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Possible Selves as Correlates of EFL Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Students' Achievement

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Abstract

The present study was intended to investigate possible relationships of the development of EFL teachers' possible selves with teacher efficacy and students' achievement. Eighty seven teachers were selected through convenience sampling from different Language Institutes participated in this study and filled in EFL teachers' Possible Selves Development Questionnaire as well as Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES). The participants were also requested to specify the mean scores of the achievement tests they administered to their students in the previous terms. The results of data analyses indicated significant relationships of teachers' possible selves development with their self-efficacy and students' achievement. To investigate which components of possible selves might have more predictive power in predicting teacher's self-efficacy and students' achievement, the researchers employed regression analysis. The four subscales of possible selves – ideal, ought-to, actual, and feared selves- were found to be good predictors of teacher self-efficacy and only three subscales of possible selves including ideal, ought-to, and actual selves were strongly correlated with students' achievement. The researchers concluded by suggesting that a sense of self-efficacy as well as a concern for students' achievement as two main senses of selves should be incorporated into the possible selves of EFL teachers through implementing specific pre-service as well as in-service teacher education programs.

Keywords: possible selves development, possible selves subcomponents, self-efficacy, EFL teachers, students' achievement

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1. Introduction

Teaching in general and second language teaching in particular are demanding and multifaceted practices which greatly depend on the characteristics and qualifications of language teachers. Teachers, in effect, determine the success or failure of any educational program to a large extent. As Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, and Robinson (2004) state, teachers are among the influential factors which substantially influence and predict the outcomes of second language education programs. Considering the key role that language teachers play in the success of second language teaching processes, the question which arises relates to what characteristics of a language teacher are likely to influence their teaching effectiveness and efficiency.

Motivation has been among these influential characteristics (Gardner, 1985). Over the past two decades, theorists have gradually departed from the notion of motivation proposed by Gardner and shown an interest in incorporating it into the self-system model as a dynamic system mediating and controlling ongoing behavior (Leary, 2007; Markus & Ruvolo, 1989). This shift of attention has led to a new application of the construct of motivation as the possible selves model. The possible selves model which was developed out of self- and motivation-oriented research in mainstream psychology has now gained prominence in the literature on L2 motivation as the possible L2 selves model (Dornyei, 2005; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2009) and language teacher motivation (Kubanyiova, 2009).

Motivation in the language learning-teaching literature is no longer viewed as an independently-operating element which influences one's success in learning or teaching a second language. It is, however, considered a factor which is subsumed in the self-system theory as an integral constituent influencing and shaping the self and how the possible L2 selves influence and predict one's language learning-teaching behaviors.

In keeping with the L2 Motivational Self System (Dornyei, 2005) and self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987 & 1998), the constructs of ideal L2 self, actual L2 self, and ought-to L2 self as the components of Possible Language Teacher Selves have been introduced in the L2 literature (Kubanyiova, 2009). These possible L2 selves and their components convey the notion of L2 motivation in a novel way as the discrepancy between teachers' ideal and ought-to selves and their current self-perceptions or actual selves. This perception of discrepancy, in turn, is likely to determine the quality of teachers' academic language teaching practices. Therefore, motivation has come to be conceptualized from the perspective of the extent to which language teachers are willing to fill the gap between their current self-perceptions and their idea expectancies.

Theoretically, to motivate language teachers for better practice would mean to raise their consciousness about these discrepancies or "deliberately create opportunities for teachers to doubt their beliefs" (p. 379), by exposing them to "powerful alternative conceptions" (Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006, p. 728). In other words, teachers need to be encouraged to consciously reflect on and shape self-efficacy beliefs based on the gap between their internal standards and what they can do in reality.

Teachers' sense of self-efficacy is a crucial parameter in determining teachers' opinion about their job, their classroom activities, and their influence on students' outcomes. Research shows that teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy enjoy higher levels of job satisfaction (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Tschannen, Moran, & Hoy, 2002), have higher degrees of commitment to their teaching practice (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007), are less vulnerable to burnout (Shaalvik & Shaalvik, 2007), and create a better learning atmosphere for their students (Gencer & Cakiroglu, 2007).

The relationship between motivation in the traditional sense and teachers' self-efficacy beliefs has been investigated in previous studies (Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink, & Hofman, 2012; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Kwon, 2016; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Watt & Richardson, 2008; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). However, as it was mentioned above, motivation has taken a new realization, i.e., L2 self. As Roshandel, Ghonsoly, and Ghanizadeh (2018) maintain, the concept of integrative motivation does not make much contribution to the learning of a new language in an EFL context where there is "practically no English speaking community which learners could join" (p. 331). Therefore, in an EFL context such as Iran, studying the construct of L2 self as an alternative concept for L2 learning motivation and the extent to which it triggers and enhances EFL teachers and learners' efficacy beliefs which would ultimately influence their success seems more pertinent.

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1.1 Statement of the Problem

Roshandel, Ghonsoly, and Ghanizadeh (2018) found a strong relationship between L2 motivation and L2 self-efficacy, with the ideal self as the strongest predictor of L2 self-efficacy. Öz and Bursali (2017) also found a significant relationship between ideal L2 self and students' willingness to communicate in the language classroom. The problem to be investigated in this study relates to whether there is any relationship between motivation in this latter sense and teachers' self-efficacy. Besides, the present study aimed to explore whether any components of teachers' L2 selves would predict their efficacy beliefs. Furthermore, as indicated above, on the one hand, self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to be related to teachers' professional success and students' achievement. On the other hand, teachers' possible L2 selves also seem to be related to their academic practice and success (Hamman, Gosselin, Romano, & Bunuan, 2010; Kubanyiova, 2009; Wagner & Imanuel-Noy, 2014). Therefore, part of the problem in this study relates to the investigation of the relationship between teachers' possible L2 selves and their students' achievement.

2. Literature Review

The present study is theoretically based on two dominant psychological theories: possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) which have already been applied to motivation and L2 self studies by Dornyei (2005, 2009, & 2010) and teacher development by Kubanyiova (2009). Markus and Nurius (1986) distinguished among three main types of possible selves: (1) 'ideal selves that we would very much like to become', (2) 'selves that we could become', and (3) 'selves we are afraid of becoming.' The ideal or hoped-for selves might include 'the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self", whereas the feared selves could be 'the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, the unemployed self, or the bag lady self.' Markus and Nurius (1986) clearly put all these different selves under the label of possible selves, that is, even the ideal, hoped-for self is not completely detached from reality (i.e. it cannot be an utterly implausible fantasy). Interestingly, they also mention 'ought-to selves' defining it as 'an image of self held by another' (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 958). Thus, Markus and Nurius believed in multiple future-oriented possible selves and outlined the scope of these selves with a number of illustrations but without providing a finite taxonomy.

Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987), on the other hand, postulates that these future-oriented selves are motivating because discrepancies between one's current sense of self (actual self) and these future selves result in discomfort, which in turn motivates a person to regulate behaviors in order to reduce that feeling of discomfort. Higgins (1987) acknowledges that this process is not always conscious: "one's self-discrepancies can be used to assign meaning to events without one's being aware of either the discrepancies or their impact on processing" (Higgins, 1987, p. 324). For example, a man might experience tension if he considers working at a bilingual job over the summer (an ideal self) but cannot currently speak the language fluently (current self), so to reduce that feeling of discomfort, he decides to enroll in an advanced language course.

In accordance with possible selves theory and self-discrepancy theory in particular (Higgins, 1987&1998), Kubanyiova (2009) cleaves possible Language Teacher Self into (1) Ideal Language Teacher Self, which constitutes language-teaching specific identity goals and aspirations of language teachers. It is assumed that, whatever the content of this Ideal Self, the teachers will be motivated to expend effort in order to reduce the discrepancy between the actual and ideal teaching selves; and (2) Ought-to Language Teacher Self, which refers to the representation of responsibilities and obligations language teachers like to fulfill with regard to their work. In contrast to the ideal type of self, the teacher's activity geared at reducing the actual versus ought-to self-discrepancy is motivated by external factors and the primary reason for this motivation is believed to be the teacher's perception of negative consequences, in other words, the teacher's feared language teacher self would develop if the perceived obligations and responsibilities are not fulfilled.

The construct of possible selves as a theoretical framework can be used for a better understanding of language teacher cognition and development. Its particular privilege is in the way it addresses the current gap in the language teacher cognition domain and bridges the various cognitive, motivational, affective, and contextual factors which play a role in language teacher conceptual change. Several key identity researchers have emphasized a dynamic future-oriented process of identity development, where identities are explored and created as people gain information about themselves through life experiences (Berzonsky, 1989; Dunkel, 2000; Grotevant, 1987). As Dunkel (2000) argued, the development of possible selves can serve as an important mechanism in identity development, with the process of generating or "trying on" possible selves being viewed as an integral aspect of identity exploration. In agreement with

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Dunkel (2000), Dastgoshadeh (2018) used possible selves theory as a useful framework for understanding how teachers develop self-knowledge and for contributing to the development of EFL teachers' possible selves model.

2.1 Teacher Self-efficacy and Language Teachers

One of the features that has absorbed a good deal of attention recently is teachers' sense of self-efficacy which is a crucial parameter in determining teachers' opinion about their job, their classroom activities, and their influence on students' outcomes. Research shows that teachers with a strong sense of efficacy enjoy higher levels of job satisfaction (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003; Caprara, et al., 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2002), have stronger commitment to teaching (Evans & Tribble, 1986; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007), and are less vulnerable to burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Shaalvik & Shaalvik, 2007). In addition, efficacious teachers create a better learning atmosphere for their students (Deemer, 2004; Gencer & Cakiroglu, 2007; Yost, 2002), and are more innovative in the application of new teaching methods (Wertheim & Leyser, 2002). Greater efficacy also helps teachers use their class time as best as they can (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), set high standards for themselves and persist in the face of obstacles (Ross & Bruce, 2007), foster stronger collegial ties (Friedman & Kass, 2002), and enhance students' achievement (Caprara et al., 2006; Midgley et al., 1989; Ross, 1992; Shaughnessy, 2004; Tournaki & Podell, 2005). So, it seems that the stronger a teachers' sense of efficacy, the more qualified s/he will be.

2.2 On the Relationship between Self-efficacy and Possible Selves

Our fundamental teaching beliefs, practices, and principles are compounding factors in identity development, contributing to our sense of purpose, efficacy, self-worth, and value/justification (Baumeister, 1991; Baumeister & Wilson, 1996). Perceived self-efficacy like possible selves is a *future-oriented* (Goddard et al., 2004) and *context specific* (or "person-in-context") construct in that it refers to "peoples' thoughts about their capabilities for performance within a particular encounter or type of encounters" (Cervone et al., 2004, p. 190).

The identity goals that the teachers adopt permeate all facets of their work as language teachers and impact on (1) what they know, think, and believe about teaching, learning, their students or their own self; (2) what they do in the classroom; (3) what cues from the teaching context they are sensitive to; (4) how they approach their professional development; and (5) how they process any reform input (Kubanyiova, 2009).

In social cognitive theory, humans are conceived of as anticipative, purpose-oriented, and self-evaluating proactive regulators of their motivation and behavior (Bandura, 2001, cited in Bandura & Locke, 2003), who not only react to discrepancy between their internal standards and the actual behavior, but who, primarily, motivate themselves through creating discrepancies to be mastered. More specifically, people exercise proactive self-regulation over their functioning by setting themselves challenging goals and mobilizing their internal resources based on their anticipation of what fulfilling those goals will entail. They subsequently respond to feedback on their performance by adjusting their efforts. The extent to which the goals have been accomplished successfully will determine the level of people's self-efficacy, which, in turn, will influence the nature of future goals. People with high self-efficacy will typically set themselves increasingly higher standards as opposed to those with low self-efficacy beliefs. As Bandura and Locke (2003, p. 91) maintain, "The adoption of further challenges creates new motivating discrepancies to be mastered. Thus, discrepancy reduction is only half of the story and not necessarily the more interesting half" (p. 91).

Two paths, therefore, are likely possible: a. lack of teaching self-efficacy coupled with feelings of powerlessness (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005) and an absence of motivating future teacher selves – either negative or positive – ultimately leads to depression, decreased effort, and burnout; b. lack of teaching self-efficacy paired with feelings of potential for improvement due to motivating future teacher selves impels teachers to undergo development as a route to achieving success as an educator (Wheatley, 2005).

Individuals who are otherwise similar feel differently about themselves and choose different courses of action, depending on how they construe themselves-what attributes they think they possess, what roles they presume they are expected to play, what they believe they are capable of, how they view they fare in comparison with others, and how they judge they are viewed by others. Without doubt, these are beliefs and perceptions about self that are heavily rooted in one's past achievement and reinforcement history. Yet it is these subjective convictions about oneself, once established, which play a determining role in individuals' further growth and development (Bandura, 1977; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

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The contents of possible selves might, therefore, include different types of values and beliefs including self-efficacy beliefs. As evidence for these theoretical views, reference can be made to some previous studies which provide evidence for the relationship between L2 motivation on the one hand and L2 self and achievement on the other hand. For example, Martinović (2017) came up with the finding that higher levels of L2 motivation and a stronger ideal L2 self and pragmatic motives were related to career success and higher grade levels. Martinović and Poljaković's (2010) study revealed that non-language students' motivation to learn English at university was related to positive attitudes toward the teacher and evaluation methods, the English language and positive feelings toward English language learning. Based on the above theoretical views and empirical findings, one hypothesis that can be formulated in this study is that possible L2 selves and L2 self-efficacy can be related and, by extension, considering the attested relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and achievement, another hypothesis could be that possible L2 selves and achievement can also be related. Therefore, this study aims to explore the extent to which EFL teachers' possible selves contents are related to their teaching efficacy beliefs and whether these beliefs are related to their students' achievement. More specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions.

2.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were proposed to be investigated in this study:

1. Is there any significant relationship between the degrees of possible selves development and self-efficacy of Iranian EFL teachers?
2. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' degrees of possible selves development and students' achievement?

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

This study was carried out following a correlational design through which the correlations between the variables were calculated. The independent variable was the participant teachers' possible L2 selves and the dependent variables were their self-efficacy beliefs and their student language achievement.

3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were 87 EFL teachers, both male and female, teaching at different language institutes/universities in Iran. They were selected through convenience sampling and filled in consent forms for participating in the study: an EFL teachers' Possible Selves Development Questionnaire as well as a Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES). They ranged between 28 and 32 years of age.

3.3 Instruments

The following instruments were utilized in this study. First, the EFL teachers' possible selves development questionnaire developed by Dastgoshadeh (2018) was used for measuring the participant teachers' possible selves development. The total reliability of this questionnaire was calculated via Cronbach's alpha which was found to be 0.91. The validity was also confirmed through two separate steps of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. This questionnaire includes 54 items with four components on a 6-point Likert scale. Second, the teacher self-efficacy scale (TES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) was used to assess self-efficacy based on general personality disposition. Participants responded by indicating their extent of agreement with each of the 24 statements using a nine-point scale of 1 (Nothing), to 9 (A great deal). Third, the achievement tests administered to the students in the previous terms were used as a basis for their achievement, the mean scores of which were considered as the criteria of students' achievement.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The two questionnaires were administered to the participants by email, on line, or by the supervisors of the schools and language institutes. The required explanations were given to the supervisors and teachers based on the instructions of each questionnaire. The EFL teachers' Possible Selves Development Questionnaire was used to measure the participants' possible L2 selves and the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) was utilized to estimate their self-efficacy. The participants were also requested to specify the mean scores of the achievement tests they administered to their students in the previous terms. Then, the correlations between the scores on the Possible Selves Development

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Questionnaire and the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale were calculated. Finally, the correlations between the Possible Selves Development Questionnaire and teacher-generated scores of students' achievement were computed.

3.5 Data Analysis

The statistical methods including descriptive statistics and correlations were used to answer the research questions. To find out which components of possible selves might have more predictive power in predicting teachers' self-efficacy and students' achievement, regression analyses were run.

4. **Results**

The descriptive statistics for teachers' self-efficacy and the four components of the EFL teachers' possible selves are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Self-efficacy and the Four Components of the EFL teachers' Possible Selves

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-efficacy	202.7816	2.79542
Ideal	182.8030	3.93916
Ought-to	78.9146	4.84303
Actual	114.8048	2.53284
Feared	22.5000	1.37132

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation for teachers' self-efficacy and the four components of the EFL teachers' possible selves including ideal, ought-to, actual, and feared selves respectively. To investigate the correlation between possible selves development and self-efficacy of the teachers, using Enter method, the variables were put into the analysis. Table 2 below shows the significance level for the regression model obtained based on the collected data of the study.

Table 2. The Regression Model of the Relationships between the Variables

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	df1	df2	Sig. F
Regression Model	.653	.57	.655	4	82	.000

As seen, the results of the regression analysis show that the regression model is valid, as an R^2 of .57 means that 57% of the variance in the observed values of the dependent variable is explained by the model. The independent variable in this study is the model comprised of the four components of the teachers' possible selves and the dependent variable is the teachers' self-efficacy. Table 3 below shows the results of ANOVA for the regression model.

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Table 3. ANOVA Results for the Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	517.221	4	145.305	24.787	.000
Residual	572.365	82	5.861		
Total	1089.586	86			

a. Predictors: (Constant), factor1, factor2, factor3, factor4

b. Dependent Variable: Self-efficacy

In Table 3, ANOVA tests the null hypothesis that there is no linear relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. As seen, for this model, when all four predictors are entered, the significance level associated with the observed value of F is 0.000. Thus, the null hypothesis that "There is NO meaningful correlation between Iranian EFL teachers' possible selves development and their self-efficacy" can be rejected. To find out which components of teachers' possible selves might have more predictive power in predicting teachers' self-efficacy, the values of the coefficients in the regression equation presented in Table 4 were calculated.

Table 4. The Values of the Coefficients in the Regression Equation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	87.796	16.969		5.174	.000
Ideal	.185	.090	.169	2.044	.044
Ought-to	.215	.059	.276	3.622	.001
Actual	.294	.104	.207	2.833	.006
Feared	1.242	.219	.478	5.678	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Self-efficacy

Table 4 displays the values of the coefficients in the regression equation and measures the probability that a linear relationship exists between each predictor variable and the dependent variable. The regression coefficients including B and Beta for each component were calculated. As observed, the correlation coefficients between possible selves development and teachers' self-efficacy are significant at $P \leq 0.05$. Thus, the four subscales of possible selves development are good predictors of EFL teachers' self-efficacy.

4.1 The Relationship between EFL Teachers' Possible selves Development and Students' Achievement

With regard to the second research question of the study which investigates the relationship between EFL teachers' possible selves development and students' achievement, first, the descriptive statistics for students' achievement and the four components of possible selves are presented in Table 5 below.

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Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Students' Achievement and the Four Components of the EFL teachers' Possible Selves

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students' Achievement	17.0575	.95669
Ideal	172.8030	3.83916
Ought-to	77.9146	4.83303
Actual	104.8048	2.51284
Feared	26.5172	1.37132

Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviation for students' achievement and the four components of the possible selves including ideal, ought-to, actual, and feared selves respectively. To investigate the correlation between EFL teachers' possible selves development and their students' achievement, using Enter method, the variables were put into the analysis. Table 6 below shows the significance level for the regression model obtained based on the collected data of the study.

Table 6. The Regression Model of the Relationships between the Variables

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	df1	df2	Sig. F
Regression Model	.722	.517	.58	4	82	.000

a. Predictors: (constant), factor1, factor 2, factor3, factor 4

As seen, the results of regression analysis show that the regression model is valid as an R^2 of .517 means that 51% of the variance in the observed values of the dependent variable is explained by the model. The independent variable in this study is the model comprised of the four components of the possible selves and the dependent variable is students' achievement. Table 7 below shows the results of ANOVA for the regression model.

Table 7. ANOVA Results for the Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.498	4	4.875	21.106	.000
Residual	17.939	82	.231		
Total	36.437	86			

a. Predictors: (Constant), factor1, factor2, factor3, factor4

b. Dependent Variable: Students' achievement

In Table 7, ANOVA tests the null hypothesis that there is no linear relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. As seen, for this model, when all four predictors are entered, the significance level associated with the observed value of F is 0.000. Thus, the null hypothesis that "There is NO significant correlation between EFL teachers' possible selves development and students' achievement" can be rejected. As it was mentioned before, to

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assess the relationship between the four components of the possible selves (ideal, ought-to, actual, feared selves) and students' achievement, regression analyses were performed. The values of the coefficients in the regression equation presented in Table 8 were calculated.

Table 8. The Values of the Coefficients in the Regression Equation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-13.167	4.055		-3.247	.002
Ideal	.074	.023	.279	3.222	.002
Ought-to	.098	.032	.260	2.761	.007
Actual	.078	. 031	.301	2.863	.005
Feared	.036	.048	.094	.968	.331

a. Dependent Variable: Students' achievement

Table 8 displays the values of the coefficients in the regression equation and measures the probability that a linear relationship exists between each predictor variable which is the four components of the possible selves and the dependent variable which is students' achievement in this study. The regression coefficients including B and Beta for each component were calculated. As observed, the correlation coefficients between factors 1, 2, and 3 of the possible selves development and students' achievement are significant at $P \leq 0.05$. It is concluded that there is a significant linear relationship between EFL teachers' ideal, ought-to, and actual selves, and students' achievement. But with regard to factor 4 representing feared self of the teachers, as observed, the value for this factor is not significant at $P \leq 0.05$. It is also revealed that there is no significant relationship between EFL teachers' feared self and students' achievement.

5. Discussion

As stated earlier, the present study was an attempt to investigate the relationship of EFL teachers' possible selves development with their efficacy and students' achievement. The results of regression analysis showed that there were significant relationships between the four components of the EFL teachers' possible selves and their self-efficacy. The findings of the present study showed that teachers' beliefs about their profession, students, and sociopolitical aspects of language learning, which comprise the whole model of EFL teachers' possible selves development are positively correlated with teachers' self-efficacy. The significant correlations between teachers' possible selves and their self-efficacy can probably be justified and explained with reference to the assumption that self-efficacy beliefs themselves constitute a central element of the development of the "self" and, as Bandura (1994) states, are the identity goals teachers develop with regard to different aspects of their profession. They refer to teachers' beliefs about their own values, competencies, and accomplishments (Rots, Aelterman, Vierick, & Vermeulen, 2007). Therefore, sense of self-efficacy seems to be present within ideal, ought-to, and actual selves as one of the integral constituents of the possible selves development of EFL teachers.

The obtained relationships can also be warranted in terms of Kubanyiova's (2009) view that the identity goals that the teachers adopt permeate all facets of their work as language teachers and impact on (1) what they know, think, and believe about teaching, learning, their students or their own self; (2) what they do in the classroom; (3) what cues from the teaching context they are sensitive to; (4) how they approach their professional development; and (5) how they process any reform input. In other words, teachers' L2 selves and their different components can logically be related to what they actually perceive of their own capabilities and qualifications in practice. This remind of Bernat's (2008) view that teachers' personal discourses regarding self and language teacher identity may include beliefs about their

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own competence (self-efficacy beliefs), level of language proficiency, career opportunities, past teaching experiences, and perceptions of self as 'language expert', to name a few.

Regarding the second research question, the findings showed that among the four components of possible selves development, ideal, ought-to, and actual selves had the highest positive correlations with students' achievement. It was observed that the different components of the EFL teachers' possible selves, except feared self, predicted language learners' achievement. Exploring the content of the different components and sub-components of EFL teachers' possible selves revealed that the teachers expressed their concern about their students' learning which, in turn, resulted in exercising a greater level of effort and efficacy to bring about success in language learning. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies which show positive interrelationships between the different characteristics of language teachers such as their pedagogical knowledge base (Watzke, 2007), professional development (Ross & Bruce, 2007), identity (Tsui, 2007), and teachers' classroom practices and subsequently students' achievement. This finding seems to provide empirical support for Tajeddin and Teimournezhad's (2014) suggestion that identity awareness should be incorporated in content on cultural awareness in teacher education programs.

To sum up, the findings of the present study can theoretically be justified with reference to Higgin's (1987) Self-Discrepancy Theory which postulates that the discrepancy between one's future-oriented selves and his current sense of self (actual self) create motivation since the former results in discomfort, which in turn motivates the individual to regulate behaviors in order to reduce that feeling of discomfort. The findings can empirically be explained in terms of the results in previous studies which generally support a significant relationship between motivation to learn a second language and achievement (Martinović & Poljaković, 2010), between L2 motivation and L2 self-efficacy (Roshandel, Ghonsoly, & Ghanizadeh, 2018), between ideal L2 self and students' willingness to communicate in the language classroom (Öz & Bursali, 2017), and between L2 motivation and ideal L2 self on the one hand and career success and higher grade levels on the other hand. The concordance between the findings of previous studies and the current study relates to the fact that both have shown the relationship between motivation and self-efficacy and achievement, the former conceptualizing motivation in the traditional sense and the latter considering it in the new sense of L2 self model. But, the overlap in both groups of studies is in their scope which has incorporated motivation in one sense or the other. If, as it was mentioned above, the construct of L2 self is also highly dependent on the motivation factor, there logically follows that both groups of studies should be similar in the results obtained, since both have addressed motivation, be it in the traditional sense proposed by Gardner (1985) or its new realization as Dornyei's (2005) L2 selves.

6. Conclusion

EFL teachers' possible selves are comprised of the hopes, wishes, aspirations, and fears that they develop about their profession. These, in turn, influence and govern teachers' personal investment in pursuing their professional development and academic success, effectiveness, and efficiency. What has traditionally been viewed as language learning motivation has subsequently been introduced as L2 self. The construct of L2 self is an alternative cover term which also subsumes the construct of L2 motivation. It differs across different individual teachers in its centrality, strength, and combinatory patterns. But, according to the findings of the present study, due to the considerable overlap between L2 motivation and L2 self, both have been shown to similarly go hand-in-hand with language teachers' self-efficacy and their concern about students' achievement. Generally, this study endorses the go-togetherness of L2 self and L2 motivation with the latter being part of the former, both of which predicting language teachers' self-efficacy and their students' achievement.

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