and there is supervision on the teaching practice and the curriculum as well.

The participants include 162 EFL teachers, who were contacted randomly through social media. Data coming from five teachers were excluded from the analysis process for various reasons; reducing the final sample number to 157, as shown in Table 1. One hundred teachers (63.7%) worked in private language schools, 33 (21%) in public schools, and 24 in both. As Table 1 indicates, 60.5% of the participants were female teachers and 39.5% were male, more than half of the participants (about 63%) were MA holders, with the rest of participants being BA and PhD holders. Data shows that 59.2% of the participants were part-time teachers, whereas 37.6% had teaching as their full-time profession. The participants also possessed different teaching experiences, from 6 months to 30 years. It is also worth mentioning that 77.7% of the participants had graduated with a degree in teaching English and the rest of the participants had other majors (English literature, translation, linguistics, etc.).

Table 1
Demographic Information of the Participants

		Number	Percentage %
Degree	BA	32	20.4%
	MA	99	63.1%
	PhD	26	16.6%
Gender	Male	62	39.5%
	Female	95	60.5%
Major	TEFL	122	77.7%
	Literature	18	11.5%
	Translation	7	4.5%
	Others	10	6.4%
Type of Job	Public	33	21.0%
	Private	100	63.7%
	Both	24	15.3%
Employment	Full time	59	37.6%
	Part time	93	59.2%
	Others	5	3.2%
Total		157	100%

2.2 Instrumentation

Two instruments, mainly a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview, were used in this study to gather data. Below we present a brief explanation of these data elicitation tools.

2.2.1 The questionnaire

Quantitative data for this study was collected using a questionnaire (Appendix A), called Language Teachers' Immunity, Vision, Motivation Scale, developed by Rahmati (2018). The original questionnaire was reported to be reliable and valid; also, before being used in our study, it was once more reviewed by experts and piloted with three language teachers, and found to be appropriate for our purposes. According to Rahmati (2018), the Language Teachers' Immunity, Vision, Motivation Scale has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .92. In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .83, which indicates preferable and high internal consistency. In other words, the scale demonstrated a strong reliability in the current study as well.

The utilized questionnaire had three parts, composing demographic information section, a section on language teacher immunity, and a section on teacher motivation. The questionnaire had 39 and 31 Likert-scale items in Persian for immunity and motivation, respectively, and the respondents had to choose one of the five options (from Strongly agree- to Strongly disagree). The electronic version of the questionnaire was made using Google Forms.

2.2.2 Semi-structured Interview

The interview protocol was borrowed from Rahmati, Sadeghi, and Ghaderi (2019), and included three sections of demographic information, questions on teacher motivation, and questions about immunity. Examples of questions of immunity included:

Do you believe that teaching is a stressful profession?

What are the sources of that stress?
What are the strategies you use to cope with challenges in your profession?
Examples of questions of motivation included:
What are some factors that motivate/demotivate you?
Have you ever thought of giving up your job as an English teacher?
What are the most effective strategies to motivate English teachers?

Before the actual administration of the interview, two experts reviewed the interview questions and it was piloted with three teachers prior to the main study to ensure its appropriateness for the study.

2.3. Procedure

The electronic version of the questionnaire was made using Google Forms and the related link was sent to two Telegram groups of over 2000 members. One hundred and sixty-two members in the virtual groups, who were all language teachers, voluntarily filled in the questionnaire and submitted it online. An email was received for each completed questionnaire.

In the following step, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with interviewees in English (as the participants preferred English). The volunteer teachers were contacted and the interviews were conducted in the participants' workplace. All the interviews were audio-recorded with a smart phone for subsequent transcriptions.

After conducting the interviews, they were all transcribed by the researchers for further analysis. It should also be noted that the teachers' participation in the study was completely voluntarily.

2.4 Research Design

The current study used a mixed-methods design, which is a procedure to combine and analyze quantitative and qualitative data at some stage in a single study. We believe that studies combining qualitative and quantitative perspectives to researching language learning/teaching behaviour are better

equipped to answer questions on complex human phenomena, such as the role of motivation and immunity in language teaching.

2.5. Data Analysis

In order to answer research question 1, the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed and relevant correlational tests were run to understand the amount of relationship between immunity and motivation.

To answer research questions 2, 3, and 4 the obtained data from interviews were first transcribed and then analyzed deductively. The answers given for each question were written on a separate sheet of paper and then the dominant and most frequent views offered for questions were regarded as the evidence answering that question.

3. Findings

This study was an attempt to uncover the relationship between language teacher immunity and teacher motivation among two groups of Iranian EFL teachers (those employed in the public sector as opposed to those working in the private sector). Data was obtained through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (as explained above) and was analyzed both thematically and quantitatively (using correlational techniques). Below is an account of qualitative findings followed by quantitative results.

3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics associated with participants' answers to the scale used in the study are reported in Table 2.

English as a Foreign Language …

Table 2
The Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Immunity, and Motivation with Regard to Their Type of Job (Public, Private, Both)

		Groups (Based on their Type of Job)		
		Public	Private	Both
Language Teacher Immunity	Mean	125.79	125.52	126.33
	Standard Deviation	8.54	8.02	9.23
	Count	33	100	24
Language Teacher Motivation	Mean	110.97	116.27	117.21
	Standard Deviation	11.02	13.25	16.36
	Count	33	100	24

As displayed in Table 2, the group who worked in both public and private school had higher mean scores than either private or public group in terms of both Immunity and Motivation. On the other hand, the group who only worked at public schools had the lowest mean scores in both scales. However, whether the so-called differences are statistically significant needs further investigation using inferential statistics.

In order to answer research question 1 (relationship between immunity and motivation), inferential correlational tests were run. Before this, we first ensured that the underlying assumptions of the inferential parametric correlational tests were met. To this end, normality and linearity assumptions of the correlational statistics were checked. As the number of the participants were quite large and statistical tests such as Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk are very sensitive to large number of participants, Q-Q plot was used in order to determine the normality of the data.

The analysis showed that the data for Immunity and Motivation is perfectly normal, indicating that the data set met the underlying normality assumption of the inferential parametric correlational tests. In order to test the linearity assumption as well, scatter plot is exploited.
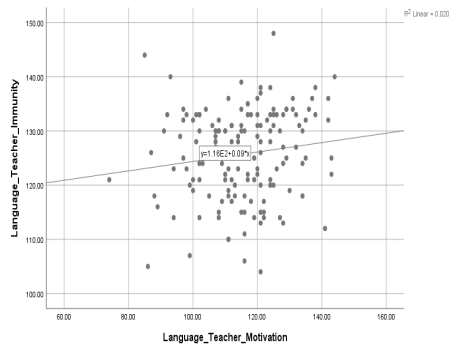
Figure 1. Scatter plot of Language Teachers' Immunity and Language Teachers' Motivation

As displayed in Figure 1, the scatter plot revealed that the underlying linearity assumption of the inferential parametric correlational test was met. An initial analysis using the so-called scatterplot (Fig. 1) revealed that there was a small positive relationship between Immunity and Motivation. As the underlying assumptions for the parametric statistics were met, a Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the strength of the relationship (Table 3). As mentioned in Table 3, the relationship between type of job (public, private, or both) and language teachers' Immunity and Motivation was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. As mentioned above, preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity. As Table 3 indicates, the correlational analysis revealed that there was a small positive correlation between the two variables, r =.21, n = 100, p < .001, only among private school teachers, with coefficient of determination of 0.04, which indicated only 4 per cent of shared variance between the two variables. No significant correlations were found between motivation and immunity in the case of public-school teachers and those who worked in both contexts.

English as a Foreign Language …

Table 3
Pearson Product Moment Correlation between types of Job and Language teachers' Immunity and Motivation

Groups (Based on their Type of Job)				Language Teacher Immunity	Language Teacher Motivation
Public	Language Teacher Immunity	Pearson		1	-.153
		Sig. (2-tailed)			.395
		N		33	33
	Language Teacher Motivation	Pearson		-.153	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.395	
		N		33	33
Private	Language Teacher Immunity	Pearson		1	.211*
		Sig. (2-tailed)			.035
		N		100	100
	Language Teacher Motivation	Pearson		.211*	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.035	
		N		100	100
Both	Language Teacher Immunity	Pearson		1	.199
		Sig. (2-tailed)			.350
		N		24	24
	Language Teacher Motivation	Pearson		.199	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.350	
		N		24	24

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Therefore, to answer research question 1, the quantitative analysis of the data revealed a positive correlation between immunity and motivation only among one group of teachers (i.e., those working in private institutes). Triggering disturbances of teachers in both contexts were identified in qualitative analysis of the interviews.

3.2 Qualitative Analysis

As already mentioned, to answer research questions 2, 3, and 4, the obtained data from the interviews were first transcribed and then analyzed deductively. The answers provided to each question were written on a separate sheet of paper and then the dominant answers to each of the posed questions were found according to the most frequent theme. The following section is a more detailed account of the findings.

3.2.1 Triggers of Language Teacher Immunity

The analysis of interview data showed that most of teachers considered teaching English to be a stressful job to some extent. However, slight differences were found among sources of stress by teachers in public schools and those in private institutes. Rahmati et al.'s (2018) categorization (teacher-related, student-related, educational, and contextual factors) was used to further describe the elicited data:

Among teacher-related factors, it seems that teachers' own personality was an important element in lowering or augmenting the stress. When a teacher was not generally a sociable person, it could lead to more stress in their teaching profession. Because not only does a teacher deal with lots of students, but also s/he is touch with numerous other people (managers, supervisors, and parents), and there are cases when a teacher needs to decide instantly and simultaneously and this would impose some pressure and stress on the teacher. Extract 1 is provided to substantiate this concern:

Extract 1: I am possibly an introvert, and having to interact with   many people in this job is kind of stressful

Regarding student-related factors, dealing with students at different age groups, heterogeneous language proficiency levels, and different genders (male vs. female) are among the factors that were reported to lead to stress especially for teachers who teach in private sector and are in contact with a

variety of students (Extract 2). This is not the case in public schools, because teachers usually teach the same gender for many years and students are almost in the same age range; however, dealing with disrupting behavior of some naughty students and heterogeneous group of classes (regarding their language level) seems to create some stress and put pressure on some teachers in public schools (Extract 3).

Extract 2: you know, I teach for little girls in the morning and then suddenly switch to teenagers and young men, I need to change my mood and way of teaching, and this is not really easy.

Extract 3: actually, unlike private institutes, in public schools we face students with different sociocultural background and families. Many times, I have found it hard to deal with terrible student behavior in my classes, it is really hard to manage the class then, especially when I am working with young boys.

Concerning educational factors, teachers were stressed not knowing if the student was really learning the topic or not. In some private schools, teachers had to teach in a way to keep the student for the following semesters (because of financial issues in most private institutes) (Extract 4). The case is a bit different in public schools, where students were usually demotivated to learn the subject using the unattractive Iranian school books. As some teachers mentioned, the books (Perspective Series) which are currently taught in public schools are themselves a source of stress. Because of the recognized drawbacks and insufficiencies of the provided materials, the teachers need to change the order of the material in teaching in order to make it more productive and beneficial (Extract 5).

Extract 4: sometimes I really think that the main purpose in this institute is not learning. It is just money. They give students extra scores to keep them for the next semesters, because of fee only.

Extract 5: I guess one of the main problems in school is the book. My students don't like the book, neither me. And I need to provide lots of things to make it look better and

I need to use lots of other sources. I guess they don't like our students to learn English. I really wish they change these terrible books and I don't have to teach them anymore.

As for the contextual factors, whereas, the presence of a supervisor in private sector was a stressor (Extract 6), lack of time in public sector seemed to play a more important factor that led to stress in most teachers (Extract 7). Teachers in private institutes mentioned that they had to prepare meticulously before every session because presence of a supervisor was unpredictable and stressful for those being observed. However, it seemed no such issue existed in public schools and teachers were mostly worried about classroom and time management issues. Teachers usually had large classes (at least 30 students) and very limited time (about 90 minutes per week) to teach the lesson and get feedback from their students as well.

Extract 6: oh, I feel like having butterflies in my stomach when I remember it. It is really hard to teach in front of another teacher and I really get sick when the supervisor observes my class, I can't even speak and I feel like shivering then. I hope I get used to this.

Extract 7: time, time, time. I have never ever enough time in class. There are many students in the class and I suddenly check my time and see it is already finished and I haven't done what I had already planned to do.

3.2.2 Coping strategies

Regarding the mentioned stressors, teachers adopted some coping strategies. The first and most important strategy, which was mentioned by all the teachers (private and public) was preparation before the class. Teachers mentioned that they needed to get ready linguistically and also psychologically before their class (Extract 8 & 9).

Extract 8: you know, I get ready every session, even if I teach kids, I spend some time before my class to check everything in the book and then I can enter the class confidently.

Extract 9: I have to think of it, to prepare, to plan. My mind should be ready before I can step into the class.

English as a Foreign Language …

It seems that having in mind students' background knowledge could help teachers as a strategy to overcome possible pressure and stress in class (Extract 10). Some teachers also learned to believe that *not everyone knows everything* (Extract 11), so they believed it was okay not to sometimes know the answer to all the questions. Teachers in public schools also listed enhancing their confidence and studying in order to improve their linguistic knowledge as useful techniques to overcome their stress in class.

Extract 10: I must be with those students for many sessions. They are human beings and actually each one is different. So, I try to know them, their background, their talents, specific strategies that they use, even their families, and specific problems of their families, all can help me in the class.

To answer research question 2, teachers' own personality, dealing with students at different age groups and proficiency levels, and different genders (male vs. female), teaching in a way to keep the students for the following terms due to economic reasons only, and presence of a supervisor are among the main triggering disturbances in private institutes, whereas, teachers' personality, dealing with disrupting behavior of some naughty students and heterogeneous group of classes, student demotivation, unattractive and useless school books, lack of time and classroom management were found to disturb public school teachers.

To answer research question 3, it was found that preparation before the class and getting to know students were the strategies employed by teachers in private institutes, similarly, their counterparts in public schools used to spend time to prepare linguistically and psychologically before the class and improved their self-confidence to cope with the mentioned disturbances. To answer research questions 4, as the best strategy for language teachers (in both contexts), it seems that linguistic and psychological preparation before teaching and improving self-confidence can assist teachers in better dealing

with stressors and disturbances throughout their professional life and help create a productive immunity.

4. Discussions

The findings of this project reveal that most of the language teachers consider their job to be a stressful one. Numerous reasons have been listed for this claim and have been categorized into four groups of teacher-related, learner-related, educational and contextual factors. It seems that developing a professional immune system is vital for teachers over time, with this system affecting their teaching life positively and negatively. As teachers go through a variety of unexpected problems in their teaching career, reaching a full stabilization seems impossible. In this vein, external factors which cause perturbation lead teachers to a state of equilibrium; however, as Hiver (2015) states, the chaotic system of nature may lead to the production of an effective immunity system. Therefore, the established immunity system can be productive or maladaptive.

In this study, those external factors leading to perturbation (research question 2) were students' demotivation, supervisors' observation, lack of enough time, lack of proper material, and few other issues which caused the triggers and led teachers to think of strategies to cope with. The results of the interview indicated that (research question 3) linguistic preparation and improving self-confidence were the main coupling strategies employed by the teachers in this research.

The findings of the study are mostly in line with that of Hiver (2015, 2017) and Rahmati, et al. (2019). The mentioned studies indicated lack of time as one of the triggering disturbances; this was highlighted in interview with participants in public sector in this work as well. Whereas Hiver (2017) referred to lack of student cooperation as one of the triggering instances, public school teachers in this study and also in Rahmati, et al.'s (2019) study found student demotivation as one of the key elements of triggering disturbances.

Hiver (2017) also identified student misbehavior as another triggering disturbance, which is in line with findings coming from interviews with public school teachers in this study; however, Rahmati, et al. (2019) do not seem to have identified such an issue. As another triggering disturbance, the presence of a supervisor, which was mentioned by private sector teachers in our study, does not seem to be a stressor in the above-mentioned research projects, possibly because teacher supervision and observation does not exist in the context of public schools.

Regarding the coupling strategies employed by teachers, findings of our study are almost in line with the two mentioned studies. Korean teachers (Hiver, 2015), and Iranian teachers (Rahmati, et al. 2019) try new techniques and adapt their teaching methods to their real context; likewise, teachers in our study too seem to work hard to improve their self-confidence and adapt themselves to the situation in which they work.

The obvious observation in the interviews was the influence that teachers' motivation had on leading them toward productive immunity. However, the quantitative analysis showed this correlation only in the group of teachers who taught in the private sector and those who possibly owned higher levels of motivation in their career compared to their counterparts who worked in public sector, within a never-changing and never-improving system. Observation by a supervisor in private institutes which was considered an important triggering disturber, led to productive immunity in most motivated teachers who kept studying and improving their knowledge, rather than quitting their jobs like their demotivated counterparts who did not enjoy taking risks and were resistant to any further changes. This is almost in line with Dehqan, Barjasteh, and Faraji's (2017) findings, where negative attitudes of the teacher led to resistance to change, and consequently encouragement of positive attitude seemed necessary for further achievements.

It is noteworthy that the slight difference in findings of this study with that of Hiver (2015, 2017) and Rahmati (2019) can be attributed to the difference in the context of studies. While those findings of the current study which are related to public sector are mostly in line with findings of the mentioned studies, it can be noticed that the case is different in private institutes. As a conclusion, it seems logical to replicate the study in other educational contexts and gain a deeper understanding of the influencing factors. That is, other possible triggering disturbances and consequently coping strategies will most probably be found in a variety of contexts that will provide us with a broader perspective on teacher immunity and motivation.

5. Conclusions and Implications

The current study examined the possible relationship between language teachers' immunity and motivation in public schools and private institutes. More specifically, the study examined language teachers' triggering disturbances and effective strategies in forming productive immunity. The study revealed that lack of self-confidence, student demotivation and disruptive behavior, lack of proper material, and lack of time were among the triggering disturbances in public schools, whereas lack of self-confidence, observation by a supervisor, economical issues, and having to teach in a variety of classes (different levels and genders) were the most commonly reported triggers of immunity in private institutes. EFL teachers of this study tried to cope with these disturbances by linguistic and psychological preparations before the class, and attempting to know their students. Moreover, school teachers attempted to resolve issues such as lack of proper material at school by providing suitable sources.

Despite shortcomings of this study, which was mainly the number of participants in the public school, the study can have implications for language teacher programs and teacher trainers who have the responsibility of equipping

the teachers with the required skills. It is suggested that besides the content knowledge that the teachers should acquire in their professional journey, they should be motivated to improve the reflective practice and abilities that enable them to be good decision makers in all the critical moments that happen in real classrooms and to improve their teaching narratives by reflecting on their experiences and yearning for self-development and getting involved, rather than avoiding risks. Furthermore, stressors such as lack of proper material is not fully in control of teachers. That is, the issue seeks attention of policy makers and responsible parties to provide a suitable setting for teachers' growth and consequently better learning outcomes. In other words, to improve adaptive immunity, besides reflective practice and professional development, teachers need the support of all the involved parties. Being constrained by the policy makers and not being able to practice one's agency and authority and other stressors as obstacles in this path, without having any guidance and support, can harm teachers and lead to maladaptive immunity.

One of the main objectives of the study was to make teachers aware of what was going on during their professional life and awaken reflective practice throughout this journey. Identifying the triggering disturbances in teachers' career and consequently reflecting on them and trying to find out proper strategies to cope with them in order to have a more fruitful professional life, which is always open to criticism, development, and progress, is believed to be necessary to prevent language teacher attrition. That is, if these triggering disturbances are not guided into the right path, as Hiver (2015) believes, they will lead to maladaptive immunity. Considering the limitations of this study, mainly the limited number of teachers in public schools and bearing in mind the differences found in different contexts, it is hoped that further research can be conducted with a larger number of participants in a variety of educational contexts.

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Pourbahram & Sadeghi

Appendix A: **Language teacher immunity, vision, and motivation scale**

پرسشنامه ایمنی، پنداره و انگیزه مدرسین زبان

الف) لطفا اطلاعات زیر را تکمیل فرمائید:

جنسیت: زن ☐ مرد ☐ سن: مدرک تحصیلی/گواهی تدریس: کارشناسی ☐ کارشناسی ارشد ☐ دکتری ☐ سایر (لطفا مشخص فرمایید)

رشته تحصیلی: آموزش زبان انگلیسی ☐ زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی ☐ مطالعات ترجمه ☐ سایر (لطفا مشخص فرمایید)

سابقه تدریس (ماه یا سال): ساعات تدریس در هفته: مدرس بخش: خصوصی ☐ دولتی ☐ هر دو ☐

تدریس در (در صورت لزوم، امکان انتخاب بیش از یک گزینه وجود دارد): مدارس راهنمایی ☐ دبیرستان ☐ دانشگاه ☐ سایر (لطفا مشخص فرمائید)

ب) لطفا با درج علامت در یکی از مربع های مربوطه، میزان موافقت یا مخالفت خود با موارد زیر را مشخص فرمائید.

Language Teacher Immunity						
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	اگر سخت تلاش کنم می توانم به ناسازگارترین و بی انگیزه ترین دانش آموزان هم آموزش دهم.	۱
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	با در نظر گرفتن همه عوامل، من تاثیر بسیار زیادی برموفقیت دانش آموزانم دارم.	۲
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	به توانایی حرفه ای خود برای کمک به یادگیری دانش آموزانم اطمینان ندارم.	۳
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تجربه و آموزش کافی برای مواجهه با تقریبا همه مشکلات آموزشی در کلاس هایم را دارم.	۴
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	مطمئن نیستم که در زندگی دانش آموزانم تغییری ایجاد می کنم.	۵
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من می توانم به طور موثری مشکلات دانش آموزانم را حل کنم.	۶
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	احساس می کنم با تدریس خود تاثیر مثبتی بر زندگی دانش آموزانم می گذارم.	۷
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	در مدرسه بخاطر کارم احساس فرسودگی و خستگی می کنم.	۸
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	احساس می کنم تدریس مرا از لحاظ عاطفی به فرد محکمی تبدیل می کند.	۹
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	برخی روزها در مدرسه احساس آسیب پذیری می کنم.	۱۰
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تمام عواطف و احساسات من صرف تدریس می شود.	۱۱
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	برخی روزها در مدرسه احساس نا امنی می کنم.	۱۲
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من می توانم از عهده شرایط دشوار بر آیم چون قبلا مشکلات را تجربه کرده ام.	۱۳
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	شکست ها انگیزه من برای موفقیت به عنوان یک معلم را دوچندان می کنند.	۱۴
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	پشت سرگذاشتن شرایط پراسترس برای من دشوار است.	۱۵
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	غالبا پس از اتمام شرایط دشوار، به سرعت به حالت عادی باز می گردم.	۱۶
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	وقتی اتفاق بدی رخ می دهد، بازگشت به شرایط عادی برایم دشوار می شود.	۱۷
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	از شغل معلمی لذت می برم چون برایم خوشایند است.	۱۸
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تدریس زندگی من است و نمی توانم از آن دست بکشم.	۱۹
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	از تدریس چندان احساس رضایت نمی کنم.	۲۰
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	اگر می توانستم امروز شغلی انتخاب کنم، معلمی را انتخاب نمی کردم.	۲۱
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	وسوسه شده ام شغل تدریس را کنار بگذارم.	۲۲
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	به عنوان یک معلم، موضوعات شناخته شده را بر ناشناخته ها ترجیح می دهم.	۲۳

English as a Foreign Language …

کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم		
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	وقتی برای مشکلاتم به عنوان یک معلم راه حل روشنی نمی یابم، صبرخود را از دست نمی دهم.	۲۴
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	زمانی که کارم نامتعارف و خارج از حاشیه امنیت من به عنوان یک معلم باشد، احساس خستگی می کنم.	۲۵
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	در امر تدریس، دست کشیدن از آنچه که در گذشته برای کارم مفید بوده است برایم دشوار است، حتی اگر آن چیز دیگر موفقیت آمیز نباشد.	۲۶
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	روشها آزموده شده و درست، بهترین روشهای تدریس هستند.	۲۷
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	به عنوان یک معلم، موقعیت های غیرقابل پیش بینی و متغیر را دوست دارم.	۲۸
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	اغلب اوقات در مدرسه ویا در کلاس احساس نگرانی به من دست میدهد.	۲۹
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	اغلب هنگام تدریس احساس افسردگی می کنم.	۳۰
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	غالبا احساس می کنم در مدرسه یا کلاس انگیزه می گیرم.	۳۱
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	درمجموع، انتظار دارم اتفاقات خوب بیشتری در مقایسه با اتفاقات بد برایم در کلاس رخ دهند.	۳۲
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تصور اینکه شخصی به خاطر شغل تدریس شور و هیجان داشته باشد، دشوار است.	۳۳
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	در تدریس خود، همیشه نکات برجسته و متمایز را می بینم.	۳۴
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	زمانی که در محل کار مشکلی ایجاد می شود، آنچه را که رخ داده می پذیرم و می آموزم که با آن زندگی کنم.	۳۵
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	وقتی استرس زیادی را تجربه می کنم، از فکر کردن به آن و یا انجام هر کاری در مورد آن اجتناب می کنم.	۳۶
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	زمانی که شرایط استرس آور می شوند، سعی می کنم راهکاری برای مواجهه با آنها بیابم.	۳۷
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	وقتی در مدرسه با شرایط بدی مواجه می شوم، در آنچه که رخ می دهد به دنبال نکته مشتی می گردم.	۳۸
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	احساس می کنم نمی توانم با مشکلاتی که بر سر راه من قرار می گیرند مقابله نمایم.	۳۹
				Language Teacher Motivation		بخش دوم
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من خصوصیات یک معلم زبان انگلیسی خوب را دارم.	۴۰
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تدریس زبان انگلیسی شغلی است که متناسب توانایی هایی من است.	۴۱
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من به تدریس زبان انگلیسی علاقه دارم.	۴۲
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من همیشه می خواستم یک معلم زبان انگلیسی باشم.	۴۳
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من به خاطر والدینم شغل تدریس زبان انگلیسی را انتخاب کردم.	۴۴
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من به توصیه دیگران (دوستان، اقوام و ...) شغل تدریس زبان انگلیسی را انتخاب کردم.	۴۵
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من شغل تدریس زبان انگلیسی را به عنوان آخرین راه انتخاب کردم.	۴۶
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	اگر فرصتی دست بدهد، من به جای تدریس زبان انگلیسی شغل دیگری را انتخاب خواهم کرد.	۴۷
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من از شغل خودم به عنوان یک معلم زبان انگلیسی رضایت دارم.	۴۸
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تدریس زبان انگلیسی به من اجازه می دهد نسل آینده را تحت تاثیر قرار دهم.	۴۹
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تدریس زبان انگلیسی به من اجازه می دهد به جامعه خدمات اجتماعی ارائه نمایم.	۵۰

Pourbahram & Sadeghi

کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم		
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تدریس زبان انگلیسی به من این فرصت را می دهد که نابرابری های اجتماعی را کاهش دهم.	۵۱
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	تدریس زبان انگلیسی به من کمک می کند که دانش زبانی خود را بهبود بخشم.	۵۲
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من می دانم که تدریس من در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی توسط زبان آموزانم موثر است.	۵۳
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	موفقیت زبان آموزان من در یادگیری زبان انگلیسی به من برای ادامه فعالیتم انگیزه می دهد.	۵۴
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	استفاده از زبان انگلیسی به من انگیزه می دهد.	۵۵
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	استفاده از کتاب ها و منابع آموزش تدریس زبان انگلیسی به من انگیزه می دهند.	۵۶
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	روش های تدریس زبان انگلیسی، به من به عنوان یک معلم زبان انگلیسی انگیزه می دهند.	۵۷
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من از فرصت های رشد حرفه ای در شغل خود رضایت دارم.	۵۸
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من از چشم انداز ارتقاء در شغل خود رضایت دارم.	۵۹
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	قوانین و مقرات آموزشی به من انگیزه می دهند که بیشتر تلاش کنم.	۶۰
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من از مزایای جانبی شغل خود رضایت دارم.	۶۱
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من از میزان حقوق فعلی خود رضایت دارم.	۶۲
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	معلمان زبان انگلیسی از احترام اجتماعی بالا برخوردار هستند.	۶۳
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	شغل تدریس زبان انگلیسی به من این فرصت را می دهد که با دیگران در ارتباط باشم.	۶۴
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من با زبان آموزانم رابطه خوبی دارم.	۶۵
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من با همکارانم رابطه خوبی دارم.	۶۶
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من با مدیرانم رابطه خوبی دارم.	۶۷
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من می خواهم در فرایند تعیین اهداف یادگیری برای زبان آموزانم، مشارکت بیشتری داشته باشم.	۶۸
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	ساعات کاری من بسیار طولانی هستند.	۶۹
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	همکاران من نیز به اندازه من کار می کنند.	۷۰
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	من و همکارانم مسئولیت های خود را با همکاری همدیگر انجام می دهیم.	۷۱