



**An Ethnographic Study of English Teachers’
Institutional Identity
in High Schools, Language Institutes, and Universities**

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in
Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Department of English Language Teaching
Faculty of Humanities
Tarbiat Modares University

By:

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February, 2012

the Almighty

in the name of

In the Name of the Almighty

We hereby recommend that this dissertation

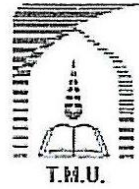
By

Hadi Azimi

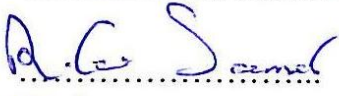


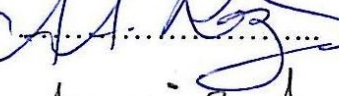
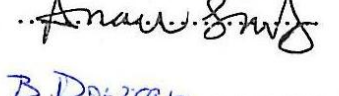



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be accepted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor in Philosophy in
Teaching English as a Foreign Language



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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 پایان‌نامه/ 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 پایان‌نامه 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 آئین‌نامه های مصوب انجام شود.

ماده ۴- 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 ۵- این آیین‌نامه در ۵ ماده و یک تبصره در تاریخ ۸۷/۴/۱ در شورای پژوهشی و در تاریخ ۸۷/۴/۲۳ 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 هادی عظیمی دانشجوی رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی ورودی سال تحصیلی ۱۳۸۶ مقطع دکتری تخصصی دانشکده ادبیات و علوم انسانی متعهد می شوم کلیه نکات مندرج در آئین‌نامه حق مالکیت مادی و معنوی در مورد نتایج پژوهش‌های علمی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس را در انتشار یافته‌های علمی مستخرج از پایان‌نامه / رساله تحصیلی خود رعایت نمایم. در صورت تخلف از مفاد آئین‌نامه فوق‌الاشعار به دانشگاه وکالت و نمایندگی می‌دهم 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: ۱۵ بهمن ۱۳۹۰





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Ramin AKbari, Ph.D

February, 2012

To my wife: Zahra

who helps me identify with the institution of love

Acknowledgements

Although I cannot really believe it, writing acknowledgement section of the dissertation means I have finalized my four-year-and-a-half job. Yet, in spite of the fact that it will be called *my* work, there are some people who have had critical impacts on various phases of the study.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Dr. Ghafar Samar, my knowledgeable and kind supervisor who had always been there to listen to persistent complaints. He read the chapters comprehensively very soon and provided helpful comments. More than anything, I am grateful to him for his being a good friend to me. It has been an honor for me to have Dr. Kiany as my advisor for his comments and suggestions that greatly improved my study. If I have any sense of quantitative research, it is definitely due to his teachings during our research courses. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Akbari whose practical comments and critiques kept me stay in the line of the study. Indeed, I owe him a lot for introducing to me the realm of teacher education and inflaming the enthusiasm to work in teacher identity area. Moreover, I should appreciate Doctors Anani, Rezaei, Dowran, and Abdollahzadeh for their kindness to accept reading this work and providing helpful comments to make this work a better one.

While writing this study I got married, but painstakingly extensive procedures of carrying out the dissertation prevented me from starting the family life. I owe my deepest gratitude to Zahra, my affectionate, honorable, and patient wife, who waited for more than two years for me to finish my dissertation and stood beside me during the moments I was at my desk and forgivingly tolerated the presence of my notebook all the time!

I am also indebted to Mrs. Nabizadeh and Dr. Saffar for all support and caring love they offered me during the past eight years. Not only did they show me the beauties of life, they also taught me the grammar of love. I owe them more than I can ever utter.

Also, I should acknowledge scientific and emotional support I received from many scholars of the field during these years, including Dr. Kelchtermans who provided me with many papers I did not have access to. Moreover, Mrs. Ravanbod, MA graduate of the English Department, provided me with a good deal of useful data and literature. Also, I should thank Mrs. Kaveh, the office assistant of the department who has always been a source of sincere kindness to me. More than anything, she was always ready to listen to our complaints on a daily basis.

Finally, I should thank participants of the study who preferred to remain anonymous. I feel thankful to them for all the time they kindly spent with me in data collection sessions.

Abstract

Teachers' inner qualities have recently attracted researchers in the area of teacher education. By analyzing teachers' characteristics, researchers look for finding means through which they can improve both teachers' professional conditions in particular and the educational states of affair in general. One of these means is different types of identity teachers may develop in their profession.

Identity, as a general term, is believed to be an inseparable component of teachers' profession (Husu & Tirri, 2007). In fact, efficient teachers are believed to be those who have developed the right sense of identity with regard to their profession. Among various variables affecting teachers' professional identity is the institutions they serve; the institutions that make them develop a special type of teacher identity named 'institutional identity'. This is a significant type of identity in teacher education because it raises key questions like: do teachers display different identities in different institutions? This question constitutes the focal point of discussion in this study.

Meanwhile, one is reminded that institutions differ in a variety of dimensions including their social status. The question is how different social status of institutions, say low and high social status, affect a teacher's perception and realization of his/her professional identity. To this question gender should be added as well, since gender can always be a determining variable in humanities. This study is an attempt to fill the research gap by answering the question of the effects of social status and gender on teachers' institutional identity in three different institutions where English teaching is prevalent, i.e. high schools, language institutes, and universities.

In so doing, ethnography as a robust approach within the qualitative paradigm of research was selected as the design. 12 male and female English teachers teaching at different high schools, language institutes, and universities with different social status were selected for data collection. Following the directions of this type of research design in relevant literature (e.g. Dörnyei, 2007; Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009), three major instruments, namely semi-standard interviews, focus group technique, and (non-)participant observation were implemented. The recorded data were then transcribed and merged with the notes taken. Then, making use of 'content analysis' (e.g. Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005), patterns were extracted which served as the materials to define and describe the institutional identity of teachers in these three institutions.

The patterns extracted revealed the similarities and differences among the institutional identities of teachers regarding their related institutions. Description of each type of institutional identity in details, statement of the extracted similarities and differences, and explanations of the motives and consequences are among the outcomes of this study. The institutional identity questionnaire developed based on the data is another significant result of this study. According to findings, the three institutions differ in terms of the nine institutional identity factors. Also, male and female teachers in each institution type displayed different institutional identity states. Moreover, high and low status institutions found to hold diverse institutional identity qualities. The outcomes provide researchers in the realm of teacher education with a qualitative picture of teachers in various institutions where language is taught. Moreover, curriculum developers can benefit from knowing how a teacher should and/or would feel in certain educational institutions and why.

Keywords: Institutional Identity; English Teachers; Social Status; Gender; High Schools; Language Institutes

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List of Acronyms and Symbols

Symbol	Stands for
ELT	English Language Teaching
IELTS	International English language Testing System
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SIT	Social Identity Theory
TEPs	Teacher Education Programs
–	Totally Absent
– ±	Below Average
±	Average
± +	Above Average
+	Totally Present
>	Greater Than

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Chapter ONE

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Teachers and students are inseparable elements of any educational system. These systems may survive without fulfilling required standards in many of their parts including physical facilities, such as buildings and materials; nevertheless, they are indisputably paralyzed if educators and learners are taken away from them. As a matter of fact, philosophically speaking, one of the major reasons why human beings have survived is the simple relationship of a tutor educating younger generations (Rury, 2005).

The importance of teachers' and students' roles necessitates carrying out special research on them and their features. Studying cognitive, emotional, and relational variables of students provides substantial knowledge on how they learn and react in the process of education. These types of knowledge have always been interesting areas of investigation among researchers of our field (Jiménez, 2000; McQuillan, 2005; Robinson, 2001, among others), and the process is still on.

However, literature is not so much rich when it comes to research on teachers. Although many of teachers' variables have been investigated in different branches, the range and the extent of the studies are still inadequate. This study intends to explore one of the many variables of the teachers.

1.1.1. What is the focus of this study?

Research on teachers and variables pertaining to them does not have as long a history as that of students. Teachers were seen mostly as mediators in education, as means to help students make progress, as observed in Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Swan, 2005; Sheehan, 2005). Although research on teachers started much earlier in 1970s, the first big wave of research started probably in early 1990s and it flourished even more after Kumaravadivelu's *the post method condition* (1994). From then on, researchers began to notice and study characteristics of teachers as seriously as other variables related to education (Cohen, 2010; Johnston & Ahtee, 2006).

As early as 1970s, researchers began exploring and explaining teachers' "outer" characteristics including the techniques they use in classes (e.g., Mackey, Polio, McDonough, 2004) and the impact they leave on students (e.g., Day, et al., 2003). Meanwhile, however,