Professional Identity in Iran`s Higher Education: A Case of EFL Professors

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Abstract *This paper explores the roles of 10 professors teaching TEFL at the MA level in Iranian higher education contexts. For this purpose, observational data in 10 classroom settings was gathered through audio-taping classroom interactions. The collected data was transcribed, and analysis was carried out on footing changes so that the professors' roles could be identified in details. According to Footing Theory, a speaker can take on three roles of animator, author, and principal. In-depth analysis of the transcripts revealed that classroom practices were dominated by the author role taken on by the professors. The results offer implications and suggestions for pedagogical consideration within higher education context.*

Key terms: *Footing Theory, animator, author, principal*

1. Introduction

Teaching-learning process can be looked at as an intellectual game in which a number of players take on various roles. In this complex process, the most outstanding and effective factor is the teacher (Fareh&Saeed, 2011). Rama (2011) pointed out that being a teacher is a special challenge as teachers have to educate new generations, and this is of crucial significance for the development of the future of a country. He, further, claimed that teachers are the most significant factors that influence the level of achievement in student learning since they strive to motivate students, to shape their minds, and to make them responsible members of the society.

However, the dominant traditional teaching method, the lecture, has turned teachers into followers of predetermined paths rather than voyages of exploration (Badley&Habeshaw, 2006). No more do the teachers think critically. Rather, they merely imitate and replicate common trend of knowledge (Lane, Lacefield-Parachini&Isken, 2003). In the same vein, students turn into passive recipients of knowledge who simply wait to copy ill digested notes. In such a context, no space is assigned for arguments, discussion, and critical judgment (Ijaiya, Alabi&Fasasi, 2011; Kitot, Ahmad &Seman, 2010).As a result, in this challenging millennium, it becomes seriously obligatory to reconsider teachers' roles. In fact, any educational system has to be dependent on teachers who willingly contribute to educational reform (Samech&Zahavy, 2000).

1.1. The Change Toward Agency

Teachers have embarked on a long-life journey in which they should be ready to learn and improve their developmental path continuously (Nakabugo, 2008). It is crucial that teachers fulfill the primary aim of education which is the support of both teachers and learners to develop their agency. The basic concept of agency is that teachers do not merely repeat given information. Rather, they should have the ability for autonomous social action during which they refine educational world and take control of their practices. To put in other words, agency is a dynamic process involving continuous transformation of both the community

and the self. Hence, teacher agency is absolutely crucial to provide learners with opportunities to experience an engaging learning environment which extends beyond traditional practices (Lipponen&Kumpulainen, 2011). An educational system that reaches beyond transmission of information must work deeper and make the identities of both the teacher and learners more complex and supple (Zajonc, 2006).

Within the university context, higher education has the most significant role in producing agents of change (Cope & Stephen, 2001). Rosaen and Scharm (1998, p.914, cited in Cope & Stephen, 2001) suggested that "the role of higher education should be to produce transformative intellectuals who will reform rather than just fit into existing teacher practices". In higher education context, professors should provide learners with opportunities to deal with practical demands of teaching and foster a critical outlook on the issues (Cope & Stephen, 2001).

Traditionally, professors teaching in higher education failed to encourage learners to think critically, participate in research, or express their own ideas. Rather, memorization and rote learning were the dominant ways of learning. However, the professor's main responsibility is not to dispense information but to design courses in which learners are provided with opportunities to use higher-level intellectual skills involving problem-solving and critical thinking skills. In such a context, the aim of education is not acquisition and reproduction of facts. Rather, learners are required to demonstrate a deep understanding of materials and express their own attitudes. This requires that professors challenge learners intellectually. Such diversification of educational program is a great challenge that can be met more successfully if the professor overcomes a traditional dependence on mastery of a discipline (Badely&Habeshaw, 2006).

Polat (2011) investigated 10 postgraduate students to explore their opinions on the role of higher education on growing scientists. Analysis of ideas revealed that students regard higher education as a context for free and scientific opinions. What they expect from higher education are flexible programs, quality in education, applicable knowledge, and opportunities for critical thinking and expressions of their ideas.

Butt and Rehman (2010) explored 350 university students' satisfaction in higher education in Pakistan regarding four factors of teacher expertise, the course offered, learning environment, and classroom facilities. The analysis of the data showed that all four factors significantly influenced and positively related to students' satisfaction. Furthermore the result indicated that there was a significant difference between males' and females responses, showing that females students are less satisfied with higher education. As teacher expertise was the most significant factor in students' satisfaction, plans should be made to train expert teachers who can promote the quality of education.

Overall, there has been a large body of research which addresses the importance of teacher in educational world (King Rice, 2003; Moafian&Pishghadam, 2008; Sanders &Rieves, 1996). Thus, teacher's role assumes seminal role within educational context. Teacher's role can be explored from various perspectives. A typical prism through which teachers' roles can be investigated is Footing Theory.

1.2. Footing Theory

Goffman (1981) defined Footing as the alignment that participants in interaction take with regard to one another. In other words, "the alignment of an individual to a particular utterance can be referred to as Footing" (Goffman, 1974, cited in Goffman, 1981, p.221).

Goffman (1981) believed that the terms speaker and hearer are too shallow to provide us with anything beyond sound. Furthermore, the term speaker is troublesome and ambiguous since it does not decompose the role of the one who speaks into smaller and more detailed elements. As a result, Goffman rejected the oversimplified notion of speaker and proposed Footing theory.

According to Footing theory, a speaker may take on three roles of animator, author, and principal. As Goffman (1981, p.145) explained, animator is identified as the talking machinewho is engaged in acoustic activity. An animator is merely concerned with issuing sound from his/her mouth and moving his/her lips up and down. Reading aloud from a fully memorized text or a prepared script allows us to animate words we

have no hand in and to express opinions, beliefs, and sentiments we do not hold. We can speak for someone else and in someone else's words. As a result, it can be said that animator and recipient are in the same level of analysis.

The speaker's second role identified by Goffman (1981, p.144) is author. An author selects the sentiments expressed and the words in which they are encoded. To put in other words, authoring an utterance means reformulating and paraphrasing the statements having been made before.Reading off from a text or a group of utterances not having been memorized gives the speaker the role of author.

Principal, the speaker's third role clarified by Goffman (1981), is someone who expresses his/her own beliefs, someone whose position is identified by his/her ideas expressed and the one committed to what s/he says. The principal role entails "the extraporaneous, ongoing assembly and encoding of the text under the exigency of immediate response to one's current situation and audience, in a word, fresh production" (p.227).

As shifting from one role to another, for example from repeating a text to expressing original ideas, a speaker is changing his/her footing (Goffman, 1981, p.128). A change in footing implies "a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the other present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance".

To have a more comprehensive outlook to what happens in the classroom, Bannink and Dam (2006) accentuated the application of a more dynamic notion of educational context. This implies giving special attention to changes in footing occurring in a classroom. To this end, Skidmore and Murakami (2010) marked prosodic features of teacher-student dialogue during whole-class discussion to show changes in footing and signal boundaries between different kinds of pedagogic activities. The result showed that teacher led IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) discussion, which displays teacher's role as animator, was marked prosodically by fast interaction pace and echoing of students' answers with minimal uptake. However, teacher's principal role, identified by thought and reflection was marked prosodically by low pace, vowel lengthening, and quickened tempo.

Su (2009) investigated a bilingual speaker's code-switching practices in conversations. The observational analysis of this study showed that when the speaker is dealing with a highly face-threatening situation like asking or promising, s/he changes his/her footing to accomplish this complex communicative task through changes in code choice. More specifically, to create more social distance which decreases a treat in a conversation, the speaker usually refrains from using pronouns 'I' and 'me' and acts as an animator through using third person singular pronoun. However, when the focus of talk shifts, the speaker's strategy seemed to reduce social distance through using pronouns 'I' and 'me' acting as a principal.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

Although a few numbers of studies (Bannink& Dam, 2006; Skidmore & Murakami, 2010) addressed teachers' roles based on Goffman's footing theory, clearly, a need exists for sharper focus on the roles of professor teaching in higher education context.Hence, this study will be an attempt to pursue the roles of animator, author, and principal that professors majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at MA level take on. The research presented here aims at finding out answers to the following question:
What are professors' roles in classroom considering Goffman's classification of animator, author, and principal?

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 10 Iranian male professors teaching TEFL at MA level. They were chosen based on accessibility from some cities in Iran including: Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Tarbiat Moalem

University of Sabzevar, Zahedan University, Semnan University, and Alzahra University. The participants, whose age ranged from 33 to 55, were native speakers of Persian language.

2.2. Procedure

The principal method used to gather data were non-participant observation and audio-recording of classroom discourse practices. To explore the roles that the professors take on in the classrooms, each professor's classroom was observed and audio-recorded for one session which lasted around 90 minutes. On the whole, 10 sessions, in which subjects such as Applied Linguistics, Teaching Methods, Testing, Psychology, and Sociology were taught, were recorded. Initially, the transcript representing all verbal content of speech was produced. Then, analysis was carried out on the transcribed data to highlight the shifts in footing. To put it in more specific words, each sentence was carefully analyzed to determine whether it was an imitation of the information presented in the specific book taught, a restatement of its concept, or a totally original idea. To make this process clear, 6 extracts which best represent animator, author, or principal role were selected and analyzed in details in order to show how far the professors diverge from the book, reflecting their identity.

3. Result

In this section, 6 extracts which best represent the roles of the professors as animator, author, and principal are analyzed.

Animator role

Extract 1

Professor: Last session, we talked about two basic assumptions of C.T.S model. Now, we want to criticize it extensively. To do so, I would like to read a section for you because, in fact, what the text says is clearer than what I say. Turn to page 186, paragraph 2 when it says one problem with C.T.S model is…. Found it? One problem is that it treats error variance as homogeneous in origin. Each of the estimates of reliability discusses one specific source of error and treats other potential sources either as part of the source of that score or as true score, so there is no such a thing to differentiate between different sources of errors. As a result, we have equivalent form estimate, for example, do not distinguish inconsistencies between the forms from the inconsistencies within the form. Turning to page 187, we have another model which can be a good replacement for C.T.S model.

In this extract, the professor initiates the session by giving an overview of what he did in the last session. Then, he says that this session is going to be oriented toward voicing criticisms against C.T.S model which was thought previously. Thus, one thinks that an opportunity in which both the professor and the learners can challenge the model and put their ideas forward. However, by the next sentences, the professor states that, in challenging the model, he is going to read the book. Up to the end of this extract, he appears to adopt the animator role, reading the book without inserting his own comments. In addition, the very use of the last sentence, "Turning to page 187, we have another model which can be a good replacement for C.T.S model", indicates that neither the professor nor the learners make any contribution in criticizing C.T.S model.

As a result, though the topic of the session has the potential to enlarge the cognitive environment through critical judgment, the classroom context in this extract strongly displayed repetition and imitation of the book as the dominant teaching practice. More specifically, the professor does not participate in generation of ideas but appeared to imitate the critiques presented in the book.

Extract 2

Professor: What are the differences between comprehension of spoken and written languages? Miss Malekian.
Learner: Time is less of a constraint on processing written language, and we also have the advantage with written language that…..
Professor: Where are you?
Learner: Page 162, at the bottom of the first paragraph.
Professor: Ok. Time is less of a constraint on processing written language, and we also have the advantage with written language that the text is there for us to reread if we should so wish. Comprehending spoken language is affected by the transience of the speech signal and the time constraints this imposes.
This dialogue is chosen from a session where the professor is concerned with clarification and explanation of the concepts of the book. In doing so, he poses a question, calls a learner to answer it, and completes the reply by reading off the book.

A close scrutiny of this question and the ones not included in this extract reveals that they are not appropriate for establishing a space for critical consciousness. The only apparent aim of such question seems to change the one-way flow of information from the professor to the learners to a dialogue between them. It can be also observed that, in answering the question, the learner reads the book, not even bothering herself paraphrasing it. This indicated that the question the professor poses leads learners toward imitation. Ironically, even the chance to read off the book is robbed of the learner as the professor intrudes, spots the answer, and continues to read it. At this point, the professor takes on animator role, oriented toward repeating the information of the book.

On the whole, if we use the descriptors of an agency-oriented educational setting, it can be concluded that in this extractrepetition and mere consumption of the information presented in the book dominate the dialogue between the professor and the learner. No opportunity is provided for both the professor and the learners to think critically and express their own ideas. Although it is one of the aims of higher education to produce agents of change (Cope & Stephen, 2001), no such a purpose is fulfilled here, for the professor is merely concerned with the repetition of common trend of knowledge.

Author Role

Extract 1

Professor: Now, a review of the history of the syntax. For Saussure, syntax was not part of langue but part of parole because he believed that langue provides us with the signs and the way they are put together. I mean syntax is just what people do with. It is part of parole not part of langue. This is what he believed. Do you know why Saussure thought that syntax cannot be part of langue and it is part of parole? It is mentioned here. Of course, because signs can be limited, but the way signs are put together is infinitely numerous, so we can say, as you see here, there is endless variety of possible sentences in a language even though the range of Saussurian's signs available in a language is limited.
The extract is embedded in a session where the professor is discussing syntax from Saussure's point of view. The very use of the beginning phrase, "a review of the history of syntax", reflects the role of professor as an author as he aims to paraphrase the information presented in book about Saussurian syntax. Up to the end of this part, the professor is concerned with explanation and simplification of the theory.

The phrases, "for Saussure" and "he believed", clearly justifies the professor's role as paraphraser of Saussure's ideas. What he does here is merely putting the theory into simpler terms; however, he neither presents his own ideas nor challenges the concept. As a result, no space providing opportunities for critical consciousness, subjectivity, and agency is opened. Meanwhile, the professor poses a question. On the face

of it, the question seems to open the possibility for the learners to delve into reasons of Saussure's outlook from their own perspectives, yet such an opportunity is not provided because not only does not the professor give learners time to think, but also he states that the answer is mentioned in the book. Thus, the question presented here can be called a cloze question. According to Molinari and Mameli (2010), cloze questions invite an answer that has been predetermined. Such questions rob the learners of the opportunity to think critically, express their identities, and reform existing intellectual pattern. Furthermore, the clause, "as you see here", indicates that the professor is moving with the book step by step.

Extract 2

Learner: What does incremental model mean? It is in the second paragraph, line 9.
Professor: Yeah, I found it, so your question is incremental model?
Learner: Yes, What is that?
Professor: Incremental model is meaning making of a whole process. It is made of different parts; each part has a specific meaning, so when you use one process, then you add it to the next process. You hold all the process together and come up with the whole. This adding up the different processes is called incremental model. Thanks for your good question. It was a really good question.

The above extract starts from a question, posed by a learner, through which the meaning of incremental model is asked. Then, it can be seen that the professor zeros in on its definition.

The comparison between the definition provided by the teacher and the one presented in the book indicates that the professor adopts the author role, aiming at paraphrasing and clarification. Neither does he provide more information on the topic, nor does he give an example. The general impression of the definition provided is that the professor moves beyond a concept as much as the book does.

Another point that should be highlighted in this extract is the nature of the feedback the professor gives to the learner. On the face of it, it seems that, by saying "Thanks for your good question. It was a really good question.", the professor gives public recognition to learner's question; thus, he openly credits his contribution; however, a more delicate scrutiny indicates that, in some way, the professor is implicitly assigning significance to the questions answers of which involve clarification and simplification, yet questions which enlarge learners' cognitive frameworks are those opening the space for discussion, critical judgment, and creativity (Badely& Habeshaw, 2006; Freire, 1994; Zajonc, 2006). As a result, with regards to the creation of conditions promoting critical consciousness and agency, not only does the professor mainly take on author role (see Table 1, subject 9), but also he even improves such a role in learners.

Principal role

Extract 1

Professor: All the time you are talking about disabilities, you role the ball in learners' court. Why don't you talk about teaching disabilities? All the time you are talking about motivation, you say learners are not motivated; learners are such and such, but you have never talked about teachers. What about teachers? All the time we are speaking about learner cognition. What about teacher cognition? So, don't you think that it is a very good topic for research? I remember that once I designed a questionnaire and it is used a lot in the literature. It helps us to identify successful teachers. I think it is better to design another questionnaire focusing on unsuccessful teachers. All the time, we are talking about learner anxiety. Why don't we talk about teacher anxiety? What do you think? Just give more features.

This extract is embedded in a session where the learners and the professor are discussing the concept of learning disabilities which is presented in the book. Up to this point, the professor has been merely concerned with clarifying and elaborating the concept. However, at this point, he plays a critical role by calling

learners' attention to the concept of teaching disabilities. In this case, the teacher's role is more complex as his goal is to encourage learners to present their own ideas and challenge the taken-for-granted flow of information. More specifically, after a short explanation of the concept of learning disabilities, the professor intends to initiate a shift in both learners' and his thinking pattern away from recapping the information presented in the book to generating new ideas. Overall, the aim is not transmission of information but co-construction of knowledge.

The principal role which is adopted by the professor is clearly reflected in his words. The interrogative invitation, "why don't you talk about teaching disabilities", gives the learners a space to share their voices and thinking. Instead of emphasizing the common literature, the professor acts as an agent who has something new to contribute to the field of education. In doing so, the professor seems to fulfill the primary goal of education which is providing a space in which both the teacher and learners can develop their agency (Lipponen&Kumpulainen, 2011). Besides, the professor believes that his original ideas can be a good topic for research. His statement can be interpreted as a move toward a producer educational system where both teachers and learners are not simply concerned with consumption of prescribed concepts. Thus, the professor trains the learners to become critical reflective researchers. Finally, he refers to his contribution to the field of education, and calls for another new research-based endeavor. Providing research-based context in universities is absolutely crucial as it changes the roles of learners from passive receivers to active explorers (Shakibaei, Ghourchian& Khalkhali, 2011). Repetitive use of pronouns "I" and "we" and the phrase "I think", reflect the role of the professor as a principal.

Extract 2

Professor: What do you think about the assumption that Chomskian Linguistics is on a wrong track? How you ever thought about it? Is Chomskian Linguistics really correct? I am a syntactition. My PhD dissertation was on the latest version of Chomskian generative grammar which is called Minimalistic Program. I applied it in a kind of comparison between Persian and English, mostly in Persian of course, so on the face of it, it seems that I have to support Chomskian Linguistics, but, in fact, I cannot agree with him because although I follow his track, I always keep asking myself why it should be the way Chomsky says. Why should not we think otherwise?

This short discourse is embedded in a session where the main focus is on merits and demerits of Chomskian Linguistics. The discussion starts with a short biography about Chomsky's life and scientific contributions which is presented in the book. However, these utterances indicate that the professor leaves his role as a paraphraser and directly challenges long-held Chomskian Linguistics. Overall, the whole discussion indicates that the professor expresses his own thinking pattern, not just what is supposed to be true.

To put it in more specific words, the beginning three questions illustrate the professor's role as a principal. Here, his goal is to encourage learners to present their comments, criticize, and challenge Chomskian Linguistics. The questions presented here are authentic questions. According to Molinari and Mameli (2010), authentic questions are those for which no answer has been pre-specified; thus, they open the possibility of expressing a range of opinions, imaginings, and reflections. Hence, it can be deduced that the professor moves beyond transmission of knowledge and enters the realm of critical consciousness and subjectivity.

Then, he refers to his dissertation, which can be interpreted as an indication of his scientific contribution. The very use of the utterance "I always keep asking myself why it should be the way Chomsky says" manifests the professor's critical role in challenging the taken-for-granted theory. Finally, the last question clearly depicts the professor as an agent whose challenging ideas initiate a shift in learners' thinking away from blindly accepting the theory to criticizing it. Thus, problem-posing educational context in which the teacher presents a concept, critically examines it, and expresses new ideas (Freire, 1994) is highlighted. The principal role can be also justified in repetitive use of pronouns "I", "we", and "my".

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Table 1. The percentage of animator, author, and principal roles taken on by 10 professors teaching TEFL at MA level

Professors	Percentage		
	animator	author	principal
1	8.3%	83.3%	8.3%
2	34.1%	65.9%	
3	11.6%	27.9%	60.5%
4	25.6%	61.5%	12.8%
5	29.3%	68%	2.6%
6	30.4%	39.1%	30.4%
7	40.9%	47.7%	11.3%
8	7.6%	92.3%	
9	31.8%	54.5%	13.6%
10		100%	
Mean	**21.9%**	**64%**	**13.9%**

Table 1 lists the percentage of each three roles of animator, author, and principal adopted by 10 professors teaching TEFL at MA level. Such a result is gained based on the highlighting of three shifts in footing within the transcribed data having been recorded. As it can be clearly seen, author role is the most dominant one taken on by the professors (mean=64%). For 6 out of the 10 professors, more than half of the teaching practice was centered on restatement and reformulation of the pre-made concepts. Among this number, one professor (subject 10, 100%) devoted the whole session to paraphrasing the information of the book. Evidently, the next dominant role is the animator role (mean=21.9%). Almost all the professors spent less than half of their teaching practice on recapping and replicating the concepts of the book. Unlike author role, principal role is the least frequent role embodied by the professors (mean=13.9%). At a glance, it can be said that 3 professors did not enter the realm of critical consciousness and subjectivity through expressing their own outlooks. 5 out of 7 professors centered less than 15% of their teaching practice on presenting original ideas.

4. Discussion

The present study explored the roles of 10 professors teaching TEFL at MA level based on Goffman's Footing Theory. The identification of professors' roles was done through highlighting of three shifts in footing within the transcribed data having been recorded.The analysis of the study strongly displayed restatement and reformulation of pre-made concepts as the dominant teaching practice since the professors dominantly adopt author role. In fact, instead of acting as transformative intellectuals, professors just fit into the existing educational framework. They function mainly as dispensers of knowledge produced by other thinkers. In a classroom where the core of the professor's activity is centered on presenting and explaining the concepts of the book, no space providing opportunities for critical consciousness, subjectivity, and agency is opened. Therefore, the primary aim of education which is producing agents of change (Cope & Stephan, 2001) is not fulfilled. In the same vein, the identification of animator role as the next dominant role taken on by the professors indicates that recap and repetition have permeated into the higher education context. On the other hand, as the principal role is the least dominant role adopted by the professors, it can be deduced that they did not show much inclination to create a space in which they show their identities. On the whole, it is apparent that in the current higher education context, the opportunity to initiate a shift in the learners' thinking pattern away from following taken-for-granted knowledge to challenging the current cognitive framework is rather closed.

However, the aim of education is not replication and reproduction of taken-for-granted knowledge. Rather, the professors should create a dynamic cognitive framework and challenge existing intellectual boundaries. Moreover, the professors' major responsibility is not to transfer and inject information to the students' minds but to provide opportunities for them to use higher-level intellectual skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking (Badely& Habeshaw, 2006).Moreover, an effective teacher is not the one who dominantly plays one of the roles of animator, author, or principal and discards the others, but the one who makes an appropriate weighting of the roles in response to a specific context (Harley, Barasa, Bertman, Mattson, &Piilay, 2000; Skidmore & Murakami, 2010).

The underlying roots of professors' tendency to take on author and animator roles can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, Iranian professors teaching at MA level have passed BA, MA, and PhD Entrance Examinations in which traditional multiple-choice item tests requiring memorization are dominant. Consequently, the professors naturally get accustomed to repetition and reproduction.It should be noted that encouraging teachers to have positive attitudes toward a shift from consumer to producer educational system is not sufficient. This is because subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are also two other equally significant factors in making a change. In other words, what an individual believes others think about a specific behavior and limiting contextual factors strongly affect the process of a change. As a result, instead of introducing radical shifts in teaching and learning, contextually appropriate approaches taking into account contextual norms have to be designed (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996).

Furthermore, that the professors dominantly adopt author and animator roles can be explained in terms of the fact that TESOL in Iran still lives in modern era (Pishghadam& Mirzaee, 2008).Modernism, which represented knowledge as absolute and eternal, developed the one-way transmission of knowledge from experts (western countries) to non-experts (non-western countries). Consumers of the theories made by the experts, the professors teaching in Iranian educational contextconsider science to be in hands of English countries, so they wrongly believe that they have to follow what Western experts prescribe instead of challenging such concepts and expressing their own ideas.

Within the boundaries of Iranian educational system in which modernism is dominant, opportunities for genuine spontaneity and creativity are being eliminated for both teachers and students. Instead, students are used to getting engaged with rote learning of materials. In such a context, any attempts at providing opportunities in which students' minds can be liberated, and memorization can replaced by critical and creative thinking will fail as students are accustomed to be consumers of prescribed knowledge. Purali (2011)

pointed out that students consider themselves as passive learners and empty containers filled with the information transmitted from professors. This can be the reason why professor have to become dispensers of knowledge rather than creators of an agency-based classroom context.

In addition, that the principal role is the least dominant role taken on by the professors may stem from professors' lack of enough study to generate and transfer original ideas. They may also hold the wrong idea that as English is not their mother tongue, they cannot contribute to the field. More specifically, they lack much self-confidence to accept themselves as the key players in the field.

Why the professors have become the followers of predetermined paths rather than voyagers of exploration can be also explained in terms of job satisfaction. Although job satisfaction can be associated with intrapersonal factors, the effect of environmental factors can be singled out. More specifically, dissatisfaction with the salary, increased length of service, low levels of respect for the teaching profession may lead to boredom and demotivation (Bishay, 1996). Thus, it seems that the professors in Iran feel demotivated to the adverse repercussions of some irksome environmental factors such as low salary and long period of service. This is one possible explanation why they do not have the drive to contribute to the educational reform.

In more global terms, it is national policy makers' responsibility to invest in training professors to reach beyond transmission of information and monitoring them to open the space for challenging current intellectual framework (Zajonc, 2006). Yet, professors in Iran are neither monitored nor trained to move toward the fulfillment of an agency-based educational system. Hence, they are not driven to move beyond replication of common trend of knowledge and critically question current framework. Indeed, after the professors are employed, few monitoring systems, workshops sponsored by the government, and educational programs are provided.

Furthermore, such results implicate that the concept of banking model of education, proposed by Freire (1994), is dominant in Iran. According to Freire (1993), in this model, the whole teaching profession includes a narrative teacher injecting information to the passive learners. In such a context, an inclination to be passive with respect to knowledge tends to develop in learners since they are not driven to critically evaluate the information on their own and challenge the contents of the materials. Rather, students are merely demanded to memorize and repeat concepts without realizing their significance. Indeed, teachers also do the same as they themselves repeat the information of the materials without critically thinking about it. Thus, a teaching profession based on banking model of education lacks transformative power because it blocks both the teacher's and learners' critical consciousness through which they can refine current trend of knowledge. Accordingly, higher education in Iran, in which imitation and replication of knowledge is dominant, reflects the characteristics of banking model of education.

Based on these results, a number of implications can be inferred. First, educational policy makers can benefit from the findings. As this study showed, the dominant role of the professors teaching at MA level is author. Thus, the very foundation of educational system needs to undergo a radical shift. Specifically, training programs can be launched to make the university professors aware of the need to reflect on and modify their roles in order to meet the demands of challenging millennium, for no more does educational system need professors concerned with transmission of information; instead, the professor who contribute to the field of knowledge are required (Ghaemi& Taherian, 2011; Samech& Zahavy, 2000). In the same vein, administrators and supervisors should be cognizant of the compelling need to significantly improve instructional supervisory methods through which they can monitor university professors effectively. An efficient monitoring system urges the professors to fulfill the primary aim of education which is promotion of critical intellectual skills (Lipponen&Kumpulainen, 2011).

Next, the findings of this study will be highly invaluable for teacher training courses because the change toward agency demands a new outlook on teacher education (Catelly, 2011). Indeed, teacher trainers should encourage prospective teachers to move beyond replication, recap, and restatementof the concepts of the materials. More importantly, prospective teachers should be trained to provide a challenging context in the

classroom and promote critical awareness through opening the space for reforming current knowledge rather than emulating it.

Since there are some limitations to every study, all the notions could not be covered here. Hence, the researchers suggest that other studies be conducted in which the gender and age of the participants are taken into account. Moreover, in more comprehensive studies larger samples can be investigated. Finally, it is recommended that other universities in Iran or other countries be explored to compare the results.

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