

## **AN EXPLORATORY INTERPLAY OF EFL TEACHERS' REFLECTION AND THEIR TEACHING AND LEARNING BELIEFS**

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### **Abstract**

The main objective behind this study was to investigate the association between EFL teachers' reflective behavior and their language learning and teaching beliefs. Accordingly, two respective questionnaires were given to 130 male and female EFL teachers who were conveniently sampled, and the elicited data were analyzed via correlational and multiple/multivariate regression analyses. Five components of teachers' beliefs such as foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies and motivation and expectations were taken into account in the analyses. The results indicated that although there is a significant relationship between teachers' reflectivity and their beliefs on language learning, teachers' reflection is not a significant predictor for teachers' beliefs and its constituting components.

**Keywords:** Teachers' reflection- learning beliefs- EFL context-

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since reflectivity does not have an accurate meaning, it is perceived as having different interpretations. Because there are diverse interpretations for this concept, the scholars have a consensus on the fact that there are some fundamental senses and there is no definite and determined route to follow reflectivity. They have some conflicts about the worth of reflectivity process; nevertheless, the scholars from different fields of study view reflectivity from diverse perspectives and they utilize a set of definitions and concepts to delineate its path through different strategies. Such diverse perceptions on the reflectivity process and the situations where it is practiced is conducive to much complication in perceiving the reflectivity process theoretically as well as practically.

The reflectivity process includes some strategies and stages which can be applied individually or collectively offline or online or through practicing a self-managing outline.

Additionally, individuals perform the reflectivity process through various techniques, involving collaboration with others, using portfolios, or recording their ideologies and emotions dexterously.

Bartlett (1990) states that reflectivity is a difficult job to handle. In other words, reflectivity contains a crucial focus on perception and practice. The process of reflectivity gives us a sense of criticality to criticize personal ideologies on the teaching process. It puts teaching practices under question in order to explore and ponder the direct impact of the teaching practice and teachers' roles on the social contexts.

Through reviewing the former investigations (Akbari, 2007; Akbari, Behzadpoor, and Dadvand, 2010; Griffith, 2000; Jay and Johnson, 2002) focusing on reflectivity, one can see that Dewey (1933) has elaborated on reflectivity as a process including "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of

knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it" (cited in Jay and Johnson 2002:74). Moreover, reflectivity in teaching requires teachers' organized pondering and commonsensical evaluation of the teaching context (Korthagen 2001).

Dieker and Monda-Amaya (1995) explained the benefits of reflectivity process including teachers' tendency to challenge the teaching process, to challenge the efficiency of their teaching profession, to connect the within-class challenges with the real-life situations so as to alter teaching-oriented principles, and to assist teaching experiences in an organized way while evaluating the issues in the teaching environment to recognize beneficial remedies. Lester (1998) maintains that reflectivity prompts conceptual-practical links, creates novel theories, and their efficiency improves due to the powerful impacts of their remedies.

Furthermore, Dale (2001:10) elaborates on reflectivity as "the process of mirroring the environment non-judgmentally or critically for the purpose of decision-making". Accordingly, reflectivity can be regarded as a sort of self-evaluation to see the appropriacy and rationality of the actions and perceiving the affairs through criticizing the respective goals and procedures. In fact, the process of reflectivity conveys a sense of conscious collaboration and self-evaluation aiming at improving the instructional techniques. In other words, the reflectivity process assists instructors to evaluate their routine challenges, prompts them to implement the teaching principles through a conscious questioning and evaluation, promotes their attentiveness to teaching challenges, enhances more profound perceptions, and prompts desirable shifts (Farrell 2008).

Besides teachers' reflection, their ideas, performances and approaches are crucial for perceiving and enhancing educational trends. Teachers are narrowly connected to the techniques for dealing with problems in their

routine educational contexts and to their holistic identity, and they form students' learning conditions and affect students' tendency, agency, and success. Additionally, teachers can temper the impacts of teaching-oriented principles like alterations in the methodologies for teachers' preliminary learning or executive professionalization on students' development. In fact, instructors' expert competence and practical procedures may have some conflicts across contexts and even among teachers inside a particular context. In order to recognize the dominance of particular ideologies and procedures, it is thus crucial to evaluate how they are connected to the features of instructors and teaching contexts. In this vein, former investigations indicate that the ideologies and procedures of instructors from the viewpoint of gender may regularly vary (*e.g.* Singer 1996).

Actually, ideologies about language learning have been regarded as a crucial element, like many other individual distinctions in the language learning process (Dörnyei 2005; Wenden 1999). Ideologies on language learning were explained as "opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning" (Horwitz 1987:120). In the same vein, Wenden (1999: 435) regarded language learning ideologies as a sort of holistic competence from a broader viewpoint, and explained them as "the acquired knowledge about learning: the nature of learning, the learning process, and humans as learners, including themselves". Recently, a large number of scholars have investigated language learning ideologies in diverse researches, including different classes of learners in various contexts of education (Diab 2006; Loewen et al. 2009; Riley 2009). Such contexts illuminate the vigorous influence of the ideologies on language learning, and as a result, on the educational ramifications (Mori 1999; Tanaka and Ellis 2003). Moreover, Horwitz (1987) classified ideologies on language learning into the following five

categories: (a) foreign language aptitude; (b) the difficulty of language learning; (c) the nature of language learning; (d) learning and communication strategies; and (e) motivation and expectations; these categories were put in Horwitz's (1987) frame of Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), which is a major concern in the present study.

EFL teachers' language learning and teaching beliefs can play a vital role determining learning and teaching success. As Borg (2005) rightly stated language teachers' beliefs may be shaped by their cognitive characteristics, learning and teaching experiences, and their professional behaviors. In response to recent pedagogical concerns in the field, therefore, this study attempted to target the association of teachers' reflection and their language learning and teaching beliefs. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1 Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' reflection and their language learning and teaching beliefs?
- 2 To what extent Iranian EFL teachers' language learning and teaching beliefs can be predicted based on their reflection scores?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Teachers' Reflection**

Mahmoodi and Ghaslani (2014) investigated the relationship among teachers' burnout, emotional intelligence, and reflectivity with a sample of 125 Iranian EFL teachers from several language institutes in Kurdistan and Hamedan. Moreover, differences in the teachers' burnout, emotional intelligence, and reflectivity scores were examined with respect to teachers' teaching experiences. To answer the research questions, the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey, Teacher Reflectivity Questionnaire, and Bar-On EQ-I Scale were used and Pearson

Product-Moment Correlation, Multiple Regression and MANOVA analyses were utilized. The findings showed that emotional intelligence and reflectivity were reversely correlated with burnout, and they could both predict the level of burnout. The results of the study also revealed that there were significant differences in teachers' level of emotional intelligence with respect to their teaching experience. However, no significant differences were found in teachers' burnout and reflectivity with respect to their teaching experience.

Additionally, Keshavarzi and Fumani (2015) investigated the impact of teachers' reflectivity and gender on their use of intellectual excitement and interpersonal rapport teaching styles. Fifty EFL teachers (25 male and 25 female) in various English Language Institutes in Shiraz, Fars province, Iran were selected through availability sampling. The participants were all from the 23-42 age group. Their degree level ranged from BA to MA in TEFL (30 teachers), English Literature (10 teachers) and Linguistics (10 teachers). The teachers' teaching experience ranged between 5 and 10 years. They were given the teacher reflectivity questionnaire proposed by Akbari, Behzadpour and Dadvand (2010) and Lowman's (1995) Two Dimensional Teaching style scale. In order to analyze the data, inferential statistics including correlation, independent sample T-test and Two-way ANOVA were applied. Accordingly, the results indicated that there was a significant relationship between teachers' reflectivity and teaching style. Gender was shown to have no effect on teacher's reflectivity. Gender was of course observed to be a contributing factor in teaching style, and finally teachers' reflectivity and gender did not reveal any impact on teaching style.

Besides, Mahmoodi, Izadi, and Dehghannezhad (2015) investigated the relationship among three important teacher variables and students' L2 achievement. To

this end, 105 high school EFL teachers from Shiraz and Hamadan were asked to fill out three sets of instruments: the reflective teaching questionnaire proposed by Akbari, Behzadpour and Dadvand, 2010, and the inventory of the Attitudes and Beliefs on Classroom Control developed by Martin, Yin, and Baldwin (1998) as well as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning proposed by Ardasheva and Tretter (2013). Moreover, the scores of the English final exams of 2673 third-grade high school students were gathered. The findings of Pearson Product Moment Correlations illustrated that there was a significant relationship between the three concerned teachers' factors and their learners' L2 attainment. The findings also indicated a significant distinction between male and female instructors in the degree of perceptions of LLSs, while no significant differences were revealed between the two genders with regard to their classroom management performances and reflectivity processes. Furthermore, through multiple regression analysis, it was indicated that among the teachers' factors, reflectivity was the most vigorous predictor of students' L2 success.

In addition, Faghihi and AnaniSarab (2016) examined the English language teachers' perception of their level of reflection and the way their perceptions were realized in practice. Adopting a multi-method design, the study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, data were elicited from 60 EFL teachers using a questionnaire (Akbari et al. 2010). In the second phase, six teachers were randomly selected from among the surveyed teachers and their teaching practices were observed. The record of the observations was, then, analyzed using the seating chart technique to find patterns in the observed teachers' questioning practice as a sign of their degree of reflectivity. The results revealed a relatively low level of reflection with the teachers under study tending to rely more on their own rationality in teaching. It is argued that for teachers to

develop desirable levels of pedagogic integrity, they should involve themselves more in exploring their students' learning styles and critical aspects of the teaching context.

Finally, Sammaknejad and Marzban (2016) investigated instructors' reflectivity on their own within-class experiences. To this end, a comparative case study of University EFL male and female instructors was conducted. The research was performed with four novice and experienced English instructors in four various universities in Mazandaran province, Iran. The required data were gathered through two questionnaires given to all participants and the diaries of two instructors. The findings related to the questionnaires given to the instructors indicated that instructors were conscious of the reflectivity process on their classroom experiences. The two questionnaires included frequency Likert scale items. The diaries provided insight into the instructors' emotions, performances, and procedures with a focus on their reflectivity on their within-class teaching process. Summative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) were utilized. The findings elucidated that Iranian University EFL instructors enjoy high consciousness of the reflectivity process. After the juxtaposition of the participants, it was revealed that the female teachers of both novice and experienced types rather varied in their reflectivity procedures done with regard to their classroom management; however, this was not the case with regard to the self-reflectivity process itself.

### **Teachers' Beliefs**

Peacock (2001) conducted a longitudinal study with a focus on the shifts in the ideologies about L2 learning of 146 trainee ESL instructors over their 3-year BA TESL period. The ideologies of first year trainees were gathered applying Horwitz's beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), and these were compared with the ideologies

of experienced ESL instructors. Three key distinctions between trainees' ideologies and those of experienced instructors were specified pertained to the statements below:

- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabularies.
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammatical rules.
- People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.

However, little alteration was witnessed over the three years on Horwitz's two core ideologies about vocabulary and grammar, or about the role of intelligence in language learning and that the data did not indicate the belief that trainees' ideologies were formed by their pre-service methodology programs. Such conclusions were in contrast with those generally appearing from the investigations of teacher cognition in language teacher education.

In another research, Lai Yu-Ling (2005) examined teaching vocabulary learning strategies: awareness, beliefs, and practices in a survey of Taiwanese senior high school instructors. The investigation is thus an endeavor to recognize the relationships between teachers' beliefs and their teaching performances. A questionnaire was used to gather data on the respective issues. The findings revealed that the English instructors were conscious of a range of vocabulary learning strategies, consisting of both direct and indirect viewpoints towards vocabulary learning. However, some teaching performances appeared not to be adapted to inquiry-based teaching, showing the space between the reality in the language classroom and implications from empirical research. Generally speaking, there were positive relationships between the teachers' ideologies and their instructional performances.

In this respect, Amiryousefi (2015) examined Iranian EFL instructors and learners' ideologies about vocabulary learning and teaching. This investigation attempted to realize the Iranian EFL teachers and learners' beliefs about vocabulary learning and teaching. The data were gathered by the application of a five-point liker scale questionnaire which was given to 292 EFL teachers and learners. The findings indicated that in the Iranian EFL teachers and learners' opinions: a) vocabulary and grammar have identical cruciality, b) both vocabulary competence and vocabulary utilization are crucial, c) vocabulary should be taught directly to the students at all levels, d) the application of novel technologies, pictures and videos are beneficial in vocabulary learning and teaching and e) dictionaries can assist vocabulary learning and students at all levels must be induced and taught to apply monolingual dictionaries.

### **Methodology**

This study has adopted a quantitative research paradigm since two closed-ended questionnaires were administered to the teachers and the data collected were statistically analyzed through SPSS software. Furthermore, this study is correlational in nature in which care was taken to determine if teachers' reflection and beliefs are meaningfully associated.

The participants of the study included 130 male and female English teachers teaching in language institutes in Shiraz, Iran who were conveniently sampled to fill out the two questionnaires. The teachers who had at least a two-year teaching experience were included in the study. The participants were either BA or MA holders of ELT, English literature, and translation studies.

Teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching were elicited using a modified version of a survey entitled, Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), which was published by Horwitz (1987). This Likert-

scale questionnaire consists of 43 items. Horwitz (1987) categorized the 43 BALLI items into the following five themes: (a) foreign language aptitude (10 items); (b) the difficulty of language learning (4 items); (c) the nature of language learning (7 items); (d) learning and communication strategies (10 items); and (e) motivation and expectations (12 items). The reliability of the questionnaire calculated through Cronbach alpha was .89.

The teacher reflectivity questionnaire developed by Akbari et al. (2010) was used in this study to decide on participants' levels of reflective behavior. This 33 item 5-point Likert format questionnaire consists of five components of the teacher reflectivity, i.e. Affective, Cognitive, Metacognitive, Practical, and Critical dimensions. In fact, this questionnaire was applied to determine to what extent teachers' have reflective procedure during his/her English teaching. The questionnaires were administered in person simultaneously. As an attempt to check the content validity of the scales, the respondents were also requested to leave comments on the relevance and ambiguity of items at the end of each questionnaire.

In order to analyze the data gathered through the administration of the two questionnaires, the following steps were pursued by the researcher:

1. The numerical data were transferred to SPSS software the 24<sup>th</sup> version.
2. The reliability of the questionnaires were calculated through Cronbach Alpha
3. Pearson correlation was used to determine the significance of the relationship between the two variables
4. Multiple regression was also used to decide on the predictability of teachers' belief based on their scores of their reflectivity.

## RESULTS

In order to answer the first research question, Pearson correlation coefficient was employed. Moreover, regarding the relationship between teachers' reflectivity and their belief on language teaching and learning, the normality of the distribution of teachers' reflection scores was first checked. Figure 1 illustrates distribution of the reflection scores via a histogram.

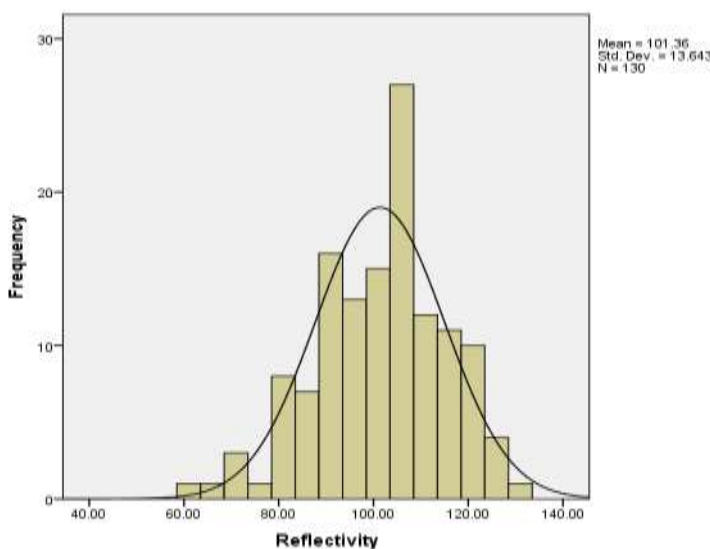


Figure 1. Distribution of Reflection Scores

It can be realized through this figure that the reflection scores are normally distributed therefore the data is suitable for running correlational analyses. Correlational analysis was run to indicate the degree of the relationship between teachers' reflection and

their beliefs about language teaching and learning. To this end, both Pearson and Spearman correlations were calculated. Table 1 shows the mentioned correlations related to the respective variables.

Table 1. Correlation between Teachers' Reflectivity and Learning Beliefs

		<b>Reflectivity</b>
<b>Learning Beliefs</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.290**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	Spearman's rho	-.234**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007
	N	130

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As it is shown in Table 1, the correlational analysis indicates that there is a significant relationship between teachers' reflectivity and their beliefs on language learning ( $p = .00 < .01$ ). However, since  $r = -.29$ , i.e.  $.10 \leq r \leq .29$ ,

it can be interpreted as a negative small correlation (Cohen 1988:79-81; cited in Pallant 2016). Figure 2 better illustrates the strength and direction of this correlation through a scatterplot.

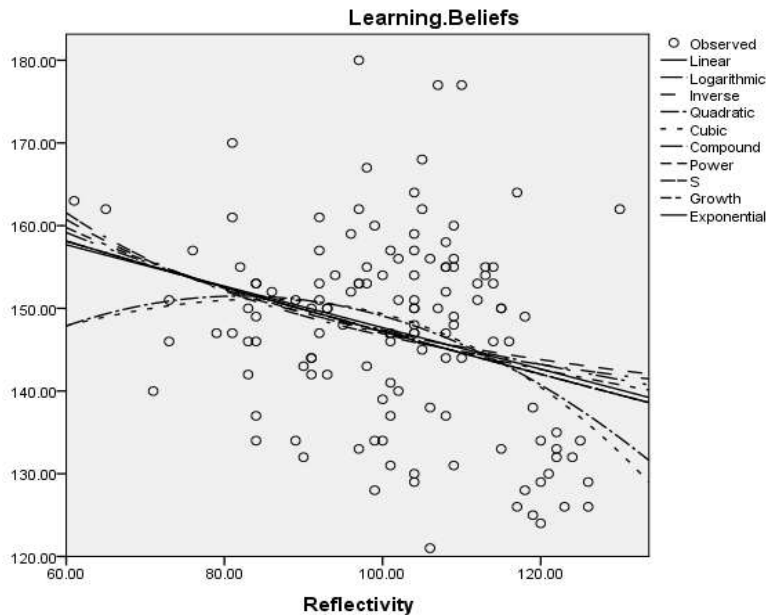


Figure 2. relationship between teachers' reflectivity and learning beliefs

As Figure 2 illustrates, the relationship between teachers' reflectivity and learning

beliefs is more a linear relationship though the quadratic and cubic lines delineate a

curvilinear one as well, probably due to the weak relationship; however, the data generally show a more linear downhill pattern as they move from left to right, indicating a negative relationship between reflectivity and learning belief. In other words, as the reflectivity values increase (move right) the learning-belief values tend to decrease (move down). Also, the scatterplot shows that the linearity is not highly-sloped and also the points are spread all over the plot, indicating that the concerned correlation does not seem to be a strong one due to the widely-scattered positions of the

points in the plot. Therefore, it can be interpreted that reflectivity and language belief have a negative correlation of small strength.

Another correlational analysis was conducted to indicate the degree of the relationship between reflectivity and the five subcomponents of teachers' language learning and teaching beliefs, i.e. *language aptitude, nature of language, motivation/expectation, difficulty of learning, and learning/communication*. To this end, Pearson correlation was also employed. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2. Pearson correlation between reflection and components of teachers' beliefs

	<b>Reflectivity</b>	
<b>Aptitude</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.768
	N	130
<b>Nature</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.204*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020
	N	130
<b>Mot/Exp.</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.259**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	130
<b>Difficulty</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.435
	N	130
<b>Learn/Comm.</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.249**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
	N	130

According to the results illustrated in Table 2 of correlations, there are significant relationships between reflectivity and nature of language, i.e.  $r = -.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ; reflectivity and motivation and expectation, i.e.  $r = -.25$ ,  $p < .01$  and reflectivity and learning and communication, i.e.  $r = -.24$ ,  $p < .01$ .

As it was also intended to determine to what extent teachers' beliefs can be predicted from their reflective behavior, multiple regression was also used. Thus, this study conducted a multivariate regression analysis

so as to determine how well teachers' reflection can predict the five levels of language learning beliefs in particular, including *language aptitude, nature of language, motivation and expectation, learning difficulty, and learning and communication*. In this vein, Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the concerned variables. Table 4 illustrates the multivariate regression, showing the contribution of teachers' reflection.



Table 3. Multivariate Tests

Effect	Value	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Reflectivity Pillai's Trace	.037	.936	.460	.037
Wilks' Lambda	.963	.936	.460	.037
Hotelling's Trace	.038	.936	.460	.037
Roy's Largest Root	.038	.936	.460	.037

As it can be seen from the table above, teachers' reflection cannot be safely predicted based on their reflective; although 3% of the variance seems to be explained by reflectivity, its contribution is not meaningful. Table 4

illuminates the tests of between-subjects effects, showing the contribution of teachers' reflection and to each of the components of their teaching and learning beliefs.

Table 4 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Reflectivity	Aptitude	4.829	4.829	.340	.561	.003
	Nature	18.676	18.676	1.543	.216	.012
	Mot/Exp.	29.304	29.304	1.715	.193	.013
	Difficulty	1.138	1.138	.117	.733	.001
	Learn/Comm.	20.034	20.034	1.122	.292	.009

This table reveals that the variance of none of the components of teachers' beliefs is significantly explained by their reflection scores. Regression analysis was also employed to determine how well the five subcomponents of reflectivity, i.e. *affective, cognitive, metacognitive, practical,* and

*critical,* predict teachers' language learning beliefs in general, and its subcomponents, i.e. *language aptitude, nature of language, motivation and expectation, difficulty of language learning, and learning and communication,* in particular as well. The results are reported in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Multivariate Tests

Effect	Value	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Affective	Pillai's Trace	.056	1.424	.221	.056
	Wilks' Lambda	.944	1.424	.221	.056
	Hotelling's Trace	.059	1.424	.221	.056
	Roy's Largest Root	.059	1.424	.221	.056
Cognitive	Pillai's Trace	.067	1.718	.136	.067
	Wilks' Lambda	.933	1.718	.136	.067
	Hotelling's Trace	.072	1.718	.136	.067
	Roy's Largest Root	.072	1.718	.136	.067
Metacognitive	Pillai's Trace	.015	.366	.871	.015
	Wilks' Lambda	.985	.366	.871	.015
	Hotelling's Trace	.015	.366	.871	.015

	Roy's Largest Root	.015	.366	.871	.015
Practical	Pillai's Trace	.051	1.298	.269	.051
	Wilks' Lambda	.949	1.298	.269	.051
	Hotelling's Trace	.054	1.298	.269	.051
	Roy's Largest Root	.054	1.298	.269	.051
	Pillai's Trace	.061	1.557	.178	.061
Critical	Wilks' Lambda	.939	1.557	.178	.061
	Hotelling's Trace	.065	1.557	.178	.061
	Roy's Largest Root	.065	1.557	.178	.061
	Pillai's Trace	.061	1.557	.178	.061

As Table 5 shows, none of the aspects of teachers' reflection are significant predictors in general; although 5%, 6%, 1%, 5%, and 6% of the whole variance in teachers' beliefs seems to be explained by affective, cognitive, metacognitive, practical, and

critical, respectively, their contributions are not meaningful ( $P > .05$ ). Table 6 illuminates the tests of between-subjects effects, showing the contribution of each independent variable to each of the dependent ones.

Table 6. Between subjects effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Affective	Aptitude	73.151	73.151	5.458	.021
	Nature	2.397	2.397	.197	.658
	Mot/Exp.	.451	.451	.024	.878
	Difficulty	1.319	1.319	.134	.715
	Learn/Comm.	25.850	25.850	1.182	.279
Cognitive	Aptitude	17.414	17.414	1.299	.257
	Nature	7.261	7.261	.597	.441
	Mot/Exp.	96.931	96.931	5.122	.025
	Difficulty	3.891	3.891	.396	.530
	Learn/Comm.	.388	.388	.018	.894
Metacognitive	Aptitude	.081	.081	.006	.938
	Nature	17.383	17.383	1.429	.234
	Mot/Exp.	8.800	8.800	.465	.497
	Difficulty	1.021	1.021	.104	.748
	Learn/Comm.	.690	.690	.032	.859
Practical	Aptitude	32.945	32.945	2.458	.119
	Nature	37.961	37.961	3.121	.080
	Mot/Exp.	4.191	4.191	.221	.639
	Difficulty	6.745	6.745	.686	.409
	Learn/Comm.	53.062	53.062	2.426	.122
Critical	Aptitude	60.768	60.768	4.534	.035
	Nature	21.861	21.861	1.797	.182
	Mot/Exp.	.526	.526	.028	.868
	Difficulty	3.587	3.587	.365	.547
	Learn/Comm.	1.196	1.196	.055	.816

As Table 6 reveals, the significant predictors are as follows. First, the contribution of *affective* is significant merely to one of the components' of teachers' beliefs, i.e. *aptitude* ( $F = 5.45, p < .05$ ), with the small effect size of .04. In other words, just 4% of

the variance in aptitude is significantly explained by *affective*. Also, the contribution of *cognitive* is significant merely to one of the dependent variables, i.e. *motivation and expectation* ( $F = 5.12, p < .05$ ), with the small effect size of .04. In other words, just 4% of

the variance in motivation and expectation is significantly explained by *cognitive*. Finally, the contribution of *critical* is significant merely to one of the dependent variables, i.e. *aptitude* ( $F = 4.53, p < .05$ ), with the small effect size of .03. In other words, just 3% of the variance in aptitude is significantly explained by *critical*.

## **DISCUSSION**

As it can be seen from the present findings, reflectivity was not a significant predictor; although 3% of the variance in teachers' beliefs seemed to be explained by their reflective habits, its contribution was not meaningful. This can be in contrast with the reflective thinking pyramid which "builds progressively from a basic general premise to a peak of reflection epitomized by individual autonomy and self-understanding" (Taggart and Wilson 1998: 41). Also, these findings appeared to be in contrast with the view that reflective thinking is a skill acquired and developed so as to contribute to teachers' professional ideologies.

As the present results revealed, the contribution of *affective* subcomponent of the reflectivity variable was significant merely to one of the dependent variables, i.e. *aptitude* ( $F = 5.45, p < .05$ ), with the small effect size of .04. In other words, just 4% of the variance in aptitude is significantly explained by *affective*. This result is in line with Hinton's (2014) idea that affective issues such as improving motivation and reducing anxiety are not dealt with directly, but rather through their interaction with aptitude. In other words, while answering in front of the class is stressful for everyone, a one-to-one conversation with the teacher might be absolutely terrifying for some and reassuring for others.

A wide-ranging test of learning aptitude, however, should be able to expose weaknesses in the student's abilities; weaknesses which could lead to failure, which, in turn, is likely

to lead to an increase in negative emotion. When a teacher knows about and understands these weaknesses related to affective filters, situations where the learner is set up to fail can be avoided, particularly at the beginning of the course, helping to prevent classroom affective filters building up in the first place. This is also confirmed by Sideridis et al. (2006:160), who noted that affective factors can have a significant influence on academic engagement, which has implications ultimately for academic performance: "Therefore, the role of affective processing is of particular importance because it may contribute substantially to defining types of engagement and motivational states during engagement".

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