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Conceptualizing Classroom Justice in Second/Foreign Language Education: Past, Present, & Future Directions of Research & Practice

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ABSTRACT

As a cornerstone of any effective education system, classroom justice is a neglected area of research in second/foreign language (L2) education. The current conceptual review paper was written with the prospect of familiarizing L2 teachers, practitioners, and researchers with the main tenets of classroom justice and their applications in L2 learning and teaching. To this aim, by drawing on the social psychology theories of justice, this study unfolded how the concept of organizational justice found its way into the instructional context by being renamed as classroom justice. Then the extant empirical studies on classroom justice were critically reviewed, and the gaps and limitations in the existing literature were explicated. Subsequently, the significance of theorizing and empirically testing the concept of classroom justice in L2 education research was foregrounded by taking into account the social and relational nature of L2 learning and teaching, which places the teachers' enactment of justice as a primary concern for both L2 teachers and students. Afterward, some theoretical and pedagogical implications were recommended to inform L2 researchers, teachers, students, teacher educators, materials developers, teacher recruiters, and administrators among other L2 educational stakeholders. The paper terminated with some new avenues for future research for interested L2 researchers.

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1. Introduction

Being treated justly is one of the priorities of students at any level of education and in any education system (Mameli et al., 2018). It is argued that teacher is the main authority who is responsible for implementing justice in the teaching, assessment, learning, and interactional domains of classroom (Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a). Students evaluate the teachers' interpersonal relationships with students, allocation decisions, and classroom procedures for their extent of being just and fair (Rasooli et al., 2019). Since teaching is inherently a moral activity, teachers are expected to not only transmit content knowledge about a particular subject matter to students, but more importantly, to deliver such ethical and democratic values as justice to their learners (Kazemi, 2016). The evaluation of the justice of teacher behavior, in particular interactional and procedural justice, have an impact on the legitimation of the authority of teachers, on the evaluation of institutional authorities outside school, and in general on legal socialization (Emler & Reicher, 1987). Notwithstanding their significance, justice principles are often violated in the instructional context as reported by students from different parts of the globe (Chory et al., 2017). Thus, it is crucial to dedicate more systematic attention to the concept of classroom justice in both general education and second/foreign language (L2) education research with the ultimate prospect of assisting teachers in fostering the development of a just learning and teaching environment. As classroom justice is a totally novel concept in L2 education, this conceptual review paper aimed to familiarize key L2 educational stakeholders with the past, present, and future directions of research and practice on classroom justice.

2. The Social Psychology Origins of Justice

Justice has been originally studied in the organizational behavior research in light of the equity theory and social exchange theory where the focus was on understanding how organizational members perceive and feel about the incidents of organizational (in)justice (Chory-Assad, 2002). Organizational justice was conceptualized as a three-dimensional component, encompassing the distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. Distributive justice refers to the extent of fairness that an employee perceives to be present in the goals reached or outcomes distributed, such as wages, payments, promotions, and awards. She/he may assess the fairness of salary, comparing what she/he has received to what other employees have received or even to standards such as norms and expectations (Adams, 1965).

Procedural justice refers to an employee's fairness perceptions regarding the means, rules, and processes employed to make allocation decisions such as distributing rewards (Leventhal, 1980; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Finally, interactional justice relates to an employee's perceptions of how fair is the quality of interpersonal relations they are engaged in at the workplace. Interactional justice perceptions can be enhanced for a specific situation through the outcomes distributer's (e.g.,

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employer) attempt to participate in ego supportive communication or interact in a socially-sensitive manner to ultimately help the affected individuals (e.g., employees) have good feelings toward themselves (Bies & Moag, 1986).

3. Classroom Justice Conceptualization

By drawing on the organizational justice theory, at the beginning of the 21st century, Chory-Assad (2002) introduced the term classroom justice, encompassing the distributive, interactional, and procedural dimensions. Distributive classroom justice is defined as the students' perceptions of the degree of fairness of grades, rewards, praise, teacher's time or other educational outcomes that students receive in comparison with those received by other students in the same classroom, the ones they thought they deserved to receive, the ones they expected to receive based on their contributions, and some other referents (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004a). According to Adams (1965) and Jasso et al. (2016) to implement the distributive justice, the *equality* (allocating resources and outcomes equally to all), *equity* (allocating resources and outcomes based on efforts and contribution), and *need* (allocating resources and outcomes based on unique learning needs and particularities) principles of justice need to be met.

Procedural classroom justice is described as the students' perceptions of fairness concerning the processes and procedures gone through by the teachers to make allocation decisions and consequently, distribute the outcomes among students (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b). For instance, to arrive at grade distribution decisions, teachers may go through a variety of processes or employ various tools or criteria such as course policies, scheduling, and exam-related data. Teachers may also consider the students' attendance records, handed assignments, class participation, and classroom behavior (Chory, 2007). According to Leventhal (1980) and Rasooli et al. (2019), procedural justice is enacted when the principles of *correctability* (i.e., setting modifiable procedures), *transparency* (i.e., procedures are clear), *voice for representativeness* (i.e., asking for students' opinions when setting the procedures), *reasonableness* (i.e., setting reasonable procedures), *consistency* (i.e., applying procedures consistently to all at all times), *ethicality* (i.e., setting moral and ethical standards), *accuracy* (i.e., setting procedures based on precise and correct information), and *bias suppression* (i.e., setting impartial and unbiased procedures) are satisfied.

Interactional classroom justice refers to how fair the teacher is perceived to be in his/her communication of information with and interpersonal treatment of students (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b). Dalbert and Stoeber (2006) considered interactional justice as a *they-to-me approach*, highlighting the subjective experience of students regarding their teachers' justice behavior toward them personally. As postulated by Bies and Moag (1986) and Rasooli et al. (2019), the interpersonal sub-component of interactional justice is realized when the *propriety* (i.e., acting with dignity), *respect* (i.e., treating students respectfully), and *caring* (i.e., paying attention to students' feelings,

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needs, and wants) principles of justice are enacted. Its informational sub-component is fulfilled when the *truthfulness* (i.e., communicating honestly), *justification/adequacy* (i.e., giving sufficient explanations), and *timeliness* (i.e., communicating information at an appropriate time) principles are met. Researchers have evinced that the three dimensions of classroom justice can be applied or violated in all four domains of classroom, which are (1) students' *learning* of knowledge and skills, (2) teachers' *assessment* and evaluation of students' learning progress, academic preparedness, and academic needs, and (3) teachers' *teaching* approach and conveying knowledge to students, and (4) teachers' *interactions* and interpersonal relationships with students (Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021b; Chory et al., 2017).

4. Previous Empirical Studies on Classroom Justice

There has been a growing interest in research on classroom justice during the last three decades (Rasooli, 2020). To commence with, following the development of the Teacher Justice Scale measuring the interactional justice dimension by Dalbert and Stoeber (2006), a number of studies mostly in the context of Germany were done by Dalbert and her research associates, examining teacher justice in relation to factors such as classroom climate, students' belief in a just world, school achievement, distress in school, self-efficacy, self-esteem, general trust, neuroticism, as well as bullying and cheating behaviors (e.g., Donat et al., 2012; Donat et al., 2014; Donat et al., 2018; Peter et al., 2012). In another pioneering study, Chory-Assad (2002) developed a questionnaire in the American university context measuring the students' perceptions of procedural and distributive classroom justice. Two years later, Chory-Assad and Paulsel (2004a) developed another scale to measure American university students' perceptions of interactional justice. This scale was adapted in another study by Chory (2007), examining teacher classroom justice in relation to teacher credibility. These scales have been used recurrently by later researchers to measure the students' perceptions of classroom justice dimensions.

A large number of empirical studies, which were mainly done in the West, have studied classroom justice in relation to a number of positive and negative student-related factors such as the students' visions of a just world, learning motivation, engagement (Berti et al., 2016), psychological health (Mameli et al., 2018), sense of belonging to school, school and academic achievement (Kazemi, 2016; Molinari et al., 2013), class identification, belief in a just world, perceptions of student-teacher relationship (Jiang et al., 2018), social identification, engagement in the university context (Di Battista et al., 2014), affective learning, cognitive learning, state motivation (Horan et al., 2012), psychological school engagement, involving in dialogue with the teacher, and identification with one's own classes (Berti et al., 2010). Classroom justice was also found to be related to the students' emotional and behavioral responses and reactions (Chory et al., 2017), evaluation of teachers (Tripp et al., 2019), interest in a given subject (Sonnleitner & Kovacs, 2020), willingness to

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talk, affect toward the teacher, cognitive learning (Kaufmann, & Tatum, 2018), psychological need satisfaction, agentic and school engagement (Molinari & Mameli, 2018), learning outcomes, instructional beliefs (Vallade et al., 2014), school distress, belief in a just world (Peter et al., 2012), social and institutional trust, sense of belonging to school (Resh & Sabbagh, 2014), agency (Grazia et al., 2020), group membership, antisocial communication (Horan et al., 2013), desirable long-term classroom outcomes, and transaction-specific satisfaction (Holmgren & Bolkan, 2014).

Another line of studies, mainly done in the West with few exceptions in non-Western education contexts, has shifted attention toward examining classroom justice in association with teacher-related variables like teacher clarity (Chesebro et al., 2004), power (Paulsel et al., 2005), employment of behavior alteration techniques (e.g., Horan & Myers, 2009), credibility (Argon & Kepekcioglu, 2016; Chory, 2007), argumentativeness (Claus et al., 2012), interactions (Molinari et al., 2013), rapport with students, and confirmation (Young et al., 2013), Additionally, dissimilar to many studies in the literature mostly focusing on the students' perceptions, few studies have also been done examining classroom justice from the teachers' viewpoint (Berti et al., 2010; Ehrhardt-Madapathi et al., 2018; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a, 2021b; Gasser et al., 2018; Horan & Myers, 2009; Kobs et al., 2021; Poulos, 2004; Sonnleitner & Kovacs, 2020).

Overall, the results of these studies showed that teachers might have different representations and perceptions of classroom from those of students. Thus, such studies contribute to better understanding of the realities of justice enactment in the classroom as they considered the teacher's point of view who is one of the key actors in the classroom ecology. Moreover, to date, only 12 studies have adopted a qualitative approach to study classroom justice from teachers' or students' perspectives (Bempechat et al., 2013; Buttner, 2004; Čiuladienė & Račelytė, 2016; Chory et al., 2017; Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a, 2021b; Horan et al., 2010; Houston & Bettencourt, 1999; Israelashvili, 1997; Lizzio & Wilson, 2008; Rasooli et al., 2019; Robbins & Jeffords, 2009), with the rest being mainly quantitative in nature. In particular, close-ended scales have been the most frequently used measures of classroom justice that directed researchers toward quantitative studies of the concept worldwide.

5. Gaps & Limitations in the Existing Literature

While numerous studies have been done on classroom justice in the last three decades, the following lacunas still exist in the literature. To initiate with, in comparison with the large number of research inquiries on the students' perceptions of classroom justice, there is a small number of investigations seeking the teachers' understandings, perceptions, or experiences of their classroom justice behavior. The obsession with the students' point of view has been precipitated by Chory-Assad and her co-researchers' (e.g., Chory, 2002, 2007; Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004a) conceptualization of classroom justice, which lies mainly on the students' perceptions of fairness in distributive, interactional, and procedural dimensions. However, to reach a comprehensive understanding of the justice give-and-take

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in the classroom, both the students' and teachers' perspectives should be equally attended to in research and practice (Gasser et al., 2018; Sonnleitner & Kovacs, 2020).

Moreover, the extant literature is replete with quantitative studies of classroom justice, employing close-ended classroom justice scales. There is shortage of qualitative or mixed methods research investigations, which can deeply explore and unravel the various aspects of classroom justice through eliciting textual data or both the textual and numeric data from participants, using qualitative or both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments. It should be noted that these close-ended questionnaires were also measuring the students' perceptions (e.g., Chory, 2007; Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b; Dalbert & Stoeber, 2006; Di Battista et al., 2014; Kazemi, 2016; Resh & Sabbagh, 2014). Thus, they could not be used to measure the teachers' perceptions. Additionally, the existing scales were mostly designed and validated in the West (e.g., Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b; Ehrhardt et al., 2018; Sonnleitner & Kovacs, 2020); thus, they might not be culturally appropriate to be applied in non-Western parts of the world.

A large number of the existing studies also scrutinized only one or more of the classroom justice dimensions in general without specifying and examining the justice principles in them (e.g., caring, transparency, equity, reasonableness principles). In other words, with the exception of Rasooli et al.'s (2019) and Estaji and Zhaleh's (2021a, 2021b) recent studies, there is a paucity of investigation taking an all-inclusive view of all classroom justice domains, principles, and dimensions in a single study or framework. Additionally, following the early conceptualization of classroom justice in the American instructional context (Chory, 2002, 2007), the majority of the extant studies have been done in the West, with little extension to non-Western educational settings. For instance, it was only through the pioneering studies of Rasooli et al. (2019) and Estaji and Zhaleh (2021a, 2021b) that classroom justice found its way to the education context of Iran as a non-Western country.

Moreover, barriers and obstacles that teachers might encounter in their attempt to implement justice in the classroom were totally disregarded by previous researchers, except for the only study of Estaji and Zhaleh (2021b) which identified these barriers and put forward some copying strategies for the teachers to know how to tackle with them. Furthermore, little attention has been dedicated to examining the impact of classroom justice training on the teachers' teaching quality enhancement. Only the experimental studies of Kobs et al. (2021), Sonnleitner and Kovacs (2020), and Estaji and Zhaleh (2022) focused on training teachers considering the main elements of classroom justice.

Finally, and with more particular relevance to the focus of this review paper, before the very recent pioneering studies of Estaji and Zhaleh (2021a, 2021b, 2022), classroom justice has been totally neglected in L2 education research. This is surprising considering that L2 teaching and learning are essentially relational and social undertakings (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020) necessitating just and fair teacher-student relationships and give-and-take in the classroom. Illuminating how classroom

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justice can be extendable to and significant in L2 teaching and learning and research and practice is the focus of the following section.

6. Extending Classroom Justice into L2 Education

Despite the transparent significance of justice in the instructional context, it has been an underrepresented domain of research in L2 education. It should be noted that L2 learning and teaching are intertwined with continuous co-communication and co-construction of the target language knowledge by the teacher and students. Compared to other subject matters, L2 learning and teaching are more interpersonal and bi-directional as language functions as both the instructional means and an end in itself in language classes. To build rapport with students and enhance interpersonal relationships in this context, L2 teachers endeavor to meet qualities like trust, equality, open communication, honesty, mutual respect, unbiased treatment of students, and reciprocity (Wang et al., 2021), which overlap with many principles of distributive, procedural, and interactional classroom justice (Gasser et al., 2018).

More importantly, L2 teacher's fair distribution of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and affective resources among students helps building bonds of trust and understanding between the teacher and students (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020), which in turn facilitates L2 students' making positive perceptions of their teacher's justice behavior (Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a). However, teacher injustice negatively affects students' attitudes toward the teacher and can result in their hostility toward the teacher, academic disengagement, embarrassment, anger, aggressiveness, and stress (Chory et al., 2017; Rasooli et al., 2019). Therefore, it is essential that L2 teachers go a step beyond just conveying content and pedagogical knowledge to student by increasing affective and psychological development of students and aid their involvement in the classroom through promoting justice in all classroom domains of assessment, teaching, interactions, and learning (Ehrhardt-Madapathi et al., 2018).

Estaji and Zhaleh (2021a) were the first researchers who extended the concept of classroom justice into L2 education. They did this undertaking alongside with compensating for the lacunas in the exiting classroom justice literature through studying classroom justice on a very under-researched population (i.e., L2 teachers), adopting qualitative and mixed methods approaches to research, developing a more comprehensive framework of classroom justice dimensions, principles, and domains, designing and validating a Teacher Classroom Justice Scale (TCJS) in the L2 education context, and training L2 teachers for the rudimental elements of classroom justice. In this section, a brief summary of the main findings of their studies is presented.

In Estaji and Zhaleh's (2021a) purely qualitative study, aiming to explore the perceptions that Iranian EFL teachers had of classroom justice and its main dimensions, 31 EFL teachers, chosen through purposive sampling, filled out a self-designed open-ended classroom justice questionnaire,

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and a sub-group of them participated in a semi-structured interview. Based on reviewing the existing literature, they developed a comprehensive classroom justice framework in L2 education, conceptualizing classroom justice at three levels of (1) distributive, interactional, and procedural justice dimensions, (2) justice principles (i.e., propriety, equity, correctability, respect, transparency, voice, sufficiency, equality, truthfulness, accuracy, bias suppression, need, caring, reasonableness, consistency, timeliness, ethicality), and (3) learning, interactions, assessment, and teaching domains of L2 classroom. They used this framework for analyzing the textual data obtained in their study. Based on the content and thematic analyses of the data through MAXQDA, the following themes were reached in this study: (1) For Iranian EFL teachers, classroom justice was a core component of L2 teaching, (2) In line with the literature, they defined classroom justice in terms of interactional, procedural, and distributive dimensions, and (3) they considered justice principles to be necessary for implementing justice in learning, assessment, interactions, and teaching domains of L2 classroom. These findings empirically reinforced the social psychology theories of classroom justice (Chory et al., 2014; Sabbagh & Resh, 2016) and confirmed the applicability of such theories in L2 education.

To expand this novel area of research, in another qualitative study focusing on 31 Iranian EFL teachers, Estaji and Zhaleh (2021b) focused on exploring the teachers' experiences of both justice and injustice and the obstacles they faced when trying to implement justice in their particular instructional contexts. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview and analyzed through MAXQDA, adopting Estaji and Zhaleh's (2021a) classroom justice framework. It was revealed that (1) the three dimensions of justice were reflected in the teachers' actual accounts of their justice and injustice implementations, (2) the teachers reported to have been more just than unjust toward their students, (3) they evaluated their justice practices positively, and (4) they reported facing sources of cultural, environmental, teacher-related, student-related, and educational/instructional challenges when trying to act justly in their classes.

Moreover, since there was a paucity of classroom justice scales in L2 education, Zhaleh (2022) developed and validated a TCJS in the Iranian EFL context. Primarily, she prepared a draft version of the instrument involving 46 items after thoroughly reviewing the existing classroom justice literature, scrutinizing the existing classroom justice questionnaires in general education, and interviewing a group of experts in the field. She pilot-tested it with 30 Iranian EFL teachers. Subsequently, another group entailing 398 Iranian EFL teachers answered the scale, and reliability was examined for each of its components. Subsequently, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used, revealing that the three-factor solution of procedural, interactional, and distributive justice could best explain the scale. Finally, the EFA results were approved through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). It was concluded that, the finalized scale, consisting of 18 items and enjoying good psychometric properties of validity and reliability, can potentially precipitate the expansion of survey-based studies on classroom justice in L2 education.

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In addition, to promote instilling teaching on classroom justice into teacher education/preparation programs, Zhaleh (2022) investigated 77 Iranian EFL teachers' ideas regarding the necessity and utility of receiving classroom justice trainings for their professional effectiveness. The data were gathered through employing a self-made open-ended needs-analysis classroom justice questionnaire and analyzed through MAXQDA. The content analysis of textual data revealed that as reported by the teachers, (1) most of them had not received any training on classroom justice in their entire life, (2) they regarded such training to be necessary for EFL teachers, (3) they recommended teacher education programs in Iran to inculcate classroom justice trainings in the programs they design for pre- and in-service EFL teachers, and (4) they thought receiving such training is very useful for improving their L2 pedagogical skills, knowledge, and practices.

In the same line of inquiry, Estaji and Zhaleh (2022) attempted to examine if training EFL teachers for classroom justice could influence their perceptions and practices of justice in their particular education contexts. Thus, through maximum variation sampling, 77 Iranian EFL teachers were targeted to be trained for classroom justice during a four-session online course lasting for six hours. Syllabus and materials were developed for the course after doing a needs analysis of the participants. They responded to the TCJS, developed and validated by Zhaleh (2022), both before and after attending the course. Moreover, a week after the final session, they filled out an open-ended self-evaluation classroom-justice questionnaire, seeking to reveal in what ways the teachers thought the received trainings affected their perceptions and pedagogical practices.

The non-parametric and parametric quantitative data, obtained from employing TCJS, were respectively analyzed through Wilcoxon signed ranks tests and paired samples t-tests. It was found that the trainings that the teachers received could enhance their perceptions of classroom justice and the interactional and procedural dimensions, except for their perceptions of distributive dimension. Besides, the qualitative post-intervention data were analyzed by MAXQDA, which proved the effectiveness of the received course for ameliorating the teachers' classroom justice perceptions and practices. More particularly, it was found that (1) Iranian EFL teachers considered the received trainings quite useful, (2) their perceptions of classroom justice improved after the trainings, (3) attending the course positively changed their classroom justice knowledge base (4) the course taught them different strategies for implementing justice in L2 classes, (5) attending the course helped them enhance their classroom justice behavior toward students, and (6) they were enthusiastic about taking part in future classroom justice training courses.

Overall, based on what was explained so far, it seems that these few primary studies of Estaji and Zhaleh potentially open up new avenues of investigation on classroom justice for interested L2 researchers, which in turn contribute to richer classroom justice theorizations in L2 education and

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inform the pedagogical practices of key L2 education stakeholders. These points are attended to in some details in the two remaining parts of the paper.

7. Theoretical & Pedagogical Implications

Conduction of studies on classroom justice in L2 instructional contexts at different parts of the globe foregrounds the importance of theorizing and empirically testing the concept of classroom justice in L2 education, which is totally a novel avenue for research. Results of such studies confirm the applicability and extension of the Western social psychology theories of classroom justice in L2 learning and teaching research.

For instance, by drawing on the Western social psychology theories of classroom justice as well as doing an extensive review of the extant literature, Estaji and Zhaleh (2021a) introduced a comprehensive three-level framework, simultaneously attending to all dimensions, principles, and domains of classroom justice. Despite years of research on classroom justice, such an all-embracing framework was lacking in the literature. Thus, from a theoretical vantage point, the framework presented in their work can hopefully guide the design of other studies in this area, and more particularly, the researchers' development of classroom justice scales and content and thematic analysis of qualitative data, among its many other uses. It should be also mentioned that close-ended questionnaires have been the prevailing instrument for measuring the students' or teachers' perceptions of classroom justice in general education (Rasooli, 2020). However, no comprehensive scale existed in the L2 language education domain. Therefore, as the first stride toward developing and validating the TCJS in the L2 education context, Zhaleh's (2022) study provides useful theoretical implications for this domain as the conduction of survey-based studies using this scale will add to the fledgling literature on the concept and expand this under-represented line of research.

In addition, the results of the few studies on classroom justice in the Iranian EFL context (Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021, 2021b, 2022; Zhaleh, 2022) may shed light on our understanding and modification of contemporary classroom justice models. As reviewing the literature showed, the main concern of the previous studies and models has been mostly the students' perceptions and experiences of classroom justice to the disregard of the teachers. However, the findings of those few studies that entirely originated from the teachers' perceptions and experiences increased our understanding of L2 teachers' perspectives regarding their justice behaviors.

From a pedagogical perspective, the outcomes of studies on classroom justice in L2 education can enlighten the practice and mindset of various L2 education stakeholders, including L2 policymakers, teacher educators, authorities in charge of enrolling teachers, and materials developers, to take appropriate measures to increase pre and in-service L2 teachers' justice literacy and, as a result, encourage the implementation of teacher procedural, distributive, and interactional justice in

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the L2 instructional context. Hereupon, L2 policymakers who make top-down decisions in L2 education programs, by drawing on the findings of these studies, can enforce just behavior as a primary characteristic of effective L2 teachers, and in this way, promote the teachers' implementation of justice in their relationships with the students.

Similarly, L2 authorities being responsible for designing materials and curricula for teacher education programs can increase the justice knowledge of pre- and in-service L2 teachers by considering classroom justice training as an integral element of such programs. Similar actions can be taken in the higher education context where classroom justice can be considered a course in graduate and postgraduate TEFL and applied linguistics programs. To increase the students' justice literacy in such a course, the teachers can teach the social psychological underpinnings of justice, encourage handing in individual or group-based research projects on the topic at the end of the course, introduce useful and novel classroom justice books and articles, or urge attending classroom justice workshops, training courses, conferences, or symposia. By combining the transmission of theoretical knowledge with practice-based activities in a single course, students might be more motivated to implement what they have learned in their pedagogical practices.

Moreover, most L2 teacher education programs in Iran mainly cover the theoretical aspects of language teaching to the disregard of preparing teachers for the realities and intricacies of actual teaching. Thus, there is a huge gap between theory and practice in such programs, where, for instance, teachers are not informed of the challenges of distributing resources fairly among all, implementing fairness in their interpersonal relationships with students, or setting just classroom procedures and policies due to the interference of many institute-, teacher-, context-, or student-related factors. Thus, it is recommended that L2 teacher preparation programs, instead of being purely theoretical and held at single time intervals, involve teachers in life-long development of their pedagogical knowledge, skills, and practices (Derakhshan et al., 2020). For instance, to continuously attend to their need for being a just teacher, teachers can be trained to regularly reflect on their teaching practices, evaluate their classroom performance, observe classes of other teachers, ask peers to observe their classes, update their knowledgebase of classroom justice with new research findings, or become involved in action/practitioner research projects on classroom justice.

Empirical findings in the domain of L2 classroom justice research might also benefit institute principals, who want to increase fairness of their teachers and ultimately, success of their institutions. Accordingly, institute managers are recommended to implement the principles of justice when treating their teachers. By doing so, they become a role model for the teachers' enactment of justice in relationships with students. In this respect, institution managers are urged to provide teachers' access to necessary teaching and research resources, distribute fair salary among teachers based on their efforts and performance, allow teachers to be involved in materials development, syllabus design, or

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other decision-making processes in their institute, not enroll too many students in a single class solely for monetary benefits to the institute, set reasonable rules and limitations for the teachers, pay attention to the teachers' needs, wants, and problems, treat teachers with dignity and respect, and promote teachers' autonomy and agency. Additionally, the institute principals can set teacher justice as a gate-keeping criterion when recruiting L2 teachers. They can also run regular justice-oriented training courses and workshops for aiding teachers to skillfully tackle with the day-to-day obstacles of being just in the classroom. Overall, in this section, the significant contributions of doing classroom justice research into L2 education theorizing and practice became evident. In the following section, avenues for new research studies in this line of inquiry are provided for the interested L2 researchers.

8. Directions for Future Research

Classroom justice is a concept extended very recently by Estaji and Zhaleh (2021a) to the domain of L2 education. Thus, this novel line of inquiry opened up a vast avenue of research for researchers who are interested in studying the intersection of classroom justice and L2 learning and teaching.

First, this concept has been studied only in the EFL instructional context in Iran (Estaji & Zhaleh, 2021a, 2021a). Future studies can consider either classroom justice in EFL instructional contexts of other Asian, African, or European countries or classroom justice in relation to other L2 languages such as Arabic, French, Chinese, or Spanish to reach more generalizable findings regarding the functioning of classroom justice in L2 education in general. Similarly, researchers can study the concept in bilingual or multilingual instructional contexts.

Second, data collection in the previous studies of classroom justice in both general education and L2 education was mostly done through close-ended questionnaires, open-ended questionnaires, and interviews. Future researchers can gather more in-depth data through utilizing such qualitative instruments as narrative writing, audio journal, focus group interviews, stimulated recall interviews (SRI), observation checklist, diary writing, portfolio, or document analysis. Third, there is a shortage of experimental studies, longitudinal investigations, case studies, or discourse analysis studies on the concept, which can be attended to by future L2 researchers.

Third, by employing the TCJS developed by Zhaleh (2022), future studies can investigate L2 teachers' perceptions of classroom justice in association with other teacher variables like job burnout, effectiveness, work engagement, emotional intelligence, well-being, or resilience, or in association with student variables like learning, willingness to attend L2 classes, motivation, interest in the course, or academic engagement.

Fourth, as TCJS was developed and validated in the Iranian EFL context, it may not be directly applicable to non-Iranian L2 teaching contexts. Therefore, future researchers can revalidate the

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instrument in their particular cultural contexts to ensure its appropriateness in L2 classes beyond the Iranian EFL ones.

Fifth, future studies can investigate if L2 teachers' demographic variables of gender, country, age, teaching experience, major, or academic level influence their perceptions and practices of justice in classes.

Sixth, the few studies of classroom justice in the Iranian L2 contexts all investigated the teachers' perspectives. To reach more comprehensive understanding of the justice give-and-take in L2 classes, future researchers can simultaneously study L2 students' and teachers' perspectives in a single study.

Seventh, to elicit L2 students' perceptions of classroom justice through a close-ended questionnaire, future researchers can revalidate the TCJS of Zhaleh (2022), which was originally developed on Iranian EFL teachers and enjoyed adequate psychometric proprieties of validity and reliability, on a sample of EFL students.

Eight, only one experimental study was conducted by Estaji and Zhaleh (2022), in which they trained a group of 77 Iranian EFL teachers for the theoretical and practical aspects of classroom justice during a six-hour four-session online course. Other researchers can replicate this study on larger samples from other cultural or linguistic contexts with longer durations of intervention.

Ninth, the existing L2 classroom justice studies have focused solely on the Iranian cultural context. Future researchers can engage in cross-cultural comparisons of classroom justice in different cultures (e.g., Spain, Germany, Poland, China, Iraq, or Italy) to explore how perceptions and implementations of justice diverge or converge in different cultural contexts of instruction.

Tenth, the existing literature has been mostly concerned with the students' and teachers' perspectives toward classroom justice. However, there are other educational stakeholders, such as policymakers, teacher educators, materials developers, or institute managers, who can provide valuable insights regarding the place and importance of classroom justice in teacher education programs, materials, and education systems overall.

Eleventh, considering the present Coronavirus pandemic which has imposed online learning and teaching on many education systems around the globe, future researchers are recommended to examine the effect of emergency remote L2 teaching on the teachers' classroom justice behavior. They can also compare the effect of imposed online learning vs. normal planned online learning on the teachers' practices of justice. Similarly, researchers can compare classroom justice in online classes, where there is less likelihood of face-to-face interactions vs. physical classes, where there is

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more opportunity for in-person interactions, to see if the type of learning (i.e., face-to-face vs. online) influences the teachers' justice implementation in classroom.

As a concluding remark, based on this conceptual review paper, it became evident that classroom justice is at its nascent stage of development in L2 learning and teaching research and practice. To firmly establish this concept in the broad domain of L2 education, there is a need for more research undertakings on classroom justice in the future in different L2 instructional contexts worldwide.

Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed significantly to the research process.

Declaration

We declare that this manuscript is original and has not been submitted to any other journal for publication

Transparency Statements

The authors affirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article. Any additional data can be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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