Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics (IJAL), Vol. 17, No. 2, September 2014, 59-91

The Place of Postmethod Pedagogy in Teacher Education Programs in EFL Language Centers of Iran

Parisa Naseri Karimvand *
Ph.D. student in TEFL, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran

Gholamreza Hessamy
Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran

Fatemeh Hemmati
Assistant professor of Applied Linguistics, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran

Received 28 January 2014; revised 15 August 2014; accepted 25 August 2014

Abstract

ELT has recently witnessed a shift away from a method-bound orientation and toward a post-methodic view of teaching English. Consequently, the focus of some second language teacher education programs has shifted toward sociopolitical aspects of ELT (Miller, 2004) and its contributions to reinforcement or transformation of the status quo (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a). Yet, in many countries, including Iran, ELT teacher education has maintained a relatively method-bound focus on technical dimensions of teaching English and has avoided adopting a critical and sociopolitical approach to ELT. In order to investigate the ways in which teacher education as currently practiced

* *Email address:* prsnaseri @yahoo.com
Corresponding Address: English language department, Faculty of Foreign Language Payame Noor University, Kohandezh St, Isfahan, Iran

facilitates or stifles implementation of postmethod in ELT, the present study explored English teachers' perceptions of the dominant approaches to teacher education in ELT centers in Iran and their ideological and pedagogical bases. To this end, 23 language teachers were interviewed about the logistics, content, and procedures of the teacher education programs they had attended. The analysis of the interviews, as directed by grounded theory, yielded three themes, namely no/little teacher learners' involvement in course design and implementation, dominance of a transmission model, and dominance of a linguistic and technical focus.

Keywords: Ideological barriers; Method, Pedagogical barriers; Postmethod; EFL teacher education

Introduction

Various methods of (second) language teaching have been proposed and used during the previous 20 years (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), especially in the 1970s when the "method boom" (Stern, 1985, p. 249) led to the emergence of most of them. Although these methods have been used around the world, and some such as CLT have been welcomed widely, in the late 80s and early 90s, the concept of method came under several criticisms (Allwright, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Pennycook, 1989; Prabhu, 1990).

To start with, Kumaravadivelu (2006) asserted that methods are too restricted to successfully explain the complexity of language teaching and learning. For example, teachers' roles in second language teaching are defined narrowly within a mechanical framework which marginalizes them and fails to provide adequate space for their creativity and autonomy. Methods assign similarly narrow roles to learners which prevent their active involvement in second language learning. Generally, learners are supposed to be passive recipients of knowledge and are rarely encouraged to act autonomously (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Secondly, methods are believed to largely ignore institutional, sociopolitical, and contextual conditions teachers work within (Clarke, 1994; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; McMorrow, 2007). Finally, their developers' claim as to having designed them based on different theoretical bases has been questioned, since methods are not as different in practice as they

are claimed to be in theory (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b). Kumaravadivelu (2006) attributes this to the failure to develop methods based on classroom practice and in a context-sensitive manner.

In light of these criticisms, more flexible and context-sensitive alternatives have been developed. One such alternative is Stern's (1992) three dimensional framework which focuses on various language components and how they combine into an integrated whole. This framework consists of three dimensions. The intralingual-crosslingual dimension centers around techniques that remain within the target language and target culture as the frame of reference for teaching and those that use features of L1 and native culture for comparison purposes. The analytic-experiential dimension involves explicit focus on formal properties of language as well as interactions in communication. Finally, the explicit-implicit dimension considers conscious and unconscious attempts to learn an L2. Another attempt to go beyond a method-bound conception of language teaching is Allwright's (1984) exploratory practice which considers language teaching as exploring new ideas and learning from them. Exploratory practice connects experts' professional theories with teachers' personal theories through its three fundamental tenets: "to prioritize the quality of life of our learning–teaching environment above any concern for instructional efficiency", "to develop our understandings of the quality of learning–teaching life instead of simply searching for ever-'improved' teaching techniques", and to recognize "the fundamentally social nature of the mutual quest for understanding" (Allwright, 2003, p. 115). Kumaravadivelu (1992) also proposed a framework consisting of 10 macrostrategies, such as maximizing learning opportunities, facilitating negotiated interaction, and fostering language awareness in order to help teachers become more sensitive to classroom events and activities and, as a result, develop the capacity to generate varied and situation specific ways of teaching.

Kumaravadivelu proposed the macrostrategies within the more general framework of "postmethod" (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). He argued that postmethod is an alternative to methods rather than another method. Therefore,

it compels the rethinking of the relationship between theoreticians and practitioners which is one of hierarchical within the method framework. In other words, it empowers practitioners to construct theories based on classroom practice and generate innovative techniques of teaching in light of the specifics of contexts where they teach. Establishing a dynamic and interactive relationship between theory and practice constitutes a major principle of postmethod which Kumaravadivelu came to call the parameter of practicality (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b). Two other parameters that Kumaravadivelu proposed as underlying a postmethod pedagogy are the parameter of particularity, which promotes a context-sensitive pedagogy developed based on particulars of the teaching-learning contexts, and the parameter of possibility, which encourages a focus on students' sociopolitical consciousness and transformative potential (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Kumaravadivelu (2003b) considers these parameters "as the axle that connects and holds the center of the pedagogic wheel" and the macrostrategies "as spokes that join the pedagogic wheel to its center thereby giving the wheel its stability and strength" (p. 41).

Although innovative ideas build on a questioning approach to previous proposals, they themselves should also be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism. Treating his own proposal skeptically, Kumaravadivelu (2006) introduced two main types of barriers in the way of practicing postmethod: ideological and pedagogical. Pedagogical barriers are "related to the content and character of L2 teacher education programs which stand as a harmful hurdle blocking the effective construction and implementation of any postmethod pedagogy" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 216). A good example is L2 teacher training programs in which a predetermined and pre-sequenced body of knowledge is transferred to prospective teachers (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Ideological barriers are those created by the imperialistic and colonial character of English language education (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992) which hinder implementation of postmethod pedagogy. Some prominent examples of these barriers are marginalization mechanisms and unequal distribution of power.

In order to explore these barriers, this study specifically focused on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher education courses conducted in EFL

centers in Iran. More precisely, Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences of teacher education were explored through interviews to understand how second language teacher education may be approached and practiced in this context and how this may influence the implementation of postmethod in EFL instruction in Iran. Before discussing the study and the findings, however, the context of teacher education in EFL centers in Iran is discussed.

The Context of Teacher Education in Iran

Our search for published writings focused on the current situation of EFL teacher education in language centers in Iran yielded only few results. These few existing scholarly writings characterize EFL teacher education in Iran as having a mainly positivistic and transmission-oriented approach (e.g., Farhady, Sajadi, & Hedayati, 2010). To be more specific, some argue that the content of many pre-service programs conducted in EFL centers is mainly theoretical and decontextualized, similar to academic courses, while a more practical approach informed by social and cultural considerations is necessary (Akbari, 2008; Farhady et al, 2010). It has also been observed that teacher educators usually do not encourage student teachers to actively participate in the process of learning to teach and, instead, spend the bulk of the courses giving lectures. This approach renders student teachers mainly responsible for taking notes and memorizing the materials presented in the class (Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2010). Evaluation of student teachers is also summative and objective which fails to effectively assess their teaching ability and pedagogical knowledge (Farhady et al., 2010; Maftoon, Yazdani, Gholebostan, & Beh-Afarin, 2010). In some cases, for instance, at the end of the program, student teachers are asked to answer some questions about theories of second language teaching, which do not necessarily engage them in thinking about the theories and concepts critically, analytically, and in light of their experiences (Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2010). Service programs, if conducted at all, particularly suffer from the additional problem of lack of motivation to improve professionally on the part of many teachers who mainly attend them to receive certificates and

promotions from their workplace (Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2012; Razi & Kargar, 2014).

In brief, EFL teacher education programs in Iran have been described as having a mainly transmission-oriented approach and theoretical focus, with little motivation on the part of teachers to take part in them, especially in in-service programs. However, as mentioned above, these writings, though insightful, do not provide an adequate account of how EFL teacher education are designed and implemented in language centers in Iran. More precisely, most of these references are position papers, and, therefore, the authors' arguments are not grounded in data specifically collected for the purpose of writing these academic pieces (e.g., Akbari, 2008; Nezakat-Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2010). Almost all the rest of the articles involve quantitative survey data, our review of them leads us to conclude that they lack enough depth as they mostly offer very general observations (e.g., Razi & Kargar, 2014).

To address this gap, the present study was conducted to specifically draw upon teachers' perceptions of EFL teacher education with a view of examining the compatibility of teacher education as currently practiced within the discourse of postmethod. Therefore, the major research question directing this study was "What approach to teacher education dominates EFL instruction in Iran as perceived by EFL teachers, and what are its pedagogical and ideological bases?" In the following section, the participants, the data collection process, and the data analysis procedures are discussed.

Method

Participants

The participants of the study, who were selected through convenience sampling, were 23 Iranian EFL teachers (9 male and 14 female), with an age range of 20 to 45 years. They all had received pre-service teacher training and had been teaching for 9 years on average (3-15 years) in language centers in three cities, namely Tehran, Mashhad, and Isfahan. Table 1 below provides information about their academic background.

Table 1
Participants' Information

	Number of students in each group			
Participants	**EFL**	**English translation**	**English literature**	**Total**
MA student	2	1	0	3
MA holder	8	2	2	12
Ph.D. student	2	0	1	3
Total	14	5	5	23

Data Collection and Analysis

To explore the participants' perceptions regarding the teacher education courses they had taken part in, an interview framework was developed. Based on a review of the literature on second language teacher education and postmethod, 16 questions were developed in the categories of course logistics (e.g., the length of the course and sessions, the number of sessions per week), course content (e.g., topics focused on in the course), and course methodology (e.g., teaching and learning activities and assessment procedures). The interview questions were reviewed by three experienced researchers who had published qualitative research in the areas of teacher education and critical pedagogy. Their comments which revolved around the content and wording of the questions were incorporated. Afterwards, the interview was piloted with three EFL teachers based on whose answers further changes were made to the questions. The interviews lasted between 40 and 1:45 minutes. Some of the long interviews were conducted in two sessions to maintain their depth and quality. The interview questions were developed in both Persian and English; therefore, the participants were free to choose the language of the interview, which was Persian in all cases (see Appendix 1 for the interview questions).

The interviews were audio recorded and the recordings were transcribed verbatim. Using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the interviews were subjected to open, axial, and selective coding. In open coding, the data was broken into meaningful units of analysis. In this study, no single unit of

analysis was decided on. Instead, single words, phrases, sentences, or larger language bodies which would convey a certain concept were open coded (Mavetera & Kroeze, 2009). The total number of the codes extracted at this stage was 3020. At the stage of axial coding, the researchers searched for meaningful relationships between the codes extracted at the first stage. Finally, selective coding involved choosing categories developed in axial coding which proved to be most recurring and would contribute to answering the research question. At this stage, the researchers dealt with the interim categories more conceptually and refined them with a view to developing the final themes. The researchers wrote memos (Given, 2008) throughout the process of data analysis to facilitate the development of the coding schemes. Also, following a constant comparative method, coding of new data happened alongside comparison of the resultant codes with the previously extracted codes (Giske & Artinian, 2007), which sometimes resulted in reconsiderations of the codes.

Three themes emerged from the codes, namely no/little teacher learners' involvement in course design and implementation, dominance of a transmission model, and dominance of a linguistic and technical focus. Finally, the literature on second language teacher education was further reviewed to enrich the developed themes in light of the existing theoretical discussions and empirical evidence. In the process of writing the themes, the excerpts from the data which were going to be incorporated into the findings were translated into English. To ensure the accuracy of the translations, the researchers sought for a peer's feedback on them, and necessary revisions were made. The themes are discussed in the following section.

Results

No/Little Teacher Learners' Involvement in Course Design and Implementation

Wallace and Woolger (1991) believe that taking teacher learners' ideas, likes, and dislikes into account when developing teacher education programs can facilitate their active participation in the planning and implementation of these programs. A direct result of this involvement is more effective learning (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; McMorrow, 2007; Richards, 2008). By the same

token, “when decisions are made by others, ownership of the process is lost, and results can be dismal” (Maggioli, 2003, p. 3). The latter scenario was found to hold true about the teacher education courses attended by the participants in the present study.

To start with, the preplanned nature of the teacher education courses was among the major factors which had left little room for teacher learners’ contribution to their development and implementation. The courses had been preplanned in three major respects: logistics, content, and procedures (i.e., how the course was taught, including tasks and activities).

Regarding course logistics, almost all of the interviewees said that the time and length of the teacher education course, the number and length of sessions, the number of times they met per week, and the facilities used during the course had been decided on without any negotiation with them. The participants who were doing graduate degrees while teaching were among those who were most dissatisfied with the class time. For instance, Mansoureh said;

> *The time of the teacher education class was not suitable at all. I had to attend three sessions per week while at the same time I had other classes to attend. So I had to miss some sessions of those classes because of my teacher education class.*

The length of the course, which had been as short as three or four sessions in most of the cases, had not been negotiated either, leaving many of the teachers unhappy with their short length and the consequent inadequate coverage of ELT issues. In Saeed’s words, for example, “no one can learn techniques of teaching in just three sessions”. Laleh also lamented “I wish we had more sessions. I really think there were points about teaching techniques which were not discussed in detail”. As observed by Maryam, time limitations had also resulted in adoption of a transmission approach in the courses: “Due to lack of time, we preferred to listen to the teacher’s words rather than our classmates’ ideas”.

Some of the interviewees believed that, if the courses had been longer, the teacher trainers might have chosen to conduct the class in a more interactive manner. In Laleh's words:

> *He had to present all the materials very fast one after another. If he asked for our ideas in the middle of his teaching, he would run out of time and consequently would have to skip some materials.*

As another logistic aspect of teacher education, facilities to use in the courses had not been discussed with the teacher learners either. Naghmeh, for example, said "if they had asked for our ideas, I would have suggested using some technologies like PowerPoint or video projectors for teaching".

Content was another major aspect of the teacher education courses that the interviewed teachers had not been asked to contribute to. Although establishing meaningful connections between the content of education and participants' real-life concerns has been emphasized by many scholars (e.g., Freire, 1972; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Shor, 1992), the participants' interests and opinions had not been factored into the selection of materials. Rather, in the majority of the courses, the materials had been introduced by the teacher trainers and given to the participants in the first session. Ali's account of how this had happened in the course he had attended is a representative example:

> *The teacher trainer simply introduced some books in the first session and told us "these are your materials for this course". I wish it was not like that because I had some good ideas to share about the materials. Maybe the other students also had some good ideas. But the trainer did not ask for our opinions and he did not strike me as open to suggestions.*

Lack of negotiation over the content had resulted in complete reliance on materials produced in the inner circle, as recalled by some of the interviewees including Fatemeh: "All the sources and materials were from European

countries". Mansoureh, however, seemed to be the only teacher unhappy with no use of locally produced ELT methodology materials: "None of the materials he [the teacher trainer] introduced during the course had been written by Iranian experts in our field. All of them had foreign writers".

The majority of materials used for assessment in demo sessions had also been planned a priori. More precisely, each teacher learner had been assigned a particular section to teach, for example a grammar lesson from the intermediate book of the Interchange series, which they "had to teach in the demo" (Ahmad). In a few cases, however, restrictions on what to teach were less strict: "for the assessment we were allowed to choose from among the lessons of a book we were supposed to teach in that center" (Sharifeh).

This is in contrast with the emphasis in the literature on negotiation of assessment content and procedures. In this regard, Chandler and Ortiz (2004, p. 28) argue that "informed and shared decision making" are key to successful assessment because "all parties understand the procedures, frequency, benefits, and goals of the assessment" and "implementation will be easier."

The procedures of teacher education classes in this study were also mostly preplanned. In most of the programs the teacher trainers had not asked for the teachers' ideas about how to present and deal with the content and what tasks to incorporate into the course. The observation shared by almost all interviewees was the teacher trainer's introducing the course process and requiring them to follow it throughout the course.

> *I remember in the teacher training course that I took part in, the teacher trainer did not consider our ideas and he kept saying that the center had its own rules that had to be followed by all teachers (Fatemeh).*
>
> *The trainer followed the same procedure during all sessions. He did not seek for our ideas in this regard. First he*

> *presented the materials. Then he asked us to practice it. And finally he asked us to ask our questions (Arezoo).*

In most cases, the teacher trainers had been very explicit about the fact that there was no room for negotiation over procedures in the teacher education courses. As Nasim recalled, "at the beginning of the teacher training course, he told us that everything in this course was preplanned and everybody who wanted to express or follow his/her personal ideas about teaching would have to simply quit". This is against the constructivist principle that adults learn best when given the chance to make their own choices and change them if necessary (Maggioli, 2003).

Finally, attending the teacher education courses was compulsory regardless of the teachers' professional experience and expertise. In other words, even those participants who had already been teaching for a number of years had to attend training in centers where they wanted to start to teach: "I knew most of the materials discussed there. In fact, it was not a course that I had chosen to participate in but I had to attend it" (Shokoufeh).

The preplanned and compulsory nature of the teacher education courses had led to development of a negative attitude toward these courses on the part of the participants who found them mostly useless, boring, and repetitious:

> *The course would not have become this boring to teachers if the teacher trainer had involved them in selecting materials. This way we would not have had to study the methods we had already learned about in university courses of second language teaching methodology (Hakimeh).*

This is a highly expected outcome of failure to gear teacher education to teacher learners' needs and concerns. In this regard, Schcolnik, Kol, and Abarbanel (2006) assert that neglecting teacher learners' varied learning needs and styles often make them feel frustrated and discouraged.

Dominance of a Transmission Model

Transmission models of education have been metaphorically described as "banking education" by Freire (1972). In this approach, learners are considered as mainly passive recipients of deposits of pre-selected knowledge transferred by their teachers. Among the few studies reported in 1.1., some had reported that EFL teacher education in Iran is conducted in a lecture-based format and follows a transmission model (Farhady et al., 2010). The interviews also showed that the teacher education courses the participants had attended were transmission-oriented and lecture-based as there were limited opportunities for reflection, creativity, and sharing of ideas in the classroom.

To start with, most of the teachers recalled that it was the teacher trainer who would present the methods and techniques of teaching and ask teacher learners to listen, follow, and imitate him/her closely, to the point where sometimes whole sessions were run in an entirely lecture-based manner. In Sara's case, for example, "in all sessions we listened to her carefully and she taught us teaching methods one after another". On a few occasions, however, the teacher trainers' lectures about theoretical aspects of teaching were followed by discussions. Ali had taken part in such a course: "every session first he presented the new method and then he asked us to practice and discuss it". In the former which applied to most of the courses attended by the participants, the teacher learners were mere receivers of knowledge provided with almost no opportunity for "creativity or intellectual freedom" (Imig & Imig, 2006, p. 289), whereas in the latter which had happened to a few of the interviewees, a relatively reasonable chance was available for teachers to share their ideas and experiences.

Most of the participants referred to the lecture format of teacher education as "the Iranian style" and explained it as a traditional and teacher trainer-fronted method of teaching in which teachers present materials and teacher learners' sole activity is taking notes from the teacher educators' words. Nasim, for example, said:

> *The way the teacher education program was run was basically the Iranian style because he [the teacher trainer] explained different methods of teaching language skills and asked us to take notes. We just asked questions whenever we did not understand the points.*

Calling this traditional style "Iranian" is indicative of some participants' implicit tendency to romanticize the mainstream approaches to education dominant in the west (Bartolome, 2004) which they would consider less lecture-based and more interactive. For instance, Majid said "I wish we had followed foreign styles of teaching rather than the Iranian style in which students are passive". Interestingly, none of the participants had ever been involved in overseas education programs in any way, and their perceptions were exclusively based on what they had heard from others and what they assumed to be the case in western countries.

Another manifestation of the transmission-oriented nature of the teacher education programs was the limited opportunity for critical reflection on the presented methods and techniques of teaching, despite the vast literature on the prominent place of reflection in learning to teach (e.g., Farrell, 2007). The teacher learners were often required to closely follow a dictated method of teaching without any serious analysis of its advantages and disadvantages. Mina, for example, recalled "He said what we should do in the class is just listening carefully to him and learning all the techniques and methods and later implementing them one by one without altering them". Maryam's training experience was very similar: "He wanted us to follow his methods closely rather than thinking about the reasons behind following these methods". This is in line with Imig and Imig's (2006) observation of the educational settings where the curriculum is sometimes so prescriptive that it "actually dictates every teacher-spoken word during instruction" (p. 289).

Although providing space for teachers' creativity has been shown to have different benefits such as improving teachers' ability to offer learning experiences (Montgomery, 1997) and fostering students' creativity (McWilliam, 2009), most of the participants believed that the trainers had

almost never encouraged them to be creative in their teaching. Limited time had reinforced this situation as the teacher trainers were often in a hurry to cover preplanned materials. Consequently, the teacher learners had chosen to listen to the trainers' presentations rather than focus on their own creative ideas and teaching strategies. Hamideh's account is a representative example:

> *All of the students in the class knew that due to lack of time it was better to focus on what the teacher trainer was presenting in order to learn them rather than spend the class time evaluating and analyzing their own creative methods of teaching.*

Teacher education specialists in both mainstream and critical approaches to education have argued for the importance of collaborative reflection among teachers (e.g., Fernandez-Balboa & Marshall, 1994; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Richards & Farrell, 2005). Discussion, as a classic example of collaboration, was not a major part of the training courses the participants had attended though. One of the reasons behind this was the heavy and unwelcoming atmosphere of the class. For example, Naghmeh had avoided sharing her opinions assuming that no one would be interested and she would be seen to be different:

> *I never expressed my ideas in the class because no one else did so and I did not like to look different from the other students in the class simply because I would express my personal thoughts or experiences. In fact I think it would look odd if I did so. Besides, I don't think anybody in the class was interested in hearing their classmates' ideas.*

An additional challenge that Arezoo had faced was the trainer's reaction to her ideas because they differed from the institutional policies:

> *Once I shared my idea and experience about a method of teaching. It was against what the teacher trainer was saying and he did not accept my idea and said that the center had clear rules for teaching that all teachers had to obey. I also noticed that nobody in the class liked my opinions probably because they were against the teacher trainer's. So I decided not to express my thoughts any longer.*

Lack of group activities also contributed to limited chance for exchanging ideas. Although a few teachers, like Nasim, had been lucky to be encouraged to take part in group tasks, most, like Naghmeh, "did no group activities to learn from each other's ideas".

In addition to factors external to the participants, they themselves also tended to underestimate their own knowledge and insights and overestimate their teacher trainers', which caused more passivity and less creativity and reflection. Ali, for example, rationalized his lack of active involvement in the teacher education course by arguing "because students' knowledge and experience are less than their teachers', they don't have better ideas. So, there is no use in students' thinking about why they should follow the methods the teacher trainer suggests". Hamideh also believed that teachers' understandings "were typically not technical and scientific, at least in comparison with the methods taught by the teacher trainer" (Hamideh). Finally, idolizing teacher trainers, Pari believed "There is no need to hear others' words in the class as there exists a perfect model of teaching". The teachers' tendency to underestimate their understanding and knowledge was reinforced by the trainers' tendency to overestimate their own knowledge and give themselves the privilege of being the only voice heard in the classroom. In this regard, Niloufar quoted her trainer as saying "you should listen carefully because I am your teacher and I know what the best method is".

While the above discussion highlights the largely transmission-oriented nature of most of teacher education courses, a few shared some positive experiences of active involvement in their own professional development on

occasions other than the teacher education courses. Maryam, for example, talked about some in-service workshops she and her colleagues had attended, where they had shared ideas and experiences:

> *We attended some practical sessions in which we talked about our previous experiences and gave comments on others' experiences. Sometimes we had opposing ideas. It was very good because I could participate in the discussions and I felt I was doing something which helped me learn.*

Classroom observation which is believed to improve teachers' reflection skills (Farrell, 2004; Murphy, 2001), although not common, had also made a useful contribution to some of the teachers' active learning. Some of the teachers had been asked to observe their classmates' teaching during the course and in the assessment session. They had also been asked to observe the classes of those who were already teachers where they were receiving training.

Dominance of a Linguistic and Technical Focus

Given the importance recently attached to raising students' political and sociocultural awareness in second language education (Crookes, 2009; McKay, 2004; Pennycook, 2001), the scope of teacher education should go beyond methodological concerns and focus on its sociopolitical and transformative mission (Adamson, 2005; Bartell, 2001; Bartolome, 2004). Similar to some of the studies mentioned in 1.1. (e.g., Nezakat-Alhosseini & Ketabi, 2010), however, the interviews in this study showed that in most of the teacher education programs, the major focus was on either theoretical aspects of ELT or its linguistic and technical aspects (e.g., how to teach language skills and discipline students), both of which had served to promote a mainstream classroom-bound view of ELT and move its sociocultural and political dimensions out of focus.

To start with, many of the interviewees believed that the teacher education programs they had attended had a mostly theoretical focus. This had reinforced

lack of engagement with practical aspects of teaching, partly because theoretical arguments are not often directly translatable into practice (Ur, 1992). To be more specific, the teacher trainers would discuss the theoretical bases of different methods of ELT without any serious focus on how to put them into practice.

They believed that the purely theoretical discussions were a waste of time, because they were already familiar with many of them and this repetition had made the training boring and ineffective. In this regard, Ahmad recalled:

> *I had studied all the theoretical stuff in the university and I wanted to learn useful points about teaching practice but unfortunately it was different from what had I expected. It was all about theories while I needed to learn about the practical aspects of teaching.*

Fatemeh also had become disillusioned with the teacher training she had attended early on in the course due to its highly theoretical nature:

> *I soon realized that this class wasn't going to improve my teaching skills because he [the teacher trainer] basically gave speeches about language teaching theories discussed by Brown and Larsen Freeman instead of teaching us how to use these theories and how to teach in the real context of the class.*

This exclusive focus on theoretical issues had carried over into the assessment following training. In Shekoufeh's words: "for assessment we answered some questions about major theories of teaching and learning like deductive vs. inductive method of teaching grammar or explicit vs. implicit learning".

Where there were discussions about the practical side of teaching English, the focus was limited to issues within the boundaries of classroom, such as how to teach skills, manage group activities, and treat late comers. Most of the

participants reported that a typical training session which focused on teaching practice was the teacher trainer's presenting ways of teaching language skills and sub skills through step by step explanations about classroom procedures that require teacher learners to closely follow them in their teaching. Arezoo's account is a representative example: "Almost the entire course was about methods of teaching different phases of speaking, reading, writing and listening and he [the teacher trainer] wanted us to practice them closely." Obviously, this narrow focus on classroom practice had been maintained in how assessment had been conducted. Saeed, for example, recalled:

> *What he wanted us to do in the assessment session was execution of each and every step he had taught us during the course about teaching different skills and sub skills. If one did so carefully and accurately, they would pass the course with a good score; otherwise, they would fail.*

In addition to educating them how to teach language skills, the participants had been taught how to manage the class and discipline students, among other technical skills related to teaching an L2. Also, they had been told about ways of modifying materials based on student-related factors such as their age. For instance, Majid said:

> *He taught us some points about adjusting our teaching to suit factors like our students' age. For example, he said it is better to use short stories or songs if your students are kids, while for adults introducing newspapers and interesting websites would be better.*

The interviewees had enjoyed this part of training the most. Arezoo, for instance, said "the best part of the class was when we talked about our real experiences about helping students who had different interests, behaviors, and learning styles or when we shared suggestions about ways of running a happy and exciting class". The theories and techniques of second language teaching, although important and relevant, were still related to classroom-bound concerns

and did not have to do with issues beyond classroom boundaries. This narrow focus had limited the practical usefulness of the training the teachers had received, excluded the sociocultural and political aspects of ELT from the process of learning to teach what they had gone through, and reduced this process to learning how to help improve learners' language proficiency. As the last example to mention here of undue attention to linguistic issues related to ELT, many of the interviewees recalled their trainers going to extremes by frequently requiring them to check pronunciations. This would sometimes happen so often that the focus of the session would shift away from how to teach English. As observed by Ahmad, "while there were other important activities to do in the class, all the time he [the teacher trainer] would force us to use a dictionary for checking pronunciations". Some of the teachers reported a similar focus in assessment sessions and later on in class observations as well.

The above account suggests that the teacher education programs the participants had attended had not incorporated any direct or indirect focus on issues beyond the boundaries of classroom and technical aspects of ELT, such as its sociocultural and political dimensions, which postmethod advocates. This suggests the already strong hold of uncritical, language-oriented, and classroom-bound conceptions of teaching a second language in TESOL teacher education, which has also been highlighted by others in Iran (e.g., Abednia, 2012; Abednia & Karrabi, 2010) and elsewhere (e.g., Braxley, 2008; Pennycook, 1990).

Discussion

In summary, the participants believed that in the teacher education programs they had attended there was little, if any, negotiation with them over the content, procedures, and logistics of the courses. Also, they believed that they had been trained in a teacher-fronted and lecture-based manner with limited opportunity for reflection and sharing of ideas. Finally, a technical, language-bound, context-reduced, and apolitical approach to ELT had been mostly followed in the courses. These findings are qualitative by nature and cannot be generalized to all different contexts of teacher education in Iran. However, since each participant had received training in a different setting, we believe the themes tend to provide a proper perspective as to how EFL teacher education in

Iran, as currently practiced, may (not) contribute to implementation of a post-methodic view of ELT. In other words, they can help us understand how, if at all, teacher education in some EFL centers in Iran serves as a springboard for promoting a post-methodic conceptualization of teaching EFL and educating EFL teachers or as a barrier to doing so.

To start with, the themes reported above suggest that the approach currently dominating teacher education in EFL centers in Iran can be best described as training-oriented. More precisely, negotiation over different aspects of teacher education (i.e., logistics, content, and procedures) is kept to a minimum. Also, knowledge is treated as factual, transmitted to teachers as fixed and predetermined, and teachers are expected to take it in and apply it in their own teaching without questioning its validity and relevance to their lived experiences and the contexts where they teach (Sange, 2000; Voght, 2000). Consequently, there is not sufficient room available for teachers to contribute to the content of teacher education and how it is dealt with. Nor is there adequate space for them to reflect on different dimensions of teaching and develop and enrich their pedagogical knowledge through discussion and other types of collective reflection. Failure to adopt a social constructivist approach to knowledge production in teacher education is likely to result in teachers' embedding a transmission model in their own teaching practice, and hence teachers' unconsciously taking on an active role in reinforcing a lecture-based format in EFL instruction (Cochran-Smith, 2001).

Closely related to its training orientation, EFL teacher education, as experienced by the participants in this study, has a technical focus. More precisely, teachers are presented with practical techniques of teaching and assessing different language skills and managing classroom. They are also expected to master and later implement them as instructed without much serious analysis of their rationale and applicability in light of a situated understanding of contexts where they (are going to) teach and what learners they (are going to) deal with (Bartell, 2001; Bartolome, 2004). Many of the interviewees were discouraged from expressing their views and alternative

suggestions which were based on their own learning and teaching experiences. Instead, they were reminded that they were supposed to follow methods and techniques of teaching adhered to by the center where they received training. This technical approach neglects the artistry and unpredictable nature of teaching (Mockler, 2005; Singh & Richards, 2006) and fails to prepare teachers to teach reflectively and creatively when faced with different situations.

Finally, the findings showed that a critical and political view of ELT is lacking in EFL teacher education. As discussed in the third theme, a mainly linguistic focus had been adopted in the training courses. To be more specific, the content of training had mostly revolved around how to help learners improve their language proficiency and develop their language skills, most probably because these objectives are in line with market values. In response to the interview questions asking about the topics covered in the courses, the teachers did not recall any focus on helping learners think critically and develop their transformative potential, nor did they talk about having been encouraged to improve their own critical reflection skills and sense of agency. This indicates the dominance of an instrumentalist view of ELT which promotes a "what works" mentality (Mockler, 2005), prioritizes the demands of the labor market (Helsby, 1999), considers education as mainly a means of economic prosperity (Ben-Peretz, 2001), and fails to “locate English and English language teaching within the complex social, cultural, economic, and political environments in which it occurs” (Pennycook, 2004, p. 335).

These observations suggest that EFL teacher education, as currently conceptualized and practiced in Iran, at best fails to facilitate incorporation of a post-methodic approach to ELT and at worst serves as a barrier to it. To be more specific, the above discussion shows that some of the myths related to the concept of method underlie how teachers are educated to teach EFL. Transmitting knowledge as absolute truth, discouraging alternative views and ways of teaching, and failing to enhance social construction of knowledge are in line with the myth “there is a best method out there ready and waiting to be discovered” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p.163) and at odds with the parameter of particularity. Promoting a one-size-fits-all approach to ELT, presenting teachers with idealized techniques of teaching English, and ignoring their real-

life experiences which are a major source of local knowledge remind us of the myth “method has a universal and ahistorical value” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p.165) and go against the parameters of particularity and practicality. Elevating the status of knowledge generated by scholars in the inner circle to one of perfectness and reducing teachers to passive recipients of this knowledge match the myth “theorists conceive knowledge, and teachers consume knowledge” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p.166), reinforce the theory/practice divide in ELT (Clarke, 1994), and ignore the parameter of practicality. Finally, promoting a purely technical, decontextualized, and apolitical view of ELT suggests the already strong hold of the myth “method is neutral, and has no ideological motivation” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p.167) and is antithetical to the parameter of possibility.

These pedagogical and ideological barriers to incorporation of postmethod into EFL instruction are created and reinforced by the way EFL teacher education is approached and practiced. Within the category of ideological barriers, however, another immensely important obstacle which emerged from the data was the participants’ tendency to self-marginalization. Calling the teacher-fronted manner of education the “Iranian style”- as if western styles are essentially more interactive-and considering legitimate the use of materials and knowledge produced in the west as fully guiding local practices show the participants’ uncritical acceptance of the superiority of Western over local methods and “legitimiz[ing] their own marginalization” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b, p. 548).

Conclusion

If we take the above account as a relatively accurate and balanced picture of the status quo in Iran and some other contexts with similar approaches to teacher education, then we can conclude that critical and liberatory conceptions of teaching such as postmethod have assigned extremely heavy responsibilities to teachers who are expected to tackle and overcome a variety of challenges within an unsupportive atmosphere. A major manifestation of this lack of support is teacher education programs, which as shown in this study and elsewhere, heavily depend on a method-based pedagogy and, following the

policies established in the educational settings where they are conducted, provide little space for teachers to incorporate their real-life experiences into the process of learning to teach and develop their own ways of teaching. In other words, in how postmethod has been conceptualized

> What is missing, in fact, is a proper understanding of the limits within which teachers perform. That is, by assigning the extra roles of social reformer and cultural critic to teachers, the postmethod is taking language teaching beyond the realms of possibility and practice (Akbari, 2008, p. 645).

Therefore, a number of complementary measures should be employed in connection with teacher education to pave the way for the development and implementation of locally appropriate and socioculturally situated variations of postmethod in different local contexts. One is for stakeholders who hold policy making positions to become more tolerant and appreciative of dynamic, situated, and transformative perspectives on ELT and contribute to the adoption of this perspective in second language teacher education. Teacher educators and teachers should also come to appreciate the significance and advantages of this perspective to the fulfillment of local and global missions of ELT. These do not happen, however, unless adequate space is created for an honest and ongoing dialog between different parties involved in second language teacher education and for its outcomes to form the basis of improving teacher education programs. Administrators and teacher education specialists should be as willing to respect, welcome, and build on “the fund of experience and tacit knowledge about teaching which the teachers already have” (Freeman, 1991, p. 35) as teachers should avoid legitimizing their own marginalization and go beyond the technical, instrumental, and classroom-bound roles currently assigned to them. Ongoing collaborative effort by all stakeholders within a supportive climate, rather than merely expecting teachers to rectify all problems, is the only way forward. Otherwise, transforming the status quo as nurtured by postmethod will remain more of a chimera than an achievable target. In light of these general thoughts on how to facilitate locally oriented and globally informed re-appropriation of postmethod in language centers in Iran, the present researchers would like to present the following practical solutions.

In designing EFL teacher education courses, conscious attention should be paid to incorporating tasks and activities which encourage teachers' involvement in the course and their critical reflection on different issues related to ELT. This can happen early on in the course through inviting them to help with course design. For example, a brief needs analysis can be conducted through which they are asked to share their goals behind participating in the course and their expectations from it. They can also be asked to contribute materials to the course, especially if they are already teachers and have a proper understanding of the process of teacher professional development. Then, the course developers and teacher educators should cooperate to refine the course drawing upon the teachers' perceived needs, goals, and contributions. At the same time, they should inform teachers of the limitations and other practical considerations which make it difficult to implement the course exactly as expected by them. This will help maintain the trust initially built as a result of negotiation. For teachers to feel as co-owners of the course they are taking part in, this negotiation should continue throughout the course.

An important step toward acknowledging the sociopolitical dimension of EFL instruction and teacher education is to consciously attempt to incorporate content which encourages to go beyond a technical and classroom-bound view of TESOL and focus on its potential to affect society at large. Although most readings on critical approaches to TESOL have a theoretical approach and are written for an academic audience, practitioner journals like English Teaching Forum do publish papers in which authors share their experiences of practicing critical TESOL in simple and accessible language. Such resources can be drawn upon for teacher education purposes.

During the course, teachers should be encouraged and assisted to treat materials critically. To do so, teacher educators should be prepared to deal with teachers' critical comments in a tolerant and welcoming manner and acknowledge teachers' contributions (Sonneville, 2007) so that a culture of critical dialog (Fernandez-Balboa & Marshall, 1994) is fostered and teachers are motivated to voice their opinions. In addition to collaborative reflection,

teachers can be asked to write reflective journals which provide them with a further chance to think about different dimensions of teaching and their teacher selves (Lee, 2007), identify their areas of improvement, and connect what they know with new information (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000).

Attempts should be made to preserve the culture of critical reflection and dialog in the assessment phase too. Teachers should not be expected to passively follow techniques and ideas suggested by others. Instead, they should be encouraged to be creative and follow their own approaches to ways of teaching, while informed by insights and practical tips presented to them in the course. In the practical phase of assessment, they should be given space to adopt alternative ways of teaching what they are assigned to as long as how they teach helps them meet the goals of the lesson. To avoid limiting the scope of teachers' creativity to the technical and operational aspects of teaching (Ben-Peretz, 2001; Parker, 1997), they could even be encouraged to make attempts at redefining goals as long as their capabilities and insights permit.

While encouraging criticality and creativity in teacher education is immensely important, institutional policies should also be reformulated so as to provide adequate space for teacher innovation in the reality of classroom. Teacher supervision, observation, and evaluation should happen to strengthen teachers' motivation for questioning established approaches and techniques and implementing alternative strategies in classroom. All of these measures can become viable if an atmosphere of mutual trust, openness, and appreciation of diversity is established.

Notes on Contributors:

Parisa Naseri Karimvand is doing her Ph.D in TEFL at Payame Noor University. She has been teaching undergraduate English courses since 2010 in different universities in Tehran and Isfahan. Her areas of interest include postmethod and teacher education. She has published a skill book as well as articles in national and international journals.

Gholamreza Hessamy holds Ph.D. in TEFL from Tehran University and currently is assistant professor at Payame Noor University of Karaj. His research interests are language testing and assessment, teaching methodology, and English for academic purposes.

Fatemeh Hemmati is assistant professor in TEFL at Payame Noor University of Tehran. Her areas of interest include classroom discourse analysis and the productive skills in foreign language acquisition. She is the co-author of some articles appearing in journals such as portalinguarum.

References

Abednia, A. (2012). Teachers' professional identity: Contributions of a critical EFL teacher education course in Iran. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(3), 706-717.

Abednia, A. &Karrabi, M. (2010).*Freire and Bakhtin in EFL writing. Rethinking tertiary EFL writing in light of dialogic-critical pedagogy.* Proceedings of Writing the Future: Tertiary Writing Network Colloquium. Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand, 2, December.

Adamson, J. (2005). Teacher development in EFL: What is to be learned beyond methodology in Asian contexts? *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly, 7*(4), 74-84.

Akbari, R. (2008). Postmethod discourse and practice. *TESOL Quarterly, 42*(2), 641-652.

Allwright, R. L. (1984). The importance of interaction in classroom learning. *Applied linguistics, 5*(1), 156-171.

Allwright, R. L. (2003). Exploratory practice: Rethinking practitioner research in language teaching. *Language Teaching Research, 7*(1), 113-141.

Bartell, C. A. (2001). Bridging the disconnect between policy and practice in teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 28*(1), 189-198.

Bartolome, L. (2004). Critical pedagogy and teacher education: Radicalizing prospective teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 31*(1), 97-122.

Ben-Peretz, M. (2001).The impossible role of teacher educators in a changing world. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*(1), 48-56.

Braxley, K. (2008).Mastering academic English: International graduate students' use of dialog and speech genres to meet the writing demands of graduate school. In J. K. Hall, G. Vitanova, & L. Marchenkova (Eds.), *Dialog with Bakhtin on second and foreign language learning: New perspectives* (pp. 10-28). Mahwah, NJ and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Chandler, P. M., & Ortiz, S. B. (2004). Building consensus on teacher assessment. *English Teaching Forum, 42*(3), 22-31.

Clark, H. H. (1994). Discourse in production. In M. A. Gernsbacher (Ed*.), Handbook of psycholinguistics* (pp. 985-1021). San Diego: Academic Press.

Clarke, M. A. (1994). Mainstreaming" ESL students: Disturbing changes. *College ESL, 4*(1), 1-19.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2001).Higher standards for prospective teachers: What is missing from the discourse? *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*(3), 179-81.

Crookes, G. (2009). Radical language teaching. In M. H. Long, & C. J. Doughty (Eds.), *The Handbook of language teaching* (pp. 595-609). Hong Kong: Blackwell Publishing.

Farhady, H., Sajadi, F. H., & Hedayati, H.(2010). Reflections on foreign language education in Iran. *TESL-EL, 13*(4).1-18.

Farrell, T. (2004).*Reflective practice in action: 80 reflection breaks for busy teachers.* California: Corwin Press.

Farrell, T. (2007).*Reflective language teaching: From theory to practice*. London and New York: Continuum.

Fernandez-Balboa, J. M., & Marshall, J. P. (1994). Dialogical pedagogy in teacher education: Toward an education for democracy. *Journal of Teacher Education, 45*(3), 172-182.

Freeman, D. (1991). Mistaken constructs: Re-examining the nature and assumptions of language teacher education. In J. Alatis (Ed.), *Georgetown university round table on languages and linguistics 1991: Linguistics and language pedagogy: The state of the art* (pp. 25–39). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Penguin Books.
Giroux, H. A., and McLaren, P. (1989). Introduction: schooling, cultural politics, and the struggle for democracy. In H. A. Giroux & P. McLaren (Eds.), *Critical pedagogy, the state, and cultural struggle* (pp. xi-xxxv). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
Given, L. M. (2008).*The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods.* Online Pub**.** Date: September 15, 2008 | DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909
Glaser, B.G., & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Pub.
Hawkins, M., & Norton, B. (2009).Critical language teacher education. In A. Burns & J. Richards (Eds.), *Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*. (pp. 30-39). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Helsby, G. (1999). *Changing teachers' work, Buckingham*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
Imig, D. G., &Imig, S. R. (2006).What do beginning teachers need to know? An essay. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *57*(3), 286-291.
Kumaravadivelu, B. (1992). Macrostrategies for the second/foreign language teacher. *The Modern Language Journal, 76*(1), 41-49.
Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 28*(3), 27-48.
Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003a). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003b). Forum: critical language pedagogy: A postmethod perspective on English language teaching. *World English, 22*(4), 539-550.
Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006).*Understanding language teaching from method to post method.* London: Lawrence Erlbum Associates.
Lee, I. (2007). Preparing pre-service English teachers for reflective practice, *ELT Journal, 61(*4), 321-329.
Maftoon, P., Yazdani, M. M., Gholebostan, H., & Beh-Afarin, S. R. (2010). Privatization of English education in Iran: A feasibility study. *TESL-EL, 13*(4), 1-12.

Maggioli, G. D. (2003). *Teacher-centered professional development*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Mavetera, N., & Kroeze, J. H. (2009).Practical considerations in grounded theory research. *Sprouts: Working Papers on Information Systems*, *9, 32*. Retrieved from http://sprouts.aisnet.org/9-32

McKay, G. (2004). Subcultural and social innovations in the campaign for nuclear disarmament, Peace review. *Journal of Social Justice, 16*(4), 429-438.

McMorrow, J. (2007). Inspiring learning; Enquiry-based learning. In *Workshop for History, Classics and Archaeology HEA Subject Centre, Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning, University of Manchester*. eScholarID: 2b1214.

McWilliam, E. (2009). Teaching for creativity: From sage to guide to meddler. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 29*(3), 281-293.

Miller, J. (2004). Social languages and schooling: The uptake of sociocultural perspectives in school. In M. Hawkins (ed.), Language learning and teacher education. *Language learning and teacher education* (pp. 113-46). Clevedon: Multilingual matters.

Mockler, N. (2005). Transforming teachers: New professional learning and transformative teacher professionalism. *Journal of Inservice Education, 31*(4), 199-211.

Montgomery, D. (1997). Teaching teachers for creativity. *High Ability Studies, 8*(1), 79-93.

Murphy, J. M. (2001). Reflective teaching in ELT. In M. Celce-Murcia. (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 499-514). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Nezakat-Alhossaini, M., & Ketabi, A. S. (2012).Teacher training system and EFL classes in Iran.[Procedia of Akdeniz Language Studies Conference]. *Social and Behavioral Sciences, 70*(3), 526-536.

Parker, S. (1997).*Reflective teaching in the postmodern world: A manifesto for education in postmodernity*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Pennycook, A. (1989). The concept of method, interested knowledge and the politics of language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 23*(4), 589-612.

Pennycook, A. (1990). Critical pedagogy and second language education. *System, 18*(3), 303-314.

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical Applied Linguistics: A critical introduction*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pennycook, A. (2004). Critical moments in a TESOL praxicum. In B. Norton, & K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 327-345). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prabhu, N. S. (1990). There is no best method-why? *TESOL Quarterly, 24*(2), 161-176.

Razi, N., & Kargar, A. A.(2014).Evaluation of in-service foreign language teacher education program in Iran. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World, 5*(1), 221-236.

Richards, J. C. (2008). Second language teacher education today, *RELC, 39*(2), 158-177.

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. (2005).*Professional development for language teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. (3rd ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Senge, P. (Ed.). (2000). *Schools that learn: A fieldbook for teachers, administrators, parents, and everyone who cares about education.* New York: Doubleday.

Schcolnik, M., Kol, S., & Abarbanel, J. (2006). Constructivism in theory and in practice. *English teaching Forum, 4*, 13-20.

Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Singh, G., & Richards, J. C. (2006). Teaching and learning in the language teacher education course room: a critical sociocultural perspective. *RELC Journal, 37*(2), 149-175.

Sonneville, J. (2007). Acknowledgement as a key to teacher learning. *ELT Journal, 61*(1), 55-62.

Stern, H. H. (1985). Review of J. W. Oller and P. A. Richard-Amato's *Methods that work* [Book review]. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 7,* 249-251.

Stern, H. H. (1992). *Issues and options in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Voght, G. M. (2000). New paradigms for U.S. higher education in the twenty-first century. *Foreign Language Annals, 33,* 269-277.

Wallace, M., & Woolger, D. (1991).Improving the ELT supervisory dialogue: the Sri Lankan experience. *ELT journal, 45*(4), 320-327.

Yost, D. S., Sentner, S. M., & Forlenza-Bailey, A. (2000). An examination of the construct of critical reflection: Implications for teacher education programming in the 21st century. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(1), 3-49.

Appendix

Interview questions

1. Have you ever attended a teacher training course? If yes, would you please explain the course and a typical session of it?
2. How long was the course?
3. What were the main topics and issues focused on in the course? Give examples please.
4. What were the main activities and procedures followed in the course? How did the teacher educator teach those topics? Give examples please.
5. What were the teacher educators' expectations from you in the course? (What were you asked to do in the course?)
6. How were you assessed?
7. Did the teacher educator encourage you to express your personal opinions and experiences and share them with other teachers? How?
8. Did the teacher educator support you to develop your own understanding and style of teaching based on forming and reforming your own teaching?
9. Did you do any group activities or assignments with your classmates? Please explain.

10. Did the teacher educator involve you in the selection of course materials? If yes, how?
11. Did the teacher educator ask for your opinions about how to run the course? If yes, how?
12. Were you asked how you'd like to be assessed in the course? If yes, how?
13. What did you like about the course?
14. What didn't you like about it?
15. If you were in a position to make decisions about how to run teacher training courses what major changes would you make in them?
16. Where do you think the current approach and style of teacher training comes from?
17. Does the center where you teach help you improve your teaching skills? How? For example, does it hold any workshops or sessions for you to share ideas with other teachers? Are you observed? Please explain.