



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY OF  
TEACHERS IN A TEFL GRADUATE PROGRAMME THROUGH  
ACADEMIC DISCOURSE SOCIALIZATION***

**PARVIZ AHMADI**

**FPP 2014 71**



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**By**

**PARVIZ AHMADI**

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**December 2014**

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*Dedicated to my wife and my daughter*



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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By

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**December 2014**

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This study investigated how five EFL in-service teachers in a graduate programme engaged in discourse socialization practices over the first year of the programme and how the collegial interactions nurtured the professional identity and knowledge development of these EFL teachers. Three research questions guided the study:

1. How does academic discourse socialization occur among in-service teachers in a TEFL graduate programme? 2. How does the participants' engagement in discourse socialization practices focusing on oral coursework practices influence their professional knowledge? 3. How does the participants' engagement in discourse socialization practices focusing on oral coursework practices influence their professional identity?

The primary research tools used in this qualitative collective case study were individual interviews, group discussions and reflective writings of the participants. The interviews and group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed in verbatim and a number of their writings were collected for analysis. The data were analysed both at a macro-level for any theme emerging from the interviews or discussions and at a micro-level for tracing epistemic markers in the data reflecting the perceptions and attitudes of the participants.

The active participation of the participant teachers in discourse socialization practices facilitated learning in a collaborative learning community. The participants shared their personal practical experiences, scaffolded their peers and engaged with assigned academic texts. Their engagement in collegial discussions and with academic texts developed their professional knowledge in several aspects. Their awareness of pedagogical challenges was raised and they addressed their learners' needs and learning strategies in real classroom settings more effectively. The collegial interactions focused on the transfer of theories learned from the disciplinary

textbooks to the pedagogical realities of the EFL educational settings. The engagement of the participant teachers in academic discourse socialization made them reconsider their pedagogical beliefs and practices. The participant EFL teachers reflected over their prior EFL teaching and learning beliefs and practices and shared them with their peers. In addition, the participants reconstructed and developed a relative expert identity as well as a critical identity over the status quo of their current EFL context.

A number of implications for professional development of EFL teachers arise from this qualitative collective case study. A community of EFL teachers can provide them with support. Designing professional training programs that are likely to contribute to professional development of teachers through collegial interaction can be of great importance as they may lead to reconsideration of their learning and teaching beliefs and practices. Guided supervision and more reflection in real settings can help teachers form the habit of reflection as life-long learning. Peer counselling services, skill-training under guided supervision, or any other form of support and scaffolding which provide motives for professional development should be encouraging.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PEMBANGUNAN PENGETAHUAN PROFESIONAL DAN IDENTITI GURU  
EFL MELALUI SOSIALISASI WACANA AKADEMIK DALAM PROGRAM  
SISWAZAH TEFL**

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Kajian ini menyiasat bagaimana 5 guru EFL dalam perkhidmatan dalam program ijazah terlibat dalam amalan wacana sosialisasi sepanjang tahun pertama program dan bagaimana interaksi keserakanan memupuk identiti profesional dan pembangunan pengetahuan guru-guru EFL tersebut. Kajian ini berpandukan tiga persoalan kajian: 1. Bagaimana wacana sosialisasi akademik berlaku di kalangan guru-guru dalam perkhidmatan dalam program ijazah TEFL? 2. Bagaimana penglibatan peserta dalam amalan sosialisasi wacana yang memberi tumpuan kepada kerja kursus lisan mempengaruhi pengetahuan profesional mereka? 3. Bagaimana penglibatan peserta dalam amalan sosialisasi wacana yang memberi tumpuan kepada kerja kursus lisan mempengaruhi identiti profesional mereka?

Alat kajian utama yang digunakan dalam kajian kes etnografi kualitatif ini adalah temu bual individu, perbincangan berkumpulan dan penulisan reflektif para peserta. Temu bual dan perbincangan kumpulan dirakam dan ditranskripsikan secara kata demi kata (verbatim) dan beberapa tulisan mereka telah dikumpulkan untuk dianalisis. Data telah dianalisa secara makro untuk mengenalpasti tema yang muncul daripada temu bual atau perbincangan; dan di peringkat mikro untuk mengesan apa-apa penanda epistemik dalam data yang mencerminkan persepsi dan ide peserta dan pengajar mereka.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa penglibatan aktif guru-guru peserta dalam proses wacana sosialisasi akademik mewujudkan komuniti pembelajaran secara berkolaborasi. Peserta kajian berkongsi pengalaman praktik peribadi mereka, memberi sokongan (scaffolding) kepada rakan dan melibatkan diri dalam teks akademik yang telah diberikan. Penglibatan mereka dalam perbincangan keserakanan dan dengan teks akademik membentuk pengetahuan professional dari bebefapa aspek. Kesedaran mereka terhadap permasalahan akademik telah ditingkatkan dan

mereka menangani keperluan pelajar dalam keadaan bilik darjah dengan lebih berkesan. Interaksi keserakanan memberi tumpuan kepada pemindahan teori yang dipelajari daripada buku teks disiplin kepada realiti pedagogi EFL mengikut tetapan pendidikan berkaitan. Penglibatan dalam wacana sosialisasi akademik membuat mereka menilai semula kepercayaan dan amalan pedagogi mereka. Peserta guru EFL telah lakukan refleksi tentang pengajaran EFL awal mereka dan kongsikannya dengan rakan-rakan mereka. Disamping itu, peserta turut membentuk suatu identiti kritis berkaitan kedudukan semasa mereka dalam konteks EFL mereka.

Beberapa implikasi bagi pembangunan profesional guru-guru EFL timbul daripada kajian kes kualitatif ini. Sebuah komuniti guru EFL boleh menyediakan mereka dengan sokongan. Mereka bentuk program latihan profesional yang berkemungkinan tinggi untuk menyumbang kepada pembangunan profesional guru-guru melalui interaksi keserakanan amat penting kerana ia boleh membawa kepada pertimbangan semula terhadap kepercayaan dan amalan pembelajaran dan pengajaran. Penyeliaan dan refleksi boleh membantu menjadikan refleksi sebagai amalan pembelajaran sepanjang hayat. Khidmat kaunseling keserakanan, latihan kemahiran dengan penyeliaan, atau sokongan dalam bentuk lain yang dapat memberi motivasi untuk pembangunan profesional perlu digalakkan.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my feelings of thankfulness and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Arshad Abdul Samad, whose mentoring, guidance, and encouragement has always helped me undertake and pursue my academic endeavours. I offer my sincere thanks to him for many hours that he has dedicated to discussing my study, listening patiently to my ideas, reading and responding properly to my writings, and giving me his profound insights and valuable suggestions.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr Nooreen Noordin and Dr Roselan bin Baki for their thoughtful comments and encouragement. Their support has positively influenced my work in many ways.

I would like to thank the participants in the study for their allegiance to this study and their willingness to share their experiences and insights. I would also like to express my appreciation to the two instructors who were very helpful despite their busy life and teaching schedules.

Last but not least, my family deserves to be recognized for their care and concern. I am most grateful to my parents, my wife and my daughter who supported me throughout all these years. I thank them for their patience and understanding.

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 16 December 2014 to conduct the final examination of Parviz Ahmadi on his thesis entitled "Development of Professional Knowledge and Identity of Teachers in a TEFL Graduate Programme Through Academic Discourse Socialization" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CoP	Community of Practice
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
NNES	Non-native English Speaking
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
MATESOL	Master programs in TESOL
MATEFL	Master programs in TEFL

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Discourse communities are seen as groups of individuals, who have certain beliefs, knowledge and practices in common, a mechanism for intercommunication, professional organizations, discursal expectations or disciplinary genres, gate keeping for membership and changing memberships from apprentices to experts (Swales, 1988). One of the functioning mechanisms of gate keeping membership is through graduate programs. They either initiate neophytes into the discourse community and assign them membership legitimacy or provide more professional training opportunities for less experienced members of the discourse community to become more mature and experienced (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Graduate study revitalizes the discourse community by bringing in new members. Also, it can initiate and enculturate graduate students, as legitimate members of the community, into their professional discourse communities through introducing them to topics currently being discussed in the community, offering considerable opportunities to acquire the academic language including the technical jargons and rhetorical conventions as well as prevalent values, conventions and practices of the discourse community (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995).

The learning process of graduate students is a multilateral situated process (Wenger, 1998) in which cooperative learning is emphasized and knowledge is negotiated through the interactions. Graduate students undergo the process of academic discourse socialization through doing oral or written discourse practices to become initiated into the discourse culture of the community. Prior (1998) maintains that graduate students conform themselves to new discourse communities through engagement and dialogical interaction with their peers. As academic discourse or forms of oral or written language carry the prevalent conventions of a discourse community, engagement in discourse socialization practices is likely to help discourse community members including both newcomers and experienced insiders assert fuller participation in the accepted activities of the community and consequently develop professionally (Wenger, 1998).

As Nayar (1997) states, TESOL communities can be arranged into three categories, which relies on the aim of learning English, including EFL (English as a Foreign Language), EAL (English as an Associate Language) and ESL (English as a second language). Each one of them can be seen as a discourse community or a community of practice with its own conventions and values (Swales, 1990). Consequently, each discourse community has different concerns, interests and practices. The universal spread of English has led to the increase in number of graduate programs which try

to train prospective teachers for their future career or help in-service teachers develop professionally.

In most academic and educational settings, the prospect of graduate students in TEFL highly relies on the professional development of teachers, including their professional knowledge and identity development. Research shows that high quality teaching contributes to the progress and success of students (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Guskey, 2003; Strahan, 2003). To bring about substantial changes in teacher education, a model of education which can function effectively is needed which involves collegial interaction, reflection, and collaboration (Dufour, 2004; Guskey, 2003).

The process of learning calls for enculturation or socialization into the conventions of teacher community (Borko, 2004). Learning happens as a consequence of the changes which are experienced through socialization into a discourse community or "participation in socially organized activities, and individuals' use of knowledge as an aspect of their own participation in social practices" (p. 4). Academic discourse socialization, according to Duff (2010) is a "dynamic, socially situated process that in contemporary contexts is often multimodal, multilingual, and highly intertextual" (p.169). Through undergoing the process of discourse socialization, members of an academic community learn how to participate actively in a discourse community by engaging in its related practices including oral or written discourse. Discourse socialization in TEFL graduate programs can similarly encourage graduate students participate actively in their community of practice through engagement and interaction with academic texts, peers and experienced members of their community, which can finally facilitate their professional expertise and sense of inclusiveness in the community (ibid).

From a sociocultural viewpoint, teacher education is established through experiences in multiple social settings including classrooms, as learners, and schools, as teachers, then as participants in teacher education programs including graduate programs, and finally in their affiliated discourse community (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). The main objective of teacher education programs for both prospective and in-service teachers is professional development. The pivots of professional development of teachers are professional knowledge and professional identity of teachers. Professional knowledge in teaching includes knowledge about oneself as a teacher, about the content, students, and contextual factors (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Freeman, 1996). Professional knowledge development of teachers is a long-term and sophisticated process which is possible through engagement in social practices concerned with learning and teaching.

Apart from professional knowledge, professional identity of teachers should be of great importance in teacher education and professional development programs as teachers' decision-making and behaviours are influenced by their knowledge about their identity, which is their interpretation of their professional self as teachers and

their sense of belonging to their community of practice (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1994). According to Gee (2001), identities are shaped through interpretative systems influencing how members of a discourse community can interpret themselves and how they are recognized as legitimate members of the community by others. Engagement in discourse practices can shape an individual's identity (Danielewicz, 2001). Language teacher identity has drawn the interest of a number of researchers in language teacher education and professional development of teachers (Inbar-Lourie, 2005; Varghese, Morgan, Johnson, & Johnson, 2005). Yet relatively little attention has been paid to non-native English-speaking teachers' identity in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, in particular in Iran.

## **1.2 EFL Teacher Training in Iran**

As the number of graduate students who gain admission into EFL graduate programs rises, a pressing need is felt to prepare these pre-service and in-service teachers for their future career. To understand the educational context in which Iranian English as a Foreign language (EFL) teachers work, this section tries to look at the factual information about EFL instruction in Iran in both public schools and private institutes, the status of teaching English in Iran and EFL teacher training in Iran. Due to the spread of the English language in various global arenas, educational policies have always shifted to adjust themselves with the advancements. In the researcher's home country of Iran, language education reforms have been insignificant (Farhady et al. 2010) and proceeded slowly and even unprofessional if there have been any. Likewise, professional development programs in general and for EFL teachers in particular have fallen behind drastically as it can be obviously felt in all public educational centres.

On the other hand, the tendency towards learning English has gradually risen and in recent years it has dramatically soared for various reasons. The identification of all the reasons needs a comprehensive sociopolitical study and cannot be investigated in this study. However the main reason might be directly pertinent to the inefficacy of teaching English in public schools controlled by the Ministry of Education (Dahmardeh & Hunt, 2012). As the number of educated middle class families, who had witnessed the inefficacy of the public schools in teaching English, started to rise a decade ago and due to the growing number of graduates holding a degree in teaching English or English literature, the number of private institutes increased considerably to satisfy the demands of the market and at the same time create jobs.

An unofficial language education reform has been pushed through by people from the middle class which has demanded for qualified teachers and liberalization of teacher education programs in private centres advocating more modern approaches of teaching English. To meet these expectations, private institutes have tried to live up to the growing expectation of people by implementing a more communicative approach (Aliakbari, 2004) to make up for the main flaws of the language educational policies undertaken by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology



EFL instruction in public schools in Iran starts after the primary school. The first phase of high school (3 years) which starts from grade 7 is the time when students start learning English in public schools and continue through the first and second phases of high school (overall 7 years) with an average of 2 to 3 hours of weekly instruction. The same curriculum has been implemented nationwide since EFL instruction began in public schools in Iran in recent decades. A text book is prepared by the Council of Textbook Preparation under the supervision of Ministry of Education for each grade. It focuses on reading, vocabulary and grammar with very little attention to other skills and pronunciation. Reading is mainly taught through grammar translation method (Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh, 2004) for the purpose of vocabulary building and teaching explicit grammar rules (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008). Words and expressions and their equivalents in Persian are often learned in isolation. As grammar and vocabulary are learned in isolation, students are simply at a disadvantage when it comes to writing essays or speaking. The result of such an educational system has been many high school graduates who can't use English to communicate (e.g., Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). However, the situation in private institutes is different and tends to be more encouraging for teaching English communicatively (Namaghy, 2009).

The teaching context in many EFL settings and in particular in Iran can cause a lot of difficulties for English teachers including crowded classes, lack of appropriate pedagogic materials, teachers' limited English proficiency, and last but not least the discouraging dominance of a traditional testing system focusing on grammar and vocabulary at higher educational stages. Traditional educational testing system focusing on grammar (Rahimi, Riazi, & Saif, 2008) is one of the biggest obstacles in the way of enhancing communicative language teaching in most of EFL settings, especially in Asia. In a country like Iran, one's performance in these exams can be regarded as one of the factors influencing his future accomplishment. Since these exams mainly do not cover spoken language, both EFL students and their families did not invest enough on oral/aural aspects of the language because as focusing more on form-focused tests, mainly multiple-choice tests, were more in vogue in the Iranian setting by the early 2000s. The competitiveness at the nationwide university entrance exam influenced the ideas of students about effective and successful teaching methodologies and these expectations, in a fever of entering universities, consequently had a big effect on the whole educational system and the profession of teaching English. To explain the undesirable situation of teaching English in Iran, Namaghy (2009) states that,

Three aspects of teaching are tightly controlled by the Ministry of Education of Iran. First, the input or the syllabus for all language classes in public high schools is centrally determined. Thus teachers have no say as to what to teach. Second, conformity with the input is guaranteed by a uniform testing scheme issued by the central office. This eliminates the exercise of professional expertise in testing. In addition to specifying what student knowledge is, the central office specifies what teacher knowledge is and presents it unidirectionally through in-service teacher training programs (p.114).

EFL teacher training in Iran can be divided to three groups: in-service teacher training for public school teachers, teacher training courses for private institute teachers and university degree teacher education courses for both pre-service and in-service



teachers. Teacher training practices for public school teachers are held by the education authorities aiming at teacher professional development. Teacher training activities are mostly limited to meetings of teachers, supervised by one of the experienced teachers appointed for a period of one year, focusing on continuous and final assessment of students. Apart from the meetings, there are short term teacher training courses held by the authorities for the purpose of retraining in-service EFL teachers. Teacher training courses (TTC) which are held by private institutes offer opportunities for EFL university graduates to become familiar with more communicative approaches of teaching English using multimedia and modern books with more comprehensive syllabus. The university graduates who can successfully fulfil the requirements of the TTC courses can be initiated into the private sector of teaching English. Finally, degree programs are carried out by the Ministry of Science and Research or Teacher Training Centres affiliated to the Ministry of Education. EFL degree programs at undergraduate level under the Ministry of Science are designed for EFL pre-service teachers. They include Associate Degree (a two-year undergraduate programme in TEFL), B.A in TEFL (a four-year undergraduate programme in TEFL) while Master programs in Teaching English as a foreign language (MATEFL) have an intake of both pre-service and in-service EFL teachers.

Nearly all university degree programs intended for teacher preparation in Iran including TEFL master programs (MATEFL programs) are based on a traditional model. The ultimate goal of these programs is knowledge acquisition. Most of their available time is spent on transferring information from the instructor to participant teachers as passive recipients and finally assessment is carried out to examine if the information has been acquired by them. Practice is subordinate to theoretical knowledge of the EFL teachers assuming that theoretical knowledge may result in behavioural change in part of teachers. This model presumes that if theory is applied, effective practice may finally be achieved. However, as it is also indicated by Osterman and Kottkamp (2004), these programs are unlikely to result in change in professional practices of teachers as little attention is paid to personal practical knowledge of teachers in real contexts (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006).

The traditional model of teacher professional development is the prevalent model of in Iran (Namaghy, 2009). It sees learning as the acquisition of knowledge passed down by an expert in the discourse community. It expects learners to pile up professional knowledge; therefore, it is primarily inactive, and channelized by expert. The underlying philosophy of this model can be linked to objectivist epistemology promoting the implementation of findings from the empirical research. They are supposed to improve their teaching practices so that their students can reach a higher mark in the final exams. At the school level, most executives do not provide teachers with adequate learning ground which can warrant participation in more collective learning spaces such as teachers' communities of practice.

The ineffective top-down, professional development programs have always been grounds for complaints from EFL teachers based on the researcher's own experience, the results from both previous studies in other EFL studies (Namaghy, 2009;

Razmjoo& Riazi,2006) and the present study interviews. Apart from infrequent short term in-service programs, undergraduate or even graduate programs in most EFL contexts are mainly about transmission of information. The need for reconsidering these programs and incorporating more reflective practice opportunities can be deeply felt (Namaghy,2009).

The number of graduate programs in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Iran has recently increased. A wide number of pre-service or in-service English teachers register in these programs either to build a career in teaching English or gain more professional expertise. The graduate-level course work in these programs can vary from one course to another depending on how much emphasis falls on oral or written coursework practices intended to socialize the new cohorts of TEFL students into the practices and conventions of their discourse community. Despite the importance of coursework practices in these programs, there have been no studies on how these EFL in-service teachers in graduate program are engaged in coursework practices and how involvement in these practices may help these teachers develop professionally in terms of identity and knowledge.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

This study developed out of the researchers' own experience as a non-native EFL teacher and a teacher educator working with education department in his own hometown. The researcher came to recognize that the teacher education model prevalent both in university contexts and in training programs for in-service teachers being far away from the socio-cultural models of teacher education wherein contextual and cultural factors play a significant role in teaching English specific to EFL contexts as well as in curriculum planning.

Despite the domineering traditional based model of professional development courses in Iran (Namaghi, 2009), there are teacher educators who try to achieve high standards in professional development through reflectively-based professional development practices (Sangani & Stelma, 2012). In their classes, groups of participant teachers seated in circles are involved in collaborative discussions. Such reflectively-based development course practices which mainly focus on oral discourse practices may originate from the underlying philosophy of any teacher educator who believes that professional development is not about transfer of theoretical information and that participant teachers can no longer be mere passive recipients. Since the prevalent educational system in Iran is based on traditional models focusing on acquisition of information, examining the practices of those few practitioners whose class sessions centre on reflectively based development practices can be illuminating.

Besides, in the area of EFL teacher education or professional development, university teacher education programs have not been systematically investigated to achieve a better understanding of how teachers participate in discourse practices and what they

acquire in these places, and to identify the factors or circumstances in these courses that are likely to support or obstruct their learning process.

However, despite the fact that most of teacher education in Iran is carried out through university degree programs, there is a lack of qualitative studies on coursework practices in teacher's professional preparation and development programs at universities in general and those of EFL teachers in particular. There has been no ethnographic case study investigating the professional knowledge of in-service EFL teachers, especially those who are in MATEFL programs. No study has ever been done on professional knowledge, identity and teaching experiences of English teachers in graduate programs in Iran and how they socialize into the values and practices of TESOL discourse community.

However, the formation of professional teacher identity in TESOL discourse community and in particular in EFL settings has been understudied. The development of in-service EFL teachers' own voices and identities as legitimate members of the TESOL discourse community has not been examined fully enough, especially from sociocultural perspectives.

Most studies deal with EFL teachers who are educated in English speaking countries and there are few studies addressing their professional identity formation in a second or foreign language context (Pennycook, 1999). How the professional identity of EFL teachers are shaped or undergo transition can call for more investigation as these teachers may experience unique challenges due to their "dual identities" of being both L2 learners and teachers.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

First, the study attempts to investigate how TEFL graduate students who are also in-service teachers (referred to as participant teachers in this study) undergo discourse socialization process in their graduate programme through engaging in its discourse practices. This study also tries to uncover the factors which are likely to facilitate the process or tend to hinder it. The perceptions of the participant teachers and their instructors towards the efficacy of professional discourse socialization practices are also explored to find out how much the discourse practices have been able to instil positive attitudes towards the values and practices of the TESOL discourse community.

Second, the study aims at examining the probable influence of engaging in discourse socialization practices on their professional knowledge including their declarative knowledge, knowledge about L2 learning and teaching, or procedural knowledge, knowledge about L2 classroom learning and teaching procedures. In addition, it may address issues such as teacher's prior beliefs concerning L2 learning and teaching

and how much they are influenced by engagement in professional discourse socialization practices.

The third objective of the study is to examine how much participant teacher's engagement in discourse socialization practices is likely to influence their professional identity or even identity transition, if any. This objective may also include professional background of the participant teachers, how they identify their professional self before being initiated into socialization practices and after it.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. How does academic discourse socialization occur among in-service teachers in a TEFL graduate programme?
2. How does the participants' engagement in discourse socialization practices focusing on oral coursework practices influence their professional knowledge?
3. How does the participants' engagement in discourse socialization practices focusing on oral coursework practices influence their professional identity?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study can provide implications for the professional development of EFL teachers in general and in MATEFL programs in particular. Understanding the factors affecting the professional knowledge development of the EFL teacher while they are socialized into their discourse community conventions and practices can help programme developers form a more realistic view towards the efficacy or drawbacks of their programs in emergence of effective teachers. As Shulman (2011) maintains, "a proper understanding of the knowledge base of teaching, the sources for that knowledge, and the complexities of the pedagogical process will make the emergence of such teachers more likely" (p.20).

As a qualitative collective case study, the present research can help to understand the beliefs and behaviours of the EFL in-service teachers. It is likely to contribute new understanding of realities of discourse socialization of graduate students into their disciplinary culture in an EFL setting. It tries to achieve a situated understanding of the dialogical interaction between peers concerning disciplinary issues, challenges of EFL teachers in their local setting and their perceptions towards TESOL discourse community by depicting a broader picture of the in-service EFL participant teachers in a TEFL graduate programme which is not provided by quantitative methodology. However, the ultimate objective of this collective case study is not to make broad generalizations and ignore the distinctions between various educational settings, but to provide lessons learned from two courses taught by the same instructor focusing



on dialogical interactions and reflection through oral discourse practices over an eight-month period. Educators working in the same field of EFL teacher education might find some of these insights illuminating for developing or reconsidering their professional development programs.

The findings of this study may contribute to the research on discourse socialization of TEFL graduate students. The study is likely to contribute to second language socialization theory by providing new information on how TEFL graduates participant teachers in Iran, as a graduate population with their own unique attributes, undergo discourse socialization process. Conducting studies in various educational and disciplinary domains to investigate how people learn in various situations to accomplish their disciplinary objectives can contribute to theory-building in academic discourse socialization. The findings of the study are likely to contribute to the existing theoretical literature regarding advanced academic literacy of NNES as well as academic language socialization. It can expand our understanding of the notions of second language socialization and legitimate peripheral participation of graduate students through investigation of the influence of disciplinary socialization.

Also, carrying out academic discourse socialization studies in natural settings to explore how graduate scholars engage in their discourse communities based on ideologies and practices in a specific setting can be helpful for future scholars to have a clearer view towards values and practices of their own discourse community. Having such a vision at their disposal, experienced scholars can revise their pre-conceptions about active participation of graduate students in their discourse communities as well as their perceptions of the programme and challenges they face.

### **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

Several key terms which are important to the study are defined as follows:

Academic discourse socialization process: Discourse socialization refers to reciprocal interaction in a community of discourse through which community members are enculturated into the discourse practices including the linguistic and sociocultural activities of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) and “is a process by which newcomers into a community of discourse become increasingly competent in academic ways of knowing, speaking, and writing as they participate peripherally and legitimately in academic practices” (Morita, 2004, p.576). In this study, academic discourse socialization refers to the interactions of the participant teachers with their peers and instructors as well as their engagement with academic texts, through which they share their personal practical knowledge and academic knowledge with other members of their discourse community.

Communities of practice: The idea behind the theoretical notion of communities of practice is that learning is situated and occurs through a process of social engagement in the practices of a group with similar values and activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Classrooms are also communities of practices (Wenger, 1998) in which insiders (university instructors and more experienced peers) help newcomers initiate into the academic discourse community. In the present study, a class of in-service EFL teachers in a graduate programme is seen as a community of practice inside a wider local EFL discourse community, which itself is situated in a global TESOL discourse community.

Declarative knowledge: Declarative knowledge is defined as “a special type of information in long term memory that consists of knowledge about the facts and things that we know. This type of information is stored in terms of propositions, schemata, and propositional networks. It may also be stored in terms of isolated pieces of information temporal strings, and images” (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 229). In this study, declarative knowledge refers to the participant teachers' knowledge of the concepts concerned with learning and teaching English.

Disciplinary language: Disciplinary language is the language forms which are subject to the underlying epistemology and discipline-specific values, conventions and norms through which the knowledge is conceived (Parry, 1998, p.273). In this study, disciplinary language refers to the technical jargons and terms related to learning and teaching English used by the participant teachers during their collegial interactions or writing their reflective papers.

Discourse community: Discourse communities are communities of practice which tend to have boards, professional organizations, educational programs, in-group language and other forms of gate keeping that limit, control or authorize membership (Haneda, 2006). TESOL communities are discourse communities where members are pre-service or in-service teachers who share similar purposes and concerns in connection with teaching English to the speakers of other languages. This universal TESOL discourse community can be divided into ESL, EFL and EAL communities. These sub-divisions can be useful to show how different educational settings have their own needs, objectives, culture, and teaching and learning activities. In the present study, EFL discourse community refers to a community of non-native English speaking Iranian EFL teachers who teach English as a foreign language in Iran.

Graduate TEFL programs (MATEFL programs): In this study, it refers to a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) graduate programme in Iran, which includes fourteen courses in language teaching and learning as well as linguistic theories of English as a foreign language in on-site classes, practicums which incorporate teaching practices supervised by an instructor, a seminar course and dissertation writing.

Oral discourse practices: Oral discourse practices which are considered as communication skills include presentations, mini-lectures, group discussions, and

class discussions as discussed by Duff (2010). In this study, they refer to collegial small-group discussions as well as interactions after oral presentations and after practicums in two courses of Methodology of Teaching English and Teaching English Skills in a TEFL graduate programme in Iran over the first year.

Procedural knowledge: Procedural knowledge is the “knowledge that consists of the things that we know how to do. It underlies the execution of all complex cognitive skills and includes mental activities such as problem solving, language reception and production, and using learning strategies” (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 231).

Professional Knowledge: The word knowledge is used as an umbrella term to refer to both teachers' knowledge as factual propositions and at the same time covering a wider spectrum of teacher's assumptions and beliefs obtained from personal practical experience. However, beliefs are teachers' subjective and somehow idiosyncratic understanding (Swales, 1998). Knowledge is both referred to the objective knowledge of the teachers and the personal practical knowledge that is bound to specific educational settings and is obtained from teaching practice and experience. Since the notions of teacher's beliefs and teacher's knowledge, in the present study, the word professional knowledge is used to refer to both and is not limited to a repertoire of factual propositions acquired by the teacher through memorization of disciplinary based courses, but it includes personal, practical knowledge of participant teachers and is not limited to factual knowledge.

Professional identity: Identity is defined as the concept of "self" as an organized unit of one's theories, attitudes, and beliefs about oneself. How teachers frame and reframe their identity in their learning and teaching contexts is assumed as professional in this study (McCormick & Pressley, 1997). In this study, it refers to the attitudes and beliefs of the participant teachers towards their profession and their discourse community.

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