

# Immunity among Iranian EFL Teachers: Sources, Impacts, and the Developmental Path

Research Article

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## Abstract

As a novel concept in teacher psychology, language teacher immunity is a strong indicator of how teachers thrive or survive in the face of adversity. Research on language teacher immunity is still in its nascent stage, and the present qualitative study tries to fill the gap in the existing literature. This study aimed to investigate the possible sources of immunity among Iranian EFL teachers, the impact immunity may have on teachers' classroom practices, and intervention strategies EFL teachers suggested to influence the development of immunity. Based on interviews with 13 seasoned high school EFL teachers, we found that four main stressors, namely, personal-level, school-level, organization-based, and sociocultur-

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al stressors, were the sources of maladaptive immunity development. The only cause for the development of positive immunity in EFL teachers was altruistic motivation. It was further found that those EFL teachers with positive immunity kept functioning effectively in their classrooms, whereas teachers with maladaptive immunity set into a state of indifference towards their students and complacency without exercising agency. These teachers had surrendered in the face of a multitude of adversities they faced during their professional life. The findings also indicated that in order to influence the development of immunity formation process to gear it towards an adaptive one, teachers' economic situation should be improved by increasing their salaries, praising and appreciating their efforts, organizing practical in-service teacher training courses, and supporting them at schools by principals and other educational authorities.

**Keywords:** language teacher immunity, teacher motivation, Iranian English teachers, teacher stress, immunity type

## Introduction

Over the past half a century abundant research on 'learner-centered' approaches have focused on language learners' psychology and well-being (Mercer et al., 2016; Sampson, 2016) but language teachers' psychology has been given short shrift in the field of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) learning and teaching. Therefore, investigating language teacher psychology is essential not only in relation to learner achievement, but because teachers themselves deserve their professional dignity regarded, their viewpoints validated, their agency respected, and their voices and concerns heeded (Moskowitz, 2018). Research in language teacher psychology is still in its early stages, and there exist underdeveloped areas and clear gaps in language teachers' psychology (Collie et al., 2018; Mercer et al., 2016). Those areas and gaps include: the connection between teachers' identity and other factors of their psychology, the interconnection of teachers' emotions and beliefs, the link between teachers' motivation and their psychology and social setting, teachers' autonomy, and teachers' emotions. In line with the above gaps, more scholars have addressed other gaps that exist in the area of teachers' psychology such as the impact of perfectionism on the psychological states of EFL teachers (Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, 2016), the effect of culture on EFL teachers' burnout (Saboori & Pishghadam, 2016), the impact of EFL teachers' job (dis)satisfaction on their job performance (Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2015, 2016) examining L2 teachers' hopefulness on their teaching commitment and motivation (Hiver, 2016a), and investigating EFL teachers' demotivation in culturally specific contexts (Yaghoubinejad et al., 2016) .

Since researching language teachers' psychology is in its infancy (Hiver, 2018), it has given rise to the emergence of new concepts and constructs. One of these novel constructs is language teacher immunity (Hiver, 2015; Hiver, 2017; Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). Language teacher immunity has been defined as "a robust armoring system that emerges in response to high-intensity threats and allows teachers to maintain professional equilibrium and instructional ef-

fectiveness” (Hiver, 2017, p. 269). In stressful and adverse conditions, this immunity can take on two global types: productive (positive) and maladaptive (negative). Research on language teacher immunity is in its nascent stage and needs to be fine-tuned by further investigation (Hiver, 2016b). Furthermore, as examining novel constructs is essential to illuminate understanding of teachers’ psychology (Collie et al., 2018), the present study, then, endeavors to find out what factors caused the development of a given immunity type, the impact that immunity might have on EFL teachers’ classroom practices, and interventions that can put EFL teachers on the productive immunity development path. This study is the follow-up to our previous study (Haseli Songhori et al., 2018) in which we investigated the language teacher immunity among Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers through self-organization perspective. The findings of the previous study revealed that maladaptive immunity was a dominant type of immunity among Iranian English language teachers. It was also found that both productively and maladaptively immunized teachers went through the four stages of self-organization process in forming their immunity type. Hopefully, the findings of the present study can help fill the gap in the existing literature on language teacher psychology, in general, and language teacher immunity, in particular.

This qualitative study, therefore, aimed to find the answers to the following research questions:

- 1) What are the possible sources of immunity among Iranian EFL teachers?
- 2) What impact does language teacher immunity have on Iranian English language teachers’ classroom practice?
- 3) What are the most effective intervention strategies which positively influence the development of the Iranian English language teachers’ immunity according to the Iranian EFL teachers?

## **Review of the Related Literature**

### ***Language Teacher Immunity***

The concept of language teacher immunity was put forward by Hiver (2015) and Hiver & Dörnyei (2017) so as to fill the lacuna in language teacher motivation and professional identity. Language teacher immunity is a robust armoring system that emerges in response to adverse conditions (Hiver, 2018) and ensures the survival of a system (Hiver, 2015), here a language teacher. The concept of teacher immunity puts forward a framework that elucidates the processes through which teachers in general, and language teachers in particular, attempt to come up with a defense mechanism to buffer or assuage the effects of unpleasant disturbances that might threaten their motivation to teach and their professional identity (Hiver, 2016b; Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). The metaphor of teacher immunity is derived from biological immunity and has two global manifestations: productive (positive) and maladaptive (negative) (Hiver, 2015). Language teacher immunity in its productive representation protects teachers from the effects of certain adversities because of their personality,

while others with maladaptive immunity experience increased risk regarding the negative consequences from stressors (MacIntyre et al., 2019).

### ***Differentiating Language Teacher Immunity from Cognate Constructs***

In order to gain a better understanding of language teacher immunity, it should be differentiated from other cognate concepts that have been put forward since the 1970s when individual well-being was a central concern in psychology (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). These concepts include resilience, adaptability, buoyancy, coping, burnout, and engagement. In the field of educational psychology, these concepts are well-attested, but in applied linguistics, and specifically in language teacher psychology research, they are under-researched.

There is a multidisciplinary interest in the concept of resilience, and this interest has culminated in various definitions. In their study on teachers and resilience, Pearce and Morrison (2011) defined it as “the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances” (p. 48). According to this definition, resilience is not an innate quality; rather, it is a relative, developmental, and dynamic concept that leads to adaptation in the face of challenges (Gu & Day, 2007). Considering the nature of resilience, it seems to be similar to the concept of language immunity. However, Hiver (2018) differentiates language teacher immunity from resilience based on three aspects. Firstly, language teacher immunity is an emergent outcome of self-organization which is an adaptive reaction to domain-specific crises, while resilience is the commonplace outcome of ordinary systems for adaptation. Secondly, language teacher immunity is dual-natured: safeguarding the teacher against adversities or threatening their effectiveness and functioning, whereas resilience promotes individuals’ positive functioning. Thirdly, through analytical narratives, language teacher immunity becomes part of teachers’ professional identity. Nevertheless, resilience has not been explicitly involved in the formation of professional identity.

Adaptability is an essential personal capacity that enables one to successfully adjust to changing circumstances inherent in life (Collie & Martin, 2016). Collie and Martin (2017) define adaptability as an “individual’s capacity to use strategies to regulate their thoughts, actions, and emotions in order to effectively respond to new, changing, or uncertain situations” (p. 30). Three key terms in this definition are change, novelty, and uncertainty. In order to deliver effective instruction (Margolis, 2018), teachers should be able to constructively respond and react to changing, novel, and uncertain situations which are inherent in their profession (Collie & Martin, 2016). In language learning and teaching contexts, examples of these situations are limited and shrinking budgets, teaching new courses, working with students from unfamiliar cultures, and being agile enough to handle multilevel classrooms (Margolis, 2018).

Like resilience, adaptability aims at enhancing one’s positive functioning. Therefore, it is considered as a strategy or skill which individuals must adopt to deal with the demands of the situations which are novel, changing, and uncer-

tain. In some studies, (e.g., Le Cornu, 2009; Mansfield et al., 2012), teachers' adaptability has been viewed as one of the core components of resilience. Consequently, the differentiation between resilience and language teacher immunity applies to adaptability too.

To the best of our knowledge, to date, no study has investigated the concept of buoyancy in language teacher research. Thus, it makes a new line of investigation in the field of language teacher psychology. Parker & Martin (2009) defined buoyancy as the individuals' self-perceptions to their ability to successfully handle the hassles of daily life such as a bad mark on a test, competing deadlines, pressure, and challenging tasks. On the surface, resilience and buoyancy appear to be conceptually similar, but they are different in that research on resilience investigates chronic and extreme life adversities which are threats that could undermine development (Collie & Martin, 2016), whereas buoyancy research zeroes in on the everyday setbacks and struggles which characterize the course of everyday life and work (Parker & Martin, 2009). These setbacks and struggles cannot necessarily be taken as adversities, hence not threatening developmental processes. Therefore, buoyancy has been equated to "everyday resilience" (e.g., Martin & Marsh, 2008; Martin et al., 2013).

Coping strategies are vital as an individual grapples with adversities. Compas et al. (2001) defined coping as "conscious volitional efforts to regulate emotion, cognition, behavior, physiology, and the environment in response to stressful events or circumstances" (p. 89). This definition implies that coping refers to the strategies used following the appraisal of a stressful event (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Put it another way, coping can be taken as "processes that are enacted in response to stress" (Compas et al., 2014, p.72). Adopting certain coping strategies in response to stressful situations can be adaptive such as problem-solving, seeking support, reappraisal, information-seeking, emotion expression and regulation, or maladaptive like avoidance, escape, rumination, denial, helplessness, passivity, confusion, concealment, isolation, self-pity, dependency (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2015). Coping and language teacher immunity share adaptive and maladaptive dimensions. Coping is just regulating teachers' actions in stressful events. It is an element that contributes to the formation of immunity. Also, since coping strategies are responses a teacher adopts to deal with a challenging situation, they do not include explicit developmental elements in professional identity formation.

Other concepts that are similar to language teacher immunity are burnout and engagement. Burnout as a multidimensional syndrome and a psychological erosion process is associated with organizational and work stress (Maslach & Leiter, 2008) and is the result of the prolonged involvement in stressful environments (Richards et al., 2016). Burnout has three interrelated components *emotional exhaustion* which is assumed to develop first (Maslach & Leiter, 2016) refers to "feeling emotionally and physically drained by one's work" (Richards et al., 2018, p. 3). Emotional exhaustion, then, leads to *depersonalization* (also called *cynicism*) which relates to the negative, unsympathetic attitude toward others in the workplace (Richards et al., 2016). As depersonalization

continues, the individuals starts to develop critical attitudes toward their work (Richards et al., 2018). This last component is *reduced personal accomplishment* which refers to feelings of inefficacy and a lack of achievement and productivity in work (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). The converse of burnout is engagement which is a positive construct. Engagement is a productive and fulfilling state that teachers have in their work. Engagement can be regarded as the positive extremes of the three dimensions of burnout (Maslach, 2011). Comparing engagement and burnout, it can be said that teachers who enjoy engagement have a state of high energy in their job rather than emotional exhaustion, they are strongly involved in teaching rather than being depersonalized, and they have a strong feeling of efficacy rather than inefficacy. As mentioned above, it is the dual nature of language teacher immunity that distinguishes it from other similar concepts.

Comparing language teacher immunity to its cognate constructs shows that language teacher immunity is a stronger predictor of how language teachers survive or thrive in their profession. Considering the tremendous impact language teacher immunity has on teachers' daily classroom teaching, their motivation, and professional identity, language teacher immunity is considered as a useful construct in offering more insight into teacher's cognition, experiences, and identities (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017).

### ***Language Teacher Immunity, Teacher Effectiveness, and (De)motivation***

To date, research on language teacher immunity (e.g., Haseli Songhori et al., 2018; Hiver, 2016b, 2017) has shown that classroom practice and effectiveness of teachers hinges significantly upon the immunity type that they have developed and acquired over their career. There is a remarkable difference between teachers with productive immunity and those with maladaptive one vis-à-vis their instructional abilities. While productive immunity provides teachers with a robust armoring mechanism which helps them bounce back and overcome challenges, upheaval, and adversities in their classrooms and teaching profession (Hiver, 2018), maladaptive immunity debilitates teachers through adopting skewed coping strategies which culminate in aversion to change, apathy, cynicism, indifference, and fossilization and plateauing (Haseli Songhori et al., 2018; Hiver, 2017).

Productive teacher immunity equips teachers with the following characteristics: *specificity* (that helps teachers respond appropriately to specific perturbations they encounter); *memory* (prior encounter and handling of upheaval helps teachers to intelligently respond to future disturbances); *adaptability* (an aspect of resilience that evolves in response to changes to help teachers bounce back from adversity and function effectively); and *durability* (teacher immunity sustains its protective capacity in the face of stress, upheaval, and failure) (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). Teaching is a stressful profession (MacIntyre et al., 2019; Talbot & Mercer, 2019), and only those teachers that possess the above-mentioned characteristics will survive and thrive. If they do not, they will ulti-

mately plateau and fossilize. Plateauing prevents teachers from growth, and to top it off, it can be contagious (Milstein, 1990). That is, novice teachers' identity is, to some extent, influenced by their experienced colleagues who suffer from inertia and fossilization.

Language teacher immunity originates from the factors that motivate or demotivate teachers in their profession, and, as a result, solidifies into their professional identity (Hiver, 2017). Teacher motivation is "one of the crucial factors which might have to do with the success or failure of educational systems" (Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2015, p. 2). Motivation is squarely linked with job satisfaction which may have serious positive or negative consequences for not only teachers' well-being and health, but also for the quality of education (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Motivation has been defined in different ways by different scholars and many "theoretical strands have been put forward to explain the relationship between individual motivation, job satisfaction, and performance at work" (Müller et al., 2009, p. 579). Ryan and Deci (2000) offer a process-oriented definition which covers both motivation and demotivation definition. Their definition is "to be motivated means to be moved to do something. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is thus characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone who is energized or activated toward an end is considered motivated" (p. 54). Therefore, motivation can be considered as a drive or motive that pushes an individual towards achieving a goal. Research findings on motivation have generally identified three sources or types of motivation: Extrinsic motivation which is concerned with aspects of the job not inherent in the work itself, such as salary and employment and promotion opportunities (Moses et al., 2017); intrinsic motivation which has to do with "satisfaction of needs and interests, emotional payoffs, and the internal desire for personal growth, intellectual fulfillment and meaningfulness often found in educational settings" (Hiver et al., 2018, p. 24); and altruistic motivation which is the personal desire to help students to succeed and considering teaching as a socially valuable job (Müller et al., 2009). Why teachers choose teaching as their profession and remain in it hinges, to a large extent, upon their specific motivation. When teachers start their careers, their motivations are shaped and reshaped by ongoing experiences, emotions, and stressors they encounter (Hiver et al., 2018). Research in educational mainstream has identified various sources of stress that can negatively impact teachers' motivation. These include: discipline problems, time pressure, workload, poor working conditions, students' diversity, lack of teacher agency, lack of recognition and value, low remuneration, lack of facilities, lack of resources and administrative support (De Costa et al., 2019; Rahmati et al., 2019; Skaalvic & Skaalvic, 2017; Wieczorek, 2016). These stressors are experienced by all teachers the world over and have the potential to undermine teachers' motivation. Iranian language teachers are no exception. As research in the field of teacher motivation is still in its nascent stage (Urđan, 2014), investigating factors that motivate and demotivate teachers in the Iranian EFL context is also under-researched.



Iran is a culturally specific context (Yaghoubinejad et al., 2016) with its own unique system in teacher recruitment, material development, and curriculum implementation in the centralized, state-run education system (Sadeghi & Ghaderi, 2018) with little room for teachers' autonomy and agency which can contribute to teachers' demotivation. The findings of several studies (e.g., Akbari & Eghtesadi Roudi, 2017; Roohani & Dayeri, 2019; Sadeghi & Sa'adatpourvahid, 2016; Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2015, 2016; Soodmand Afshar & Hamzavi, 2017; Yaghoubinejad et al., 2016) investigating motivating and demotivating factors among Iranian EFL teachers working in state-run schools have yielded relatively similar results. As a couple of studies indicate, the only type of motivation that aids teachers to function effectively in the face of a slew of demotivating factors is the altruistic motivation (Haseli Songhori et al., 2018; Rahmati et al., 2019; Yaghoubinejad et al., 2016). On the contrary, a large number of teachers working in junior and senior high schools suffer from high levels of job-related stress (Sadeghi & Sa'adatpourvahid, 2016) and grapple with daily hassles in workplace, which, more often than not, culminates in their demotivation and burnout. The demotivating factors reported in several studies conducted in Iran are more or less similar to other foreign contexts barring some context-specific ones. Iranian state-sector EFL teachers consider the following as big threats to their motivation: lack of administrative support, students' disruptive classroom behavior (Roohani & Dayeri, 2019), lack of autonomy and agency, parents' high expectations, limited or lack of facilities in schools and classrooms (Rahmati et al., 2019), unsatisfactory supervision and monitoring of teachers, and students' demotivation (Soodmand Afshar & Hamzavi, 2017). In their study, Yaghoubinejad et al. (2016) reported the following as the culture-specific demotivating factors among Iranian junior high school teachers: lack of social recognition and social respect and value, inadequate remuneration, and lack of support and understanding regarding English education in schools.

## Method

Because of the interpretive aspects (Merriam, 2009) of this study, a qualitative research design was employed for the collection and analysis of the empirical data. A qualitative research design, according to Creswell (2012), enables researchers to "develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (p. 206). In the current study, the central phenomenon is the quest for the roots of immunity and its impacts on the classroom practices of EFL teachers in Iran as well as changing or tweaking the immunity development process.

## Context

The government of Iran is the provider of education for almost everyone. The education system is centralized (Sadeghi & Ghaderi, 2018) and is aimed at the matriculation exam (Konkur Exam) that takes place at the end of high school and is a mandatory exam for students if they want to gain entrance into universities and other higher education institutions. Any decision having to do with



the education, such as designing the curriculum, writing and selecting textbooks, and recruiting and training teachers, including English language teachers, is made under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology.

Before 2012, there were some teacher education centers responsible for training would-be teachers, but in 2012, a state-run teacher education university, called Farhangian University, was founded, and this university is the sole provider of teacher training programs across Iran (Kuusisto et al., 2016). Typically, teacher training programs are completed within four years after which the graduates receive their Bachelor's degree. Upon graduation, they start their teaching career at different schools. Iranian school teachers have to teach 24 hours per week, and this workload is mandatory. Their monthly salary ranges from 3500000 to 4500000 Tomans (Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2015). Due to high rates of inflation, this salary is low and insufficient, and most teachers have to have a second job in order to meet just the basic needs of their life. This has resulted in a decline in teachers' social status and motivation to teach. On the other hand, some teachers have kept functioning effectively for intrinsic reasons, such as having a positive internal derive toward helping students learn, and feeling internally satisfied with serving the society (Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2016).

### ***Participants***

Convenience and snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit 13 EFL teachers working in state-run high schools. They ranged in age from 31 to 53 (average 40.85). Eight of the participants were male and five were female. All the participants were seasoned English language teachers (6 years to 30 years of experience) who were quite familiar with the high school settings and the motivating, demotivating, and stress-causing factors and the coping strategies that teachers use to deal with these factors. The participants' complete background information is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
*Demographic information of the participants*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Teaching experience (years)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Interviewee 1</b>	39	MA	16	Male	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 2</b>	36	BA	6	Female	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 3</b>	37	MA	16	Female	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 4</b>	53	MA	30	Male	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 5</b>	39	MA	23	Male	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 6</b>	34	MA	8	Male	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 7</b>	31	BA	6	Male	Translation
<b>Interviewee 8</b>	48	BA	25	Male	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 9</b>	48	MA	26	Male	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 10</b>	32	BA	8	Female	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 11</b>	35	MA	10	Female	Linguistics
<b>Interviewee 12</b>	48	MA	27	Female	Teaching
<b>Interviewee 13</b>	51	MA	29	Male	Linguistics

### ***Instruments***

In this study, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were the main data collection instrument. Before conducting the interviews, an interview protocol was designed to be used as a guide during the interviews. Besides, the participants' answers made the interviewer ask some probing questions (Hatch, 2002) to increase the depth of the interviews. The interview protocol began with a description of the purposes of the study to the participants. Then, questions were asked to gather the participants' demographic information along with the main questions regarding the views and opinions of the participants vis-à-vis the possible sources of immunity among Iranian EFL teachers, the effect of a certain type of immunity on EFL teachers' classroom performance, and the most effective intervention strategies which could positively influence the development of the Iranian EFL teachers' immunity.

### ***Procedure***

The first researcher conducted all the interviews in quiet locations either at the university where he teaches or at the schools where the participants taught. Before each interview, the interviewer explained the purpose of the study to the interviewees, and they signed the ethics sheet that indicated their voluntary participation and confidentiality of their interview data. The interviews were conducted in Persian to ensure that the participants felt comfortable in discussing their experiences and expressing their feelings in their mother tongue. Each interview lasted between 25 to 40 min. The interviews were audio-recorded with a smartphone using Easy Voice Recorder (version 1.8.1). The interviews, then, were transcribed verbatim and used for data analysis.

In order to analyze the data, conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used to identify themes and categories with the assistance of MAXQDA Analytics Pro software. In order to analyze the data, the following steps were taken based on Graneheim and Lundman's (2004) work. As a first step, the interview transcripts were read several times to gain a sense of the whole. Then, the transcripts were divided into meaningful units and these units were also condensed. These condensed units were subsequently abstracted and labeled with subthemes. Based on comparing their similarities and differences, the ensuing subthemes were then sorted into themes. Finally, themes were formulated which were the expressions of latent content of the transcripts. Table 2 presents an example of how themes were formulated.

To increase trustworthiness and reliability in this study, the analysis was strengthened by 'member checking' and 'peer debriefing' (Ary et al., 2018). In order to carry out member checking, also called 'respondent validation' (Merriam, 2009), during the analysis of the data, examples of the data, along with the interpretations, were sent to some of the participants to solicit their comments and feedback about the findings which were later included into the research process through confirming, changing, or fine-tuning the interpretations. Then, a friend of the first author, who was a disinterested peer and an expert in quali-

tative research and was familiar with the research context and methodology, took the role of a peer debriefer who carefully and critically analyzed a sample of interviews. The discussion between the first author and his friend on what they had found determined that the interpretations were reasonable.

**Table 2.**  
*Theme formulation process*

Meaningful unit	Condensed meaningful units	Subthemes	Theme
A stress-causing factor that happens inside my classroom is that my students show no interest in learning English! And this disinterest demotivates me because I do not get positive feedback from the students	Students showing no interest in learning English	Lack of interest among students	Students' demotivation
One of the factors that causes teachers' stress in classroom contexts is the lack of motivation in students. The main reason for this demotivation is rooted in our society where students see no point in learning English. As an EFL teacher, I get frustrated because of this situation.	Students who lack motivation	Demotivation in students	Students' demotivation
Meaningful unit	Condensed meaningful units	Subthemes	Theme
A stress-causing factor that happens inside my classroom is that my students show no interest in learning English! And this disinterest demotivates me because I do not get positive feedback from the students	Students showing no interest in learning English	Lack of interest among students	Students' demotivation
One of the factors that causes teachers' stress in classroom contexts is the lack of motivation in students. The main reason for this demotivation is rooted in our society where students see no point in learning English. As an EFL teacher, I get frustrated because of this situation.	Students who lack motivation	Demotivation in students	Students' demotivation

## Findings

In the analysis of the interview transcripts, some themes were identified vis-à-vis sources of immunity and intervention strategies to gear the immunity development toward a positive, adaptive one.

### ***Sources of English Teachers' Immunity***

As mentioned above, the sources of immunity in language teachers have to do with the factors that motivate or demotivate them in their careers. The demotivating factors are at the core of maladaptive immunity development. These demotivating factors are the stressors that EFL teachers face and the skewed and wrong strategies they adopt in tackling these stressors. Consequently, the final outcome of this process over the years is maladaptive immunity which has symptoms like frustration, cynicism, aversion to change, callousness, apathy, emotional exhaustion, resignedness, inefficacy, jaded indifference (Hiver & Dornyei, 2017). On the other hand, teachers with adaptive immunity enjoy the following characteristics: specificity, memory, adaptability, and durability (Hiver, 2017). They have developed a robust armoring system in dealing with stressors and adversities in their profession. The interview data of the study revealed four major types of stressors which were considered by the interviewees as the sources of maladaptive immunity. These were: *personal-level*, *school-level*, *organization-based*, and *sociocultural* stressors. The first two types are considered as micro-level and the other two as macro-level stressors. The interviewees mentioned only one source for the positive immunity among EFL teachers: intrinsic and altruistic motivation.

### ***Sources Related to the Maladaptive Immunity***

Although every teacher possesses a unique profile of what types of stressors might afflict them, the analysis of the interview data indicated that school-level stressors were the most reported stressors among the four stressor types. Among these, *unsupportive principals* were mentioned with the highest frequency by the interviewees as the trigger of stress in English teachers. This seems to be due to lack of autonomy and agency on the part of teachers and the views the principals have towards students' grades because higher grades indicate better achievement. Therefore, the school principals are very strict with teachers and force them to follow the exact syllabus and school regulations. As a result, "teachers become mere implementers of prescribed initiatives and schemes without recourse to their own professional knowledge and experience" (Ghorbani, 2009, p. 132). The following extracts were taken from the EFL teachers' interview data as evidence in this regard.

Extract 1: *Once I taught in a school whose principal had imposed some strict regulations. She didn't consider whether I was a good teacher or not. All she thought about was obeying those strict school regulations. This really annoyed me and made me apathetic towards my students! (Interviewee 12)*

Extract 2: *I am a teacher and love to be independent and autonomous in my teaching. But our principal continually checks on me and limits me and it*

*seems that she puts shackles on me. The present situation makes me emotionally drained and I feel I have no enthusiasm in my job anymore.*  
(Interviewee 3)

The next stressor experienced by EFL teachers which was also reported with rather high frequency was *students' demotivation*. One main reason which causes students to become demotivated in learning English is that they see no practical use for learning a language in their real life. This can have a strongly negative influence on English teachers' motivation to teach. The following extracts express this concern as a stressor:

Extract 3: *One of the factors that causes teachers' stress in classroom contexts is the lack of motivation in students. The main reason for this demotivation is rooted in our society where students see no point in learning English. As an EFL teacher, I get frustrated because of this situation.* (Interviewee 13)

Extract 4: *A stress-causing factor that happens inside my classroom is that my students show no interest in learning English! And this disinterest demotivates me because I do not get positive feedback from the students.* (Interviewee 4)

*Inappropriate classroom setting* was another factor that caused stress in EFL teachers. Learning English requires a separate classroom with audio-visual facilities. However, in almost all schools in Iran the same classroom which is allocated for learning and teaching chemistry, physics, geography, etc., it is also used for teaching English. Therefore, EFL teachers have to resort to the traditional method of language teaching and only use the textbook and whiteboard for teaching English. As interviewee 2 stated, "*lack of facilities makes EFL teachers like me feel stressed and frustrated, and just use their traditional method of teaching*". Other stressors identified as school-level ones were *students' misbehavior* and *oversized and heterogeneous classes*. Like the aforementioned stressors, these two also put much stress on teachers and could cause teachers' demotivation because EFL teachers stated that they could not control the students in their classrooms and gradually became indifferent towards students and their profession.

The interviewees of the current research also identified a number of *organization-based triggers* of maladaptive language teacher immunity. Organization-based factors are at macro level and pertain to the provincial education offices and the Ministry of Education. For this type of stressor, the data revealed that the interviewees talked about four different factors that caused stress in teachers. The first factor is *no/inappropriate supervision on teachers' work*. This stressor is quite demotivating for EFL teachers because, as a couple of the in-

interviewees mentioned, the teachers think that they are doing something worthless in class.

Extract 5: *Nobody cares about what is happening in my class and what I am teaching to my students.* (Interviewee 5)

Extract 6: *Well, when a teacher puts much energy in class and they notice that nobody cares, then that teacher experiences stress and little by little becomes demotivated.* (Interviewee 7)

The second organization-based stressor expressed by the interviewees was *teachers' financial dissatisfaction*. The economic status of teachers in Iran is one of the main stressors they experience in their careers. Their low remuneration and bad economic situation constantly pester them to the extent that they become dissatisfied with their job (Soodman Afshar & Doosti, 2015). The following extract indicated how this financial dissatisfaction triggered stress in the teacher.

Extract 7: *Financial dissatisfaction has a tremendous negative impact on my mind and soul. This stressor causes me not to put my optimal effort in teaching. I just try to quickly finish class and go on my second job to be able to support my family.* (Interviewee 5)

*Insufficient class time* and *introduction of new books* are other stressors that are directly related to the organization-based factors. Class time and new books are imposed on teachers from education offices and the Ministry of Education. Teachers have no agency to use their initiation in designing materials for their class. This really weakens teachers' autonomous motivation (Hiver et al., 2018). These stressors were mentioned by the interviewees as the following:

Extract 8: *One thing that makes me stressed is the new books introduced by the Ministry of Education. They introduce new books but it is not clear for the teachers what they have had in mind in introducing the new book. The books are supposed to improve students' listening and speaking skills, but the only thing that is not taken into account in the actual classrooms is the development of these skills.* (Interviewee 10)

Extract 9: *What students are going to learn in one hour and a half per week? What the teachers are going to teach to their students during this very limited class hour? These put a lot of stress on English teachers.* (Interviewee 1)

Regarding personal-level stressor, *teachers' lack of English knowledge* was a major trigger of stress among the study participants. This lack of knowledge can pertain to teachers' lack of technical or content knowledge. Quite surprisingly, only two interviewees mentioned personal-level stressors and this type of stressor as the only one. The remaining 11 interviewees did not talk about their personal-level stressors. The following extracts taken from those two EFL teachers' interviews substantiated this concern.

Extract 10: *The problem that I have seen in English teachers is their weakness in skills related to English language and its teaching. Most of the teachers, consciously or unconsciously, are not familiar with the new teaching methods. If they are, they think that these new methods are not applicable in our context. For this reason, they are scared to use new methods or avoid them altogether.* (Interviewee 4)

Extract 11: *Teachers' lack of English language knowledge and their weakness in speaking and listening skills put them in a lot of stressful situations in class. And due to this they have come to this conclusion that they are just repeating very limited grammar and vocabulary every year.* (Interviewee 6)

The last category of stressors is sociocultural ones. *Lack of teacher social status* and *little value for English language* were two stressors reported by interviewees. As teachers are like the slaves and implementers of the prescribed curriculum, they gradually lose their respect in the eye of the people. This has a detrimental impact on teachers' morale and motivation. The following extract indicates the EFL teachers' resentment with their lack of social status.

Extract 12: *Our society does not understand the importance of teachers and the job they do. Unfortunately, this lack of understanding puts a lot of mental pressure on teachers.* (Interviewee 5)

When people and society do not respect and appreciate teachers and their job, one consequence would be little value for English language itself. As a trigger of stress in EFL teachers, this interviewee expressed his opinion in this regard in the following extract:

Extract 13: *The reason for the little value that English receives is related to the society. When students have no motivation and purpose in learning English, so, they say to themselves 'why try to learn it'. English language and its learning seem useless to them.* (Interviewee 13)



### ***Sources Related to the Positive Immunity***

Despite the various sources of stressors like low remuneration, lack of supervision on teachers' work, unsupportive principals, demotivated students which had afflicted almost all English teachers, English teachers who were adapting towards productive immunity expressed their positive attitudes towards their career and students, "*Every year I am learning positive things to help me continue my career for thirty years. This is because I love teaching and my students*" (Interviewee 6), or "*I didn't surrender when faced with lack of appreciation from Education office. I just stuck to my goals and purposes in teaching English for the sake of my students*" (Interviewee 4).

The analysis of the data revealed, as is understood from the above quotes, that EFL teachers kept functioning effectively due to their intrinsic and altruistic motives. Although some teachers used their creativity and imagination in their teaching, but the only source of the positive immunity was expressed by the teachers as 'loving the job', 'loving students', and 'helping the society'. Several participants stated that despite the many stressors and demotivating factors, they tried to remain motivated and efficacious because they loved their students. The following extracts show EFL teachers' love for their students.

Extract 14: *Under no circumstances I ignore my students. It's true that I face several adversities in my work environment, but when I enter the class and look at my students, all my worries, anger, and other negative feeling disappear. My students are innocent!* (Interviewee 3)

Extract 15: *I don't allow my principal's disrespect and bad behavior directly or indirectly influence my job. I manage my classroom in a way that the students don't feel that they have a bad principal. I won't let negative things impact my relationship with my students.* (Interviewee 4)

### ***Effect of Teacher Immunity Type on Classroom Practice***

As mentioned earlier, language teacher immunity affects whatever teachers do in their professional life. The qualitative data regarding the effect of adaptive and maladaptive teacher immunity on classroom practice clearly show the divide between those teachers who have adaptive immunity and the maladaptively immunized teachers.

The teachers who reported to have developed adaptive immunity seemed to have the capacity to adopt effective strategies to deal with the stressful events that they confronted in their classrooms. For instance, in order to deal with impolite students, interviewee 8 resorted to a strategy which he had developed during his professional life.

Extract 16: *Those students should have a clear picture of my reaction in their mind. They should know that I may inform their parents about their bad behavior in class.* (Interviewee 8)

Also, interviewee 11 had developed a strategy of talking to and convincing impolite students.

Extract 17: *I do my best to talk to them. My personal experience tells me that talking to them and convincing them that their behavior is not appropriate works to a great extent.* (Interviewee 11)

The experiences and strategies that teachers have learned from stressful situations in class have made teachers to be quick and powerful in responding to the same stressful events as they happen in the classroom setting. As a couple of interviewees mentioned, in the face of lack of facilities they had encountered during their years of teaching, they quickly use other things available in class to teach English to their students.

Extract 18: *I know that my classroom has no facilities to make learning English easier. So I just use the whiteboard and my marker in a way to make learning English fun for my students.* (Interviewee 2)

Extract 19: *When I'm going to work on student's listening and speaking skills which are emphasized in the newly introduced books, the first thing that I do is to use my mobile to play them a clip to improve their listening and ask them questions in English to help them speak as well.* (Interviewee 10)

On the other end of the immunity spectrum, that is, maladaptive immunity, teachers are afflicted with indifference and self-complacency in class. They have become so over the years in their career by adopting strategies that appear to be the easiest solutions for them when facing stressful events in their classrooms and even at school level. The teachers with maladaptive immunity have developed an everlasting resistance to taking risks, using modern technology in class, sticking to their old control routines. In general, we can say that they are suffering from fossilization and inertia. What was explained above is evident in what the interviewees said about the maladaptively immunized teachers.

Extract 20: *These teachers have no interest in their job. They are never willing to update their knowledge. They are just trying to satisfy their financial needs.* (Interviewee 11)

Extract 21: *Unfortunately, teachers with maladaptive immunity are like fossils. They do not believe in novelty, creativity, using technology, etc. they just stick to their old beliefs in teaching English and continue that forever. (Interviewee 1)*

All in all, teachers' performance in class is directly influenced by their immunity type, either adaptive or maladaptive. Faced with adversities, language teachers constantly try to come up with a strategy to deal with stressors and over the years the coping strategies that they have used solidify in them and turn them into an adaptively or maladaptively immunized teacher. Now, the question is "What can be done to manipulate the immunity formation stages in teachers so that inclination towards maladaptive immunity is controlled and adaptive immunity is reinforced and encouraged?"

### ***Interventions to Influence Immunity Formation***

As Hiver (2015) explains, most of the times we see that the process of immunity development results in maladaptive immunity formation and this underscores the need to come up with ways to influence this process and introduce elements that help the system to move to the other direction. Since the process of immunity formation is dynamic and cannot be blocked, some effective interventions must be introduced during the developmental process of maladaptive immunity.

The qualitative data analysis revealed that the participants had very similar ideas regarding the interventions that can be made to help teachers, specially novice teachers, to move on the path towards adaptive immunity development. These similar ideas originate from the fact that the state-run education system is the same across the country. In total, six intervention strategies were proposed by the participants. These are presented here according to their frequency. The first intervention strategy that the study interviewees unanimously mentioned was improving teachers' financial condition. Due to low remuneration that language teachers receive, their main concern and stressor that is always on their mind is supporting their family financially. The following excerpts reflect what the interviewees thought about teachers' economic status.

Extract 22: *Teachers have a lot of financial problems. I know a teacher who has been teaching for 26 years but he cannot support his son to get married. This person is so busy making money that has no time to spend time and energy on his classroom. (Interviewee 2)*

Extract 23: *My disappointing economic status has a great impact on my teaching in the classroom, my relationship with my students and professional behavior. (Interviewee 5)*

Another intervention strategy that the participants believed can be done to encourage teachers and motivate them was praising and appreciating teachers' efforts. Almost all the participants stated that teachers', especially successful teachers', efforts and success in teaching are not valued and appreciated, and this was considered as a huge demotivating factor that led the teachers towards being indifferent to their job and students.

Extract 24: *I think teachers should be appreciated by their school authorities or the education offices. But they are totally ignored.* (Interviewee 7)

Extract 25: *One factor that can motivate teachers is appreciation. Others should praise them and value their efforts. These can be done by authorities and the educational system. But, unfortunately, teachers are not appreciated at all.* (Interviewee 13)

No proper supervision on teachers' teaching in the classroom was the concern that most of the interviewees expressed. They believed that teachers receive almost no feedback from supervisors or the schools' or education offices' authorities. Interviewee 8 went on to the point that he called the teachers and their classroom "deserted islands".

Extract 26: *Teachers think that they and their classrooms are like a deserted island where nobody sets foot. So anything that they do in the classroom is just for themselves and nobody supervises them.* (Interviewee 8)

Other participants expressed their concern in the following extracts.

Extract 27: *There is no one to supervise teachers in their classrooms and tell them what their English language problems are and if their teaching method is suitable or not.* (Interviewee 4)

Extract 28: *In practice, I think there is no difference between successful and unsuccessful teachers because there is no supervision on what teachers do in class and how they teach.* (Interviewee 5)

The next intervention strategy that most of the interviewees highlighted was organizing appropriate in-service teacher training courses. They complained about the ineffectiveness of these sessions in training teachers to help them use new methods of teaching or utilize technology in classroom. The following reports by the interviewees are evidence of the inappropriateness of in-service teacher training courses.

Extract 29: *The in-service teacher training sessions are like ordinary meetings where teachers meet their friends and nothing special happens. Teachers just get the points or marks that they need to be recorded in their records. (Interviewee 9)*

Extract 30: *We have courses called 'in-service teacher training sessions', but they are just a waste of time. The education office organizes a session, some teacher explains something, and it's over. Nothing is added to the teachers' knowledge. (Interviewee 12)*

The last intervention strategies that the participants mentioned pertained to the system of recruiting teachers and updating teachers' technological knowledge either by themselves or the authorities.

Extract 31: *I think in future the system of employing should be stricter. The authorities should not allow unqualified graduates to become teachers. (Interviewee 9)*

Extract 32: *Most of the teachers, consciously or unconsciously, are not aware of the importance of using novel methods and technology in class and think that these are not applicable in our classrooms. For this reason, they approach them with panic or avoid them altogether. (Interviewee 4)*

On the whole, the findings regarding the immunization process indicate that it does not happen overnight. It is a process that may take months or even years to complete. The development of teacher immunity is squarely linked with the issue of how to motivate teachers in order to assist them to not only stay in the profession, but to thrive in it. Thus, the appropriate intervention strategies employed by the Ministry of Education, education offices, school authorities are of paramount importance in inspiring and energizing teachers.

It should be noted that, as mentioned above, only two interviewees mentioned personal-level stressors which were related to the EFL teachers themselves. The data show that what they proposed as intervention strategies regarding those teachers who faced personal-level stressors was that these types of teachers should keep themselves up to date by reading about and enhancing their knowledge of new teaching methods as well as using state-of-the-art technology and mobile applications in their teaching. Also, by improving their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation and by preparing appropriate lesson plans before starting their classes, they can overcome their personal-level stress and try to gear their immunity formation path towards the positive one. It should also be noted that since EFL teachers are mostly exposed to contextual stressors, rarely did they mention personal intervention strategies.

## Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to address the paucity of the literature regarding the EFL teachers' immunity (either positive or maladaptive), its effect on teachers' classroom practices, and the interventions strategies to gear the immunity process towards a productive one. From the analysis of the teachers' accounts, a number of insights can be provided. First, it was noticed, as predicted, that each participant was reluctant to talk about the idea that they might be suffering from maladaptive immunity. This was evident in what Hiver (2016b) stated: "... teachers were not only familiar with the idea of teacher immunity, but they were surprisingly quick and happy to nominate people to whom this applied—very rarely to themselves" (p. 260). This can be explained by the cultural values that restrict people to talk about their shortcomings and problems, and feel that they might be judged by others.

Second, the sources of immunity, especially maladaptive immunity, were manifold. Generally speaking, language teachers in Iran are in constant encounter with demotivating factors both at macro and micro levels. Several studies that have been conducted in Iranian context in recent years (e.g., Akbari & Eghtesadi Roudi, 2017; Haseli Songhori et al., 2018; Rahmati et al., 2019; Sadeghi & Khezrlou, 2016; Sadeghi & Sa'adatpourvahid, 2016; Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2015, 2016; Yaghoubinejad et al., 2016) indicate that EFL teachers are working in undesirable and deteriorating conditions. More often than not, these unfavorable conditions are conducive to English teachers' low self-efficacy, resilience, classroom affectivity, openness to changes, attitudes to teaching, coping strategies, and high levels of burnout. Maladaptive immunity is very much similar to burnout and the reasons of these psychological erosions are similar too. Teachers dissatisfaction with their work conditions because of the presence of several types of stressors and adversities reverberated throughout the teachers' accounts, as they described the situation in state-run schools. This is in line with findings of Akbari & Eghtesadi Roudi (2020) and Rahmati et al.'s (2019) recent studies. In these studies, the scholars found out several potential stressors of which inadequate salary, English language and its teachers' low social status, teaching demotivated students, attitudes of principals, limited teaching time, parental expectations, and ineffective teacher training courses had the greatest impact on English teachers' motivation and their commitment to their job. Also, low social status of English teachers and English language itself make teachers and learners demotivated. In our interview data some participants were critical of their job value and English language status as perceived by the society at large. According to Hiver et al. (2018), when a language is not favored in the society and learning it has no immediate reward, learners lose their motivation in learning the language and teachers may, in turn, get frustrated and demotivated. This finding is also in line with Harrison's (1983) social competence model of burnout. According to this model, individuals who enter human service occupations such as language teaching are highly motivated and have a sense of perfectionism so as to be beneficial for others. But when the sense of having any value and effect for others and the society is lost, burnout is a likely consequence. Therefore, EFL teachers who are teaching

poorly motivated and proficient students, more often than not feel that their efforts cannot bear fruit and may be of little help to students. The result of this feeling of lost effectiveness and value is, thus, burnout and maladaptive immunity.

On the other hand, regarding the positive immunity, the findings of the study delineated that EFL teachers with positive immunity considered teaching as a vocation because they held a strong and inherent interest in teaching and they believed that their work contributes to making a difference in students' lives (Hong, 2012) and helps the society at large. Some of the interviewees clearly stated that the authorities lack of attention and appreciation leave "scars" on teachers' mind. But despite these scars, they kept functioning effectively based on their intrinsic/altruistic motivation. This type of motivation can lead to the adoption of positive, constructive coping strategies whereby EFL teachers consider stressful events in their profession as an opportunity rather than a threat and do their level best to adjust themselves to the stressful events and take advantage of them. This finding that intrinsic and altruistic motivation keeps English teachers functioning effectively in their profession is also echoed by Soodmand Afshar and Doosti (2015, 2016). In their studies they concluded that despite many demotivating factors that Iranian English teachers were afflicted with, they were satisfied with intrinsic/altruistic aspects of their profession such as considering teaching as an interesting job, having positive feelings towards helping students learn, and feeling intrinsically satisfied with serving their society.

Third, the findings of the study show that teachers' classroom practices are directly and significantly affected by the positive and maladaptive immunity types. Teachers with positive immunity and those with maladaptive immunity seem to be on the opposite ends of a spectrum in terms of their classroom practices. While the positively-immunized teachers used their own creativity and initiation to teach English to students despite the many stressors they faced, the teachers with maladaptive immunity just remained indifferent and apathetic towards students and kept plateauing. One thing that was evident in interviewees report, as mentioned above, was that teachers with positive immunity tried to strive and thrive in their profession just because of intrinsic and altruistic motivations. This is in line with the findings of Khani and Mirzaee (2014). In this study EFL teachers experienced and dealt with similar stressors and adversities in their work environment and used coping strategies to mitigate the effects of disturbances on their profession. Facing micro-level stressors, EFL teachers can resort to various constructive coping strategies (Akbari & Eghtesadi Roudi, 2017) and work engagement (Amini Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018) that they have acquired, adapted, and adopted over their careers, they can help the teachers to remain efficacious. In most cases, especially in terms of macro-level stressors where teachers can do nothing but grin and bear it, therefore, what keeps them functioning effectively is their internal desire to help the students and the society. Ryan and Deci's (2000, p. 56) definition of intrinsic motivation as "the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" clearly indicates that positively-immunized



teachers do not have instrumental reasons behind their classroom practices. The only drives that motivate them are the positive experience of teaching itself, the love of students, and improving their own abilities.

Fourth, pertaining to the intervention strategies to influence the development of language teacher immunity, the participants of the study offered some practical solutions and strategies that help teachers get motivated. According to Hiver (2015), the most effective intervention strategies are likely to take place during the formation of maladaptive immunity. And these interventions are nothing but factors that motivate teachers because immunity is directly linked with motivation.

The interventions that the interviewees talked about could be mostly implemented by the Ministry of Education and the education offices. Offering motivators like higher salaries, praising and appreciating teachers, supervising teachers' practices in the classroom, organizing suitable in-service teacher training courses, and systematic teacher recruitment requires the attention of education authorities. Teachers' autonomy and agency are not effective in these cases because they are macro-level responsibilities not under teachers' jurisdiction. Teachers' agency can only be effective in keeping themselves up-to-date, motivating their students, managing parental expectations, and compensating for the lack of facilities in the classrooms. As a result, EFL teachers are emotionally inflicted and suffer because they feel that no matter how hard they struggle and regardless of their agentive actions, their effort to teach English is doomed to fail due to unsupportive macro-level policies. Thus, under these circumstances, EFL teachers can be just passive actors (Khani & Mirzaee, 2014) and slaves of the system (Namaghi, 2006) who have no choice but to acquiesce to unwelcome adversities and stressors.

The findings related to the intervention strategies are not in line with what Hiver (2015, 2017) offered as solutions to influence the immunity development in teachers. In his studies, Hiver has proposed three necessary components to influence the immunity formation process. These are: 1) triggering dissonance in the process through awareness-raising to help teachers realize that the existing form of immunity is maladaptive; 2) providing teachers with transforming coping strategies that may enable teachers to find new answers to old questions; and 3) helping teachers to create narratives of resolution so that they can personalize in order to stabilize the new identity. Hiver's strategies are at the level of theory because he has not investigated the practical solutions and intervention strategies offered by EFL teachers. The findings of the present study, we believe, propose practical solutions in order to influence the immunization process.

## **Conclusion**

From the findings of the study we conclude that influencing language teacher immunity formation is a matter of motivating teachers through the interventions suggested by the interviews. Immunity formation is not a simple, linear

process. Rather, it is a complex one that evolves in the course of teachers' career. As a result, just saying something motivating and inspiring to the teachers with the hope of making them aware of the immunity development is not effective. Education authorities must take into consideration the interventions that are influential in motivating and energizing teachers and these interventions cannot be implemented overnight. Instead, these interventions should be steady so as to target the maladaptive immunity process to alter its path towards adaptive immunity formation.

There are some limitations to this study. First, the number of participants was limited. A larger sample can produce more generalizable findings in Iran and other similar contexts. Second, although the concept of teacher immunity was originally put forward for language teachers, it can also be attributed to all teachers working in any educational system because those teachers could be unaware of their immunity type and its impact on their professional careers. Third, the study only sampled participants from senior high schools. Recruiting teachers from junior high schools to participate in a study like this would lead to better findings in terms of generalizability and application in future studies.

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