In the Name of God

We Recommend This Thesis by Mahdi Nasiri Entitled:

'F/SLA from Learner Perspectives: a Social Activity or a Cognitive Process'

Be Accepted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

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آیین‌نامه حق مالکیت مادی و معنوی در مورد نتایج پژوهشهای علمی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس

مقدمه: با عنایت به سیاست‌های پژوهشی و فناوری دانشگاه در راستای تحقق عدالت و کرامت انسانها که لازمه شکوفایی علمی و فنی است و رعایت حقوق مادی و معنوی دانشگاه و پژوهشگران، لازم است اعضای هیأت علمی، دانشجویان، دانش‌آموختگان و دیگر همکاران طرح، در مورد نتایج پژوهشهای علمی که تحت عناوین پایان‌نامه، رساله و طرحهای تحقیقاتی با هماهنگی دانشگاه انجام شده است، موارد زیر را رعایت نمایند:

ماده ۱- حق نشر و تکثیر پایان نامه/ رساله و درآمدهای حاصل از آنها متعلق به دانشگاه می باشد ولی حقوق معنوی پدید آورندگان محفوظ خواهد بود.

ماده ۲- انتشار مقاله یا مقالات مستخرج از پایان‌نامه/ رساله به صورت چاپ در نشریات علمی و یا ارائه در مجامع علمی باید به نام دانشگاه بوده و با تایید استاد راهنمای اصلی، یکی از اساتید راهنما، مشاور و یا دانشجو مسئول مکاتبات مقاله باشد. ولی مسئولیت علمی مقاله مستخرج از پایان نامه و رساله به عهده اساتید راهنما و دانشجو می باشد.

تبصره: در مقالاتی که پس از دانش‌آموختگی بصورت ترکیبی از اطلاعات جدید و نتایج حاصل از پایان‌نامه/ رساله نیز منتشر می‌شود نیز باید نام دانشگاه درج شود.

ماده ۳- انتشار کتاب، نرم افزار و یا آثار ویژه (اثری هنری مانند فیلم، عکس، نقاشی و نمایشنامه) حاصل از نتایج پایان‌نامه/ رساله و تمامی طرحهای تحقیقاتی کلیه واحدهای دانشگاه اعم از دانشکده ها، مراکز تحقیقاتی، پژوهشکده ها، پارک علم و فناوری و دیگر واحدها باید با مجوز کتبی صادره از معاونت پژوهشی دانشگاه و براساس آئین نامه های مصوب انجام شود.

ماده ٤- ثبت اختراع و تدوین دانش فنی و یا ارائه یافته ها در جشنواره‌های ملی، منطقه‌ای و بین‌المللی که حاصل نتایج مستخرج از پایان‌نامه/ رساله و تمامی طرح‌های تحقیقاتی دانشگاه باید با هماهنگی استاد راهنما یا مجری طرح از طریق معاونت پژوهشی دانشگاه انجام گیرد.

ماده ٥- این آیین‌نامه در ٥ ماده و یک تبصره در تاریخ ۸۷/٤/۱ در شورای پژوهشی و در تاریخ ۸۷/٤/۲۳ در هیأت رئیسه دانشگاه به تایید رسید و در جلسه مورخ ۸۷/۷/۱۵ شورای دانشگاه به تصویب رسیده و از تاریخ تصویب در شورای دانشگاه لازم‌الاجرا است.

«اینجانب ..... دانشجوی رشته ..... ورودی سال تحصیلی ۸۶ مقطع ..... دانشکده ..... متعهد می شوم کلیه نکات مندرج در آئین نامه حق مالکیت مادی و معنوی در مورد نتایج پژوهش های علمی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس را در انتشار یافته های علمی مستخرج از پایان نامه / رساله تحصیلی خود رعایت نمایم. در صورت تخلف از مفاد آئین نامه فوق الاشعار به دانشگاه وکالت و نمایندگی می دهم که از طرف اینجانب نسبت به لغو امتیاز اختراع بنام بنده و یا هر گونه امتیاز دیگر و تغییر آن به نام دانشگاه اقدام نماید. ضمناً نسبت به جبران فوری ضرر و زیان حاصله بر اساس برآورد دانشگاه اقدام خواهم نمود و بدینوسیله حق هر گونه اعتراض را از خود سلب نمودم»

امضا: .....

تاریخ: ۹۰/۱۲/۲

آیین نامه چاپ پایان‌نامه (رساله)های دانشجویان دانشگاه تربیت مدرس

نظر به اینکه چاپ و انتشار پایان نامه (رساله)های تحصیلی دانشجویان دانشگاه تربیت مدرس، مبین بخشی از فعالیتهای علمی - پژوهشی دانشگاه است بنابراین به منظور آگاهی و رعایت حقوق دانشگاه،دانش آموختگان این دانشگاه نسبت به رعایت موارد ذیل متعهد می‌شوند:

ماده ۱: در صورت اقدام به چاپ پایان نامه (رساله)ی خود، مراتب را قبلاً به طور کتبی به «دفتر نشر آثارعلمی» دانشگاه اطلاع دهد.

ماده ۲: در صفحه سوم کتاب (پس از برگ شناسنامه) عبارت ذیل را چاپ کند:

«کتاب حاضر، حاصل پایان نامه کارشناسی ارشد/ رساله دکتری نگارنده در رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی

است که در سال ۱۳۸۹/۶/۲۷ در دانشکده علوم انسانی

دانشگاه تربیت مدرس به راهنمایی سرکار خانم/جناب آقای دکتر رضا غفار نژاد ، مشاوره دکتر غلامرضا کیانی

سرکار خانم/جناب آقای دکتر غلامرضا کیانی و مشاوره سرکار خانم/جناب آقای دکتر

از آن دفاع شده است.»

ماده ۳: به منظور جبران بخشی از هزینه‌های انتشارات دانشگاه، تعداد یک درصد شمارگان کتاب (در هر نوبت‌چاپ) را به «دفتر نشر آثارعلمی» دانشگاه اهدا کند. دانشگاه می‌تواند مازاد نیاز خود را به نفع مرکز نشر درمعرض فروش قرار دهد.

ماده ۴: در صورت عدم رعایت ماده ۳، ۵۰٪ بهای شمارگان چاپ شده را به عنوان خسارت به دانشگاه تربیت‌مدرس، تأدیه کند.

ماده ۵: دانشجو تعهد و قبول می کند در صورت خودداری از پرداخت بهای خسارت، دانشگاه می‌تواند خسارت مذکور را از طریق مراجع قضایی مطالبه و وصول کند؛ به علاوه به دانشگاه حق می‌دهد به منظور استیفای حقوق خود، از طریق دادگاه، معادل وجه مذکور در ماده ۴ را از محل توقیف کتابهای عرضه شده نگارنده برای فروش، تامین نماید.

ماده ۶: اینجانب محدی نصیری دانشجوی رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی مقطع کارشناسی ارشد

تعهد فوق وضمانت اجرایی آن را قبول کرده، به آن ملتزم می شوم.

نام و نام خانوادگی: محدی نصیری

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TMU

F/SLA from Learner Perspectives: a Social Activity or a Cognitive Process

MA thesis Submitted to the English Language department in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

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To My Family

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Abstract:

In the past couple of decades sociocultural theory of SLA and its implications in EFL contexts have attracted attentions of research circles worldwide and aroused some controversies. Firth and Wagner (1997) have questioned the principles of the cognitive view which gives importance to mental constructs in favor of sociocultural view which highlights social and contextual constructs. But if sociocultural view considers social-contextual factors as important as individual cognitive factors, what will the learners own perspective be in this respect? How do learners look at language or language learning, as a social phenomenon or cognitive one? In this study we explore learners' attitudes towards the language as a cognitive-individual or social-contextual phenomenon and the way their learning is affected differentially by the two perspectives in language teaching. Furthermore, the traces of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) are witnessed in this study. Accordingly, the implications of ELF context will be meticulously scrutinized. To this end, 9-month diaries of 30 male high school students and their teacher in one of the rural schools of Zanjan, Iran, who apart from their school classes, regular classes, optionally participated in an out-of-school class after regular school hours. It should be noted that in school situation learners were involved mostly in cognitive activities like any other learning discipline in school, whereas in out-of-school situation they looked at learning as a kind of

social activity, being taught by the same teacher and following the same syllabus. The interpretation of diaries, using metaphor analysis, suggests that as the nature of these two classes are different, learner's perspective towards the learning English was different too. In the first class students looked at language as a means to fulfill their educational purposes like success in university entrance exams, whereas in the other class they were trying to be socialized, being able to communicate with some Japanese and German engineers working in their village. My findings show that the difference in learner's perspective can affect the way of their language learning. Furthermore, in this piece of qualitative study, ELF contexts in compared with EFL contexts provided more outlets for language socialization of the learners.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Cognitive view, Social view, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Language Socialization

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Chapter one

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In the past couple of decades sociocultural theory of SLA and its implications in EFL contexts have attracted attentions of research circles worldwide and aroused some controversies. Firth and Wagner (1997) have questioned the principles of the cognitive view which gives importance to mental constructs in favor of sociocultural view which highlights social and contextual constructs.

The study of second language acquisition, or SLA, as it came to be known, has experienced different storms of thoughts, having two extremes of cognitive and social view, during the past half a century. The mainstream of SLA can be looked at as a continuum due to the fact that some scholars believe in the starting point of this continuum, namely cognitive view, some stand at the end of this continuum adhering to their own view, social view; meanwhile some scholars claim that there must be a kind of balance between cognitive and social views.

Long (1997) and Kasper (1997), proponents of cognitive view, were united in their belief that, although L2 acquisition occurs through participation in conversation, SLA is currently about acquisition not use.

Indeed Long underscored this point by asserting that "most SLA researchers view the object of SLA inquiry as in large part an internal, mental process: the acquisition of new (linguistic) knowledge.

Prior to and since 1997, there was and has been a notable increase in SLA research and theory that prioritizes sociocultural and contextual factors. Firth and Wagner (1997) have questioned the principles of the cognitive view which give importance to mental constructs in favor of sociocultural view which highlights social and contextual constructs.

Approximately 30 years after the birth of cognitively oriented approach to SLA, Firth and Wagner presented their 1996 paper, a work that called for an enlargement of the parameters of the field to include a social and contextual orientation to language. It is interesting to note that these authors were not the first to embark on this issue. Firth and Wagner (1997), according to their notes, were persuaded by the work of Vygotsky (1962) and other socially oriented researchers (Beebe, 1980; Norton Peirce, 1995; Tarone, 1983; Young, 1988). As far as social view is concerned, 'Language Socialization' is of high importance. Language socialization gained prominence through the work of Heath (1983), Ochs (1988), Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), and Watson (1975), to name but a few. According to Garrett and Baquedano Lopez (2002), 'socialization' is

the process through which a child or other novice acquires the knowledge, orientations, and practices that enable him or her to participate effectively and appropriately in the social life of the particular community. This process is, obviously, realized through the use of language. Language socialization researchers, then, examine how novices are socialized through the use of language as well as how they are socialized to use language.

Among those who are in partial agreement with Cognitive and social perspective is Poulisse (1997) who believes in middle-of-the-road compromise. He agreed that developing linguistic competence involved both acquiring the system and its use.

The supporters of the ‘cognitive-social balance’ consider the psycholinguistic approach to be primary though, and sociolinguistic approach to be secondary; in their philosophy, one first needs to describe the basic processes of learning, and then to discuss the contextual factors that may influence these processes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem and Significance of the study

What this study aims to investigate is to see if there is any difference in learners' perspectives towards language, being a social activity or a cognitive process. Then, the effect of these different perspectives, if proven, will be scrutinized through performance of the learners. Today, different implications of approaches to SLA are implemented by practitioners all around the world, using the principles of either cognitive or social view. So far to the best knowledge of the researcher and according to Merril Swain (2007), there is not ample evidence in literature about the learners' perspective towards language. Language learners form 'mini theories' of L2 learning (Hosenfeld, 1978) which shape the way they set about the learning task. These theories are made up of beliefs about language and language learning. Clearly 'beliefs' constitute an individual difference variable notably different from the other individual difference factors such as language aptitude or motivation but, like these variables, beliefs influence both the process and product of learning. Also, like a number of other individual difference variables, they are dynamic and situated.

This study argues that how learners learn will reflect (to some extent at least) their perspective about language learning. Furthermore, learners need to be made aware of their perspective and how these affect their

learning and performance. They also need to be able to change their perspectives to make learning more effective. Investigating learners' belief gives a clear conception and perception of learners about the subject of language. But, the question regarding the kind of perspective, social or cognitive, learners wear towards language still remains intact. In fact, catering to different needs of learners, which in our mind is highly influenced by their beliefs about language, entails a true understanding of what their perception is about language. Not having knowledge about the way learners look at language may face teachers with problem in term of setting goals and syllabus.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Concerning the problems referred to above, the present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Do learners conceive of language processes as a social phenomenon, part of life, or a cognitive one, a discipline?

Hypothesis 1: There is no difference in the way learners conceive of language process, as a social phenomenon, part of life or cognitive one, a discipline.