

Teacher Appraisal Systems of Critical Incidents Experienced in Iranian EFL Classroom Context

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Received 18 May 2023 | Received in revised form 25 May 2023 | Accepted 06 June 2023

APA Citation:

Abdulhay, H. (2023). Teacher Appraisal Systems of Critical Incidents Experienced in Iranian EFL Classroom Context. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 8(2), 2023, 211-226.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v8i2.1105>

Abstract

This study sought to solicit, through the Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ), Iranian EFL teachers' emotional experiences and their ensuing control and authority practices. In so doing, a total of forty university instructors in Iran were recruited to participate in the study by filling in the instruments, of which thirteen were returned back. The content analysis of the data was quantitatively and qualitatively done to pinpoint the frequency of the occurrences of the emotional events and to scour the teachers' feelings, behaviors, and reactions to the encountered situations. The data gleaned from both female and male teachers in this study disclosed the recalling of the negative events more than the positive ones. The teachers' reservations and expectations and the lack of dexterity to confront the unprecedented behaviors were witnessed to be the main causes of experiencing negative emotions. However, the teachers' commiseration and empathetic teaching styles were reported as the reasons for their experiences of positive feelings. The results of this study may have some practical implications and suggestions for language teacher education.

Keywords: EFL, learner behavior, language teaching, teacher development

1. Introduction

Language learning and teaching processes compel its interlocutors to wage into cognitive, corporeal, and affective transactions, signifying their sundry intended purposes and impressions. Schumann (1997) argues that motivation and ensuing success in language learning is pivoted on the stimulus appraisal (one's overhaul of potential harms or benefits of external stimuli in any given situation). Individuals' neuro-cerebral processing and functioning differences determine stimulus

appraisal, which, in turn, embraces the differential emotional reactions (ibid). Reflective practice does have a contribution to teacher quality enhancement (Suphasn & Chinokul, 2021).

As Tahti & Arhippainen (2004) put it, emotional responses are deemed as a social language. Feelings are commonly presumed to be conscious processes, and the only means to assess feelings is by dint of verbal report (Sanderet al., 2005). Affectual/phrenic reaction to the stimulating variables determines much of the optimal performance in foreign language learning. Because of protecting themselves against appearing negatively in class, students usually predispose to evince withdrawal behavior for performance and participation. According to Lazarus (1966), emotions culminate from the interaction of the person and his/her environment when distressed, which is evaluated either as primary appraisal in the form of being benign, menacing, or unrelated to their well-being or as secondary appraisal through enjoying of enough facilities to tackle the event.

As Roseman et al. (1996) propound, to study appraisal and emotion is to want students to recall their emotional experiences, describing them in their own words and completing a questionnaire designed to measure their appraisals. According to Lazarus (1966), emotions culminate from the interaction of the person and his/her environment when distressed, which is evaluated either as primary appraisal in the form of being benign, menacing, or unrelated to their well-being or as secondary appraisal through enjoying of enough facilities to tackle the event. Coping potential appraisal is understood to be a determining factor in an appropriate response to an event by examining the available resources.

Coping potential appraisal is understood to be a determining factor in the appropriate response to an event by examining the available resources. Folkman & Lazarus (1988), in their model of stress and coping, state that, coping strategies are employed in response to emotion imbued by the appraisal process to alter the person–environment relationship through strategies to regulate distressing emotions (emotion-focused coping) or through tactics to alter the problem resulting in the distress (problem-focused coping). As Roseman and Smith (2001) postulate, under the appraisal theory, a person imbues emotions through the assessment of events and situations pertaining to his/her goals, needs, or concerns. Folkman & Lazarus' (1988) stress and coping model conveys that coping strategies are deployed in response to emotion imbued by the appraisal process to alter the person–environment relationship through strategies to regulate distressing emotions (emotion-focused coping) or through tactics to alter the problem resulting in the distress (problem-focused coping). However, individuals confront situations and size up their value and merits according to their novelty, pleasantness, goal/needs significance, coping potential, and self/social image (Schumann, 1997).

Gross (2001) coined the term “emotion regulation” for the tactics a person deploys to augment, preserve, or dwindle one or more particles of an emotional response (p. 215). Gross (1998) delineated five sets of tactics for emotion regulation: Situation selection in the form of distancing oneself or approaching people, places, or objects to adjust and control our own behaviors, for instance, to not mention a word that is tricky or offending; Situation modification, the situation alteration for the sake of changing emotional effects, for instance, changing seat of a student who is loquacious and noisy; Attentivedirection, through diverting distraction and brooding; Cognitive alternation, like reappraisal strategies for changing the initial appraisal of the event; Response-focused strategies for affecting physiological, experiential, or behavioral aspects of the emotional response. Reappraisal and distraction have proved to be more effective than expressive suppression in down-regulating emotions (Richards & Gross 2000, 2006; Gross, 2001).

It is patent that teaching practice, where emotions are accompanied by people all the time, embraces emotional experience (Babad, 2009). According to Deci and Ryan (2000), teachers' emotions vary contextually. In a similar vein, teachers' responses to similar critical incidents vary (Shapira-Linshchinsky, 2011) as judged differently (Farrell, 2008). However, Gross (2001) postulates that early adjustments in the emotional trajectory come off as more effective than delayed adjustments. Çukur

(2022) ascribed critical incidents to a multitude of sources, basically, owing to students' behaviors. However, teachers modulate their strategies relative to the student while acting as the authority. Novice language teachers are affected by critical incidents in a variety of ways, with their education and teaching competence questioned (ibid). In a parallel manner, students' creativity, motivation, critical thinking, and meta-cognitive abilities are fostered by reflective teaching techniques (Léon-Henri, 2022).

According to Shandomo (2010), reflection is a deliberate, intentional, and regular process of self-examination and self-evaluation. The reflective process, while resolving problems in classroom teaching, deals with teachers' inner lives besides. Hooijer et al. (2021), disclosed that taking a reflective process in teaching helps teachers' knowledge can be increased, their attitudes towards learners with diverse needs become positive, feel more confident in their own abilities, and get geared up for the task.

Oduro, et al. (2022), in a phenomenological research, examining college tutors' use of reflective teaching in Ghana, implementing constructivist ideas, using semi-structured interviews, uncloak that the tutors took reflective practice as a vital approach to identify weaknesses in the teaching process which enables them to adopt steps to obviate the feebleness in germinating learners' understanding and performance. The findings attested to the powerfulness, durability, and effectiveness of reflective practice as the cause of education quality change and facilitator of effective teaching and learning toward educational goal attainment. Moreover, tutors can constantly apply and become inured to reflective practice for realizing their instructional objectives and improving their performances.

It is conspicuous that setting critical incidents on paper gives teachers more time to contemplate and find the possible reasons behind classroom events. Whereas the learning and teaching environment is not a space void of emotional and behavioral encounters, it is an urgent demand for teachers to be geared up to react appropriately to prospective events. Teachers could preclude similar events if the experiences learned from reading and reviewing the critical incidents are turned into values and beliefs for acting appropriately. Megawati et al. (2020) found that negative and positive critical incidents contribute to teaching development. Critical incidents allow teachers to mull over and challenge their beliefs and value systems to grow and promote (Esmali & Afzali, 2020). Chien (2017), analyzing writing and discussion of critical incidents reported by six Taiwanese EFL student teachers' unclocked four important lessons student teachers learned from this approach, namely, individual learner differences, classroom management and instructional strategies, solutions to the incidents, and reflection.

Pursuant to the intended research paradigm, the study aimed to scrutinize the critical incidents and their resultant emotional experiences reported by Iranian English language teachers during their teaching programs and gauged by dint of Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire-GAQ which is hinged on Scherer's typologies (2001). The Geneva Appraisal survey, built upon Scherer's instrument, which is regarded as the most comprehensive scale for gauging respondents' evaluation of situations, was administered to the intended context. A total of 14 Iranian EFL university teachers instructing the English language as part of the compulsory course reported their apprehensions about the situation where they felt emotionally via questionnaires. The null hypothesis was built on the assumption that teachers-related stimulus of language learning experiences at university does not significantly affect their emotional experiences in language teaching at the university level. It should be noted that the medium of instruction in the university credit courses in English and Persian both. To answer the hypothesized assumption, these research questions were constructed as follows:

Q1. What is the emotional evaluation of university teachers pursuant to their language teaching practices?

Q2. What do the events unfold as precursors to the emotional experiences reported?

2. Literature Review

As Šarić and Šteh (2017) purport, critical reflection should be taken as a way to find new solutions as to bring about the alterations that contribute to the transformation of the community for better

learning. Suphasn and Chinokul (2021) evidenced that instructors' standards are uplifted by reflective practice. Tay et al. (2022) found that the focus on a transformative mindset based on intentional reflection is a sturdy stimulus for change and growth in teaching practice. However, Limbere et al. (2022) found that teachers don't have the alacrity to share power with students for distrusting their understanding, behavior, and time constraints, which may hamper an enactment of the democratic classroom version.

Teacher education programs have exploited critical incidents to assist learners' development in decision-making schema (Griffin, 2003). As Richards and Farrell (2005) posit, by dint of critical incident analysis, insights on some aspects of teaching and learning in ELT can be generated. They further add that the utilities of critical incidents are in that they aid in recognizing and resolving problems, pinpointing good practices, and granting teachers an elevated sense of professional awareness. Yilmaz (2021) found that teachers relied solely on pedagogical proclivity and instructional-related issues to accomplish predetermined objectives. Estaji & Fatalaki (2022) evidenced that the students' bizarre behavior, discontent, lack of motivation, effective cooperation, empathy, sympathy, the teacher's subject matter knowledge, and the requisite type of feedback and time management.

According to Lazarus (1993), a cognitive appraisal is an evaluation system of the encounter with the environment for its relevance to his or her well-being. The outcome of cognitive appraisal of antecedent situations and events determines the reaction patterns in sundry dimensions (physiology, expression, action tendencies, and feeling) to a situation. Carter & McGriff (2014) conducted a research study on the way classroom management of critical incidents during student teaching influences one's perspective on the teaching profession. The 23 student teachers at a land-grant institution in the United States and 33 student teachers enrolled in a comparable program in India comprised the participants of the study. The perceptions of the student teachers of their teacher education programs and their preparedness for classroom management issues were solicited through eight open-ended questions and surveys. "class disruption", "truancy", "disorderly conduct", and "disrespect" were common between the two universities. The US institution reported instances of insubordination and use of cell-phone. The recurring theme in India was the breaking of the class rules. Corrective, verbal warning and punitive were the student teachers' reactions to the discipline incidents.

Of the 30 participants, 19 reported the corrective, eight determined verbal warning, and three named punitive as their preferred technique of tackling critical incidents. Experience, more than anything else, was a determining factor for dealing with the critical incident situation personality, experience/teaching strategy, and having a role model were categorized as responses to the questions. Of the student teachers in India, all claimed their teacher education program or discussion with others has been of assistance in preparation for critical incidents, while the four student teachers in the US claimed that teacher education programs did not gear them up for critical incidents. Vanderclayen et al. (2014) carried out a study on troublesome teaching episodes in professional development contexts. They concluded that emotions are the outcome of worst lessons or problematic experiences and deemed emotions as determining factors in the pre-service teachers' learning.

A critical incident is known to be coined by Flanagan (1954), while doing psychology research on the context of the aviation industry. According to Farrell (2008), a critical incident happening unexpectedly is an incentive for training teachers to mull over their teaching and learning practices. Critical incidents are configured through attending with the lens of significance to an event (Tripp, 1993). Brookfield (1990) postulates that the way one perceives an event is key to the memory of an event as a live picture for him. He further adds that not any usual event per se is prone to be taken critically until the person gives meaning to them. Koestler (1967) embodies the critical moments in the triads of 'haha' (humorous), 'aha' (scientific), and 'ah' (artistic) which to Gestalt psychologists, as he reports, AHA is for the enlightening instants of truth to a sudden puzzle. According to Griffiths (2008), experiencing these perceptions is of paramount significance to language learners as they assay veracities of situations through their molded beliefs and react accordingly during language learning.

The psychology and neurobiology of stimulus appraisal (hinged upon novelty, pleasantness, goal/need significance, coping potential, and the self- and social image of the learner) predict the degree of achievement in second language learning (see Schumann 1997, 2001), mooted. A model was proposed by Schumann (2001) to evince the neural system involved in the transposition of motivation into action. Hinged upon the foraging theory, the first stage for foraging behavior was the generation of an incentive motive or goal. This incentive motive/goal was initiated from the Amygdale of the temporal lobes, the orbitofrontal cortex of the prefrontal area, along with the peripheral nervous system (Stephens & Krebs, 1986).

Kilgour et al. (2015), as educational pre-service practitioner teachers, at the end of their university course and the outset of their school employment, report their last year's reflections on their professional experiences of critical incidents in school, especially, recalling their worst lesson experience. They adopted a theoretical framework of reflective practice, including critical incident research design. The assumption built on this was that pre-service teachers' experiences of professional practice affect their moves to the complicated milieu of the workplace. Through the constant comparative method, the coding and analysis of their written narrative were undertaken during the reflective practices to identify the properties of their most concerning memories and their alleged reasons for the troublesome moments. The findings showed traces of emotional distress, ensuing by concerns on classroom management and planning matters and some concerns, likewise, on communication and learning issues in the initial reflection of pre-service teachers on teaching experiences of the worst moments.

There it seems to be some studies on the role of appraisals in relation to language learning (Schumann, 1997; 2006; Schumann & Wood, 2004). ELT has exploited the theory for cultural studies (Stakhnevich, 2002), language learning (Finch, 2010), teacher education (Farrell, 2008, 2013; Kim et al., 2013), and teacher training (Johnson, 2003; Richards & Farrell, 2005). Lengeling and Pablo (2016) studied the reflections of eight beginner EFL teachers and one of their trainers' critical incidents through the narrative inquiry and the use of journals in a Mexican context. The critical incidents proved to help teachers analyze and evaluate their teaching processes.

Gabryś-Barker (2011) believes that the prominent role of affective factors in post-puberty language learning and achievement is patently conspicuous. Identifying and calling emotions by their true names is the springboard to finding exactly what emotion a person is currently experiencing and to helping one self-regulate himself/herself to override his/her impediments in achieving success. Storm and Storm (1987) identified a hierarchical taxonomy of 525 emotion labels. Albeit there is a discrepancy in categorizing emotion cross-culturally, there is a consensus in the domain of language learning and teaching.

As Schumann (1997) proposes, novelty is the extent of unexpectedness or acquaintance. The pleasantness, however, depicts the attractiveness of the stimulus. The goal/need prominence alludes to the instrumental satisfying needs or achieving goals. The coping potential is the alacrity of learners to cope with an event. The self and social image pertain to individuals' self-concept. However, it should be notified that only positive appraisal could culminate in eventual proficiency. The negative appraisals may end up in the abandonment of learning activity and leave the process unaccomplished.

The results of the study by Atai and Nejadghanbar (2016), analyzing the written critical incidents reported by six in-service Iranian EFL teachers, revealed six categories, namely, behavior, language proficiency, clashes, individual discrepancy, class participation, and teachers' unpreparedness. They collected the CIs of in-service teachers through reflections via blogs to share with their colleagues and came up with six categories. The main categories of CIs were *behavior, language proficiency, clashes, individual difference, class participation, and teachers' unpreparedness*. The most frequently mentioned CIs were related to behavior. Thus, the authors suggested emphasizing behavioral incidents is needed in second language teacher education (SLTE) programs.

Finch (2010) notifies learners to review of their past experiences for their significance in their learning process. As Cruickshank and Applegate (1981, p. 553) put it, 'reflective practice' as an integral part of any language teaching practice is "to think about what happened, why it happened, and what else could have been done to reach their goals." Esmaeli & Afzali (2020), examining fifteen Iranian universities English teachers' reports of the forty-nine narrated critical incidents and coping strategies, evidenced that the critical incidents in English classrooms are hinged upon language skills and components, heterogeneous classrooms, materials, mother tongue, testing issues, and teaching foreign cultural aspects.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Procedure

The study sought to appraise the critical incidents of Iranian English language teachers during their instructional years instructing language at university to first grader university students and their resultant emotional experiences by dint of the Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire- GAQ hinged on Scherer's taxonomy (2001). A total of 14 teachers instructing English as a foreign language in Iran experienced at university were recruited. The study was implemented in the English language department in Iran, recruiting 14 language teachers. A cross-sectional study was deployed, scaling and soliciting the incidents in a descriptive text happening in their credit courses and ensuing responses to Likert-type question items anchored by *not at all (no)*, *moderately*, *extremely (yes)*, *does not apply* by checking in the box in a continuum format provided to the right for each question task, for instance for question number 8 in the questionnaire "*you were familiar with this type of event.*"

The respondents were to check not at all in the box if the event happened to them was not new, to check moderately if they has a nodding acquaintance with the event and had heard or had watched something like that somewhere, and to check extremely if they had experienced that kind of event they wrote in the questionnaire and to check does not apply if the item does not relate to them or they have no answer to it. Throughout the whole process of data collection while the respondents were guided through prompts provided at the heading of the questionnaires, helped by the researcher filling in the instruments. Throughout the course of questionnaire distribution and completion, researchers were present and gave assistance regarding the aim, reading, understanding of the items, and filling up the scales.

3.2. Instrument

The study employed the Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ), which is the latest version of the components of Scherer's Stimulus Evaluation Checks (SECs) (Scherer, 2001). The instrument debuted by Geneva Emotion Research Group is based upon the component process model of emotion (CPM), constructed by Scherer (2001), which is composed of five components of emotion, viz., cognitive, neuro-physiological, motivational, expressive, and subjective feeling. It includes both descriptive questions for the respondents to generate a narrative text and likewise the Likert-scaled question items where the respondents are to select their responses from a scale ranging from not at all (no), moderately, extremely (yes), and does not apply.

3.3. Participants

Forty university teachers, 9 female and 31 male, participated in eliciting their experiences through logged journals. Some had at least fifty years of teaching experience, and others were new in their job, and all of them were non-native speakers of the English language.

4. Results

The total number of surveys filled in was fourteen, out of them, 3 reported positive emotions, and 10 reported negative ones, while one was unrelated (that is, narrating irrelevant events to teaching). In total, 5 answers were not checked by the respondents and were missing. The participants critically reported the events as they were easily retrieved and recalled. The data was tabulated quantitatively based on their content focus, which is showcased in the following.

Table 1a. *Positive Critical Incidents*

<i>Type of Critical Incidents</i>	<i>Total Number</i>	<i>Index of Event</i>
Events focusing on teaching the language	4	1,2,4,5
Events focusing on the personal well-being of learners	3	11,12,13

Table 1a exhibits the number of reports on the positive events experienced by the teachers apropos of their teaching practices and also their reactions to a situation that learners went through by taking into account the individual learners' learning condition.

Table 1b depicts the number of reports on the negative events touched by the teachers that were germane to their teaching practices and also their reactions to the situations that learners run through by taking into consideration the individual learners' learning conditions.

Table 1b. *Negative Critical Incidents*

Type of CI	Quantity	Examples
Violent behavior in the classroom and beyond:		
- towards the teacher	7	3,5,6,7,8,9,10
- towards other learner(s)	0	-
verbal violence (towards the teacher)	1	9
Disruptive behavior in the classroom	3	5,7,8,9
Learning misbehavior (refusal to perform a task)	2	7,9
Teaching the language (professional qualifications)	-	-
Teacher being evaluated by others (learners, parents)	4	2,3,5,7,9
The personal well-being of learners	4	10,11,12,13

Table 1b delineates the instances of behaviors aimed at the teachers and classmates by the learners which are not individually and socially approved. However, since the learners reported are at the university level and beyond mature age, they behaved more independently of one another, exposing their misbehaviors publicly. The peers appeared not to have any effect on the classmates' behaviors, and their misbehaviors seemed to spring from the conditions they have gone through.

Event 9:

The insulting remark affecting the teacher (See the Appendix), in this case, caused her to quit and discard her job, which attests to the intensity of the emotional experience. This instance of emotional experience is clearly evident in the way the negative emotion experienced stymies one not to wage into a task and, as a result, giving up the job, intolerant of getting along with the experience subjected to. However, culturally inappropriate behavior directed at the teacher could have stemmed from the latitude given by the teacher so as to be witnessing such consequences, or it could have been the negligence of the teacher establishing such an iron-clad discipline from scratch to set up these kinds of behaviors, or the manner of handling style may cause the event like the unfriendly look.

Event 13:

This event (See the Appendix) was perceived by the teacher as totally humane and empathetic. The teacher precluded any further tension and strain and prospective consequence for the learners,

which may pave the way for motivating the student. It was expected that something like this to be exercised as an appropriate reaction. (More samples of CIs can be found in the Appendix).

The proportion of negative incidents reflected by the teachers who reported negative events was higher than the positive ones (10 *versus* 3). The misconduct, both verbal and non-verbal (insulting), was seen to be directed at the teacher (1 case). Strong emotional experiences resulting from negative events recalled by the teachers were all related to misbehavior in class (7 cases). Those incidents attest to the lack of the teacher’s exercise of control in respect of exercising his/her power and, therefore, low levels of authority in the class and themselves. The same missing qualities bring about a high number of learning misbehaviors in the classroom, manifested as refusal to do work assigned by the teacher. This inexperienced orchestration of the class culminates in learning problems, likewise as giving no attention to the subjects, resulting from cultivating negative attitudes towards teachers and the course.

Positively and negatively identified critical incidents appertained to markedly different domains of focus. The negative critical incidents were affined to the way the classroom was managed by the teachers and the resultant disruptive behavior in the classroom, whereas the positive incidents sprouted from the teaching methods and the way materials were imparted to the learners. The event clearly depicts such kinds of conduct.

4.1. Stimulus Evaluation Checks

Table 2, in the following, enumerates the respondents’ reports pursuant to different categories of appraisal components (SECs). A diversity of emotive responses is seen by individual participants where no definite value is attached to individual appraisal components. Some variables like *novelty*, *intrinsic pleasantness*, *goal/need*, *significance*, and *compatibility with standards* are seen out of teacher’s control as they go through them, which seek more negative answers compared to positive items. Coping potential is only a choice that is perceived as a component open to modification by the teachers, which they can obtain via the attainment of knowledge or experience acquired in similar situations. However, the coping potential can be ascribed and imputed to the personality types and impulses than their teaching experiences that emanate from habitual behavior than teaching management. Scherer (2001) treats it as an attitude adopted by the respondent in relation to and influenced by the other components.

Table 2. *Total Scores for the Positive and Negative CIs*

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
Total no. of CIs	123	74	66

Table 2 depicts the total number of responses checked for both the positive and negative events rated on Likert-type scales.

4.2. Intensity and Verbal Description of CIs

Since the subjects were solicited to recall a critical incident that was imprinted vividly on their minds during their teaching careers, it was assumed that the events recollected were intensively memorable. It is, however, expected to predict the *intensity of experienced feelings* in the CIs for both negative and positive events to be strong as they were more readily recalled and popped up. The *degree of control* over feelings in terms of disguise was observed to lean more towards moderate than strong ones in the negative events. The negative CIs are seen as spontaneously occurring and bringing about feelings of anger and external threat. Positivity is as an indicator of teachers’ professional competency, knowledge, and degree of professional security, in which the terms *being annoyed*, *frightened*, *shocked*, etc., manifest the experienced feelings. The positive words used also convey the degree of teachers’ confidence in their works and their feelings of fulfillment: *pride*, *pleasure*, and *joy*. Negative terms used like *anger* conveys an individual’s lack of control feelings.

Table 3. *Intensity of CIs. (SEC- A Stimulus Evaluation Check)*

Total	Positive CIs			Negative CIs		
	weak	moderate	strong	weak	moderate	strong
Intensity * degree (q. 29)	0	0	2	3	3	1
* control (q. 32)	1	0	1	2	4	3

Table 3 delineates the intensity of teachers’ exercises of degree and control on a weak, medium, and strong continuum.

Table 4. *Verbal Description of the Emotional Experience (The CIs Described)*

<i>Rehearsal</i>	word/phrase	List of emotion terms	word/Phrase	List of emotion terms
Verbal Description Of the event (q. 33, 34)	Success (1)	Joy (1)	Anger (1)	rage (3)
	Pleasant (1)	Pride (1)	Disgusting	irritation(3)
	Encouraging	Shame (1)	Aggressive	sadness (8)
	Eye-opening		Unpleasant (1)	surprise (2)
			Self-pity	anxiety (2)
			Sympathetic	disgust (2)
			Control	contempt (2)
			Unacceptable	despair (2)
			Control	
			Impolite	
		Tough		
		Difficult		
		Shocked		

Table 4 describes the verbal reports of the respondents about their emotional experiences regarding two items, for the number 33, which was supposed to be responded to their own words in the box provided to the right, and for the number 34 to be checked by checking mark in a block below the prompt by their corresponding emotion terms in the questionnaire. For the number 33, participants described their emotional experiences in a word or in the form of a short expression, and for item 34, the respondents were asked to identify the term that is nearest to whatever they felt corresponded best to the emotional experiences that they reported above in question 33 with a check mark. The respondents were asked through the prompt to identify the stronger of the two emotions experienced, which were coterminous and blended, or two different simultaneous emotions, with two check marks. As seen in Table 4, a diverse distribution of different emotions overtly expressed by the teachers is observed, denoting the magnitude of their significance of them, to which eventually, the teachers respond subjectively and impulsively perceived.

5. Discussion

The present study intended to discern Iranian EFL teachers’ reflections and impressions of their CIs. To that end, their written reports of CIs experienced during their teaching practices were collected through a survey study, which was then analyzed for their contents to find answers to the first research question. As checked by the respondents in the survey, three positive and ten negative emotions were pinpointed, while irrelevant ones, narrating an event impertinent to the teaching process. From among the events, the data also showed that the respondents were concerned about the students’ individual well-being in three cases and zeroed in on teaching the language in three ones.

The answer to the second research question was supplied by analyzing and interpreting the critical incidents teachers set on paper. Dissatisfaction with the negative events was mostly witnessed, ranging from rage, irritation, and anxiety to surprise, disgust, and sadness. The coping strategies witnessed in their written reports by the teachers seem to be the exercise of restraint so as not to react and confront insipiently and impulsively. The appraisal of stimulus divulged that some variables such as *novelty*,

intrinsic pleasantness, goal/need, significance, and compatibility with standards were found not to be under the heel of the teacher, seeking more negative answers compared to positive items, then. The coping potential was only perceived as a component open to modulation by the teachers, which can be attained through knowledge or experience.

The negative CIs were found to spontaneously set the teachers up to feel anger and external threat. The positivity witnessed was a yardstick of teachers' professional security and competency, and knowledge. The positive words put on paper also convey the degree of teachers' faith and confidence in their works and their feelings of fulfillment as pride, pleasure, and joy. The negative terms underscored, such as anger, convey an individual's lack of control over feelings. The upshots of the content analysis of the written reports showed that fear was also a contributing factor culminating in the student's misbehavior. However, students may extrapolate outside feelings unrelated to the teachers' teaching practices. Putri and Kuswando (2020), in an EFL context, identified the students' misbehavior as a critical incident claimed by the high school Indonesian EFL teachers.

Agency and emotions were two dominant dimensions affecting the teachers. The teachers took it as a threat for them to act agentively. The findings of the current study corroborate the results of the research conducted by Nazari & De Costa (2021), who found that CIs negatively influences teachers' agency and emotions. The results substantiate findings of other studies in which the most recurring CI sources are reported to be learners' unwelcoming behaviors (e.g., Atai & Nejadghanbar, 2016; Karimi & Nazari, 2019; Molani et al., 2021; Pourhassan & Nazari, 2021; Putri & Kuswando, 2020). In some events reported, the teachers identified the students as problematic, expecting them to act more politely and discreetly. This finding is in line with the findings by Çukur (2022), who evidenced student behavior as the most recurring CI theme, including conflicts between students, whole, and individual student class misbehaviors.

The thematic analysis of the written reports delineated that CIs negatively influenced teachers' self-esteem. In all these negative events reported, teachers recognized the problematic situation as student-related. However, these negative experiences can be turned into positive ones if one's attitude to these events is adjusted. In two events, teachers established their identity as collaborative. Among these events, the teaching method was not implicated as a source of the problem. In one event, teachers concerned about students' learning issues went to the extreme using addressing them to make learners take their course seriously. The results are consistent with the study done by Pourhassan and Nazari (2021), in which the teachers reflected having issues with learner engagement. Various interpersonal, pedagogical, and professional matters end up in CIs, to name one frequent example, the situation where the learners question the teachers' knowledge (ibid).

These reports illustrated that the teachers took some classroom events seriously, taking them as a threat to their authority. In event nine (see Appendix), for example, one teacher wants to quit the job at hand, feeling the negative experiences. According to Duckworth (2016), solid commitment makes one with ultra grit eschew giving up in case of failure. However, educational programs need to uplift teachers' resilience and spur them to mull over the critical incidents (henceforth CIs) encountered (Esmali & Afzali, 2020). To Luthar et al. (2000), resilience is a positive adjustment in the face of significant adversity. However, these occasions contribute to teachers' experiences and cognizance. As Babaii et al. (2021) and Karimi and Nazari (2019) evidenced, thinking on CIs expanded Iranian EFL teachers' peer reflection, classroom management skills, and professional development.

The findings of the current study depicted that the teachers were also empathetically involved in their teaching, as expressed in the three events, too. Moreover, the written reports yielded by Iranian EFL teachers indicated that they exercised cooperation with the students. Four examples of authoritarian themes were revealed by analyzing these reports. However, some reports yield that the teachers have exercised cooperation, encouraging learners. The content analysis of the themes uncovered that teachers considered the critical incidents as unwelcome based on their set principles.

What is patent is that critical incidents inevitably happen (Dixon & Byrne, 2011), but the way one reacts to them is crucial. According to Molani et al. (2021), some CIs may be interpreted differently relative to diverse situations.

In all these events reported, it was witnessed that the teachers exercised restraint, not giving in to their impulses and rushing in. Content analysis of the data showed that the teacher's expectations of the students to act accordingly were principle-centered. Some reports exhibited that the teachers were set up for disappointment and exposed to some unexpected misconduct. However, it should be noted that teachers' responses to similar critical incidents vary (Shapira-Linshchinsky, 2011) as judged differently (Farrell, 2008). However, Ria et al. (2003) found that experienced teachers who have more than five years of teaching experience are less emotionally challenged than novice teachers. Griffin (2003) found out that pre-service teachers analyzing critical incidents orientated them toward growth and inquiry. Richards and Farrell (2010) remark that critical incidents impel teachers to pause, think, and query the meaning of incidents and their long-term consequences.

Getting all the critical incidents down on paper permits teachers to find underlying problems in their teaching program and discern the pro and cons of their teaching practice if thoroughly, consistently, and specifically done so as to obviate their unproductive practices. It paves the way to meticulously observe any malpractice gone on extreme so as to carefully zero in on one's teaching method and behavior, especially if one specific area of weakness is attended to. Moreover, reflecting on critical incidents through writing is conducive to realizing professional and other social identities (Sevilla & Gamboa, 2017). It serves as a teaching lesson by rehashing and overhauling negative consequences and consequently preempting suchlike in the future.

Transcribing and reviewing critical incidents allows one to let go of negative feelings and restore one's well-being, by allowing oneself to be fallible. Likewise, rehashing one's own critical incident serves as a lesson practice for one to take preventive measures. To Philp-Clark and Grieshaber (2023), reflection is a process and way of analytical thinking, imparting credibility to teaching practice, and informing decision-making, leading to greater opportunities for teachers to justify teacher cognition and transform professional practice. However, recognition of instigators of negative emotions helps obviate their subsequent effects in future teaching (Kilgour, 2015).

All in all, the findings obtained from this study nurture the literature on classroom behavior concerning the intensity of teachers' emotive responses towards CIs and their consecutive consequences. As Aloni, (2007) proposes, humanistic education needs to care about maintaining human dignity. Moreover, future teachers should foster students' reflective thinking at the outset of their study courses (Bognar, & Krumes, 2017). Hence, it seeks for both parties to become adroit at the prognosis of the problematic situation by retrospectively rehashing their thought system and in-class behavior to defer triggering any unpleasant event which culminates in dishonor for any interlocutor. The findings of this study provide evidence of the fact that teaching situations are unexpected as every student enjoys his own unique and complex nature. Making the recording and appraising of critical incidents, positive or negative ones, a regular and routine practice by teachers, dwindles the iterative problems. Interestingly, sharing and reflecting on overcritical incidents were favored by EFL teachers, raising their awareness (Karimi & Nazari, 2021; Nejadghanbar, 2021).

6. Conclusion

This study attempted to explore the emotional experiences and the extent of control and authority practices of EFL teachers in the context of Iranian universities. The findings revealed that almost, all the recalled incidences evidenced were negatively reported. The collection of incidents provides teaching resources and leaves the clue for better management of the classroom and the exercise of proper conduct, which mutually affect teachers' and students' emotional well-being. However, a small radius of samples was recruited to complete the study. The data can apprise learners of their emotional status in

response to situations and inform teachers, likewise, of the instances of rising clashes and reconciliation between them and their audiences.

Albeit, this study would aware the readers of the tool and its concept recall and appraise their reaction through recalling and bringing up an event on the paper preferably, the future reaction could not be guaranteed or safeguarded unless the responsibility for taking action in a situation is admitted and the action to edify and rectify the tactic for responding to an occasion be exercised for gearing up and bracing for positive behavior and preempting a negative reaction. The tool is an appropriate device to apprise the flexibility degree of the respondents and prognosis the deficit characters that are impediments to appearing fruitful to both the teaching and learning situations en route to taking immediate responses to uplift the educational levels.

The diversity of incidences attests to the fact that each classroom and each student is different, all with different personalities and characters which are sui generis and unique, requiring every teacher to be expecting different incidences, cognizant of the fact that what does work for one doesn't apply for another. Thus, caution needs to be exercised by teachers not to overextend and extrapolate every response to all persons and contexts. The tool once again reminds the readers of the uniqueness of every individual and the subsequent tactics needed to be embraced by instructors for treating every single classroom.

However, this paper endeavored to introduce developing an appraisal tool for gauging the critical incidence and significance of reaction, which is pivotal to the teachers' professional development. However, a bigger sample size needs to be taken in future studies. The negative reports indicate that more work needs to be done to enhance educational gaining for both teachers and students and positive incidents at the same time be promoted and showcased as a model for novice pre-and in-service teachers. The regular appraisal, however, is more conducive to the habituation of specific behavior by findings the pitfall and advantages points. It helps identify the effects that are beneficial to better class management and diagnose those that culminate in mismanagement.

Although this study opens up the nature of EFL teachers' responding appropriately and inappropriately in the EFL classroom context to critical incidents, some limitations warrant attention. This study is not infallible as not taking into account the personality, gender diversity, background, and the kind of training the teachers went through when interpreting the situations and also uses a limited tool for investigating reflective practices. Some participants may have difficulty expressing themselves and characterizing their experiences in their writings. Cross-referencing data can compensate for this. Moreover, the teachers' beliefs affecting the scope of responses to the situations could be more harnessed. Thus, further inquiry into an examination of the quality of teachers' reflections is suggested to advance educational policy and practice.

7. Implications and Applications

The results of this study have theoretical, methodological, practical, and pedagogical implications and applications for teachers and curriculum developers, furthering the advancement of the approaches to teacher reflection studies. This study also attempted to shed some light on the process and outcomes of the reflective practices within the EFL environment. This investigation reflected teachers' descriptions of their emotions experienced during their teaching practice, from pleasant, unpleasant, and happiness to disappointment and anger. There is a paucity of research regarding critical incidents experienced in the Iranian context of language learning and teaching.

However, from the point of view that the psychological factors are more entrenched and determinant in the learning of a foreign language than the mother language, it calls for a thorough investigation of travails that hinder the development into an efficient and productive language learner and of the facilitative incidents, which are of help to a better language learning and teaching. However,

Farrell (2009) calls for teacher education programs to supply pre-service teachers with case studies on the challenges, conflicts, and problems they may encounter in their first year of teaching. It is an urgent need to uplift and elevate the awareness and effective responses to situations of all teachers, especially training and trainer teachers to educate them on the situations expected and apposite responses to them.

Teachers, being cognizant of their own appraisal systems, will deal with and manage the situations constructively, gearing up for such critical situations in advance. The appraisal of behavior is a beacon to finding a way to better reaction and respond to a situation and alleviate the consequences. In the case of an occasion that is new, appropriate behavior gives confidence to the respondent and help habituate it in future reaction. In the case of moderate responses, it leaves room for additional work to be done to uplift and promote teacher professional competency.

At the very least, teachers can use them to neutralize the consequences. The study is more than any other of paramount significance to the foreign language contexts to evaluate their behaviors more thoroughly to preempt those of debilitating nature for efficient language learning and teaching and to invigorate the appropriate behaviors which will be needed for optimal learning to occur. These kinds of self-overhauls by teachers allow them to find and activate the default role to better do the job at hand. It is also of paramount significance to share the critical incidents experienced with other teachers so as to modulate their expectations and prepare for probable similar situations. This study embedded in the domain of reflective teaching is useful for classroom management and appraises the curriculum developers and faculties, and educators to overhaul their structures and infrastructure conducive to administration leadership improvement. Teacher education will benefit from the advances in the research on the incidents experienced by learners and teachers so as to train much more efficient educators.

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