

Please cite this paper as follows:

Haji Jalili, M., Sepehri, M., & Shafiee, S. (2023). Teacher Immunity in English Language Institutes and Public Schools: EFL Teachers' Perception in Focus. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 11 (44), 81-95. <http://doi.org/10.30495/IJFL.2023.699909>

Research Paper

## Teacher Immunity in English Language Institutes and Public Schools: EFL Teachers' Perception in Focus

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Received: October 16, 2022

Accepted: November 07, 2022

### Abstract

The teacher, his instructional method, and indeed his characteristics are considered to be the decisive factors for the success or failure of education. The current study was carried out to determine the Iranian EFL teachers' perception of immunity in their occupational contexts, that is, in English language institutes and public schools. To achieve this objective, one hundred EFL teachers teaching in public schools (N = 50) and language institutes (N = 50) in Isfahan were selected through convenience sampling to participate in this study. Then, the Teachers' Immunity Level questionnaire was administered to them, and they were interviewed as well. The teachers were asked about their perception of immunity in their own occupational setting. All the teachers working in language institutes believed that teachers in these educational centers are suffering from low levels of job immunity. The teachers were also asked about the reasons underlying the high and low levels of job immunity in these two educational contexts. The teachers in language institutes believed that the dearth of monitoring by the government, the large number of unemployed educated people, employers' greed, and the lowering value of education in society are among the most important reasons underlying this catastrophe in language institutes. These findings can have some implications for the decision-makers in the Iranian Ministry of Education to provide language institutes with more support and attention with an eye to eliminating the mentioned problems.

**Keywords:** Attitude; Language institutes; Perception; Public Schools; Teachers' Immunity

### انیت‌شنلی مملد در ررسات زبان انگلیسی و ودارس ددلتککک ک لنان زبان انگلیسی

معلم، روش او، بی او و در واقع ویژگی‌ها و از عوامل بین‌زده موفقیت یا شکست آن می‌شود. ما... رود. مطالعه حاضر به منظور تبیین ادراک معلمان زبان از بیسی زبان ایرانی از امنیت در زمینه‌های شغلی خود، یعنی در میان زبان‌آموزان، دبیران و مدارس دولتی انجام شد. برای دسترسی به این هدف، ۱۰۰ نفر از معلمان زبان انگلیسی در مدارس دولتی (۵۰ نفر) و موسسات (۵۰ نفر) در صف‌های تدریس می‌کنند، به روش نمونه‌گیری دسترس برای شرکت در این پژوهش انتخاب شدند. سپس پرسشنامه سطح ایمنی معلمان برای آنها اجرا شد و با آنها مصاحبه شد. از معلمان در مورد درک آنها از امنیت در محیط شغلی خود سوال شد. همه معلمان شغلی در موسسات زبان معتقد بودند که معلمان این مراکز آموزشی از سطح پایین امنیت شغلی رنج می‌برند. همچنین از معلمان در موسسات زبان دولتی و پایین امنیت شغلی در این موسسات زبان دولتی سوال شد. معلمان زبان دولتی و پایین امنیت شغلی در این موسسات زبان دولتی، تعداد زیاد تحصیل‌کردگان، طمع کارفرمایان و پایین آمدن ارزش آموزش در جامعه از مهمترین دلایل فاجعه در موسسات زبان است. این یافته‌ها می‌تواند پیامدهای زیادی برای تصمیم‌گیران وزارت آموزش و پرورش ایران داشته باشد تا از موسسات زبان حمایت بیشتری برای رفع مشکلات ذکر شده داشته باشند.

واژگان کلیدی: نگرش؛ زبان‌آموزان؛ ادراک؛ معلمان؛ امنیت شغلی

## **Introduction**

### **Importance of Teachers' Personal Attitudes and Characteristics in Teaching**

The field of pedagogy has relatively diverse fields of study focused on various aspects of the teaching profession; e.g., teacher responsibilities and rights in the educational context, teacher characteristics and roles, various methods used in the classroom by the teachers (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007), and the like.

On the other hand, in educational psychology, there is no such fixed field of study for education, and teachers' attitudes and characteristics are mostly neglected by the educational authorities and even the researchers (Giluk & Postlethwaite, 2015). This is surprising because of the long-standing consensus that teachers' personal attitudes and characteristics are the most important and complex variables in the educational process (Giluk & Postlethwaite, 2015).

Even in educational psychology, the role of teachers' personal attitudes and characteristics is usually emphasized only in studies dealing with the relationship between education (e.g., the positive or negative effect of one personal trait on the instruction of the teacher or learning of the students) and the psychological or social aspects of education (Murray & Zvoch, 2011). De Raad and Schouwenburg (1998) found that research applying new insights from individual attitudes and traits to explain the role of different patterns of teacher personality traits is very important and should be assigned to its own research group. This approach was first introduced in the mid-20th century (Lamke, 1951) and has been adopted regularly since then (Giluk & Postlethwaite, 2015; Mount & Barrick, 1998; Rushton, Murray & Paunonen, 1983). As a result, the present study was conducted to show the relationship between three different personal characteristics of teachers in the Iranian EFL context.

### **Theoretical Base of the Three Variables of the Study**

The present study was concerned with the effect of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on teachers' immunity and finding out their potential difference in different contexts of teaching, such as public schools and language centers. These three variables were taken into account due to the fact that emotional intelligence has been a widely discussed issue during the last two decades and the relationship between this concept and various aspects and components of education (Alrefaai & Shah, 2020); therefore, the relationship between emotional intelligence and a newly proposed concept such as teachers' immunity could be effective in future decisions that would be made by the scholars.

On the other hand, self-efficacy was considered one of the components of teachers' immunity by Hiver (2017); however, the researcher could not find any empirical research work confirming this idea. Moreover, as the researcher was going through the literature, it was revealed that self-efficacy was among the most determinant factors affecting various aspects of an individual's life. Besides, teachers' immunity was a new topic or construct introduced in the field of education which could be worked on yet. In order to conduct this research work, there was a need to have a review of the theoretical issues proposed in the study. In this section, a review of the theoretical framework of the study is provided.

### **Teacher Immunity**

For immunity since the mid-1980s and into the mid-1990s, awareness of immune deficiency continued to grow in the context of education (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). The teaching of contextual immunity deficiency began to become an ongoing argument in several countries, such as Scandinavia (e.g., Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015), the United Kingdom (Rayner & Hoel, 1997), and the United States (Fox & Cowan, 2015). In the mid-1980s, several studies, surveys, books, and articles on the teaching of contextual immunity deficiency were published. Many conferences

and symposia have worked to address, examine, and report on the occurrence of immune deficiency behaviors in the context of teaching, thus highlighting the seriousness and complexity of this ongoing problem (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015; Fox & Cowan, 2015; Zapf.). Studies show a lack of contextual immunity that persistently undermines the foundation of education, produces higher turnover intentions and is absent among targeted teachers (Matthiesen, & Magerøy, 2015; Ortega, Christensen, Høgh, Rugulies, & Borg, 2011). Research studies continue to show discomfort, emotional pain (Qureshi, Rasli, & Zaman, 2014), physical complaints (Okechukwu, Souza, Davis, & de Castro, 2014), mental abuse, and loss of life. Business (Neill & Tuckey, 2014) victims tend to be resistant to immune deficiency in the context of teaching (Woodrow & Guest, 2014).

Research also suggests that the incidence of self-reported immune deficits is 10% to 35% in the teaching context (e.g., theft, physical assault, and harassment). Research on the teaching of contextual immunity deficiency continues to generate great interest in the scientific community, but there is still much to be learned (Samnani & Singh, 2016). There is rare research examining the relationship between teaching context immunity deficiency and teacher stress and depression (Taniguchi, Takaki, Hirokawa, Fujii, & Harano, 2016). In fact, studies on the lack of immunity in the teaching context among teachers are almost non-existent. Because of the widespread immunity behavior in other organizations, it is very important to examine the immunity of the teaching context. In the academic community, research related to the lack of immunity of teaching contexts and problems in the teacher workplace appears to be non-existent.

### Review of the Literature

According to Hiver (2015), the majority of teachers can live a life showing that a form of psychological invulnerability exists among teachers in order to cope with various pressures and distractions that threaten their level of motivation and professional identity, and this “psychological invulnerability.” It seems linked to resilience, which employs all teachers at different levels and times and allows for teachers to have the determination to consistently and persistently struggle with and overcome challenges throughout their careers.

With this exploration, in 2015, Hiver planned a study to find out why some teachers appear to keep a vision of teaching and evolving and why others suffer and are almost unable to survive their teaching careers. She wants to explore the qualities that differentiate an engaged, tuned, and productive L2 teacher from a struggling L2 teacher for a living. To this end, he conducted a multi-stage research study, which is detailed below.

Hiver first conducted an exploratory study in South Korea with four teachers from three different teaching settings: the private sector, the public K-12 sector, and higher education. The selected teachers all have high levels of professional satisfaction and commitment and are able to withstand stress, failure, and fatigue. He is confident about the quality of education and performance. Hiver conducted a series of in-depth interviews with the four teachers.

To report and gain insight into the data collected, Hiver uses self-organizing processes as a theoretical framework. Under this framework, systems change their internal structure or overall function in response to some external situation through a process called self-organization (Dekker, Cilliers & Hofmeyr, 2011). Self-organization can affect many important aspects of human behavior, such as learning and cognitive development. One model of self-organization is the psychological model of Lewis (2005). In the model, four stages are central to the self-organization process: (1) triggering, (2) linking, (3) re-alignment, and (4) stabilization.

At the trigger stage, the disturbance displaces the teacher from her motivational comfort zone. The linking stage involves the generation of specific responses or coping mechanisms corresponding to the disturbance. In the next stage, the re-alignment stage, the individual develops the ability to recognize the disturbance, be able to cope and even control it. When they

find ways to deal with the disruption they experience and regain their productivity, it is because they consciously apply strategies that appear to be able to bring the system back under stability control. In the final stages of stabilization, teachers accept the rest of the experience as a new aspect of identity. He adds new experiences to ourselves that will affect the way we respond to disruption in the future. This new result can be considered teacher immunity.

For Hiver, immunity results from the own organization of the system. Thus, they report data for an exploratory case study using this theoretical framework. By quoting the sentences spoken by the participants, she highlighted the process undergone by the four teachers in the study of developing teacher immunity. The results of this study suggest that the teachers in this study have developed a type of system to respond to the disturbances found in the classroom experience. He referred to this language teacher's immune system, which serves as a defense mechanism against the material and emotional demands imposed on L2 practitioners.

Hiver found that teachers' immunity was a line of defense against the demands placed on teachers and traumatic experiences, which could lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Based on the descriptions and examples provided by the participants, they also found that this immunity can be either positive (productive and strong) or negative (counterproductive/maladaptive) and has the potential to affect almost everything teachers do in their careers. Although none of the participants in the exploratory study had counterproductive immunity, they reported that they had witnessed or collaborated with peers who showed up.

After studying this exploration, Hiver believes that many questions remain unanswered. He thinks that in addition to productive and maladaptive types of immunity, there must also be non-immune and partial immune types and several sub-categories for productive and maladaptive types of immunity. They also want to define the types of teachers that are included in the broad types of immunity and the important characteristics of each type of teacher. For this purpose, Hiver conducted a validation study after the exploratory study.

In this validation study, Hiver used focus group interview data from forty-four L2 professionals (public/private school English teachers, teacher coaches, and administrators). She asked the teacher if she had ever met a teacher who could resist the difficulties she was experiencing and could act effectively in class without being prone to problems. She also asked participants to list the types of teachers they encountered or observed for the types of global teacher immunity identified in the exploratory study and give descriptive and creative names to them. Then, participants were asked to describe what these teachers thought, believed, did, and expected and what they felt through real-life examples. The results yielded different types and characteristics of teachers with some overlap and redundancy. Thus, participants in the last focus group were asked to look for overlap and redundancy in the types and characteristics of teachers. Eventually, illustrative descriptors for almost 30 types of teachers were realized.

After the focus group session, Hiver divided the types of teachers into more global types of teacher immunity, namely: (a) teachers who were productively immunized (i.e., those who had strong but healthy teacher immunity); (b) partially immunized teachers (i.e., those who have developed certain elements of a flexible and useful form of teacher immunity); (c) maladaptively immunized teachers (i.e., those with severe and counterproductive teacher immunity); (d) some maladaptive immunization teachers (i.e., those who have developed a partial aspect of the maladaptive form of teacher immunity); and (e) immunocompromised teachers (i.e., those who have not yet developed teacher immunity).

At this point, it is important to note that teacher immunity, like biological immunity, is manifested in two general forms: productive immunity and maladaptive immunity. Teachers who develop productive immunity are usually not prone to stress, failure, and fatigue. They are able to ignore distractions and cope with stress, and thus experience higher career satisfaction,

confidence, and commitment, and are eventually able to thrive in the profession. Teachers who develop maladaptive immunity, on the other hand, have enthusiasm, motivation, and self-efficacy. They can be very settled, conservative in pedagogy, and reluctant to change, even if it's for the better. They may not respond even when necessary and may feel proud. In their study, Hiver and Dörnyei (2017) provided a framework of interventions that could (be used to "restart" maladaptive immunity. The term "reboot" involves the destabilization of a fossil, maladaptive system to change the parameters underlying it in order to reform it into a productive teacher immunity (Hiver, 2015). He says that successful teachers reviving, or reorganizing, by recreating their professional identity through narration will be able to continue their work because of their productive immunity. Furthermore, although a reconstructed immune system will not be appropriate and require occasional maintenance, the effectiveness of rebooted teachers in the classroom and overall perceptions of their ability to function in the language teaching profession are expected to increase exponentially.

Hiver also examined crosses for overlap and redundancy in illustrative descriptors for the original pool of almost 30 teacher types and prepared a narrower list of nine teacher types (Spark Plug, The Visionary, Sell-out, The Fossilized Teacher, Over-compensator, Bloody Heart), The Lost Teacher, The Poseur, The Striver), their names all appeared during the focus group session. He also ensured that the key characteristics of each type of teacher identified during the focus group interviews were included in the description of each type of teacher. Finally, he synthesized the type of global teacher immunity with the type of teacher. It was found that each of the nine sub-types of teachers that emerged from the data analysis corresponded to one of the more global types of teacher immunity (Table 1).

**Table 1**  
*Global Teacher Immunity Types and Teacher Sub-types*

<b>Global Teacher Immunity Types</b>	<b>Teacher Sub-types</b>
Productively Immunized Outcome	The Spark Plug The Visionary
Maladaptively Immunized Outcome	The Sell-out The Fossilized Teacher
Immunocompromised Outcome	The Overcompensation The Bleeding Heart
Halfway Immunized Outcome	The Defeated Teacher the Poseur The Striver

As is observed in the reviewed studies, the researchers have rarely worked on the immunity of teachers in different contexts. Therefore, there is a need to work in this regard. So, the following research question was addressed in the present study:

**RQ.** What are the perceptions of English language teachers working in public schools and private language institutes about their job immunity?

## Method

### Design of the Study

An explanatory sequential mixed-method design was employed in this study to collect, analyze and interpret the data. According to Creswell (2013), with the mixed-methods approach, researchers incorporate methods of collecting or analyzing data from the quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single research study. Thus, in the first phase of the study, quantitative data were gathered through the questionnaires, which were designed to receive the participants'

perception of the immunity of Iranian EFL teachers. In the next phase of the study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the participants, taking into account the findings obtained through the administration of the immunity questionnaire.

### Participants

The participants of the present study were selected through the convenience sampling technique from among EFL teachers teaching at male/female public schools and language centers in Isfahan. Fifty of them were teaching English in Donyaye Zaban and Zaban Pooyesh language centers, and the rest (No= 50) were teaching at public schools. They were teaching at different levels of proficiency (elementary, intermediate, and advanced). They all had a B.A. degree in English language teaching, English literature, or translation studies. Their age range was 24 to 35 years.

### Instruments

For the purposes of the present study, two instruments were utilized as follows:

#### Immunity Questionnaire

The data needed for the quantitative section of the current study were gathered through the administration of a teacher immunity questionnaire developed by Hiver (2017). This questionnaire was composed of 39 Likert-scale items (see Appendix ). In order to elicit participants' views, seven points, six points, five points, four points, three points, two points, and one point were designed for the options *Strongly agree*, *rather agree*, *agree*, *neutral disagree*, *rather disagree*, and *strongly disagree*, respectively.

The items of the questionnaire were developed based on 7 scales. Teachers' perceived self-efficacy was measured by means of 7 items. These items included items such as "I have enough training and experience to deal with almost any learning problem in the classroom." The reliability of the items of this scale was  $\alpha = 0.78$ . The burnout scale was composed of 5 items and measured the participants' buildup of chronic stress and the corresponding emotional manifestation; for example, "There are days at school when I feel vulnerable." The internal consistency of the items was  $\alpha = 0.80$ . Resilience demonstrates teachers' capacity to cope with adversities in their job. This scale also included 5 items. Cronbach's alpha of these items was  $\alpha = 0.82$ . The next scale was concerned with teachers' attitudes toward teaching. This scale was again composed of 5 items. The reliability of the items was approved by Cronbach's alpha results  $\alpha = 0.79$ . The next 6 items dealt with another scale. Openness to change measured teachers' capabilities in adopting novelty and change. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was  $\alpha = 0.74$ . Classroom affectivity was concerned with teachers' feelings in their teaching practices; for example, "While teaching, I regularly feel depressed" or "I regularly feel inspired at school or in the classroom." This scale included 6 items that were adapted from Watson, Clark, and Tellegan (1988). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.81. The last 5 items of the questionnaire dealt with coping measuring actual controlling of distractors and challenges. For instance, one of the items was "When things get really stressful, I try to come up with a strategy about what to do," and the participants were supposed to check one of the seven options. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.77.

### Interview

A semi-structured interview with 9 Iranian English teachers was conducted to find plausible answers to the research question. Half of the candidates participating in the interview were selected from the participants in public high schools, and the other half were selected from the

teachers working in the mentioned private language institutes. The interview was composed of eight questions:

Can you tell me your ideas about the position of teachers in our country?

Do you believe in the concept of teacher immunity?

According to you, what is teacher immunity?

What is your perception of immunity in our own occupational contexts?

Do you think that teacher immunity is similar in private and public educational settings?

What are the reasons underlying the low level of job immunity in these two educational contexts?

What are the reasons underlying the high level of job immunity in these two educational contexts?

Can you name some of the factors affecting the sense of immunity in teachers as a whole?

### **Procedure**

As stated previously, the study was conducted in different public high schools and private language institutes in Isfahan. In order to keep the ethical norms, the researcher first explained all aspects of the questionnaire and interview, as well as the objectives of the study, to the participants. Then, the participants took about 20 to 35 minutes to answer the questionnaire. They were asked to answer all the items according to their own points of view, not by their intuitions about the teaching rules or trends provided by cultural norms. After that, 30 teachers participated in the interview. The researcher herself was the interviewer of the study. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes, based on the answers provided by the interviewees. Then, the scores obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed statistically, and the qualitative data were interpreted by the researcher to approve the responses given to the questions of the questionnaire.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Perceptions of Teachers Working in Public Schools and Language Institutes about Their Job Immunity**

The research question focused on the perceptions of teachers working in public schools and language institutes about their job immunity. As mentioned before, the needed data for answering such a question was obtained through the application of an interview. The oral interview was conducted immediately after the application questionnaires. The administration of interviews in this study was based on the idea that collecting data through a sequential and interrelated survey and interview, such as in a mixed method, would help to overcome the possible weaknesses of each individual method (Dornyei, 2007). Furthermore, we can better understand a complex phenomenon if we mix numerical data from quantitative analysis with the specific details obtained through qualitative analysis (Dornyei, 2007). According to Dornyei (2007), "mixed methods research has the unique potential to produce evidence of the validity of research outcome through the convergence and corroboration of results" (p. 5). Therefore, an interview session was used to gather additional qualitative data to triangulate and compare its findings with the ones obtained by the administration of the questionnaire on Teachers' immunity.

Nine teachers (4 teachers from public schools and 5 teachers from language institutes) were asked to participate in an informal interview with the researcher. The interview was an informal question-and-answer meeting between the researcher and the teachers. The interview sessions lasted for about fifteen minutes and were conducted in the native language of the participants, Persian. The recorded interviews were summarized and translated into English for analysis. An expert in the English language, one of the researcher's professional colleagues, was asked to check the reliability of the translations. All the concerns he raised were resolved after the necessary checks. Regarding the objectives of the interview, the researcher knew that in such a

semi-structured interview, topics determine the flow of the interview (Nunan, 1992); therefore, some pre-prepared questions were raised by the researcher, but the format of the interview was open. The questions raised for each interviewee were the same; however, the order or wording would change depending on the context.

It is worth noting that both semi-structured and fully structured interviews were taken into account during the process of instrument selection. Although fully structured interviews would have prevented unexpected responses, they may miss the unexpected answers which were not considered by the researcher. Thus, the interviews were conducted by raising general themes and guiding questions. A list of the questions can be found in chapter three.

### Summary and Analyses of Interviews

Table 4.9 provides a summary of the interviews. Column 1 was devoted to the names of each interviewee. Column 2 dealt with teachers' ideas about the position of teachers in Iran. Column 3 was concerned with whether teachers believe in the concept of teacher immunity. In column 4, the concept of teacher immunity was defined and clarified by the teachers. Columns 5 and 6 dealt with interviewees' perception of immunity in Iran's occupational contexts and whether teacher immunity level is similar in private and public educational settings, respectively. The next two sections (columns 7 and 8) presented the reasons underlying the low and high levels of job immunity in these two educational contexts. In the last column, the factors affecting the sense of immunity in teachers are presented. Empty boxes indicate that the interviewee was either not asked or did not answer it.

**Table 2**  
*Summary of the Analyses of the Interviews*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Name	Ideas on Teachers' position	Belief in the concept of teacher immunity	Definition of teacher immunity	perception of immunity in Iran's occupational contexts	teacher immunity level is similar in both settings	reasons underlying low immunity	reasons underlying high immunity	factors affecting immunity
Ahmad	Non-stable	yes	Stable position in the educational context	Weak due to internal (self-confidence and self-esteem) and external factors (condemned by the ministry of education and the ones in higher ranks)	No.	lack of monitoring by the government, employer's greed,	Monitoring the institutes by the government, Appreciate teachers in different ceremonies	Social, cultural, economic, and educational factors
Fatemeh	Non-stable	yes	Insured posts and salaries	Teachers suffer a significant	No. a language institutes,	In lowering the value of	Increasing the prestige	Various external and

				lack of immunity	it is highly dependent on the economic status of the teacher	education in the society	and value of teaching in the society	internal factors, from self-confidence to payment
Behrooz	Stable but ignored and condemned	yes	The sense of being effective in the educational context	Iranian teachers feel high levels of immunity due to their capabilities in teaching	No.	A large number of unemployed educated people	Being admired by officials and students, being well-paid, being confident	Increasing our capabilities, Being well-paid
Mina	Stable	Not heard before	Increasing teachers' sense of effectiveness	Iranian teachers feel high levels of immunity because they receive positive feedback from their students	It does not depend on the organization in which you are teaching	Low educational degrees or not being educated in the field they are involved (unrelated degrees)	Having an M.A. or Ph.D. Degrees in the field they are teaching	Continuing the education to be updated and respected by the degree.
Sadegh	just stable for the ones employed by the ministry	yes	Rewarding based on quality	Since external factors are very important, institute teachers are suffering from low immunity due to the contextual ignorance imposed to them	It is higher in public schools	Lack of employment, being ignored by the community and the ministry of education	Being appreciated regarding their capabilities and significant role in bringing up the next generation	Economic factors, being trusted by the officials and students' parents
Farahnaz	Non-stable	yes	Not to be fired easily for any kind	It is not observed in any of the employment	No.	Being condemned by the family	Various external and internal	Level of shyness, confidence,



			of excuse	positions in government organization		and authorities	factors such as self-esteem and self-confidence or encouraged by the authorities	motivation, government appraisal, encouraged and respected by the family
Ali-Reza	Low in terms of social, economic, cultural, and occupational position	Not heard before	The same as job immunity	even if you contest on the date that your salary is paid, the employer may ask you not to come to the class, even at the middle of the term	No. it is lower in language institutes	Lack of economic insurance	Being employed by the government	payment
Zohreh	Lower than any other job	A vague concept	Not to worry about losing your affective and effective position in the educational context.	as soon as I was hired by the educational ministry, I was relieved that if I worked well, I can work as long as I like, and they will pay me monthly	No.	Lack of self-confidence and inappropriate behavior of the educational stakeholders	High levels of self-confidence and appropriate behavior of the educational stakeholders	Respect, appreciation, being well-paid

**Content-Based Analysis of Interviews**

At first, teachers’ ideas on the position of teachers in the Iranian educational context were explored. Most of the participants believed in an unstable and uncertain condition. One of the interviewees mentioned that “teachers are Low in terms of social, economic, cultural, and occupational position.” Another teacher exaggeratedly stated that “teaching is lower than any other sort of job.” Then, the teachers were asked to have a definition of teachers’ immunity based on their own perceptions. Most of the answers contained similar content. One of the teachers working in the language institutes ironically stated that “job immunity means that you wake up in the morning and see that your class is given to another person, and you can do nothing.” Another teacher teaching in public schools believed that “immunity is concerned with the guarantee of the



job by insurance services that the employer cannot fire the employee whenever he wishes by any kind of excuse.” From these answers and other similar responses, the teacher concluded that all the interviewees knew the meaning of teachers’ job immunity.

Then, the teachers were asked about their perception of immunity in their own occupational contexts. All the teachers working in language institutes believed that teachers in these educational centers are suffering from low levels of job immunity. One of the teachers said that “even if you contest on the date that your salary is paid, the employer may ask you not to come to the class, even at the middle of the term.” On the other hand, teachers working in public schools believed that although their salaries were low, they were sure that nobody could dismiss them by any trivial excuse. One of the teachers mentioned that “as soon as I was hired by the educational ministry, I was relieved that if I work well, I can work as long as I like, and they will pay me monthly.”

The teachers were asked about the reasons underlying the high and low levels of job immunity in these two educational contexts. The teachers in language institutes believed that lack of monitoring by the government, the large number of unemployed educated people, employers’ greed, and lowering the value of education in society are among the most important reasons underlying this catastrophe on language institutes. One of the teachers stated that “when universities graduate a large number of educators in different fields of study each year, there are lots of unemployed individuals that will accept any employment condition to earn the least amount of money to stay alive.” Another teacher believed that “government has no monitoring system to check the institutes as employers, even the officials know the situation, but they do not bother to limit this injustice.” The next teacher “this is the natural consequence of the elevation of wealth over knowledge in the society.” On the other hand, one of the teachers proposed the idea that “employers in private institutes are greedy; they want to earn as much as they can. Therefore, they will expire the teacher whenever they think that he/she is not going hand in hand with their economic goals and ideas”.

Finally, teachers were asked about the factors affecting the sense of immunity in teachers as a whole. Various responses were proposed in this regard. One of the interviewees believed that “a teacher who is confident and considers him/herself self-effective will have higher levels of job immunity.” Another participant stated that “shyness and lack of teaching experience can be considered among the reasons underlying the feeling of lack of immunity in any educational context.” On the other hand, one of the teachers claimed that “immunity is not an inner personal feeling by any means. The environmental factors should prepare it for the teacher, and the instructor has no role in this regard”.

### Conclusion

The interpretation of results obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data requires an integrated approach in which the findings should be triangulated to confirm conclusions and understand a complex issue. This study was conducted to determine the impact of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on teachers’ immunity levels in the Iranian EFL context considering language centers and public schools. Therefore, in this section, the results obtained by the three survey questionnaires are combined and confirmed with the results of the interviews.

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### Appendix A

#### Language Teacher Immunity Questionnaire Developed by Hiver (2017)

items	Strongly disagree	Rather disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Rather agree	Strongly agree
Self-efficacy							
If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.							
When all factors are considered, I am a powerful influence on my students' success in the classroom.							
I do not have confidence in my professional ability to help students							

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learn.

---

I have enough training and experience to deal with almost any learning problem in the classroom.

---

I am not certain that I am making a difference in the lives of my students.

---

I can deal effectively with the problems of my students.

---

I feel I am positively influencing my students' lives through my teaching.

---

**Burnout**

---

At school, I feel burned out from my work.

---

I feel that teaching is hardening me emotionally.

---

There are days at school when I feel vulnerable.

---

I am emotionally drained by teaching.

---

There are days when I feel insecure at school.

---

**Resilience**

---

I can get through difficult times because I've experienced difficulty before.

---

Failures double my motivation to succeed as a teacher.

---

I have a hard time making it through stressful events.

---

I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.

---

It is hard for me to recover when something bad happens.

---

**Attitudes Toward Teaching**

---

I enjoy working as a teacher because it brings me pleasure.

---

Teaching is my life, and I can't imagine giving it up.

---

Teaching brings me very little satisfaction.

---

If I could choose an occupation today, I would not choose to be a teacher.

---

I am tempted to leave the teaching profession.

---

**Openness to Change**

---

As a teacher, I prefer the familiar to the unknown.

---

I do not get impatient when there are no clear answers or solutions to my

---

problems as a teacher.

I get frustrated when my work is unfamiliar and outside my comfort zone as a teacher.

In my teaching, I find it hard to give up on something that has worked for me in the past, even if it is no longer very successful.

As a teacher, I like it when things are uncertain or unpredictable.

The “tried and true” ways of teaching are the best.

#### Classroom Affectivity

At school or in the classroom, I often feel upset.

While teaching, I regularly feel depressed.

I regularly feel inspired at school or in the classroom.

Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me in the classroom than bad.

It's hard to imagine anyone getting excited about teaching.

In my teaching, I always look on the bright side of things.

#### Coping

When problems arise at work, I accept what has happened and learn to live with it.

When I am under a lot of stress, I just avoid thinking or doing anything about the situation.

When things get really stressful, I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.

When I encounter a bad situation at school, I look for something good in what is happening.

I don't feel that I can cope with problems that come my way



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