

A Putative Model of Transformative Teaching Self

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Received: 2017/04/08

Accepted: 2017/08/20

Abstract: Reconciling the logics of Post-method Era, Critical Pedagogy, and Sociocultural Theory in its conceptual framework, this study postulated Iranian EFL teachers' socio-pedagogical identity as comprising conformity, criticality, and conformity-criticality mediation in order to explore and model the different aspects of Iranian EFL teachers' "transformative teaching self," probably contributing to their pedagogical ZPD and sociocultural identity development. To this end, Systematic Reflexive Constructivist Grounded Theory was utilized as the methodology of this 63-participant study managing both the data collection procedures, i.e. interview, focus group, observation, field notes, and document analysis, and the data analysis procedures, i.e. tabulation, open coding, initial memoing, axial coding, intermediate memoing, selective coding, advanced memoing, and theoretical sampling. The findings of the study were put into a putative model, delineating Iranian EFL teachers' transformative teaching self at its core, which can constantly stimulate the teachers' three interactive triplex identity types, i.e. conformative, critical, and mediational identities. Finally, this study entailed some implications such as updating teachers' knowledge of mediational identity, professional retraining about mediation, encouraging teachers to achieve an understanding of their transformative teaching self, and preparing them to be efficient transformative teaching learners and practitioners of the model in this study.

Keywords: Transformative Teaching Self, Mediational Identity, Critical Identity, Conformative Identity, EFL, Learning Teaching

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Introduction

One of the most influential theories on identity development is Social Identity Theory, proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), which necessitates us to consider the notion of identity as containing multiplicity of identities to specify particularly what identities these are. This theory links identity formation to social contexts and social communities. Also, the theory of Situated Learning, proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), states that identity is something that is developing, dynamic, and not stable, and that the process of identity development is a social process that takes place in social contexts. Moreover, Simon's (1995) concept of the image-text determines the way identities develop by means of language. Simon (1995) takes into consideration the aspects of discourse, narrative experience, and contextual factors such as teacher knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and language teacher development (Johnson & Golombek, 2002). The theory of the image-text shows the integration of the multiple facets of identity, social contexts, and their transformational power which are manifested and "constituted" by language (Simon, 1995). Furthermore, identity refers to "our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 10). In this respect, Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005) maintain that an in-depth perception of teaching and teachers necessitates attention to both "identity-in-discourse" and "identity-in-practice" (p. 39). This can imply that language and identity are mutually constitutive; while language renders to the individual historically particular approaches of attaching meaning to social reality, "it is also the location where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (Weedon, 1997, p. 21; also Trent & Lim, 2010). In the poststructuralist theory, for instance, identity development takes place as individuals recognize themselves with particular distributions within discourses (Weedon, 1997). This recognition can also be manifested in Wenger's (1998) notion of identity as "three modes of belonging: imagination, engagement, and alignment" (p. 192). Social negotiation of meanings within social contexts is another scope of inquiry on identity formation by Wenger (1998). To Wenger (1998), meanings are prevalent within a broader structure termed the "economy of meanings" (p. 199), from which a range of meanings develop, each of which stands for the characterization of "certain events, actions, or artifacts" (p. 199). Inside an economy of meanings, various individuals have diverse degrees of dominance over the meanings that are created, a situation Wenger (1998) interprets as the "ownership of meanings" (p. 200). Negotiability then pertains to the extent to which individuals can use, change, and claim in terms of their own the meanings that matter to them. If such

negotiability is absent, “an identity of non-participation and marginality” may result; that is, the individuals’ experience “becomes irrelevant because it cannot be asserted and realized as a form of competence” (Wenger, 1998, p. 203).

According to Exton (2008), cultivating an identity as an EFL teacher is not simply a natural process of professional development but “an important part of securing teachers’ commitment to their work and adherence to professional norms of practice” (Hammerness *et al.*, 2005, p. 383); that is, criticality through conformity. Another way that Exton (2008) looks at teacher identity is to canvass what Palmer (1998) called “the teacher within” (p. 31). Palmer (1998) substantiates “peeling away layers of expectations” within an intentional process of personal and professional exploration of self. On the other hand, the concept of “social identity” implies the connection between the individual and the social world, and the concept of “cultural identity” indicates the link between an individual and an ethnic group (Norton, 2006, p. 25). However, the recent notion of identity conceives of identity “with respect to wider institutional practices in homes, schools and workplaces as well as more grounded practices associated with particular groups” (Norton, 2006, p. 25). In the same vein, according to MacDonald (2006, p. 9), postmodern theory has broached the concept of “liminality” as central to our perception of teacher identities. What is liminal is “on the threshold, the edge, or the border, the no-man land” (MacDonald, 2006, p. 9) which is present in spaces between extremities, where no rules are dominated, where conflicts over authority are sometimes overcome. In fact, a crucial facet is the relationship between *assigned identity*, i.e. the identity imposed on one by others, and *claimed identity*, i.e. the identity or identities one acknowledges or claims for oneself (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002). Rennert-Ariev’s (2008) notion of “bureaucratic ventriloquism,” thus, is deduced from a similar line of research on a “hidden curriculum” as well as the specific modes of opposition apparent in teachers’ practices, conveying both teachers’ conformity and their criticality as the paradoxical “third space” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 190), where teachers’ defiance, power, and agency appear; it is a *bordering* place, a *third* space which is neither the one occupied by the teacher conformer, i.e. the institutes, nor the one occupied by the conformed teacher: it is, in fact, a *hybrid* space where totalizing narratives are challenged and mediated, where the supposed stability of meanings is shaken up, and the conflicting character of teachers’ conformance-critical identities is perceived (Bhabha, 1994).

Objectives of the Study

Professional teacher identity, that is, how teachers perceive themselves as teachers and how they think others perceive them, is related to the professional role they assume (Goodson & Cole, 1994) and to the self (Antonek, McCormick, & Donato, 1997), the individual who is in the profession. Cultivating or developing a teacher professional identity is a continuous process that is originally social and mediated in what Wenger (1998) calls communities of practice. Teachers' conglomerate and contingent mystique is concocted out of the mediation of choice and constraint; an apprehension which exhibits both institutionalized strategies and tactical resistances. Teachers' involvement in the process of identity construction is, in fact, combined with the experience of it "as both contested and contestable" (MacDonald, 2006, p. 8). In the same vein, in the Iranian EFL curriculum and classroom life, there are values, dispositions, institutionalized prescriptions, and social and behavioral expectations that provoke Iranian EFL teachers and their teaching process conformative to them. If Iranian EFL teachers are not empowered or do not perform such reflection and mediation, then all an institute is doing deals with preparing them to unquestioningly take up teaching positions within an industrialized and institutionalized society or some sort of hidden curricula on a path towards "ecological collapse" (Stibbe, 2011, p. 93), and thereby contributing to that collapse, rather than working towards ongoing appraisal and reinvention of the self and society. As a result, this paradoxical substratum of conformity-criticality mediation may be an essential aspect of EFL teachers' jobs in Iran, enabling them to keep their critical stance alive at the center of the dominant curricular orthodoxies. The objectives of this study have four general scopes: *conformative identity*, *critical identity*, *conformity-critical mediatory identity*, and *modeling*. Therefore, in particular, this study endeavors to provide responses to the research questions below:

1. What are the different aspects of conformative identity work that Iranian EFL teachers deal with?
2. What are the different aspects of critical identity work that Iranian EFL teachers deal with?
3. What are the different aspects of the mediational identity work through which Iranian EFL teachers can deal with their conformative and critical identities?
4. What are the constituents of a putative model of Iranian EFL teachers' transformative teaching self?

Method

Following Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, and Razavieh (2010), this study extracted a set of methods, i.e. main techniques, from each of the three major approaches towards Grounded Theory: (1) Glaser and Strauss' (1967) as well as Strauss and Corbin's (1998) Systematic Grounded Theory, in which the constant comparative method and systematic coding were the primary analysis techniques; (2) Charmaz's (2006) Constructivist Grounded Theory, in which memoing was a key part of analysis; and (3) Gasson and Waters' (2013) Reflexive Grounded theory, in which researchers' reflections on their own pre-understandings, experience, and insights were critical aspects of analysis. In fact, these three approaches towards Grounded Theory have many similarities in their analysis procedures. However, this study has taken into account their major techniques mentioned by Ary et al. (2010), and has attempted to put them together and make a whole. This integration was done with the consensus of two other research experts in TEFL. The researcher called this integrated method as Systematic Reflexive Constructivist Grounded Theory (SRCGT), which resulted in a step-by-step method including tabulation of sensitizing concepts and in vivo codes; open coding; initial memoing; axial coding; intermediate memoing; selective coding; advanced memoing; saturation; synthesis and modeling.

Context and Participants

The participants of this study consist of Iranian EFL teachers from diverse English language institutes in Shiraz, such as Bahar, Navid, SULC, Saaee, Farzaneh, Safir, Maad, Omid, and Fakher. They were purposive sampled from several institutes with different methods of teaching. Purposive sampling was done due to the fact that the researcher interviewed diverse groups of EFL teachers from different institutes who had had different experiences in order to frequently confirm or refute the preliminary findings in the form of general theoretical statements, and continued the process to the point that it reached theoretical saturation in the form of the final model. The number of participants in this study depended upon data and theoretical saturation. In other words, the study interviewed different numbers and types of EFL teachers to the point that it reached data saturation, i.e. no further new information or construct emerged out of the interviews, and theoretical saturation, i.e. the comparative analysis with diverse additional empirical data no longer contributed anything new in the cyclical process of testing the explanatory adequacy of the theoretical constructs. The purposive sampling was conducted in two phases as follows.

(1) *Questionnaire-Phase Participants*: Totally 126, 52 male and 74 female, participants (first, 70 participants, and then, due to data saturation, 56 more participants) were given the critical pedagogy questionnaire (Rashidi & Mozaffari, 2012) to select those participants who were familiar with the principles of critical pedagogy. They ranged in age from 21 to 53. The more experienced EFL teachers were purposively selected in terms of the extent of their familiarity with critical pedagogy principles working in different institutes taking into account Weinreich and Saunderson's (2003, p. 56) definition of identity, i.e. "a collection of existential and experiential features that a person takes for oneself." The rationale for seeking a cohort with more, rather than less, experience with the critical standards was that they were more "bureaucratic ventriloquists" than preservice teachers, and consequently, they might have more insight and information to offer about the application and representation of the critical standards in interactions with various institutionalized rule-restricted EFL contexts. Out of the total of 126 participants, 63 EFL teachers were selected in several phases due to their familiarity with the critical standards signaling their bureaucratically ventriloquistic teaching-identities, so that they were regarded as suitable for the interview phase.

(2) *Interview-Phase Participants*: The participants in the interview phase consisted of those EFL teachers who were selected based on the critical pedagogy questionnaire (Rashidi & Mozaffari, 2012). In other words, those who were familiar with the principles of critical pedagogy based on the results of the already-administered questionnaire were interviewed. The researcher gave the questionnaire to and then took interviews from different EFL teachers in a cyclical fashion to the point that it reached data saturation, i.e. no further new information emerged out of the 63 interviews. Thus, the kind and number of the participants for the interview depended upon the purposive sampling on the basis of their familiarity with critical pedagogy principles measured through the questionnaire, and this questionnaire-interview cycle depended upon data saturation.

Instrumentation

As it was formerly mentioned, the instruments consisted of questionnaires, transcribed interviews, document analyses, and observation field notes.

Critical Pedagogy Questionnaire

A questionnaire entitled Critical Pedagogy Questionnaire developed by Rashidi and Mozaffari (2012) was used in this study. It included 44 items on a Likert-scale ranging from 'always' to 'never' (with no reverse items), determining the participants' extent of agreement

and familiarity with critical pedagogy principles; each item was typically coded from five (always) to one (never). This questionnaire was used in order to select those participants who were familiar with the principles of critical pedagogy. In other words, the items in the questionnaire included the principles and strategies that diverse critical pedagogues employ in the context of teaching aiming at teacher professional development. Those who scored more than three in each Likert-scale item (three itself was not acceptable), i.e. those whose total scores were between 132 and 220 (regarding 44 items), were selected. Since the items were about the educational practice in the context of Iran, some adaptations germane to the exclusion of the Iranian context from the statements of the items were made. In other words, instead of asking about the critical pedagogy practice in the Iranian context, the items, in the new format, asked Iranian EFL teachers about their general tendency to implement critical pedagogy principles in any educational context. This was done with the consensus of two other experts in TEFL familiar with critical pedagogy principles. With regard to questionnaire psychometrics, the critical pedagogy questionnaire had already been validated by Rashidi and Mozaffari (2012) using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) through Principal Component Analysis (PCA) extraction method, which had revealed the presence of seven components with eigenvalues exceeding 1.0 which had counted for 64% of the variance. The reliability of the questionnaire had been previously estimated by Rashidi and Mozaffari (2012) through Cronbach Alpha and reported as 0.91. Also, this study reiteratively calculated the reliability of the questionnaire, in its respective context and with its own sample, applying Cronbach Alpha which resulted in 0.89 index, a high reliability value as in Rashidi and Mozaffari's (2012) study.

Document Analysis

Some institutional documents were analyzed consisting of the official, ongoing records of the institutes' activities as well as some documents referring to the development of the program and the performance-based standards that had to be used within the institute and the classroom life. Moreover, some subject-specific methods courses were also focused on in order to collect diverse course materials from each of the methods courses or contexts. Examples used in this study included students' journalistic-ideas transcripts, teacher methodological statements, observation reports, policy manuals, student handbooks, strategic plans, and syllabi. Some physical documents were also assessed within the teaching setting relevant to multimodal literacy. Examples used in this study included flyers, posters, agendas, handbooks, audios, videos, slides, and training materials. Furthermore, some first-person

accounts of teachers' actions, experiences, reflections, and beliefs were analyzed in this study. In fact, this type of document especially included the experiences of those teachers who were physically far from the researcher, and as a result, they sent their accounts through emails or chats. Examples utilized in this study included some exchanged e-mails, textbooks, blogs, Facebook posts, and some teacher-teacher or teacher-students' WhatsApp, and Telegram chats. Additionally, some online/offline documents related to conformational and critical identities were examined. In fact, the researcher studied a large number of online/offline articles and books related to general identity, teacher identity, teacher conformity, teacher criticality, critical pedagogy, teacher sociocultural identity development, teacher reflective transformation, post-method teacher, and so many other various topics in the literature which were helpful in achieving data saturation and model-making or model-revision in the study.

Field Notes and Video-Recordings

Field notes in this study included different types, but all of them were mainly divided into two sections. The first section was description, in which the researcher tried to delineate the context, performances, and interactions. The second section was a sort of reflection, in which the researcher wrote down contemplations, opinions, interrogations, and emphases according to the data in the observations and interviews. Moreover, Field notes were written during or/and after the observations and/or interviews.

Interviews and Focus Groups

The main instrument utilized in this study was a semi-structured interview, which is the primary method of data collection in grounded theory (Ary *et al.*, 2010). It is worth mentioning that the interviews were performed in Persian and most of them were conducted in a focus-group fashion. The researcher in this study interviewed Iranian EFL teachers sitting in an office and chatting together on the issues freely in the similar way. Through the interview sessions, the researcher made an attempt to extract specific information about EFL teachers' conformational and critical identities as well as the significant strategies they used in terms of their mediation between conformational and critical identities. Some questions and hints were given during the sessions to explore the concepts and strategies both directly and indirectly. The questions of this phase included some sensitizing concepts in the mind of the researcher along with the concepts that were presented in the literature review and in the various respective materials related to conformational, critical, mediational, and, as a result, professional identities.

MAXQDA Software

MAXQDA is a professional software for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis. The software is available as a universal application to help the qualitative researchers analyze all kinds of unstructured data like interviews, articles, media, surveys, twitter, and more. Released in 1989, MAXQDA has a long history of providing researchers with powerful, innovative and easy-to-use analytical tools that help make a research project successful. Working with MAXQDA software is easy as the researcher did in this study. First, the raw data (e.g. interview transcriptions) were inserted in the form of PDF. Second, the researcher defined some categories in order to drag the relevant data pieces into them; that is, the relevant sentences said by the participants were selected and dragged into their respective categories. Each of the categories was given a name and color. All of the inserted data pieces were categorized in this way. In fact, this software gave an amazing re-organization to the data indicating an intra-rater code-recode agreement. In the present study, about 20 percent of the whole data was imported into MAXQDA to manage the research project for the sake of dependability issues, i.e. intra-rater code-recode agreement. Besides, this study applied MAXQDA due to its precise code-relations charts and document portraits, which can be observed in the Results section.

Data Collection Procedures

The critical pedagogy questionnaire (Rashidi & Mozaffari, 2012) was given to 126 EFL teachers, 63 of whom were selected during several stages as familiar with critical pedagogy principles. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were used as the main strategy for data collection in conjunction with other methods such as observation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Most of the interviews were conducted in a focus-group fashion. With regard to the teachers' writing practice, some observations were conducted in line with the interviews to clarify any probably ambiguous techniques or strategies the teachers might mention in their interviews. Contextualized interpretations of documents were jot-noted to give voice and meaning around the data elicited from the participants. Moreover, the experiences of several teachers who were far from the researcher and sent their accounts or ideas through emails or WhatsApp, Viber, Telegram chats were taken advantage of. Retrospective field notes were the complementary notes that the researcher used at the end of each cycle of data collection. Diverse online/offline or soft/hard materials and sources pertinent to the data collected in former phases were found. The researcher tried to match the theoretical concepts to the

elicited information in data collection cycles. Figure 2 illustrates the data collection cycle in the present study.

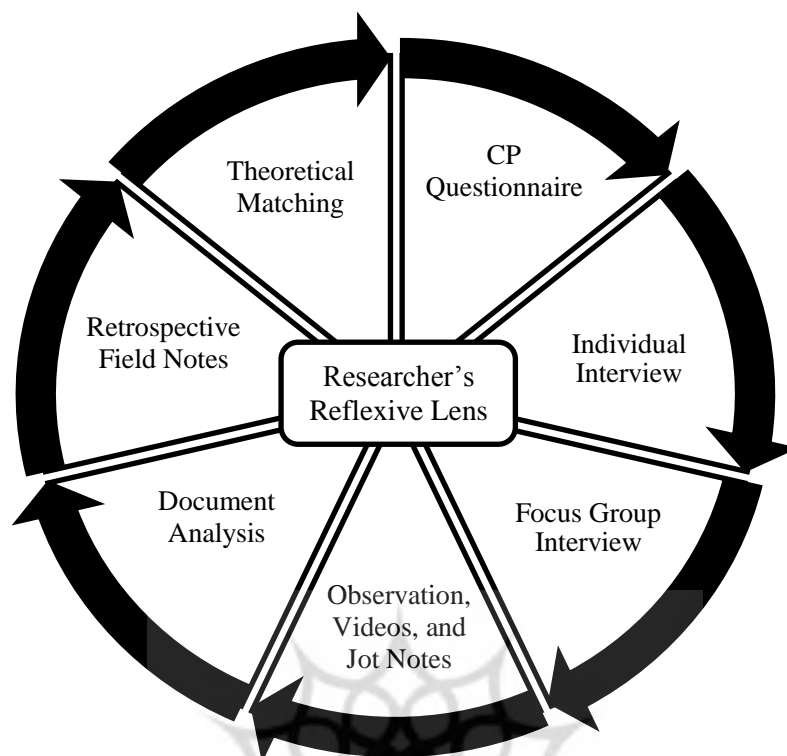


Figure 2. Data Collection Cycle

Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis of the data began with the tabulation of sensitizing concepts and in vivo codes. Initial or open coding was the next step of data analysis. In this phase, the researcher identified more important words, or groups of words, in the data relating to the objective-scopes of the study and then labeled them accordingly. Therefore, through open coding, the researcher attempted to develop core concepts, categories, and properties. After the initial coding, the researcher undertook the initial memo writing which was an ongoing activity of transforming initial data categories into initial grounded theory findings. The initial memos were written consistently about the initial codes and included initial comparison and ideas. After open coding, followed by initial memoing, axial coding began as the next major stage of data analysis in this study. In doing this, the researcher's reflexive lens mediated between open and axial coding during the process of concurrent data generation or collection and analysis, and the constant comparison of data. Axial coding was employed to develop core categories by connecting sub-categories, and also to specify the range of their properties and dimensions. Moreover, axial coding was used to link categories together as much as possible. At this time, intermediate memos worked further on the partial codifications. In fact, it was

played with significant or frequent codes extracted from the axial coding phase. In intermediate memos, preliminary diagrams or charts were drawn to sort the codes, and to preliminarily synthesize and hypothetically integrate theoretical ideas in an interactive process in order to capture and perceive new thoughts and connections.

The next phase dealt with selective coding which was a critical step towards the final theoretical integration of the data. In this phase, the researcher attempted to provide a general explanation of the processes or schemes apparent in memo diagrams in relation to particular conceptual relationships. Selective coding procedures included the use of the storyline technique (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) as a mechanism of both integrating and presenting grounded theory. Also, according to Glaser (2009), the researcher employed theoretical coding during the selective coding stage. Theoretical codes were drawn from existing theories to assist in theoretical integration, to add explanatory power to the final product of the grounded theory in this study, and to situate it in relation to the theoretical body of knowledge in this area. Advanced memoing was utilized to refine the conceptual categories, and to build and clarify the research. Such final memoing was to adopt further theoretical concepts, to sort all the previous memos and codings, and to integrate concepts leading to diagramming. In fact, advanced memoing was the draft of theory generation in this study. Although advanced memoing is usually done when the study reaches data saturation, the draft theory or model was revised in this study through adding some theoretical terms and replacing some concepts or titles with some other parallel terms in existing theories or models in the literature. Such theoretical sampling was central to the grounded theory design in this study. In fact, theoretical samples were informed by coding, comparison, and memo-writing in the study. Theoretical sampling served the developing model in this study. Analyses and codings raised questions, suggested relationships, highlighted gaps in the existing data set and revealed what the researcher needed to seek. Through the careful selection of the participants and modification of the questions asked in data collection, it was endeavored to fill the gaps, clarify uncertainties, test the interpretations, and build the emerging identity model. Theoretical sampling was used to focus and feed the constant comparative analysis of the data. During this iterative process, it became apparent that more information was needed to saturate categories under development. This often occurred when there was a need to find out more about the properties of a category, conditions that a particular category might exist under, the dimensions of a category or the relationship between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Figure 3 illustrates the full image of the present research method as Systematic Reflexive Constructivist Grounded Theory (SRCGT).

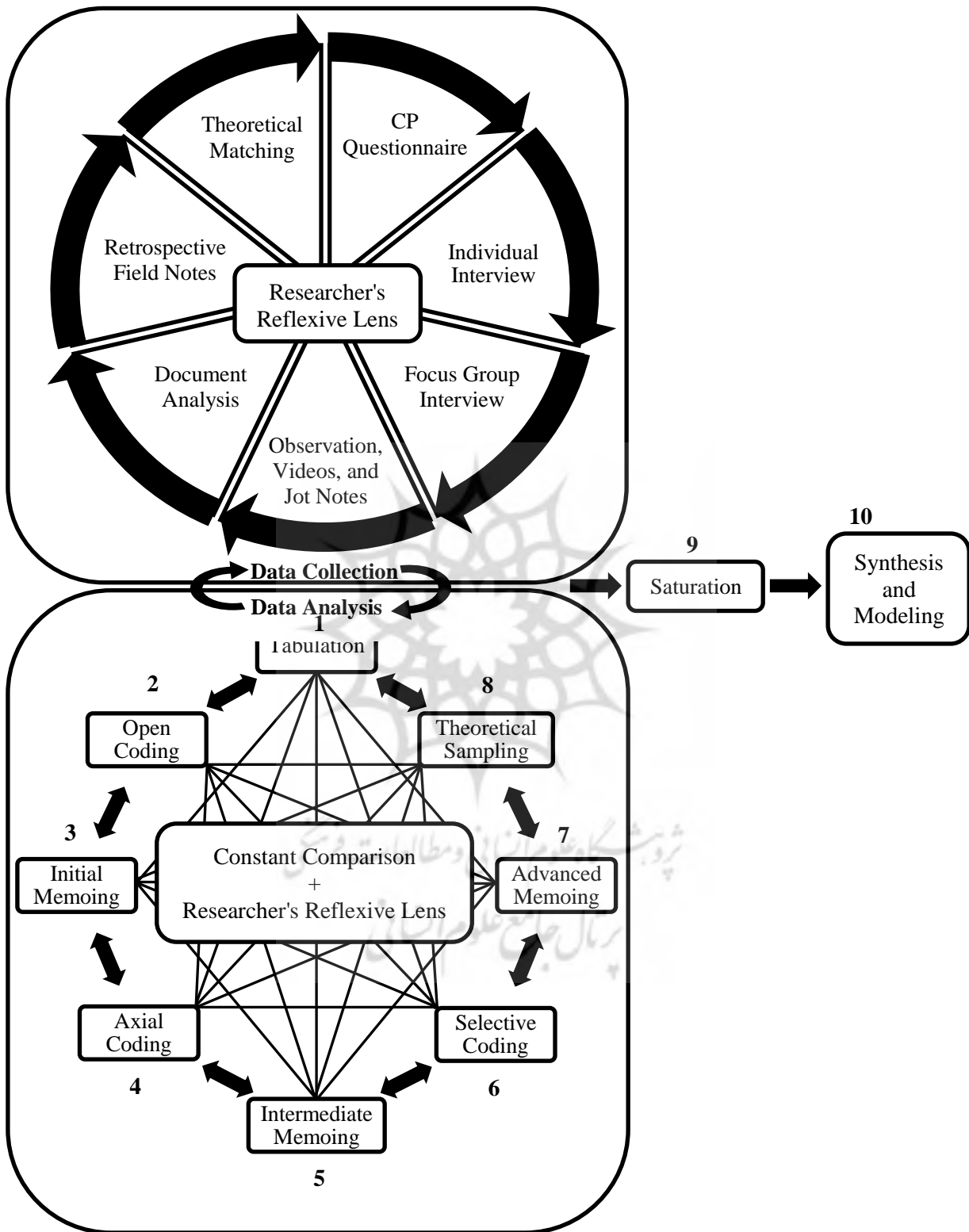


Figure 3. Systematic Reflexive Constructivist Grounded Theory (SRCGT)

(Adopted from Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006; and Gasson & Waters, 2013)

Results

A mediational identity model can be a tool to promote Iranian EFL teachers' role in developing their own or one another's professional identity rather than just conforming to the unquestioned social and institutional forces around them. Accordingly, this study integrated all the extracted categories and themes, and put them into a modelling frame with the included components. Figure 4 illustrates the putative model of the present study.

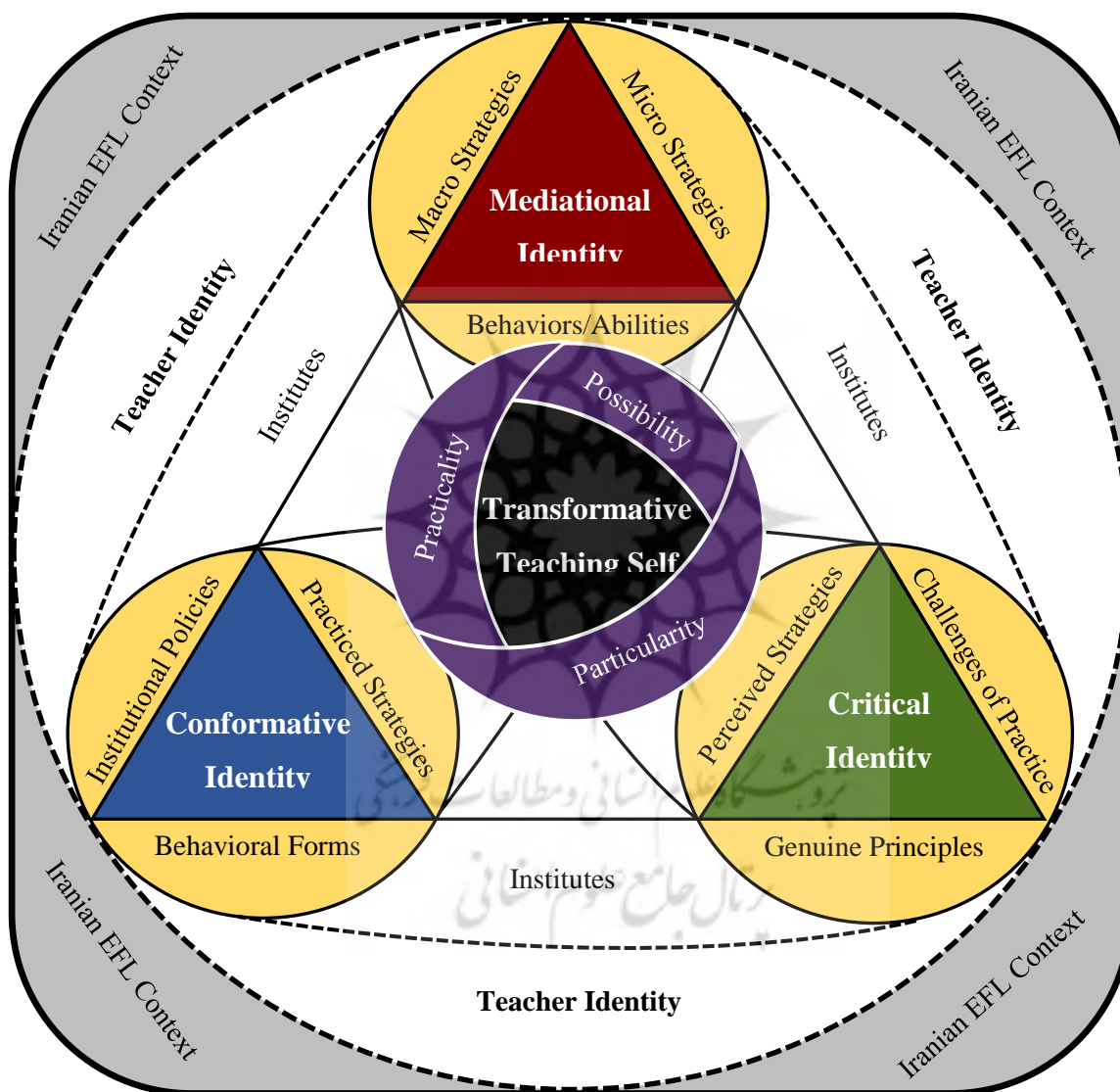


Figure 4. Putative Model of Iranian EFL Teachers' Transformative Teaching Self

Tables 5, 6, and 7 show the model-components of critical identity, conformative identity, and mediational identity, respectively. Also, Figures 5, 6, and 7 illustrate their respective MAXQDA code relations.

Table 5. Components of Critical Identity

Perceived Critical Pedagogy Strategies			
Authenticity in Teaching		Multimodality in Teaching	
Problematization and Emancipation		Alternatives to Assessment Methods	
Teachers' Challenges in Critical Pedagogy Implementation			
Voiced-Text and Accessed-Context Mismatch			
Inaccessibility of Curriculum Manipulation			
Experiential Divergence in Perceived CP		Institutional Challenges	
Making the Political more Pedagogical		Impalpable and Imaginary CP Goals	
Genuine Principles of Critical Pedagogy			
Themes for Students' Lives in Curriculum and Syllabus			
Democracy and Criticality in Textbook and System			
Critical Testing		Students' Role	Use of Dialogic Method
Sociopolitical Aspects of Students' Lives		Cultural Aspects of Students' Lives	

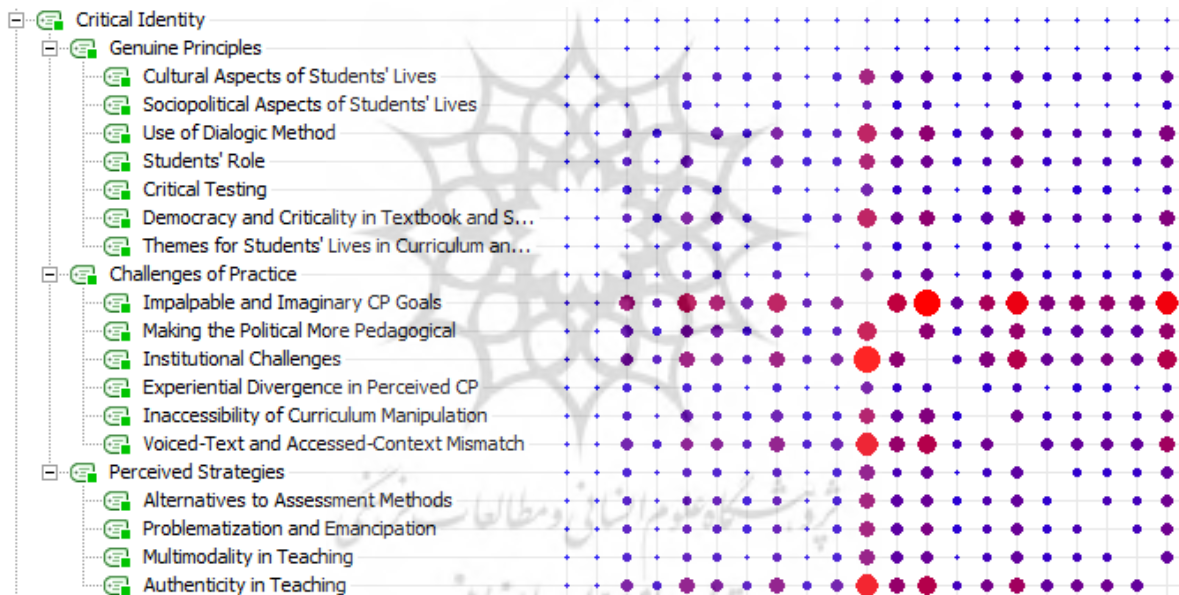


Figure 5. MAXQDA Code Relations of Critical Identity

Table 6. Components of Conformative Identity

Conformative Institutional Policies			
Legitimation		Cheerleader Effect	
Teaching to the test		Institutional Cohesion	
Identity-Linked Accommodation		Attractive Remuneration	
Supervisory Individualism		Institutional Empowerment	
Conformative Identity Forms			
Technicist	Compliance	Identification	Internalization
Conformative Institutional In-Class Strategies			
Cooperative Learning	Positional Framing		Evocation
Oral-Practice Activities	Elaborative Interrogation	Assignments	

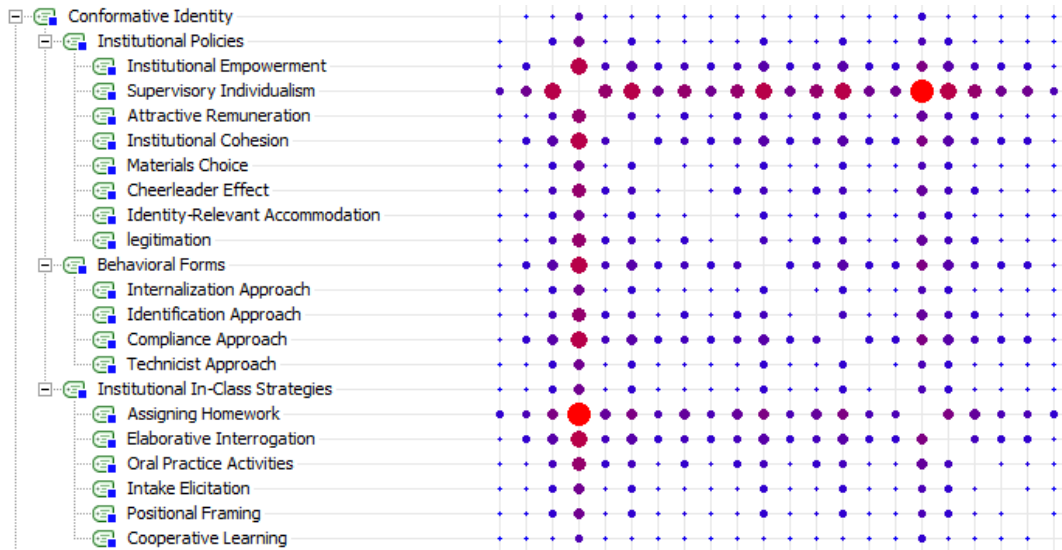


Figure 6. MAXQDA Code Relations of Conformative Identity

Table 7. Components of Mediational Identity

Teachers' Putative Mediatory Macro Strategies		
Non-Additive Integrative Use of CP		
Critical Bricolage and Autopoiesis		
Cultivating Dialogic Humanization Dialectics		
Putting Teaching/Learning into Flipped Instruction/Blended Learning Frame		
Interactional Positioning	Field-Internal Reflection	
Actually Practiced Mediatory Micro Strategies		
Use of First Language	Possible Multimodal Semiotic Strategies	
Use of Collaborative Internalization	Use of Classroom-Based Assessment	
Mediatory Behaviors and Abilities		
Intersubjectivity	Communicative Ratchet	Socio-Affective Scaffolding

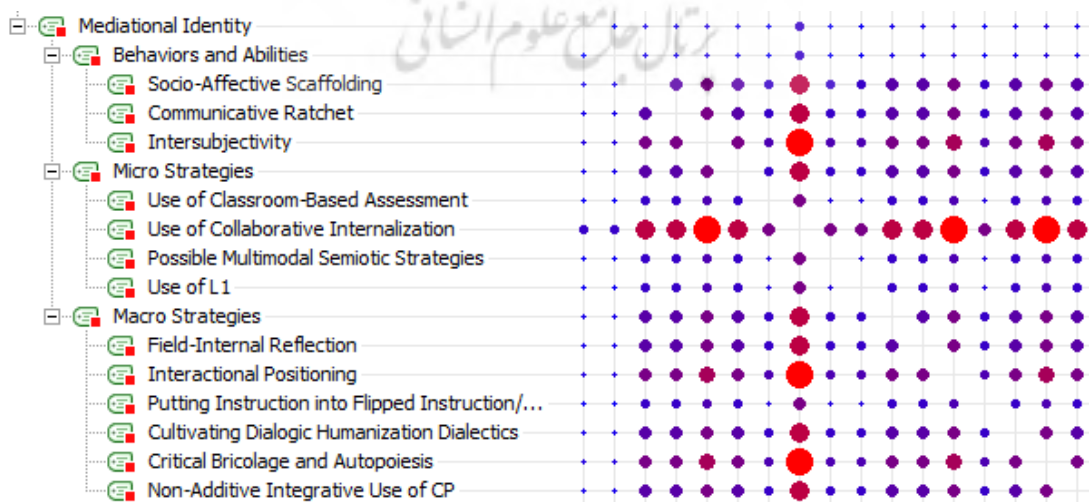


Figure 7. MAXQDA Code Relations of Mediational Identity

Also, Figure 8 shows a portrait of the whole teacher identity including all the identity types in the model based on the coded data in the present study through MAXQDA software. It illustrates the identity types in their respective colors as well as the interactions or overlaps among them. In other words, the little blue circles refer to the conformative identity data (which are the dominating ones in this study), the green ones stand for the critical identity data, and the reds are related to the mediational identity data. Besides, the other colors like dark green, dark blue, dark red, and purple indicate the overlaps or the interactions between these identity types. Due to these MAXQDA-extracted colors for the interactions, the color which was chosen for the circle related to the transformative teaching self in the above model (Figure 4) was generally considered as purple. These purple or interactional colors in Figure 8 may be suggestive of the teachers' potential to transform their teaching selves, and to explore or create "safe-house" (Canagarajah, 1999) spaces for professional identity development.

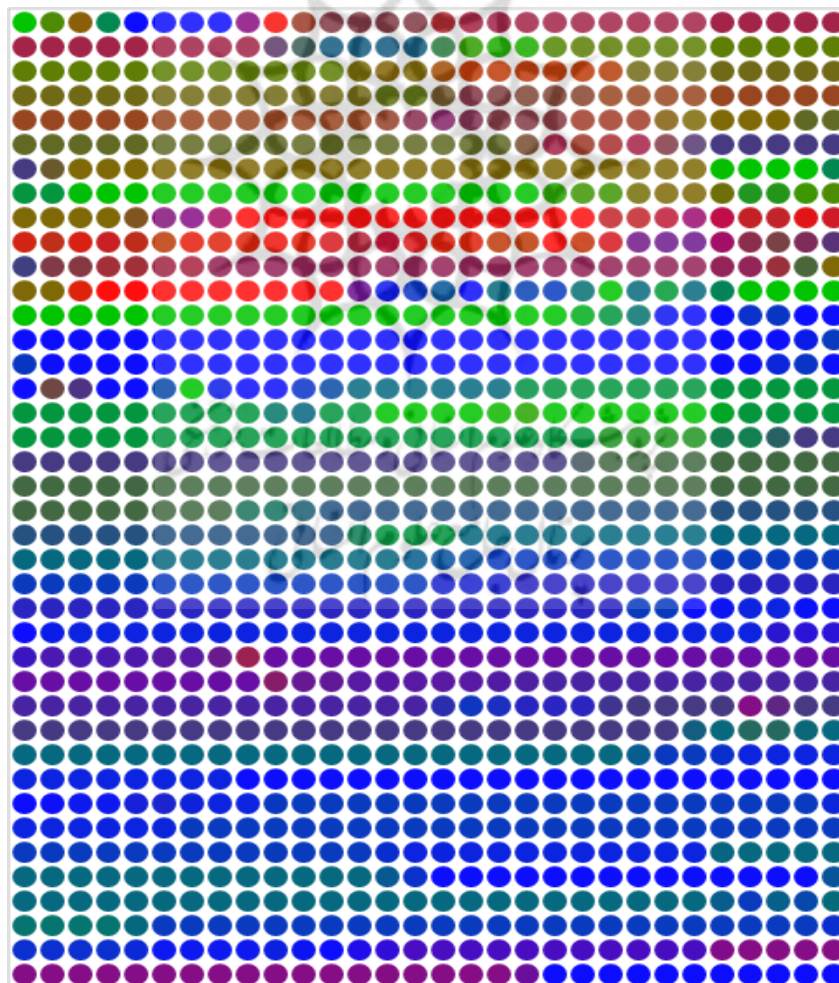


Figure 8. MAXQDA Portrait of Iranian EFL Teachers' Transformative Teaching Self

Discussion

As Figure 4 shows, the teachers' transformative self is always active and undertakes an ongoing development at the core of the model inspired by Kumaravadivelu's (2012) post-method parameters, i.e. particularity, practicality, and possibility. The model depicts an interactive connection between the three triangles through which Iranian EFL teachers may be able to transform their teaching selves in pursuit of professional identity development. This is also illuminated through the little purple circles in Figure 8. Each triangle in Figure 4 includes three components which were clarified and summarized in Tables 5, 6, and 7 above. The model depicts how teachers everywhere are encountered with the challenge of reconciling their "transformative teaching self" in congruence with the contemporary conformational realities of the EFL institutes, which is the most dominant issue based on Figure 8, while simultaneously trying to infringe any artificial restrictions the realities might intrude on them on the basis of their critical selves. Informing such challenge of reconciling the "transformative teaching self" is exactly what the present model illuminates.

As it can be observed in Figure 4, the model includes a post-method-oriented center inspired by Kumaravadivelu's (2012) KARDS model. The central circle, i.e. transformative teaching self (which is shown as the purple parts in Figure 8) implies the genuine agency of teachers to develop their professional teaching identities taking into account the three post-method parameters. As it can be seen, all the three types of teacher identity, i.e. conformational, critical, and mediational identities, are concentratively connected to the central transformative teaching self. This connectivity indicates teachers' choice to adopt whatever type of identity they tend to have wherever possible in their teaching praxis as it is shown in Figure 8. Also, each of the three identity types includes three aspects depicted on the three sides of the triangles. Besides, these three triangles are connected by a larger triangle, indicating their interactivity. This interactivity can clearly be seen in Figure 8.

An important point depicted in the model (Figure 4) is that though the identity-types triangles are interconnected, none of them can move the other two. In fact, their interactivity may not be activated unless the central transformative self moves. This may be congruent with Kumaravadivelu's (2012) viewpoint that a crucial factor in determining whether teachers succeed in forging a desired teaching self is their ability and willingness to exercise their agency and to formulate strategies of power and resistance. It is true that most teachers operate within a fairly rigid framework of conformational pedagogic policies and practices.

However, teaching identity is not characterized by compliance and conformity, but by a contextually instigated response that shows a constantly attendant agentive state (Martin, 2007).

Such state of choice and power may also be in agreement with Lasky's (2005) sociocultural theoretical approach, including mediated agency (Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993), through which the dynamic interconnection among teacher identity, agency, and context was investigated. In other words, in an EFL context like Iran, such an agentive quality may hardly be possible for teachers unless they employ their mediational identity. Teachers are required to mediate between their conformative and critical identities in order to explore "pedagogical safe houses" (Canagarajah, 1999) serving as sites of professional identity construction through transformative teaching self. In the same vein, Alsup's (2006) "borderland discourse" can be somewhat compared to teachers' mediational identity as a shifting situation in which internalization or negotiation of individual and professional identities occur. Alsup (2006) maintains that unresolved tension between discordant subjectivities and associated ideologies lessens the chance of the teachers to develop a satisfying professional identity or a sense of fulfillment as a teacher. Such tensions and conflicting issues are subject to critical reflection so that teachers can explore spaces in between to know how they can mediate between their current educational philosophies and pedagogical choices.

Additionally, the model clearly illustrates the multifacetedness of teacher identity. As Kumaravadivelu (2012) properly warns, the creation of teaching self should not lead us to the false assumption that there is a singular teaching self and an essential teacher identity as implied in popular cultural myths about teaching. On the contrary, as the model shows, teaching self should be looked at as something unique to the teachers' individuality contingent upon their agency. There are several factors, as indicated in the model, which shape the construction of teacher identities. This can be in line with what was stated in Soreide's (2006) study regarding teacher identity as negotiation of multiple selves which is a necessary part of the construction of teacher identity. It was stated that this illumination of teacher self as having several facets and being shaped may imply several notions, as it eliminates the conceptualization that teacher training, institutional authorities, teacher communities, or curriculum constructors can equip teachers with predetermined and unitary identities which they should adapt to. Instead, the perception of identity reflected in this article may allow teachers to construct identities that might be experienced as unique,

relevant and meaningful. Moreover, this is approved by Olsen's (2008) study in which teacher identity components were considered as circular and intertwined, and continually loop back and forth to influence each other in mutually constitutive ways. Olsen (2008) shows how multiple components of a teacher's professional identity mediate one another as each becomes integrated within and arranged around the teacher's perceptions of teaching, teacher practices, and career schedules.

The proposed model in the present study can also be in agreement with Clarke's (2009) notion of identity as a contemporary popular notion in education, relevant to the personal and the contextual, the individual and the political, self and other. The paper takes into account an identity that recognizes its paradoxical aspects, yet also contains scope for agency. This can also be observed in the paradoxical types of identity in the present model, i.e. conformational and critical identities, and in the agency inherent in the transformative teaching self at its core. In fact, such a transformative teaching self at the core of teachers' identity construction may enable teachers to cope with the challenge of aligning their teaching self in congruence with contemporary complex intersections between individual, social, national, and global realities while at the same time attempting to transgress any artificial boundaries the realities might impose on them. Such critical-conformational mediation may be a sure path that opens to genuine pedagogical transformation of self and probably personal transformation.

Conclusion

This study brought post-method and critical pedagogy closer to their practical aspects in the Iranian EFL contexts. The praxis in the proposed model of this study is its reconceptualization of EFL teacher agency in discourse; its understanding of EFL teacher agency as a reflexive practice that constantly challenges, against different ideological grounds, its own assumptions and implications, focusing on the transformation and constant reappraisal of interpretive self and the knowledge they produce. The model presupposes EFL teachers' openness to difference, their perception of contextual constraints and strategic forms of mediating them, as well as creative reflexivity, since it problematizes its own assumptions in the encounter with other ways of knowing. EFL teachers' agency in this perspective happens in discourses that can, at the same time, restrict and allow, or conform and transform, the construction of meanings and subject representations in concrete teaching practices. The results of this research generally indicated that EFL teacher mediation may be a significant factor in increasing the effectiveness of learning teaching or transformative

teaching self. Based on the findings, a conclusion can be drawn that most EFL teachers may be able to find possible spaces in their institutional teaching practices to activate their transformative teaching selves through their mediation between their conformational, critical, and mediatory situated identities. In Iran's present EFL educational setting, implementing mediation is theoretically acceptable and practically feasible as illustrated in the proposed model in this study. It is toughly challenging for EFL teachers to administer it smoothly due to the lack of the knowledge of mediation as well as the situational constraints associated with the institutional systems, students, and teachers themselves. It is thus proposed that EFL teachers re-orient their roles from traditional instructor to mediator to adapt to the progress of their teaching selves.

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