Exploring L3 motivational profiles of EFL teachers as successful EFL learners: A mixed methods study

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Abstract: Addressing language learning motivation, Dörnyei’s second language (L2) Motivational Self-system (L2MSS) theory consists of three components: (1) Ideal L2 self which refers to all the language-related characteristics a person wishes to have in the future, (2) Ought-to L2 self which concerns the language-related attributes that one believes one ought to possess, and (3) L2 learning experience which concerns the immediate language learning environment and experience. Building on this theory, this mixed methods study investigated third language Motivational Self-system (L3MSS) of 40 Iranian EFL teachers, as successful EFL learners (25 EFL teachers with university education in TEFL and 15 EFL teachers with language learning experience in language institutes). They completed an adaptation of L2MSS questionnaire and an open-ended self-report questionnaire. Moreover, six participants were randomly selected to be interviewed. The findings indicated a positive relationship between Ideal L3 self and L3 learning experience of EFL teachers. Furthermore, no significant difference was observed between TEFL graduates and language institute graduates in their L3MSS. Self-report analyses showed that “learning environment” (as a dimension of L3 learning experience) and “positive attitude” (as a dimension of Ideal L3 self) were the most effective motivational factors in EFL teachers’ success in L3 learning, whereas “aptitude” and “the impact of people” were rated as the least effective ones. Finally, the interview results were consistent with the findings of the self-report. The findings have certain implications in better appreciation of motivational profiles of successful EFL learners.

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT  
Motivation is a key factor in language learning. Many researchers to date have investigated its effect on language learners’ success. However, very few studies have addressed successful language learners in this regard. This study explored motivational profiles of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers who are considered successful EFL learners. The findings showed that this group of learners was motivated by their internal motives toward English language, that is, they had positive attitudes toward English. They were also motivated by their learning environment when they were learners in the past. The results further showed that they do not see talent or people’s impact as the most influential factors in their success.
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Keywords: EFL teachers; L2 motivational self-system; motivational profiles; successful EFL learners

1. Introduction
Motivation is the key to success in learning a second language, and more importantly in learning a foreign language (FL). As Oxford and Shearin (1994) indicated, motivation determines “the extent of active personal involvement in second language (L2) learning” (p. 12). In FL settings, which Ellis (2009) considers to be acquisition-poor environments, due to the lack of exposure to the FL, students may lose motivation as a function of the difficulties they encounter in learning. Therefore, students need a strong motivator to overcome these difficulties.

Dörnyei (2005) categorized three phases of second language motivation research including the social-psychological period (1959–1990) during which many empirical studies focused on measuring the association between various aspects of motivation and L2 language achievement. Dörnyei (2009) found some limitations in the models proposed for L2 motivation during the social-psychological period, specifically integrativeness, and introduced a new theory. He believed that the concept of integrative motivation could be associated only in certain socio-cultural contexts in which learners have direct contact with native speakers of L2 and is not applicable in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts in which English can be an additional, a foreign, or a third language. His famous L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS) theory is appropriate for foreign language contexts as well. This theory was grown out of two well-known theories of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy (Higgins, 1987). The former was influential in the L2 field, and the latter was introduced within the field of psychology. Dörnyei (2005) argued that possible selves are the most powerful motivational self-mechanisms that characterize what an individual would like to become, what he/she might become, and what he/she is afraid of becoming.

Putting together the possible-selves theory and self-discrepancy theory, Dörnyei proposed the L2MSS theory, which was made up of three components: (1) Ideal L2 self, (2) Ought-to L2 self, and (3) L2 learning experience (Dörnyei, 2009). Ideal L2 self includes all the ideal characteristics that a person himself/herself wishes to have in the future. “If the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the ‘ideal L2 self’ is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves” (p. 29). “Ought-to L2 self concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes” (p. 29). This dimension is similar to Higgins’ (1987) ought self, so it is closer to extrinsic types of motivation. “L2 learning experience concerns situated, ‘executive’ motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g., the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success)” (p. 29).

It should be emphasized here that the acronym L2 in the field of language teaching is not limited to second languages; rather it is an umbrella term, referring to any language that is not a native language/mother tongue and is learned later either as a second or foreign language; accordingly, L2MSS theory is not only applicable to second languages but also to foreign languages as this theory has been used in different studies focusing on EFL contexts (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011; Lamb, 2012; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009).

L2MSS proposes new ways for motivating language learners. Language learners’ motivation can be promoted by generating a language learning vision and through imagery enhancement, which results in forming a clear ideal L2 self. The second component of L2MSS, Ought-to L2 self “does not lend itself to obvious motivational practices” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 39). The third component, L2 learning experience, can be enriched using different techniques of the traditional motivational theories in order to promote motivation.
The aim of the present study is to investigate L3 motivational profiles (motivation descriptions) of Iranian EFL teachers as successful learners through L2MSS. L3 is EFL in the Iranian context of this study. Since participants’ third language, which is English, is the focus of the study, we preferred to use the terms Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self, L3 learning experience, and L3MSS throughout the study. Moreover, this study addresses two groups of teachers: (1) Those who graduated from language institutes (non-university settings) whom we refer to as language institute graduates in the study, and (2) Those who have MA or BA in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) whom we refer to as TEFL graduates throughout the study.

2. Literature review
A relatively large number of studies have to date utilized L2MSS to describe motivational profiles of English language learners. This section is a brief account of the studies in which L2MSS has played a central role as a theoretical framework to describe the motivational profiles of language learners. This theory has been deployed in different EFL contexts including Japan, China, and Iran (Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009), Hungary (Csizér & Kormos, 2009), Chile (Kormos et al., 2011), and Indonesia (Lamb, 2012). Most of these studies have confirmed the tri-partite structure of the model.

2.1. L2MSS and motivated learning behavior
A number of researchers have considered L2MSS components and their relationship with motivated learning behavior. Papi’s (2010) research took the initiative to test a theoretical model that includes the Ideal L2 self, the Ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience, and to find its relationship with English anxiety and intended effort to learn English. He found that all the variables in the model significantly contributed to intended effort; however, while the ideal L2 self and the learning experience decreased students’ English anxiety, the Ought-to self significantly made them more anxious. In another study with respect to motivated learning behavior, Csizér and Kormos (2009) found that ideal L2 self and English learning experience contributed to motivated learning behavior; however, they revealed that the role played by Ought-to L2 self was limited.

Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) deployed L2MSS to scrutinize and interpret students’ motivational orientation toward L2. However, they did not utilize it as the theoretical foundation. They exploited another hypothesized theory of integrativeness (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002), and investigated language learners’ motivational profiles and their motivated learning behavior through cluster analysis. They measured and analyzed five broad dimensions of students’ motivational and attitudinal dispositions toward five different L2s. The statistical calculations provided four distinct motivational groups that characterized learners irrespective of the specific target language or the time of the survey: (1) least motivated learners, (2) learners with more positive attitudes toward the L2 culture and community, (3) learners who were superior on instrumental aspects, and (4) the most motivated learners. They interpreted the results within Dörnyei’s (2005) L2MSS as follows: Group one had the lowest scores on all the motivational measures, and accordingly, they were labeled the least motivated students. In the case of group two, a lack of professional future relevance of the L2 was the reason of not having a strong ideal L2 self. For group three, their motivations being determined by the Ought-to L2 self, which is a less internalized counterpart of the ideal L2 self, caused the weakening of ideal L2 self. Group four had successfully developed a salient Ideal L2 self, which was also associated with an interest in foreign languages in general.

Ideal L2 self is considered a strong component of L2MSS. Ryan (2009) found that it has direct relationship with motivated behavior. In addition, Csizér and Kormos (2009) revealed that it is a more powerful predictor of motivated behavior than Ought-to L2 self. The motivating capacity of ideal L2 self has been the focus of a study conducted by Hessel (2015). She detailed a quantitative measure that operationalized the ideal L2 self for its motivating capacity and linked these with the effort expended towards its accomplishment. The results proved that levels of self-motivation to accomplish a specific ideal L2 self were most strongly associated with the frequency of ideal L2
self-envisioning. The perceived plausibility of a specific ideal L2 self was also positively related with the effort expended towards its accomplishment, but its unique contribution to predicting effort was not proved.

Perceptual learning styles, ideal L2 self, and motivated learning behavior have been researched in several studies (Al-Shehri, 2009; Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2014; Yang & Kim, 2011). For instance, Yang and Kim (2011) explored the relationship between perceptual learning styles, Ideal L2 self, and motivated L2 behavior of Chinese, Japanese, South Korean, and Swedish high school students. Guided by Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2MSS, the researchers found that learners’ perceptual learning styles, namely visual, auditory, and kinesthetic styles were meaningfully associated with their ideal L2 self and motivated L2 behavior. However, further analysis indicated that none of the three perceptual learning styles were meaningful predictors of motivated L2 behavior. Instead, only ideal L2 self was found to be meaningful predictor of their motivated L2 behavior. Observing the relationship between learners’ perceptual learning styles and motivated L2 behavior, and within the framework of the L2 motivational self-system, this study concluded that the creation of ideal L2 selves plays a critical role in supporting motivated L2 behavior.

2.2. The validity of L2MSS

Like any theoretical models or frameworks, L2MSS has been tested or compared with other theoretical frameworks and models. To test the validity of L2MSS components in Pakistani context, Islam et al. (2013) conducted a study, and their results provided extensive support for the validity of the L2MSS. Learning experience and the ideal L2 self were found to be the most powerful predictors of learning effort. They also found that a new concept being National Interest affected the ideal L2 self strongly, which emphasized the need to understand the relationship of English with the national identities. Kim (2012) compared L2MSS with Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model. A series of regression analyses showed that Dörnyei’s L2 motivational self-system was a better predictor of students’ English proficiency than Gardner’s socio-educational model; which means that integrativeness and two types of instrumentality could not explain students’ English proficiency as well as students’ Ideal L2 and Ought-to L2 selves.

Building on a component from psychological reactance (Brehm, 1966), the distinction between “I” and “other” in Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987), and L2MSS, Thompson and Vásquez (2015) analyzed the language learning descriptions of three non-native foreign language teachers. “I” refers to the learner’s him/herself wishes and dreams of language learning like the “I” in the item “I could imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English,” whereas in the “other” dimension the focus is on the other people not the learner’s wishes and dreams. An example is the item “Learning English was necessary because people surrounding me expected me to do so.” Thompson and Vásquez found that the L2MSS underrated the relationship between “I” and “other.” While the “I” dimension had a crucial role in the ideal L2 self, the “other” dimension was not stressed. The reverse was true for the Ought-to L2 self because the “other” dimension was emphasized. As a result, L2MSS minimizes the interaction between the self and the context, which is important in developing language-learning motivation. Moreover, the results of this study proved that the L2MSS framework needs further improvement to be applicable to learners in different settings, as opposed to an EFL environment.

To the best of our knowledge, only one study to date has explored the motivational profiles of EFL teachers (Thompson & Vásquez, 2015). The present study took advantage of L2MSS to explore L3 (i.e., English) motivational profiles of EFL teachers as successful EFL learners. The term L3 is preferred here, because the selected participants all had Turkish, spoken in the city where the data were collected, as their mother tongue, Persian as their second language, and English as their third language. L2MSS was selected because research (Dörnyei et al., 2006; Kim, 2012) has shown its priority over Gardner’s socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985). To achieve the purpose of this study and by utilizing L2MSS, the L3 motivational profiles of two groups of EFL teachers in Iranian
context were explored quantitatively and qualitatively, and the following research questions (RQs) were put forth:

RQ1: Is there any significant relationship among Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self and L3 learning experience of Iranian EFL teachers? We further divided this RQ into RQ1a, RQ1b, and RQ1c as follows:

RQ1a: Is there any significant relationship among Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self, and L3 learning experience of Iranian EFL teachers who work at language institute (all the participants)?

RQ1b: Is there any significant relationship among Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self, and L3 learning experience of Iranian EFL teachers who are TEFL graduates?

RQ1c: Is there any significant relationship among Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self, and L3 learning experience as subcomponents of Iranian EFL teachers who are language institute graduates?

RQ2: Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers who are TEFL graduates, and those who are institutes graduates in their Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self and L3 learning experience?

RQ3: How are the Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self, and L3 learning experience expressed in language learning narratives of Iranian EFL teachers?

3. Method

3.1. Design of the study

The research design used in this study was a mixed methods design since it consists of both qualitative and quantitative designs. Of the different designs of mixed methods approach, the one employed in this study is explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This type of design is comprised of two distinct stages (Creswell et al., 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) that start with the quantitative followed by the qualitative phase in order to have in-depth descriptions of the variables. Mixed methods design has a considerable potential to improve the validity of research outcomes and to increase the generalizability of the results (Dörnyei, 2007). Our sample contained only 40 participants, which would have been so small to conduct a quantitative study. Consequently, the generalizability power of the results would have been lost as this is asserted by Creswell and Clark (2018). Even if a sample size is large enough to conduct a quantitative study, the resulted findings are some general descriptions about the variables. What complements this is a qualitative phase to give more explanations regarding what exactly the results of statistical analyses mean (Creswell & Clark, 2018). We formulated the first and the second questions to find their answers quantitatively and posed the third question for the qualitative phase of the study.

The quantitative phase of this study includes two stages. At the first stage, a correlational analysis was utilized using the data gathered through a questionnaire to explore whether there is any relationship among Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self, and English learning experience as subcomponents of L3 motivational profiles of Iranian EFL teachers including those who work at language institutes (all the participants), those who completed their education at language institutes, and those who have BA or MA in the field of TEFL. At the second stage, we investigated the difference between L3 motivational profiles of EFL teachers who completed their education in universities and those who completed their education in language institutes through Mann-Whitney U test. We conducted the qualitative phase of the study using a self-report questionnaire and interview. In this research, we used no treatment and extracted L3 motivational profiles of EFL teachers working at language institutes retrospectively because they were no longer language learners.
3.2. Participants and context of the study
Out of a pool of 85 EFL teachers whom we briefed on the overall objectives of this study and its
data collection means, a sample of 40 Iranian EFL teachers (13 males, 27 females) who had
learned English as their third and foreign language expressed their willingness to act as the
participants of this survey. We assured them that the information they provide would be kept
confidential and would be solely used for the purposes of the present study. The chosen teachers
were within the age range of 20 to 52 (M = 31.84) years and their teaching experience ranged from
1 to 15 years. Overall, the sample included two groups of teachers: (1) TEFL graduates (N = 25,
62.5%), 21 of whom had also taken teacher-training courses in TEFL/TESOL, (2) language institute
graduates (N = 15, 37.5%) eight of whom had taken teacher-training courses in TEFL/TESOL, and
the rest of whom had a certified teacher-training certificate. This group had been taught English in
language institutes, which are non-university contexts. We did not control proficiency and teaching
experience of teachers because these variables were not related to the purposed attributes of the
research and being able to teach English was simply the criterion for choosing successful EFL
learners. It should be pointed out that in order to gather the required data, we selected six
language institutes, which are described in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, the number of males and females was not equal since we did not
investigate the effect of gender on L2MSS. In addition, we chose six language institutes to increase
the generalizability of the results.

For the next stage, we randomly chose six participants from the sample who participated in the
quantitative section like the other participants (three participants from each group), within the age
range of 26 to 31, to be interviewed for the qualitative section. The second researcher interviewed
the participants at their institutes. The information on the institutes where these participants work
at is provided in Table 1.

3.3. Instruments
In order to collect the data required for this study, we utilized an adaptation of L2MSS
questionnaire (see Appendix A), a self-report questionnaire (see Appendix B), and interviews
(see Appendix C). We adopted the L2MSS questionnaire from Papi’s (2010) study (here referred
to as L3MSS questionnaire) to explore L3 motivational profiles of EFL teachers. It consisted of
three parts each of which contains six questions measured either by six-point Likert scales or
six-point rating scales. We piloted the questionnaire to 11 participants whom we chose ran-
domly, and calculated internal consistency reliability, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α) which
showed 0.841 for Ideal L3 self, 0.839 for Ought-to L3 self, and 0.886 for L3 learning experience.

| Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants |
|-----------------------------------------------------|
| **Institutes** | **Number of participants** |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Anisheieh-     | Quantitative stage Self-report (qualitative stage) Interview (qualitative stage) Language institutes graduates TEFL graduates |
| Sabze- Ehsan   | 12 (7 females) 8 (4 females) 4 (2 females) 8 (5 females) |
| Iran Language  | 5 4 2 3 |
| Institute (ILI)| |
| Iran Mehr      | 5 (4 females) 5 (4 females) 2 females 3 (2 females) 2 females |
| Urasia         | 7 (5 females) 6 (4 females) 2 females 2 (1 female) 5 (4 females) |
| Atlas          | 8 females 7 females 2 (1 female) 3 females 5 females |
| Ava Talk       | 3 females 2 females 2 females 1 female 2 females |
| Total          | 40 (27 females) 32 (21 females) 6 15 25 |
six-point Likert scale items ranged from 1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 6 = “Strongly Agree,” and the six-point rating scale items ranged from 1 = “not at all” to 6 = “very much.” We averaged the scores for the items of each sub-variable.

We used a self-report questionnaire to explore the key to success in EFL learners as reported by themselves. An open-ended question was provided in this questionnaire, and we required the participants to describe what made them a high achiever and a successful English language learner in 60–80 words. We used this questionnaire to get part of the qualitative data needed.

We interviewed the participants to get more qualitative data. We asked EFL teachers to tell their English learning narratives thinking back about their language learning times. Interviews were structured and 14 questions were asked during the interview. We adapted the main questions from Thompson and Vásquez’s (2015) study and designed the others taking into consideration the L3MSS questionnaire used in the quantitative phase of the study.

3.4. Procedure
L2MSS questionnaires and self-report questionnaires were distributed among the participants (N = 40). Out of this pool, only 32 participants filled in the self-report section. Then, for the qualitative phase of the study, we chose six EFL teachers for the interview through convenience sampling, recorded their English learning narratives, transcribed the recordings, and then, for the sake of the ethical considerations and reliability issues, we sent back the transcriptions to the participants to let them check the data and make the necessary revisions if they wished.

3.5. Data analysis
We analyzed data of the quantitative phase using version 24 of SPSS software. Then, we ran normality test of Shapiro Wilk to make sure that the scores were normally distributed. The results of the normality tests showed that the data on the three L3 motivational profiles were not normally distributed; therefore, we used Spearman’s correlations in the next step to examine relationships among the three components of L3 motivational profiles (Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self, and L3 learning experience). In order to see any difference between L3 motivational profiles of two groups of EFL teachers (TEFL graduates and language institute graduates), we ran the Mann–Whitney U Test. Then, we utilized a Friedman test to rank the subcomponents of L3MSS in each group.

Using qualitative content analysis, we analyzed the self-report questionnaire data and interview data to extract and report major themes. We organized all the data using Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) (Allen, 2017; Dörnyei, 2007). Atlas-ti 6, a CAQDAS software, was used to sort, organize, and archive the qualitative data more easily and also analyze these organized data. Through using Atlas-ti, qualitative-oriented researchers benefit from its capacity to process large amounts of textual data and to handle annotations, concepts, and complex structures emerging in data interpretation (Muhr, 1991). After encoding the data, the sequences related to L3 learning motivation were analyzed within Dörnyei’s L2MSS framework.

Finally, participants’ answers were ranked and reported in Tables 5 and 6. The ranking, calculated by Atlas-ti, was based on the frequency of the answers. For example, the majority of institutes’ graduates mentioned learning environment as the most influential factor in their success. Thus, this element ranked the first (see Table 5).

4. Results
Quantitative and qualitative results are presented in the following two sections.
4.1. Quantitative data analysis

4.1.1. Results of the data analysis for RQ1
Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide more information about the Ideal L3 self, Ought-to L3 self, and English (L3) learning experience of the two groups. Since the data were not normally distributed, we reported median scores instead of mean scores.

As Table 2 shows, considerable variation is seen in the scores. The highest score is for L3 learning experience and Ideal L3 self, whereas Ought-to L3 self has the lowest score.

To answer RQ1 of the present study, correlational statistics were carried out, and the p-value was set at .05 level. The results of correlations for RQ1a, which addresses all the participants, show that Ideal L3 self is significantly correlated with L3 learning experience ($r_s (38) = .392, p = .012$). This is the only significant correlation for RQ1a. In addition, the correlational analysis for RQ1b addressing TEFL graduates revealed that there is a significant correlation between Ideal L3 self and L3 learning experience ($r_s (23) = .543, p = .005$). Finally, no significant relationship was found between the sub-variables of L3MSS for language institute graduates with respect to RQ1 c.

4.1.2. The results of data analysis for RQ2
Both descriptive and inferential statistics were deployed in order to answer RQ2. The descriptive data for each research group are provided in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, interesting variation can be seen in the data. For example, the highest score for both TEFL graduates and language institutes’ graduates is in Ideal L3, and the lowest score for both groups is in Ought-to L3 self. In order to find the differences between the two groups of the study, namely, TEFL graduates and language institutes graduates, we ran Mann–Whitney U test the results of which are presented in Table 4.

| Variables                        | N | Median | Min | Max |
|----------------------------------|---|--------|-----|-----|
| Ideal L3 Self                   | 40| 4.88   | 1.67| 6.00|
| Ought-to L3 Self                | 40| 2.97   | 1.00| 5.17|
| L3 Learning Experience          | 40| 4.89   | 1.00| 6.00|
| L3MSS                           | 40| 4.25   | 1.67| 5.33|

| Research groups                  | Variables        | Median | Min  | Max  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------|------|------|
| TEFL graduates (N = 25)          | Ideal L3 self    | 4.74   | 1.67 | 6.00 |
|                                  | Ought-to L3 self | 3.05   | 1.17 | 5.17 |
|                                  | L3 learning      | 4.74   | 1.00 | 6.00 |
|                                  | experience       |        |      |      |
|                                  | L3MSS            | 4.18   | 1.67 | 5.33 |
| Language institutes graduates    | Ideal L3 self    | 5.11   | 3.00 | 5.67 |
| (N = 15)                         | Ought-to L3 self | 2.84   | 1.00 | 4.50 |
|                                  | L3 learning      | 5.13   | 3.50 | 6.00 |
|                                  | experience       |        |      |      |
|                                  | L3MSS            | 4.36   | 3.61 | 5.22 |
The results of Mann–Whitney U test indicate that there is no significant difference between the two groups in their motivational profiles.

### 4.2. Qualitative data analysis for RQ3

The qualitative phase of the study comprised two sections: (a) Motivational self-report (b) Language learning narratives (interview). The results of each section are as follows:

#### 4.2.1. Motivational self-report

Using Atlas-ti 6, we encoded self-report questionnaires of EFL teachers and the following reasons were found to affect English learning success of all the participants. We grouped the extracted reasons together to make more general themes and make the conclusion easier. Seven factors were obtained and sorted in the following ascending order: learning environment, motivation, positive attitude, effort, using the language, impact of people, and aptitude. Each of these factors is described in detail below:
4.2.1.1. Learning environment. Learning environment includes experienced and capable teachers, learning environment, authentic resources, learning materials, good approach, and exposure to English. Most of the participants mentioned having experienced and capable teachers as an important factor in their success. One of the participants pointed out, “I had two teachers in the ILI whose characteristics were so respectful to me and because of this, I was encouraged more to study well and do my best.” Another participant mentioned, “My English teacher” as the key to his success, as he had liked the teacher and had studied English because of him.

Learning environment was mentioned by many participant teachers with different expressions such as English classes, English language institute, university classes, etc. The importance of this factor was highlighted by one of the female teachers who wrote, “The reason of my interest was the experienced teachers and exciting classes.”

Novels and English books in general, TV news, English TV series, internet, English magazines, and contact with native speakers were mentioned by some of the participant teachers, which were gathered under the category of authentic resources. One of the teachers described one of the reasons of his achievement as “… studying at Shiraz University where everything was in English.”

Books and other learning materials used in EFL classes have a vital role in language learners’ performance and can facilitate the learning process if selected correctly. On the contrary, if the materials are not suitable, learners might get demotivated. One of the teachers emphasizing the importance of the learning materials in her success wrote, “… the books which I’ve studied were so colorful with many interesting and useful subjects.”

One of the participants summarized the reasons of her success and mentioned four factors the first one being “good approach.” The approach is mostly related to institute; therefore, the role of an English institute or university is emphasized through this factor.

Having contact with English language and exposure to English movies, books, news, etc., can facilitate the learning process and can improve the learning potential of the EFL learners. One of the participants of the present study, describing the key to her success, mentioned “reading books, listening to music, and watching movies and TV series.” In fact, she had increased her exposure to English.

4.2.1.2. Motivation. Motivation includes motivation in general, the importance of English, goals for future, and instrumental motivation. Motivation was reported directly and implied by some of the teachers as the reason of their success in learning English. Some mentioned intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and some simply used the term motivation. For example, one of the participants wrote, “I believe motivation is the most important factor in learners’ achievement.”

The importance of English and the necessity of English learning were other factors in successful English achievement mentioned by several participants. These teachers had learned English because they thought it was necessary for real-life situations. One of the participants wrote, “… as an international language, I had to choose to learn it (English) rather than other languages.”

Some of the teachers talked about the goals that they had for their future like being a “multilingual” or “speaking like native people.” These participants could imagine themselves having these characteristics; therefore, they indicated striving to reach their imagined abilities. In fact, the Ideal L3 self was leading these teachers to success.
A few of the participants had learned English not because of the language itself but due to a need in order to achieve something else. For example, one of the experienced teachers wrote, “at high school, I didn’t learn much. I just tried to pass the exams. Later, I joined Air Force where learning English was mandatory for those who wanted to be trained as technicians to maintain. I finished the six-month course in exactly three months.”

4.2.1.3. Positive attitude. This element includes a positive attitude toward English and a positive attitude toward foreign language culture. Almost all the participants had mentioned the interest in English language as the first reason behind their success in EFL learning and highlighted that without interest no one can be successful in language learning. One of the teachers wrote, “Since the early years of my life, I developed a great interest in English.” Another teacher said, “English has been my hobby.” One of the participants liked intonation of English. He explained, “The first time I liked English was when I once watched English news on a TV channel at the age of 10 and I really loved the way the announcer was speaking.”

Having a tendency to get familiar with the culture of English-speaking countries can be a reason why EFL learners study well and try hard to learn the language successfully. “I think what made me successful in language learning was my positive attitude toward English and its culture,” said one of the teachers.

4.2.1.4. Effort. Effort includes personal effort and outside-class studies. Personal effort was noticed by several participants and they believed that no one can be successful without effort. For example, one of the participants noted that “… in order to succeed in any field of study, especially linguistics-related fields, the key factors are talent, interest, and personal effort.” Another teacher after mentioning two other factors added, “If you don’t study, these two things won’t work because English is a volatile language and it can easily fly out of your mind.”

It was mentioned by some of the teachers that attending English classes is not enough for success and studying at home is more important. In this regard, one of the teachers wrote, “in order to be a successful language learner, one must work very hard; in other words, we cannot learn English just by attending English classes.”

4.2.1.5. Using the language. This aspect includes using language in daily life and communicative tasks. Daily usage of English can be a good practice and at the same time a good motivator for EFL learners as indicated by some participants. One of the participants said, “… teachers tried to help us to use English in daily activities and that added some fun.”

Some of the teachers owed their success to communicative tasks of their EFL classes. One of them noted, “different class activities such as giving lectures, researching about different topics, role play (teaching the topic in class instead of teacher) increased my self-confidence and helped me do all my best in order to be a high achiever and an experienced teacher.”

4.2.1.6. Impact of people. This element includes family and people’s attitudes. As is clear for everyone, family has a vital role in every body’s life and success. One of the participants of this study approved this fact by writing “… my mother encouraged me to learn a foreign language.”

One of the teachers of the study wrote, “Studying English was important to me because other people would respect me if I had the knowledge of English.” This shows the role of Ought-to L3 self in the success of this teacher.
4.2.1.7. **Aptitude.** There are some learners who are gifted in language learning and can learn languages easily. Some of the participants of the present study seemed to belong to this group of learners. In their self-reports, they had mentioned aptitude as one of the factors of their successful achievement of English language. One of the participant teachers said, “I think the main reasons for my achievement in English are my talent, interest, and my own studies.”

These factors were ranked differently in the self-reports of TEFL graduates and language institutes graduates. Table 5 compares the rankings of the factors affecting the success in learning English as a foreign language between the two groups.

As Table 5 shows, the most effective factor in EFL learning reported by the TEFL graduates was “positive attitude,” whereas language institute graduates reported “learning environment” to be the most important factor. “Effort” was in the fourth rank in both groups, and the last factor was found to be “aptitude” for TEFL graduates and “using the language” for language institute graduates.

Using L2MSS to describe the results, one can associate “learning environment” with “L3 learning experience,” “People’s attitudes” with “Ought-to L3 self,” and “positive attitude” can be considered an aspect of the “Ideal L3 self.”

4.2.2. **Language learning narratives**

We analyzed and coded language learning narratives of six EFL teachers using Atlas-ti 6 software, and the main reasons of their success in learning English as a third language were extracted. It is noteworthy that for the sake of the ethical issues, real names are not used in the reports. Like the self-report section, the extracted reasons were also grouped to make more general themes so as to make the conclusion easier. Most of the raised factors are the same as the results of the self-reports with only a few differences. The following seven factors were obtained:

4.2.2.1. **Positive attitude.** This source of success includes a positive attitude toward English and a positive attitude toward foreign language culture. “I have never thought about quitting English learning, I really love it,” said one of the participants. This statement shows her positive attitude toward English. After mentioning the difficulties that she had while learning English, another participant said, “I had to put up with all those difficulties because I loved the language, I really liked to learn more.” This teacher had also succeeded in learning English because of her positive attitudes toward it.

Foreign language learning needs an open mind to foreign language countries and cultures. “I liked the culture of foreign countries. I really wanted to get familiar with their culture.” Stated one of the participants and continued, “But I had never thought about living there.” Unlike her, another participant who also had the experience of learning German as an additional language liked to live at “Lichtenstein.” He admired this German-speaking country because of its rich culture. He described this country as “… a German speaking five-kilometer-long principality between Austria and Switzerland. It is known as its Alpine landscape and fresh air. In this country, the last crime has been committed more than 10 years ago. In this country, 100 percent of people are all educated.”

4.2.2.2. **Learning ENVIRONMENT.** Like the self-report section, this aspect includes experienced and capable teachers, learning environment, authentic resources, learning materials, good approach, and exposure to English.

Considering the positive features of his English classes, one of the teachers said, “… I had a good teacher, and I remember his name and I’m in contact with him.” Emphasizing the vital role of teachers, another teacher said, “At ILI we had perfect teachers and they were really knowledgeable
and they really liked to share everything new with us.” It can be understood from these two quotations and other comments made by the participants in the interview that teachers have an important role in their students’ success.

The quality of EFL learning is closely related to the learning environment. This was repeated several times by the participants. The following excerpts from three participants show the importance of the language learning institutes or universities, English classes, books and other teaching materials, and all the things associated with learning environment: “I really loved the atmosphere of my English classes.” “I liked my classes back then,” and “I liked my English classes.”

Having access to authentic resources can increase the quality of learning to a large extent. One of the participants talked about the experience she gained using authentic resources as she said, “I tried to expose myself to more language like movies, like radio programs, like magazines, I used to study story books, many of them.” As the key to his success, one of the teachers said, “I watched a lot of movies, read a lot of books, and spoke a lot.” All these activities indicate that he had exposed himself to English language and authentic resources. One of the participants was pleased with the approach of the language-learning institute she had studied at, because “there was not a rigid method of teaching for all the teachers.”

4.2.2.3. Impact of people. The impact of people includes family, people’s attitudes, and peer group impact. Family can have either a positive or negative role in the foreign language learning process of its members. All the participants of this study mentioned the positive or at least neutral role of their families in their success in English learning. “My father was my supporter and incentive,” said one of the participants. When discussing the key to her success in English learning, another participant mentioned “a supportive family” besides some other factors. She also talked about her “brother” several times during the interview as the one who supported and encouraged her to learn English.

It seems that teenagers are affected by their peer groups even more than their families. This could be due to the fact that one of the main developmental tasks of teenagers is to become a member of a peer group (Coleman & Hendry, 1990). This impact can be also seen in the education, specifically, in the foreign language learning process of EFL learners. In the following sentences quoted by one of the teachers, this impact is obvious: “I had some good close friends when I was younger. And they were learning English and I really liked to learn English like them.” Sahar had a similar experience: “All my friends at school attended EFL classes and I really wanted to keep up with them.”

Besides family and peer group, there are other people around each learner whose ideas have an effect on the learning process and learning motivation of the learners. One of the participants said, “More than 95 percent of my friends are all English teachers and they speak very nice English. And they all think that speaking a nice English for nonnative people is a virtue.”

4.2.2.4. Effort. This element includes personal effort and outside-class studies, which is similar to the self-report section results. As the famous saying “No pain, no gain” denotes, even if all the other conditions are set for one person, without effort it is impossible to be successful in English learning. “Practice makes perfect,” said one of the participants and continued, “Each movie took five times for me to watch because I squeezed every living word out of it. And after watching it, I used the words for writing a summary for each one and I put it in its cover.” In addition, the reason for another participant’s success was “practicing more and more.”

Going to English classes is not all that one can do to be successful. Outside-class studies can be an important benefit for some learners. For example, one of the teachers said, “I learned vocabulary, grammar, and things through studying, doing the things by myself and on my own.”
4.2.2.5. **Motivation.** Like the findings of the self-report section, this factor includes motivation in general, the importance of English, goals for future, and instrumental motivation. One of the participants talked about “motivation and enthusiasm for learning English,” when she was asked the key to her success. Although motivation is implied in all the other factors affecting the success in foreign language learning, it can also be mentioned as an independent factor because of its importance.

The reason why many people start learning English is the important position of this language around the world. Some of the participants of this study also had decided to learn English for this reason. One of the participants highlighted the importance of English language as she said, “Everybody know that English is part of life nowadays.”

Some people learn English to achieve other goals. This kind of motivation was observed in the interview of one of the teachers. “I started to learn English so that I could be a doctor.”

4.2.2.6. **Using the language.** Like the self-report section findings, using the language includes using language in daily life and communicative tasks. Using the language is a necessity for being a successful language learner. One of the teachers mentioned this by saying, “I switched my goal from learning a language to using the language.”

Some of the teachers talked about communicative tasks within the English classes and outside them. For one of the participants, one of the positive features of her English classes was the existence of “communicative activities.”

4.2.2.7. **Aptitude.** Degrees of talent are also needed for one to be successful in language learning. One of the participants said, “Before going to school, I had some English books and could learn them easily.” This shows her talent in English learning.

These factors were ranked differently in the interview data of TEFL graduates and language institutes graduates. Table 6 compares the rankings of the factors affecting the success in learning English as a foreign language.

As Table 6 shows, the most effective factor in EFL learning mentioned by the TEFL graduates of universities was learning environment, whereas language institute graduates reported a positive attitude to be the most important factor. The least important factor was aptitude in both groups.

As mentioned earlier, “positive attitude” can be considered one feature of the “Ideal L3 self,” at the same time, “learning environment” and “people's attitudes” can be associated with L3 learning experience and Ought-to L3 self, respectively. The findings are discussed below.

5. **Discussion**
The present study explored the motivational profiles of successful EFL learners with both university and institute English learning backgrounds. Unlike universities, language institutes have provided their learners with more exposure to English language, because the majority of these institutes have focused on teaching only English, not any other subjects. Concerning universities, it is feasible for applicants with different educational backgrounds to enroll in TEFL programs. These students sometimes do not have any English speaking or learning experience in language institutes. However, they will learn English language and its teaching in universities. What triggered the researchers to conduct this research was the lack of a study scrutinizing the L3 motivation of EFL teachers considered to be successful EFL learners. Broadly, language practitioners are presumably cognizant of the motivating factors of EFL learners; however, when it comes to the motivating
factors of successful language learners, there appears to be a gap in the literature that needs further research.

The findings of the study in terms of Dörnyei’s L2MSS pointed out that Ideal L3 self and L3 learning experience are positively correlated and can lead EFL learners to success more than Ought-to L3 self. This lends support to the study carried out by Csizér and Kormos (2009) where they found that Ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience contributed to motivated learning behavior. In the present study, we assume that teaching English by the participants of this study is an indication of their motivated learning behavior. The results also lend credence to the study conducted by Islam et al. (2013) as they found that attitudes to learning experience and Ideal L2 self are the strongest predictors of learning effort. Although no correlation was found between Ought-to L3 self and other sub-variables, this component still emerged as important, albeit lesser than Ideal L3 self and L3 learning experience. The interview data show this as Ought-to L3 self was the third most important element.

Considering Ought-to L2 self, Csizér and Kormos (2009) also found that the role played by Ought-to L2 self was limited which bears a strong resemblance to this study as the results showed that no significant relationship exists between Ought-to L3 self and L3 learning experience or Ideal L3 self. Perhaps, it is due to the way participants perceived this concept, that is, they might have considered it something contributing to anxiety. However, no measurement for anxiety was used in this study to confirm this statement. This study is not the first one in which Ought-to L3 self was found to be less important compared to the other two components of L2MSS. For instance, Papi (2010) found that Ought-to L2 self-led his participants to be more anxious. Something that throws Ought-to L2 self into question is that few studies identified it clearly (Csizér & Lukacs, 2010; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Lamb, 2012). While Lamb (2012) claims that this problem can be attributed to a “potential weakness either in the construct or current methods of elicitation” (p. 1014), absolute certainty that the construct itself is weak needs more thorough and in-depth studies.

As mentioned earlier, no significant correlation was found between the three components of L2MSS in language institute graduates. These three dimensions of L2MSS all capture motivation toward L2, meaning they are related. However, they are relatively separate concepts as well (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). This is further indicated by the fact that the positive correlation between Ideal L3 self and L3 learning experience was not high for TEFL graduates. Part of the explanation of this positive correlation can be the fact that the three dimensions all deal with L2 motivational variables.

The results of the second research question showed that no significant difference exists between TEFL graduates and language institute graduates in their L2MSS. The participants in this study showed various individual differences and learning styles and strategies. This is evident in Gu’s (2003) study as he found that the two successful participants in the study displayed different learning styles. What is noteworthy is that no difference in L2MSS was found for all the participants who are different in terms of individual differences, age, learning styles and strategies, and gender. Therefore, it can be claimed that the way they see motivation as a factor contributing to success is parallel. The only commonality among the participants was that they were all successful English language learners, i.e., EFL teachers.

Considering qualitative findings of the self-report questionnaires and interview, positive attitude as a dimension of Ideal L3 self and learning environment as a dimension of L3 learning experience ranked as the most effective sub-variables leading to success in EFL learning. This finding parallels the previous studies that highlighted the pivotal role of Ideal L2 self (Kim, 2012; Lamb, 2012; Yang & Kim, 2011), the role of English learning experience as the strongest predictor of English proficiency and motivated learning behavior (Lamb, 2012), and the role of both Ideal L2 self and English learning experience (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Islam et al., 2013) in language learning. Classroom-related elements were introduced by Root (1999) as the most influential aspects in
learning situations. This facet can be considered part of the learning environment component explored in the motivational profiles in this study, which was among the most important sources of EFL learning success. Moreover, this factor falls in the L2 learning experience category of L2MSS, which was found to have a major role in learners’ success.

Some studies have shown that Iranian EFL learners have instrumental motivation toward English as this is evident in Taguchi et al.’s (2009) study in which they explained that Iranians learn English in order to get information on the internet, to be accepted in English-medium universities outside Iran and so forth. The concept of integrative/instrumental motivation was not addressed in the current research; however, drawing on the findings of Ryan’s (2009) research, integrativeness and Ideal L2 self are approximately the same concepts. The results of the current study are in contrast with the findings of Taguchi et al.’s study because what they described was Iranian EFL learners, that is to say, their participants were ordinary EFL learners, i.e., they were not teachers. However, the participants of the present study were English teachers working in Iranian context. According to our results, Iranian EFL learners who become teachers of English show evidence of having integrative motivation, as shown by Ideal L3 self, toward English.

“Using the language” and specifically communicative tasks were other effective factors in EFL learners’ success. This finding aligns with the results of the research conducted by Lucas et al. (2010), as they found that speaking in L2 with their peers inside the classroom, being able to use foreign media, computer, and reading materials were the main motives for learning skills in the L2.

The fact that aptitude emerged as less influential than other variables including learning environment and positive attitude, which is a dimension of Ideal L3 self, corroborates the fact that positive motivational orientation toward the foreign language compensates for any deficiencies in one’s aptitude, and paves the way for tolerating any difficulties that arise in language learning, a position also taken by Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Dörnyei (2005).

As mentioned earlier, no significant difference was found between the motivational profiles of TEFL graduates and language institutes’ graduates, and there were only slight differences between the motivational profiles of the two groups in the self-report and narrative sections. Given this, the results of the qualitative section supported the findings of the quantitative phase of the study to a great extent. In other words, in both sections of the study, ideal L3 self and L3 learning experience were found to be the most important facets of participants’ motivational profiles.

Overall, the findings of the study may lend weight to the claim that successful language learners have clear goals for their future and learning environment can facilitate success in L3 learning for the participants by triggering motivation or impede it through the details that demotivate the learners. In this study, both Ideal L3 self and L3 learning experience were found to influence the EFL learners’ success, but the Ought-to factor was still influential as indicated in the qualitative data.

The present study had some limitations, the first of which was the number of the participants. Firstly, the small number of participants in this study did not permit the level of depth of analysis that a larger sample would have allowed. Second, participants’ experience of traveling or studying abroad was not taken into account. Thirdly, participants were EFL teachers and not students; students might have shown different motivational profiles. Finally, the information provided was retrospective and could have diminished any real differences that would have showed up if new graduates were studied. In the present investigation, EFL teachers were chosen as successful learners. Future studies can use other criteria such as language proficiency for choosing successful language learners. In addition, travel experience should also be a regarded as a factor. Last but not least, the concept of Ought-to L2 self, as mentioned earlier, is another area of research for future studies.
6. Conclusion
The current research used an adaptation of the L2MSS questionnaire to examine the L3 motivational profiles of EFL learners and compare ideal L3 self, ought-to L3 self, and L3 learning experience in two groups of EFL teachers. The results showed that EFL learners’ motivation is heavily dependent on their ideal L3 self and L3 learning experience rather than their Ought-to L3 selves. Aptitude was not mentioned as an influential factor in success by the participants, indicating that language teachers should take into consideration the fact that aptitude is not the most effective element of success learners need. Instead, developing a positive attitude toward both the L3 and its culture (a dimension of ideal L3 self) in EFL learners and providing them with suitable learning environment (a dimension of L3 learning experience) should be practiced by the teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A. L2MSS Questionnaire

Dear EFL Teacher,

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and involvement in this research. This questionnaire is aimed at exploring your motivational profiles and finding out what has made you a successful language learner. It consists of four sections.

Please read the instructions for each section and write your answers. The results of this survey will be used only for research purposes, and your identity will be kept confidential, so please give your answers sincerely. If you are interested in learning about the final results of this study, please write your Email here: ..............................

Thank you very much for your participation.

Part I: Demographic Section

Please provide the following information by ticking (√) in the box or writing your response in the space.

Name:

Name of the Language Institute:

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age:

Academic degree: Diploma ☐ BA/BS ☐ MA/MS ☐ PhD ☐
University Education: BA/BS: MA/MS: PhD:

How many languages do you know? (Please write them in order and specify your proficiency level.)

How have you learned English?

By studying English at language institutes

| Languages | Novice | Intermediate | Advanced | Native/Native-Like |
|-----------|--------|--------------|----------|-------------------|
| L1        |        |              |          |                   |
| L2        |        |              |          |                   |
| L3        |        |              |          |                   |
| L4        |        |              |          |                   |
| L5        |        |              |          |                   |

If yes, please name them.

By studying English at university

Teaching English as a Foreign Language ☐ English Language and Literature ☐

English Translation ☐ Linguistics ☐

If yes, please specify your field of study.

Years of Teaching Experience: Young learners: Adults: Total:

Taught EFL Books and Materials:

Have you taken any Teacher Training Courses in TEFL/TESOL? If yes, please specify the duration of the training courses in total hours:

Do you have any certified teacher training certificate like CELTA, DELTA, Cert-TESOL, TKT, etc? If yes, please name them.

Part II

In this part, we would like you to tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by simply circling a number from 1 to 6. This is not a test, so there is no “right” or “wrong” answer. Please answer all of the items.

During the years I learned English,....
Part III

1. I could imagine myself writing English e-mails/letters fluently. 1 2 3 4 5 6

2. I could imagine myself studying in a university where all my courses were taught in English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

3. I could imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

4. I could imagine myself speaking English with international friends or colleagues. 1 2 3 4 5 6

5. Whenever I thought about my future career, I imagined myself using English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

6. I could imagine myself living abroad and using English effectively for communicating with the locals. 1 2 3 4 5 6

7. If I failed to learn English, I would be letting other people down. 1 2 3 4 5 6

8. I considered learning English important because the people I respect thought that I had to do it. 1 2 3 4 5 6

9. I studied English because close friends of mine thought it was important. 1 2 3 4 5 6

10. Studying English was important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family/boss. 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. Learning English was necessary because people surrounding me expected me to do so. 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. Studying English was important to me because other people would respect me more if I had the knowledge of English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Please circle ○ one of the numbers from 1 to 6 based on the feelings and attitudes you have had during the years you were learning English.

During the years you were learning English ... ....

|       | Not at all | Not so much | So-so | A little | Quite a lot | Very much |
|-------|------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| 1     | 1          | 2           | 3     | 4       | 5           | 6         |

13. Did you like the atmosphere of your English classes? 1 2 3 4 5 6

14. Did you find learning English really interesting? 1 2 3 4 5 6

15. Did you think time passes faster while studying English? 1 2 3 4 5 6

16. Did you always look forward to English classes? 1 2 3 4 5 6

17. Did you like to have more English lessons at school? 1 2 3 4 5 6

18. Did you really enjoy learning English? 1 2 3 4 5 6
Appendix B. Motivational Self-Report Questionnaire

Please reflect on your language learning experience some years ago. In your own words (60–80 words), please describe what made you a high achiever and a successful English language learner?

Thank you!

Appendix C. Interview Questions

(1) Do you remember your earliest encounters with English language? Can you describe it?
(2) When did you notice that you like English?
(3) Tell me about your English classes as a learner. When and where did you start learning English?
(4) What was your reason for starting to learn English and what kept you going along?
(5) Have you ever thought about quitting EFL learning? What stopped you from doing so?
(6) Was there anybody in your life who wanted you to learn English? Was their idea influential in your success in EFL learning?
(7) You know that all the parents have some dreams for their children. Do you remember what your parents dreamed for your future?
(8) What was your attitude toward foreign countries? Was there any country that you admired a lot and wanted to live or study there?
(9) Before beginning English learning, did you like to have International friends?
(10) What did your close friends think about English language and English learning? Were they learning English too?
(11) Before starting EFL learning, what did you like to do as your future career?
(12) When did you decide to be an EFL teacher?
(13) What was your idea about the atmosphere of your English classes? Did you like your books, your teachers, your institute, and your classmates?
(14) At the end, I want you to describe what made you a high achiever and a very successful English language learner.