THE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPES, REFLECTIVITY, AND SELF-EFFICACY OF EFL TEACHERS IN PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN IRAN

By

Mehdi Mozaffar Saniazar

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

January 2012

Acknowledgements

Primarily, I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Dr. Ambigapathy Pandian, the Dean of the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, for his invaluable guidelines all through the research, for his endless patience, and for his heartwarming encouragements. I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Ramin Akbari who has made available his support in a number of ways. He triggered the idea of this research area in my mind and helped me with his precious comments all along. He also generously let me have a copy of one of the questionnaires used in this research prior to its publication. It is a pleasure to thank teachers of Safir Language Schools who participated in the research, and the staff who assisted me with the formalities of the research. Without their efforts, time and patience, this research would not have been possible. It is an honor for me to thank Mr. Hassan Sayyad Chamani, Mr. Mohammad-Ali Saleki, Ms. Sahar Mansouri, Mr. Nima Khalili, Mr. Omid Hoseini, and Ms. Yeghaneh Salehi (executive officers and supervisors of Safir Language Schools) for their kind assistance in conducting the treatment and their supervision in distribution of the questionnaires. Last but by no means least, I am indebted to my caring wife, Shahla, for her patience and support all through the research. I would also like to thank my parents and parents-in-law for their encouragement.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

List of Tables

List of Figures

ANALISIS PERKAITAN DI ANTARA JENIS PERSONALITI, KEREFLEKTIFAN, DAN KECEKAPAN DIRI GURU EFL DI SEKOLAH BAHASA SWASTA DI IRAN

Abstrak

Kajian ini dijalankan bagi meneroka perkaitan di antara tahap reflektif, kecekapan diri dan jenis personaliti guru. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk melihat jenis personaliti guru bahasa Inggeris Iran dalam pengajaran reflektif sama ada dapat meningkatkan kredibiliti sekiranya wujud perkaitan di antara pengajaran reflektif dan kecekapan, dan pengajaran reflektif yang berkesan. Tambahan pula, kajian tentang perkaitan di antara personaliti guru, pengajaran reflektif dan kecekapan diri yang berbeza membolehkan pengajar bahasa memilih dan melatih guru dengan lebih efektif. Tiga instrumen digunakan bagi mengkuantitikan ketiga-tiga perkaitan ini. Indikator Jenis Myers-Briggs (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, MBTI) digunakan bagi menentukan jenis personaliti peserta. Bagi mengukur tahap refleksi mereka, Inventori Refleksi Pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris (English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory, ELTRI) digunakan. Kecekapan diri peserta diukur menggunakan Skala Kecekapan Deria Guru (Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale, TSES). Pertama, MBTI diagihkan dalam kalangan subjek yang dipilih secara rawak bagi menentukan jenis personaliti mereka. Kemudian, subjek dibahagikan secara rawak kepada dua kumpulan, iaitu kumpulan eksperimen dan kumpulan kawalan. Semasa praujian, ELTRI dan TSES yang mengukur pemboleh ubah bersandar kajian (kereflektifan dan kecekapan diri guru secara keseluruhan), diagihkan kepada kedua-dua

kumpulan untuk mengukur tahap refleksi dan kecekapan diri mereka sebelum kajian dilakukan. Semasa kajian, refleksi praktikal (pemboleh ubah tak bersandar) diperkenalkan kepada kumpulan eksperimen. Semasa pascaujian, ELTRI dan TSES diperkenalkan secara serentak kepada kedua-dua kumpulan bagi mengenal pasti sebarang perubahan. Akhir sekali, permasalahan penyelidikan terjawab melalui analisis data menggunakan SPSS 16. Walaupun dapatan kajian ini mengesahkan wujudnya perkaitan yang positif di antara refleksi dan kecekapan diri guru, namun tiada perkaitan signifikan yang wujud di antara jenis personaliti guru dan tahap refleksi mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat perkaitan di antara kecekapan diri guru dan jenis personaliti mereka.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPES, REFLECTIVITY, AND SELF-EFFICACY OF EFL TEACHERS IN PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN IRAN

Abstract

The study was conducted to explore the relationship between Iranian English teachers' reflection levels, their self-efficacy, and their personality types. The purpose of this research is to find out if personality types of Iranian English teachers is related to their reflection level and/or self-efficacy levels, and hence to explore if teachers' self is a determining factor in their teaching practices. An additional aim of the study is to investigate if teachers' self-efficacy and their reflection levels are related, in order to find out if involvement in reflective practices makes teachers more effective. Establishment of a relationship between teacher personality on the one hand and reflective teaching and self-efficacy on the other, allows teacher educators to select and train teachers more effectively. Three instruments were employed to quantify the three constructs. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was used to determine the participants' personality types. To measure their reflection levels, English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory (ELTRI) was used. The participants' self-efficacy was measured by Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). First, MBTI was circulated among the randomly selected subjects to determine their personality types. Next, the subjects were randomly divided into experimental and control groups. In the pre-test phase, ELTRI (English Language Teacher Reflection Inventory) and TSES (Teachers' Sense of

Efficacy Scale), which measure dependent variables of the study (teacher overall reflectivity and teacher overall self-efficacy), were distributed in both groups to measure their reflection and self-efficacy levels before the treatment. As the treatment, practical reflection (independent variable) was promoted in the experimental group. In the post-test phase, both control and experimental groups received ELTRI and TSES simultaneously in order to discover any possible changes. SPSS 16 was used for data analysis to answer the research questions. While the findings of this study confirmed a positive relationship between teacher reflection and self-efficacy, no significant relationship could be established between teachers' personality types and their levels of reflection. Teachers' self-efficacy and their personality types, however, were found related.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Reflective teaching is a familiar topic in English teacher education (Yayli, 2009; Ray & Coulter, 2008; Lord & Lomicka, 2007; Halter, 2006; Korthagen, 2004). While the idea dates back to the thirties (Dewey, 1933) and more rigorously in education to the early eighties (Schon, 1983), the "terms 'reflection' and 'reflective practitioner' are now common currency in articles about teacher education and teachers' professional development" (Griffiths, 2000, p. 539). Reflection, in its technical sense, and thinking are not synonymous; reflection goes beyond everyday thinking, in that it is more organized and conscious (Stanley, 1998). For instance, when experienced non-reflective teachers encounter a problem while teaching, they might hastily decide on the issue based on what they can see, unable to see what in fact caused the problem. Similarly, when they think their lesson went on well, they might have noticed the reactions of louder students only. Reflection, accordingly, implies a more systematic process of collecting, recording and analyzing our own and our students' thoughts and observations (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). To be brief, reflective teaching means observing what you do in the classroom, contemplating the reason you do it, and thinking about if it is effective – a process of self-observation and self-evaluation. A reflective practitioner is a person who has extensive knowledge about teaching (Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Korthagen &

Wubbels, 1995) and is interested in the improvement of her/his teaching (Griffiths, 2000). She/he is aware that "experience is insufficient as a basis for development" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 4) and acknowledges that "much of what happens in teaching is unknown to the teacher" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 3) unless she/he critically reflects upon them. A reflective practitioner also believes that "much can be learned about teaching through self-inquiry" (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p. 3). She/he does classroom investigation by keeping journals, writing lesson reports, conducting surveys and questionnaires, videotaping or audio recording of lessons, and observing peers (Farrell, 2004; Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Notwithstanding the fact that reflective teaching is currently believed to be the dominant approach in education (Farrell, 2004; Korthagen, 2004; Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Richards & Lockhart, 1996), it seems to be flawed in some ways (Fendler, 2003). At the outset, no published report exists showing improvement in the teaching quality or teachers' self-efficacy resulting from practicing reflective teaching (Akbari, 2007). What is more, teachers' personality is missing in the literature dealing with reflective teaching, while it "can influence their tendency to get involved in reflection and will affect their reaction to their own image resulting from reflection" (Akbari, 2007, p. 201).

On the other hand, self-efficacy has been found associated with teaching effectiveness, achievement, and motivation (Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008; Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007; Barkley, 2006; Milner, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Having conducted a large-scale literature review on teachers' self-efficacy, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) reported self-efficacy to be positively related to students' own self-efficacy, greater levels of teacher planning and organization, teachers' openness to new ideas, their readiness to try new methods, their persistence, their becoming less

critical of students, their greater enthusiasm for teaching and their commitment to it. With all the positive outcomes on students and teachers, few practical ways have been suggested to boost self-efficacy beliefs in teachers (Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, & Hogan, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). This research, hence, was an attempt to find a relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and reflection, and to find out the role of teachers' personality types in these constructs.

1.2 Background of the Study

In order for the rationale of the study to be fully appreciated, a review of the background of the study is indispensable. In this section, ELT (EFL and ESL) in general is briefly discussed, and the current trends and issues in it are evaluated. Next, Education and ELT (EFL) in Iran, where the study took place, are investigated and the challenges facing Iranian teachers and teacher educators are discussed.

1.2.1 ELT

English language teaching has a recorded history that dates back to the Middle Ages (Kelly, 1969). Ever since, in an effort to develop the best method of teaching a language, educators have devised and recommended several methods and approaches. However, the twentieth century was the time when several methods and approaches were introduced: Grammar Translation, Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method,

Communicative approach, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response among many others. Although this has been an ongoing process until now, gradually more language teachers find a single method inefficient to cover all their teaching needs (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). They believe that in the postmethod era (Kumaravadivelu, 1994) teachers are valued over methods. In their opinion, teachers-to-be in teacher training courses should be taught about basic teaching principles and not the teaching methods. Once in the field, the teachers themselves should decide how to teach, based on their students and the class. What follows is a brief examination of the weaknesses of the methods and a brief review of ELT in the postmethod era.

1.2.1.1 Shortcomings of the Method Era

> While sciences have advanced by approximations in which each new stage results from an improvement, not rejection, of what has gone before, language-teaching methods have followed the pendulum of fashion from one extreme to the other. So that, after centuries of language teaching, no systematic reference to this body of knowledge exists. *(Mackey, 1965, p. 138)*

An introduction to major teaching methods and approaches is an essential component of many teacher training programs. This practice is justified inasmuch as it helps teachers choose the right method or approach when they might be useful. In addition, it equips them with a rich source of techniques. What is more, it helps them appreciate the relationship between theories and practice (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The question that remains unanswered in such courses, however, is why they have

developed so many methods in the first place. Kelly (1969), having investigated dominant teaching methods in a period of two-thousand five hundred years, concludes, "very few inherently bad ideas have ever been put forward in language teaching" (p. 363). In effect, many people did learn the language through the methods that were ultimately rejected by the subsequent ones. As a case in point, the fundamentals of the Audiolingual Method that prevailed in 1960s and much of 1970s, were adversely questioned both theoretically and practically in 1970s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) and it was mostly replaced by Communicative Approach, Total Physical Response, and Suggestopedia. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that many people did (and in some countries still do) learn a foreign language through the method (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) found two reasons why educators agitated for changes in teaching methods. One is the fact that they thought learners needed a kind of proficiency other than the one achieved through the previous methods. For instance, if, in an earlier method, reading and writing were given prominence, they thought they should devise a method to prioritize speaking and listening. The other reason is that with the advent of new theories of language and language learning, educators felt it was time they devised new approaches to language learning and teaching.

Despite the good intentions behind the method change, the changes have always been under criticism. As early as 1900s, in a report entitled *Report of the Committee of Twelve*, the conclusion made was that no method in education had privileged superiority over the others and that a teaching approach compatible with the objectives of instruction and students' age had to be adopted (Bowen, Madsen, & Hilferty, 1985). Much of the criticism, nevertheless, is more recent and dates back to 1980s and 1990s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This criticism is mainly on three dimensions: the concept

of having various methods, the nature of methods and approaches, and teachers' attitudes towards them.

To begin with, the notion of having a variety of methods is questionable.

> In the field of language teaching, Method A is the logical contradiction of Method B: if the assumptions from which A claims to be derived are correct, then B cannot work, and vice versa. Yet one colleague is getting excellent results with A and another is getting comparable results with B. How is this possible? (Stevick, 1996, p. 193)

Over the years, teachers have been so preoccupied with methods that they have disregarded teaching itself and learners. Teachers have come to believe that "if language learning is to be improved, it will come about through changes and improvements in teaching methodology" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 15).

The second problem in methods and approaches is the very nature of them. Teachers have come to question whether methods deliver what they promise.

> Each method is affected by the contexts in which it is implemented. Thus, even the most prescriptive or rigid method will be implemented differently, depending on whether it is being used within a second or a foreign language environment, in a large class, or on an individual basis, to teach children, adolescents, or adults. (Pica, 2000)

Richards and Rodgers (2001) notice the same shortcoming, stating that approaches and methods have not been devised for international cultures. For example, one cannot teach based on Counseling Learning in cultures where they believe classes should be teacher-centered and where grades are considered very important. Furthermore, many teachers hold the view that the teacher plays the most important role and the success of any

method depends on how good the teacher is (Mackey, 1965).

The third shortcoming derives from the attitude teachers take in dealing with methods, which is in fact caused by the suggestions made by methods. In justifying the method they have devised, educators try to inject the idea that their method "provide[s] a more effective and theoretically sound basis for teaching than the methods that preceded it" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 1). This has inculcated teachers with the notion that "newer is better", and that "accepting one method … [means] automatic rejection of all that preceded it" (Bowen et al., 1985, p. 4).

1.2.1.2 The Postmethod Era

Considering the rising awareness in many teachers and educators that has resulted in criticizing and rejecting methods, the advent of a new method seems implausible, or at least if introduced, it is not going to enjoy the previous commonality of methods. English language teaching seems to have emerged from an era called *method* era into what is generally known as *postmethod* era (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Postmethod condition "signifies a search for an alternative to method, rather than an alternative method" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 29) or as Pica (2000) puts it a "transition from principal method to principles in method" (p. 7).

Before proceeding any further, a distinction needs to be made between eclecticism, which denies the employment of a single method and supports the incorporation of the functional techniques of any given method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), and postmethod condition. They do not share common ground as eclecticism is an unprincipled mixture

of different techniques with no theoretical basis, whereas principled pragmatism, which is practiced in postmethod condition, requires teachers to rely on theories developed based on their actual practice (Kumaravadivelu, 1994).

Instead of stipulating what needs to be done, "the postmethod condition empowers practitioners to construct classroom-oriented theories of practice" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 29). This means that teachers are expected to develop practical theories based on what they practice in the classroom and develop practices based on such theories. By promoting confidence and competence in teachers in solving learning/teaching problems in their classes, it tries to train autonomous teachers who, instead of abiding by a set of rules, could decide what is best for their students.

To provide teachers with the base teaching knowledge, several macrostrategies have been introduced to work as plans and to be developed into microstrategies (Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These macrostrategies are independent of methods and present general guidelines concerning teaching a foreign language. Yet, they do not cover the biggest weakness of the postmethod condition: not equipping teachers with practical guidelines to be used in the field. No matter how ineffective a given method is, it at least underpins what a novice teacher does; what it tells the teacher to do might not be the best thing to do, but, at any rate, it helps her/him to do something. This shortcoming of the postmethod condition is now being filled by reflective models of teacher education. Reflective teaching and its theoretical foundations is discussed in detail in section 2.4.

1.2.2 Education in Iran

In Iran, the Ministry of Education administers and finances schools at the primary and secondary levels. The Supreme Council of Education, as the highest legislative body, approves all policies and regulations related to non-university education (Unesco, 2001).

The Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (formerly the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education) is responsible for universities of science, art and technology. The Ministry of Health and Medical Education deals with medical schools and the training of medical assistants. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for non-formal training; non-formal vocational courses are conducted by the Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) under this ministry (Amadio, 2003).

> The Iranian educational system has three characteristics. First, primary education is mandatory under the Iranian constitution. Secondly, due to increasing number of applicants, admission to post-secondary institutions is through a nation-wide entrance examination and thus only the most talented [i.e. qualified] students can enter universities. Finally, in general, education (in primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels) is free of charge, though private schools and universities authorized by law are allowed to charge tuition fees (Student Advisory, 2006).

1.2.2.1 Educational Goals

The Supreme Council of Education (Amadio, 2003) has approved the following as the educational goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Based upon the Constitution, it is

necessary to dedicate oneself to God and His divine legislation, and to the continuous leadership of Imams and their crucial role in the ongoing Islamic Revolution. To obtain these goals, the following main objectives of education have to be achieved:

- explain Islamic and Shiite principles and culture on the basis of the Holy Qu'ran, the Prophet's tradition and the actions of his family members;
- enhance survey and research regarding all Islamic, scientific, technical and cultural issues;
- promote science and technology for the scientific and technical development of the country, notably in agriculture, industry and military matters;
- promote lifelong education;
- ensure social, economic and cultural justice;
- observe laws and regulations and develop desired habits among people;
- unify all Islamic nations, to exert a continuous effort to obtain political, economic and cultural unity among Muslims;
- maintain the country's independence and sovereignty (Amadio, 2003).

1.2.2.2 The Structure of the Educational System

The educational system in Iran comprises of three groups: primary schooling, secondary schooling, and university education.

Primary schooling in Iran starts at the age of 6 and ends at the age of 11. In the

Primary program, pupils go to Elementary School for a period of five years, at the end of which they receive their Certificate of Completed Primary Education.

After the primary period, at the age of 11, students enter Middle School for their Lower Secondary program. After the completion of three years in Middle School, students receive their certificate of Completed Lower Secondary Education at the age of 14.

Upper secondary education is a four-year program from age 14 to 18. This period is divided into a three-year and a final one-year programs. For the first three years, students have the choice of entering a regular Secondary School or a Technical-Vocational Secondary School, or a Skill-Knowledge Secondary School, all ending in High School Diploma upon passing the required number of 96 credits. Those intending to enter university, will have to enter an additional one-year program, Pre-University Program. Only those with a Pre-University Certificate are allowed to enter University (Amadio, 2003; Unesco, 2001).

Higher education in Iran is provided by comprehensive universities, specialized universities, universities of technology, medical universities, teacher training centers and private institutions (Unesco, 2001).

The first stage university level is Associate Degree (Kardani), offered by some universities after two or three years of study. Bachelor's degree (Karshenasi) is conferred after four years' study (or two years after Kardani). Courses follow the credit and semester system. The Bachelor's Degree requires 130 to 140 (in engineering) credit units.

The second stage university level is Master's Degree (Karshenasi Arshad). The postgraduate qualification of Master's Degree in Arts and Science is generally conferred

after two years' study beyond the Bachelor's Degree. Students must sit for an entrance examination and then pass 13 general and 32 to 36 semester units.

The third stage University level is Doctorate (Doctora), which is offered at the professional level (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine) and at the level of the PhD. PhD programs are divided into course and research phases. Master's degree holders who are successful in the entrance examination begin the course phase. They must complete 60 semester units and pass a comprehensive exam after which they enter the research phase. Here, they prepare and defend a thesis (Unesco, 2001). The language of education in Iran, at all levels, is Farsi and English is studied as a course from lower secondary program onwards (Amadio, 2003). The only exception to this trend is those majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT), English Language Literature, Linguistics, and Translation who study their courses at university level in English (Yarmohammadi, 1995).

1.2.3 ELT in Iran

In Iran, English is considered a foreign language (EFL) and is taught both throughout the formal education (secondary school and university) and at language schools (Amadio, 2003). Private Language schools in Iran are not part of the formal education. In this research, “academic setting”, “academic school” and “academic learner” refer to setting, schools and learners in secondary school and universities, and “private setting”, “private schools”, and “private learner” refer to setting, schools, and learners in non-governmentally funded language schools.

Second year of the lower secondary is the first year students study English at school. Studying English only for 2 hours 15 minutes a week, they continue until they receive their high school diploma. During the final year of the upper secondary program (pre-university course), however, this time increases to three hours a week (Fallahi, 2007).

At university level, for those not majoring in English language (English language and literature, teaching English, linguistics, and translation), English instruction does not exceed 8 out of about 140 credit hours of undergraduate studies (Fallahi, 2007).

Private language schools play a more important role in the field of ELT in Iran. Courses offered in these language schools usually focus on all four skills (Yarmohammadi, 1995), unlike upper-secondary schools and universities, which focus more on redaing. These schools usually have different programs for various age groups. Course books employed are more up-to-date and they usually follow more contemporary teaching methodologies.

1.2.3.1 Shortcomings of ELT in Iran

In the field of ELT, Iranian students and teachers face numerous problems. These problems can be classified under three categories: learners, materials and setting, and instructors.

Many of the problems concern learners. Primarily, most academic learners lack motivation to study English (Talebinezhad & Sadegi Benis, 2005), while it provides one of the essential key factors that initiates learning in L2. Lack of motivation can be because academic learners do not expect to use English in authentic situations in future,

as very few Iranians travel to English speaking countries and Iran is not a very attractive tourist spot for native speakers of English. Consequently, many students become mark oriented and the major reason to study English becomes to pass the course and not to learn (Karimnia & Salehi Zade, 2007).

Karimnia and Salehi Zade (2007) also found that Iranian learners encounter problems in all the language skills. This problem is partly caused by strong language interference between English and Farsi (Gazanfari, 2003). Research shows that some of the most problematic areas for Iranian students are comprehending and using English tenses (Keyvani, 1980), reporting speech in English (Yarmohammadi, 1995), and using English authentically (Karimnia & Salehi Zade, 2007).

Poor teaching materials and unsuitable instruction settings are responsible for some of the problems regarding ELT in Iran. In the academic setting, course books have been targets for criticism. Sadeghian (1996) believes that, "for certain methodological and ideological reasons, we water the content and language so much that what we teach has no educational values" (p. 1). Karimnia and Salehi Zade (2007), too, find school and university curricula inefficient and blame them as one of the reasons for students' incompetency.

Inappropriate class size in the academic setting can also contribute to poor learning on the side of the students (Talebinezhad & Sadegi Benis, 2005). It is not surprising to find English classes with 50-70 students in schools and universities. It is clear that languages are learned through interaction, an element that is missing in the academic setting for the shortage of time and the size of the class.

Many believe that in the academic setting, instruction duration is barely enough (Fallahi, 2007; Karimnia & Salehi Zade, 2007; Talebinezhad & Sadegi Benis, 2005). As

mentioned earlier in this section, learners in the academic setting study English for only 2 hours 15 minutes weekly at school and only 8 credit hours out of 140 credit hours at university.

Instructor-related problems are regarded more important than the other problems as teachers have always played more important roles than curricula or the learning environment. In the academic setting in Iran, many English teachers at school level are not competent enough to teach English (Talebinezhad & Sadegi Benis, 2005; Sadeghian, 1996). The majority of the teachers at schools use Farsi to teach vocabulary items or to explain grammar. The situation is not any better at universities. More often than not, even uneversity professors teach students majoring in English in Farsi. Of course, "the university instructors are [competent], but the problem is that students are not at the level of proficiency to make the professors communicate with them in English" (Talebinezhad & Sadegi Benis, 2005, p. 94). This becomes a vicious circle as such graduates are the next generation school teachers (Sadeghian, 1996).

Instructor problems in private settings are of different nature. These teachers are usually very competent as most of them have learned English either in private language schools where the quality is much higher than academic schools (Talebinezhad & Sadegi Benis, 2005), or in an English speaking country where they have lived and/or studied for some years. One problem some of such teachers have is too much dependance on teaching methods that they have learned in the training courses or by means of which they have been taught when they were students. As it was mentioned earlier in this section, private language schools try to keep abreast of changes in the field of teaching English. Many language schools are now introducing the concepts of postmethod condition and reflective teaching in their teacher training programs.

Although private schools do face some shortcomings, they provide a better setting for research. Many scholars do not find research done on academic schools generalizable (Sadeghi, 2005; Talebinezhad & Sadegi Benis, 2005; Sadeghi, 2003; Seif, 1998). Talebinezhad and Sadegi Benis (2005) believe that "the real act of English learning takes place not in these educational centers [i.e. academic centers: schools and universities] but in non-academic [i.e. private] centers" (p. 87). They go on stating that "if you choose to use college students [as research population] in order to save time, effort, and money, you may be sacrificing the generalizability of your results, and the study will have less external validity" (p. 90).

For the reasons stated above, private schools were chosen as the research setting.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In Iranian language schools, teachers are treated as if they had similar psychological characteristics and consequently, are expected to react in the same manner in all situations. Educators in pre- and in-service programs tend to promote reflection among all teachers, but they fail to inquire why some teachers do not respond adequately in practice. As one of its ends, this research is an endeavor to consider Iranian English teachers' personality type in their reflective practices on the one hand, and in the self-efficacy beliefs on the other.

Disregarding teachers' personality is not the only shortcoming that educators have come to realize in current practice. Another problem is the lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of reflective practices (Akbari, 2007; Griffiths, 2000). In Iran,

educators who encourage teachers to become more reflective are not supported by researches indicating that involvement in reflective practices can yield to improvement in teaching quality and/or effectiveness. As another end of this research, the relationship between teachers' reflection and their self-efficacy beliefs was examined to evaluate the effectiveness of reflective practices.

Another problem regarding reflection as it is currently practiced in Iran is that although reflection has five dimensions (practical, cognitive, affective, meta-cognitive, and critical) (Akbari, Behzadpoor, & Dadvand, 2010), mostly practical reflection is practiced in Iranian language schools in order to develop reflective teachers (Akbari, 2007) and the other four dimensions are generally ignored. As another end, this study evaluates the effectiveness of promoting practical reflection on overall reflection levels of Iranian English teachers.

Self-efficacy has been associated with students' own self-efficacy, greater levels of teacher planning and organization, teachers' willingness to experiment with new methods, their persistence, their becoming less critical of students, and their greater enthusiasm for and commitment to teaching (Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008; Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007; Barkley, 2006; Milner, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). In the literature pertaining to teacher self-efficacy, however, little has been said about practical ways to make teachers more self-efficacious (Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, & Hogan, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

Moreover, in the context of ELT in private language schools in Iran, the concepts of reflective practice and teacher self-efficacy are relatively novel, and very few language schools are incorporating the reflective aspect in their teacher training programs (Sadeghi, 2003).

To summarize the problems, the personality type of Iranian English teachers is generally ignored, while it can provide English teacher educators with critical information regarding English teachers' professional development (Akbari, 2007). Additionally, although reflective practice is encouraged in English teacher education programs in the West (Pacheco, 2005) and with less intensity in Iran, research indicating its positive impact on students or teachers is scarce (Akbari, 2007; Griffiths, 2000). In addition, only practical dimension of reflection out of its five dimensions (practical, cognitive, affective, meta-cognitive, and critical) is employed in promoting reflection and the other dimensions are generally ignored in Iran. What is more, the way to develop teacher self-efficacy, which has been shown in the literature to be positively effective on students and teachers, has not been paid due attention (Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, & Hogan, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Finally, teachers' reflectivity or self-efficacy in the context of ELT in private language schools in Iran has not received enough attention (Sadeghi, 2003).

If reflective teaching and self-efficacy are found positively related as proposed in this research, resorting to reflective practices can be justified, as positive outcomes of reflective practices can be pinpointed. Moreover, the effectiveness of promoting practical reflection on overall reflectivity is examined. In addition, if a positive relationship is established between teachers' reflection and self-efficacy, a practical way is suggested to promote teachers' self-efficacy (through promoting reflectivity). In studying the relationship between the two constructs, the role of teachers' personality type and its effects on each construct and on the relationship between the two constructs can provide key information for teacher educators in order to make their teacher education programs more effective. Finally, teacher educators in Iran will be encouraged

to revise their programs by considering teachers' personality type and by incorporating more reflective activities in their teacher education programs if they see positive outcomes of this research. The aim of this research, hence, is to explore the relationship between personality types of ELT teachers in Iran, their reflectivity, and self-efficacy.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain if Iranian EFL teachers' personality type is a defining factor in their reflective practices
2. To find out if Iranian EFL teachers' personality type is a defining factor in their self-efficacy levels
3. To identify the amount of variance in self-efficacy scores of Iranian EFL teachers explained by reflection scores
4. To explore the impact of practical reflection on overall reflectivity among Iranian EFL teachers, while controlling for their personality types
5. To investigate the effect of practical reflection on overall self-efficacy among Iranian EFL teachers, while controlling for their personality types
6. To discover which of the techniques of reflection are more helpful for teachers' classroom performance, from the participants' perspective
7. To determine what the shortcomings of the available teacher reflection program have been and what elements could be added to it, from the participants' perspective

1.5 Research Questions

1. Do personality types of Iranian EFL teachers make a significant difference in their reflection?
2. Do personality types of Iranian EFL teachers make a significant difference in their self-efficacy levels?
3. How much of the variance in self-efficacy scores of Iranian EFL teachers can be explained by their reflection scores?
4. Is there a significant change in Iranian EFL teachers' overall reflection levels after promoting practical reflection among them, while controlling for their personality types?
5. Is there a significant change in Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy levels after promoting practical reflection among them, while controlling for their personality types?
6. Which of the techniques of reflection are more helpful for teachers' classroom performance, from the participants' perspective?
7. What have been the shortcomings of the available teacher reflection program and what elements could be added to it, from the participants' perspective?

1.6 Hypotheses

$H_0$1. Personality types of Iranian EFL teachers do not make a significant difference in their reflection levels.

$H_0$2. Personality types of Iranian EFL teachers do not make a significant

difference in their self-efficacy levels.

$H_0$3. No significant amount of the variance in self-efficacy scores of Iranian EFL teachers can be explained by their reflection scores.

$H_0$4. There is no significant change in Iranian EFL teachers' overall reflection levels after promoting practical reflection among them, while controlling for their personality types.

$H_0$5. There is no significant change in Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy levels after promoting practical reflection among them, while controlling for their personality types.

Because of the qualitative nature of the last two research questions, no hypothesis was generated for them.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research is of significance to the domain of ELT as it extends the knowledge base that currently exists in that field. For one thing, it probes into the effectiveness of reflective teaching by measuring its effects on teacher efficacy, a feature that is missing in the literature. It has already been shown, of course, that developing reflective teachers is important in education, because through reflection, teachers develop a capacity for self-directed learning (Korthagen, 1993) and they foster greater professional and personal development (Lord & Lomicka, 2007). However, its impact on teacher effectiveness has never been measured. If the relationship between reflectivity and self-

efficacy that is proposed by this research is established, the relationship between reflectivity and teaching effectiveness will be demonstrated. As a result, involvement in reflective activities will be justified, as it would mean carrying out teaching in a more effective manner. Additionally, the present research will help educators have a better picture of reflective teaching by introducing teacher personality into the topic. This, in turn, will assist them in training teachers who are more reflective.

Many schools have chosen to embrace the concept of reflection in their teacher training programs, and research that explores the unexplored areas of reflective teaching and depicts its effectiveness will help to raise awareness in such programs. In addition, those who are unacquainted with the potential benefits of reflective teaching within their educational setting will be encouraged to revise their programs.

Equally significant, if a relationship between self-efficacy and reflective teaching is established, a practical way is suggested to promote teachers' self-efficacy (through promoting reflectivity). This will fill the existing gap in the literature pertaining to teacher self-efficacy.

The population chosen for this study is sufficiently unique to reliably allow this research to illuminate the relationship between teacher personality and reflective teaching and to demonstrate the degree to which teaching reflectively can be effective. This research, then, is poised to expand the general knowledge base for further research into the area of reflective teaching.

1.8 Definition of Operational Terms

Academic

In this research, this adjective describes students, settings, etc. in upper-secondary schools or university, which are part of the formal education in Iran.

ELTRI

English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory (ELTRI) was constructed by Akbari et al (2010) to quantify English teachers' reflections. ELTRI consists of five sub-scales: Practical, Cognitive, Affective, Meta-Cognitive, and Critical.

MBTI

MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) is a personality questionnaire designed to identify certain psychological differences according to the typological theories of Carl Gustav Jung as published in his 1921 book *Psychological Types* (Jung, 1921, 1971).

Personality

"A pattern of relatively permanent traits and unique characteristics that give both consistency and individuality to a person's behavior" (Feist & Feist, 2006, p. 4).

Personality Type

The concept of personality types goes back to the Swiss psychologist Carl G. Jung. He suggested that human behavior was not random, but rather predictable, and as a result, classifiable. He referred to this as the *typology of individual*. Jung believed

> that differences in behavior were the result of preferences. These preferences are formed early in life and provide the key attributes for our personalities (Akbari, Mirhassani, & Bahri, 2005, p. 3).

The personality type of the participants in this study was determined by MBTI. MBTI was developed by Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers and consists of 16 different personality types – ISTJ, ISTP, ESTJ, ESTP, ISFJ, ISFP, ESFJ, ESFP, INFJ, INFP, ENFJ, ENFP, INTJ, INTP, ENTJ, and ENTP.

Practical Reflection

Practical reflection is one of the five dimensions of overall reflection: practical, cognitive, affective, meta-cognitive and critical. Through practical reflection, teachers are encouraged to keep journals, do audio-video recording of their classes, conduct surveys, keep blogs, and observe peers.

Private

In this research, this adjective describes students, settings, etc. in independent, non-governmentally funded language schools.

Reflective Teaching

The idea of reflective teaching was introduced by Dewey (1933) and re-introduced by Schon (1983). According to Dewey, reflection is "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (1933, p. 9). Schon (1983) believed reflection consisted of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-

in-action is based on "the idea that a kind of knowing is inherent in intelligent action" (Schon, 1983, p. 50). It is argued that when a problem surfaces in a profession, reflective professionals can, based on this knowing, reframe that problem and find solutions (Schon, 1983). Reflection-on-action, which "is the basis of much of the literature pertaining to reflective teaching and reflective teacher education … is similar to Dewey's notion of reflection. This form of reflection is seen as 'the systematic and deliberate thinking back over one's actions'" (Loughran, 1996, p. 6).

Reflective teaching, as employed in this research, was best defined by Jay and Johnson (2002). According to them,

> Reflection is a process, both individual and collaborative, involving experience and uncertainty. It is comprised of identifying questions and key elements of a matter that has emerged as significant, then taking one's thoughts into dialogue with oneself and with others. One evaluates insights gained from that process with reference to: (1) additional perspectives, (2) one's own values, experiences, and beliefs, and (3) the larger context within which the questions are raised. Through reflection, one reaches newfound clarity, on which one bases changes in action or disposition. New questions naturally arise, and the process spirals onward. (p. 76)

In this study, reflective teaching was measured by ELTRI, constructed by Akbari et al (2010). ELTRI consists of five constructs – practical, cognitive, affective, meta-cognitive, and critical.

Teachers' Self-Efficacy

In the literature pertaining to teacher self-efficacy, the following terms are used to refer to different aspects of the concept.