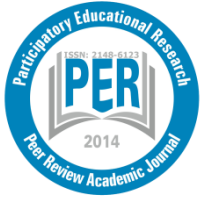TITLE: Teaching Immunity of Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach

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Teaching Immunity of Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach

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The shield analogy, which teachers have developed to protect themselves naturally against the difficulties that arise in the teaching process, is one of the most effective expressions used to express teacher immunity. Teacher immunity and reflective teaching are very important constructs that can affect language teachers' practices and professional development. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate how reflection on teaching practice influences the teaching immunity of pre-service EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers. It also investigated factors influencing the changes in the teaching immunity of pre-service EFL teachers. The participants were six pre-service EFL teachers at a state university in Turkey. Data were collected through reflection forms during teaching practice and follow-up interviews with the participants. The content analysis method was used to analyse the collected data. The findings revealed that reflecting on teaching practice raised teachers' awareness about their instructional practice, affective factors, and professional development. Additionally, the results indicated that teaching responsibilities, coping strategies, and contextual factors were the three main factors influencing the changes in the teaching immunity of teachers. It would be fair to state that reflecting on teaching practice may help teachers be resilient to burnout, open to change, tolerate negative behaviours, and, thus, increase their instructional effectiveness.

Introduction

Like many studies on the personal and professional experience and development processes of teachers, Hiver and Dörnyei (2015, p. 405) introduced a new concept called "teacher immunity" (TI) in one of their studies. In this study, the researchers have concluded that this immunity arises from the experience of teachers to cope with problems such as disturbances in stressful teaching environments, difficulties encountered in the classroom, and so on, that they experience during the process of practicing their profession. At the same time, they commented that this immunity is acquired by teachers over time and functions as an essential armour that they must have in order to continue this profession. This immune

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system, which developed and settled over time, was taken as the starting point of the biological immune system and the established constructs in the field of psychology and explained based on the "self-organization" framework from the complexity theory (p. 411).

Many foreign language teachers struggle to continue teaching languages and fulfilling the requirements of their profession despite numerous negative factors that can affect their motivation and desire to teach (Aydın, 2012). Some teachers have the ability to overcome these obstacles through their self-motivation and self-organizing strategies. However, others may not be sufficient and successful in dealing with such problems due to their lack of awareness of their professional self and identity. Moreover, stakeholders who have common denominators with teachers can also cause pressure on teachers like psychological problems (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Since no one is born with a professional immune system, no teacher can be protected from the negative effects of the environment and people without developing such a system.

Hiver and Dörnyei (2015, pp. 405, 414-415) used the "double-edged sword" metaphor to define the concept of "Language Teacher Immunity" (LTI) by referring to two global types: "productive immunity" and "maladaptive immunity". As the name suggests, productive immunity is "an adaptive outcome" that protects teachers against the harms of the teaching profession and, at the same time, facilitates teaching effectiveness. It guides teachers to sustain an adequate balance in teaching context changes. However, effective teaching, teacher reflection and development are negatively affected as a result of maladaptive immunity developed by the teacher. (Hiver, 2017). The productive teacher immune system has some characteristics that facilitate teachers' work and support their psychology, such as specificity, memory, adaptability, and durability. With productive immunity, teachers can cope with stress more easily. Thanks to the ability to ignore disturbances, they can tolerate failure and burnout. As a result, they are generally satisfied with their profession and have the dedication and optimism that will help them succeed in their profession. On the other hand, maladaptive immunity causes teachers to have low motivation and self-efficacy. These teachers are distinguished by their resistance to change. Therefore, such teachers avoid applying innovative and new methodologies and taking risks. Saydam (2019) suggested that mechanical control procedures are followed by those teachers, and they often exhibit passivity and fossilization.

The concepts of "self-organization" and "emergence" have been put forward as two active elements under the umbrella of teacher immunity. Self-organization is seen as a powerful general process by Hiver (2017). In addition, it is argued that the process of self-organization is through an ensemble of complex systems; and flexibility, autonomy and solidity are various aspects of this process (Beyranvand & Zenouzagh, 2021). At the same time, the researchers emphasize that these systems can operate and organize themselves to deal with a variety of anxieties (internal and external), mental uneasiness, and conflicts. Development and adaptation take place endlessly depending on the changes in the environment. The exposure of the components of this active system to external conditions creates a state of disorder, allowing these components to be constantly redefined from different angles with new adjustments. The result of such development and adaptation is called "emergence" (Hiver & Dornyei, 2015; Mahmoodzadeh & Gkonou, 2015).

Self-organization and emergence consist of four stages, which are factual indicators of "motivation-sustaining teacher immunity" (Sampson, 2016, p. 296). Hiver and Dörnyei (2015) suggested that the first of these stages is 'triggering' in which different functions of a

system are interrupted due to some disturbance. The second is 'linking', in which these disturbances are handled with the reformulation of the components of the system. The next is 'realignment', in which mutual relationships between disturbances and their exact solutions are developed to bring the system back to equilibrium. The last one is 'stabilization' when the system becomes a 'new-meta component' that prevents future disruptions of the system.

Various factors are known to have different effects on LTI. However, this study also focused on reflective teaching (RT), another variable that is theoretically considered to be intertwined with teacher immunity (TI). Dewey (1933) is considered the first to introduce the concept of RT. Dewey (1933) defines it as "the active, persistent, and careful evaluation of any belief or so-called form of knowledge in light of the justifications that support it and the other conclusions to which it leads" (p. 6). Research shows that RT has a number of influences on both professional competence and personality trait issues of the teaching profession, examples of which are that language teachers with RT practices value their careers more and have greater self-efficacy; it is also found that RT has an impact on factors such as personality type, burnout, and autonomy (Akbari, 2007; Fani, 2017; Malmir, 2018; Stanley, 1998; Teng, 2017). RT can also be a useful implementation method in the understanding and development of LTI. Teachers' beliefs and understandings about the nature of RT and LTI begin to take shape before starting their profession. In this context, examining the relationship between EFL pre-service teachers' RT practices during their teacher education and their development of LTI can provide important indicators for the research in the field regarding the preparation and implementation of more qualified teacher education programs and the experiment of more successful and satisfied professional careers in the future. A brief look at the literature on LTI may help shed more light on the content of the current study.

Language teacher immunity

Although it is not a very old term, researchers are very interested in the concept of TI and research is carried out in the field of language teaching about the place and functions of this concept. At the beginning of these studies is that of Hiver and Dörnyei (2015). In this study, they defined the concept of LTI and compared the concept with some other psychological terms (teacher resilience and teacher burnout). Moreover, by examining the development process of LTI and its associated stages, they identified four stages. In parallel with the concept of biological immunity, they also suggested that the concept of LTI may have both positive and negative effects on the quality and performance of teachers in their professions. In line with these effects, they claimed that teachers could develop two types of immunity: productive immunity or maladaptive immunity.

Ordem (2017), in a case study, dwelled upon the teacher's ideas and attitudes toward adaptive skill, self, and motivation. The findings revealed that through reflection on their previous experiences, teachers presented maladaptive behaviours. In his study, it was illustrated that LTI was found to be affected by RT. In education, the search for personal characteristics has been addressed in many of the researchers' work (Sadeghi et al., 2012; Threeton & Walter, 2009). For instance, in their study Ghazalbash and Afghari (2015) aimed to investigate the relationship between RT and teacher burnout, another concept thought to be related to the concept of immunity, by considering the gender factor. It was presented at the end of the study that a weak negative correlation existed regardless of teacher gender. Similarly, in Rashtchi and Mashhoor's study (2019), the relationship between RT and burnout was aimed to be investigated among introvert and extrovert English teachers. It has been demonstrated through the findings of the study that RT and burnout exhibit a negative correlation. In

addition, other findings presented differences in terms of reflectivity and burnout between introverted and extroverted teachers. For example, introverts were more reflective while extroverts were less likely to experience burnout. The results of Namaziandost et al.'s study (2022) were among other findings demonstrating the effects of RT on emotion regulation (ER) and EFL teacher immunity. In this context, the EFL teachers' immunity was found to be significantly related to their ER.

The concept of LTI has been studied concerning various factors. For example, Azari Noughabi et al. (2020) examined the concept in relation to autonomy, emotions, and participation. Furthermore, they showed that for in-service EFL teachers, teacher autonomy is the most important predictor of teacher immunity. In another study, Ahmadi et al. (2020) also investigated the impact of the other factors like gender, teaching experience, and age on the immunity of Iranian EFL teachers and found that all these variables played a significant role. For instance, more female participants than male participants had productive immunity, and EFL teachers' immunity waved towards being more fossilized and negative in the final stages of their professional lives. Moreover, participants of various age groups had different immunity types. In a similar study, a new model related to factors predicting LTI was claimed by Rahimpour et al. (2020). According to their study, factors such as agreeableness, extroversion and emotionality indirectly affected the language teacher immunity. Their other finding is that RT and teacher immunity were negatively affected by job insecurity. Besides, Canbay and Sönmez's study (2023) examined the language teacher immunity concerning the place of work and years of service. In their study, some significant differences were presented in sets for the seven constructs of the theoretical considerations of immunity (teaching self-efficacy, resilience, coping, burnout, attitudes toward teaching, openness to change, and classroom affectivity).

The study of Songhori and Ghonsooly (2018), among the studies on types of LTI, questioned the predominant types of LTI and how Iranian English teachers developed this dominant trait. As a result of the study, it was found that these teachers completed all four stages of self-organization while forming their immunity and the dominant type of LTI among teachers was maladaptive immunity. A study examining the development and working way of LTI was also carried out by Saydam (2019). In this study, she explored both the motivational aspects and implications of this new concept and ways to reshape maladaptive LTI with the help of a newly developed questionnaire. The findings showcased that teachers had high levels of immunity and fell into two main categories, productive and maladaptive.

In their study, Rahmati et al. (2019) focused on the possible reasons behind the maladaptive immunity among EFL teachers. They listed the sources of these reasons as the teachers themselves, the students, and environmental factors. In addition, they reported that the lack of self-confidence due to limited language proficiency in EFL teachers was one of the leading causes of immunodeficiency. Also, Haji Jalili et al.'s study (2023) 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. They stated that 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 were among the most important reasons underlying the catastrophe in language institutes.

As the results of the studies mentioned above reveal, teacher immunity and reflective teaching are very important constructs that can affect teachers' practices and professional development.

To the best of our knowledge, teacher immunity has not been adequately studied, and several influential variables that could reinforce such a system remain unexamined. Therefore, the researchers sought to highlight the role of reflective teaching, which can potentially improve the teacher's immune system. Based on the discussion above, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

(1) How does reflection on teaching practice influence teaching immunity of pre-service EFL teachers?
(2) What factors influence the changes in teaching immunity of pre-service EFL teachers?

Method

This study is a qualitative study since the goal was to understand how reflection influences teacher immunity developed by pre-service EFL teachers during their teaching practices and to describe the factors influencing the changes in teaching immunity of these pre-service EFL teachers. As Creswell (2014) spotlights, qualitative research is "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). The content analysis method was used to analyse the collected data. As Leedy and Ormrod (2001) explain, content analysis is "a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials to identify patterns, themes, or biases" (p. 155).

Participants

The participants in this study included six fourth-year (five females and one male) pre-service EFL teachers enrolled in a BA program under the English language teaching program at a university in southeast Turkey. Their age ranged from 21 to 23. They were having their internship in a state school. Pseudonyms were used to protect the teachers' identities. In this qualitative research, convenience sampling was used as the sampling method because the researchers only chose six participants from English Language Teaching Department who were accessible and available at that time. According to Creswell (2012), convenience sampling is a sampling that the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied.

Data collection

The study included two data collection tools composed of a form filled with reflections on the teaching practice of six Turkish pre-service EFL teachers and semi-structured interviews carried out by the researchers. Teachers were asked to reflect on the teaching practice they experienced during their internship education for six weeks. The participants were first asked to describe an unforgettable educational experience they wanted to share. Secondly, they were asked to identify their feelings and thoughts related to that experience. Then, they needed to provide an evaluation of that experience. Lastly, they were required to make conclusions and implications about what they learned in that process. This section was prepared as a form (see Appendix A), and participants were required to fill in that form once a week for five weeks (5 forms for each participant at the end of the study, 30 forms in total). Ten days after the last reflection, teachers were asked to write a general reflection on what they have learned throughout that process. Written feedback is also thought to provide more in-depth knowledge so that all reflections are in written format. After the analysis of data from reflection forms, in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants by one of the researchers. Two interviews were conducted once in the first and

the last week of the education with each participant. Interview questions were adapted from Gürsoy (2018), which could be examined in Appendix B and the purpose was to investigate how language learners develop a sense of stability and how this stability might change in different conditions. Detailed information about the aim and content of the study was given to all the participants. They granted permission to use the data written in their forms and collected through interviews for this study.

Data analysis

Data collected from reflection forms were analysed by the researchers inductively. The purpose of the inductive approach is to "allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies" (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). For this study, an independent parallel coding model was utilised. First, transcripts (of reflection forms and interviews) were read in detail several times by the researchers individually to identify the frequent and dominant codes or themes. Later, emergent codes or themes were identified; lower-level and upper-level categories were identified to identify general themes, sub-codes, and overlapping ones. Lastly, data coding was revised to select contradictory points of view or overlapping ones. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, two researchers shared their own coding to compare emergent themes for inter-coder reliability. Most of the themes were consistent. For the inconsistent ones, category descriptions and the text belonging to those categories were re-examined, and interpretations were agreed on.

Findings

The content analysis results indicated that reflection on teaching practice influenced pre-service EFL teachers' immunity from different perspectives.

The Impact of Reflection on Teaching Practice on Teaching Immunity of Pre-service EFL Teachers

The content analysis of the first research question showed that reflection on teaching practice influenced pre-service EFL teachers' immunity by raising their awareness about *a) instructional practice, b) their affective factors, c) openness to change and increase in their professional development.*

a) Instructional practice

Participants generally accentuated that reflecting on their teaching practice influenced their immunity by raising their awareness about their instructional practice. The instructional practice was one of the most frequently mentioned themes in their reflections. For instance, one of the participants emphasized the importance of active participation and explained it in the following way:

> I would use activities where I would interact with students one-on-one to improve this lesson. I used activities that included physical movements in which students would talk, participate more in the lesson, and discharge their energy while getting used to school after the holidays. (Elif- reflection form)

As seen in this excerpt, Elif realised that using activities requiring interaction may motivate learners, and sometimes it might be a good choice to motivate learners after a long holiday. Elif especially paid attention to activities requiring teacher-student interaction and explained

that such kinds of activities are sometimes required by learners for motivation. Similarly, in another reflection by Naz, who noticed the importance of using body language for classroom management. She points outs:

> While asking questions, reading the instructions in the textbook, and making explanations, she used body language by changing her tone of voice, emphasizing important points, and making use of body language... Thus, she was better at controlling the class. (Naz- interview)

Naz underlines that using body language and voice effectively may contribute to classroom management. During her teaching practice, she observed that teachers could manage the classrooms by using different techniques. Additionally, the same teacher highlights that creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom may also encourage demotivated learners to be more active in the classroom. For this issue, she stated that:

> Another important approach was to be aware of the existence of unresponsive students as well as students who were impatient to answer the teacher's questions, and our teacher always approached them positively. This approach was definitely a positive reinforcement for them. (Naz- reflection form)

This excerpt demonstrates that Naz detected the role of the teacher's approach in enhancing learner participation. The teacher approached positively to both unresponsive and very active learners. That's why the effort of active learners was valued while inactive learners were encouraged to participate.

b) Affective factors

The results marked that reflecting on teaching practice systematically influenced participant teachers' immunity by raising their awareness about affective factors related to teachers and learners. For instance, Elif argues that:

> After giving instructions a few times, some still do not understand because they do not pay attention or listen. This means making extra effort for the teacher and may reduce the teacher's motivation. In this case, I do not know if the teacher's tireless re-explaining would be a behaviour that I could reinforce. I might lose my motivation, but our mentor teacher did not, which was encouraging for me. (Elif- interview)

In this vignette, Elif mentions teacher motivation and adds that teachers may also become discouraged in some circumstances. She talks about herself and reveals that she could have lost her motivation and given up. However, she changed her mind after observing and realizing her mentor teacher's effort. Another participant focused on learner motivation and stated:

> I observed that a 6th grade student does not like the English class ... He constantly opens up different topics to interrupt the lesson … In this process, I would do my best to make this student understand that English is a part of our life and love it. I would tell him about the place and importance of English in our lives by giving various examples. I would make him understand that English is not just a lesson but that it opens up unique opportunities for us (Naz- reflection form)

This reflection displayed that participant teachers raised awareness about learners' motivation as well. Naz teacher asserted that teachers could raise learners' motivation by highlighting the importance of the English language as an international language and the opportunities it might provide for them. She also comments further and says that teachers should raise learners' awareness that English is not just a lesson but a part of their life.

c) Openness to change and increase in professional development

Openness to change and professional development was another theme that was revealed by participant teachers in their reflections. Pre-service EFL teachers mentioned that reflecting on their teaching practice influenced their teaching immunity by raising their awareness about being open to change and professional development. Elif teacher explains that:

> This week, I saw how to check the information given to students except for exams. This was something I did not like to experience when I was a student, but now as a teacher candidate, I have seen how beneficial quizzes are. That's why quizzes can be an assessment form that I might use when I become a teacher. As they are not as challenging as exams, and when students are successful, it motivates them and increases their desire to learn. (Elif- reflection form)

As seen, Elif teacher raised awareness about how an assessment form she did not favour as a learner can be an effective assessment form for a teacher. It can be interpreted that Elif teacher is open to change, and her teaching experience contributes to this change. Similarly, Sümeyra recognized that pondering over producing various types of activities was a very effective way of increasing students' learning opportunities:

> … there would be other creative ways. … I would want them to play a game like they are a famous sportsperson and they talk about their past, like their childhood and how did they imagine being in the position they are today. …. or portfolios can be another way. … so, as I always suggest, with a little imagination, a teacher can create a perfect learning environment with various changing activities. (Sümeyra- reflection form)

As the excerpt suggests, being aware of the importance of trying to find new ways is one of the factors that positively affects teacher immunity, especially in terms of being open to change and professional development. Also, Naz mentioned the importance of being ready for any unexpected situation with their materials and objectives:

> … for the effects, I can say that the use of technology and authentic videos really grab students' attention. So, rather than just using the textbook, we should design our lesson materials and objectives according to the changing factors. (Naz- reflection form)

Focusing on the use of technology and authentic materials as a method that attracts the students' attention throughout the course, Naz realized that the new generation means new areas of interest and that teachers are responsible for catching up with the changing world.

The factors influencing the changes in teaching immunity of pre-service EFL teachers

This question aimed to investigate the factors influencing the changes in teaching immunity of pre-service EFL teachers. The content analysis results showed that three main

factors influence the teaching immunity of EFL teachers: *a) teaching responsibilities/ teacher's roles, b) coping strategies, and c) contextual factors.*

a) Teaching responsibilities/ teacher's roles

The participants frequently mentioned the importance of the teaching responsibilities/ teacher's role, one of the factors influencing the changes in their teaching immunity, by trying to express the aim and meaning of being a teacher. Sümeyra teacher, in the following excerpt, talks about a teacher's ideal features, which are necessary for creating a change and which would be helpful in maintaining teacher immunity (i.e., being enthusiastic, compassionate, wise, lifelong learner, and moderate).

> What would our world look like if we didn't have enthusiastic, compassionate, and wise teachers who give purpose and direction to others through their own life experiences, defeats, and victories? How do we stay motivated to infuse our students with knowledge, strength, passion, and a willingness to create change? It is by committing to be a lifelong learner and not allowing our ego to cast a shadow over our mission and core values. (Sümeyra- interview)

Another participant gave the details of his own ideas about how a teacher's teaching responsibilities/ roles can play a crucial role in students' education by emphasizing the importance of being an enthusiastic and positive individual, an available teacher to offer help or support, and able to work together in harmony with others in a school setting.

> During this process, I feel that I am an enthusiastic and positive individual. I would like to become the type of teacher other staff can approach for support, ideas, and guidance where possible. Within a school setting, no teacher is an individual, and everyone is working with a common goal which is to provide children with the greatest possible experiences and opportunities throughout their education. (Serkan- reflection form)

Elif teacher in the next excerpt explained shortly the meaning of being a teacher by saying and questioning:

> Being a teacher requires giving a lot of yourself. As I am also a student, I questioned why my teachers did not understand me as I understood my students when I was exposed to some difficulties. (Elif- reflection form)

She tried to focus on the reason why teachers should be emphatic towards their students and sometimes give up on themselves. Also, Gülnaz teacher states that a teacher's ability to control her/his feelings is another important skill for being a teacher. She explains that as:

> Every teacher should be a theatre player, I think. They should keep snugging their bad feelings. … If I am not okay, students cannot show sympathy to me, especially young/very young learners. If students start to act up, teachers must not show their weaknesses. (Gülnaz- reflection form)

She emphasized that one of the responsibilities of teachers is to take on different roles and that these roles should be separated from each other inside and outside the classroom. She focused on the feeling that a teacher must relax to realize this compelling ability.

b) Coping strategies

Coping strategies, the participants applied to continue their education as a student and to reach the aim of being a teacher in the future were another theme influencing the changes in their teaching immunity. Sümeyra teacher stated the importance of having a reason and a goal to keep on studying during the hard times.

> So, if you do not say to yourself, I am going to be a teacher who will break down the prejudices about English and make students love it, it is almost impossible to stay in the department. You need to find a lifting reason to be in the department; otherwise, you will not take responsibility. … This will be your goal, and you will remember this as a reason to keep studying in the department when the hard times come. (Sümeyra‐ interview)

As a coping strategy, also Gizem teacher mentioned what she saw during this adventure as parts of a storyboard are lessons to be learned with its good and bad sides.

> I remember all the hard times that I managed to pass, and I say to myself that I can overcome bad things even if I cannot, this is okay too because I at least tried. … As a result, think of a filmstrip, two sides of it are full of the bad things that happened to you that day, and the middle part of it is your present way. I look at these sides and try to see their reasons and consequences and learn my lesson from them. After that, I cut out these parts from my movie, and I keep watching the middle part because I know that it is the part where I will reflect on the things that I have learned from these two parts and reconstruct my way for the future. (Gizem- reflection form)

Focusing on students' feelings, especially positive ones, was presented as another coping strategy to struggle with difficulties and to protect/ maintain their teaching immunity as pre-service EFL teachers by many of the participants. Naz explains that:

> Seeing the excitement and happiness on my students' faces, their active participation in the lesson, and their staying by my side even during breaks always make me feel calm as a teacher … It is touching someone's heart. Moreover, if my students say to me, "We learned" even this simple sentence is inevitable for me. Actually, this sentence is simple, but it hides a lot of meanings underneath. I am really so glad when I see the sparkles in their eyes. (Naz- interview)

Moreover, Gülnaz described similar issues with different expressions and from a different perspective by saying:

> When I teach, I want to see all my students learn what I teach. When they attend the lesson, I feel happy because it means that I succeed and I receive a recompense for their work. When they just smile at me, I feel great. When they listen to me carefully, it feels awesome. (Gülnaz- reflection form)

From the excerpt, it can be assumed that she sees the students' positive reactions as proof of her self-efficacy, and she tries to measure her competence with student words and emotional reactions.

c) Contextual factors

The results illustrated that reflecting on teaching practice systematically influenced the changes in participant teachers' teaching immunity in terms of contextual factors. For instance, Serkan argues that:

> I have understood that there are no students who cannot learn, but there are methods and classroom environments that are not suitable for teaching students. (Serkan- reflection form)

Sümeyra also emphasizes the importance of providing an active classroom environment to learners instead of a boring one to create mutually more understanding and tolerant relationships between the teacher and learners in the next excerpt:

> … The problem with teachers is that they expose students to a boring classroom environment instead of trying to make students like the lesson. So, they get into a vicious circle where they do not mutually understand each other. (Sümeyra- interview)

Similarly, Gizem gives some of the contextual factors causing changes in her teaching immunity (negatively/positively) by stating them:

> Factors such as lack of resources, limited time, and destructive environment are some broad topics that make teaching challenging… I think a school's headmaster is really important ... On the other hand, some students' parents do not care about their child/children … Teachers also have difficulty in their life also. Being a teacher is really hard :(. (Gizem- reflection form)

Negative contextual factors such as limited resources and time and inadequate stakeholders such as school administrators and parents have been identified as challenging for a teacher to succeed and achieve professional and personal satisfaction.

Discussion and conclusion

Aligned with previous research, the present study confirms that reflecting on TI may raise pre-service teachers' awareness about their self-organization, which is mentioned to be a powerful general process by Hiver (2017). When teachers have that awareness, they can organize themselves to deal effectively with difficulties they have encountered. Such kind of awareness can increase teaching effectiveness.

This is also confirmed by existing literature (Akbari, 2007). The results also revealed that pre-service EFL teachers raised their awareness about their affective factors. Other researchers can also support it (Azari Noughabi et al., 2020). They focused on the significance of teacher autonomy and found that emotions, autonomy, and participation are important factors for TI. Additionally, Rahimpour et al. (2020) found that TI was indirectly influenced by agreeableness, extraversion, and emotionality through job insecurity and TI.

Reflecting on TI raised their awareness about their professional development. Teachers' personal and professional lives can be influenced by their emotions and experience in their careers (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009). Autonomous teachers may tend to stay in the profession because they are more self-regulated. That situation can further their professional development while it may decrease the level of burnout they feel (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2014;

Teng 2018).

Related to factors influencing the changes in TI of pre-service EFL teachers, the results displayed that teaching responsibilities and teacher roles are among the factors that are frequently mentioned. As Farrell (2019) supported, reflection is important in promoting productive immunity in teachers. Teachers have different roles and responsibilities based on the activities and tasks done during the class. When there is high student participation, different aspects of immunity are influenced positively. Teachers feel more positively immune, effective, and resilient. This is in line with the findings of Drew and Sosnowski (2019), who found that students play an important role in teacher resilience.

The findings also indicated that coping strategies were among the most frequent factors influencing the changes in TI. As mentioned by Hiver (2017), LTI is a powerful tool for understanding the work and lives of language teachers. When teachers raise awareness about coping strategies, they can increase their repertoire about these strategies, and thus, they can leave out undesirable and disturbing factors and focus on the productive aspects of their teaching practice (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2015) Having an awareness about these coping strategies may help teachers to control the events more easily and tolerate or adjust negative events. Hence, it may be beneficial for teachers to be familiar with more coping strategies to increase their productive immunity.

Contextual factors were also found to be among the factors influencing changes in TI. Hiver (2017) mentioned that contextual factors might influence classroom practice. If contextual factors maximise teachers' psychological well-being and assist them to be more motivated, open to change, and resilient to burnout, that means; contextual factors contribute productive immunity of teachers.

The findings of this study should be interpreted in the light of the following limitations. First of all, this study included qualitative data, so future studies can employ mixed methods design in order to triangulate data and provide a better understanding of teacher immunity. Additionally, further studies may be carried out in different context with participants from different countries to generalise findings. Lastly, further comparative studies may be performed to see whether there are any differences between pre-service and in-service teachers.

Conclusion and Implications

This study aimed to investigate the role of reflection on teaching practice in the development of language teachers' immunity and the factors influencing the changes in language teachers' immunity. The results showed that reflecting on teaching practice raised language teachers' awareness related to their instructional practice, affective factors and professional development. It can be said that reflection helps pre-service teachers raise their awareness about their teaching practice, how they feel or their learners feel during teaching and learning process. It also helps them be aware of their professional development. Therefore, it can be interpreted having that awareness might promote teachers' self-confidence leading to higher immunity. In addition, it presents that reflection leading to such an awareness may play contribute to productive immunity. Thus, teachers may feel positively immune, resilient, and more effective.

The results also showed that teaching responsibilities, coping strategies and contextual factors are the main factors influencing teaching immunity. If teachers have the knowledge of these factors in the development of their teaching immunity, they can look for ways how to manage these factors and environmental stressors. Hopefully, it will help them feel more immune.

Finally, it can be said that teacher education programs should raise pre-service teachers' awareness of teacher immunity. An effective teacher education program should involve instruction about how to reflect on teaching practice in order to manage work tensions and how to promote their productive immunity. When they have awareness about TI and factors influencing TI, they can look for and find ways how to be resilient to burnout, open to change, and tolerate negative events/behaviours. Throughout reflection, they can learn how to cope with unavoidable contextual factors. They can learn how to improve their instructional effectiveness.

Conflict of Interest

Authors have no conflict of interest.

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Appendices

A. Reflection Form

Name:
Date:

1- *Please reflect on your observation/teaching in general. (your general comments, what you have learnt as a trainee)*

2- *Give a brief description of a teaching/learning incident you experienced recently. This can be something you observed or something you participated in.*

3- *What were the consequences (effects or outcomes) of this event?*
    effects……
    outcomes/consequences……………………………………………………………………………………

4- *Did an educational dilemma exist? If so, describe it.*

5- *Is this incident significant enough for you to reinforce it? Why or Why not?*

6- *What, if anything, would you have done differently? Why?*

B. In-depth interview questions (adapted from Gürsoy, 2018)

Settledness

(3) Some of students struggle to keep on studying English Language Teaching and some of them even give it up. As a student who will be a teacher in a near future, what is the secret to keep on studying the department?

(4) What are the things that really motivate you in class as a teacher? What do you think or what do you do in that moment?

Unsettledness

(5) As a student-teacher, are there times in which you feel you lose your sanity, balance or sense of equilibrium? Could you tell me about those times more?

(6) Let's say you experienced a difficulty in the classroom as a student-teacher. Moreover, you think that this will affect you negatively for a long time. How would you react to this situation?

(7) Now, let's think the other way; you got really a satisfactory experience in the classroom as a student-teacher. Imagine this thing happened to you. How would you react to this situation? Would you just lean back and enjoy this moment or would you challenge   yourself and keep on trying for better ones?

Reactions to challenges

(8) What kind of difficulties or challenges do most student-teachers experience or are they most vulnerable to?

(9) What would be your recommendations to student-teachers who experience such kind of difficulties and challenges? What do you think they should do on a bad day when things go wrong? How do you think they can hold themselves together on those days?

(10) Reflecting on the former question, what do you think those people should not do when they face difficulties or challenges? What would be the worst thing to do on a bad day,   when everything goes wrong?

(11) Despite all these challenges and adversities, what helps you to keep your balance and sanity as student-teacher?

(12) What do you do to hold yourself together on a bad day when things go wrong?