

LITERACY PRACTICES OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHER IN TWO PRE-UNIVERSITY HIGH-STAKES
EXAMINATION-ORIENTED SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

Literacy Practices of an English Language Teacher in Two Pre-University High-Stakes Examination-Oriented Settings

The main objective of the study is to provide a critical understanding of literacy practices in pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented English language education settings in Gonbad Qabus City in Northern Iran. In this context, high-stakes examinations refer to two national examinations namely, the *Konkoor* Examination and National High School Graduation examination, which have important consequences for students' entry to university. Specifically, this study addresses the macro level literacy practices observed in the core curriculum and the micro level teaching language literacy by the same teacher in two schooling systems with the same high-stakes examinations. Theoretically, the study is grounded in Street's socially situated/ideological model of literacy and Foucault's social theory of power. The present study employs a qualitative research methodology. It specifically focuses on a case of an Iranian teacher who implements teaching English language in two schooling systems, namely in a mainstream state-run and in a privately-run schooling system. This case study analyzes data in the form of documents, classroom audiotaped observations, field notes and teacher and students individual and focus interviews. Thematic Grouping and Critical Discourse Analysis are two main data analysis procedures. The analysis of the data revealed discursivities, namely a degree of alignments, situatedness, tensions and paradoxes among macro-level literacy practices. Furthermore, there was also a sharp contrast in implementing teaching of English language literacy by the same teacher in the two settings. Specifically, in the mainstream state-run classroom, the teacher neglected parts of curriculum which were not relevant to the examination and resisted critical engagement with the content of the lesson. In the private school, there was more discursive latitude in which the same teacher, although still examination-oriented, explored critical questions and literacies through a shunting back and forth movement between banking and critical pedagogy.

ABSTRAK

Amalan Literasi Seorang Guru Bahasa Inggeris Dalam Dua Persekitaran Pra-Universiti Yang Berorientasikan Peperiksaan Berkepentingan Tinggi

Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk memberi pemahaman kritis mengenai pengamalan literasi pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris dalam persekitaran pra-universiti yang berorientasikan peperiksaan yang berkepentingan tinggi di bandaraya Gonbad Qabus di Iran Utara. Dalam konteks ini, peperiksaan yang berkepentingan tinggi merujuk kepada dua peperiksaan peringkat kebangsaan, iaitu Peperiksaan *Konkoor* dan Peperiksaan Pengijazahan Sekolah Kebangsaan Tinggi, yang penting untuk menentukan kemasukan pelajar ke universiti. Khususnya, kajian ini mengupas amalan literasi tahap makro yang diperhatikan di dalam kurikulum teras dan pengajaran literasi bahasa di tahap mikro oleh guru yang sama dalam dua sistem persekolahan yang menggunakan peperiksaan yang berkepentingan tinggi. Dari segi teori, kajian ini berasaskan model literasi ideologi Street (*Street's ideological model of literacy*) dan teori kuasa sosial Foucault (*Foucault's social theory of power*). Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif. Kajian ini khususnya bertumpu kepada kes seorang guru Iran yang melaksanakan pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris dalam dua sistem persekolahan, iaitu dalam sistem aliran perdana persekolahan awam dan sistem persekolahan swasta. Kajian kes ini menganalisis data dalam bentuk dokumen, rakaman audio pemerhatian kelas, nota lapangan, dan temu bual secara individu dan berfokus dengan guru dan murid-murid. Pengumpulan Tematik (*Thematic Grouping*) dan Analisis Wacana Kritis (*Critical Discourse Analysis*) adalah dua prosedur analisis data yang digunakan. Analisis data menunjukkan kejadian diskursif, iaitu tahap penjajaran, kontekstualisasi (*situatedness*), kecelaruan (*tensions*) dan paradoks dalam pengamalan literasi tahap makro. Tambahan pula, terdapat perbezaan ketara dalam perlaksanaan pengajaran literasi Bahasa Inggeris oleh guru yang sama dalam dua persekitaran tersebut. Khususnya, dalam kelas aliran perdana persekolahan awam, guru itu mengabaikan sebahagian kurikulum yang tidak relevan kepada peperiksaan dan membantah penglibatan kritikal terhadap isi kandungan pelajaran. Di sekolah swasta, terdapat kebebasan diskursif (*discursive latitude*) di mana guru yang sama, walaupun masih berorientasikan peperiksaan, meneroka persoalan dan literasi kritikal melalui pengulangan diantara pedagogi perbankan (*banking pedagogy*) dan pedagogi kritikal.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Articulated Curriculum
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CP	Critical Pedagogy
EC	Enacted Curriculum
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FRDE	Fundamental Reform Document in Education
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
ISA	Ideological State Apparatus
L.P	Literacy Practice
l.p	literacy practice

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Literacy is a critical concept in many development plans in education and also in English language teaching (Gee, 1991). In conceptualizing literacy, Gee (1991), a pioneer in critical approaches to literacy studies, describes ‘the social turn’ in literacy which sees literacy as a multilayered social phenomenon created by and existing in social interactions among the members of society. He mapped out more than a dozen noticeable ‘movements’ which collectively made up the ‘social turn’ in education and hence ELT. These movements have contributed to broadening the concept of literacy which was subsequently expanded into the ‘New’ Literacy Studies (NLS hereafter).

The ‘social turn’ in literacy thus signaled a shift from a focus on “individuals” and their “private or inner minds” to a focus on “interaction and social practice.” In NLS, literacy as a socially situated practice is a reaction to the decontextualized, information-centered, neutral skills-based concept of literacy it was once thought to be. Indeed, individuality itself may even be a misnomer, according to some literacy theorists such as Street (2010), Hamilton (2000) and Gee (1990, 2014). These scholars contest the more traditional psychological and cognitive approaches to literacy both in the developed world as well as in postcolonial societies. In doing so, they critique those perspectives which are mainly based on literacy as monolithic, decontextualized or autonomous of context and which see English language literacy achievement

quantitatively as measured by test or examination scores, enrolment rates, and frequency of reading and writing among individuals.

Rather, as a social phenomenon, literacy is actively constructed, and is centrally implicated in power relations, within a society involving such elements as gender, religion, nationality, ethnicity, language and globality, to name few. It is now widely accepted (see, for instance, the work of Gee (1990) and Pennycook (2010) that the approach to English language literacy from the past to the present, “consciously or unconsciously, incorporates tacit or overt ideological theory” (Gee, 1990, p. 27). More specifically, Street (2010) refers to the ‘ideological model of literacy’ and Knoblauch and Brannon (1993) assert that “the concept of [language and] literacy is and must always be ideologically situated” (p. 15).

In general, such a concept of literacy alludes to the early work on ideology in sociology, which drew special attention to social institutions, power relations (Althusser, 2001; Gramsci, 1971), which was developed upon by more recent works in education, with an emphasis on curriculum (Apple, 1990; McLaren & Lankshear, 1993) and language education (González, 2001; Heller, 2006, 2006; Razfar, 2003; Luke, 2009). Specifically within education, several scholars (Gee, 2000; Luke 2010; Norton, 2010; Cumming 2009) have highlighted the ideological nature of educational policies and practices. In viewing education through an ideological lens, these scholars acknowledge that some practices may be ideologically privileged (and hence become dominant, prominent, and frequent) and other practices may be ideologically marginalized or silenced.

As Giroux (2010) argues, one of the key sites in which English language literacy as an ideological practice has emerged comprises schools, and by extension classrooms, where pedagogies are constructed from the mandated curriculum which reflects what should or should not be taught. In this regard, it is pertinent to ask: “What counts as

English language literacy in schools; "Whose literacy practices" are more supported and hence socially accepted as 'better' than others? Which literacy practices are resisted or marginalized in ELT classrooms? and what are the pedagogical and social consequences of the literacy practices on different social actors like teachers and learners within the social system. It is questions such as these that form the background to this dissertation.

1.2 Context of the Study: Literacy Education in Iran

I explore the above questions in the context of English language literacy education in Iran. The Iranian educational system, like every educational system, invariably aims at legitimizing certain values as well as ways of thinking, knowing and doing as *ideologies* (Gee, 1999). After the proclamation of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, as in the previous eras, education and hence English language education became an important ideological tool for the ruling elites. What follows is an overview of major developments in English language literacy education in the post-revolution era, which provides a sharp contrast to the western-centric view of English language literacy education that was prevalent in the pre-revolution era, i.e. the period before 1979.

In the last three decades, Iran has experienced three waves of a revolution which have radically altered the sociopolitical and, economic milieu of English language literacy education. The first phase from 1979 to 1990 witnessed the indigenization of English language literacy education in the post-revolutionary era. The second wave from 1990 to 2005 was characterized by globalization and its effect on English language literacy education. In the third phase from 2005 to the time data was collected in the study, we observe a re-indigenization of literacy in ELT. The three phases could thus be seen as swings of the pendulum or reactions to the earlier phase.

1.2.1 Indigenizing English Language Literacy Education In Post-Revolution Era (1979-1990)

The year 1979 is a turning point in recent Iranian history. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was replaced by the Supreme Leader, Imam Khomeini. The political changes, brought on by the 1979 Revolution, resulted in a cultural revolution which in turn had the effect of indigenizing the educational system in line with Islamization and Nationalization (Borjian, 2013). This provided an epistemic break with Western-centric view of education in the pre-revolutionary period. In essence, the indigenization of education which was known as *first Cultural Revolution* was ideological and cultural, and promoted Islamic and national values which were expressed in the mandated, centralized, national curriculum.

As far as English language teaching was concerned, at this juncture, for the fear of promoting counter values to the revolution, the private English language schooling systems of the pre-revolutionary period (including the British Council and Iran-America Council and their various branches) were temporarily closed. This was because they were suspected of spreading English with *western values* in different schools at all levels (Borjian, 2013). Also, in different educational settings, various textbooks, even textbooks related to foreign language teaching were redesigned by an arm of the newly established Cultural Revolution Council named the Center for Textbooks.

In the wake of such a policy of indigenization, with a focus on religious and national values, a convergent way of thinking, knowing, and doing was introduced throughout the country. The rationale behind the redesigning of the EFL textbooks was that the previous EFL textbooks produced by organizations like the British Council was perceived to run the risk of transferring western ways of thinking and doing and thus had a “negative impact” on students. The newly written domestic textbooks defined the agenda for teaching and assessing students’ English language literacy. The textbooks

also defined the content for the National High School Graduation Examination (known as the NHSGE) and National University Entrance Examination (known as the Konkoor) which were *nationally administered standardized examinations*, mostly in the form of multiple choice tests. The high-stakes national examination system had the effect of legitimizing the educational content and approach. This high-stakes testing milieu encouraged many local authors to write commercially produced test bank books for school students. These textbooks, in turn, positioned themselves as a rich and “sacred” source of knowledge for teachers and students for the final examinations. Therefore, teachers tried to align their own teaching in a way that covers the contents of the official textbooks and the commercially produced *testbooks*.

Thus in the first decade after the revolution, the values of the 1979 revolution--with its “new” literacies embedded in the cultural ways of knowing and being --were promoted in the education system through new national textbooks, a *high-stakes testing regime* and centrally indigenized curriculum.

1.2.2 Globalization and its Emergence in English Language Literacy Education (1990 To 2005)

Beginning in 1990s, after the imposed Iraq-Iran war, Iran embarked on the process of globalization. This phase of the history of the nation involved the promotion of reforms which involved marketization of economy and the privatization of many Publicsectors including education. As Bourdieu (2008) tells us globalization as a modern ideology serves as a “password”, “a watchword” or even a “mask”. At this time, the opening up of the country to outside influences was viewed as a necessary antidote to the destructive economic consequences of the imposed eight-year war. As Bourdieu argues, globalization involves a paradox; it was a “password” because it unlocked potentials but it was also a double-edged sword because it masked unintended

consequences which had implications for literacy.

In the sociocultural domain, this phase saw the beginnings of the relaxation of State control of the media and forms of cultural expression. According to Sharifian (2009), during this phase, the English language also became a greater part of the social and individual lives of the people. The impact of English was felt not only on education and the professions, but also on literacy through television, internet, mobile phones, and other information and communication technologies. Because the process of globalization was tied to the spread of English, it ideologically contributed to the Anglicization or Englishization (Kwok-Kan, 2009) of literacy.

In effect, in this era, the country orchestrated a careful return to the “uncompleted” modern globalization policies with an embedded new sociocultural milieu. In fact, the educational system could not keep itself immune from globalization. Several structural changes were introduced to align the Iranian educational system with that of other developed countries.

Firstly, an annual unit credit system was defined for the traditional annual academic system. Secondly, the education duration at the high school level decreased to three years from the four years. Rather, *Pre-university* level was considered for those who tended to go on higher education in order to bridge the gap between high school and also higher education. Thirdly, in order to train skilled workers to meet the ever-increasing demands of the newly produced job markets, some new branches in technical, vocational, and also applied science at high school level were established.

Crucially in this era, the educational system became more diversified and witnessed a shift from a mainstream Publicschooling system to include privately-run schooling systems ostensibly to address shortcomings like the ever-increasing financial burden of the Publicpublic schooling systems. Although the privately-run schooling systems were independent in some school-board policies, like the Public schools, they

also prepared students for national high-stakes examinations like National High School Graduation Examination and University Entrance Examination, known as the Konkoor. Significantly, both schooling systems were strongly examination-driven.

Both schooling systems remained under the direct management of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and textbooks in public and private schools remained unchanged. The national high-stakes examination, the Konkoor, rose in importance among senior high school and pre-university students, and was widely accepted among families as a vital avenue for social mobility. Several specialized centers were certified by the Ministry of Education as Konkoor-training centers. Among them, the Training Cultural Center (*Kanoon Farhangi Amuzesh*) and the Future Center (*Ayandehgan*) with different branches across the country attracted great attention through mass media advertisements. Interestingly, a special national TV channel--*Shabakeye Amuzesh* or Educational Channel--was also designated to cover the Konkoor. These centers and TV channel become popular and provided models for instruction for both main stream Public and also privately-run high schools.

Thus, the marketization of education was promoted through an examination system which was an entrenched feature of the education system. The Public system was dominated by the Konkoor and NHSGE so that these schools also seemed to follow an examination-oriented approach. These national textbooks and testbooks inadvertently also promoted and privileged certain methods of teaching such as Grammar Translation Method (GTM) as the “one size fits all” method for teaching English. While the discourse of globalization introduced into the educational discourse in the second decade of the revolution, in effect, this did not result in the globalization of educational practices in the schooling systems neither in privately-run schooling systems nor in Mainstream Public schooling system. More accurately, it contributed to the growth of the testbooks, in a differentiated educational landscape.

1.2.3 Back to the Basics: Re-indigenizing of Literacy in ELT (2005 onwards)

The globalization of educational discourses in Iran which began in the second decade after revolution was the subject of intense debate in the third decade. In 2005, the country witnessed attempts to revive the so-called cultural values which were believed to be diminished by the prevailing discourses influenced by the processes of globalization. In making the case for a return to indigenized practices, “*cultural invasion*” of global powers and the notion of a cultural “soft war” was a main discourse. The justification for such “discourse” was the perception that non-Islamic-Iranian culture and ideology transferred by various social strata through satellite TV, the internet and other technological and cultural tools may act as a hinderance to realign society with Islamic and Iranian culture and ideology which is the main discourses of the Islamic revolution.

Hence, in this phase, there was a call for re-indigenizing education aimed at reviving the values of the revolution which were neglected by the previous administrations. Thus, the humanities and social science subjects from primary to higher education were reviewed as they were suspected of being influenced by those views which were read as being in conflict with the main values of the revolution.

The scope and magnitude of the revisions had an impact on the position of global and Western literacy practices in the schooling systems. In implementing the policies demanded literacy education reform in line with the values of the revolution was spearheaded. In this regard, a formal curriculum document entitled “Sanade Barname Darsi Melli” (translated as the National Curriculum Document, known as the NCD) which detailed the characteristics of the new educational reform called for in “Tahavvole Bonyadin e Aamuzesh” (translated as the Fundamental Reform Document in Education, known as FRDE) were issued in 2008 and 2010, respectively.

The process of the re-indigenization of education aimed at critical turn to literacy, started in 2006, at the time of writing, is still ongoing. The EFL classrooms in both mainstream public schooling systems and privately-run schooling systems have still retained their previous centralized policy in designing textbooks and in developing and administering the national high-stakes examinations.

Thus, ELT at the schooling systems at pre-university level continue to perpetuate the previous textbooks and an examination-oriented approach in the context of a centralized, re-indigenized milieu.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The recent research literature (Chege 2009, Gee 1990, 2000) has shown that language and literacy education is always power-related. Such power relations sometimes render some literacy practices--as social ways of thinking, knowing and doing--more influential. Hence, it results in 'the ideal representation of the interests of privileged groups as universal interests, which are then accepted by the masses as the natural social order' (Orlowski, 2011, p. 2). This shows "how power [may] compel us to consent to something which constrains us" (Butler, 2002, p. 29), and recalls Althusser's (2001, 2008) Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) which functions by ideology" (p. 1490).

Althusser later noted that the school system is the most effective strategic and also all the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) in promoting the ideology of the influential group. The ISAs are "settled forms" through curriculum, pedagogy, etc. ISAs are so settled that the educational stakeholders hardly notice what is happening. Historically, the Iranian school systems in English language literacy education--like many other similar educational systems--have been highly influenced by discursive power relations within Iranian society which produce the ISAs. The discursive power relations tend to legitimize the national high-stakes examinations (e.g. the Konkoor which is the National

High-Stakes University Entrance Examination and National High School Graduation Examination, known as NHSGE). Consequently, a significant part of the curriculum and classroom interactions become a means to increase achievement levels in such examinations (Namaghi, 2010). Hence, “it is naïve to think of the school curriculum [as well as the assessment system] as neutral knowledge” since “*education and power are an indissoluble couplet*” (Apple 1996:195-196).

Paradoxically, although the goal of critical literacy is emphasized by the core national curriculum in the educational system (Kiani, et. al, 2011), the high-stakes examinations continue to exert a powerful influence on teaching and learning practices (Farhady & Hedayati, 2009). Consequently, high-stakes examinations may result in consolidating existing power relations in a discursive manner and may in reality act as a hindrance in critical thinking. Thus a gap emerges between the articulated goal of a critical approach to literacy in the core curriculum and the outcomes of high-stakes examinations at pedagogical level. This is an issue which the research literature on literacy studies has so far failed to adequately address empirically or theoretically. As such, this study attempts to bridge the gap between the dominance of high-stakes examinations in English language and literacy classroom settings and the practices it generates at classroom level.

From the research in New Literacy Studies (NLS), one can infer that as long as the centralized high-stakes examination discourse is dominant in the schooling systems, English language teaching tends to draw on *a banking pedagogy* (Freire,1970) especially when it is embedded with a view of literacy that is *autonomous, neutral, decontextualized rather than critical* (Street, 2014). This banking pedagogy includes rote-learning, mechanical-like responses and the transmission of knowledge on behalf of the prescribed textbook *for the examination* as the main source of knowledge in classroom interactions (Gorlewski et al, 2012).

In other words, one might say that the discourse of the classrooms is the discourse *about the examination*. Thus, a gap exists between the overt goals of the Iranian new curriculum (The Fundamental Reform Document in Education 2008, National Curriculum Document 2010, Kiani et.al. 2011, Atai, 2011) which calls for a critical view to literacy discourse and the classroom practices especially when high-stakes examinations in a centralized educational system are positioned as ideal, “sacred” or “hyper-orthodox” (Pennycook, 2001) in school settings. In fact, this gap still remains when the Iranian new curriculum does not explain how examination-oriented educational systems can develop a critical view to literacy among learners.

In this line, McMillan, Myran, and Workman (1999) reported that teachers who follow high-stakes examinations are concerned that their classroom teaching is centered more on breadth rather than depth. Charles (2008) stated that pressure associated with high-stakes examination in the teaching profession distracts educators from doing their jobs, prompting them to teach for the examination in an effort to improve examination scores.

A major issue which has not been addressed in the research literature on the dominance of high-stakes examinations in educational settings concerns their influences on pedagogical and ideological practices in English language literacy settings. There is hence a need to investigate what are the dominant discourse of literacy in examination-oriented settings at the macro level i.e. the core curriculum and its key components i.e. the national textbooks and national high-stakes examinations; what happens at the micro level when the teacher implements classroom teaching practices.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Teaching English language literacy in a specific EFL context like Iran tends to adopt a high-stakes examination-oriented approach. It needs in-depth, situated and critical understanding. Specifically, this investigation aims to:

- 1) identify the macro-level dominant discourse of English language literacy in the Iranian high-stakes examination-oriented schooling systems. In doing so, the core curriculum (the Fundamental Reforms Document in Education, known as the FRDE & the National Curriculum Document, known as the NCD and also their related key components-- namely, the national mandated textbooks and national high-stakes examinations) are analyzed to address those practices which are ideologically privileged (and hence become dominant, prominent, and frequent) and other practices which may be ideologically marginalized or silenced in the educational policy, instructional and assessment documents.
- 2) analyze and deconstruct the ways based on which dominant discourses of literacy and pedagogy are enacted in teaching of English language literacy in the pre-university EFL classrooms in Iran.

1.5 Research Questions

To meet the above-mentioned objectives, the following questions were formulated:

- 1) At the macro level, what are the dominant discourses of English language literacy in pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings?

2) At the micro level, in what ways, are dominant discourses of literacy and pedagogy enacted in teaching of English language literacy in the pre-university EFL classrooms in Iran?

1.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study

In this study, literacy is conceptualized as ideological, discursive, power-related phenomenon which “is situated historically, socially and politically (and as such is often stated in the plural form of literacies). Such a definition of literacy(ies) eschew(s) autonomous, monolithic and also decontextualized descriptions on literacy activities, literacy events, and processes” (Street, 1999, p.20) . As a socially situated phenomenon, literacy(ies) and hence dominant discourse of literacy can be examined at the two levels: macro, micro. Figure 1.1 below provides a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework of the study. In this figure, L.P, Tr., and S are illustrative of literacy practices, teacher and student, respectively.

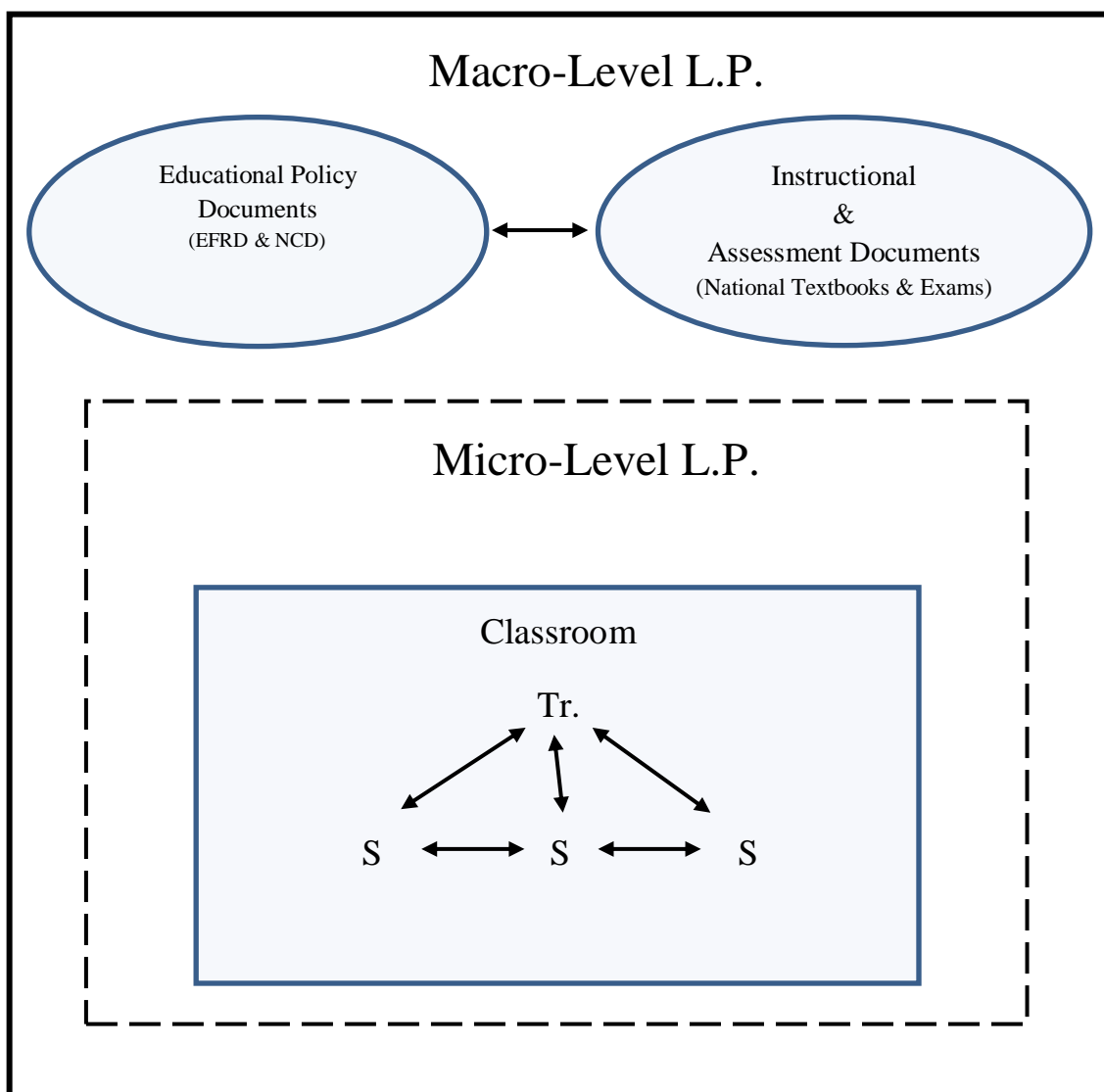


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

At the macro level, dominant literacy practices are shaped around high-stakes examination-oriented school settings. They are dictated by asymmetric power relations in the socio-political structure of any given society. They may influence teachers so that they are centered on an examination-oriented approach.

At the macro-level, these dominant literacy practices are enhanced by what educational institutions are expected to produce. The macro-level dominant literacy practices can also be observed in a set of educational policies and practices. Here, the Fundamental Reform Document in Education (the FRDE) and National Curriculum

Document (The NCD) are two core educational policy documents. Indeed, the NCD is a macro-level policy document that translates the literacy practices promoted by the educational reforms currently underway in the Iranian education system as shown in the Fundamental Reform Document in Education (the FRDE). The curriculum also takes the form of the national textbook and the national high-stakes examinations when it is translated at the macro-level.

Notably, in viewing education through an critical lens, it can be argued that some literacy practices may be ideologically privileged (and hence become frequent) and other practices may be ideologically marginalized. These policies and practices which accrue from the macro level may influence teachers' beliefs, ways of thinking, knowing, being and doing as enacted in classroom discourse and practices at the micro level.

More precisely, at the micro level, pedagogic practices and teacher's stances may be influenced by macro level literacy practices shaped in examination-oriented school settings. The practices at the micro level are focused on classroom interactions and teaching practices as sites of literacy production. The investigation of teaching practices provides insights into *discourse in use*. These discourses at the micro level clarify how the curriculum is pedagogically implemented; which stances are taken by teachers when enacting the curriculum. They also clarify the extent to which practices at the micro level critique or reproduce the taken-for-granted or legitimized practices accruing from an examination-oriented milieu.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study draws on two main theories: Street's theory of literacy as ideological practice and Foucault's theory of power which enables us to explain the discursive and complex concept of dominance in the phrase "dominant discourse of literacy".

1.7.1 Theory of Literacy as Ideological/Socially Situated Practice

This study is theoretically framed within a social view to literacy which acknowledges that literacy practices are always ideological. The concept of ideology is an issue which has been strongly addressed by Street (1984, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2010). Street distinguishes between two models of literacy namely, the autonomous model and socially situated or ideological model. The socially situated or “ideological model of literacy, offers a more socially sensitive perspective to literacy practice as they differ from one context to another. The ideological model is a reaction to the autonomous model which assumes that literacy is a monolithic entity and merely a technical and neutral set of skills” (Street, 1999) . Rather, the ideological model of literacy holds the view that literacy is a socially situated practice. In this sense, literacy, is always contested, not only in its meanings but also in its practices. Hence particular versions of it are always "ideological".

As Street (1999) explains, “Literacy practices are located not only within cultural wholes but also within power structures” (p. 57). As social practices and institutions are implicated in our understanding of literacies they address the intersection of literacy and power.

My argument for social theory of literacy in an EFL context like Iran sees examination-oriented pedagogy as an isolated or decontextualized four-skill concept which can be easily measured. The main concern of this pedagogy in these classrooms is on transferring information existing in the FEL textbooks and curriculum as it is. Indeed, this pedagogy introduces literacy practices as if it is monolithic, universal, technical and neutral (Chege, 2009; Reed, 2006). Hence, this view, as Street (1999) argues, conceptualizes literacies and their practices as embedded in ideology and power relations, cultural values, and social roles which are nurtured or imposed by particular groups and institutions in each context either EFL or ESL. Thus, questions about

acquiring, developing, and participating in literacy practices are necessarily complex, discursive and socio-political questions. They are always embedded in a specific world-view and the adherents of that world view have a desire for that view of literacy to dominate and to marginalize others (Street, 1994).

1.7.2 Foucault's Theory of Power

This study is also framed using Foucault's social discourse theory on "power, knowledge and ideology" (1979, 1980, 1984, 1990, 2008). In Foucault's view, discourse construction is the main source of knowledge. Other literacy scholars like Gee (2014), Friere (1996) and Giroux (2010 a & b) who have critical views to literacy have made the link between knowledge and literacy. As such they saw knowledge and hence also literacy as not only ideological/socially situated but also power-related.

My argument for choosing Foucault's theory on power, knowledge and ideology (1990, 2008) is that it contributes to explaining the complexity and discursivity of power-related nature of literacy in each context. Pennycook (2001) has argued that existing ideological models of literacy unlike their claims, failed to comprehensively address the centrality and discursivity of power in the conception of literacy due to being linear, non-critical and depoliticized. Thus, the use of Foucault's theory to analyze literacy practices in an examination-oriented setting in this study addresses the gap in theorizing literacy studies.

Foucault (1979, 1984, 1990, 2008) argued that in every society, discourse, knowledge (and hence literacy) production is selected, controlled, organized and also redistributed by discursive power relationships. Different from many other critical theorists, Foucault avoided dichotomizing the issue of power relations. In fact, he conceptualizes power relations as discursive practice seen in every educational system, at curriculum, assessment or pedagogy. In effect, he did not look at this issue in terms of either domination or powerlessness as seen in the literature. Rather, in his

conceptualization of power relationships, he foregrounds resistance, critique and question as significant determinants to explain discursive nature of power relation of knowledge and hence literacy production. In his view, resistance, critique and question may even be shaped in moments of dominance. People, for example, teacher and student through taking different contextual stances can resist, question and critique to challenge the prominent power in each context. In his view, any resistance to, question and critique of knowledge production in the whole context of education, contribute to shedding more light on the discursive nature of power relations which are shaped in educational settings whether those in the core curriculum or those enacted in the classroom pedagogic practices.

Hence, Foucault's social theory of power besides Street's ideological model of literacy thus enables us to answer to the central questions of this study such as: what are the taken-for-granted literacy practices as shaped in examination-oriented settings and "control" teachers to follow a specific pedagogy in their ELT? What are the effects of following high-stakes examination-oriented approach in English language literacy education which has intentionally been embedded with power-related discourses of specific groups in the classrooms? These questions which are embedded in the key research questions in this study justify the necessity of such theoretical framework.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

Before carrying out this research, it is necessary to define some key terms as they are used in this research.

1.8.1 High-Stakes Examinations

In this context, high-stakes examinations or tests refer to two national examinations namely, the *Konkoor* Examination and National High School Graduation Examination, known as NHSGE. Both of these two national examinations have important consequences for students' entry to university.

1.8.2 Examination-Oriented Settings

Examination-oriented settings refer to a setting in which educational policy and practices (curriculum, assessment and pedagogy) are almost exclusively centered on students' success in examinations, specifically in high-stakes examination.

1.8.3 Literacy practices

Literacy practices are defined as socially situated construct. This definition sees literacy and its related practices as ideologies in which some assumptions are taken-for granted, prevalent and frequent at macro assessment and instructional documents and also micro-level pedagogical practices in every educational setting. Literacy practices are discursively embedded in power relations and are shaped by part of a larger belief systems or social attitudes which may serve to limit, control and restrict meaning making in teaching English language. As such, these dominant literacy practices implicate asymmetric and discursive power relations transferred by the political and also socio-economic structure of any given educational context. Although some educational researchers define some literacy practices as inherently negative, in this research investigation they can be either productive as well. Therefore, they are not neutral by themselves. In fact, they become so naturalized that the embedded intentions and consequences in them cannot be easily recognized and the persons involved are

sometimes not informed on intentions behind them. Hence, they are discursively constructed and needed to be analyzed.

1.8.4 Testbook

Testbooks, in the Iranian context, are books of tests which are written for making students ready for the national high-stakes examination--namely, the National University Entrance Examination, known as the Konkoor and also the National High School Graduation Examinations. The testbooks are published and endorsed by the educational authorities. The “tests” in the testbook constitute either actual test items or are modelled on the official high-stakes examinations. The tests generally resemble the genre of the Konkoor and NHSGE questions and some test items are categorized by skills viz. grammar, vocabulary, reading, etc.

1.9 Organization of the Study

Chapter one included an introduction to this study and was framed in different sections. In introduction section, the researcher commenced the concept of literacy in education. Then background of study provided a general not comprehensive review on what happened in Iranian educational system from past to present based on some dramatic fluctuations which made English language literacy teaching centered on an examination-oriented approach. In addition, I framed the problem, objectives, the research questions, and the conceptual and theoretical framework. Finally, this chapter was ended with defining some key terms as they are used in this research.

Chapter Two, Review of Literature, gives a review of the existing relevant literature on the literacy studies and their contribution to Education. The purpose of this chapter is to review literacy studies research in the field of language education. In this

chapter research on the social/ideological turn to literacy studies and also power turn to literacy studies, at the two levels of macro and micro level will be reviewed.

In Chapter Three, Research Methodology, the methodological aspects of the study are discussed. This chapter begins with introducing and providing a rational for the research site. Then the research approach and design is described in detail. The researcher's stance and his professional role and how they relate to participants and setting in which data are collected are also discussed. In this chapter, data sources, techniques of analysis and trustworthiness issues are also explained.

Chapter Four addresses the research findings relevant to Research Question One: *At the macro level, what are the dominant discourses of English language literacy in the pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings?*

In this study, the macro-level dominant English language literacy practices are identified through thematic grouping on curriculum documents. Curriculum documents are divided into articulated (the NCD) and manifested curriculum documents (national high-stakes tests and national textbooks).

Chapter Five answers Research Question Two viz. *“At the micro level, in what ways are dominant discourses of literacy and pedagogy enacted in teaching of English language literacy in the pre-university EFL classrooms in Iran?”* The main focus in this research question is to investigate how the teacher working in two classrooms in two schooling system i.e., the mainstream Publicschooling system, and the non-mainstream privately-run schooling system implements English language literacy education. In doing so, CDA on classroom interactions is done to explain systematically how discourse builds description of the teaching practices.

Chapter Six summarizes the main findings of this study, referring to the two main research questions of the study. Also, theoretical and empirical implications of the findings will be discussed. The chapter is ended with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review literacy studies research briefly in the field of language education. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, namely the social/ideological turn to literacy studies, I firstly review the notion of literacy and literacy practices which have intellectual roots in ethnographic studies.

In the second section, namely, the power turn to literacy studies, I will review literacy studies at the macro and micro level. In section three, I will address Foucault's contributions to literacy studies to have a better understanding on the conceptual and theoretical framework of this study which focuses discursivities and complexities of power-related nature of literacy discourse. Furthermore, some Foucauldian studies in education which shape teacher work will be reviewed.

2.2 Social/Ideological Turn to Literacy Studies

In this section, the developing concept of literacy and literacy practice from the perspective of ethnography which set the stage for a social turn to literacy is examined. Under the New Literacy Studies rubric (Gee, 1991; Street, 1993), socially-situated or ideological perspectives on literacy were posed in the late 1970s and also early 1980s. These studies were considered as an explicit challenge to the work of such figures as anthropologists Goody (1987, 2000), Goody & Watt (1986), Ong (1982, 1986), and

psychologist Olson(1977,1996). All these scholars attempted to clarify cultural changes in modernizing societies centering on alphabetic literacy as a unique instrument for cognitive and also social reorganization. These scholars saw the ostensible “differences” between so-called non-literate as well as literate societies or, in some cases, between oral as well as written discourse. Hence, these studies contributed to what was known as the so-called “Great Divide”. These early studies see literacy as a technology. The approach assigns the origin of higher and complex mental functions in humans, principally logical as well as analytical thinking technology of literacy, specifically the invention of the alphabet or emergence of writing (Ong, 2012; Daniell, 1999).

In fact, Goody and Watt (1963) believed the ancient of civilizations such as “the Sumerian, Egyptian, Hittite, and Chinese and Persian civilizations were a direct consequence of the invention of the alphabetic writing system” (p. 36) and that literacy was a requisite for human civilization. Years later, the assumption that literacy in itself, autonomously, has impacts on other social and also cognitive practices originates from the standard view widespread in field of literacy. Such a view of literacy was later termed as “the autonomous view” of literacy by Street (1984).

In his work, Street as an early critical scholar of the great divide scholars in literacy studies, as a social and cultural anthropologist and critical literacy theorist, approaches language and education drawing on his work in Iran, Britain, and around the world. In fact, his all attempts to develop the notion of literacy continued through making a distinction between 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy (Street, 1984). He also questioned singular literacy and introduced the literacies and opened a new horizon in New Literacy Studies (Street, 1988). The autonomous model saw literacy as a singular, monolithic construct, whereas the ideological model viewed literacy as socially and culturally situated.

In *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (1984), Street also argues about the "consequences of literacy" as an autonomous view. He believes this view intentionally disguises the underpinning cultural and ideological assumptions (generally, Western-centric ideologies) and wittingly tries to be presented as universal and neutral. As such, he problematized the conceptualization of literacy "in terms of cognitive skills". This notion of literacy runs the risk of reducing literacy and literacy practice as a neutral set of skills. Street discusses the "significance" which literacy practices have for specific social groups.

In order to document his argument, Street referred to Scribner and Cole (1981) whose work have also prblematized the validity of the claim that literacy in itself emerges higher order cognitive skills as many divide theorists claimed. Documenting their investigation among the Vai people, a community in Liberia who had their own unique literacy system before Western education was introduced to them, Scribner and Cole found that the Vai people who were literate in their native system were not necessarily cognitively performed better than those who were not. Scribner and Cole (1981) and Daniell (1999) criticized the autonomous view to literacy as it removes literacy of its tacit political and socio-cultural underpinnings and ignores the influential ideological and also sociopolitical factors. In their view, the autonomous view also ignores other social background factors like language, gender, race and ethnicity on performance of teachers and students in context.

When literacy is conceived as varied and diverse as is articulated by the socially situated or ideological model, the role of context is highlighted as an influential factor in how value systems are constructed and how literacies are practiced. In line with this, anthropologists like Scribner & Cole (1981), also mentioned literacies are the result of direct socialization processes and well-defined domains of literacy. Together with

Street, they ushered a fundamental change towards taking into account the specific social context and its different practices.

Another key study which focused on the interrelationship between literacy and society is an ethnographic study by Heath (1983). Heath

“who lived for ten years among the Piedmont Carolinas, highlighted three culturally distinct communities: working class black, working class white, and middle class white. Having collected the data, she described how children in this community learned to use language from the mirror of their culture, contextual issues”(p. 368).

In spite of the fact that Heath’s three communities were within a neighborhood, their literacy practices were different. Such differences in literacy practice discourse, from Heath’s view, are highly associated with the sociocultural context of each society, not to their cognitive abilities or social membership. She holds the view that being aware of such differences and similarities should contribute to distinguishing between the boundaries in a classroom and culture.

Years later, in conceptualization of literacy as socially situated practice, Gallego and Hollingsworth (2000, p5) also “proposes a conceptual framework for discussion of domain-oriented literacies in different boundaries, that is:

- School literacies—the learning of interpretive and communicative processes needed to adapt socially to school and other dominant language contexts, and the use or practice of those processes in order to gain a conceptual understanding of school subjects.
- Community literacies—the appreciation, understanding, and/or use of interpretive and communicative traditions of culture and community, which sometimes stand as critiques of school literacies.
- Personal literacies—the critical awareness of ways of knowing and believing about self that comes from thoughtful examination of history or experiential and gender specific backgrounds in school and community language

settings, which sometimes stands as a critique of both school literacies and community literacies” (p. 5).

What is significant about Gallegos and Hollingsworth (2000)’s framework is that it acknowledges that literacy is, among other things, domain specific with each domain providing a different socio-cultural milieu for literacy practices.

Likewise, Baynham (1995) also argues that “definitions of literacy are always ideological” (p. 37) because literacy always takes place in social and cultural context. He believes that out of context, literacy is meaningless. He also adds that there exist multiple literacies not just one literacy. He also reckons that in order to study literacy, it should not be viewed as an independent variable as conventional in many autonomous views to literacy; to encompass where literacy falls into the social lives and how power relationships shape literacy application.

Barton & Hamilton (1998) also reconceptualize the concept of literacy, literacy event and literacy practices as central to a social view of literacy and expands on six following propositions about the nature of literacy and its practices. The six propositions are:

- “Literacy is best understood as a set of social practice; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written [and spoken] texts.
- There are different literacies associated with different domains of life.
- Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, therefore some literacy practices become more dominant, visible and influential compared to others.
- Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices.
- Literacy is historically and culturally situated.

- Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making.”

The six propositions taken together see literacy practices in terms of broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing, namely, reading, writing or talking in cultural contexts”. (p.8)

In clarifying ideological or socially situated views to literacy in educational systems, group of scholars in NLS who were later known as the New London Group (1996) also developed the concept of literacy and literacy practices in education. The New London Group (1996) “designated the original document as pedagogy. However, it was merely used in order to reframe clarification of the nature of literacy, literacy practices, and learners as literacy users so that it can influence curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. The original document is often cited as an inspiration for ideas to be empirically tested out” (e.g., Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003, p.560). For instance, it provided a framework for addressing practices in the new literacy classrooms. (e.g., Kist, 2000; Rogers, Winters, LaMonde, & Perry, 2010), considering new understanding of texts and the use of texts in educational programs. The New London Group (1996) “provided a basis for describing existing cultural identity-text configurations in the world” (McGinnis, Goodstein-Stolzenberg, & Saliani, cited in Hornberger, 2007), and “a tool for investigating how students are engaged with variety of texts” (Hassett & Curwood, 2009, p.280). They also set the place for concept of *multiliteracies* which was rather lost in literacy studies. The New London Group developed a well-structured framework for action. Indeed, this framework contributed us to bring the field of education and English language education to the more comprehensive question of the social consequences of language education, given that “there was no singular, canonical English that either could or should be taught any more” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5). The outcomes of all discussions in New London Group “presented a powerful

redefinition of texts and practices, moving the field from *literacy* to *literacies*, through recognizing multiple ways of making meaning, including such modes as visual, behavioral, and gestural. They argued for the critical turn to literacy studies through shifting from a perspective on literacy as passive consuming of texts to comprehending and enacting literacy practices embedded and represented in various texts in which systems of meanings are structured. In New London Group's view, text was conceptualized as any artifact of production which is broadly perceived. This included either the body-as-text or talk as text" . (New London Group, 1996, cited in Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, *ibid*)

As Street (2014) points out, the concept of literacy practice in New London Group due to its more dynamic view to text and literacy practice is more applicable to ideological view to literacy these days. In Street's view, the New London Group's focus on literacy as an ideological or multiple socially situated practices highlighted the centrality of multiculturalism, new texts and literacies that play out in continual, complex interrelationships. Hence, as Street (*ibid*) argues, such new perspective to literacy could influence policy and practice in curriculum and assessment studies related to language education.

As regards to all the conceptual understanding of discourse of literacy, Ivanic (2010) in "Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write" presents a meta-analysis of theory and research on writing as literacy discourse. She identifies six discourses which in her view is defined as alignments of beliefs and also practices in association with literacy education. She introduces and explains a framework for the educational data analysis on literacy pedagogy in which the connections are created across "language views, writing literacy views, learning to writing literacy views, approaches to literacy education, and also approaches to literacy assessment". The framework can be applicable for the identification of different discourses of literacy in data such as "policy

documents, teaching and learning materials and also pedagogic practice reports” (p. 220). In this paper, she briefly mentions the work of other scholars who have addressed theories, ideologies and underlying discourses in literacy education. Two main identified discourses in her work is skills discourse and critical literacy discourse. Ivanic (ibid) in conceptualizing skills discourse sees this view to literacy as an output, namely the written or spoken text. Indeed, in her view, literacy in this sense contains applying knowledge of lexical and also syntactic patterns to construct a text. Also, literacy learning involves learning “phonetic relationships, lexical and syntactic patterns” (p. 240). In her conceptualization of a “skills discourse” teaching, she argues that there is an emphasis on accuracy of the relationships and structures. Rather, critical literacy in her conceptualisation is viewed as a socio-politically constructed practice. It sees literacy as power-related construct having implications for identity, and is open to contestation and transformation. She argues that critical literacy learning embraces comprehending why various types of writing and reading are, the manners they are, and it takes a positionality among alternatives. In literacy teaching, there is also an emphasis on “critical language awareness”.

2.3 Power Turn to Literacy Studies

As Pennycook (2001) argues, although Street (1984) in his seminal work, addressed the power-related nature of literacy, failed to comprehensively explain the complexities and discursivities in power-related notion of literacy in their understanding of literacy as socially situated or ideological practice. Therefore, in order to address a more comprehensive understanding of literacy as a socially situated construct, in the next section, I draw my attention to those literacy studies in education, focusing on power issues.

With reference to critical literacy studies viewed from the power lens, firstly, I will review some recent work at the macro level with an emphasis on curriculum and assessment. Then, some recent work at the micro level, namely pedagogical practices will be addressed. Finally, Foucault's contributions to literacy studies as the main theoretical framework of the study will be explained.

2.3.1 Critical Literacy Studies at the Macro Level

Critical scholarship on literacy considering the power-related nature of literacy came to be known as 'critical literacy'. These critical literacy studies are centered on the premise that literacy cannot be detached from power-related issues. The power-related nature of literacy comes from the reality that dominant groups attempt to capitalize on their vantage points to set their own ideological agenda for literacy. More precisely, in clarifying concepts of literacy as ideological or socially situated constructs, most of these studies attempt to share the view that literacy is of power-related nature since society is in a continual state of conflict, for the ownership of knowledge and hence power.

Grounded in all these critical literacy studies is arguments on “read[ing] the world through the words” (Freire,1970). They argue that there are always unequally matched; for some specific social groups have historically controlled the institutions, practices and ideologies of their society, thereby maintaining their positionality. However, because these are socially and historically constructed, they can be reconstructed. One main device for such re/construction is the issue of language and literacy in schooling systems. Hence, critical literacy studies put an emphasis on the underpinning cultural and ideological assumptions of a wide range of texts in these settings.

Althusser (2008) views schooling education as an apparatus “which reproduces the dominant culture, contributing thereby to the reproduction of the structure of the power relations within a social formation in which the dominant system of education

tends to secure a monopoly of legitimate symbolic [power]” (p.6). Althusser (ibid) advances his argument through his hypothesis on Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) which, in his view, functions “by ideology” (p.1490).

As Lankshear and Lawler (1989) also pose, "schooling is a major structural setting wherein those classes whose interests are already more influential have access to greater power by which to maintain their [ways of thinking and knowing] at the expense of subordinate class interests" (p. 25). Giroux (1988), by the same token, denies the concept that school knowledge is objective by arguing that "school knowledge [as seen in curriculum, instructional and assessment materials] is a particular representation of dominant culture, a privileged discourse that is constructed through a selective process of emphases and exclusions" (p. xxx). Literacy always embodies the "struggle [for] the control of the whole process of social reproduction" (Mouffe, 1979, p. 5).

Hence, many other critical studies scrutinize the contested representation of literacy in various schooling texts. These studies question the cultural and inequitable positioning of readers and also speakers within discourses. Furthermore, these studies “ask who constructs the texts; whose representations are more influential in a specific culture at a specific time; how readers cope with the influential ideologies embedded in texts; whose interests are met by such representations and also readings ; and when such texts and readings are not equitable in their scope of impacts, how then these could be constructed. They explore possible socio(in)equalities as made and maintained by literacy practices within and beyond formal education” (For more comprehensive accounts of critical literacy, see also Gee 1991, McLaren & Lankshear 1994, Luke 1997, Fairclough, 2001, Woods, Dooley, Luke & Exley, 2014, to name few).

In addressing the critical perspectives to literacy at the macro level, these scholars have conceptualized critical literacy as a social order or socially situated practice discourse in English education worldwide (See, for example, Apple, 1996; Hammond &

Macken-Horarik, 1999; Morrell, 2005; Reed, 2006; Morrell, 2009; Luke, 2012; Lau, 2012; Stojkovic' & Živkovic', 2012; Janks, 2014). They have seen critical literacy as a necessary and powerful instrument to discuss issues of text and cultural imperialism (NicCraith, 2007), gender, cultural and/or language (in)equity (Ammon, 2000; Apple 2013), and social justice (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009), nationalistic literacy practice in education (Osler and Vincent, 2002).

Integrated with the above-mentioned literature is the significance of text analysis which also opened a major area of critical appraisal in language and literacy education, namely textbook/ testbook as discourse in EF/SL contexts at all levels of schooling systems.

2.3.1.1. Textbook as a Discursive Discourse in EF/SL Contexts

Scholarship on textbooks has systematically been on the rise in the past few decades. In 1990s onwards, researchers began to draw their attention on the teaching materials. Lähdesmäki (2004) also argues that critical appraisal of the teaching materials, especially the EFL textbooks is ever-increasing due to positionality of English as a global language.

Karvonen (1995) categorizes several types of textbooks. A single textbook which often includes part of a larger series of books. In addition to textbooks, extra readings, work books with their exercises, teacher's material and a guidebook may be categorized in the group. Some recently published materials even those ones which include ready-made examination or testbooks for the teacher's use can be categorized as EFL textbooks. Lähdesmäki (2004) states that an EFL textbook is also a *merchandise* as it shapes the image of the English language and cultural practice to study English. A textbook has a strong positionality in different EFL and also ESL contexts. As Luukka et al.(2008) argues, textbooks play an important role in today's schooling systems since many

teachers in different EF/SL contexts utilize them as the most applicable instrument in their teaching.

Luukka et al (2008) in a large scale study examines perceptions of 740 mother tongue teachers and also 324 foreign language teachers. Their findings reveals that language teachers in Finland are heavily reliant on textbooks in their teaching process inspite of ever-increasing development of other teaching material (for instance the internet sources). They argue that the textbook popularity may have different reasons such as teachers' limitations on time pressure for preparing teaching materials. Hence, EFL textbooks are used to facilitate their work. Furthermore, teachers may have no enough training in utilizing the new technologiis although availability of the new technology in these schooling systems are also an issue. Students themselves enhances such dependency as they acknowledge using a textbook believing that the textbooks are something permanent which they can be reliant on.

Karvonen (1995) argues that a major role of textbooks in teaching is as important as that of the national curriculum so that it can be equated as curriculum. He adds that there are some criticisms on textbook dominance as textbooks are merely a medium and teachers' familiarity with the national curriculum is a priority. Teachers as curriculum developers are needed to decide on how to apply the textbooks when their understanding of the national curriculum may not be fully matched with the textbooks' authors.

Lähdesmäki (2004) believes that "teaching the English language and publishing EFL textbooks is on the rise due to market-oriented view" (p.273) of neoliberalism.

Rösler (1994, 2009) also points out that textbooks are often designed to be matched with the national curriculum. They also serve interests of a large number of stakeholders, including publishers, teachers, learners and so forth. Lähdesmäki (2004) goes on that *language learning and teaching* as a very complex phenomena includes a ranges of facts and skills to be learned. Teaching languages is centered around

vocabulary, structures, grammar and communication as well as on thematic contents (as seen in textbook chapters) and learning strategies. Hence, textbooks have multiple purposes although all important mentioned aspects of language learning and teaching may not draw equal attention. That is why the textbooks always meet certain learners' needs partially.

Kalmus (2004) states that much of the previous research on schooling textbooks was more or less based on implicit assumption that they are influential on their readers ideologically. This assumption is based on the fact that textbooks have been designed to teach students what curriculum developers believe. Kalmus (2004) and Lähdesmäki (2004) point out that school textbooks are also taken into account as important instruments for transmitting values, ideologies and literacies to the younger generation. Therefore, the analysis of textbooks is a necessity. In addition, Lähdesmäki (2004) argues that it is obvious that whether we want to teach attitudes or not, they are always part of the learning and teaching process. For instance, the selected texts in a textbook are reflective of the attitudes and values of the dominant culture.

Karvonen (1995) argues what the learners learn through textbooks is not the actual reality. Rather, it accords the reality which the text tends to create. The textbook authors utilize the language as an instrument for achieving their own agenda. An individual gets used to the perspectives and images which the text and the language reflect about the reality. This fact makes the text and its content seem more obvious for the reader.

As Kalmus (2004) states, in some cases, textbooks create the only trustworthy information source, in which case they are most likely to influence learners who are engaged with the texts. Educational texts clearly provide frameworks for learners' understanding. However, a considerable part of texts in textbooks include *the hidden curriculum*, which the learners may not notice or take them for granted. According to

Apple (1979), the hidden curriculum means certain values, norms and also dispositions which are implicitly but effectively taught in schooling systems but usually not spoken about. Teachers should be conscious of these facts. Hence, they should consider whether they should go beyond the textbook. Karvonen (1995) points out that many textbooks are developed by groups of authors, in that they are the result of collaborative thinking. Indeed, the textbooks have been created as a result of many compromises during their designing process. However, the *voice* heard in a text is not merely reflective of the author(s)' vantage point by themselves. Rather, it also belongs to other sources: The text may, for example, be a response, reaction or even follow-up for some other existing texts. Criticizing the common anonymity of authors, Risager (1991) also adds that although the authors' names are anonymous, their roles as a mediator still remain. Hence, their vantage points are never open to discussion.

Furthermore, every text is linked to other texts because creating texts is not possible in a vacuum without considering why and for which purposes the texts are created. This is called *intertextuality*. Wallace (2003) argues that the term intertextuality is being used in order to describe how the texts allude to other texts and how the texts should be read against within or across different text genres. Indeed, the whole range of the network centering around a text is termed as the *context* of a text (Karvonen 1995). Wallace (2003) goes on that context must be perceived as something more than the visible circumstances around the text: indeed, they include the conditions in which the text is created and used. Furthermore, such conditions are interlinked to other broader social landscapes from which the texts are ideologically influenced. Apple (1979) argues that *ideology* refers to a system of ideas, beliefs, values on society. The concept of ideology may also be linked to possible conflicts among people holding or seeking power. Ideologies are primarily embedded in the implicit propositions related to the text in context (Fairclough 1995).

Karvonen (1995) argues that the main idea behind *critical text analysis* is that texts are always a product of many alternatives and categories, controlled by the values, attitudes and ideologies in a community. The context restricts the target audience of the text to a specific group and directs the readers to come into some certain conclusions in a sophisticated manner. The main objective of critical text analysis is to disclose the hidden meanings existing in the text. As Wallace (2003) argues, the purpose of the process can be framed as linguistic, cultural and also critical. Firstly, the linguistic objective contributes to the reader to understand the ideological meanings embedded in texts. Secondly, the cultural objective enables the reader to achieve insights into cultural assumptions (for example, some possible similarities and differences among cultures). Finally, a critical approach contributes to the reader to go beyond the text.

Accordingly, many scholars (See, for example, Apple, 1996; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999; Morrell, 2005; Reed, 2006; Morrell, 2009; Luke, 2012; Lau, 2012; Stojkovic' & Živkovic', 2012; Janks, 2014). have attempted to disclose the multifaceted nature of texts like textbook, curriculum and tests as educational discourses. These scholars have drawn their attention to other aspects of critical perspectives to literacy at the macro level. In addressing the critical perspectives to literacy at macro level, these scholars have conceptualized critical literacy as a social order or socially situated practice discourse in English education worldwide. They have seen critical literacy as a powerful and also necessary instrument for discussing cultural imperialism (NicCraith, 2007), gender, cultural and/or language equity (Ammon, 2000; Apple 2013), and social justice (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009) as discourse of the textbooks in English language education.

In the macro level studies, there are some studies which examined how gender are represented or mediated in second or foreign language and literacy instructional textbook, although studying on assessment materials is still rare. Most of these studies

(see for example, Cameron 1992; Luke and Gore 1992; Weeden 1987; Pavlenko 2008), taking critical approaches to language and literacy, tried to (a) understand the association between power, knowledge and literacy; (b) theorize the role of language and literacy in production, reproduction of power, difference, and symbolic gender and cultural domination; and (c) disclose narratives which tend to exclude certain groups--be it women, or local and vernacular cultures--and devalue their literacy practices.

Specifically, those studies with critical perspectives also focused on acknowledging and incorporating genders in literacy education. These studies demystify normative discourses of gender by revealing domination as “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1984). They often draw their attention to cross-cultural differences in the meaning of gender. In most of these studies, gender has been conceptualized as a “system of culturally constructed relations of power produced and reproduced in interaction between and among men and women” (Gal, 1995, p.176).

Apple (2013, 2011, 2009, 2003) also addresses multiculturalism aspects and the dynamics of class, gender and also race resulted from neo-liberal and neo-conservative agendas in the US educational curriculum. He argues how subjects are classed, raced and gendered all at the same time in the curriculum. Hence, he argues that being limited to issue of class as if it is detached from other significant power dynamics seems invalid. He also problematizes assumptions that explain all issues in education through factor of economy as seen in work of some researchers like Giroux (2011). In his argument, this view would be reductive and also essentializing. Luke and Gore (2014), and Weedon (1987) also demystified how Australian school curriculum is gendered.

Laakkonen (2007) examined EFL textbooks to show the representations of gender in Finnish EFL textbooks. The objective of the study was to disclose whether the textbooks developed are matched with the principle of gender equity stated in the Finnish national curriculum, or whether they reproduce the traditional stereotypes.

Laakkonen used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to see how language as a medium constructs and mirror reality. Based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis in nature and also using content analysis, findings showed that textbooks are embedded with a hidden curriculum. Indeed, the textbooks were gendered and genders had specific steryotyped roles in the textbooks: males were active and sporty, while females spend their time with clothes and cosmetics. Focusing on ways of valuing in an EFL textbook series for upper secondary students, Keisala (2010) also used critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a method for her analysis to disclose values ideological implications and values embedded in the chosen texts. The data analysis showed that the texts reproduced marriage as one form of relationship either in arranged marriage or love marriage. The most visible value represented in the textbooks was the freedom of choice in marriage and divorce. Stability, commitment as well as practicality was negatively visualized values. While attitude towards love marriage was negatively represented, the attitude towards the arranged marriage was positively manifested. Futhermore, divorce was positively represented as it was introduced as part of the choice of freedom.

Apple (1996, 2000, 2003, 2013) also in stating his theoretical standpoint clearly “analyzes educational and curricular reconstructing in the US neo-liberal and neoconservative policies context. He discusses some existing educational themes related to the fields such as sociology of education, critical literacy theories”, and also curriculum studies, specifically in the context of the US educational policies. Among the themes addressed by Apple are different forms by which the reformist and conservative movements have been stating themselves socio-politically to impose their vantage points on gender and race via textbooks, national curriculum, and teacher education. He explains how the national curriculum and hence the textbooks were influenced by the US neo-conservative and neo liberal agenda. Also, he found that in the US the curriculum is the textbook in many classrooms. He adds that, in spite of

teachers' having the right to select among many texts, nearly all the textbooks seem basically similar and follow the same ethos. He views it due to the political economy of textbook publishers who just think of the market and meet the criteria of the most populous States. He adds that the market-based interests are one main reason why these textbooks seem shallow in content and exercise. In his view, these textbooks avoid those culturally or politically critical issues which may be faced with some negative feedbacks by those in power. Thus, many textbooks, at different levels, move away from any kind of provocative material in order not to jeopardize their sales. He calls this condition as "dumbing down" (that is to make the textbooks quite mild and simple). One more impact of the ever-increasing power of these textbooks is to get away from a social transformation agenda and critical literacy education.

Apple (2000, 2003, 2013) also explains how the core of the curriculum in different periods has a tendency towards either the US neo-liberal or neo-conservative agendas. Indeed, he comes to the conclusion that the US curriculum was always a consequence of settlements over what and whose knowledge should be legitimated in each phase or era. However, the US curriculum always had some enlightened elements which are embedded in it. These discussions some how include discussions on multiculturalism through race, gender, and also class issues.

In another study, Reed (2006) has also done a comparative analysis of post-1994 English language and literacy textbook in South African educational system which turned to a critical perspective to literacy. Embedded in Foucault's power theory and multiliteracies, her study shows how these textbooks shape literacy as multiculturalism and position learners as subject in the recently published textbooks. More precisely, she shows how learners from diverse cultures are excluded in the grade-9 English textbooks by textbook designers and producers. As contributions of the study, she argues for a

necessity for a critical perspective to literacy, considering more inclusive view to the school textbooks.

As shown above, critical literacy has often been studied as an analytical lens for researchers in investigating macro-level official texts, namely, educational policy documents, curriculum, English textbooks and examination. These few studies focus on having a critical lens in investigating texts like educational policy documents and core curriculum which defines standards, missions, goals and ethos for designing instructional and assessment materials.

Among few ones with a critical perspective to literacy, considering power relations, Apple (2000,2003, 2004, 2006) also discusses how the US neo-conservatives similar to their neoliberal counterparts are strongly committed to constructing mechanisms of severe control over knowledge, values and morals via national or state curricula and national or state mandated and reductive high-stakes testing. In his view, this is resulted from a strong mistrust dominant at macro level among policy makers in teachers and local school board members. The US policy makers hold the view that establishing strongly centralized control or centralized educational systems is the only way to achieve content and values of “legitimate knowledge” in the curriculum. Dependency to an apparently more demanding curriculum in terms of what they see as “higher standards” is also another possible alternative.

Thus, with students who are restratified in terms of what is viewed as “neutral” knowledge and “neutral” achievement tests, schooling itself must be more competitive.

Shohamy (2004) in “assessment in multicultural societies” addresses the issues of multiculturalism, education and assessment from power turn. Her main focus is on how tests apply hegemonic discourses. In keeping with this, she describes five scenarios to illustrate how knowledge of regional groups is often not appreciated and valued and how high-stakes examinations, especially language tests serve as an apparatus for

maintaining and perpetuating the dominant knowledge of regional groups. As contributions of her study, she argues for a critical language testing via more inclusive language testing and mentions such features as:

1. The necessity for considering and including diverse groups knowledge on tests
2. The necessity for conducting tests in cooperation and in collaboration with those tested
3. The necessity for applying Critical Language Testing (CLT) approaches with the aim for monitoring the applications of tests as apparatus and instruments of power, in order to challenge their assumptions, and investigate their outcomes
4. The necessity for protecting and guarding the test takers' rights.

Using a case study of a school, Comber (2012) takes an institutional ethnography approach to show the local impacts of the Australian federal policy. In this study, she examined what high-stakes tests do to teachers' work in a multicultural school community with students from low-socioeconomic class . She disclosed some strategic exclusion of students from different cultures in the testing process and some inequity on the differential effects of policy in different schooling systems.

One significant dimension of multiculturalism is the issue of national literacy practice which provided a new debate among researchers in New Literacy Studies. For example, Osler and Vincent (2002) argue that the leadership in numerous countries in the globe decided that a National Education agenda should be promoted within their education systems. According to this argument, Rossi & Ryan (2006) explains that this kind of leadership seems to be of a multifaceted agenda. It may "serve as a form of civics education in which the legitimate role of government is detailed and the sense of

civic responsibility is endorsed, although in fairly general terms”. Osler and Vincent (2002) “refer to other agendas which apparently advance a sense of National Identity and a sense of citizenship associated with superiority in nation-state, promise to the nationalism which in his view expands a general sense of belonging and national unity across cultures in education” (p143).. What most of these agendas seem to be is an unproblematic notion of identity and the belief that there either is, or can only be, one identity in spite of the fact that the literature includes a wide range of counter arguments (see Dudley, Robison and Taylor, 1999). Hence contemporary research in sociology of education denies this assumption. So, this is because no matter how caring governments attempts to be, globalization power to go beyond national boundaries refers to the point that numerous citizens of most developed nations also need to become global citizens and this especially is applicable for the young members of communities skillful in using techno and also cyber literacies providing them with opportunities to other possible worlds” (Luke & Luke, 2001).

The above-mentioned research literature on different aspects clarified understanding of literacy as ideological or socially situated construct at the macro level of analysis. However, at this level there still exists a paucity of critical research to show ideological views to gender and culture as represented in content and exercises of high-stakes examinations as official texts considering discursive power relations in different contexts.

2.3.2 Critical Literacy Studies at the Micro Level

In clarifying literacy as ideological or socially situated practices and also in response to many typical and also predetermined teaching practice models which ignored complexities of power relations, critical literacy scholars (Kincheloe, 2007; Wink, 2005;

Giroux, 2014) focused on critical literacy studies at the micro level, as practiced in classrooms.

2.3.2.1. Critical Literacy Pedagogy and its Contributions to English Language Education

Specifically, these critical literacy studies at the micro classroom level have often been related to the work and ideas of many authors in Europe and in North and South America (see Kincheloe, 2007; Wink, 2005; Giroux, 2013 for a detailed description of these authors). However, these scholars have been highly influenced by “Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, one of the most influential practitioners, the father of critical literacy pedagogy. What can literacy educators interested in critical literacy pedagogy learn from Freire? The first lesson is that critical literacy pedagogy is not a method. It is a socially situated stance or response, a way of teaching that sees in each and every student the potential to question taken-for-granted assumptions aimed at learning, but, most importantly, teaching something”. (McLaughlin & DeVooged, 2004, p.53).

Wink (2005) mentions that “the only way to do [critical literacy pedagogy] is to deeply, deeply believe in the learner” (p. 108). In other words, critical literacy pedagogy requires teachers and students working together to transform the lives and the world into a better place through questioning and critiquing. Using understanding of power-related nature of knowledge as his starting point, Freire (1970) worked on the notions of oppressor and oppressed from the perspective of social classes. This dichotomy of *oppressor*” and *oppressed* was particularly relevant to the Brazilian communities in which Freire was in collaboration with peasants and working-class people.

Other critical literacy pedagogues use Freire's (1998) phrase which is grounded on the belief that "naming the world through the words," is a critical initiative.

Aspects such as critical engagement for transformation and equity were agenda inherently demanded in critical literacy pedagogy. Hence, several authors have also reinvented critical literacy pedagogy as Freire (2002) suggested, naming it “a pedagogy of love” (Darder, 2002), “transformative education” (Ada & Campoy, 2004), “transformative pedagogy” (Cummins, 2000), and “revolutionary pedagogies” (McLaren, 2003; Trifonas, 2000).

One central issue in all these pedagogies is the concept of dialogue. Freire (1970) noticed that in traditional way of teaching, learners were viewed as “empty vessels” where instructors could “*deposit* knowledge”. Hence, he introduces the term of “banking education” or “banking pedagogy”. In banking pedagogy, as seen in many classrooms, teachers were the active ones while students waited for being filled with so-called facts or truths. Indeed, students played a passive role. Freire (1970) believed that in banking pedagogy or education students behaved like *objects*. In his view, it was important for them to become *subjects*, namely being a part of a *dialogical action* with the teacher, the opposite of banking education. The teacher and students would then construct knowledge together and learn from each other when they move towards liberation from discriminatory positions (e.g. being a failing student due to low achievement in examination-oriented settings).

Freire (1998) also states that there are always certain requirements for a “real dialogue” or transformative pedagogy. Indeed, dialogic or transformative practice cannot occur if some teachers positions themselves superior than students, acknowledging that they are the absolute owners of truth. Freire (ibid) adds that that “without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education” (pp. 73-74). True education, in his view, alludes to transformative pedagogy. However, as LópezGopar et al., (2006) argue, recognizing the point that “dialogue” can be used and manipulated by various groups is also important. Burbules

(2000) argues that it would be simplistic to acknowledge that in every dialogic practice, participants view each other in equal position for being listened to. Also, he questioned Freire since his stance to dialogue was too unproblematic and also idealistic. Burbules (2000) argues that:

“The crucial shift is [to go] from a prescriptive model of dialogue as a neutral communicative process, a procedure in which all participants are treated equally, concerned only with the search for knowledge, understanding, and perhaps agreement, to *dialogue as a situated practice*, one implicated by the particulars of who, when, where, and how the dialogue takes place”. (p. 261)

The concept of voice is also an inherent part of the dialogue proposed by critical literacy pedagogy studies. Taking Giroux’s work as a starting point, McLaren (2003) states that voice “refers to the multifaceted and interlocking set of meanings through which students and teachers actively engage in dialogue with one another” (p. 245). He argues that critical literacy pedagogy needs to be (re)constructed by ways in which students and teachers question, share, authorize or legitimize meanings, and underlying possibilities on the experiences as they share their “voices” both in teaching and learning. Blommaert (2005) also problematizes the construct of “voice”. He argues that having voice is highly contingent upon considering discursivities such as differences and inequities, conditions of power, and other people’s acknowledgement within specific contexts. More precisely, assuming the point that when one writes or speaks their “voice”--one’s beliefs, opinions, and/or arguments--other people will actually listen or grant the voice is problematic. Hence, in Freire’s critical literacy pedagogy, both the teacher and students must believe in each other and grant each other voice. Kamler (2001) also stresses that a person does not have a fixed and also unitary voice. However, he never clarifies the concept and conditions for having different voices for people.

McLaren (2003) implies “the notion of collective agency as political praxis” (p. 247). Macedo (1997) and Freire & Macedo (2013) focused on dialogical action

(exchange of people's vantage points) as praxis. They respond to those teachers who has interpreted their role in the dialogical model as facilitators whose role is to *converse* with their students. Freire & Macedo (2013) argue that teachers should not ignore critical engagement and co-constructing knowledge and literacy with their students. In their view, it is also the teacher's responsibility to assist students to make connections between their lived experiences and the new knowledge. In doing this, teachers will facilitate students not only to construct new knowledge, but also to get engaged in their own learning, which in turn may help students construct a more sustainable identity. Freire & Macedo (2013) “ put an emphasis that education should be always embedded in *praxis* (action + reflection), leading to transform the world into a better place for living. Dialogue without transformation is only sterilized *conversation*. Some teachers who have adopted Freire's dialogical action seemed to avoid the complex process of delivering agency to their students, thus promptly empowering them. Empowerment as sterilized *conversation* seems to be problematic because empowerment or creating a productive literacy practice should not originate only *from* the teacher *to* the student” (p. 176). Indeed, this false reading of empowerment, no matter how well-intentioned the teacher may be, may reproduce oppression and in turn remove agency from the students, again creating passive recipients.

One critique of critical pedagogy, Gore's (1993, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003) also argues that “there exist, indeed, two critical pedagogies, or at least two distinct aspects within critical pedagogy and these aspects are identified by scrutinizing those prominents who have dominated the discourse of each of the aspects” (p.40, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003). Gore relatively accepts Freire and Shor's contribution as they are representative of the “strand of critical pedagogy which offers concrete suggestions and examples taken from their own pedagogical practice, and which is intended to help other educators”. She defines this aspect as a contribution to “pedagogical practice”

(ibid). In contrast, Gore strongly criticizes those approaches taken by Giroux and McLaren who promote a 'pedagogical project'. In her view, merely an abstract sociopolitical articulation can not be labeled as "critical pedagogy, but critical educational theory" (p. 42, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003). Gore reckons that the main concern here is its incapability in prescribing some related practical activities in classrooms. She adds that the outcome

"is that their pedagogy might be seen to restrict its audience to those readers who have the time, energy, or inclination to struggle with it (namely, other academics and graduate students; not the avowedly targeted teachers or, in many cases, undergraduate students) and, in so limiting its audience, it subsequently limits its political potential" (p. 38, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003).

What Gore (1992, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003) clearly states is her concern on inefficiency and the predisposition of some critical pedagogues like Freire as they bring some unapplicable abstracted theories for teachers. In her view, the same criticism is made at empowerment constructs, a significant notion in critical pedagogy. These constructs, in her view, have been described by abstract theories which enforce "a requirement on teachers to do the work of empowering, to be the agents of empowerment, without providing much in the way of tangible guidance for that work" (p.66 quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003). Furthermore, she argues that the critical pedagogies are not possibly represented as perceived.

Hence, we can not argue that some special 'recipes' for pedagogical practice are required. Freire himself, avoided to do so. However, he problematized those teachers who focus on their students' experiences and also lives aimed at constructing learning experiences articulated with these. Indeed, teacher's accountability is to produce, adapt or regulate the fitting strategies for any specific educational context. Gore, however, argues that some theorists in critical pedagogy could do more aimed at acknowledging the realities associated with educational contexts rather than merely being focused on the exclusive dependency on the theoretical ones.

Ellsworth (1992, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003), also poses similar criticism. She reckons that even the term ‘critical’ is a “repressive myth[s] that perpetuate[s] relations of domination” and hides “the actual political agendas ... namely antiracism, antisexism, anti-elitism,....., anti-ableism, anti-classism, and anti-neoconservatism” (p. 98, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003). Ellsworth clarifies her claim stating that:

Theorists of critical pedagogy have failed to launch any meaningful analysis of or program for reformulating the institutionalized power imbalances between themselves and their students, or of the essentially paternalistic project of education itself (p. 98, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003).

Further criticisms are generally addressed to those critical pedagogues who in her view are “always implicated in the very structures they are trying to change” (p. 101, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003). Finally, she states that “a relation between teacher/student becomes voyeuristic when the voice of the pedagogue himself goes unexamined” (p. 104, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003).

Bowers (1987, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003) has also reviews Freire and his followers’ work inspite of acknowledging Freire’s significant contribution. Bowers also argues that “Freire’s pedagogy is centered on Western assumptions on issues like “man, freedom, progress, and the authority of the rational process” (p 127). Furthermore, Bowers (ibid) “proposes that contribution of Freire’s pedagogy is mostly a modernizing way of knowing and thinking. Hence, it thus runs the risk of promoting western values and assumptions. The problem with Freire’s position is not that he advocates critical reflection but that he makes it the only legitimate source of knowledge and authority” (p. 129, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003). In addition, more possible risk of critical pedagogy is to use dialogue as an instrument for so-called emancipation. Bowers (ibid) “opposes that the mode of thought associated in dialogue shifts the locus of authority from that of community and tradition to the individual who unifies thought and action in a new praxis” (p. 129, quoted in Keesing-Styles, 2003). From this vantage point, such

an analysis clearly is indicative of a challenge between Freirean pedagogy intent and what Bowers argues as the possible consequence. Indeed, Bowers critically alludes to much literature of critical pedagogy associated with the Freirean philosophies.

Other critical pedagogy theorists like, Cummins (2000), however, defines empowerment or productive literacy practice “as the collaborative outcome of power, where power is made in *the relationship* and shared among participants” (p. 16), as opposed to “coercive relations of power referring to the power exercise by a dominant group (or individual) to the detriment of a subordinated group” (or individual) (p. 14).

Apple (1996) and Giroux (1988) were also among very few critical literacy scholars who also called for more close reading of the movements such as struggle and also resistance created by teachers and other social actors in natural classroom settings.

Hence, some other scholars like Canagarajah (2004) also argues that critical literacy pedagogy researchers have ignored some important aspects of classroom discourses especially in relation with possible student resistances to subordinate discourses in “underlife” class, referring to the racially marginalized people. Hence, he uses the metaphor of “pedagogical safe houses” which subordinated people, e.g. racially marginalized students may develop for themselves. He adds that “understanding of student life in these domains [refers to safe houses] can creatively complicate our estimation of the critical thinking and learning potential of our students. By trapping the strategies, students display here, teachers may help them engage in critical literacy and language acquisition” (p. 135).

2.3.2.2. Accountability Regimes and High stakes Testing Effects on Teaching and Learning

Notably, as Morgan (1996) argues, in much critical literacy theorizing about pedagogy there still is a considerable and questionable ignorance about matters of teaching literacy practices in high-stakes or mandated-assessment oriented settings. According to Morgan (1996), this “questionable ignorance” was seen in the ideological and pedagogical impacts of high-stakes testing. Morgan’s position, while true in 1996, is no longer entirely valid as several researchers have attempted to examine the impacts of high-stakes examinations from ideological and pedagogical perspectives.

Morgan (1996), as a scholar in critical literacy studies, was among those pioneers who focused more microscopically on the classroom practices produced in assessment-mandated settings. Focusing on a reading of three pieces of student writing and the contexts of their production, she showed how the teachers graded these students, what comments they wrote, what the writers felt and did with that feedback, how their writing contributed to the so-called ‘success’ of the students. She argues that literacy practices in mandated-assessment settings centers around achievement as seen in test scores. Indeed, the mainstream secondary classroom economy is so framed that it produces knowledge, which in some ways, act as in capitalism. In other words, student-workers compete with each other aimed at producing goods, usually in the form of written pieces. These are offered to the consumer (the reader teacher), who assesses its worth by assigning a letter or number as score. In this symbolic exchange economy, the grades and scores convey a power equivalent to dollars, they work for the owner’s economic and also social mobility.

Apple (1996) and also Giroux (2014) documented more general critiques of the reproductive nature of public schooling through teaching practices in classrooms, especially in high-stakes tests.

Hammond (2004) shows how the standards-based reform in schooling systems has given rise to an ever-increasing strategic emphasis on tests, embedded with sanctions and also rewards. She also argues that the reform has acted as the basis for "accountability" or so-called high-stakes tests among teachers. These strategies have often brought some unintended consequences which in turn lower access to education for students whose performances were not matched with the defined criteria. In her article, she argues that high-stakes testing acts as a function for an accountability system. She also discloses how so-called successful outcomes have been achieved in states and districts within the United States when there is no focus on wider conceptual understanding of accountability but also investments on teacher knowledge and skills. In her view, these outcomes, all taken together, drive and influence curriculum reform in an integrated manner.

Nichols and Berliner (2007) "document and categorize different ways by which high-stakes testing threatens the goals and also ideals of the American schooling system. Their analysis is embedded in Campbell's Law. Campbell as a social scientist posits that the greater the social consequences coupled with a quantitative indicator (such as test scores), the more probable, the indicator itself will become degraded and the indicator use will in turn degrade their monitoring processes" (p.26-28). Nichols and Berliner (ibid) reveals both aspects of this degrading when they unlock some negative effects of high-stakes tests on the validity of test scores and the distorting impacts of the high-stakes tests on the the schooling system integrity. Their analysis provides a coherent and

also comprehensive framework for the wide-ranging arguments against high-stakes testing which has been a hot debate for more than a decade in the field of education.

Amrein and Berliner (2002a, 2002b, 2002c) have also investigated the effects of embedded effects or so-called accountability ("high stakes") to "student scores" on their national high-stakes examinations. In order to find out whether their high-stakes testing programs influenced student learning and also the intended outcomes of high-stakes testing policies promoted within the nation. They examined 18 States in which each state's scores was based on an independent measure namely, the National Assessment of Educational Progress. That was because these scores were easily manipulated by test-preparation programs. They also narrowed curricula focus and excluded certain students, and so forth. Through comparing the four-year variations in NAEP scores in each state with the average variations for all the states, they finally came to this conclusion that there were "no consistent effects across states"(Amrein & Berliner, 2002b, p.57) after effects were introduced. Furthermore, findings showed that these high-stakes tests also have some impacts including financial awards to schools or teachers, authority replacement like a principal or teachers. They wrapped up their words that in some states students did not learn anything beyond the content of these national high-stakes tests.

Mansell (2007) as a curriculum and testing specialist, in "Education by Numbers: The Tyranny of Testing" examines a series of issues on the reliability, validity, and also effectiveness of national high stakes tests and examinations associated with it. Mansell believes that all schooling systems are needed to subject students to regular assessments to unlock what students have learned and what they are recommended for improving. He also concludes that education just improves the *numbers* and that learning quality is being impoverished as its consequence. In his book, he describes how teachers and

students devote themselves for test answering mastering tricks and techniques based on which ever-improving grades are created. He also shows how such consequences are eagerly advocated by government agencies, with their strong interest in positive outcomes. He finds that such preparation dominates schooling systems so that it excludes nonmeasurable things. As a consequence, he documents how secondary students are positioned in mark schemes and hence model answers. He also questions the National Strategies and the examination boards themselves which in his view are playing the same game. Grade superiority dominates the educational landscape, and inevitably devalues the value of what he calls as achievement.

Nichols & Berliner (2007) also in their study on high-stakes examinations and student achievement reviews some problems resulted from the U.S.A federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) based on which “standardized test scores” are considered as the indicator to keep schooling systems and schools accountable for the achievement of the students. In terms of such an act, each state is responsible for constructing an “accountability system”, assigning consequences for performance of the students. In practice, this acts as an accountability program based on which the pressure of high-stakes testing will improve student achievement. However, findings of this study show that pressure made by high-stakes testing has had almost no significant impact on student academic performance. Furthermore, the analysis of data reveals that states with rather higher proportions of minority students accomplished accountability systems with more pressure. This finding also implies that any problems associated with high-stakes testing will influence USA’s minority students as well. Furthermore, the authors concluded that there is no “convincing evidence” stating that the pressure associated with high-stakes testing gives rise to any significant benefits for achievement of the students. Hence, they called for a suspension of policies which make the public schooling system reliant on the high-stakes examinations.

Au (2007) uses the qualitative metasynthesis method to analyze 49 qualitative studies. In his study, he interrogates how high-stakes testing influence curriculum which in his view is conceptualized as “embodying knowledge” form, content and also pedagogy. The findings provide evidence on the complex relationship between high-stakes examinations and also classroom pedagogic practice as he identifies some contradictions with the current literature. The main impact of high-stakes examinations is that “curricular content” is being “narrowed down” under examined subjects. Furthermore, knowledge of subject area is divided into test-oriented slots, and educators center around teacher-oriented pedagogies. However, this study also finds that, in some specific cases, there were also some specific forms of high-stakes tests which contradictory develop curricular content, integrate knowledge, and hence expand more student-oriented pedagogies. In fact, the findings of the study offer that the nature of high-stakes examination not only creates curricular control but also it is highly reliant on the tests structures.

Amrein & Berliner (2010) also document how educators’ tremendous pressure aimed at ensuring their students’ performance on high-stakes tests has made some educators cheat in different ways. Indeed, they find that engaging in test-related cheating practices act as subject of the high-stakes examination policy of the U.S.A NCLB Act. Data analysis revealed that cheating strategies occur in quite clever manners. The authors finally introduce cheating practice taxonomy in high-stakes examination-oriented settings.

Berliner (2011) in “ Rational responses to high stakes testing: the case of curriculum narrowing and the harm that follows on” discloses unavoidable responses to high stakes examinations in which students’ high-stakes examination scores are deeply far-reaching for teachers and also related administrators. These responses from his vantage point are

ranged from cheating practices, numerous exam preparation, manipulating exam scoring and other forms of what he calls as games aimed at ensuring that exam scores seem to be high. Furthermore, focusing on the most wicked response to high stakes testing in the literature on high-stakes examinations, namely, curriculum narrowing, he argues that these examinations reduce many students' opportunities for being thought talented in schooling systems. In his view, such a restricted response gives rise to removing the enjoyable and creative activities among teachers and students. As to his findings, he adds that the high-stakes tests which are frequently used with much narrower curricula also seem to act as a hindrance for developing thinking skills. Finally, narrowing settles interpretations related to construct validity of the tests. The dominance of high-stakes testing as part of British and also USA schooling systems reform policies assures that many of the useful skills for the twenty-first century will be excluded in teaching practices. Thus heavy reliance on high stakes testing acts as a hindrance for schooling system improvement.

Lamprianou (2012) in his article on “unintended effects of mandated policy-making in the high stakes examinations” briefly describes the educational system of Cyprus and analyzes how the recent changes occurred through its “large-scale assessment (LSA)” programme. In his view, introducing a dual-purpose LSA programme for not only “graduation (mostly criterion-referenced)” but also “selection (purely norm-referenced) purposes” made educational settings highly vulnerable. Furthermore, the lack of comparability between examinations in educational systems like Cyprus which is partly dependent on other countries to propose accessibility to higher education to its citizens may enhance this vulnerability.

Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith (2012) explain how high stakes testing which was introduced in 2008 under the National Assessment Program–Literacy and Numeracy

(NAPLAN) in Australia became dominant in the schooling systems. In this article, the impact of this dominance of national high-stakes test has been seen from the lens of authorities, school principals, parents and also students through analysis stated some observations from “the Australian Primary Principals Association during 2009–10 testing periods across the country”. They finally offer an alternative to the conventional “large-scale testing approach” with its all dominance, focusing understandings from research on achievement standards, teacher judgment, and also social moderation in the context of assessment reform and also national curriculum.

Polesela, Ricea & Dulfer (2014) in “ The impact of high-stakes testing on curriculum and pedagogy: a teacher perspective from Australia” explain how high-stakes testing regimes had an impact on schooling systems at all levels from teaching practices to distribution of resources and also curriculum provision. They pose a critical question on whether the high-stakes tests in Australian schooling systems could enhance student achievement in considered areas. Through a close analysis of teachers’ perceptions on the NAPLAN impacts on Australian schooling systems, they find that the high-stakes testing regime tends to move towards reducing time focus on other curriculum areas and alignment of teaching practice and also curriculum content in order to echo the high-stakes examinations. Furthermore, findings reveal that the modifying pedagogic and curricular practices is, indeed, a reaction to the possible concerns on using and also reporting NAPLAN data and the possible effects on schooling systems. These findings accord other research on the high-stakes testing regimes capability in other contexts. Indeed, negative influence of the high-stakes tests on teaching practices, constraining and narrowing down curriculum besides students’ educational experiences can be named as some of these effects. Embedded in Bourdieu’s theory on “concept of field”, this article explores implications from the legitimacy of some specific cultural practices via the hidden interlinkage between

teaching practice capacity and also the subsequent reproduction of social and also cultural inequities. Having transformative rather than deterministic reading of Bourdieu's theoretical concepts, the article also recommends some methods for enhancing the students' educational effects in so-called disadvantaged communities.

West (2010) in "high stakes testing, accountability, incentives and consequences in English schools" address impacts of high stakes testing in the school-based education system in England. Specifically in this article, the consequences of such testing in terms of accountability, teaching, learning and also resourcing are scrutinized. The author argues that there are not only serious consequences related to the testing regime, but also the validity of these high-stakes test results are under question. Moreover, there are concerns on whether focus on high stakes test results is to meet the society needs. Finally, the author argues for indicators for the issue of accountability to be included as the wider goals of education in schooling systems.

Booher-Jennings (2008) in "Learning to label: socialisation, gender, and the hidden curriculum of high-stakes testing" shows how high-stakes examinations in schooling systems has become sites for socialisation. Using qualitative data collected at an USA urban primary school, this study attempts to answer what teachers teach students through high-stakes examinations, how students read and also internalise these signaled messages, and how hierarchies among students are developed as a result of these messages. Findings showed that teachers positioned males' failure in their stereotyped "poor attitudes and behavior". Rather, they argue that females only needed much more self-esteem in order to pass the high-stakes examinations. A large number of male students in the study acknowledged their own teachers' diagnosis regarding the problem. However, those males who felt that they were already "doing their best" and

"working hard" problematize the view that they owe any educational success to their effort.

McCarty(2009) investigates the impacts of the impacts of high-stakes accountability policies in the U.S.A--in particular, under the influence of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001--on the U.S.A indigenous students. The author names some specific theoretical and practical accountability goals embedded in NCLB like: Theoretically, closing the niche through making schooling systems accountable for learning of all different student groups to be taught by so-called qualified teachers. Practically, the author argues that the new policy brought a wide range of problems for the US educational reforms and prompted schools to label those students whose performance were lower than the defined criteria from the testing pool as "underperforming". This study also focuses on a demographic, cultural, linguistic, and also educational profile of the USA indigenous communities and provides an explanation of tribal sovereignty dominant on these communities. Taken together with an orientation to NCLB and examining empirical research on its influences on Native American and other minority groups, the authors also suggest examples of promising educational practices as alternate policies, for what they call as "authentic accountability" and education policy reform.

White, Sturtevant, & Dunlap (2002) in examined pre-service and beginning educators' views on ways their literacy teaching beliefs and decisions were influenced by how to learn to teach in a high stakes testing setting. Results of the study revealed that the pre-service and novice educators had dissimilar views on how high stakes tests influenced their literacy teaching practices. Many participants assigned strong impacts of these high-stakes tests on their teaching decisions. However there were also some other participants who reported only minimal impacts. In addition, teachers frequently report

that their teaching decisions were predisposed, although the high-stakes tests were not influential on their beliefs in a real sense.

Turvey, Yandell and Alli (2012) in “English as a site of cultural negotiation and contestation” represent the tensions and also contradictions in London schools. Embedded within a polyphonic, narrative based tradition of inquiry into practice, they write vignettes on two stories arising out of their experience as teacher educators. These vignettes provide insights on the effects of so-called standards-based reforms on the experiences of school students and also their teachers in England schools. The authors show how these changes in schooling systems are reshaping social relationships and people’s subjectivities. This study provides a discursive and complex reading of how power relations of the standards-based reforms go on in English classrooms. The authors try to show that teachers and learners’ agency was influenced by the dominant discourses. Findings of this study show questions of identity, namely how learners and teachers are situated – and situate themselves – in history and culture, though absent in the classroom, need to be drawing more attention.

Power (1999) explains educational reforms under the shadow of standards regimes need to be scrutinized—especially the government imperatives bring more accountability for schooling systems to monitor activities and educational outcomes of these settings. In this author’s view, curriculum standards bring a new dimension of the audit society, one aspect of audit cultures which currently dominates educational settings under the shadow of a surveillance, audit society, and inspection control on educational reforms. Indeed, such standards act as ‘regulatory mechanisms’ or ‘political technologies’. They enforce educational stakeholders from teachers, students or school boards to be aligned in practice with these standards and are needed to be examined in a scrutinized manner (Shore & Wright, 2000, p. 61). Debates on alignments, matches and mismatches of

these standards at different levels were called for in the USA, United Kingdom, and Australia. In Shore and Wright's view, such scrutiny can improve the educational performance and outcomes of reforms at macro level in educational systems and the teachers' practices in classrooms.

Hammond (1999), investigating a US reform perspective, discusses that "Recently developed professional standards for teaching hold promise for mobilising reforms of the teaching career and helping to structure the learning opportunities that reflect the complex, reciprocal nature of teaching work" (1999, p.39). In line with Darling Hammond, Mahony and Hextall (2000) try to demonstrate the complexity embedded in examining curriculum standards. They argue that in examining standards and their pedagogical impacts what is important for researchers is to examine the so-called standards aimed at finding their consistency, clarity and coherence, as well as the underlying principles, values and assumptions. Furthermore, they also argue that these standards are needed to be scrutinized in terms of appropriateness of purpose to find out the consistency embedded within the bigger purposes of their setting. Procedurally, benchmarks embedded in educational reforms can be examined based on their formation and also establishment, with all these involved questions of transparency and also accountability. For example, they can also be interrogated in terms of the manners by which they are rendered into practice and the impacts, both visible and invisible. More broadly, there is a wide range of issues which are needed to be taken into account as associated with the "culture and ideology of standards as a widespread phenomenon" (2000, p. 30) which operate around and within the private and public schooling systems in England and elsewhere.

Although high-stakes accountability tests in schools tend to be standardised, there are great differences dependent on their emphasis. For instance, in Queensland, some

high-stakes examinations are skills-based. An important point on high-stakes examinations is that the exam results are utilized aimed at making significant educational decisions like: student movement through year levels; funding allocations; student enrolment; teacher competency; rewarding and sanctioning institutions; and narrowing and promoting specific aspects of the curriculum; enrolment screening (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Greene, Winters, & Forster, 2003; Berliner, 2009).

O'Neill (2013) labels the high-stakes testing practices as 'second order ways of using [assessment] evidence' (p. 4). In contrast, in her view, first order ways are associated with how teachers use assessment data and judgments on students' performance. According to O'Neill, using assessment data for second order reasons which are not directly associated with learning is questionable. Regardless of this, governments across the globe are increasing accountability (Flores, 2005; Fullan, 2001; Kostogriz, 2012) as it is associated with the curriculum via student and school performances in standardized high-stakes examinations (Amrein & Berliner, 2002).

Other critics of high-stakes testing highlight the following themes as impact of high-stakes testing to drive curriculum reform: emphasizing on performance rather than learning-oriented schooling systems; narrowing the curriculum; increasing drop-out rates; increasing teaching to the test; weakening teacher morality and escaping from the profession; promoting cultural biases; increasing pressure to cheat; increasing students' and teachers' stress; discriminating impacts on life chances especially for cultural minorities and also excluding subjects which are not explicitly tested like the humanities (see Dweck, 1999; Ingersoll, 2003; Lingard, 2010; Mathers & King, 2001; Parkay, 2006).

Focusing on high-stakes tests in U.S. schooling systems, Parkay (ibid) argues that standards are weakened as benchmarks are reduced in districts aimed at attracting more

funding. On the other hand, high-stakes standardised testing advocates that these tests increase assessment objectivity, bridge the gap in educational inequality, increase accountability and allow funding to be absorbed where needed, and ensure constant comparison between international educational systems (Dreher, 2012).

Greene et al. (2003) also compared results from low-stakes and high-stakes in schooling systems. They found that better performance in high-stakes examinations does translate into better performance in low-stakes examinations. However, many scholars such as Amrein and Berliner (2002) argue that there are no clear association between these examinations and better performance in student learning. Generally, what is obvious that high-stakes examinations as a global phenomenon places ever-increasing pressure on schooling systems (Fullan, 2001) and demands significant time and energy in schools' curriculum agendas (Pinar, 2004).

In "writing in English in Malaysian High schools: The discourse of Examinations", Tan & Miller (2007) also demystify students' responses to teacher instructions coming from discourse of high-stakes tests. The findings showed that the students' emphasis on plausible writing for the schooling system and high-stakes examination purposes did not incentivize students to advance their writing skills beyond the examination requirements. Rather, these students coped to learn how to become strategized in a range of pragmatic and also so-called efficient tactics for answering the high-stakes examinations.

To put it in a nutshell, in this section, some literature on the pedagogical impacts of high-stakes testing has been provided. However, the review revealed paucity of research focusing critical literacy and theorizing the power-related nature of literacy aimed at being critically engaged through critiquing, questioning, resisting and also *transformation*. As McLaren and Lankshear (1993) argue, critical literacy as a socially

and culturally situated practice “is best understood as a terrain of contestation that serves as a locus of multivalent practical and discursive structures and powers” (p.381).

The next section addresses Foucault’s contributions to critical literacy studies and restricted research in education which shape teachers work in schooling systems using Foucauldian analysis.

2.4 Foucault’s Contributions to Critical Literacy Studies

Foucault is a critical scholar with a post-modern, post structural view to knowledge, power and ideology. He focuses on the discursive and complex power-related nature of knowledge as a highly situated construct. He uses the term “discourse” to refer to critical turn to knowledge and literacy. Generally, discourses or discursive formations, in his view, are complex systems of signification governing the production and use of knowledge and meaning in every social context. Social contexts are established by the complex inter-dependent relationships shaped between, in, and through discursive practices (Berg, 2009). As Gee (2010, 2014) puts it, for Foucault, definitions of discourse are multifaceted. They include various aspects: discourse as a socially contested and situated practice (which is the main focus of the study); discourse as power; discourse as identity; discourse as conventions; discourse as exclusion; discourse as knowledge. According to Gee (1991, 2014), these attributes of discourse intersect with attributes of literacy, accounting for why some scholars view literacy in terms of discourse or somehow synonymous with it.

In conceptualizing the discursive view to English, however, Foucault (1972, 1980) has given the terminology of ‘discourse’ a broader scope than linguistics’ understanding. Foucault argues that the ways of talking as characteristics of a social or cultural group has a posture on more than merely the language dimensions associated to people’s lives. Specific uses of language (as discourses) are not just caused by an

ideology or socially situated practice but also contribute to constituting it. Hence, people's ways of thinking, their social actions and beliefs and even their way of being are shaped by discourses. More comprehensively, the expanded meaning of "discourse" from Foucault's understanding can be summed up in some premises, each of which has contributions to English education and critical literacy studies:

First, we are "produced by discourses" as much as we are "producers of discourses". In fact, discourses constitute and are constituted by socially situated practices and institutions. In education, for example, the dominant or 'commonsense' discourse about legitimate knowledge and literacy inheres in the official channels (See also Berg, 2009). Indeed, it can be seen in policy directives, syllabus, and curriculum and assessment instruments; through pre-service and in-service teacher training and coaching programs; through the beliefs of the school board members and through teaching practices of teachers at work. This discourse and other discourses and hence practices of English send a message on what teachers value, how they act, what knowledge and literacies are mostly important for teachers and students and how these can be measured. Through these means, certain kinds of teachers and students are expected to be constructed. Each teacher participates in a number of discourses. In a certain context and a certain setting, one discourse may be much more dominant, and *necessarily not matched with another*, which in turn may construct people's different actions in dissimilar and similar situations.

Second, discourses 'converse' or 'argue' with one another. Any discourse tends to work in association and in contrast with others, suggesting alternatives to what other discourses pose. Within the field of English in high-stakes examination-oriented settings, for example, based on Foucault's understanding of the concept of discourse, we can argue that, the discourse of "banking" pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 1993) may promote its own specific reading practices and 'develop' and 'encourage' its own

specific kind of reader, namely submissive reader. However, discourse of critical literacy pedagogy may 'produce' a different type of reading and reader, namely critical reader. Therefore, based on Foucault's understanding of discourse, we can argue that there is no entirely fixed discourse for people as seen in contexts. More precisely, not only are there leakages between analogous discourses of English or ways of teaching practices, but also we all have a wide range of political, religious and also cultural associations, belonging to different interest groups and the like in each context. Thus, no one shows a discourse in a 'pure' form, because such purity does not exist in practice. People based on complexities in the context decide on how to read the world, how to respond and how and which stances they need to take when enacting curriculum.

The *third* point is that discourses are power related and as Janks (2010) & Janks et.al., (2011) argue, in Foucault's view, power is not solid and dichotomous, as seen in many arguments posed by critical pedagogy scholars. Power is not a kind of mere subordination and domination as seen in critical pedagogy theorists. Foucault (1980) sees power as something circulating. In his view, power acts in relations and its working is "capillary". The metaphor can reflect complexity of power and flowing nature of power through the veins of society and different stances of its members, permeating all levels because power relations are like blood. They can not only supply nutrients but also can carry away waste products. As such:

"Power must be analyzed as something which [discursively] circulates..... It is never..... in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (Foucault, 1980, p. 96).

Such a theoretical position in my work can be read as a multifaceted, complex and discursive view of power-related nature of construction of knowledge and literacy practices in high-stakes examination-oriented settings which should be sought not only at macro but also micro levels.

The *fourth point* is that discourses do political work based on contextual conditions. Hence, Foucault (1984) believed that:

“In every society, the production of discourse [read *literacy practice*] is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures whose role is to prevent its powers and its dangers” (p. 109) . He also adds, in each context, “there is a group of rules serving to control discourse...it is more a question of determining the conditions under which it may be employed, of imposing a certain number of rules upon those individuals who employ it” (ibid. p.238).

More precisely, based on Foucault’s view, any ideology constructed by and constitutive of any discourse organizes the knowledge, beliefs and desires, the conscious and unconscious thoughts and attitudes of a specific group. It shapes and maintains certain social and cultural arrangements and assumptions. Therefore, a discourse is always involved in promoting and also circulating a certain ideology in preference to another, hence advancing the interests of a particular social group. It may, in effect, do so if the knowledge, ways of thinking and valuing are taken for granted as commonsense or become so natural as to be invisible.

In his clarification of political agenda of discourse and knowledge, Foucault (1978) insists that we must distinguish the relationships of power as strategic games or a ubiquitous feature rooted in the system of social networks and human interactions. In fact, it would be naïve if we think of society and its members fully passive against power relations situated in each context. However, we should not ignore that there always exist some strategic games that result in some people try to determine and control the “conduct of others” by creating the states of naturalizing some dominant, frequent discourses and practices as ways of thinking, valuing and knowing. These dominant discourses or practices may take many forms, e.g. ideological manipulation or even rationally oriented argumentation as it may be seen in the core curriculum of schools in the form of exercises, moral advice given or stances taken by teachers in teaching practices. It may even, in turn, create some functional approach of controls for

people involved with. However, it does not necessarily mean that dominant practices are always exercised against the interests of the other part of power relations. Moreover, power relations are complex. They do not always result in “determining the conduct of others” or is not intrinsically “bad” or “negative”. It can even finally result in an “empowerment”, resistance, transformation of subjects.

Furthermore, discourses contribute to constituting their subjectivity (for individuals who are subject to, and subject ourselves to, the discourses to which they give their affiliation). Issue of subjectivity and agency in relation to context seems crucial from Foucault’s critical reading of knowledge because it discloses Foucault (1980)’s understanding of productive aspect of power; it reveals how power "produces effects at the level of desire" (p. 59). Foucault's (1980) analysis of power starts at the micro level, with “the everyday thoughts and actions of [ordinary] people” (ibid) who are engaged with it. It can add to discursivities and complexities of power-related nature of literacy construction. It can explain how the ways they speak and think about themselves and by such devices would be given a complex identity to each person acting in each context (Morgan, 1996). These discursive power relations as perceived by people in each context may force or direct people, here, teachers and students towards making free decisions in fields of action. It can explain how the people choose their way to become an agent of change in education and/or subject to and submit to its discourses through taking stances.

Generally, Foucault is often cited in language/ideology critique studies. His study centers on "ideology critique" as naturalized, “common sense assumptions and distorted representations which hide interests presupposing the existence of an un-ideological (read as political), pre-existing truth” (cited in Morgan, 1996) . He also draws our attention to the root of some ignored aspects in conceptualization of discursive and complex power-related nature of literacy education. What Foucault (1970, 1980, 1984)

tries to underline is how discursive, asymmetrical power relations are largely perceived in context and used by people. As reconsideration, on discursive power-related nature of knowledge and hence literacy, we can come to the conclusion that Foucault puts an emphasis on:

1. his belief on continuous critique of the concept of "ideology" if it becomes suppressive
2. his particular perspective on conceptualizing "power" as a complex and discursive concept embedded in literacy as socially situated practice.

Hence, I use Foucault's social theory of power to clarify discursivities and complexities of literacy as socially situated practices at the macro-level as seen in formal curriculum. Also, this theory can show complexities of power-related nature of literacy in implementing teaching practices by teachers at the micro level of classrooms in educational settings which are high-stakes examination-oriented.

There is a paucity of research on shaping teacher work using Foucauldian framework. What follows specifically addresses the literature.

For example, Bourke, Lidstone & Ryan (2015) in their article entitled "Schooling teachers: Professionalism or disciplinary power?", framed in Foucault's social theory of power, show how teachers' perceptions on professionalism even in the current century are, in effect, reproducing "disciplinary technologies" proposed by Foucault related to nineteenth century, although in highly sophisticated manners. Indeed, a close analysis of 20 Queensland teachers' interviews reveals that exercising discipline in educational institutions have always produced "docility" via, for instance, the structures, the timetable or the old-fashioned inspecting and monitoring system of high-stakes examinations. Nevertheless, in their view, in the new era, we witness that there is an ever-increasing growth in the rate and scale of such discipline in a more abstract and sophisticated manner which impose power relations over teachers. "Unlike the overt

older forms of regulation, this so-called *secret invasion*” (Foucault, 1995, p. 170) has become now a less observable form of control. Using Foucault’s concept of gaze, the authors disclose its multidirectional nature originating from the parents, administrators, colleagues, community and students, acting both independently and in collaboration with each other which impose the severe form of teacher self-regulation. The authors also find that teachers tend to resist such control located in the disciplinary sphere.

Bourke, Lidstone & Ryan (2013) also uses Foucauldian archaeology for analysis of data in form of a series of interviews with teachers from Queensland, Australia. Indeed, the teachers are asked to reveal their experiences of professionalism chronologically in an era in which education moves towards more economic utilitarian purposes. Findings shows although there are a range of performativity practice in the educational landscape among teachers, there are some resistance by teacher which represent a counter or alternative discourse for the currently internationally pervasive performative climate.

Smeed, Bourke, Nickerson & Corsbie (2015) in “Testing times for the implementation of curriculum change: Analysis and extension of a curriculum change model” take Foucault (1994) as their theoretical/analytical framework, a ‘tool box’ through which one could find the appropriate one for the analysis of data. Embedded in Foucault’s theorisations on power-knowledge, the authors open up the verbal statements of teachers in Queensland and disclose how current concepts of professionalism are reflective of new and old manners in which disciplinary power acts in the daily routines of teaching practices. In the construct of Foucault’s disciplinary power, three simple instruments have been introduced: “hierarchical observation, normalisation and examination”. Hierarchical observation as a surveillance technology is a way of governing conduct and cultivating performance. Although schools have been places of training, as Foucault argues, they also exist “observation apparatuses or panoptic

mechanism” (Foucault, 1995). Using panoptic mechanism, Foucault refers to “Bentham’s model of a prison where everyone is made visible” (Foucault, 1995, p. 200). Panopticism in Foucault’s view is defined as “a metaphor for surveillance system which acts within the social body including schools”. In Queensland schools, this “system of surveillance included the old inspectorate system which existed until the early 1980s and still includes the hierarchical organisation of teachers in schools with a head at the top, the organisation of space in the form of classrooms, timetables, and ‘a network of gazes’ all laid down as a means of visibility” (Foucault, 1995, p. 171). The authors find that even though the inspecting system has been eliminated, surveillance still remains in the form of teacher professional benchmarks which schooling systems and teachers go on to act under continuous gaze. Influenced by this visibility, teachers turn to the mechanism of their own subjectivity, whether ‘being watched’ is confirmable or not. More precisely, they align their behavior as a result of the perceived or real ‘all seeing eye’ (Foucault, 1995) originating from *above*, namely leadership, politicians, parents, and communities, from *besides* by their colleagues and from *below* by students. Thus, through the lens of this description, the authors find that hierarchical observation hides what many teachers believe to be professionalism. Using another dimension of disciplinary power, namely normalization which defines the norms in the schooling systems, the authors reveal how the schooling systems have always enforced behaviour norms and knowledge among students and teachers. According to Foucault, any deviance from the so-called norm is “punishable”. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995) states how penalties for students’ inattention, lateness, or even impolite behaviour were specific characteristics of schooling systems in nineteenth century. Schools still apply what is labeled as corrective mechanisms to tackle student ‘problems’ by training or reward. Such mechanisms still remain for teachers in order to secure the functionality of the overall school operations. In interrogating interview data,

Smeed, Bourke, Nickerson & Corsbie (2015) looked for this strategy in the accounts of teachers. In disclosing the concept of examination, they referred to Foucault (1995) view to “combines both hierarchical observation and normalisation as an effective mechanism of disciplinary power. Foucault sees this instrument as a normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” (p. 184). As based on Foucault’ argument, they found that apparatuses of the examination are schooling systems via high-stakes accountability regimes in which judgments will be made based on measuring and comparing performance. Teachers transfer “knowledge to their students. Rather, they simultaneously obtain some information on their students. In this way, data on students’ performance and also conduct are documented and interpreted as a measure of teacher quality. Such documentation means that each individual (students and teachers) can be described and measured, as well as trained to bring about improvement” (Foucault, 1995). In effect, normalisation takes place. The authors find evidence of disciplinary power mechanism in the participants’ accounts. Indeed, the authors disclose three micro power technologies in the interviews and thus undo the “threads” of what is done and said in the name of professionalism.

As mentioned above, Foucault presents complex reading of power. Indeed, he did not see power as essentially repressive in nature, but probably productive as it may generate various types of knowledge and behaviour. Gore (2001) investigates power relations in four pedagogical settings and came to the conclusion that power mechanisms brought about a productive practice. These authors have also identified and acknowledged various forms of resistance by teachers. However, for Foucault, productive does not necessarily mean that all consequences are positive but rather, it refers to generative of structures, behaviours or events, either negative or positive.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological aspects of this study. The chapter begins by introducing and providing the rationale for the selection of the research site. Then the research approach and design are described in detail. The researcher's stance and professional roles; and how they relate to the participants and the setting in which the qualitative data are collected are included as well. Sources of data which include classroom observation, interviews, field notes and documents are described. Data analysis techniques i.e. thematic analysis, critical discourse analysis and comparative analysis will be discussed as well. Trustworthiness issues are also explained.

3.2 Research Site and Participants

In this section, the research site and participant and rationale for their selection will be introduced and provided.

3.2.1 The Research Site

This investigation was done in two English literacy classrooms in two different schooling systems –i.e. Classroom A in the mainstream Publicpublic high school system and Classroom B in the privately-run schooling system-- which are both taught by *the same teacher*. Regarding Iranian schooling systems as explained in the context

of study (See chapter one), the English language is formally taught in the two different kinds of schools as a subject besides other subjects like Mathematics, Persian literature, etc. Similar to the main-stream Publicpublic high schools, privately-run schooling systems are also run by the Ministry of Education (MoE). The two schooling systems follow the same national mandated textbooks and the same national high-stakes examinations; although the privately-run schooling system are less centralized at top official decisions making levels. My main purpose for selecting two different schooling systems was to ensure that the contextual discursivities and their impacts on teaching practices of the case of the teacher were well elaborated. Mr. Shayan, the case of this study taught in both these classrooms, namely A and B in the two mentioned schooling systems during the period of data collection. This also provided me with some specified alternatives. Hence, I selected classrooms in terms of a set of bounded features, namely obvious characteristics for the case of this study. Indeed, the common ground of both selected classrooms was the same teacher who had the same teaching levels (pre-university level) and also the same FEL textbook i.e. pre-university textbook and the same national high-stakes examinations, namely the Konkoor, the Iranian national university entrance examination and national high school graduation examination, known as NHSGE. Furthermore, the teachers did teach the same gender, namely males in Publicschool in morning hours and in privately-run in after Publicschool hours in the same semester during the same academic year. It should be noted that it is very common for many officially employed teachers under ministry of education (MoE) to work in privately-run schooling systems due to their rather low income in the Publicschools.

The two selected schools were located in my home town, a multicultural city in the northern part of Iran (See research site map in Figure 3.1). Due to its geopolitical position and the weather conditions, this city has attracted talented migrants from local

cultures and various ethnic groups. These groups comprised Turkmen, the earliest settlers, comprising 40 percent of the population living in the center of the city and the surrounding rural areas; Persians, from different neighboring provinces like Semnan, Khorasan and Mazandaran, comprising 30 percent of the city population; Azarbaijani Turks constituting 25 percent of the city population; and Sistani and Baluches with five percent of the total population. There were some other local cultures from other cities in Iran which made the context of this city similar to “a mini Iran” in the eyes of visitors. This city was recently listed in the UNESCO historical places.

The two selected schools were located in the center of the city. Both schools were also placed in a district having a similar demographic structure.

3.2.2 The Research Participants

This section introduces research participants and criteria for selection of these participants.

3.2.2.1 The Teacher as a Focal Participant

The focal participant is a teacher, Mr. Shayan (not his real name), who was selected primarily because he was teaching in the two schooling systems – Public and privately-run school--during the same semester. In seeking to identify my focal teacher, I was looking for one who had experience in both schooling systems as well as teaching English language literacy.

In so doing, I made use of local searches and a telephonic inquiry to the offices of the vice-principals of all schools to identify the selected teacher. I was informed that there existed only ten teachers in the city who were working in both schooling systems. Indeed, during the semester of data collection, these were only ten teachers who were teaching pre-university students who were becoming ready for national high-stakes examinations. Therefore, I approached the principals who were the gatekeepers to meet with these English language teachers. In some instances, some gate keepers were sensitive and did not allow me to have access to these teachers. Of all these teachers, I could make an appointment with just six teachers. Having explained the purpose of study to them, I noticed that only three of them were initially willing to participate in the study.

Of these three teachers, one of them was a novice with less than a two-year experience. This left two teachers with the requisite of experience for the study. Experience was a criterion for teacher selection because familiarity with the social context and practices of teaching has deemed a crucial factor in coping with varied institutional requirements in the educational systems. The two selected teachers had more than ten years of uninterrupted training experience. I considered one of them as the focal participant in the main investigation and the other as the participant in my preliminary study. The preliminary study was used to identify key features in the context and to fine tune the interview questions and other methodological issues.

Having selected the teacher participant, I discussed with him the details on the purpose of the research and data collection methods. Specifically, the discussion involved what the research was about; what would be done during the research study (this includes data collection procedures and role of participant and researcher) and how the results would be reported. Using the criteria from Creswell (2008) for the consent of research participants the discussion also covered the participants' right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time and assurances about protecting the confidentiality of the respondents. Table 3.1 provides details of the profile of the focal teacher participant obtained through interviews.

Table 3.1: Teacher Participant Profile

Demographic Background	The teacher (Mr. Shayan)
Age	50
Gender	Male
Place of birth	The city in northern Iran
Socioeconomic level	Middle class
Religion	Islam
Mother Language	Persian
National Language	Persian as national Language
Common Literacy Activities	Watching Movie, listening to national and International broadcast news
Number of Teaching Years	20 years, teaching experience in main stream Publichigh school and also privately-run schooling system.
Academic Qualification	Bachelor of TEFL
Typical Size of each classroom	30 <i>pre-university</i> students in mainstream Publicschooling system, 25 <i>pre-university</i> students in the privately-run schooling system.

3.2.2.2 Students as Co-Participants

In addition to focal teacher, the students in the classes who were taught in the two schooling systems constituted the co-participants in this research. Many students in the mainstream Publicschool come from a working class or middle class background, with both groups almost equally represented. Students from privately-run schooling systems

come from middle class and higher socio-economic class background, with equally representation of both groups. The religion of 99 percent of students is Islam (Shiaat comprising 60 percent and Sunni comprising 39 percent).

My rationale for choosing the students as co-participants was that I was also of the view that it is important that the view of the students be understood as their views could be influential on shaping and implementing teaching literacy practices in these selected settings. Consent from the co-participants would be obtained as well (See Appendix A₁ & A₂).

3.3 Research Approach

This study was seeking to identify how teaching English language literacy practices are implemented in the pre-university examination-oriented settings. The key concern here is therefore to identify teaching English language literacy practices and to understand English language and literacy construction from the emic or *participants' perspective* (Merraim, 2002). It offers insights into “how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (ibid, p. 6). In order to collect the above emic data on teaching practices, I went into classrooms and collected data on the process of teaching as a natural phenomenon by taking down observational field notes as well as audio-taped recording of lessons to capture the details of the teaching practice construction as it took place in the classroom. This implicates a process orientation towards this study.

The process-oriented approach to data collection on teaching practices allowed me to develop a deep and clear understanding of the internal dynamics of the relationship between practices, focusing on participants' experiences in the classroom and the nature of interacting factors. Process oriented data, as Patton (1990) stated, permits judgments to be made about the extent to which a particular practice is operating, the way it is.

Furthermore, it highlighted strengths as well as weaknesses in teaching English language practices. Such an approach certainly helped me understand what the focal teacher knew, thought and did in the classrooms in the examination-oriented settings.

In adopting a qualitative research approach, Creswell (2012, 2013) notes that qualitative research is a process of inquiry in comprehending and discovering a human or social problem. The researcher constructs a complex, holistic picture in a natural setting. Patton (1987,1990) and Merriam (2002) write that qualitative research is a process that allows us for capturing the detailed meanings of human words, intentions and actions where the researcher is required to collect data by going into the field or natural setting and having close, direct and personal contact with the people under study in their environments. Here, in order to identify teaching English language literacy practices at the macro level in an examination-oriented setting, a qualitative study could be a good option since it enabled the researcher to get close to the participants under study through physical proximity for a period of time. Sherman and Webb (1988) write that qualitative research implies a direct connection with experience as it is lived.

Qualitative research also granted the researcher freedom to examine and question a multilayered view of the construction of literacy practices within the cultural and ideological context of Iran that has a rich, varied, and unique existence. As Denzin & Lincoln (2008) argues, this mode of inquiry also mandates me to view the participants from within their natural settings in order to describe and analyze teaching literacy practices

3.4 Research Design

The study employed a case study design. The rationale for adopting a case study design was rooted in the focus of this study which involved identifying the implementing teaching literacy practices at the classroom levels by the same teacher. A case study perspective provides insights into how participants at the classroom level generate

recognizable social orders when constructing teaching literacy practices within an examination-oriented milieu.

As regards to uniqueness of the case, the study was described as a case study since this research investigation explored the case of “the same teacher who was implementing teaching English language literacy practices in two Iranian schooling systems”.

Merriam (2002) explains that “case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution or a social group” any of which can be described as a “bounded system”. In this study, “classes (Classroom A&B) into different schooling systems were considered as a bounded system” where the same teacher acted as the main participant in English language literacy *teaching* process.

As Stake (1995: xi) argues, the main objective of case study research method is to scrutinize the “particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake 1995:xi). Hence, the main focus is also on particularization rather than generalization. Stake (ibid) argues that in this method, however, there exists “naturalistic generalization” since people come to this conclusion via their own personal engagement in life matters so that they may feel that what happens to the case occurs to them as well.

In the present study, the “particularity” can be seen in an in-depth analysis of teaching literacy practices and even disclosing challenges one teacher acting in two high-stakes examination-oriented settings. This is an experience which the focal teacher may share with many teachers in the high-stakes examination-oriented settings.

Naturalistic globalization of this study for other EFL/ESL teachers and even learners who struggle in the high-stakes examinations may be identifying the dominant teaching literacy practices which has not been cited in the high-stakes literature not only

in Iran as an EFL context but also in other EF/SL contexts globally. Case study contributes to not only interpreting the particularity of my study but also sharing accounts for future readers. Indeed, these accounts can be applied to other similar contexts. Experiences of the case of Mr Shayan, the focal teacher, taken together with his students can be taken into account as an example of many other experiences in broader context not only in Iran but also in other similar situations.

There is also other reason why I choose a case study as an appropriate design for this qualitative research. This research explains the process of English language literacy pedagogy which takes place in the high-stakes examination-oriented settings. According to Merriam (1998) a case study is on the whole appropriate design provided that we are interested in the process. Observing such enables us to document “infrequent, non-obvious or counter intuitive occurrences” (p.33) which cannot be captured by standard statistical measure.

Patton (1990) argues that one best way for examining the conceptual framework model is to gather and use detailed description of one or few cases, rather than to collect data from sources like questionnaires and survey from a wide range of participants which deal with figures.

Indeed, in his view, the figures cannot explain about in details the influences of related contexts. Under these conditions a case study is particularly appropriate because it allowed me to draw more attention on the way particular case confronting complexities and discursivities in teaching literacy practices in the high-stakes examination-oriented settings.

3.5 Researcher's Stance

At the time of doing the preliminary study, in addition to working as on-leave faculty member, I was also an active member in the regional TESOL community and a mentor

in various professional and academic organizations. I saw my stance as juxtaposed to that of the selected teachers in preliminary and also main study because the teachers' experiences were complicatedly interlinked with my experiences as an Iranian teacher. That is because I was busy with teaching in such classes not a long time before. Notwithstanding that I was not a high school teacher, my teaching experience as a mentor in various schooling systems before becoming a faculty member contributed to my understanding of these educational contexts better.

Like the focal teacher, I am a Persian, middle class, 37-year-old. Coming from an immigrant family, I also shared some similarities in the values of my race, class, gender and status with the focal teacher. As such, these similarities enabled me to understand the context of English language literacy in the Iranian high-stakes examination-oriented milieu (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Pennycook, 2005).

However, I was also cognizant of the influence of my own subjectivities. As Peskin (1988) contends, subjectivity acts throughout the whole research process, from the choosing the topic, to data collection and analysis of data, to the writing up process of the findings. While this investigation as a naturalistic inquiry is not entirely value-free; I was conscious of my possible biases (cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and took this into account in the analysis through *triangulation of data*.

3.6 Sources of Data

This investigation draws on the following sources of data i.e. documents, classroom audiotaped observations, observational field notes and interviews.

3.6.1 Documents

One data source employed in this research was documents. Specifically, in this research investigation, (a) the Fundamental Reform Document in Education (FRDE), the

National Curriculum Document (the NCD) and (b) national mandated textbooks and national high-stakes examinations documents were used in triangulation of each other to answer Research Question One, namely “what are the dominant literacy practices at the macro-level in the pre-university examination-oriented settings”.

With reference to national curriculum documents, I focused on a recent educational policy documents i.e. “Sanade Barname Darsi Melli”--translated as the National Curriculum Document (the NCD)--aligned with what has been called for in “Tahavvole Bonyadin e Amuzesh”--translated as The Fundamental Reform Document in Education (FRDE)-- which detailed the characteristics of the most recent educational reforms issued in 2010 and 2008, respectively (See chapter one, context of the study).

The National Curriculum Document (the NCD) is, indeed, a macro-level educational policy document that articulates the prescribed dominant literacy practices which are promoted by the reforms currently underway in the Iranian education system. Specifically, the NCD is also a 68- page educational policy document written in Persian. The NCD maps those agenda articulated in the Fundamental Reform Document of Education (the FRDE), another 36-page policy document which elucidates the country’s 20-year vision, mission and objective reform in K-12 literacy education in all subjects including English Language Education (See Appendixes B₁ & B₂).

Also, the national textbooks were another document in this research investigation. In this study, the national English high school textbooks, namely book 3 and pre-university textbook were considered as data sources. These two national textbooks were selected to be analyzed because for pre-university students the two textbooks are a basis for the National High School Graduation Examinations (NHSGE) and National University Entrance Examination (NUEE or the Konkoor). With reference to these English textbooks, they included 8 lessons in each of which there was one reading passage and some activities related to grammar and vocabularies. With reference to

assessment documents, they included high-stakes examinations related to the Konkoor and the NHSGE (See Appendixes B₃ & B₄). These examination documents were published and endorsed by the educational authorities under Ministry of Education (MoE). They had similar structure of the textbooks. Also, in these examinations there was one or two short reading passages along some activities related to grammar and vocabularies. Most of these documents often are on-line, accessible and easily downloadable.

Based on the objectives of this research, I reviewed these documents in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the “social, namely ideological and power-related and discursive nature of literacy practices at macro level”. Specifically, in these documents, the following general categories were taken from the research literature in NLS and theoretical positions of this study:

(a) What kinds of assumptions are valued, represented, legitimized and taken for granted as shown in the documents and which ones are excluded.

(b) How the discursive power relations are played out in these documents.

That is whose interests and how they are being expressed, whose interests and how they are excluded, and with what end were taken as criteria for identifying the main themes in Research Question One, namely the macro-level dominant literacy practices in the pre-university examination-oriented settings.

Indeed, these documents and their analysis could also contribute to identifying the general process of production of beliefs, ideas and values shaped at the macro-level in an examination-oriented milieu. It also showed how economic, social and political interests of a specific group(s) were legitimized in the curriculum and assessment document in Iranian high-school systems.

3.6.2 Interviews

One of the principle sources of data was interviews with the focal teacher as main participant and volunteer students as co-participants in each classroom. All interviews were done in Persian to enable the participants to share their views better and more easily. The interviews were done at the middle of semester with the participants to get in-depth views on different questions. The interviews were developed and some needed modifications were done before being conducted in the main study and after reviving feedbacks during preliminary study. Finally, the interviews were improved through consultations which I received by peer debriefers (See section 3.8.1.1).

The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and translated into English. The guidelines for the interviews are attached in Appendix C₁. Appendix C comprises the guidelines for teacher interviews and Appendix C₂ comprises the guidelines for student interviews. With reference to research literature and theoretical positions of this study, both the teacher and student interviews attempted to elicit multifaceted information pertaining to:

- a) Participants' background
- b) How teaching English language literacy is implemented in any examination-oriented milieu. In this section of the interview, I probed, for example, the role of learners, focus of the teacher, and the role of context considering imperatives, and constraints on English literacy education in the observed schooling systems; teacher's and students' views on the criteria for successful teaching; the similarities and differences and the teacher's reasons for teaching practice constructions in each setting and so forth (See Appendix C₁, for details).

These guidelines were used as the basis to conduct open-ended semi-structured interviews with participants in individual and focus group sessions. These interview

questions were primarily used as a way of data triangulation to answer Research Question Two. The interviews were conducted before classroom observations with the possibility of some follow-up post-observation interviews to lend breadth and richness to the data on classroom teaching literacy practice constructions. The use of open-ended, semi-structured interviews was to leave space for me to add any further questions that may arise during the actual interviews with the participants.

I conducted a total of 25 interviews (10 with the teacher and 15 with students). Eight of the student interviews were conducted in classroom A and seven interviews in classroom B). Each interview took about 45 minutes to one hour. I transcribed and provided a brief summary of each interview within one week so that the information remained fresh in my mind. Everywhere it was needed, some follow-up interviews and member checking were done to clarify and add some ambiguous information shared by the participants as well.

In contrast to the teacher interviews which were conducted with the individual teachers (in preliminary and main study), the student interviews were conducted with students in focus groups in each class. In focus groups in which the students were in 4 or 5 people groups, participants heard each other's responses and made supplementary responses beyond their own first responses as they heard what other people had to mention. It was not necessary for the group to achieve any kind of consensus. Nor was it necessary for people to disagree. When an agreement was identified, I devised some probe questions aimed at seeking exceptions to the agreement. When a disagreement was made, I also devised some more probe questions which sought explanations for the dissimilarity.

The explanations arose progressively from the data as the study continued. The purpose was to acquire high quality data in a social context in which people could take into account their own views in the context.

In the event that some students in the focus group were reluctant to speak in the presence of their peers, individual interviews with these students were arranged.

3.6.3 Classroom Observations (Audiotaped Observations and Field notes)

The main objective of observation is to gather firsthand open-ended information through noticing people and places at a research site (Creswell, 2008). It consists of a systematic recording and noting of events, behaviors in the selected setting for the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). According to Marshall and Rossman (2010), observation is important and very central in all qualitative inquiry [more so classroom inquiry].

It is used to realize complex interactions occurring in natural social settings. Merriam (2002) postulates that observations are done to triangulate emerging findings; that is they are used in conjunction with interviews to substantiate the findings. In addition, I used observation to get some specific behaviors or incidents which can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews. Therefore, the rationale for the use of observation in this study was as follows:

- i. By directly observing teacher's activities and behaviors, I was better able to understand the context and role and focus of participants in every classroom setting. Such an understanding is important to form a holistic picture of literacy practices at the broader context which have an impact on the formation of teaching literacy practice implementation.
- ii. Observation is also a firsthand experience that allowed me to be open, discovery-oriented and inductive in approach, to identify the same teacher's teaching literacy practice implementation within the setting where the interactions occurred. By being on site, I also got first-hand experience of data. I was not reliant on merely prior conceptualization.

- iii. Observation provided me with the opportunity to identify those teaching literacy practices which were taken for granted by participants and would be more likely to be overlooked during interviews (Hatch, 2002).

With following the principle of data saturation for insuring that adequate and quality data are collected to support the investigation (Walker, 2012), I observed the two classrooms in two different schooling systems during six months, one semester from January to July 2013, two days a week, each session 45 minutes. The observational data for this study was collected in two forms. One is in the form of audio recordings of classroom interactions while the other was written observational field notes on classroom events. In this study, *excerpts* of literacy sessions/lessons and also their constituent *episodes* were considered as *unit of analysis*.

3.6.3.1 Audiotaped Classroom Observations

Audiotaping of these literacy sessions/observations set a stage for writing down reflections and descriptions of verbal communications. It contributed to removing worries for missing some important words of the teacher and students in each class.

3.6.3.2 Observational Field Notes

Observational Field notes are a secondary data collection source in the qualitative research. Field notes also involves reflective feelings, insights, interpretations, judgments and reactions of the researcher to what is observed, heard or seen (Bailey, 1996) on implementation of teaching English language literacy practices in the examination oriented settings. The observational field notes of the classrooms in the following weeks focused on locating teaching literacy in context: How are teaching literacy practices implemented in every classroom context? What does it look like in the classroom? How classroom participants experience, response and interpret it?

The method followed in this study was based on a non-participant observing role of participant. Indeed, the researcher, in this study, was a non-participant observer in that he just took field notes at the research site without getting involved in the classroom discussions. No certain pre-planned observation scheme was used in the observation process because some researchers (See, for example, Nunan, 1992) argues that pre-planned observational schemes may blind the researcher to some features of interaction and discourse captured by the scheme. However, in order to orient the written observational notes during the observation, I adapted a general observational guide line to record descriptions of teaching literacy practices in every classroom.

The rational of using this guideline was to:

- a) have an appropriate research profile based on the research literature
- b) to capture the details of classroom interactions
- c) to focus not only pedagogical goals but also classroom discourse embedded in the pedagogical practices (See Alexander 2001 and also chapter 5, p.98)
- d) to offer a detailed data collection and data analysis guide

This guideline was open-ended and no certain pre-planned descriptors drove the observer. Each lesson or literacy session and its constituent episodes were separately described. With reference to the procedure of taking observational field notes, the notes specifically included e.g. the following characteristics were the focus of this observational guideline (See Appendix D):

(a) Type of Activity

With reference to the kind of activity, the observer firstly identified its types e.g. drills, discussion, translation, and so forth).

(b) Materials Used and Their Purposes

Besides, in category of materials, the materials used in combination with classroom activities were described. Specifically, the observer focused:

- Kind of materials (e.g. textbooks and actual high-stakes examinations, and so forth).
- Purpose of materials (e.g. specifically designed for L2 teaching, or students' success in the high-stakes examinations and so forth).

How materials as key components of articulated curriculum were used in the classroom interactions? How did these materials construct classroom interactions? Were these materials highly-controlled? That is, was there a close alignment between interactions based on these materials? Were the materials minimally controlled? That is, did materials act as a starting point for ensuing interactions so that they may include a range of topics and discourses.

(c) Participants' Focuses and Their Roles

Also, the observer drew his attention on participants' focus and their roles in classroom interactions to address how the discursive power relations (for example, critique, resistance and reproduction of knowledge) were played out in implementing teaching practices in every context. Hence, for example, the notes, specified:

- Whether the classroom participants worked individually or some were working in groups and others worked on their own.

- Whether the students worked on their own or in group on the same task or different task.
- Specifically, whether one central activity led by the teacher was perpetuating so that the interaction was driven by the teacher to his student or class and vice versa.
- How the students responded to the teacher's focus.
- Whether one central and the related interaction led by a student was developed by the student to student or student (s) to class and vice versa.

(d) Content of Each Literacy Classroom/Session

With reference to content of classroom session, in this guideline, the observer also described:

The subject matter of the activities in classroom sessions among the class and the teacher, that is, I observed whether language skills (grammar, vocabulary, reading and so forth) or other discourses (subject matter of classroom discourse) are explicitly focused. In order to address subject matter of classroom discourse, as an observer, I drew my attention on how the classroom interactions were built. Specifically, there was, for example, a focus on:

- Whether interaction were part of the curriculum or went beyond the curriculum
- Whether the teacher was just narrowly focused on curriculum
- The teacher interactions /the topics were broadened and went well beyond the curriculum and included references to and discussions on controversial topics /issues

Furthermore, I also, during the observation, took into consideration the participants' response towards an activity and occasionally conversed with them after

each lesson when it was seen as necessary. At this juncture, it is important to note that field notes are already “a step toward data analysis”. Therefore, as Morgan (1997) comments, that is because “field notes involve interpretations, properly speaking, they are, “part of the analysis rather than the data collection” (p. 57).

3.7 Data Analysis

This section gives some details on describing the approaches to data analysis. In this case study, data analysis was on-going (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as I analysed the documents, conducted interviews, and observed participants and their interactions in the classroom contexts of English language in various schooling systems. In fact, in this study, data analysis began very early during data collection and gradually led to formal and final analysis once all data were collected. According to Patton (1990), such overlapping of data collection and data analysis improve both the quality of data collected and data analysis so long as the researcher does not allow these initial interpretations to distort additional data collection. For instance, detailed analytical field notes are written immediately following transcription (Miles and Huberman, 1994) to provide insight into the on-going analysis.

In analysing the data, two techniques were used as follows:

- a) Thematic analysis/grouping
- b) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

In order to answer Research Question One i.e. identifying the dominant English language literacy practices in the pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings at the macro level, thematic analysis of data was applied to documents. Then, Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) technique was applied into transcription of classroom interactions. The CDA sees “language as social practice” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), and considers the “ context of language use” to be crucial. My reason for

choosing CDA as a technique of analysis comes from Fairclough and Wodak (1997)'s quotation on definition which has become "very popular" among CDA researchers:

"CDA sees discourse-language use in speech and writing-as a form of "social practice". Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), the institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned-it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationship between people and group of people. It is constitutive both in the sense it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects-that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people". (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p.258)

I have chosen Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis because, as Wodak and Meyer (2009) in their book "Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis" argue, Foucault have not introduced a method of CDA and Fairclough is one critical discourse analysis who developed a method based on Foucault's fundamental concepts on power-related nature of knowledge. The extracted themes from CDA on classroom audiotaped observations were triangulated with teacher and students interviews and also classroom observational field notes in order to answer Research Question Two i.e. At the micro level, in what ways, are dominant discourses of literacy and pedagogy enacted in teaching of English language literacy in the pre-university EFL classrooms in Iran? The table 3.2 below relates these two research questions to the data analysis techniques proposed.

Table 3.2: Summary of Data Forms & Data Analysis Techniques

Research Questions	Data Forms used	Data Analysis Techniques
RQ1. At the macro level, what are the dominant discourses of English language literacy in pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings?	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (the Fundamental Reform Document in Education (the FRDE) and National Curriculum Document (the NCD)• National mandated textbooks (Book 3 and pre-university textbook)• National high-Stakes examinations documents)	Thematic Analysis of Documents
RQ2. At the micro level, in what ways, are dominant discourses of literacy and pedagogy enacted in teaching of English language literacy in the pre-university EFL classrooms in Iran?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom Audiotaped observations• Teacher Interviews• Students Interviews• Observational Field notes	Critical Discourse Analysis on transcribed and translated audiotaped observations triangulated with observational field notes and teacher and students interviews

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is one of the most commonly used techniques of qualitative analysis. One of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility i.e. not being tied to, or stemming from a specific epistemological or theoretical position so that it can be practical across a wide range of epistemological and theoretical approaches. Table 3.3 shows the procedure used to conduct thematic analysis based on theoretical/conceptual framework of the study.

Table 3.3: Thematic Analysis Procedures

No.	Phase	Activity	Purpose
1	Formalization with data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Translating policy documents from Persian to English.• Reading and re-reading transcripts educational policy documents (and instructional and assessment documents)• Noting initial ideas in each unit of analysis at the margin of manuscript.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand data
2	Initial coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generating an initial list of ideas and producing initial codes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To link different segments or instances in data into meaningful groups• To facilitate retrieval and organization of data
3	Searching themes for interpreting data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collating codes with common elements.• Starting thinking about relationship between codes, between themes and also different levels of themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To cluster initial codes into themes• To build a systematic collection of candidate themes and sub-themes.
4	Reviewing Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refining themes• Reviewing at the level of coded data extracts• Reworking problematic themes preparing thematic map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To recognize and recontextualize data• To identify potential new themes
5	Defining & naming Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further refining and defining of themes and analyzing data within them.• Conducting and writing detailed analysis for each theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To identify the essence of each theme and themes overall.• To determine what aspect of the data each theme captures
6	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final analysis and write-up of report	To report the findings

To sum up, in thematically analyzing, the two documents (the FRDE and the NCD) were firstly translated into English. Then, in order to identify the dominant

literacy practices at the macro level, the data were read and reread to put into meaningful groups or codes. In phase three, the codes were analyzed and combined to form themes based on theoretical positions (see theoretical framework of the study, chapter one) and the related literature in this study. Phase four involved reviewing and also refining the identified themes. It helps to develop a acceptable thematic map for this research investigation.

The next phase, I defined and also refined the themes to become sure that each identified theme could capture and analyze the data. In fact, data analysis saturation occurred. The final phase would enable a detailed analysis to be worked out including examples from the data itself. This way facilitated the process of linking the analysis to the first research question.

With reference to criteria for selecting the themes as macro-level dominant literacy practices:

- a) Typicality, namely occurrence of the reforms underway in educational systems accruing on re-indigenization of education (see chapter one, context of the study, section 1.2.3).
- b) Theoretical positions of this study and also research literature acted as other criteria for me to analyze kinds of assumptions and discourses which were dominantly valued, represented, legitimized and taken for granted in the investigated documents. Indeed, in this thematic analysis, I attempted to show and discuss how the discursive power relations were played out in shaping literacy practices observed in these documents and whose interests and how they were being expressed, whose interests, how and to what end are excluded in these analyzed documents.

The main themes identified by this way of analysis provided an answer for Research Question One, namely: at the macro level, what are the dominant discourses

of English language literacy in pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings?

3.7.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis CDA was used as a technique applied to analyze transcriptions of classroom interactions (audiotaped observations and field notes). Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis used in this study draws on two key theoretical positions as follows:

- a) The CDA is in line with “social turn to literacy theory” which argues that teaching literacy practices as a socially situated practice takes place in discourses and embedded in interactions. Discourses go beyond linguistics structure to encompass the values; beliefs and social identities situated in every context, here, classroom as a natural setting (See, for example, Street, 2010; Norton 2010; Luke 2002).
- b) The CDA, as used in this study, also draws on the relationship between power, knowledge and hence literacy. This position has been articulated by Foucault (1979, 1984, 1990, 2008) who argued that discourse is not the sovereign production of human subjects. Subjects are *produced by* discourses as much as they are *producers of* discourse [and hence literacy practices]. Therefore, literacy practices are embedded in complex relationships of power. In the high-stakes examination-oriented settings, these power relations are also systematic and ubiquitous features in the system of social networks and human interactions. They are *discursively situated in every context* and may naturalize some teaching literacy practices as ways of thinking, valuing and knowing, thus rendering them dominant

and frequent in the context of classroom (for fuller discussion see chapter one, conceptual framework of the study).

I used Fairclough' (1989) approach to CDA to answer Research Question Two: micro-level teaching literacy practices in the two classrooms, namely classroom A, in mainstream Publicschooling system and classroom B in privately-run schooling system. This approach is used because it can explain systematically how discourse built description of the teaching practices which was the main focus of Research Question Two.

Fairclough CDA was also chosen because the analysis of the teaching practices as the micro-level literacy practices needs a critical, situated understanding. With reference to the production of the teaching literacy practices at the classroom level, the CDA looks beyond individuals and analyzes not just the work of the teacher but also the impact of context and the social institution such as its material resources, discourse practices and its socio-political and economic location. This is of importance in a critical view to literacy education which sees language and literacy practice as socio-cultural and political phenomenon.

The Fairclough CDA approach includes three dimensions of analysis, namely, description, interpretation and explanation, which view the production and utilization of discourse in the classroom, a natural setting, as parts of a system that connect language, literacy and power relations (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). At the descriptive level, I did a dialectical praxis —a back and forth movement— on transcribed and translated audiotaped observations. That is to say, I made some reflections on data to make linkages among linguistic features and the socio-cultural and political analysis of any text or discourse produced in the classroom sessions. At the interpretation level, there was a specific focus on theoretical positions i.e. power relations (*domination, resistance and critique, see chapter one, theoretical and conceptual framework*) and ideological

constructs produced in the teacher and his students' interactions at the classroom level event as a social setting. At the explanation level, using interviews and field notes, I showed that the interpretation as well as description of the discourse produced in the classrooms' interactions may be restricted and influenced by the macro-level discourse practices of the particular institution within which these discourse practices are occurring.

With reference to the specific description of data analysis procedure, firstly, all audio-recorded language and literacy classrooms in the two classrooms over a period of one semester i.e. from January to July, year 2013 were transcribed and translated into English. Then, I examined the transcribed interactions carefully to identify common ideological pattern of pedagogical interactions across classroom sessions observed. To do so, I looked in detail at individual classroom sessions to codify such interaction features as "converging and compatible points". By reading the codes with and against each other, based on theoretical positions of the study, the broader themes were constructed. I went on this stage as long as data analysis saturation occurred. The triangulation of data with observational field notes and teacher and students' interviews was also conducted in Persian and translated into English were also done. Finally, findings were reported as the main themes to answer Research Question Two.

These themes were extracted based on how teaching English language literacy practices in each schooling system were implemented. Hence, for every theme, some excerpts of literacy lessons which constituted units of analysis in this study were selected to be reported. These excerpts in every theme were selected because they were deemed typical of teaching literacy practices at the micro-level or classroom interactions. Typicality was defined based on the frequency of occurrence of these teaching practices.

The selected excerpts also addressed theoretical positions of this study considering how the teacher's thinking, doing and saying *leads* the classroom discourses in every observed classroom. The teacher's role as a socio-political actor in critical literacy development and his role on how he acknowledges a controlling role for the communication of knowledge and hence literacy construction in the two schooling classrooms was described and discussed. How students responds to these teaching literacy practices. Furthermore, excerpts were selected to illustrate how the national mandated text book and national high-stake examinations were pedagogically used and how the testbook or these examinations drove and constructed classroom interactions in the two classroom contexts (See chapter 5, for fuller discussion).

3.8 Trustworthiness

All research must respond to principles of quality or soundness. This is the criteria against which the trustworthiness of research can be evaluated. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), like quantitative methodological procedures, qualitative studies are of aligning and parallel procedures for establishing trustworthiness. These procedures involve examining the credibility, transferability. The following can describe these criteria in my study in details.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility in investigation is actually discourses that take into account the sort of acceptable and legitimate knowledge. In order to be acceptable, research has to be valid, reliable in the views of research communities. In addition, a common concern of this study was centered on trustworthiness issues from different angles. In this line, credibility, which is analogous to validity in quantitative studies, is termed as a source of "trustworthiness" in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2008). Its purpose is to establish

accuracy of the data (Creswell, 2008) and to get at “truth value” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.278). In order to establish credibility of a qualitative study, Guba and Lincoln (1989) state:

“Instead of focusing on a presumed real reality out there, the focus has moved to establishing the match between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders” (p. 237).

Consequently, “the credibility of qualitative inquiry is especially dependent on the credibility of the researcher because the researcher is the instrument of data collection and the center of the analytical process” (Patton, 1990, p.461). Indeed, I was aware of closely monitoring my own personal subjectivities which is more likely to overshadow and place unnecessary limitations upon the study. I was informed that my preconceived notions surrounding the inclusion of cultural interactions in these classrooms are an integral part of the study and I did acknowledge them as an influential component. Additionally, as Heron (1981) argues, my critical reflexivity in this study enabled me to come close to an “altered consciousness condition and high quality awareness” (Reason & Rowan, 1981) for the sole purpose of understanding others. In addition, as the instrument of data collection, I utilized *peer debriefing, member checking and data triangulation*, in order to assist in producing more credible findings.

3.8.1.1 Peer Debriefing

“Peer debriefing, also called analytic triangulation, is the process based on which a researcher calls upon a disinterested peer — a peer who is not engaged in the research project — to probe the researcher's thinking on all or parts of the process of the research. This probing, here, consists of, but is not limited to, methodology, interpretation, as well as data analysis. As such, it is viewed as one complementary techniques applied aimed at enhancing the credibility as well as trustworthiness of

qualitative research through using external peers. It is often parallel or comparable with internal validity in quantitative research studies” (Hai et al., 2008, p.7).

As Creswell (2013) also points out, a peer debriefer who is familiar with the researcher and project (e.g. the supervisors, dissertation defense and committee members, colleagues) reviews and asks questions about the qualitative study e.g., how variables in the theory interact with the researcher's variable so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher" .

Guba and Lincoln (1989) emphasizes that peer debriefing is the process of engaging “.in extended and extensive discussions of one's findings, conclusions, tentative analyses, and occasionally, field stresses, the purposes of which both "testing out" the findings with [them]... and also help to make propositional tacit and implicit information that the evaluator might possess” (p. 237). In order that my biases in this aspect be probed, in this study I relied on two peer debriefers (my supervisor and two of my colleague as informed persons in this area) who worked with me and supported me on a continuous basis to this juncture of time, although I included some useful received comments from the dissertation defense and committee members as well. For example, on a monthly basis, my supervisor helped me comprehend my own values and role in the investigation. Further, my peer debriefers also gave me some comments on probing interview questions and different insights into possible areas of future exploration to enrich the usefulness of the research as well.

Furthermore, my professional background, namely, Bachelor of art in English translation studies, doing “back translation” and also receiving consultancies of the two of my colleagues who were specialists in translation studies contributed to adding credibility of the translated transcribed interactions and some documents.

3.8.1.2 Member Checking

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discusses that member checking is defined as one of the "most crucial technique for establishing credibility because it allows the researcher to test data, analytical categories, interpretations and conclusions with the stakeholders from whom the data were originally collected" (p.314). Further, they add that the most certain way of evaluation is to confirm the constructions with those who provided them. Lather (1986) asserts that extensive use of member checks can enrich validity. In doing so, I employed member checks aimed at clarifying, confirming and disconfirming meanings from the collected data. In order to facilitate this process, I gave participants i.e. teachers and selected students a transcribed copy of their interviews in their first language (in Persian), and I asked them to read over (in the comfort of their homes) the transcribed copy, and add or delete revisions as needed.

3.8.1.3 Triangulation of Data

Patton (1990) states that triangulation is a means of substantiating the credibility and enhancing the quality of a study. In order that I might see a credible portrait view of how the teacher and students' and perspectives are included in classroom literacy practices, and so that multiple layers of the data field are revealed, this study employed a variety of methods in the data collection phase via triangulation. Patton (1987) reminds me that "triangulation is a process by which the evaluator can guard against the accusation that a study's findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single data source, or a single investigator's bias" (p. 332).

Therefore, triangulating different kinds of documents in answering research question One and also observational field notes, persistent audiotaped observations within the classroom setting and semi-structured interviews with the focal teacher, students in answering Research Question Two suggest that interpretations of the

findings becomes credible and the picture projected from these methods represents a more holistic one. For example, juxtaposing what the teacher may say in his interviews about the inclusion of his teaching literacy practices with the observation field notes could reveal more layered data and integrity of the research questions more clearly. Additionally, another layer of triangulation were yielded from students' interviews; specifically, about how they perceive their voices to be included or excluded in teaching English literacy practice constructions in the examination-oriented settings.

3.8.2 Transferability

Applicability, which in the positivist tradition would constitute generalizability or external validity but in qualitative research is referred to as transferability, is another concern as it relates to trustworthiness. It is important here to note that generalizability to large populations is not the goal and concern of this research. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989),

"The object of the game in making transferability judgments is to set out all the working hypotheses for this study and to provide an extensive and careful description of the time, the place, the context, the culture in which those hypotheses were found to be salient"(p. 242).

Additionally, transferability is *"always relative and depends entirely on the degree to which salient conditions overlap and match"* (p.241). Lincoln and Guba (1985) remind us that the *"burdens of proof of claimed transferability is on the receiver"*(p. 125) Therefore, the goal of this research investigation is to describe the salient features of the context of this study in such a way that allow implications to be drawn from the findings and perhaps point to suggestions for further inquiry. There are two mechanisms for facilitating the transferability of research findings to other settings; purposeful or theoretical sampling (Patton, 1990) and thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the study site; I employ the latter i.e. thick description which is an important methodology for reporting findings. Since thick description is a major technique for

establishing transferability. Presenting findings of this study in detail will depict a socially situated understanding of English literacy construction in an examination-oriented setting through highlighting the dominant literacy practices as seen in the curriculum documents and implementing teaching English literacy in different pre-university classrooms of various schooling systems.

3.9 Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented the details of research methodology. It demonstrated my attempts to chart its details from research site, participants, research design and approach to data form, data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness. The nature of this case study using multiple sources of data compiled enables me to provide answers for the research questions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: MACRO-LEVEL DOMINANT LITERACY PRACTICES

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four presents the research findings relevant to Research Question One: *at the macro level, what are the dominant discourses of English language literacy in pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings?* Research Question one complements Research Question Two: *At the micro level, in what ways, are dominant discourses of literacy and pedagogy enacted in teaching of English language literacy in the pre-university EFL classrooms in Iran?*

While Research Question One focuses on the macro-level, Research Question Two focuses on the micro level. In order to answer both research questions, I draw on Street's theory of literacy (1984, 2010) and Foucault's social theory of power (1979, 1980, 1990). Street's theory of literacy (1984, 2010) sees literacy as socially-situated phenomena, an ideological practice rather than a set of decontextualized and monolithic language skills. Foucault's social theory of power also sees knowledge and hence literacy as a power-related concept in which power relations are discursive.

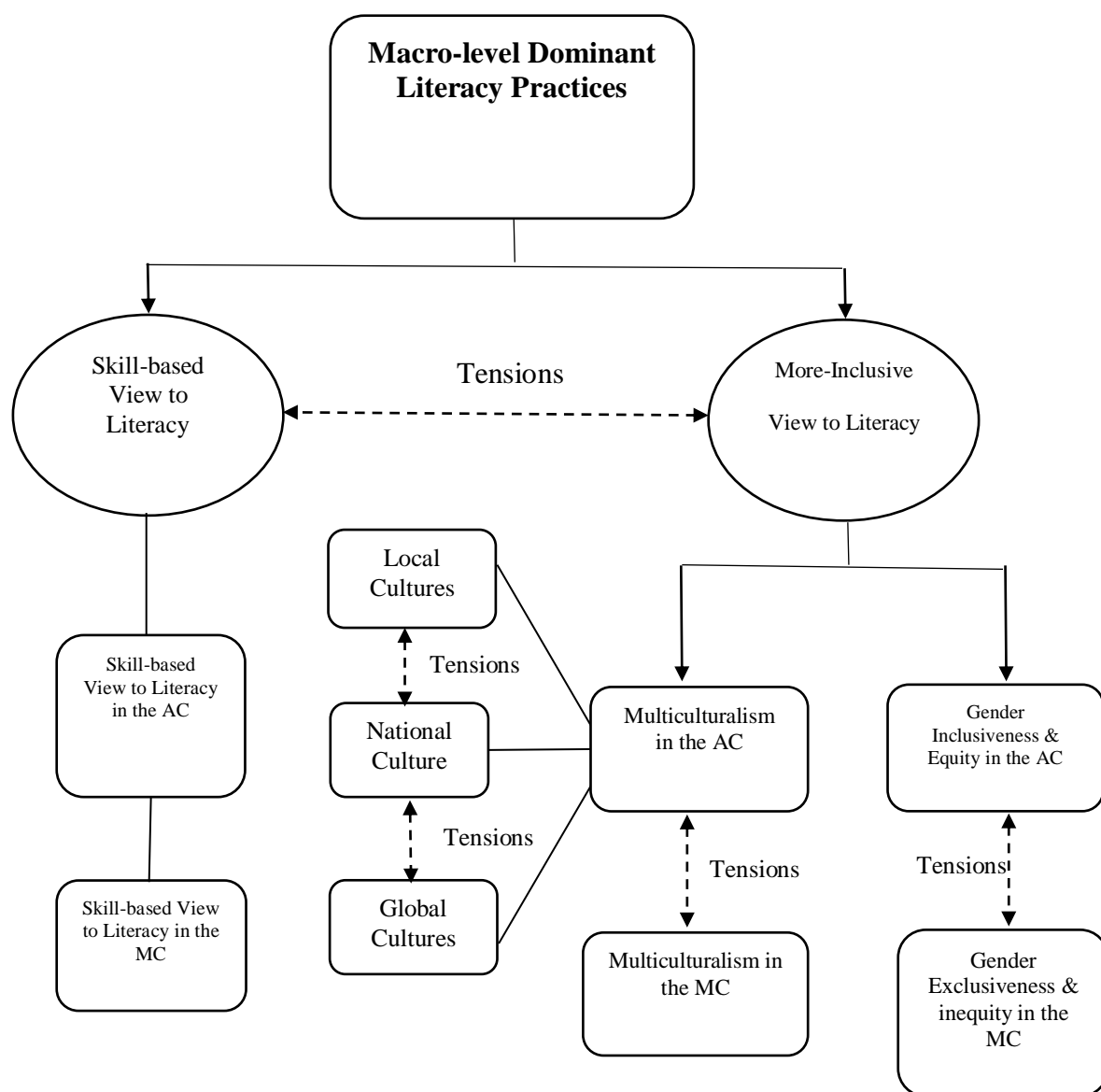
Based on Street and Foucauldian views of literacy, literacy practices are not neutral in themselves. Rather, they organize and promote and take some specific assumptions for granted. Therefore, they are ideological and serve interests of a specific group. Hence, a critical view to literacy questions these taken for granted assumptions at educational policy and practice level.

The key concept of ‘*the macro-level dominant English language literacy practice discourse*’ in research question one is defined as privileged or taken-for granted ideological assumptions and discourses at the macro level which are promoted in educational institutions like schools. The macro-level dominant literacy practices are prescribed by asymmetrical power relations in the socio-economic and political structure of any given society. They can be seen in educational policy documents such as core curriculum and key instructional and assessment components, namely national mandated textbooks and national high-stakes examinations.

4.2 Dominant Literacy Practices at the Macro Level

The following diagram (Fig.4.1) shows an overview of the findings related to Research Question One: the identified dominant literacy practices at macro level in high-stakes examination-oriented settings in Iran. In this study, the macro-level dominant English language literacy practices are identified through *thematic grouping* on curriculum documents. Curriculum documents are divided into articulated and manifested curriculum documents. The articulated curriculum is defined by Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE) and the National Curriculum Document (the NCD). The NCD is a macro-level educational policy document that articulates the prescribed dominant literacy practices which are promoted by the reforms currently underway in the Iranian education system. Specifically, the NCD is also a 68-page educational policy document written in Persian. The NCD maps those agenda articulated in Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE), a 36-page policy document which elucidates the country’s 20-year vision, mission and objective reform in K-12 literacy education in all subjects including English Language Education. The NCD takes the Fundamental Reform Document in Education, known as (FRDE) as its basis which adopted its principals from “*the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of*

Iran, the guidelines of Imam Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Revolution and those of the Supreme Leader of the I.R. of Iran, the country's 20-year vision, the country's comprehensive scientific roadmap, the education system's overall reform policies" (the FRDE, preface 2010, translated in English).



-----: tensions and paradoxes

AC: Articulated Curriculum

MC: Manifested Curriculum

Figure 4.1: The macro-level dominant literacy practices

Furthermore, the macro-level dominant literacy practices can be seen in the *manifested curriculum*--which takes the form of the national textbook and the national

high-stakes examinations. The manifested curriculum is an attempt to translate the articulated curriculum (the FRDE & the NCD) at the macro-level. In this study, the national English high school textbooks (book 3 and pre-university textbook) are analyzed. These two national textbooks were selected to be analyzed because they are a basis for the National High School Graduation Examinations (NHSGE) and National University Entrance Examination (NUEE or the Konkoor). The articulated curriculum and manifested curriculum, taken together itemize a set of ideological underpinnings, assumptions and practices which teachers are expected to comply with and enact in their classroom pedagogical practices. Notably, based on a thematic analysis on these documents two main following themes were identified:

- 1) Skill-based view to language and literacy*
- 2) More inclusive views to literacy through: a) multiculturalism b) gender inclusiveness and equity*

These two themes were selected as macro-level dominant literacy practice because they deemed typical of the reforms under way in Iranian educational systems. The typicality is defined based on the occurrence of frequency of the reforms underway in educational systems accruing from a political speech made by the supreme leader. (See chapter one, context of the study, pp. 3-11, for detail).

However, findings showed that these two identified macro-level dominant literacy practices represent the co-existence of seemingly contradictory positions on literacy. In fact, there are tensions between skill-based view of literacy and more inclusive view to literacy as two overtly mentioned goals in the articulated curriculum viz., the National Curriculum Document, specifically. The Skill-based view to language and literacy in the NCD represents the autonomous view to literacy (Street, 1999, 2010). Rather, the more inclusive views to literacy articulated in the FRDE and the NCD represents a

voice of culturally situated practice to literacy which is an ideological view to literacy (Street, 1999, 2010).

The key question raised here is that how the multi-voiced view to literacy with two different paradoxical approaches to literacy co-exist side by side in the FRDE and the NCD as the articulated curriculum. This paradox becomes more complex when those literacy practices in the articulated curriculum; viz. the FRDE and the NCD are not aligned with those seen in the manifested curriculum i.e. the national mandated textbooks and national high-stakes examinations. In order to elaborate these tensions and paradoxes, each of the themes are discussed separately below:

4.2.1 Skill-Based View to Literacy

In the following next sections, firstly I will show how the skill-based view to literacy in the articulated curriculum (here, the NCD) is shaped. Then, skill-based view to literacy in the manifested curriculum, namely, national mandated high school textbooks and national high-stakes examinations are reported and discussed.

4.2.1.1 Skill-Based View to Literacy in the Articulated Curriculum

A close analysis of the NCD shows that skill-based view of literacy is articulated since it mostly focuses on linguistic and outcome-oriented aspects of English language. A skill-based view to literacy highlights the “instrumental values” of communication and examination purposes” (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). The following excerpts of statements from the NCD embody language skill-based view to literacy. The translation of the statements published in Persian in the NCD referring this view is:

- *Senior high school students have to be able to write a short essay in English (the NCD, p38, preface of English book three and pre-university).*
- *Students are expected to read and comprehend a simple text in English in their specialized field. (the NCD, p38, preface of English book three and pre-university)*

- *Developing ESP vocabulary knowledge can enable learners to comprehend and communicate scientifically in English (the NCD, p38)*
- *Assessment of students based on their products [referring to their scores and GPAs] in national examination for graduation or upgrading cycles [the NCD, assessment section, p, 38]*

From the above mentioned excerpts in the NCD, it can be argued that a skill-based view to literacy in the curriculum predominantly limits the concept of English literacy to a monolithic and fixed set of language skills, most significantly, reading and writing and sub-skills like vocabulary and grammar measured by a set of scores. In other words, the underlying consequence of a skill-based view of literacy in the curriculum is to introduce language and literacy as a meaning system autonomous of context in which the main focus is on its *instrumental values* not its *cultural and political values*. Hence, on the surface level, the main agenda of literacy practices to be taught and assessed is mostly expressed in terms of the main constituent elements of the language.

These findings also “reflect distinction drawn between, on the one hand, asocial conceptualisations of literacy as autonomous, decontextualized skills located in the individual and, on the other hand, conceptualisations of literacy as social practices, culturally situated and ideologically constructed” (Ivanic, p.221; see also Barton, 1994; Baynham, 1995; Street, 1984).

4.2.1.2 Skill-Based View to Literacy in the Manifested Curriculum

The skill-based view to literacy is also reinforced by manifested curriculum as seen in mandated National Senior High School Textbooks and National High-Stakes Examinations like National High School Graduation Examination (here after, the NHSGE) and National University Entrance Examination (NUEE or the *Konkoor*) as well. The analysis of the national mandated textbook shows that every lesson starts with a reading passage and is continued with Vocabulary and Grammar Exercise (See Figure 4.2).

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH

Map of the Book

<i>How to Study this Book</i>			<i>Page i</i>
<i>Review of English Book 3</i>			<i>Page vi</i>
Lesson	Reading	Vocabulary	Grammar
1 P. 1	“Why Exercise Is Important!” Sentence Functions: Explaining Reading Skills: Paragraph Headings, Guessing Unknown Vocabulary	rely, efficiently, protect, injury, joint, flexible, bend, stretch, nutrient, fuel, store, fat, excellent, release	Conjunctions of Time, Reason and Condition: when, as, because, since, whether ... or
2 P. 11	“How to Give a Good Speech” Sentence Functions: Instructing Reading Skills: Guessing Unknown Vocabulary	audience, embarrassment, confidence, presentation, concentrate, firmly, distract, emphasize, gesture, expression, mood, projection, add variety, humor, nervousness	Verb+ Object+ Bare Infinitive Expressing Manner: By + Gerund
3 P. 22	“Global Warming, Global Concern” Sentence Functions: Defining Reading Skills: Understanding Reference, Guessing Unknown Vocabulary	concern, climate, trap, region, mainly, pattern, cause, sea, level, extinction, weigh something against something, environment, recycle, pollution.	Reduced Adjective Clauses
4 P. 33	“Earthquakes and How to Survive Them” Sentence Functions: Instructing (Review) Reading skills: Understanding Punctuation Marks, Guessing Unknown Vocabulary	float, consist of, smoothly, shake, rattle, damage, populated, destructive, probable, entirely, predict, locate, forecast, flood, emergency, procedure, calm, provide	Modification of Adjectives: so/such that enough/too

Figure 4.2: Table of content of the national pre-university textbook

Such a structure is also followed by the national examinations in a similar manner. The only difference is that the national high-stakes examinations have a cloze test passage as well. In fact, the national high-stakes examinations are structured in three or four sections: Part A, Vocabulary and Grammar section which includes questions in some decontextualized sentences to assess students' vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Part B which is a Cloze Test passage to check students' vocabulary and

grammar knowledge again. Part C i.e. Reading Comprehension questions includes two main passages focusing on vocabulary and some referential questions as well. Invariably, like the NCD, the structure of textbooks and examination highlights the instrumental value of literacy. In fact, there is a kind of alignment in the underlying concept of literacy articulated in the NCD with that of manifested in the supportive documents of the NCD, namely the national textbook and examinations. In both documents, the concept of literacy is reduced to teaching and learning some language skills and sub-skills.

This view to literacy is narrowed. To disclose some limitations of the skill-based view to literacy consider the use of imperatives and the verbs in the following examples taken from the textbooks and examination:

- **Fill in** the blanks with appropriate modals (the NHSGE, the national textbooks (book 3 & pre-university textbook).
- **Fill in** the blank with it or there (the NHSGE, The national textbooks: book 3 & pre-university textbook).
- **Complete** the following sentences with appropriate tag questions (the NHSGE, the national textbooks: book 3 & pre-university textbook).
- **Make comparison**, using the information in the time table (the NHSGE, the national textbooks: book 3 & pre-university textbook).
- **Complete** the sentences using the correct form of the verbs in brackets (the NHSGE, the national textbooks: book 3 & pre-university textbook).
- **Put** the words in correct order (the NHSGE, the national textbooks: book 3 & pre-university textbook).
- **Complete** the sentences using a, b, c, d. (the NHSGE, the Konkoor, the national textbooks: book 3 & pre-university textbook).

In the NHSGE, the Konkoor and the national textbooks, the use of set of verbs such as *answer, repeat, substitute, etc.* in the form of imperative sentences which I categorize them as *submissive verbs* implies that the manifested curriculum tend to transfer a restricted, predefined view to what is counted as a legitimate literacy over teacher and also learners. In other words, the absence of verbs like *think, share, discuss and criticize* which have the nature of transformation and dynamicity among students and teacher can transfer the message that the instructional and assessment manifested curriculum expect teacher and students to become a passive rather than an active reader.

Indeed, they are not expected to ask or share their own ways of thinking, knowing and valuing in a critical and reflective manner based on their own experiences. These imperative sentences and the “*submissive*” verbs restrict subjects to what to do- although not always how and why to do it. If so, knowledge and hence literacy may become hegemonic (Foucault, 1980) because they shape and are reshaped by an obedient literacy practice through thematic verbs and kind of structures embedded in the national textbooks and national high-stakes examinations.

Furthermore, such skill-based view to literacy not only in policy documents but also in the textbook and high-stakes examinations may mirror Ivanic’ conceptualizing literacy (2010) on *skills discourse* who sees literacy as a neutral output, namely the written or spoken text. Indeed, in her view, skill discourse literacy in this sense consists of applying knowledge of lexical and syntactic patterns to construct a text. Also, literacy learning involves learning phonetic relationships, lexical and syntactic patterns. In a “skills discourse” teaching, there is an emphasis on accuracy of the relationships and structures rather than a socio-politically constructed practice which consequences for identity, and is open to contestation and change.

4.2.2 More Inclusive View to Literacy

In contradiction with the skill-based view to literacy, the analysis of the articulated curriculum (the FRDE and the NCD) also indicates that achieving a more inclusive view to literacy through education has been consistently and unequivocally voiced over its different pages. A “more-inclusive view to literacy” (the FRDE, chapter 5, pp. 24-25; the NCD, p.37) serves as one of the main dimensions of reforms in Iranian Educational System in general and English Language Education specifically and is addressed in two main aspects:

a) *Multiculturalism Approach*

b) *Gender Inclusiveness and Equity*

In effect, the main objective of a more inclusive view to literacy in both mentioned aspects is *“to spread friendly and equity relationships with all human beings in a flexible manner”* (the FRDE, chapter 2, p 17; the NCD, p.3 & p. 17). What follows highlights the two main aspects of more inclusive view to literacy in the articulated curriculum (the NCD and the FRDE) and manifested curriculum (the national textbooks and national examinations).

4.2.2.1 Multiculturalism in the Articulated Curriculum

In this section, a thematic analysis of the articulated curriculum, the FRDE and the NCD based on their views to multiculturalism i.e. one main aspect of more inclusive view to literacy is presented. In these documents, multiculturalism is promoted by requiring a comprehensive view to various cultures, namely global cultures, national culture and regional or local cultures in the curriculum. The analysis of many statements in different pages of these documents shows that a multiculturalism view aims at developing a sense of:

- **identity construction:** through *“developing understanding of self and others”* (the FRDE, chapter4, p.22& chapter 7, p.31, 32; the NCD, p.32 & p.39)
- **tolerance:** through *“ a respect for, and acceptance of, difference”* (the FRDE, chapter 2, p.18 & chapter 7, p. 31; the NCD, p.36 & p.10) and understanding that 'difference' does not mean 'inferiority'. It is an answer to *“conflicts and the tyranny of the hegemonic cultural majority as it can only be controlled by the construction of a multicultural civil society which respects the differences among various cultures”* (the NCD, p10).
- **balance and equity:** based on a close analysis of multiculturalism stated in the NCD, it can be argued that a more inclusive view to literacy through promoting *“multiculturalism in a balanced way”* (the FRDE, chapter 5, p.25; the NCD, p. 10, 55 & 60) is a reaction toward any kind of *“imperialistic and hegemonic view to culture”* (the NCD, p.60). It alludes to achieving a plural view to literacy or *“ pluriliteracy”*, an attitude to set up a new utopianism to counter the bleakness usually associated with uniformity and universality embedded with a monolithic view to culture and hence to counter literacy practices favoring a specific culture.

- ***critical engagement and transformation:*** through developing “a critical attitude to different opinions” (the NCD, pp.32 & 33) and “a respect for and appreciation of all humans and their cultures to be valued ” (the NCD, p,61).

The main emphasis here is on the concept of “*interaction among various cultures*” in a balanced fashion to promote multiculturalism as one main aspect of more inclusive view to literacy.

As more evidence, in the NCD, there is an emphasis on “*devising practices which raise students’ awareness on Islamic-Iranian history, geography, culture and civilization not only in the national but also in the regional/local level at the textbook and assessment levels*”(the NCD, p37). This view is representatives of the linkage between the *national culture and the local cultures*. At the same time, other statements in the FRDE, chapter two page 18 and the NCD, page 37, like “*creating interaction between national (Islamic–Iranian) values and beliefs and culture with other global values and beliefs and culture* ” also represent the linkage between the *national culture and global culture*. Indeed, in the FRDE and the NCD, there are two views on how the cultures are interacting. An “*outward looking*” view which draws its attention to *national and its relation with global culture* and an “*inward looking*” view which focuses on *national culture* and its relations with its *regional or local cultures*.

On nationalistic literacy practices in multiculturalism approach, Rossi & Ryan (2006) argues that it “serves as a form of civics education whereby the constitutional role of state besides the sense of civic responsibility is promoted, albeit in fairly general terms” (p.18). Osler and Vincent (2002) alao sees “National Identity as a sense of citizenship which is associated with commitment to the national cause, and developing a general sense of belonging and national unity across within-border cultures” (p.143).

4.2.2.2 Multiculturalism in the Manifested Curriculum

As regards to how *multiculturalism* articulated in the FRDE and the NCD has been manifested in national textbooks and high-stakes examinations, the analysis of documents shows a range of cultural tokenism. Cultural tokenism occurs when a specific culture is dominantly favored. It occurs when cultural diversities and differences are not acknowledged and embedded and manifested in practices of the current national textbook and Examinations in a balanced manner. The cultural tokenism in the FRDE and the NCD are also manifested and reinforced in different manners in the national textbook and the national examinations. Analysis of data shows that cultural tokenism in different forms are manifested through cultural imbalance, cultural bias and cultural exclusion. These findings are in agreement with findings of Pavlenko (2008) who disclosed cultural tokenisms via stating some narratives which tend to exclude certain groups like local and vernacular cultures to devalue these groups' literacy practices. These findings also accords Shohamy (2004)' findings in which she illustrates how knowledge of regional groups were not acknowledged in assessment and high-stakes examinations and brings a kind of cultural tokenism in education.

(a) Cultural Imbalance

This kind of cultural tokenism is manifested when the various cultures articulated in the FRDE and the NCD are not equally valued in the current national textbooks and examinations. In fact, some cultures are more visible so that a kind of cultural imbalance is perceived in the documents. The followings are some areas where the cultural imbalance is manifested:

(i) Representation of Influential Persons in the History of Science, Art and Literature

Both the national textbooks and examinations contain frequent passages on development in the sciences, education, economics, art and literature. However, the authoritative or influential persons who are mentioned in reading passages, or vocabulary and grammar questions are dominantly from western countries. For instance, consider the following examples taken from reading passages in the Konkoor or NHSGE:

- “*Railways were first built in Great Britain and in the 19th century*, as the Industrial Revolution developed, the rail ways were the most important and fastest growing form of transport. These plate ways and team ways were also used *in South Wales* and it was there in 1804 that the *Cornish mine owner Richard Trevithick* worked on a steam locomotive able to pull a load of 20 tones (22 US tones). With the development of a steam engine, that was open for the start of the railway age”. (Taken from a reading passage in the 2008 Konkoor)
- “*In Western Europe and the United States, the first programmes of special education were developed during the late 18th and the 19th centuries*. But were not widely available. These schools were residential (boarding) establishments, and were often in the countryside. This meant that the children who attended them rarely mixed with other children”. (Taken from a reading passage in the 2008 Konkoor)
- “*In 1610 Galileo left Padua to become first philosopher and mathematician to the Duke of Tuscany*. This gave him more time for research and in 1613 he published a book called *Letters on the Sun spots*, and in it, as well as describing for the first time the spots that appear on the face of the Sun, declared his belief in Copernicus theory that the Earth goes round the Sun. This brought Galileo into conflict with the Roman Catholic Church which still believed in the teaching of Ptolemy and said that all Christians were to believe in it”. (Taken from a reading passage in the 2008 konkoor)
- “*John Milton (1608-74) is usually thought of as the greatest of all English poets after Shakespeare*. His most significant poem is *Paradise Lost (1667)*, which tells the story of God’s dealings with mankind, from the creation of the world, as told in the Bible” (Taken from a reading passage in the 2010 Konkoor)
- “*A Russian cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, was the first person to journey into space, travelling one around the earth on 12th April 1961 in an orbit that lasted about 90 minutes. The first American astronaut to circle the Earth was John Glenn, who made a three-orbit journey in February 1962. The early manned spacecraft, such as Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo in the United States and Vostok in Russia, were small and had restricted crew rooms*”. (Taken from a reading passage in the 2011 Konkoor)
- “*Socrates (c. 470-339 BC) was one of the greatest Greek philosophers*. Little is known about Socrates’ early life style except that several times as a

soldier and *showed great bravery*. He was born in Athens when the city was the leader of the world in literature, art, and government”. (Taken from a reading passage in the 2012 Konkoor)

- “In 1807 John Dalton, a British chemist and mathematician from the English county of Lancashire produced his famous atomic theory”. (Taken from a reading passage in the 2011 Konkoor)
- “Sharpshooter *Annie Oakley* is a *mainstay in the folklore of the Old West*. Born *Phoebe Ann Moses* in 1860, *Annie* learned to shoot at a very young age out of necessity: she hunted for birds and small game animals to help feed her family and to make some extra money by supplying the local hotel restaurant with her catch. She soon became known for her excellent marksmanship and began taking part in shooting competitions at a very young age. It was rather unusual for a young girl not only to take part in such competitions but to win over older, more experienced male competitors. At the age of fifteen, she defeated *Frank Butler, a professional marksman*, in a competition. She and Butler were married a year later, and together they took part in shooting exhibitions. In 1885, the couple joined probably the most famous of *all western shows, Buffalo Bills Wild West touring show*. As part of their act, Annie shot a cigarette out of her husband’s mouth: Frank Butler’s participation in this part of the act clearly demonstrated his faith in his wife’s shooting ability. Annie also accepted volunteers from the audience to take part in her act, and on one occasion, while *touring Europe*, she even shot a cigarette out of the mouth of *Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany*”. (Taken from a reading passage in the 2013 Konkoor)

(ii) Representation of Names of Ordinary People

Ordinary characters in different sections in the national textbook and national examinations are mostly from Western countries. For instance, names like *Mary, Laura, Uncle Joe, Professor Bilker*, etc. which are Anglophonic are more frequent in the Konkoor or NHSGE and the national textbook. Rather, Persian names are less frequent in the Konkoor. Table 4.1 below shows overall frequency and percentage of western and also local names, either western or local ones in the randomly selected national university high-stakes examination, namely the konkoor and NHSGE in years 2007-2011.

Table 4.1 Overall frequency and percentage of ordinary names

Year in	Ordinary Persian names		Ordinary Western names	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2007	13	16.88	3	3.89
2008	11	14.28	3	3.89
2009	10	12.98	5	6.49
2010	14	18.18	2	2.59
2011	15	19.48	1	1.29
total	63	81.85	14	18.15
				100

For more illustration, see the following examples taken from the Konkoor or the NHSGE:

1. “A: *Mary* is going to (.....) to the party. (the 2011 NHSGE)
B: (.....) she doesn't have her license yet.
A: a) give me a ride b) drop me off c) do me a favor d) give me a hand
B: a) Wow! b) So what? c) How could she? d) God only knows”.
2. “*Laura*the class room late because she..... with one of her classmates. (the 2010 NHSGE)
a) had left, would argue b) would leave, argued
c) left, had been arguing d) was leaving , was arguing”
3. “*Uncle Joe* was careless Money that he spent \$ 1000..... clothes and the holiday weekend. (the 2010 Konkoor)
a) of, for, in b) for, on, at c) on for, on d) with, on, over”
4. “A: *Professor Bilker*, can I see you after this class? (the 2007 Konkoor)
B: I (.....) at the faculty meeting then-how about the same time on Friday?
a) am due b) get across c) make a scene d) keep in touch”
5. “It was very difficult for *Dan* to hide his ----- when he was rejected by the law school. (the 2009 Konkoor)

- a) disappointment b) pretension c) inaction d) boredom”

As seen in the above-mentioned taken samples, while the Anglophonic names are more frequent, Persian names are less frequent in the national textbook and the high-stakes examinations. The following two examples, for instance, are those less frequent ones in different sections of the textbook and examination in which Persian names can be found:

1. “*Reza* had a terrible accident yesterday.” “Hehave been more careful.”
(the 2008 Konkoor)
a) must b) may c) should d) would”
2. “Combine the following sentences using the words (although) in parentheses. (the 2009 NHSGE and the pre-university textbook)
Ali’s father has a lot of money. He does not help the poor (although)”.

(iii) Representation of Geographical Sites

The cultural imbalance is also dramatically seen in the examples taken from the National Textbooks and Examinations as well. As seen in these examples, geographical places like New York in USA, Toronto in Canada, London in the UK belonging to Anglophonic countries are more frequent. Likewise, some geographical places in Iran and also cities like Tehran, Rasht, Shiraz, Tabriz are less frequent in the texts of the NHSGE and the national textbooks. Table 4.2 shows overall frequency and percentage of geographical names, either western or local ones in the randomly selected national university high-stakes examination, namely the konkoor in years 2007-2011.

Table 4.2 Overall frequency and percentage of geographical names

Year in	Local Geographical names		Western Geographical names	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2007	1	2.32	7	16.27
2008	2	4.65	9	20.93
2009	1	2.32	6	13.95
2010	----	----	8	18.60
2011	3	6.97	6	13.95
total	7	16.26	36	83.74

100

Also consider these examples taken from the Konkoor 2010 and the 2010 NHSGE for more elaboration:

1. “If only I ----- at the wedding, but I had to be *in New York* (2014).
(the 2010 Konkoor)
a) were b) could be c) would have been d) had been”
2. “*Toronto* is the city -----, (the 2010 NHSGE)
a) where my sister moved to b) my sister moved there
c) which my sister moved d) my sister moved to”
3. “It rained all day in *London*, but here we had only a(n) ----- shower.
1) transient 2) specific 3) enduring 4) shallow”

It is of significance here no names of *Persian or non-Western* were included. This pattern may be articulated to the test designers’ assumption that an examination in English should represent the West in terms of geographical references and names of persons.

(b) Cultural Bias

In the NCD, a more inclusive view to culture as a macro-level literacy practice has been articulated. However, the manifestation of this literacy practice in a range of texts in the national textbooks and examinations contradicts the articulated goal in the FRDE and the NCD and produces a kind of cultural bias in practice. Cultural bias in this study involves representing “a culture as inferior or superior to other cultures”. The biased view to culture can be manifested in three ways in these texts through *over-representing Western culture, underrepresenting national culture and misrepresenting religious-national culture and identity* as shown below:

(i) Over-Representing Western Culture

A close analysis of all the above-mentioned reading passages (see, for example, 4.2.2.2.1.a) in the Konkoor and NHSGE, and the national textbook show that there are some value laden adjectives or descriptions like the *first in the first railways, the first programmes of special education, the first (modern) philosopher a mathematician, the first American astronaut to circle the Earth and also the greatest in the greatest of all English poets, the greatest of the writers and thinkers, a mainstay in the folklore*, etc. In fact, these adjectives used exclusively for Western scholars, programmes and characters wittingly romanticize them so that the reader may falsely conclude that they are the only ones who contributed to human and social development. This mode of representation narrows the scope of manifested multiculturalism to some specific countries, dominantly Anglophonic countries. This may bring a kind of cultural bias besides cultural imbalance which contradicts the *balanced and equity stance* towards cultures as articulated in the FRDE and the NCD.

(ii) Under-Representing National Culture

Historical texts in the form of reading passages are frequently used in the national high-stakes examination. The analysis of National Examinations documents shows that the main focus of these texts are on great ancient civilizations like Egypt, China, Rome and Greece. In all these texts, these ancient civilizations are praised for their different contributions to history of social and human development. However, Iran with its rich history has not been narrated as a great civilization in the national textbooks and examinations. See for instance, the following excerpt of the reading passages in the 2012 Konkoor:

“This article presents a specially designed world history chart showing what has happened *over the past 7000 years in all the main centers of civilization. From the earliest civilized peoples- the farmers and town- builders of Mesopotamia and Egypt from 5000 to 4000 BC –up to the present day.* You can choose, for example, the short 800 to 650 BC, at a glance, see that several important things were happening at different places in the world at much the same time”. (the reading passage taken from the 2012 Konkoor)

A more in-depth analysis of the national examination documents shows that there is only one text about Iran and its civilization. This text is highly contested narrative of a historical event on a battle between the “mighty Persian Empire” versus the Greek in 490 B. C. The author views it as one of the most famous events which changed the trend of history and civilization. See the reading passage taken from the 2012 Konkoor:

“The victory of the Greek over the mighty Persian Empire in 490 B. C. is one of the most famous events in history. *Darius, king of the Persian Empire, was displeased because Athens had interceded for the other Greek city-states in revolt against Persian domination.* In anger the king sent an enormous army to defeat Athens. He thought it would take drastic steps to pacify the rebellious part of the empire. In Athens, citizens helped to rule. Ennobled by this participation, *Athenians were prepared to fight for their city-state.* Perhaps this was the secret of the victory at Marathon, which freed them from Persian rule. *On their way to Marathon, the Persians tried to fool some Greek city-states by claiming to have come in peace. The frightened citizens of Delos refused to believe this. Not wanting to abet the conquest of Greece, they fled from their city and did not return until the Persians had left. They were clever, for the Persians next conquered the city of Etna and captured its people. Athens stood against Persia. The Athenian people went to their sanctuaries. There they prayed for deliverance.* They asked their gods to expedite their victory. The Athenians refurbished their weapons and moved to the plain of Marathon,

where their little band would meet the Persians. At the last moment, soldiers from Plataea reinforced the Athenian troops. The Athenian army attacked, and Greek citizens fought. The power of the mighty Persians was offset by the affection that the Athenians had for their city. *Athenians defeated the Persians in archery and hand combat. Greek soldiers seized Persian ships and burned them, and the Persians fled. Herodotus, a famous historian, reports that 6400 Persians died, compared with 192 Athenians*". (the reading passage taken from the 2012 Konkoor)

The story of this text as world history is generally taught in most US and European schools (See, for example, Close up Teaching Unit 4.4.2 Pressured by Persia: The Persian Empire 550 – 479 BCE, <http://www.worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu/>) was also tested in the 2013 Konkoor. However, the event narrated in this text has sometimes been questioned by many historians and politician who have argued against it (See, for example, Iranian military history: the Achaemenid dynasty, the Persian wars, Herodotus and His Critics in www.cais-soas.com). It is about a fictional battle between a Persian Empire invasion force and an army of Athenians in 490 BCE. In this narrative, Iranians are portrayed as a *totalitarian emperorship*. Rather, the Greece People are viewed as *patriots* who fight and were killed for their city-states and "revolt against Persian domination". In this historical text used in the Konkoor, the Greeks are portrayed as clever people who are not fooled "by Persians claiming to have come in peace". They are *victorious people* who could thoroughly defeat Iranian emperorship. Using the number of bodies in the battle in both sides, namely 6400 Persians versus 192 Athenians, the author tries to amplify the wide range of this defeat, their patriotism and altruism. In addition, the author tries to validate his narration by bringing the historian like Herodotus who were not present in that fight but wrote on this narrative a few decades later while there is no narrative and even word on this battle in Iranian historical documents.

A close analysis of this historical text with its validity is still under question in the national examinations shows a kind of a cultural bias in favor of Western culture which in turn brings a kind of misrepresentation of ancient Iranian culture, an inherent part of

national identity. An analysis of the reading passages in the national examination taken from so-called authentic materials (authenticity refers to a text written by an Anglophonic speaker) demonstrates that how content of a reading passage embedded with its cultural biases may promote a misrepresentation of Iran and Iranians. In fact, a kind of cultural suppression is covertly legitimated by the Konkoor, a national high-stakes examination.

My argument is that the absence of any reference to the contributory role of great civilization like ancient Persia in social and human development and concepts of citizenship in the world can be challenging and even risky not only for Iranian students whose national identity has been underrepresented but also for all students in different countries. It may strengthen xenophobic ways of thinking and doing which contradicts the articulated objective, namely an inclusive view to literacy in the FRDE and the NCD. This way of constructing literacy may intensify cultural bias which is a kind of tokenism among those who read this text. Of course, my aim is not to narrow down the importance of history to a set of conquests and victories. That is because this view is, in itself limiting. If so, a comprehensive answer to the transformations needed in every society, as the FRDE and the NCD calls for it, can never be achieved. However, relying on a univocal narrative of a historical event which its validity under question by a Western historian who is perceived to have some Pan-Greek views in narrating the victory of the Greek versus Persian emperorship (see, for example, Herodotus and his critics in www.cais-soas.com), in effect, be risky. This risk can be reinforced when there is no narrative of this historical event by Iranian historians in the examination excerpt. Hence, this way of representing a historical event in a national high-stakes examination brings a kind of cultural bias, a romanticized view towards the Western culture which may suppress Iranian Identity as one aspect of national culture of those who read these kinds of texts.

How then can one explain the inclusion of such a view of history in a national examination? One possible explanation is that the test-designers still draw on western sources for an English language examination paper unlike what the FRDE and the NCD calls for.

(iii) Underrepresenting Religious Culture

Furthermore, a cultural bias can be seen in way of representing religion which constitutes a significant layer of national Identity for many students in Iranian society. Unlike the FRDE and the NCD in which there is an emphasis of national Culture in a balanced manner, the analysis of some historical reading passages in the Konkoor or NHSGE shows underrepresenting national culture, especially religion as an inherent constructive element of national culture.

A close analysis of both texts taken from the Konkoor shows there is no practice in the national textbook and examinations to speak about the assertive productive and transformative role of religion (Islam) in schooling. Manifestation of this view can be risky for students for whom religion is an inherent part of their national (Islamic-Iranian) identity. My objective here is not to oversimplify and narrow down the significance of religion to merely a set of its supporting or even rejecting assertions. Rather, I argue for including religion as a cultural element for friendship spreading in critical literacy development to “provide a prime and fertile terrain for lasting progress with respect to tolerance and nondiscrimination” as it called for in the FRDE on page 12 and the NCD on page 60.

It is noteworthy that the this ignorance in the textbook and high-stakes examinations would also appear to contradict the multicultural claims of the FRDE and the NCD, and its position on mutual understanding across ethnicity and religion.

(c) Cultural Exclusion

In the FRDE and the NCD, *cultural exclusion* is defined as absence of reference to specific cultural groups and practices. A close analysis of national textbooks and national examinations either the Konkoor or the NHSGE shows absence of the local subcultures. This kind of cultural exclusion contradicts the objective of multiculturalism called for in the FRDE and the NCD as well. Iran is a multicultural multilingual country composed of various local subcultures. The participants in this study come from different subcultures. The students are Turkish, Turkmen, Sistani, and Persian, to name few. Every local subculture brings with it various literacy practices related to its contexts, mother language and ethnicities. Developing these literacy practices which form a part of their identity can contribute developing their literacy practices in the formal schooling as well. Thus the cultural exclusion of local subcultures may contribute to the silencing of these cultures and literacy practices of the affected groups.

4.2.2.3 Gender Inclusiveness in the Articulated Curriculum

One of aspects of more inclusive view in the articulated curriculum, the FRDE and the NCD is more inclusiveness and equity view to gender. In the NCD, for example, “respecting gender differences and equity (p. 10), is one of values which should be practiced in the current textbook and examination. However, a close analysis of the contents and images in these texts demonstrate that there are some non-alignments between the articulated objective and those manifested in the current national textbook and national examinations like NHSGE and the Konkoor. These kinds of non-alignments may bring some tensions and paradoxes as well. What follows provide a more in-depth analysis of how gender inclusiveness and equity to literacy articulated in the FRDE and the NCD has been manifested in its components, namely the current national textbook and national examinations.

4.2.2.4 Gender Inclusiveness & Equity in the Manifested Curriculum

A close analysis of the contents and images in these texts demonstrate that there is a non-alignment between the objective in the articulated curriculum, namely, the FRDE and the NCD and the manifested curriculum, namely the current national textbook and national examinations. This kind of non-alignment has been manifested as girls and women are often either represented in an imbalanced manner or are depicted in stereotypical subordinate positions in the national textbooks and examinations. In fact, there is a gender-stereotyped and gender inequity in literacy practices emerged in different forms as follows:

(a) Males and Females' Stereotyped Literacy Practices

The analysis of the documents shows stereotyped views to women and men in the national textbooks and examinations. What follows present some males and females' stereotyped literacy practices:

(i) Males' Stereotyped Literacy Practices

In images and contents of textbook and examinations, boys are dominantly stereotyped as those who are interested in doing outdoor activities. Figure 4.3 (a), (b), (c), (d) illustrates some of these outdoor activities manifested in the current national textbook activities. For instance, Figure 4.3 (a) shows males' eating food at restaurant with their friends. Figure 4.3 (b) shows males' playing football and playing in open sports complex whereas Figure 4.3 (c) shows males' use of public transportation.

These examples reinforce the stereotypes that males were illustrated in outdoor activities or in active sports. These examples from the current textbook are further reinforced by the Konkoor, the national high-stakes university entrance examination.

While the Konkoor does not typically include images, the choice of words and the content supports the stereotyped literacy practices. For instance, the vocabulary and grammar section of the 2012 Konkoor examination and the NHSGE, represent several questions which depict *only men attending party invitation and doing public transportation*. Examples of the questions include:

- a) “Tom did not come to the party. B: He [May not have received.] the invitation card
- b) “Which train did he catch? He [may have caught] the eleven o’clock train.”
- c) “He [should have asked] me before he took my car; I am annoyed”
- d) “He has recently bought a [White beautiful Japanese big] car”.

This echoes the stance adopted by the national textbook as described earlier (for instance, see Figure 4.3(d)).

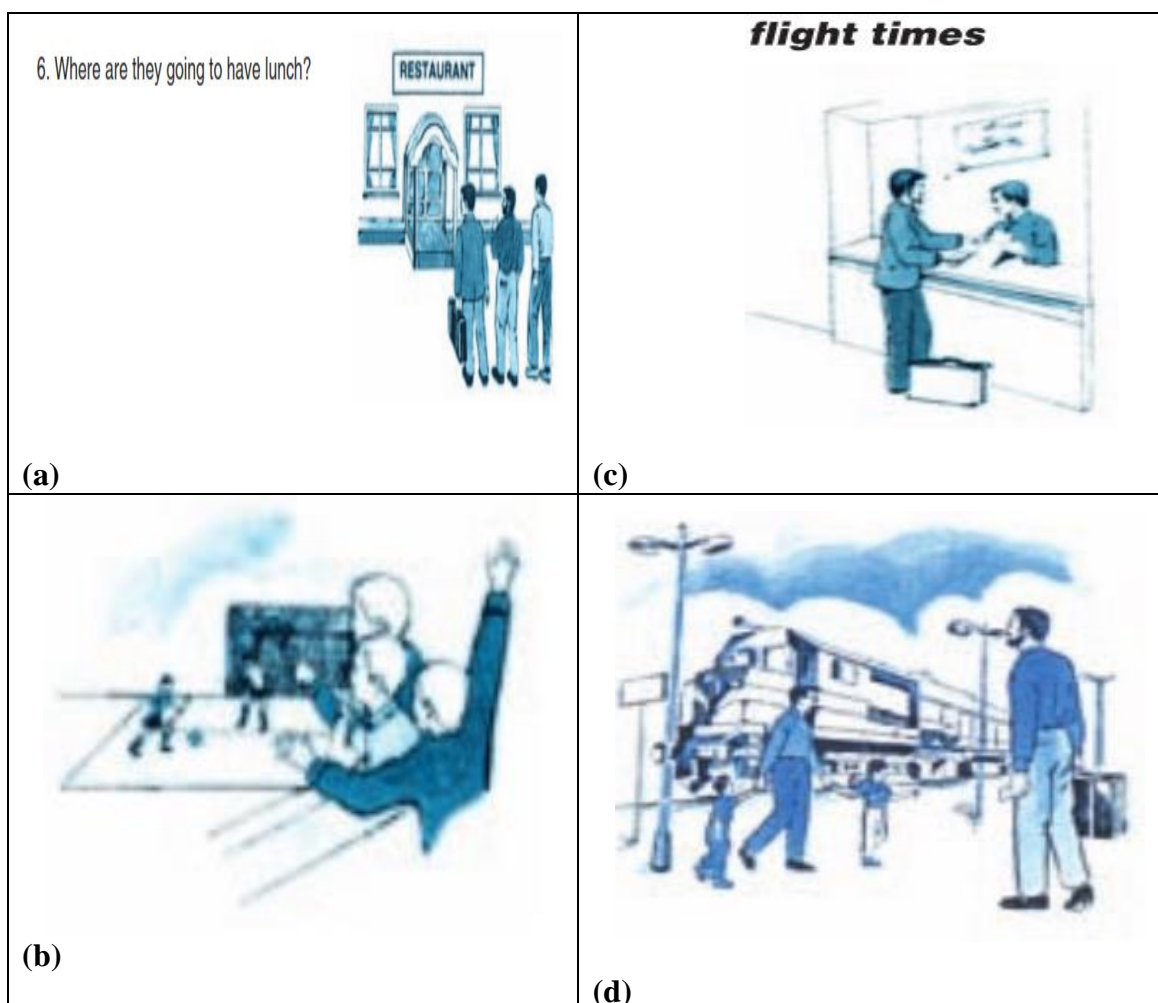


Figure 4.3: Males’ stereotyped literacy practices: (a) Males’ eating food at restaurant with their friends (b) Males’ playing football and playing in open sports complex (c and d) Males’ use of public transportation

(ii) Females’ Stereotyped Literacy Practices

In sharp contrast to the men/boys, girls are visualized as persons who are interested in doing in-door activities like playing ping pong, doing household work, washing dishes and clothes, etc. For instance, the examples in Figure 4.4 (a) show women’s playing ping pong at school or home. Girls are rarely seen while playing and playing ping pong is the only mentioned legitimate sport for young girls not aged women either in the available textbook or in the national high-stakes examinations.

One of the most common in-door activities for young girls or aged women is washing clothes or dishes. Interestingly, the verb “enjoy” is used to position women as

those people who are delighted with this position visualized in the textbook. Figure 4.4 (b, c, d) also shows woman's *doing household work*. In line with this stance, the NHSGE reinforces the females' stereotyped literacy practices. For instance, in NHSGE (2012), there is a matching question in which the students are expected to find the suitable answer among those posed alternatives, the role of a woman is limited to being a housewife. The example of this question is:

Question: "Does your mother work?"

Answer: "No, she is a housewife" .

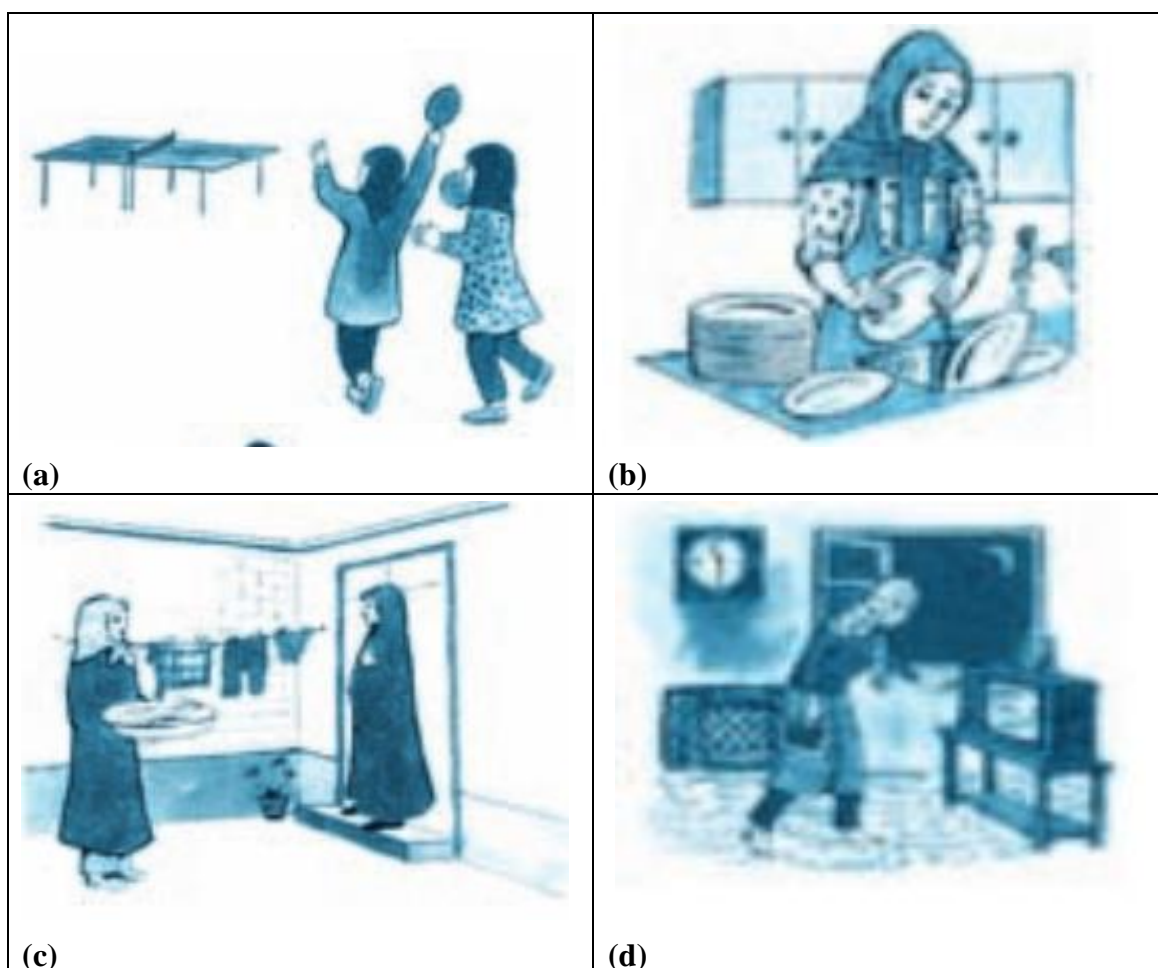


Figure 4.4: Females' stereotyped literacy practices: (a) Females' playing ping pong at school or home (b), (c), (d) Females' doing household work

A women's *story telling* is also one more evidence to females' stereotyped roles on in-door activities. For instance in the 2012 Konoor, in vocabulary and grammar section, woman is portrayed as a person with the stereotyped role like story telling for the grandchild. Example of this question is:

*"My grandmother told us stories and we all enjoyed them very much.
(Taken from vocabulary and grammar section in the 2012 Konkoor)
a) amused b) amusing c) to amuse d) to be amusing"*

In only portrayed image in the National High School Graduation Examination (the NHSGE) on men's views on in-door activities, there is an image of a man who *hates* washing the dishes. See Figure 4.5 (a) for more illustration. In fact, through this the test designer tends to reproduce this stereotyped view that washing the dishes is a duty or an

enjoyable task for women not men. This stereotyped view is even reinforced when in the national textbook images, those men who are represented at home, are shown as persons interested in reading newspapers or watching TV to get informed on news and what happens in their world, in contrast to women who are portrayed as those interested in performing household tasks. See figure 4.5 (b) for more illustration:

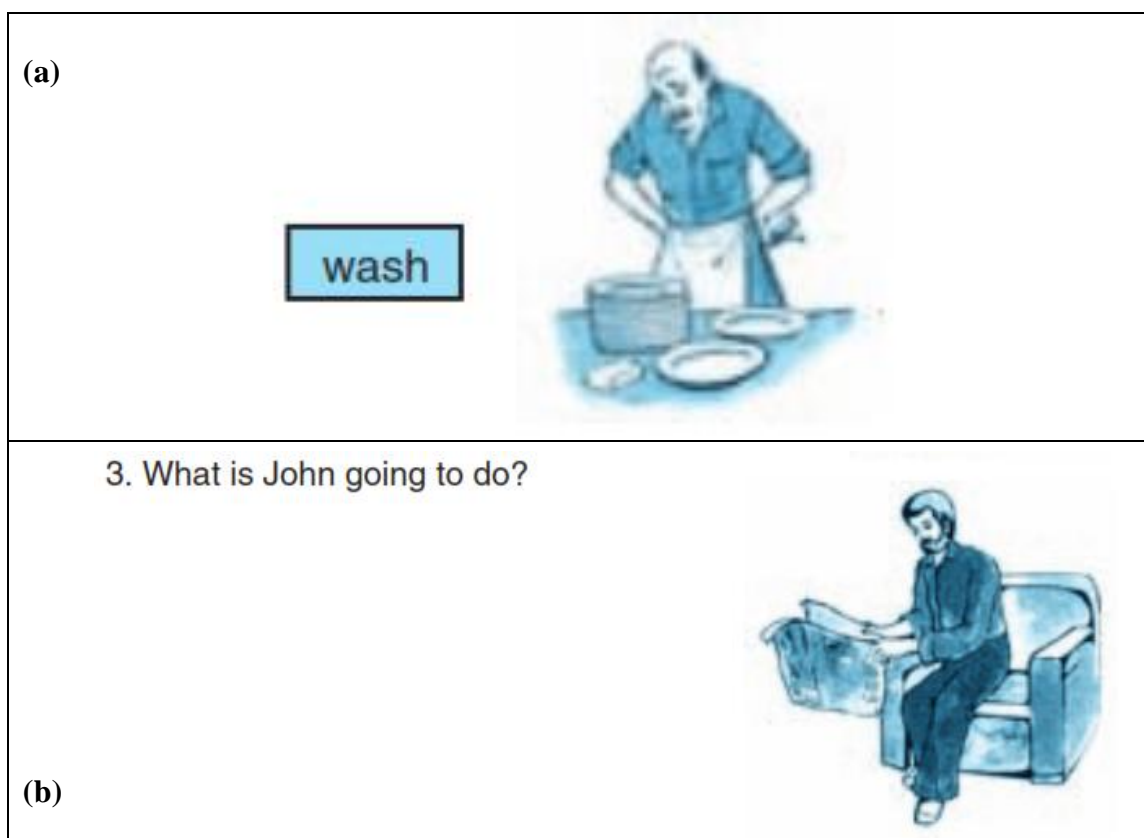


Figure 4.5: Males' rare in-door activities: (a) a man hating washing the dishes (b) a man's reading newspapers or watching TV.


(b) Gender Inequity

The analysis of the documents shows that there is gender inequity in the literacy practices manifested in the national textbooks and examinations. Gender inequity represents in these texts contradicts gender equity called for in the NCD. What follows provides a more in-depth analysis of gender inequity manifested in the national textbooks and examinations in different manners as follows:


(i) Under-representing Women and Girls

The analysis of national textbooks and examinations show that men and boys dominantly outnumber women and girls not only in names and pronouns but also in their images. Outnumbering males over females is not only limited to whole textbook but also it includes each lesson individually. For instance, figure 4.6 (a) is related to some exercises in the national textbook (p-p 13, 14, 15) as well. These exercises ask students to look at the pictures and make sentences. In the following, out of 7 images portrayed in this exercise, only two images portray women. Or figure 4.6 (b) is related to the national textbook (p-p 16 -17). Of 6 examples shown, only one image belongs to women. In these images women are writing letters and putting them in envelopes. Furthermore, figure 4.6 (c) shows a pre-reading activity in a pre-university textbook in a lesson entitled “Great People” (lesson 8, p.72). Merely 2 out of 8 people portrayed in this lesson are female. Parvin Etesami was a Persian poet and Mother Teresa was a Roman Catholic religious sister.


1. What are the girls going to do?




2. What am I going to do?



3. What is John going to do?




4. What is she going to eat?




(a)


6. Where are they going to have lunch?




7. When is he going to leave?




8. What is Mr Karimi going to study?



1. Parviz
Bahram
Mehdi




2. Bob
Bill
Ted




(b)


3. Frank
Ben
Peter



4. Kim
Judy
Peggy



5. Nick
Andy
Don




(c)

LESSON 8

Great Men and Women

Before You Read



Alfred Nobel Abu-Reihan Birsoni Parvin E'tesami

People have always been interested in reading about great men and women. They want to know what makes such people famous. This lesson introduces two of them.

Answer the following questions.

1. Do you like to be famous? Why? / Why not?
2. Can you name the people in the following photos?
3. What do you know about them?
4. Why are they famous?
5. What makes people famous?
6. Can you name other famous people?

Now ask your partner the same questions.




Figure 4.6: Outnumbering men over women in textbook activities: (a) exercise in the national textbook on p-p13-14-15 (b) exercise in the national textbook 3 on p-p 16-17 (c) exercise on pre-university book, p.82

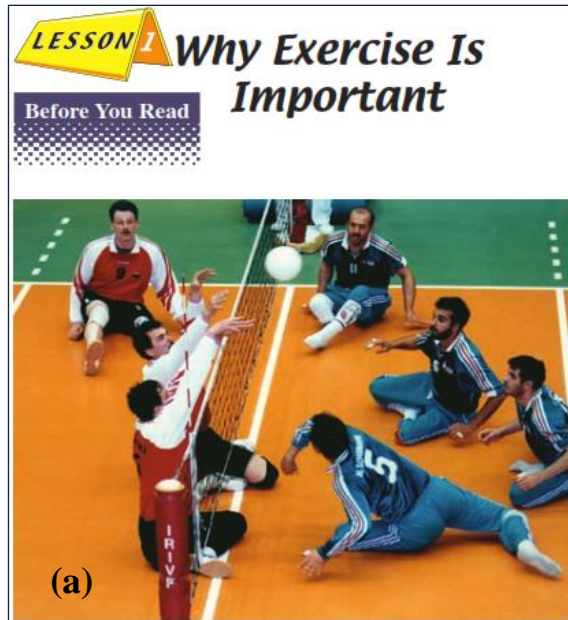
All these instances are typical of the national textbook which displayed a bias in favor of males. There were no units or chapters in the textbook in which women outnumbered or were equal to the men.

(ii) Gender Inequity in Occupations and Professional Roles


The analysis of documents shows gender inequity in occupations and professional roles. Men are mostly positioned as those who have multiple roles and can perform their roles successfully. They can be the head of family, a father or a husband and also can be active agents in their own society. Hence, they can have a high range of demanding jobs like being a farmer, a builder, a factory worker, a miner, a sportsman and a police man, an intellectual or a scientist etc. Rather, women are positioned as mothers or traditional grandmothers who have to do some household affairs or provide emotional support for men. Although being a mother is very important, it does not read as a restricting issue as shown in most cases in which women are at margins. Presence of intellectual or other great females are ignored, downgraded or described as exceptional. These exceptions include a set of restricted stereotyped jobs in society for women like librarian, nurse, teacher and general physician as well. The following examples show gender inequity in professional roles among men and women.

- a) Figure 4.7 (a) shows professional sportsmen in the available Pre-University textbook, lesson one which is about the importance of exercise. As a pre-reading image, authors use an image for sitting volleyball (sometimes known as paralympic volleyball), volleyball for male disabled athletes. (pre-university, p.1)
- b) Figure 4.7(b) shows an image of men who can do demanding professions like mining, mechanic, bus driving, etc. Figure 6 (a) and (b) are indicative of gender stereotypes in occupations. The men are portrayed as being miners,


occupations which demand physical strength. In contrast, the women are at best nurses or general physicians, occupations which are characterized as the *caring professions*.



1. What is the woman doing?



2. What is the nurse doing?



(c)
Lesson Three

Figure 4.7: Gender inequity in occupations and professional roles: (a) males' Paralympic volleyball (b) males 'demanding professions like mining (c) females' caring professions like nurse or a general physician

To cite further, in a Vocabulary and Grammar question in the 2011 Konkoor for overseas examinees, the examinees are required to answer the following fill in the blank question: - “*Mothers are often the ones who providesupport for the family*”.

- a) mild
- c) anxious

- b) natural
- d) emotional”

The correct answer to this question is “emotional”, choice number b, signifying the function of women is to provide emotional support for the family. On the surface level, at least, these roles are nevertheless read in relation to stereotyped views of Iranian women and traditional/modern roles. Certain characteristics—subservience to men—are glorified in the content of textbooks and examinations for contemporary women. The view directly contradicts the official goals articulated in the FRDE (p. 18) and the NCD (p. 10).

(iii) Gender Inequity in Historical Roles

The analysis of document also shows an inequity in historical roles among different genders. For instance, in pre-university book, in lesson 8, entitled great people, in page 72, in pre-reading section, there is a photo of successful people in different historical periods. Of all 10 characters portrayed in this section, there is only two great women, Parvin Etesami, a great poet in contemporary Iran and Mother Teresa, a nun and social worker (see figure 5 (c) for more illustration). Regardless of quantitative unequal distribution of men and women’s images, women are shown as successful persons in some specific jobs like poet or social worker which do not need any physical skill. Rather, a man can be a successful chemist (Abu-Reihan Biruni, Alfred Nobel), a great theorist (Ayatollah Mottahari), a great inventor (Thomas Edison), a mathematician and an engineer (Hessabi), a surgeon (Ven Siena), and so forth.

Likewise, a close analysis of national examinations also adds evidences on the low visibility of women as influential persons in Iran and global history. For instance, in most reading passages, Cloze Test or contents of vocabulary and grammar questions in the national high-stakes examinations, a man has been introduced as:

A revolutionary leader like William Travis and Sam Houston who transformed his society. For instance, a Reading passage in the Konkoor is on a historical event, in

which Texas as one former states of Mexico ruled by Spain became independent. In this reading passage, the role of two male leaders entitled William Travis and Sam Houston on Texas State's indecency have been highlighted. They have been introduced as people who made history. The narrator indirectly introduces women as weak persons who became free. In contrast, all men in the reading passage are brave and patriot persons who defended the Alamo and were killed for their homelands. Furthermore, the narrator refers to the Texans, most probably males as brave persons who were led by Sam Houston could defeat Santa Anna's army". (taken from a reading comprehension passage in the 2009 Konkoor).

- "A successful architect like Robert Adam, with his special style and design for plaster work decorations. In the reading passage, the narrator speaks about Adam's biography, signaling that he was the son of an architect having three brothers who were also architect. However, for instance, there is no word on his sisters' progressive or influential role of his mother or his wife in the promotions". (taken from a reading comprehension passage in the 2009 Konkoor)
- "A *great philosopher* like *Aristotle or Socrates* who have a range of moral advice". (taken from a cloze test passage in the 2010 Konkoor)
- "A *great mathematician* like *Galileo* who has been introduced as a person who changed the trend of science".(taken from a reading comprehension passage in the 2009 Konkoor)
- "*The world greatest dramatist in the west* like *Shakespeare*" (taken from a reading comprehension passage in the 2010 Konkoor)
- "A *great second novelist in the story after Shakespeare* like *John Milton*" (taken from a reading comprehension passage in the 2010 Konkoor).
- "A *great adventurous person* who discovered the new world like *Columbus*". (taken from a reading comprehension passage in the Konkoor)
- "A *great Scientist like Australian Scientist Karl von Frisch* who had *great discoveries* on details of bee's means of communication". (taken from a reading comprehension passage in the 2011 Konkoor)
- "A *great Scientist like Pasteur* who found that the microbes which made food bad could be killed if they were heated". (taken from a reading comprehension passage in the 2012 NHSGE).
- "*Great thermo dynamists like James Watt, Thomas Edison and Graham Bell* who made advances in about the relationship between the science of physics

and the practical thing”. (taken from a reading comprehension passage in the 2010 Konkoor)

In sharp contrast to these male models who shaped the course of human history, the Konkoor and NHSGE examination rarely cite examples of equivalent female role models. For example, as regards to the less frequent examples on the historical role of women in the Konkoor, it can be referred to the only reading passage on biography of Sharpshooter Annie Oakley who was a professional shoot marker, a mainstay in the folklore of the Old West. Even in this text which is related to the character there are many sentences on describing the role of her defeated competitor i.e. Frank Butler who later became her husband. (See 4.2.2.1. section c for the reading passage)

4.2.3 Commentary on More Inclusiveness and also equity view to gender in the Articulated and Manifested Curriculum

The macro-level dominant literacy practices can be seen in the articulated curriculum, namely the FRDE and the NCD. The macro-level dominant literacy practices articulated in the FRDE and specifically in the NCD provide a guideline for the design of the available national level textbooks and national high-stakes examinations. The teacher’s and students’ understanding of the macro-level policies and practices come not through the FRDE and the NCD but through the “reading” of the national textbook and the NHSGE. Hence, a contrastive analysis of the findings above *as shown in diagram (4.1)* signals the contradiction between the official goals (those literacy practices articulated in the FRDE and the NCD) and the actual manifestations of literacy practices in the national textbook and examinations. The analysis of documents show that there is a strong contradiction between the objective articulated in the FRDE and the NCD which calls for a gender inclusiveness in literacy and the literacy practices with those literacy practice seen in the manifested curriculum, namely in the available national textbook

and national high-stakes examinations. In fact, the macro-level literacy practices in the articulated and the manifested curriculum are not fully aligned with each other although some degrees of alignment among literacy practices found in the investigated documents. A gender inclusive view to literacy practice called for in the FRDE and the NCD and gender exclusive-oriented view of literacy promoted in the available textbook and examinations show that how English language education tends to a kind of “favoritism”, e.g. male favoritism through different ways, including over-representing men and under representing or misrepresenting women quantitatively and qualitatively in the current textbook and examinations. Indeed, a close analysis of the images and contents related to the textbook and national examinations still demonstrate that girls and women are often either completely ignored or are depicted in rather stereotypical positions. For example, in examinations and textbook exercises males are as active, strong agents. Rather, females are passive recipients. Such a way of representing females in the available textbook and examinations may contribute to enhancing patriarchal perspectives. In fact, the image and contents of various texts tend to essentialize men and women.

Likewise, the findings of this study suggest that gender disparity is embedded with a kind of gender marginalization in the current textbooks and examinations. In fact, this study shows that English language and literacy education through the components of the formal curriculum i.e. the available national textbooks and examinations has the capacity to exacerbate social inequality and perpetuate asymmetric power relationships in favor of men and promote a male-oriented discourse.

These findings accords Laakkonen (2007) and Keisala (2010) study who find that the textbooks in an EFL context like Finland were embedded with hidden curriculum. Indeed, the textbooks were gendered and genders were defined in specific stereotyped roles in the textbooks.

In sharp contrast to the available Iranian national examinations and text book, Iranian society has also witnessed *a movement* toward a great equity and inclusiveness, thanks to values promoted by the revolution. For instance, women's participation in occupation that has been traditionally male-dominated has increased in the post-revolution Iran. Also, in the university sector, women are involved in more active roles, and there is greater evidence of social mobility among women in Iran. While the gender equity promoted by the FRDE and the NCD seems to match the grounded reality of the Iranian society, it comes, in sharp contrast, to the realities represented in the current national textbook and the high-stakes examinations.

In fact, the consequence of this way of schooling promoted by the current national textbook and examination is to drive subjects to a monolithic way of thinking, knowing, valuing and doing on subcultures like gender issues.

A more inclusive view to literacy practice as one critical aspect of literacy called for in the FRDE and the NCD can be achieved if the textbook designers and test takers refrain from an andocentric or male-oriented ways of knowing and constructing literacy and even become centered in the (marginalized) women's experiences as well. In other words, as the findings above indicate, there is a need for aligning can be promoted.

4.3 Concluding Remarks

This chapter provided an answer to the research question one, at the macro level, at the macro level, what are the dominant discourses of English language literacy in pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings?

The key focus of this chapter was: which assumptions are privileged or taken-for-granted ideological assumptions as seen in the articulated curriculum, the FRDE and the NCD and also manifested curriculum documents, namely the national textbooks and high-stakes examinations.

Findings showed some paradoxes and tensions and also degrees of alignments between articulation of more inclusive views to literacy, namely gender and cultural inclusiveness and equity articulated in the FRDE and the NCD with those in the manifested curriculum, i.e. the national textbooks and national examinations.

One key question raised here was that how the same teacher and his students cope themselves with these two contradictory message systems. The next chapter focuses on research question two: At the micro-level how does the same teacher implement the teaching of literacy in the two pre-university EFL classrooms in Iran? This research question contributes to understanding discursivities in implementing the classroom teaching practices in the examination-oriented settings. It contributes to understanding how the teacher copes with contradictions between two different messages, namely those literacy practices articulated in the FRDE and the NCD and those literacy practices manifested in the national textbooks and examinations.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: MICRO-LEVEL TEACHING LITERACY PRACTICES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter answers Research Question Two viz. “At the micro level, in what ways, are dominant discourses of literacy and pedagogy enacted in teaching of English language literacy in the pre-university EFL classrooms in Iran?” The main focus in this research question is to investigate how the teacher working in two classrooms in two schooling systems i.e., the mainstream Publicschooling system, and the non-mainstream privately-run schooling system implements English language literacy education. In fact, teaching literacy practices at each classroom as micro-level is the key focus in this research question. The data analysis in this research question involves description, interpretation and explanation of the classroom teaching practices. Classroom teaching practices involve the identification of ways of acting and ways of being, and also positions taken by the teacher and students (i.e., the focus of the teacher and role of the students) in the classrooms.

This chapter is organized into three sections. Section one, the introduction, provides an overview of this chapter. Section two, findings and discussion, specifically, addresses how one teacher implements teaching practices in the two classrooms in two different schooling systems. Section three concludes this chapter. The main part of the chapter i.e. section two utilizes Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Fairclough’s approach to CDA is used to explain systematically how discourse builds

description of the teaching practices. This approach to CDA consists of three dimensions of analysis, namely description, interpretation and explanation, which views the production and utilization of text (and discourse) as parts of a system that connect language, literacy and power relations. At the descriptive level, a dialectical praxis--a back and forth movement--is used to make linkages among linguistic features and the socio-cultural and political analysis of any text produced in the classroom. At the interpretation level, focus is on the discursive power-related nature of literacy (domination, resistance and critique) and ideological constructs produced in the teacher and his students' interactions at the classroom level event as a social setting. At the explanation level, there is an attempt to show the interpretation and description of linguistic features of any text produced in the classrooms' interactions are restricted and influenced by the macro-level discourse practices of the particular institution within which these discourse practices are taking place.

Hence, in this analysis, focus is not merely on the list of linguistic features outside of context. In fact, due to the purpose of this study which sees literacy as discursive power-related ideological practice, the analysis of the teaching practices as the micro-level literacy practices needs a situated understanding. Thus, the production of the teaching literacy practices at the classroom level looks beyond individuals and analyzes not just the work of the teacher but also the impact of the social institution including its discourse practices, material resources, and its political and economic location. This is of importance in a critical view to literacy education which sees language and literacy practice as socio-cultural and political phenomenon.

To answer research question two, excerpts from a variety of literacy lessons constitute *units of analysis*. All audio-recorded language and literacy classrooms in the two classrooms over a period of one semester i.e. from January to July, 2013 were transcribed, translated into English and then were analyzed based on CDA. Finally the

triangulated data with teacher and students' interviews were thematically analyzed and findings were reported as the main themes to answer the research question. The findings highlighted three kinds of themes, namely, *pedagogical stance as mediated by the teacher*, *pedagogical stance as mediated by the test book* and *pedagogical stance as mediated by the textbook* as the most implemented teaching practices in the two schooling systems by the same teacher. In Iran, it is fairly typical for many teachers from mainstream Publicschools to teach in privately-run schools after Publicschool hours. This was the case of the focal teacher, Mr. Shayan in the study. Although the three themes are considered separately, it must be noted that there are overlaps between the three themes, as the discussion below will attest.

5.2 Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Teacher

Pedagogical stance mediated by the teacher in the two schooling systems is the main focus of this section. As regards with definition of pedagogy, Alexander' view is used. With reference to his view, teaching 'is an act, while pedagogy is both act and discourse' (Alexander 2001, p.540) that is, what teachers actually think, do and say. Hence, the teacher's pedagogical stance provides a contextually-based understanding of the teacher's beliefs and his doings, and encompasses social, cultural and political aspects as well. In keeping with this definition, "pedagogical stance of the teacher" is defined as a kind of teacher's stance in the teacher's thinking, doing and saying which *leads* the classroom discourses. In pedagogical stance, the teacher's role as a social actor in critical literacy development and his role on how he acknowledges a controlling role for the communication of knowledge and hence literacy construction in the two schooling classrooms is described and discussed. What follows is a discussion of three excerpts (excerpts one, two and three) of the pedagogical stance of the teacher in the two classroom contexts: Excerpt one and two were selected from classroom A in the

mainstream Publicschooling system, and excerpt three in three episodes were selected from classroom B in the privately-run schooling system. These excerpts were selected because they were deemed typical of teaching literacy practices at the micro-level as mediated by the teacher. Typicality is defined based on the frequency of occurrence of these teaching practices in the observed settings. Consider that most classroom interactions occurred in Persian. In order to make a better distinction between Persian and English interactions, those interactions occurred in English were underlined.

5.2.1 Classroom A (Mainstream Public Schooling System)

5.2.1.1 Excerpt 1:

A close analysis of the classroom interactions in classroom A in the public schooling system generally shows that the teacher, Mr. Shayan (a pseudonym) in this setting tries to actively maintain his students' on-task involvement. He overtly or covertly tries not to get engaged with socio-political discourses in Iranian society in classroom interactions. In effect, he renders the classroom discourse socio-politically neutral or socio-politically correct for the students. In fact, the majority of his interactions may be characterized as “anesthetized” (Akbari, 2008) or apolitical.

Consider the following excerpts taken from lesson 7 from Pre-university textbook in classroom A. This lesson focused on IT services in the globalized world. In the course of the lesson, the teacher made an oblique reference to a recent BBC documentary (See Table 5.1):

Table 5.1: Excerpt 1

Transcript of classroom interactions Translated from Persian	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the teacher
Mr.Shayan: BBC broadcasted a documentary on some development which Iranian scholars and others made for medicine to cure different diseases.	The teacher made an oblique reference to a recent BBC documentary
Reza: <i>Sir do you have satellite at home?</i>	The teacher's reference to recent BBC documentary led to a critical question about a sensitive issue
Mr.Shayan: <i>(In Persian) Az har che begzarim Sokhan dust nekust (translated as: nothing is much more valuable than our friend's words).</i>	Teacher used avoidance strategy to answer the student's critical question about a sensitive issue

Reza's interjection "Sir! Do you have satellite at home?!" articulated with raising intonation was socially loaded because it reflected the Iranian officially endorsed suspicious position on some foreign broadcasters for promoting counter discourse with values of the Iranian revolution.

It should be noted that there are two different official readings in Iranian society as regard to using satellite technology and media relaxation which makes this topic socially sensitive. One reading believes in media relaxation (see chapter one, context of the study, for detail). Rather, the other reading is more conservative viewing satellite channels as a Western front in the 'soft war' being waged against the ideals and cultural values of the 1979 revolution. The more conservative view sees satellite channels as a weapon aimed at undermining the religious, national and cultural beliefs of the people. In the more conservative reading, the "master of all satellites", which is how the BBC is popularly characterized, is dominantly used to promote immorality or to reproduce Western culture in society by feeding the youth of the nation with information that makes them forget their cultural identities and roots. In this view, satellite's disadvantages override its advantages. Therefore, advocates of this reading argue that

restrictions need to be imposed to control its use among the public to immunize them against any cultural threat. This argument is in agreement with Hjarvard (2004) in which he introduces the term “medialect” to refer to not only the language of media but also its attendant ideologies. This concept resonates with the concept of “cultural invasion” (see chapter one, pp. 9-10) in Iranian official discourse when the data were collected.

Given the embedded echoes of the macro-level discourses in the student’s question, Mr. Shayan chose not to respond to the student. Instead, he embarked on a topic shift by citing a cultural proverb in Persian “*Az har che begzarim sokhan dost nekust*”, translated as “nothing is much more valuable than our friend’s words”. “Our friend”, in this context, refers to the textbook. By invoking the textbook, the teacher thus used an avoidance strategy “to answer” the student’s critical question about a sensitive social issue. By elaborating on examination guidelines and emphasis; he thus avoided critical engagement with sociopolitical discourse, although this seemed to be related to the topic of comprehension passage under discussion. The teacher’s stance of avoidance may be in direct contradiction to the articulated goals in the Fundamental Reform Document in Education (the FRDE, p.18) and the National Curriculum Document (the NCD, p. 14). The FRDE and the NCD ask teachers and hence students to “promote critical consciousness raising practice through including critical media literacy in [English language] education”. Explicitly, the FRDE and also the NCD ask teachers and students to:

- *become aware of the status and also intelligent role of the media and communication technologies to control minds of people, their beliefs and values.*
- *resist undesirable consequences of mass media literacy practice through awareness raising or problem-posing practice (the FRDE, p.14 and the NCD, p18, translated by the researcher).*

This episode raises a pedagogical dilemma for the teacher; how he can reconcile the two contradictory views: on the one hand, the official discourse of the State which,

rejects the use of satellite TV channels and, on the other hand, the discourse of the Fundamental Reform Document in Education (the FRDE) and the National Curriculum Document (the NCD) which encourage critical media literacy in English language education. These contradictions at the macro policy level drives the teacher's pedagogy in a mainstream Publicschooling system towards the stronger official discourse of the State i.e. the illegality of satellite TV use. When it was pointed out to him that the FRDE and the NCD supported in critical stance to the media, Mr. Shayan, the teacher, in his interviews expressed the view that he was *"not informed and trained on the content of the FRDE and the NCD"* (Teacher Interview-TF- February 2013). Furthermore, he disclosed that the focus of the examination and textbook and also his experiences with peers and other stakeholders in this setting taught him to *"keep his classroom discussion socially harmless and safe"* (Teacher Interview-TF-February 2013).

5.2.1.2 Excerpt 2:

This excerpt is taken from the lesson 7 in the national pre-university textbook on IT and its services (See Table 5.2):

Table 5.2: Excerpt 2

Transcription of interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the teacher
Mr. Shayan: Today, I hope we can finish the whole reading text todayLet's read paragraph number 4,[Teacher begins reading from the text], <u>the terms internet and web are often used interchangeably</u> [The teacher suddenly code switches into Persian to add his comment on this sentence] Happily, we are living in internet generation.	Teacher made an intertextual linking with the text in the textbook and the global context
Saeed: <i>but sir, we still face a lot of internet connection problems here.</i>	The student read the intertextual linking as an opportunity for the students' critical engagement in the debate
Mr Shayan: [The teacher reads from the text] <u>the terms internet and web are often used interchangeably although this not really correct.</u> [The teacher code switches into Persian]. Interchangeable is important. It means replaceable, substitutable. For example, in the sentence "these football players are interchangeable", what does interchangeable means?...	The teacher used a strategy of avoidance to answer the student and shifts the topic of discussion

The lesson was basically a reading comprehension lesson, but it shifted into a vocabulary lesson on synonyms ("*the term internet and net are interchangeable*"). This part of the lesson was taught in English. Sandwiched in this reading/vocabulary lesson was an utterance by the teacher in Persian ("*Happily we are living in internet generation*"). This utterance provided the classroom with the context of the passage, expressed this time in Persian. However, the attempt by the teacher to code switch, was read by a student, Saeed, as an opportunity to engage with the teacher in Persian and to build on the teacher's comment on the internet in Iran.

The student's interjection beginning with the conjunction "but" (*amma* in Persian), thus, signaled a point of departure from the teacher's utterance which began with "happily" (*khoshbakhtane* in Persian). The student's rejoinder "*But sir, we still*

face a lot of internet connections, here” was not welcomed by the teacher. The teacher noticed that the student question is potentially a loaded discourse. He anticipated that this discourse may possibly generate an open debate regarding the suspicious negative cultural impacts or cultural invasion view of some social net works which is a loaded discourse in Iranian context. Hence, Mr. Shayan resorted to what I call, a kind of a strategy of avoidance to answer the student and to shift the topic of discussion. He did not give time to the student and his other peers to expand their own ideas. Instead, he immediately went on reading aloud the reading passage in the textbook, saying “*the terms internet and web are often used interchangeably, although this is not really correct*”. He, thus, strategically neutralized any potential sociopolitical fallout, and got the classroom back on task with the official curriculum as defined by the textbook.

Both these Excerpts (Excerpts 1 and 2) in classroom A, taken together, exemplify a strategy of avoidance of a sensitive material which is typical of this teacher’s discourse in this educational setting i.e. mainstream Public school. The assumption underlying teacher discourse is also shared by students in the mainstream public school. Thus the two Excerpts exemplify the potential for occurrence of what Freire (1970) has termed “a culture of silence” vis-à-vis State-endorsed discourses in the macro-level context.

5.2.2 Classroom B (Non-Mainstream Privately-Run Schooling System)

5.2.2.1 Excerpt 3:

Excerpt 3 comes from lesson five in the pre-university textbook titled “Child Labor: A Global Issue” in classroom B. The content of the lesson is on the definition of child labor, different kinds of child labor and its reasons and consequences. At one point in

this lesson, the teacher went beyond the comprehension passage in the textbook by contextualizing child labor in Iran and relating it to the problem of overpopulation. He articulates the view that overpopulation may be a root cause of social problems like child labor in some countries. This sets in motion a series of challenges to this initial proposition, some of which seek to contextualize the issue in terms of popular policy debates on population growth in Iran. Episode one below is the first of a blow-by-blow account of challenges and counter-challenges articulated by different classroom participants in the course of the lesson. Although, this is an English lesson all interactions presented in the excerpt 3 are in Persian, except for direct quotes from the text. This could possibly be because the class was engaging in the social interpretation of the text in English and the discussion that followed clearly went beyond the “typical” comprehension-type discussion of the examination questions.

(a) Episode 1: Opening Moves

The discussion on the link between child labor and overpopulation begins thus (See Table 5.3):

Table 5.3: Excerpt 3, Episode 1

Transcription of interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the teacher
Mr. Shayan: Many problems, like child labor, are resulted from overpopulation. Our country few decades earlier had half of this population. Now its overpopulation makes insufficient facilities, heavy traffic, and unemployment.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher related the social issue (child labor) to two distinctly different population policies in different eras. • The teacher's comment set a stage for the students (here, Ahmad) to get engaged in this discussion. • The two students (Ahmad and now Nader) saw the issue as a grass-roots problem.
Ahmad: <i>But sir, people are responsible for overpopulation</i>	
Nader: <i>Yes sir, it is due to their cultural poverty</i>	
<p>Mr. Shayan: <i>However, many other critics state that the state is responsible for such problems. They argue that in the past, the state acted on population control very well. Now, the State does not raise people's awareness on the risks of being overpopulated. Have you recently seen somewhere any posters of government campaigns in this regard? Have you recently seen any notice saying fewer children, better life?</i></p> <p>Students: <i>No Sir.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher provided a counter-view with the students.

Having claimed that the problem of child labor is a symptom of overpopulation, the teacher began to relate this claim to the population policies in Iran in different eras, namely an earlier era signaled by the phrase “*few decades earlier*” and the contemporary era signaled by the term “*Now ...*”. This is presented in the exchange above. The two eras in question relate to two distinctly different population policies. In what was referred to the era as “*few decades earlier*”, the state imposed strict

“population policies” that restricted the size of a family. These policies have now been reversed and the state has in effect encouraged a larger population.

The teacher’s comment triggered responses from two students, both of whom argued that population problem is a grass-roots problem (as seen in “*the people are responsible... it is due to their cultural poverty*”) rather than a problem created by macro-level policies.

In response, the teacher presented the two students and the class with a counter-view. He did not present this view as his own but articulated it to “others”. (*However, many other critics state that the state is responsible for such problems...*). The construction of an alternative discourse is ostensibly an opening move designed to articulate a position that student could then refute and in the process problematize recent population policies. This sets the stage for some students in the class to interrogate the recent policy as exemplified in Episode 2 below.

(b) Episode 2: “Why do you think so?”

In Episode 2, the teacher builds on the opening move of Episode1 (See Table 5.4):

Table 5.4: Excerpt 3, Episode 2

Transcription of interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the teacher
Mr. Shayan: The critics object with the government population growth policies such as giving low or free interest loan to those families bearing more children, promises which sometimes are not kept. But the population growth brings some social, economic problems, for example, the country will witness more unemployment consequences, child labor crimes and even the low rate of economic growth in a long run.	The teacher expressed the critics' voice on the disusing issue. His comment acted as a springboard for more students to get engaged.
Ahmad: But the State says that population control was once needed, but today its continuity is risky for the future of the country sir. Its continuity may be our enemy's conspiracy. Due to the past policies, for example, the birth rate is low sir and marriage age becomes higher than before.	Ahmad argued for the formal position which is in opposition with some critics' views on the discussing issue.

Table 5.4, continued: Excerpt 3, Episode 2

Transcription of interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the teacher
Alireza: Furthermore, the state says number of young people is decreasing and the number of elders is on the rise	Alireza provided more argument for the state's new position.
Nima: But who cares to these new polices!	Nima questioned his friend's views.
Amir: No family follows this policy?	Amir joined Nima to question the peers' views.
Mr. Shayan: Why do you think so?	The teacher invited the students to get engaged in critical thinking.
Nima: Because the rate of inflation and costs of living is so high these days.	Nima provided an alternative for the arguments posed by the peers.
Jalal: Yes, Nima is right. Who can think of marriage these days sir? Forget about having a baby?	
Students: <i>[laughter]</i>	

Episode 2 begins with the teacher ventriloquizing (Bakhtin, 2010) the voice of the critics, who are critical of the current formal stance. This acted as a spring board for several students to jump in and engage with the views expressed.

In the excerpt above (See Table 5.4), the use of the contrastive conjunction “but” by two students Ahmad and Nima signaled a departure from the previous line of argument. First Ahmad, supported by Alireza, articulated the formal position in opposition to the view of “some critics” given voice by the teacher. Then, Nima supported by Jalal and Amir contradicted the formal view of the State. Thus what emerges is a flourishing of a variety of alternative viewpoints expressed by the students as they grapple with their understanding of the policies. Having facilitated the flourishing of viewpoints, the teacher remained on the sidelines of debate, seemingly neutral, but still deeply involved in the debate as he challenged the debaters to give reasons (“*why do you think so*”) for their claims. Mr. Shayan thus creates in his classroom what Canagarajah (2004) has termed a “pedagogical safe house” where the students feel safe to express their own views even if they were critical of the establishment. The pedagogical safe house of the classroom creates a milieu for students to interact with each other without intervention or mediation by the teacher, as is exemplified in episode 3 below:

(c) Episode 3:

Table 5.5: Excerpt 3, Episode 3

Transcription of interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the teacher
Nader: <i>So why parents decide to give birth if they cannot meet their cost of living?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students were actively engaged in discussions with each other without the teacher's intermediary. • The students (Nader, Jalal, Amir, Vahid, Alireza) brought new dimensions (e.g. the role of parents as social actors) to the discussing social issue. • The students (Nader, Jalal, Amir, Vahid, Alireza) learnt to question different social actors' roles (the parents and the elders).
Jalal: <i>Parents are arrogant sir. We are born. We grew up. We also have some expectations as well.</i>	
Amir: <i>Yeh, when we share our expectations with them, they think that we do not respect for them. They just want us respecting for the elders without questioning them.</i> Vahid: <i>What should we do for this?</i>	
Alireza: <i>Teacher and some friends answered your question at first.</i>	
Nader: <i>But the state says the rate of population growth is very low and it may bring some risks for the future of the country in different aspects.</i>	
Vahid: <i>Yes, Ali is right</i>	

One sharp difference between Episodes 2 and 3 is that Episode 3 sees the students--(Nader, Jalal, Amir, Vahid, Alireza)—actively engaging with each other without the teacher's intermediary. The lively exchange involved a cross-fire of claims and counter-claims as the students grappled with the issue of parents as social actors in shaping the rate of population growth. Also, of significance in the episode 3 above is

that the students were critical even of parents and elders, (*“Why parents decide to give birth if they cannot meet their cost of living?”*) questioning their parents’ motives and actions. The questioning of authority was present in both episodes by the students as the students targeted different social actors: the State in Episode 2, and parents and elders in Episode 3, though the nature of interactions in the two episodes was different.

5.2.3 Commentary on Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Teacher in Classroom A&B

Although the same teacher, Mr. Shayan, taught in the two classrooms from two schooling systems, a close analysis of the above-mentioned excerpts in the classrooms generally revealed some distinct differences. In classroom A from the mainstream Publicschooling system, Mr. Shayan never allowed the students to get engaged in socially sensitive discourses. Whenever the teacher felt that the classroom interaction went beyond the content of the textbook or the examination, he resorted to overt *a* pedagogy of correctness. I use the term “pedagogy of correctness” to refer to the teacher’s resistance or avoidance of any socially sensitive implications in discussions that may emerge in the course of the lesson. In practicing “*resistance pedagogy*”, Mr. Shayan, the teacher used two different avoidance strategies: First, “being indifferent to any critical comments by students” in excerpt 2) and second “shifting the topic of discourse to that of textbook or test book” in (*nothing is much more valuable than on our friend’s [the textbooks’] words, here in excerpt 1*). Thus, in the long run, this way of teaching encouraged passivity in the students because their critical comments or possibility of critical questions were ignored. It closes their minds to the possibility of critical literacy. It may also develop a “culture of silence” (Freire, 1970) in students.

By contrast, the analysis of data from classroom B in the privately-run schooling system showed the teacher practicing a different pedagogic stance. In this setting, the

teacher allowed for controversial discourses of his own society, which he avoided in classroom A in the Public schooling system. Thus, in classroom B in the privately-run schooling system, both the teacher and student's interactions did not always reflect the official discourse. Instead, the teacher allowed the students for posing and constructing alternative discourses. This way of teaching in classroom B provides not only for students' active engagement in classroom discussions but ultimately also has the potential of contributing to their personal transformation. It helps them to find their voice (Kamler, 2001, Mc Laren, 2003, Blommaert, 2005) in society.

The question may be raised: What contributed to the stark contrast to the teacher's pedagogical stances in the two classrooms? The teacher addressed this question in an interview. Explaining his stance in the Public school, he said:

"I learned [in the Public school] that I should focus specifically on the textbook and examination. That is what I think the administrative officials want me to do. If I do not follow what was expected of me, I would be isolated by parents, students and even my peers. So, my experiences over time trained me to follow a set of guidelines in Public schools. The guidelines were not explicit in the schooling policy but were inferred over time by various signals I received from different stakeholders."(Teacher Interview,TF-February 2013).

Reflecting on his early experiences as a teacher in the Public school he added:

In my early years of teaching I resorted to some innovative ways of teaching. In fact, I tried to break the test dominance in any possible way. For example, I remember I once got students to explore religious, political or sports topics in groups and to display their ideas on "wall paper". I even taught them how to translate the hadiths [sayings] of the prophet or Imams into English. I gave extra marks as bonus to the students who made the best wall paper to enhance their motivation. However, it did not last a long time because I received complains about my way teaching from the school board members. I was told that I was departing from the main objective of the curriculum. My way of teaching did not contribute to the students' achievement scores in the Konkoor or even NHSGE. They criticized me by asking whether the tasks I designed were in student's examination. If not so, they said, why did I spend the valuable time of the classroom on what were not going to be assessed in the national examination (Teacher Interview-TF- February2013).

Throughout the teacher interview, I could feel Mr. Shayan's frustration from working in the mainstream public schools:

I was not supported at all in the school. Hence I decided to work in the private schools after mainstream Publicschool hours for the hope of teaching for joy. Although the school expected me to ensure the students' success in the examination, working there was and is much more satisfying. School board members rarely interfere in my way of teaching and in the complementary curriculum which I provided for the students here (Teacher Interview, TF-February 2013).

Indeed, the interview with Mr. Shayan provided valuable insight into his motivations and divergent pedagogic stances in the two classroom contexts. In considering his pedagogic stance in classroom B, I am reminded of Canagarajah's (1997, 2004, 2005) concept of "pedagogical safe houses". In Canagarajah's original formulation, " pedagogical safe houses" are spaces in classroom that allow students, especially those from minority or marginal groups to find their voice to express themselves without the pressure of having to confirm to the more visible culture. This was the sense in which the concept of safe house was used to analyze the data from episode 3 of excerpt 2 above (See Table 5.5).

Mr. Shayan's experiences, as narrated in the interview above, also present a different manifestation of safe houses. Whereas Canagarajah (1997, 2004, 2005) saw pedagogical safe houses as applied to the students, the interview data in this study throws light on " pedagogical safe houses" from the teacher's perspective. The privately-run schooling system offered Mr. Shayan a pedagogical safe house to practice his convictions on what constituted, in his view, *sound pedagogy*. Classroom B in the privately-run school was a pedagogical safe house because it was perceived to be free from the constraints he had experienced in the mainstream classroom. The contrast between pedagogical stance as mediated by the teacher in classroom A and B is presented in Table 5.6:

Table 5.6: Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Teacher in Classroom A and B

Pedagogical Stance as mediated by the teacher	Classroom A (Mainstream Public School) Banking pedagogy: (Pedagogy of Correctness)	Classroom B (Privately-Run School) Critical pedagogy (Pedagogy of Question and Critique)
Focus of the Teacher	The teacher resists or avoids any socially sensitive implications in discussions that may emerge in the course of the lesson, through different avoidance strategies: a) being indifferent to any critical comments by students b) shifting the topic of discourse to that of textbook or test book to make classroom discourses apolitical and anesthetized	The teacher allows the students to pose and construct alternative discourses which do not always reflect the officially endorsed discourse.
Role of Context	Classroom is not perceived as “a pedagogical safe house”.	Classroom is perceived as “a pedagogical safe house”.
Role of the Students	Many students gradually become passive or silenced because their critical comments or possibility of critical questions are ignored or resisted. The students are pushed towards a culture of silence.	Many students become actively engaged in classroom discussions because their critical comments or possibility of critical questions are welcomed. There is a potential of their personal transformation and of finding their voice in society.

5.3 Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Textbook

This section addresses the second theme of research question two, viz., and the “pedagogical stance as mediated by *the textbook*”. The officially mandated textbook, in the Iranian context, constitutes a key component of the manifested curriculum. In Research Question One, a distinction was made (See pp. 59-60) between the articulated and the mandated curriculum. The articulated curriculum was defined by the Fundamental Reforms in Education (the FRDE) and the National Curriculum Document (the NCD) which are macro-level policy document that articulates the prescribed literacy practices which are promoted by the reforms currently underway in the Iranian education system. The manifested curriculum --which took the form of the available national textbook and the national high-stakes examinations--was an attempt to translate the articulated curriculum at the macro-level. The articulated and manifested curriculum which operates at the macro-level are translated at the micro-level as *the enacted curriculum* (See, for example, Avez-Lopez, 2003). The enacted curriculum comprises the pedagogical interactions between teacher and students through the national textbook and national high-stakes examinations i.e. two aspects of the manifested curriculum. The use of the national textbook which is the focus of this section is nationally endorsed and mandated by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in both settings, i.e. mainstream Public schools as well as privately-run schools. What follows is a discussion of two excerpts (excerpts 4 and 5) of the pedagogical stance to the available textbook in the two classrooms, viz., classroom A in the mainstream Public school and classroom B in the privately-run school. The two excerpts cited below were selected because they were deemed typical of teaching literacy practices in the two classroom settings, typicality being defined as the frequency of their occurrence.

5.3.1 Classroom A (Mainstream Public Schooling System)

5.3.1.1 Excerpt 4: Great Men and Women: Interactions in Classroom A

Excerpt 4 is taken from lesson 8 in the pre-university textbook on “Great Men and Women”. The lesson was a reading comprehension lesson and the excerpt below focused on a pre-reading activity in the textbook:

Table 5.7: Excerpt 4

Transcript of classroom interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the textbook
Mr. Shayan: Ok, have a look at your textbook, Lesson 8. At this page, you see a set of before you read or pre-reading questions. <i>Let's not focus and spend much time on this section because they are not questioned in the Konkoor or the NHSGE. Just read them and translate the questions into Persian. There is no need to answer them.</i> Ok Read aloud the whole questions and translate them to the class. Ok, Morteza you please.	The teacher attempted to align the textbook practice exercises with the high-stakes examination questions (The teacher transformed the pre-reading activity to an examination-format exercises)
[The students read and translate the pre-reading questions in the textbook].	
Mr. Shayan: <i>The only possible questions related to this section can be the new vocabularies which are stated in your textbook.</i> Write the synonyms of the two new vocabularies in this section, <u>famous is synonymous with well-known</u> , who can give a synonym for the word <i>following</i> ?	The teacher provided a rationale for his focus on examination with reference to synonyms
Reza: below	
Mr. Shayan: Yes, exactly. Ok, we will practice more actual examination questions later after we finished the reading passage in the textbook.	

As shown in the excerpt 4 above (See Table 5.7), Mr. Shayan, the teacher attempts to align the textbook exercises with the high-stakes examination questions. He achieves this firstly by dismissing the pre-reading exercises (as seen in “*Let’s not focus and spend much time on this section because they are not questioned in the Konkoor or the NHSGE. Just read them and translate the questions into Persian. There is no need to answer them*”). The rationale for inclusion or exclusion of textbook exercises is thus based solely on their relevance in the national examinations. Thus he transforms the pre-reading activity, which is supposed to activate students’ prior knowledge and schemata about the passage, into an examination-format exercise. This provides the underlying rationale for his comment that “*The only possible questions related to this section can be the new vocabularies which are stated in your textbook*”. “*The only possible questions*” in this instance involves questions that (a) elicit synonyms for vocabulary or (b) require the translation of pre-reading activity questions from English to Persian. In keeping with the examination format his focus is on “linguistic knowledge” and not “content knowledge”. Making real life connections (which the textbook pre-reading questions call for) is not valued or enacted in his pedagogy in this class, because such practices do not figure in the national examination.

A further characteristic of the teacher’s pedagogical stance is the generated passivity of the students. They only respond when they are called upon, and their responses are limited to providing answers to examination-type questions.

5.3.2 Classroom B (Privately-Run Schooling System)

5.3.2.1 Excerpt 5: Great Men and Women: Interactions in Classroom B

Excerpt 5 below is taken from a lesson on the same exercise reported in excerpt 4. As in excerpt 4, this lesson as well focuses on the pre-reading activity prescribed in the textbook. What follows is a partial transcript (See Table 5.8):

Table 5.8: Excerpt 5

Transcript of classroom interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the textbook
<p>Mr. Shayan: Ok, new lesson, Lesson 8. <i>Just to save our time, let's read aloud pre-reading questions related to the lesson. No need to answer the questions, just translate them. In this section, there are two important vocabularies which are questioned in your examinations. Following which means below here and famous in questions number 1, 4, 5, 6. Who can give a synonym for the word famous?</i></p>	<p>Firstly, the teacher aligned the textbook exercise with examination question type (Here, synonym for the new word, in the pre-university activity).</p>
<p>Nader: <u>Well-known</u> .</p>	
<p>Mr. Shayan: Very good. To see how they are asked in your examination, later have a look at your testbook, page 60. Nader please go on, read the questions and translate them to class. <i>[Nader reads aloud all questions and immediately translate them one by one. One example of the suggested pre-reading question is: Number 5: Can you name other famous people?]</i></p>	<p>The teacher addressed examination concerns</p>
<p>Nader: <i>Sir! Is there any great scientist, poet or writer among Afghans?</i></p>	<p>Nader's question became a trigger for critical engagement (going beyond examination requirements).</p>
<p>Mr. Shayan: <i>Sure, Hakim Sanaei Ghaznavi, a great Physician and Balkhi, a great poet, and many others</i> whether in the past or present days. Why do you think so?</p>	<p>The teacher included the contributory role of great Afghans. He also tried to engage the students to touch on stereotypes and social attitudes on Afghan community.</p>
<p>Nader: <i>Because it is known that Afghans are extremists?</i></p>	<p>The student (Nader) expressed a stereotype and social attitude on Afghan community.</p>
<p>Mr. Shayan: Who says so?</p> <p>Farid: Media, news, everybody says so, sir.</p>	<p>The teacher raised the students' awareness to find sources of the information before making a generalizability or judgment on any social attitudes.</p>

Table 5.8, continued: Excerpt 5

Transcript of classroom interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the textbook
Mr. Shayan: You should not believe in everything the media says. Afghans are like many other people. Among them, great scientists, writers, and of course some extremists may be living. It is common everywhere. Generally, they are like many like many other people in different parts of the world. <i>Poor Afghans, they suffered from many civic and international wars in their country.</i> Many of them migrated to the neighboring counties. Iran helped these refugees a lot. In our city, some of these Afghan refugees lived. Even now, you can find some of them.	The teacher raised the students' awareness on the intelligent role of media on controlling minds of people. The teacher expressed his personal thoughts on Afghan situations.
Morteza: Yes, some of them were workers, builders.	The student (Morteza) made an intertextual linking and got engaged in the discussion.
Mr. Shayan: How did you find that?	The teacher attempted to invite the student to get engaged into the discussion and interrogate the social attitudes towards Afghans.
Morteza: Years before my father decided to make a new house. He asked one of his friends who was a builder to do it. For my father's friend some Afghans worked. My father always says that these Afghans were <i>hardworking and Halal</i> . One of these Afghans' son became my elder brother's friend later. He was very studious. I heard that he is an engineer now sir.	The student (Morteza) made an intertextual linking through sharing his family experience with the class. In his example, the student even became sympathetic with the Afghan society as well. He also brought a counter-example to negate the stereotype and social attitude.
Ss: [Start talking]	

The two excerpts, excerpts 4 and 5, provide a sharp contrast. Whereas excerpt4 was clearly guided by the examination-type practice, excerpt 5 portrayed a class which exercised greater discourse latitude where the discussion clearly veered beyond the requirements of the examination.

Nader's somewhat provocative question ("*Sir is there any great scientist, poet or writer among Afghans?*") became a trigger for a consideration of "*Great Afghan men and women*". It is not clear why Nader chose to focus on Afghans and not locals or other nationalities. Within the Iranian context, Afghans are refugees who settled in Iran as a consequence of the conflicts in their home country.

Mr. Shayan's response to this question in classroom B was distinctly different from his response or stance in classroom A. Whereas he was openly dismissive of non-examination concerns in the mainstream classroom, here in the private classroom, he appeared to be more accommodating. He even contributed the names of "*Great Afghans*" (as seen in "*Hakim Sanaei Ghaznavi, a great Physician and Balkhi, a great poet, and many others whether in the past or present days.*") and also expressed his personal thoughts on the Afghan situation ("*poor Afghans, they suffered from many civic and international wars in their country*"). We note, of course, that Mr. Shayan started this lesson on a similar note as in excerpt 4 focusing on translation and synonyms (as seen in "*Just to save our time, let's read aloud pre-reading questions related to the lesson. No need to answer the questions, just translate them*"). However, Nader's question led the teacher to depart from that pedagogical stance in Classroom A to move towards a more inclusive, more discursive and exploratory (see, for example, Teeple and Wichman, 1997) approach in classroom B. In classroom B, social attitudes towards the Afghans were interrogated. Students weighed Nader's response ("*Afghans are extremists*") with Morteza's sympathetic response ("*My father always says that these Afghans were hardworking and Halal*"). Clearly, there was attempt to relate the text under discussion with the world beyond the classroom, touching on stereotypes and social attitudes towards a specific community.

In this setting, we observe that the teacher, not only focuses on linguistic knowledge in the textbook but also he moves to critical engagement with the content.

Although the teacher aligns the textbook exercises with examination question types in the parts of the lesson, his stance in classroom B is framed so that his pedagogy is developed to include the non-examination content besides examination relevant content. In effect, the teacher, Mr. Shayan attempts to link even those non-examination exercises with the students' and his own real life experiences.

Mr. Shayan and his students in classroom B intermittently shifted between two approaches or stances: one, focused on their immediate concern i.e. success in the examination; the other, focused on real-life, out-of-class "learning". As Pennington (2002) argues, in such a context, Mr. Shayan makes himself part of the community to which his students belong. This is certainly a different "Mr. Shayan" from the one portrayed or enacted in the mainstream classroom of excerpt 4.

5.3.3 Commentary on Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Textbook in Classroom A & B

In both classes, when the teacher implemented the textbook, he aligned the textbook exercises with the examination practices. However, in doing so, some differences in pedagogical stance as mediated by the textbook in the two classrooms were seen. In classroom A, the teacher narrowed down the "textbook curriculum". As an evidence, he ignored some textbook practices, e.g. answering to the questions in pre-reading activity because they were not asked in the national high-stakes examination. Indeed, the teacher was only focused on examination relevant parts of the textbook. In effect, his pedagogy was reduced and framed in an "exclusive" pedagogy in which culturally sensitive and real-life issues of the students were excluded.

Indeed, in classroom A, English language literacy teaching for something except the examination was seen as irrelevant. This was ironic as the FRDE and the NCD explicitly called for "achieving a critical engagement in [English Language] Education"

(See, for example, the FRDE, p.18 and the NCD p.14). Still, the teacher in classroom A continued to comprise examination relevance. This is reflected in the following excerpt from an interview with him:

“As I said earlier, in this school, my performance is merely seen in terms of the students’ scores in the examination, based on their passing rate on the examinations. Therefore, I see myself highly responsible for these students. I see myself under pressure here because rank of the school, the board members from the perspective of ministry of education is dependent on the passing rate of the students in the examination. Therefore, I always try to adjust my teaching based on the examination even when I am using the textbook to ensure my performance” (Teacher Interview,TJ-June 2013).

The higher stakes nature of the examinations in classroom A seemed to create some tensions between the teacher’s epistemology and the purpose of schooling. As Mr. Shayan mentioned:

“I know the goal of the textbook and even education is something beyond the examination. It is to make the students for dealing with their issues in their real life, but here when I am always reminded of significance of the Konkoor, how I can meet these aims. Therefore, in this class the best way is to focus on the sections in the textbook which are questioned in the actual examination. I attempt not to get away from what I am asked. This let me save my time and ensure as well.” (Teacher Interview-TJ,June 2013)

His words reminds me of how the teacher, Mr. Shayan has to strategically renegotiate his own beliefs on English language teaching in the examination-oriented setting of classroom A in favor of the national high-stakes tests to cope with the contextual challenges and to ensure the students’ success in these examinations.

Likewise, in classroom B, the teacher attempted to align the textbook exercises with the examination question types. However, in classroom B, his pedagogy went beyond the examinations. In effect, the teacher attempted to link those non-examination relevant parts with the students’ and his real life experiences. He valued non-examination curriculum content and allowed for the students’ active participation to develop examination *as well as* non-examination curriculum that was triggered by the textbook. Furthermore, he not only focused on linguistic knowledge but also on

content knowledge in the textbook which acted as a springboard for critical engagement.

It is possible to characterize Mr. Shayan's pedagogy as mediated by the textbook in the two classroom settings as comprising what we might call a *low* road and a *high* road. The low road, which found expression in classroom A was narrowly examination-oriented. Curriculum relevance on the low road was determined solely by examination relevance. The high-road by contrast went beyond the examination although it did not deny the examination requirements. Curriculum relevance was determined by relevance of the content to students' needs. Part of the students' needs was determined by success in the examination; but the pedagogy also went beyond the examinations to deal with questions and concerns that students had in their lived experiences.

By travelling along the high road, as Freire and Macedo (1998) also argue, the teacher helped the students to make connections between their lives and the new knowledge. To do so, he not only helped the students to construct new knowledge but also got engaged in their learning.

To summarize the findings on the pedagogical stance mediated by the textbook, Table 5.9 below presents the characteristics of the two pedagogical stances along three dimensions: focus of the teacher, role of context, and role of the students.

Table 5. 9: Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Textbook in Classroom A & B

Pedagogical Stance as mediated by the textbook	Classroom A (Low Road)	Classroom B (High Road)
Focus of the Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher is very focused on the textbook. He neglects irrelevant examination parts in the textbook. • The teacher dominantly focuses on linguistic knowledge in the textbook rather than content knowledge and critical literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher is not very focused on the textbook. He goes beyond the examinations although he does not deny the examination requirements. • The teacher not only focuses on linguistic knowledge in the textbook but also on content knowledge and engaging the students with their real-life issues. •
Role of Context	The class provides less Discursive Latitude which makes classroom interactions being directed towards the examination discourse.	The class provides more Discursive Latitude where the teacher and students, although are still examination-oriented, explore critical questions and literacies.
Role of the Students	The students' participation is contingent upon the time when the teacher called up them or invites them to debate. As a result, the students became passive in classroom interactions.	The students participates in classroom interactions even they are not called up by the teacher. As a result, the students become active in classroom interactions.

5.4 Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Testbook

This section of research question two addresses the second theme i.e. pedagogic stance as mediated by the testbook in classroom A and B, both of which prepared students for the same national high-stakes examinations are analyzed and discussed.

Although the analysis of data showed that national high-stakes examinations, namely the Konkoor and the NHSGE were prominent in both classroom contexts, there was a slight difference between the two classroom contexts. In classroom A, in the Public schooling system, the testbook was officially prescribed by the school board. In contrast, in classroom B, in the privately-run schooling system, the testbook is not officially prescribed. However, in classroom B, Mr. Shayan, the teacher, felt the need to use the testbook based on his experience. Hence, he recommended it to the students believing that *“it ensures the students’ success in the national high-stakes examinations”*, (Teacher Interview-TJ-June 2013 & Student Interviews-SJ- June 2013), a view frequently expressed by both teacher and students in the interviews.

What follows is a discussion of five excerpts (excerpts 6 to 10) of the pedagogical stance to the testbook in the two classrooms. The excerpts address how the testbook is pedagogically used and how the testbook derives classroom interactions in the two classroom contexts. The testbooks, in the Iranian context, are books of tests of the national high-stakes examination, the Konkoor and the NHSGE. The testbooks are published and endorsed by the educational authorities. The “tests” in the testbook constitute either actual test items or are modeled on the official high-stakes examinations. While the tests generally resemble the genre of the Konkoor and the NHSGE, some test items are categorized by skills viz. grammar, vocabulary, reading, etc. These excerpts cited below were selected because they were deemed typical of teaching literacy practices at the micro-level as mediated by the testbook in each of the

settings. As mentioned in the second theme of the chapter, typicality is defined as the frequency of their occurrence.

5.4.1 Classroom A (Mainstream Public Schooling System)

5.4.1.1 Excerpt 6: Centrality of the Testbook

Excerpt 6 provides insight into the centrality of the testbook in classroom practice. In classroom A, the testbook was prescribed as part of the manifested curriculum, and together with the textbook, was pivotal in shaping classroom discourse. Excerpt 6 is presented in three episodes. Episode 1 highlights the importance that teachers and students accord the testbook. Episode 2 examines the impact of the curricular dominance of the testbook on pedagogical practice. Episode 3 in turn provides glimpses into students' resistance to the dominance of the testbook and the teachers' response to such resistance. Excerpt 7 provides further example of student resistance to the dominant test-taking pedagogy occurred in a test practice session in classroom. Excerpt 8 also underscores and highlights the central role of the testbook in classroom B as reflected in (a) the close alignment between the questions in the testbooks and the actual high-stakes (b) alluding to anecdotal evidence to highlight how the testbook can act as catalyst for the students' success in the examination. Excerpts 9 and 10 provide two examples of shunting, back and forth between banking and critical pedagogy in classroom B interactions.

(a) Episode 1: Establishing the Ground Rules: The Role of the Testbook

A close analysis of the classroom interactions between the teacher and students reveals the paramount importance of the testbook in classroom A as revealed below: Episode 1 is a spin-off from a previous reading passage where the teacher, Mr. Shayan, takes a quotation in direct speech from a character in the reading comprehension passage. He asked the class to transform it into direct speech. To underscore the importance of such

an exercise, Mr. Shayan resorted to a follow-up grammar activity from the textbook, which is reported in episode 1 (See Table 5.10):

Table 5.10: Excerpt 6, Episode 1

Transcription of interactions : (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the testbook
Mr. Shayan: Ok boys in the passage we read, there is a lot of grammar test hints which are important for your examinations. Now, have a look at the test samples in your testbook which I will read for you. In your final examination, the questions are taken from these testbooks.	The teacher frequently drew the students' attention to the importance of the examinations and the testbooks through: a) referring to the testbook b) examination question formats c) test hints d) highlighting importance of final examinations
Iman: Sir, all questions are taken from our textbook or these test books?	The student expressed examination performance as his major concern.
Mr. Shayan: Not all questions but many of them	The teacher repeated the important role of the testbooks.
Students: How good! So we can get a good score!	The students endorsed and affirmed the importance of examinations through referring to examination scores/marks

In episode 1, Mr. Shayan frequently drew the students' attention to the importance of the national high-stakes examination and test books (as seen in *"there are a lot of grammar test hints which are important for your examinations"* *"Now have a look at the test samples in your testbook which I will read for you"*). The use of words like "test hints" or phrases like "in the final examination" (articulated with emphasis, one word at a time) in the teacher's discourse which was repeated several times in the course is indicative of the pervasiveness of the examination-centeredness of classroom practices. Mr. Shayan's repeated emphasis on the paramount importance of the testbook is also illustrative of one more aspect of role of the testbooks i.e. their contribution to examination performance which is a major concern for the students (as seen in *"How*

good! So we can get a good score!”). The students here appear to endorse and affirm the importance of examination.

Likewise, Mr. Shayan’s admission that many of the questions in the final high-stakes examination will be from the testbook confirms the view that the testbook has a set of examination question genres conforming to the national high school graduation examinations (the NHSGE) or the Konkoor. The pervasiveness of the testbook in the teaching and learning process also emerged during the focus group interviews which confirm the significance of tests in episode 1 above. For instance, the following are the views of three students expressed during the interviews:

- *In our class, the teacher tries to teach us the recent examples of the test. A good teaching occurs when the teacher digest everything assessed in our final examinations for his students* (Interview with Jaffar, a student in classroom A, SF, February 2013).
- *We prefer to have a teacher who has a good skill in teaching test-answering strategies rather than a teacher who focus on other aspects of English* (Interview with Farhad, a student in classroom A, SF, February 2013).
- *In my opinion, an Iranian student is a professional expert in how to answer tests, especially multiple choice tests because from the early weeks in the schools he becomes aware of the role of testbooks in the education* (Interview with Saeed, a student in classroom A, SF-February 2013).

The examples above underscore the various students’ perception that teaching with an emphasis on high-stakes examination was equated with “good teaching” (Jaffar); that “test-answering strategies” were more important than “focusing of other aspects of English” (Farhad); and that the emphasis of tests was a feature of Iranian main stream schooling “from the early weeks in the school” (Saeed).

(b) Episode 2: Test-Taking Skills as Pedagogical Practice

The acknowledged predominance of high-stakes national examinations impacts pedagogical practices in the mainstream classrooms. The impact of tests on pedagogy is

further reinforced by the close alignment between the prescribed textbook and the testbook.

In episode 2, which followed episode 1 above, the students engaged in a vocabulary practice exercise based on a reading passage in lessons 5 of the national textbook. The lexical items listed in the textbook reading passage figured also in the vocabulary tests in the testbook, which were also matched with identical questions in the national high-stakes examination. The close alignment between the textbook, testbook and actual examinations could be said to influence the classroom interactions between Mr. Shayan and his students in classroom. This is evident in the interactions below (See Table 5.11):

Table 5.11: Excerpt 6, Episode 2

Transcript of interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the testbook
Mr. Shayan: <i>Ok, let's focus on the test samples of lesson 5. Next session, you will have a review examination on the new vocabularies you have so far learnt. Page 56 in your testbook. Read this page quickly. Do not translate it.</i>	The test became the focus of interaction
Students: <i>[Students start reading the vocabulary test practices in the testbook]</i>	
Mr. Shayan: <i>In the test sample, we have "<u>Japanese are very hardworking</u>. A synonym for <u>hardworking</u> is". What does it mean?</i>	The teacher did not give the students any time to critique the discourses (e.g. stereotypes) embedded in the tests.
Akbar: <i>Diligent</i> Mr Shayan : <i>Ok very good. In the next test sample, every year they invented new things. A synonym for <u>Invent</u> is.....</i>	There was no diversion from supplying the answers by the teacher and students
Farhad: <i><u>make sth new</u></i>	
Sina: <i>Sir, will the questions appear in the examination like this?</i>	
Mr. Shayan : <i>Just look at the examples in your testbook. The content of the test may change, but the vocabulary and the synonyms are the same. What is important is that you just need to memorize the test hints, the vocabulary and the synonyms in the examples. If you do this, surely you can answer any question which is asked in your examinations.</i>	The teacher just focused on rote-learning test-taking skills. There was no emphasis on questioning and critiquing the content of the test practice

As is evident above, the test-driven interactions are highly routinized such that the interactions rarely went beyond the test taking skills. The teacher voiced the examination questions while the students promptly supplied the answers as test-takers. There was no diversion from supplying the answers and students did not “take-off”

from their answers to build on their understanding of the content and context of the test. I use the term “test-taking pedagogy” to characterize such discourse.

This way of teaching was evident when Mr. Shayan, the teacher, emphasized the test-taking skill (as seen in “*What is important is that you just need to memorize the test hint vocabulary and the synonyms in the examples*”) to ensure the students’ achievement in the examinations. Because each question-answer sequence rapidly followed the next question-answer sequence, the students were not given any time to critique the discourses embedded in the tests. For instance, in discussing the sentence (“*Japanese are very hardworking*”) in the episode above, the attention of the teacher was focused on providing an appropriate synonym for the word “*hardworking*”. Neither, Mr. Shayan nor the students commented on or critiqued the potential stereotyping embedded in the sentence “the Japanese are hardworking”. Such a way of teaching was frequently repeated even in interactions covering other skills and subskills like grammar, and reading passage practices as well. Moreover, the teacher’s emphasis on *memorizing* the vocabulary as a test-taking skill underscores the rote-learning emphasis of his pedagogy and resembles what Friere (1996) referred to as “banking pedagogy”.

(c) Episode 3: Resistance to Tests: “it is enough”....

While the episode above presents a picture of a highly routinized test-taking pedagogy, there were also instances of resistance to this pedagogy, although occasional. This is reflected in the excerpt below which comes from fifteen minutes before the end of the above-mentioned lesson:

Table 5.12: Excerpt 6, Episode 3

Transcript of interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical Stance as mediated by the textbook
Farshid : <i>Sir, for today it is enough. We got tired</i>	A student objected to the test-taking dominant approach.
Mr. Shayan: <i>No, 15 minutes left to the end of the session. We can practice at least 10 more test samples</i>	The teacher quickly over-ruled the resisting student.
Sina: <i>Teacher is right</i> Students: Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fellow student quickly joined the teacher to over-rule the resisting student and make him silent. • The students themselves were divided, with the majority aligned to the teacher.
Mr. Shayan: <i>Ok, let's go on. Nima, the next one you please.</i>	

Although Farshid objected to the test dominant approach (“*Sir for today it is enough. We got tired*”), he was quickly over-ruled by the teacher (“*We can practice at least 10 more test samples*”) and also significantly by a fellow student, Sina (“*Teacher is right*”) which eventually silenced Farshid. Thus even in the classroom settings where the “test-taking pedagogy” was dominant there were instances, such as episode 3 above, where the pedagogy was contested albeit briefly. The students themselves were divided, with the majority aligned to the teacher, Mr. Shayan as well as the dominant and possibly the hegemonic nature of test-centered ideological milieu of the classroom.

5.4.1.2 Excerpt 7: Resistance to the Test-Taking Pedagogy ... “*Sir I do not like this class...*”

A further example of student resistance to the dominant test-taking pedagogy occurred in a test practice session on vocabulary tied to lesson 4 (of the National textbook). In

this excerpt the teacher singled out one student, Ahmad, because his performance in a prior test was less than satisfactory. The interactions that followed are presented below:

Table 5.13: Excerpt 7

Transcription of Interactions: Translated from Persian	Pedagogical Stance mediated by the textbook
Mr. Shayan: <i>Look at your testbook, page 56. What does the word “happen” mean in the sentence every year a number of earthquakes happen in Iran? Ok Ahmad you please?</i>	Teacher accepted the examination centrality
Ahmad: <i>Me sir</i>	
Mr. Shayan: <i>Yes.[the teacher look at the class] Boys, finally I will make Ahmad an expert in English language, especially in the Konkoor.</i>	Teacher positioned himself as a determiner of students’ success
Ahmad: <i>Sir why do you overexpose me among all these students?</i>	The student retorted (resisted) the teacher’s infuriating treatment
Mr. Shayan: <i>I do not remember days in which I scorned students for their weakness in English language learning. I always encouraged them.</i>	The teacher required students to submit his pedagogical stance
Sasan: <i>But he will scorn you today</i>	
Students: <i>[Laughter]</i>	
<p>Mr. Shayan: <i>Based on my all experience I continuously say to weak students like you these questions will be posed in the Konkoor. But you don’t care.</i></p> <p><i>[he goes on with a rising tone of speech]</i></p> <p><i>I had a student who was very weak at English. I encouraged him to attend in the test cramming classes. I also taught him English with these testbooks. Can you imagine he could answer more than 60% of the Konkoor questions in English? He was in the 7th heavens. He himself could not believe his eyes. Yes if there is a will, there is a way. Nothing is impossible.</i></p>	The teacher used an anecdote as a counter-point to the student’s resistance to his test-taking pedagogical stance

Table 5.13, continued: Excerpt 7

Transcription of Interactions: Translated from Persian	Pedagogical Stance mediated by the textbook
Ahmad: <i>Sir I do not like this class, I do not like the Konkoor, I do not know why I feel bored when you are teaching like this.</i>	The student overtly showed his resistance to the teacher's test-taking pedagogical stance.
Parham: <i>But I like to learn the test hints. All are not like you.</i>	Other students distanced themselves from the student who does not want to willfully submit himself to the test-taking pedagogy
Mr. Shayan: You know, I have students in the class who are expected to be accepted in the Konkoor. I am responsible for them. In your class, there are some students who are hardworking and they know that these tests make their future. <i>If I teach like this, it is just for you. For you to get a passing score, I just think of weak students like you. I am sympathetic to you. You are weak at English and you intentionally do not want to tackle your problems.</i>	The teacher treated students as an object of his pedagogical intervention.
Ahmad: <i>You mean me sir!</i>	
Mr. Shayan: <i>Yes, I do not pass a sentence on you. Keep in mind that if you cannot answer the English tests in the Konkoor, you will face many problems in your academic life as well. Ok boys, keep it in your mind that next week we will have a rather comprehensive examination from lesson 1 to the end of lesson 4. Read your textbook carefully.</i>	The teacher overtly classified the students based on their examination performance.

The terse exchange between Mr. Shayan and Ahmad is indicative of two oppositional stances towards the Konkoor (the National high-stakes University Entrance Examination) and the test-taking pedagogy as manifestation of a banking pedagogy. The teacher not only accepts the centrality of examination in his approach but more importantly also sees himself as a determiner of student success (*"I will make Ahmad an expert in English language, especially in the Konkoor"*). In his pronouncement that he

could turn Ahmad from “a weak student” to “an expert” he treats Ahmad as an *object* of his pedagogical intervention. A feature of the object-status of this student within a test-taking pedagogy is the teacher’s overt classification of the student as *weak*, thus seeing the student-as-object solely in terms of academic performance rather than any other personal and cultural attributes. This is evident in the teacher’s claim:

*(“If I teach like this it is just for you. For you to get a passing score. I just think of **weak students** like you. I am sympathetic to you. **You are weak** at English and you intentionally do not want to tackle your problems.)”*

In making this pronouncement the teacher required that the student submits to his pedagogy (*“Based on all my experience I continuously say to weak students like you these questions will be posed in the Konkoor. But you don’t care”*). His anecdote (*“I had a student who was very weak”*) who was eventually transformed (*“he was in seventh heaven”*) is prescribed as a counter-point to the stance of resistance adopted by Ahmad. (*“Sir I do not like this class, I do not like the Konkoor, I do not know why I feel bored when you are teaching like this”*).

It was precisely his treatment as a mere object in the class that infuriates Ahmad. He retorted: (*Are you trying to overexpose me among these students”*. *“you mean me, sir!”*). Overexposure as Ahmad saw it involves making him an object of the teacher’s test-taking skills and a mere example in the classroom. This is encouraged by Ahmad’s fellow student, Nader, who declared (*“He [i.e. Mr. Shayan] will scorn you today”*). Another student distanced himself from Ahmad (*“All [i.e. the rest of the students] are not like you” “but I like to learn the test hints”*). Thus by not willfully submitting himself to the test-taking pedagogy, Ahmad run the risk of being ostracized by his classmates and the teacher.

In such setting, the teacher and the students who were representing the voice of examinations became an oppressor in the classroom against any voice that was resistant to teaching for the test. By contrast, Ahmad was a student who resisted Mr. Shayan’s

ways of teaching in the classroom. Although in his interview he acknowledged that some students shared his point of view, he wondered why his peers were making fun of him or even blaming him for his resistance in the classroom. In an interview after this lesson, Ahmad shared his thoughts with frankness and candour:

I hate my class, I do not want to learn English just to get a certificate or pass the examination. I am going to learn English to transform my life, to become a person serving humanity. I do not like my class, I asked myself many times why I am coming to the school. We just rote-learn a bulk of test answering notes taken from the textbook and testbook. This way of teaching is not attractive for me. We just learn some rote-learning strategies for passing examination. These testbooks bring "an epidemic blindness" for the class. We just learn English for getting higher scores because they make our destiny. I am sometimes in a dilemma. Maybe I am mistaken, but the teacher and my fellows want me to be silent [Interview with Ahmad, a student in classroom A, SM-March 2013]

Ahmad's voice betrayed signs of sadness and frustration, strong emotions which he was struggling with at a personal level at that time. But his use of the term "epidemic blindness" to characterize the impact of Mr. Shayan's test-taking pedagogy on his rather classmates is worth exploring more closely. Epidemic blindness was in his view *an epidemic* because it was widespread, covering not the teacher but fellow students who spoke in congruence with the teacher to silence him. More crucially, the test-taking pedagogy-- especially when it took on epidemic proportions-- resulted in *blindness*: ("We just learn some rote-learning strategies..." "for getting higher scores"). What he desired, in contrast, was "to learn English to transform his life to become a person serving humanity".

Furthermore, the contestation between the teacher and Ahmad was illustrative of the discursivity in power relations in which the teacher, Mr. Shayan bestowed legitimacy on the test and testbook through what has been referred to as the test-taking pedagogy. In actuality, what was at work here is more than the legitimization of tests and the testbook in the classroom. This legitimization contributed crucially to the ultimate sovereignty of the test in the class. This sovereignty tended to objectify students as subordinated persons (Foucault, 1975). It tended to make students as "docile

body” (Foucault, 1975), as those who had little room for maneuver because their “margin of liberty (agency) is extremely limited” (1975, p. 12).

In discursual terms, the sovereignty of tests and the testbook in the test-taking pedagogy, as Ahmad expressed, stifles exploratory talk, interpretation or even critique.

5.4.2 Classroom B (Privately-Run Schooling System)

The centrality of the testbook in the teacher’s pedagogy was evident in both the mainstream Public schooling system, as was shown in classroom A (see, for instance, excerpt 6) as well as the privately-run schooling system as was evident in classroom B. Although the testbook was not officially prescribed by the school in the privately-run schooling system, Mr. Shayan who taught in classroom B required his students to purchase the testbook. This decision was based on his prior experiences in both mainstream and private schools. In his words, “*the testbook ensured students’ achievement in the national high-stakes examinations*” [Teacher Interview, TM, March 2013).

5.4.2.1 Excerpt 8: Highlighting the Testbook “Sir, the Konkoor questions are from these materials?....”

Excerpt 8 below is taken from a grammar lesson on use of so that and such that related to lesson 4 in pre-university textbook. Before referring to a set of follow-up activities in the testbook to practice these grammar items which were frequently asked in the national high-stakes examinations, the Konkoor and the NHSGE, Mr.Shayan highlighted the paramount importance of the testbook in this classroom as shown in Table 5.14:

Table 5.14: Excerpt 8

Transcription of interactions : (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the testbook
Mr. Shayan : My dear students, just for reminding, our testbook is one of the best testbooks..... It has a good compilation of exam questions.	The teacher highlighted the paramount importance of the testbooks
Mehdi: The Bani Hashemi Testbook is good as well sir.	The student reemphasized the role of the testbooks though bringing some other available testbooks in the market
Mr. Shayan: I have not seen it yet. In the testbook, we can see some actual NHSGE questions besides the Konkoor examinations which help you to get good score in the examinations	The teacher put an emphasis on role of the testbooks through referring a close alignment between the questions in the testbooks and the actual examinations
Mehdi: Sir, the Konkoor questions are from these materials?	The student expressed examination performance as his major concern.
Mr. Shayan: As I emphasized many times they are from your textbook and the testbooks. You should learn vocabulary and grammar practices in them. The reading passages, grammar rules mostly related to Book 3 and Pre-university book and also vocabulary are generally taken from the testbooks or are very similar to them. Many years before I had a student who could get 8th highest ranked one in the country in his field using these testbooks.	The teacher used anecdotal evidences (bringing the success of his students in previous years' high-stakes exams) to introduce to and ensure the students the testbook as a catalyst for the students' success.
Students: wwwwwwwwwow, happy to him sir	

The excerpt above underscores the central role of the testbook in classroom B. This is reflected in the close alignment between the questions in the testbooks and the actual high-stakes examination, as seen, for instance, in the teacher's comment that *"In the testbook, we can see some actual NHSGE questions Which help you get a good score in the examination"*. The teacher used anecdotal evidence to highlight how the testbook can act as catalyst for the students' success in the examination. He

exemplified the success of his ex-students who were top-ranked in the National University Entrance Examination, the Konkoor.

Anecdotes such as this were used as motivational narratives designed to persuade students to agree with the teacher's use of the testbook as a pivotal reference. Interviews with the students supported their endorsement of the teacher's testbook-centered approach, as was illustrated by the following two quotes from Nader and Jalal, two students in Mr. Shayan's class.

I think not only me but also many of my friends like this testbook because Mr. Shayan spends a lot of time on some actual test samples in the Konkoor and NHSGE related to the previous year (Interview with Nader, a student in classroom B-SM, March 2013)

Thanks to the testbook, I have learnt a lot of test hints and there is no need to attend in test cramming classes. Furthermore, my score in English has increased more than my last year's score in this course. It is satisfying for me (Interview with Jalal, a student in classroom B-SMB, March 2013)

At face value, the above interactions and students' views seemed to indicate that the test-taking ethos of classroom B was similar to classroom A. However, as the next excerpts indicate, there are several differences between the two classes.

5.4.2.2 Excerpt 9: Shunting Back and Forth between Banking and Critical

Pedagogy: Example A

This excerpt is taken from a reading comprehension test practice in the testbook. This reading comprehension practice includes a set of short reading passages which are aligned with lesson 8 in the tesbook, entitled “Great Men and Women”. The first short reading passage in the testbook, taken from the 2010 NHSGE, is on Thomas Edison. The short passage is followed by a question and a set of multiple choice answers, as follows:

Reading comprehension: Read the following sentences and choose the correct choice.

“Edison’s memory will live on because of the large number of his inventions and their usefulness even today.

It is understood from the sentence that

- a) Some of Edison’s inventions are useless today.
- b) Edison had a good memory
- c) We will remember Edison for many of his inventions
- d) Edison could remember a large number of useful information”.

The discussion of this examination-type question is in two parts. The first part comprises: (a) discussion of synonyms to the phrases “because of” and “the large number of”, and (b) a word-by-word translation of the entire passage into Persian. After these activities, the following exchange between Mr. Shayan and his students ensued (See Table 5.15):

Table 5.15: Excerpt 9

Transcript of Interaction: (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance mediated by the testbook
<p>Mr. Shayan: Ok, Mehdi, what is the correct answer for the test?</p> <p>Mehdi: the correct answer is <u>number c.</u></p> <p>Mr. Shayan: <u>Yes, all successful men are praised for their services and inventions.</u> Ok, Akbar, the next one please. Read the next short passage and tell the class what is the correct answer.</p>	<p>Banking pedagogy: Focus on the testbook</p>
<p>Aliasghar: But sir, I recently read an article in the internet which was on the dark side of Edison's life</p> <p>Mr. Shayan: Oh, really, may you share it with the class?</p> <p>Aliasghar: The text said, Edison was a poor man in his early life. When he discovered the bulb, he liked to become a business man so that he would start selling his new products to make profit. One of his competitors, named Westernhouse, supported AC products on the same project with less price and easy-accessible. Therefore, people were becoming reliant on his products and Edison noticed if this situation would go on, sooner or later he would lose to him and he would lose a lot of money. Hence, he decided to highlight the only disadvantage using the AC killing animals, birds, rabbits. In fact, he gave them electric shock to make the AC. Even, worthily he accepted to give a positive answer to the court's request which sentenced a man to death due to killing his friend brutally using ax. However, when they tied the man to a metallic chair and made him wear a hat made of conducting metal to give him electronic shock, the plan did not work as expected.</p> <p>Students: Wooooooooooooow, so terrible.</p>	<p>Critical Pedagogy through articulating underlying principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing for providing an alternative reading of the short text by the student • Re-evaluating the text in the test (questioning assumptions) • Using multiple sources

Table 5.15, continued: Excerpt 9

Transcript of Interaction: (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance mediated by the testbook
<p>Mr. Shayan: What do you mean by the plan did not work as expected.</p> <p>Aliasghar: I mean, when passing through his body, the electric current started burning his tissue. But things did not go well. The electric current was not at a constant rate, perhaps they had not measured the current or they were not aware of the charge amount passing the body. As a result, the poor man survived for the first time but he suffered a lot from the painful death. The article said, it took him a few minutes to die.</p> <p>Jaffar: [A student sitting at the back of the classroom].Even, I heard that all Edison's ideas was not his. Some he took from his assistant.</p> <p>Mr. Shayan: Oh, really, perhaps what you said is right on him although I had not heard about it before. So what Ali teaches us is that we should not accept everything easily. We should study on it and get different [sources of] information to judge on it. <i>Ok, can you share the article with the class, next session?</i></p> <p>Aliasghar: Yes.</p> <p>Mr. Shayan: As history shows, scientists' inventions are sometimes misused although many of them do not mean to misuse when they would invent something. Who can bring an example of this?</p> <p>Jaffar: Nobel, for example, the inventor of dynamite who firstly used it for mining not killing people.</p> <p>Mr. Shayan: Exactly, so the lesson on what Ali and Jaffar would share with us today is that every invention can be used positively or negatively, it is up to us how to use it.</p>	

The earlier part of the lesson in which the teacher returned to the test-question resembles what Freire termed as *banking pedagogy* (Freire, 1970, 1982) because it involved the transmission of information from teacher to the students, and the assumptions in the test practice were not questioned and even reproduced by Mr. Shayan, the teacher at first stage as seen in (“*Yes, all successful men are praised for their services and inventions*”).

This led to the second part of the discussion which had a distinctly different quality from the first. A shift was noticed from a *banking pedagogy* to a critical pedagogy (Freire, 1982), as is illustrated below. The boundary between the two pedagogical discourses was signaled by Aliasghar (“*But sir I recently read an article in the internet which was on the dark side of Edison’s life*”).

The student’ alternative reading of the short text, drawing on their out-of-class readings forced a re-evaluation of the text in the test. In responding to this alternative reading, the teacher, Mr. Shayan articulated the principles underlying a critical pedagogy--questioning assumptions and using multiple sources-- in the following pronouncement (“*So what Aliasghar teaches us is that we should not accept everything easily. We should study on it and get different [sources of] information to judge on it*”). Not only that, he also further invited the students “*to share the article with the class, the next session.*”

The critique of Edison’s stature as a noble prize winner scientist, may be said to form an “instructional detour” (Cazden and Cordeiro, 1992) from what otherwise would have been a focus merely on test-taking strategies and practices. The instructional detour in this context was characterized as a movement away from banking pedagogy towards critical pedagogy, and a return “after the detour” towards banking pedagogy as seen in Mr. Shayan’s invocation “*Ok, now let’s come back to our textbook*”. Crucially, therefore, we see a shunting back and forth between banking and critical pedagogy.

5.4.2.3 Excerpt 10: Shunting Movement between Banking and Critical Pedagogy,

Example B

Excerpt 10, likewise, exemplifies yet another instance of the shunting movement between banking and critical pedagogical stances as mediated by the textbook. The following excerpt presents the text on gender and employment in England followed by the classroom discussion centered around this text and related questions taken from the 2011 NHSGE:

“Reading comprehension: Read the following text and choose the correct choice.

The average woman in England earns less than the average man. She is usually employed in lower-paid job and she does not have the same salary. She is not promoted as often the average man, and she is not afforded the same training.

In addition, most women are not educated for a job. At university, there is a high percentage of women studying subjects like languages and literature (68 %). But in engineering, technology and medicine the number is only 7%. *Women are not interested in mathematics, either.*

Education is the only career subject with a high percentage of women. Teaching is a job which a lot of women choose. But teachers are not paid very highly and men are usually offered the best posts.

Below the above text was a series of questions, the first two of which were:

1. In England, women usually earn.....
 - a) more than men
 - b) less than men
 - c) a large amount of money
 - d) nothing at all
2. In which field of study, women are studying more at university?
 - a) Mathematics
 - b) Engineering and technology
 - c) Medicine
 - d) Language and literature"

The text questions and the above generated the following classroom interaction between the teacher and the students (Reza, Mehdi, Vahid, Nader, Farid, Aliasghar) as well as the associated pedagogical stance which was mediated by the textbook (See Table 5.16):

Table 5.16: Excerpt 10

Transcript of Interactions: (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance mediated by the textbook
<p>Mr. Shayan: Ok, Reza, read aloud the first question and answer the question.</p> <p>Reza: In England, women usually earn the answer is number B, less than men.</p> <p>Mr. Shayan: Yes, earn means get here. Ok, Mehdi the next one please.</p>	<p>Banking pedagogy: There was a focus on the textbook. The teacher reproduces and acknowledges the taken-for-granted assumptions reflected in the test practice without questioning it</p>
<p>Mehdi: [Immediately he says] It is like Iran, sir.</p> <p>Mr. Shayan: Like Iran and many other contexts. Women's low-payment is very common in many contexts, even in developed countries like UK and many European countries.</p>	<p>Critical Pedagogy : Connecting Iran (the students' world) to England (the word in the textbook) in classroom interactions occurred</p>
<p>[The teacher goes on] Ok, Vahid, the next question</p> <p>Vahid: [He reads aloud the sentence] <u>In which field of study, women are studying more at university?</u> Sir, the answer is <u>number D Language and literature.</u></p> <p>Mr. Shayan: Exactly, as paragraph 2 in the text says, <u>the number of women in the fields of language and literature are more than mathematics, medicine and technology.</u> Look at the last line in that paragraph which says that <u>they are not interested in engineering, mathematics and medicine fields. They mostly like language and literature.</u> Ok, question number 3 Farid, you please.</p>	<p>Banking Pedagogy: There was a focus on the textbook</p>

Table 5.16, continued: Excerpt 10

Transcript of Interactions: (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance mediated by the textbook
<p>Nader: <i>Sir, I do not think that is true.</i></p> <p>Mr. Shayan: <i>Why?</i></p> <p>Nader : I think, if the number of women studying in some fields becomes more than men, it will not show, by itself, their interests. Even we can see so many women who have a good resume in many jobs which are exclusively defined for just men. They are not weaker than men if it is not better.</p> <p>Aliasghar: I agree, for example, last week, there was a TV show on successful women in different fields in Iran. Two women were the show's guests, Mrs. Shahrzad Shams, a Female Airline Pilot and Mrs. [not clear....] Deck engineering. They liked these jobs. These women were very successful in their jobs.</p> <p>Nader: Yes, sir, I watched that show, that was very interesting. Even the sailor woman said she acts in her job better than many of her male colleagues.</p> <p>Farid: <i>But they are exceptions.</i></p> <p>Mr. Shayan: Why?</p> <p>Farid: due to their weaker physical ability in contrast to men, women do not like to study in every filed.</p> <p>Nader: But that is not true.</p> <p>Mr. Shayan: in this regard, there are two different views. Some researchers believe that women are inherently not appropriate for some jobs which need physical strength although some researchers disagree it.</p>	<p>Critical Pedagogy: Questioning the word in the textbook through being connected to Iran (the students' world) occurred</p>
<p><i>[The teacher goes on] Ok, let's come back to our textbook, so the answer for the first question based on the textbook is what? That was your turn Ali, please.</i></p>	<p>Banking Pedagogy : There was a focus on the textbook</p>

The questions which the students were discussing followed a multiple choice format, typical of the Konkoor and NHSGE examinations. What stated in the class as the selection of the most appropriate answer i.e. B, also triggered a side-comment, by the student, Reza, (*"it is like Iran, sir"*). This side-comment set the stage for a bridging between two contexts, i.e. the England of the text, and Iran, the lived context of the students in the class. Implicit in the shift from a test-focused discourse (centered on finding the right answer to multiple choice test) to a more interpretive discourse (involving intertextual linkages between test-context and the students' lived experiences) was a shift in the teacher's pedagogical stance: from a banking pedagogy to a critical pedagogy.

Crucially, throughout the interactions displayed above, we see a repeated shunting, back and forth, between banking and critical stances. The banking stance was convergent because it directed students' attention to the test, while the critical stance was divergent because it directed students' attention from the test to the "world" (Friere, 1982) of students' experiences with aspects of the test-content.

As the discussion developed, the class returned to focus on the testbook, this time on question 2. Question 2 was premised on the gender-stereotype that women (in England) were interested in engineering, technology, medicine and mathematics. Dissatisfied with the teacher's banking pedagogy stances, several students (Nader, Aliasghar and Farid) in rapid succession critically engaged with the text-context by citing examples from Iranian society which did not fit the stereotype. The teacher's use of the interrogative wh-question "why" on two occasions served to reinforce the critical stance, before returning to a test-centered banking pedagogy (*"Ok, let's come back to our test book"*). By placing the critique of gender taken-for-granted assumptions at the heart of his teaching, the teacher allowed for his students to depart from *reproducing* to *exploring the assumptions* in the test practice. In effect, his return to a critical pedagogy

provided a setting in which the textbook as a part of the curriculum was invested with a critical stance taken by the teacher and his students toward a more equitable view to literacy as called for in the FRDE and the NCD (See Research Question One, Chapter 4). Remarkably, as shown in this excerpt, a shunting back and forth between banking and critical pedagogy were also evident in the interviews with the teacher and his students in classroom B.

In his interviews, Mr. Shayan defines his pedagogical approach in classroom B as follows:

My first duty, as the students and their parents expect me to do as a good teacher, is to transmit all possible test hints to the students and to ensure my students' marks in their examinations. However, I am also trying to make them ready for their real life through hearing my students' views on different issues posed in these test practices. (Teacher Interview, TM , March 2013).

Mr. Shayan's reference to "transmitting all possible test hints to the students" and "ensuring the students' success in their high-stakes examination" may, in effect, reflect banking pedagogical stances mediated by the textbook. Moreover, his emphasis on making "them [students] ready for their real life" and "hearing my students' views on different issues posed in these test practices" may be representative of the teacher's critical pedagogical stance mediated by the textbook in classroom B. Both these stances were present in Mr. Shayan's pedagogy as he shunted back and forth between the stances. Such pedagogical vantage points are also similarly shared by the students in the class as expressed in a focus group interview:

Our teacher teaches us not only all needed test hints which are really useful for our examinations, but also he lets us share our views on many life aspects. (Interview with Aliasghar, a student in classroom B, SM, May 2013).

Besides the test hints for our examination, we are sometimes learning some new lessons which are useful for my future. For example, we should hear different views, we are allowed to share our view with our classmates (Interview with Vahid, a student in classroom B, SM, May 2013).

5.4.3 Commentary on Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Testbook in Classroom A & B:

A close analysis of the interactions in two classrooms revealed sharp differences. The teacher's interactions in classroom A in the mainstream Public schooling system was more strongly focused on the testbook. Thus, in this classroom, Mr. Shayan, the teacher, adopted a strong test-taking pedagogical practice.

In other words, the teacher was explicitly involved in transmitting test-taking skills. The frequency and dominance of these pedagogical practices characterize the enacted curriculum in the classroom. The students were asked to reproduce the answers provided in the testbook. They were not given time enough to question, deconstruct and reconstruct the assumptions embedded in the test practice of the testbook. Indeed, the interactions concerning the tests were decontextualized i.e. interactions did not relate the content of the test to the real world context. This test-taking pedagogy even involved the labeling of students by the teacher in terms of a dichotomy of weak or expert, based on their test performance. This is exemplified in excerpt7.

This test-taking pedagogy could be seen as a manifestation of banking pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 1982, 1998a, 1998b) because the teacher and hence the students reproduced and acknowledged the taken-for-granted assumptions reflected in the test practice. The role of the students was reduced to being receptors and reproducers of knowledge transmitted by the teacher. Thus the classroom literacy practices embedded in such pedagogy served not only to decontextualize but also separate test-taking from out-of-class literacy experiences of the students.

One consequence of the pedagogical stance mediated and constrained by the testbook in classroom A, was to make many students become passive agents and "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1975) and *objects* of classroom discourse (Foucault, 1975).

In this setting, there were some rare occasions as shown in the specific case of Ahmad (See excerpt 7, Table 5.13) in which the teacher's test-taking pedagogical stance to the testbook was overly resisted and challenged. However, this excerpt also indicated that the teacher supported by a group of students in the classroom resisted any voices and eventually silenced any critique of the test taking pedagogical stance. In this class, many students even evaluated the test-taking emphasis as constituting good teaching practice because, in their view, it had the potential of ensuring their success in the national high-stakes examinations. Table 5.17 summarizes the main features of the pedagogical stance mediated by the testbook along 3 dimensions, namely the focus of the teacher, the role of context, and the role of students in Classroom A.

Table 5.17: Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Testbook in Classroom A

Pedagogical Stance as mediated by the testbook	Banking pedagogy
Focus of the Teacher	The testbook is central to the lesson. The tests are the focus of interaction. The teacher reproduces and acknowledges the taken-for-granted assumptions reflected in the content of the test and test practice without questioning them.
Role of Context	Interactions concerning the tests are decontextualized i.e. interactions do not relate the content of the test to the real world context.
Role of the students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many students receive and reproduce knowledge in the test. This is reflected in classroom literacy practices. • There are also some rare occasions in which the students resist the centrality of the test.

In contrast to classroom A, classroom B from the privately-run schooling system, displayed a different pedagogic stance mediated by the testbook. While the teacher did on occasion rely on the testbook---and in doing so his pedagogy resembled banking

pedagogy, he, however, also appropriated his banking pedagogical stance with a critical pedagogy. The critical stance allowed the test in the textbook to become a trigger for critical engagement with “the world” as it was experienced by the students.

To use the metaphor of *banking pedagogy*, in classroom B, knowledge (in terms of “the test”) was not only deposited in the students, but also in some moments the students themselves were accorded agency to undeposit, check the deposit, or replace it with other deposits, sometimes self-generated by the class working collaboratively. Thus, in classroom B, there was evidence of a shunting back and forth between banking and critical pedagogy. In other words, in classroom discourse –and in the literacy practices of classroom B, there was an intermittent interfacing of *reproduction/transmission and critique* as was illustrated in excerpts 7 and 8.

Unlike classroom A where students were passive or docile or objects of the teacher’s pedagogy, in classroom B, we witnessed a range of available subject positions where subjectivities were dynamic, fluid, and negotiable (Canagarajah, 1999).

To summarize the findings on the pedagogical stance mediated by the textbook, table 5.18 below presents the characteristics of the two pedagogical stances namely, -- banking pedagogy and critical pedagogy -- along three dimensions: focus of the teacher, role of context, and role of the students. In each of these dimensions we see a shunting back and forth between the two stances. This shunting back and forth presents a dynamic view of the pedagogical stance in classroom B, which is a departure from a monolithic, homogeneous conception of pedagogy. This characterization departs from Freier’s conception of banking pedagogy and critical pedagogy, which he and others (Kincheloe, 2007; McLaren, 2003; Giroux, 2010 a& b; Canagarajah, 1999 and Lather, 1986) view as dichotomous –and even monolithic –positions.

Table 5.18: Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Testbook in Classroom B

Pedagogical Stance as Mediated by the Testbook	Banking pedagogy: (Pedagogy of reproduction)	Critical pedagogy (A Pedagogy of Question and Critique)
Focus of the Teacher	The testbook is central to the lesson. The test is the focus of interaction. The teacher reproduces and acknowledges the taken-for-granted assumptions reflected in the test practice without questioning it	The test is a trigger for interaction about “ world” (reading the worlds through the words and questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions in the test practice)
Role of Context	Interactions concerning the tests are decontextualized i.e. interactions do not relate the content of the test to the real world context	Interactions concerning the tests are contextualized i.e. interactions do relate the content of the test to the real world context
Role of student	The role of students is downgraded to a docile body who receive and reproduce knowledge hence literacy in the test practice.	The role of students is upgraded to a person who question and critique knowledge and hence literacy in the test practice

5.5 Concluding Remarks

The main focus in this research question in this chapter was to investigate how the same teacher working in two classrooms in two schooling system i.e., the mainstream public schooling system, and the non-mainstream privately-run schooling system implemented English language literacy education. The findings revealed a sharp difference between implementing teaching practices in the two classrooms.

In classroom A, in mainstream Public schooling system, a pedagogy of correctness, a banking pedagogy was observed. Indeed, this class was not perceived as “pedagogical safe house” by the teacher. Hence, in this class, the teacher resisted or avoided any social implications in discussions that was more likely to emerge in the

course of the lesson, through different avoidance strategies: a) being indifferent to any critical comments by students b) shifting the topic of discourse to that of textbook or test book to make classroom discourses apolitical and anesthetized. The teacher in classroom A was very focused on the textbook. He neglected irrelevant examination parts in the textbook. He dominantly focused on linguistic knowledge in the textbook rather than content knowledge and critical literacy. Classroom A provided less Discursive Latitude which made classroom interactions being directed towards the examination discourse. The textbook was central to the teacher's pedagogical practice in mainstream classroom. The tests were the focus of interaction. The teacher reproduced and acknowledged the taken-for-granted assumptions reflected in the content of the test and test practice without questioning them. Interactions concerning the tests were decontextualized i.e. interactions did not relate the content of the test to the real world context. Many students received and reproduced knowledge in the test. Many students gradually became passive or silenced because their critical comments or possibility of critical questions were ignored or resisted. The role of students was also downgraded to a docile body who receive and reproduce knowledge hence literacy in the test practice. The students were pushed towards a culture of silence. However, there were some rare occasions in which the students resisted the centrality of the test which were overridden by the teacher.

Rather, in classroom B in privately-run schooling system, the same teacher perceived this class as a "pedagogical safe house". It provided more Discursive Latitude where the teacher and students, although are still examination-oriented, explore critical questions and critical literacies. Indeed, in this classroom, a shunting back and forth movement banking and critical pedagogy was observed. The teacher allowed the students to pose and construct alternative discourses which do not always reflect the official State-endorsed discourse. In classroom B, the teacher was not very focused on

the textbook. He went beyond the examinations although he did not deny the examination requirements. He not only focused on linguistic knowledge in the textbook but also on content knowledge and engaging the students with their real-life issues. In fact, the test was a trigger for interaction about “world” (reading the worlds through the words and questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions in the test practice). Hence, interactions concerning the tests were contextualized i.e. interactions did relate the content of the test to the real world context of the teacher and students. The role of students was upgraded to a person who question and critique knowledge and hence literacy in the test exercises. Many students became actively engaged in classroom even when they were not called up by the teacher. As a result, in classroom B, there was a potential of their personal transformation and of finding their voice in society because their critical comments or possibility of critical questions were welcomed by the teacher.

The findings in classroom A support the current trend in the literature on the pedagogical impacts of the high-stakes examinations, for example ; promoting cultural biases ; increasing teacher and student stress (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Dweck, 1999; Ingersoll, 2003; Lingard, 2010; Mathers & King, 2001; Parkay, 2006) or produced produced “docility” via, for instance, the old-fashioned inspecting and monitoring system of high-stakes testing and assessment as argued by Bourke, Lidstone & Ryan (2015) or narrowing and also promoting specific aspects of the curriculum (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Berliner, 2009; Greene, Winters, & Forster, 2003).

Interestingly, findings in classroom B, although somehow were in accordance with Au (2007)’ study who found that in some specific cases there were also some certain types of high-stakes tests which contradictory results in expanding curricular content, integrating knowledge, and hence developing more student-centered pedagogies. Au (ibid) argues that this different finding is related to the nature and structure of high-

stakes tests so that they not only create curricular control but also they may expand the curricular. However, the case of Mr. Shayan, especially in classroom B with a shunting back and forth movement between critical and banking pedagogies is reflective of the embeddedness nature of pedagogies and complex and discursive construction of literacy teaching practice. Unlike Au (2007)'s argument, the findings in classroom A and classroom B also show that it is not just the use of texts or their structures either in textbook or in textbook that is in question. Rather what students are asked to do with the texts is the main issue. For example, if they are asked to critically analyze them as what occurs in classroom B, then the text themselves are not problematic but serve as prompts for analysis of cultural values embedded in the texts. This finding may open a new debate in the research literature on pedagogical and ideological impacts of high-stakes accountability testing regimes.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

The concluding chapter initially summarizes the main findings of this study. Referring to the two research questions, it tries to present a critical, situated understanding of English literacy education in two high-stakes examination-oriented settings in Iran. The main focus of this study is the case of the same teacher's literacy teaching practices in two settings with the same core curriculum, the same textbooks and the same national high-stakes examinations. Next, the theoretical and empirical implications of the findings will be discussed. The chapter then concludes with suggestions for future research.

6.2 Summary of the Research

Employing a qualitative research methodology, this study was to present a critical situated understanding of macro and micro-level literacy practices in the two pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings in Iran. This study was embedded in two main theories, namely the ideological/socially situated model of literacy (1984) and Foucault's social theory of power (1972, 1980) (See chapter One, Section 1.8.2).

Specifically, Street (1984) made the case for the ideological model. Heath (1983, 2000) and other scholars in literacy studies like Barton (2001, 2003, 2007), Rassool (1999) and Gee (1999, 2014) set a stage for foregrounding the socially-situated

understanding of literacy. In their view, literacy and literacy practices are not viewed as a unitary or decontextualized construct. Rather, literacy is an ideological practice, a socially situated construct in every setting. Hence, the multiplicity of literacy practices was defined by different situations, domains and purposes. More precisely, based on this theory, literacy practices can be defined as ideological constructs or ways of thinking, knowing, valuing and doing situated in context. They are produced by a range of stakeholders, from policy makers to teachers and students in educational settings or domains.

While the ideological/socially situated model of literacy contributed to providing a situated understanding of literacy in the educational settings, Foucault's social theory of power contributed to a critical understanding of literacy practices. In effect, Foucault's theory of power explains how power relations discursively operate in constructing knowledge and literacy practices at two levels: macro and micro.

In this study, at the macro-level, literacy practices are situated in educational policy documents issued and legitimized by authorities. Specially, in centralized educational settings like Iran, these literacy practices can be dominantly found in educational policy documents, textbooks and testbooks or high-stakes examination. These official texts can, in actuality, be representative of macro-level literacy practices, ways of thinking, knowing and valuing which are officially legitimized and authorized for different schooling systems, which in Iran comprises either the mainstream public schooling system or privately-run schooling system.

Furthermore, at the micro level, teaching literacy practices can be found in interactions surrounding the use of textbooks or testbooks in classroom practices. English literacy education in each setting is impacted by various sociopolitical forces operating within every setting. These forces mediate and sponsor what occurs in literacy construction in each setting. As noted by Willis and Harris (2000), "politics and

literacy... remain inseparable" (p. 72). In fact, literacy, literacy teaching, and literacy learning can never be "neutral or culturally unbiased" (p. 78). Thus, in scrutinizing literacy education through an ideological lens, it can be argued that these macro and micro level literacy practices are embedded within power relations. These power-relationships are discursively constructed and tend to marginalize or centralize some literacy practices to serve the interests of some specific groups. In order to find out the discursive and complex power-related nature of literacy, Foucault's social theory of power (1979,1990, 2008) enables us to identify these discursive relations not only by "reading between lines" but also through "reading against the lines" (Samuel,2005) to interpret, problematize and critique the lines of these official texts.

6.3 Summary of Findings

Employing a qualitative case study research design, the analysis of the data revealed some important findings.

6.3.1 Summary of Findings of Research Question One

Referring to the first research question, namely at the macro level, what are the dominant discourses of English language literacy in pre-university high-stakes examination-oriented settings?, the study revealed a range of tensions, paradoxes and contradictions among literacy practices in the official texts. A gist of these tensions and paradoxes revealed dimensions of discursivities at policy and practice. They can generally be categorized as:

- 1) tensions and paradoxes *within* literacy practices in the official texts.

Among a bulk of these tensions and paradoxes, two examples are:

- a) *Co-existence of a skill-based view to literacy alongside a critical perspective to literacy in the educational policy documents seems paradoxical.*

Indeed, the conceptualization of literacy as a set of neutral language skills within the official texts is reinforced by conception of literacy in the high-stakes examinations in the Iranian educational system. However, the emphasis on the skill-based view to literacy may result in a submissive literacy practice (see chapter 4, section 4.2.1.2) when the concept of literacy is reduced to a set of decontextualized language skills and subskills that ignore other dimensions of literacy education (New London Group, 1998). The curriculum ethos--measured by examination scores and other student performance indicators--emerge only through the filter of so-called “standardized accountability” (see, for example, Comber, 2012, Luke & Woods, 2008) in the National Curriculum Document of 2010. Thus, the ethos of the critical perspective to literacy, seen here, as another dimension of educational reforms, may be lost under the shadow of a so-called neutral skill-based view to literacy. This paradoxical stance may, in actuality, at the pedagogical level, promote test-taking teaching methods and even reproduce the role and stances of teachers in favor of high-stakes examinations and textbooks.

b) Presence of cultural paradoxes within policy documents and reform ethos at the macro level also seemed paradoxical with the reform ethos. For example, the educational policy documents, in different sections called for a *critical multiculturalism* through including various cultures like Global, National and Local (regional) cultures. However, a fine-grained analysis of the policy documents showed some asymmetrical relations which may make tensions and paradoxes more challenging for the reforms which called for inclusiveness and equity in literacy education. Coste, Moore and Zarate (2009) also argues that the imbalanced and paradoxical cultural representations in education can (re)produce some tensions and

in turn negatively influence learners in the new era in which complexity and diversity is a common feature.

2) Tensions and paradoxes across literacy practices in the official texts:

Analysis of the official texts also revealed some mismatches and non-alignments in the literacy practices across the educational policy documents, the available national textbooks and national high-stakes examinations. For instance, in response to educational reform ethos, the official core curriculum, namely the two educational policy documents called for a critical view to literacy through gender and cultural inclusiveness and equity. Paradoxically, the available national textbooks and national high-stakes examinations contradicted the reform ethos in literacy education through representing some stereotyped literacy practices in which historical and professional occupations and roles were unequally given to different genders. Furthermore, with reference to culture inclusiveness, there was also an asymmetric relation across the official texts towards cultures as a symbol for the inclusive view to literacy. These unequal relations were observed when local regional and also national (Islamic-Iranian) cultures were excluded or underrepresented when western culture was overrepresented as representing universal culture in the available English language national textbooks and national examinations.

In actuality, the literacy practices in the national textbooks and national high-stakes examinations contradicted with many real life literacy practices in society which is moving towards more inclusiveness to gender and culture. From a critical perspective, we can argue that these discursive macro-level literacy practices shaped in the official texts are, in effect, not neutral (Apple, 1996).

Findings of this section of study also agree with the research literature which supports gender and cultural inclusiveness and calls for a critical perspective to these official texts and literacy practices embedded in them (See for example, McLaren, 1995; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Kubota, 2005 ; Apple, 1996 ; Pavlenko, 2005).

Alluding to some rather similar examples, Pavlenko (2005), in a paper entitled “Gender and sexuality in foreign and second language education”, problematizes the gendered stereotyped literacy practices in the language education curriculum. However, in her article she merely underscores the need for more inclusiveness to gender in terms of *topics* in the curriculum. She argues that adult ESL education should not only acknowledge gender inclusiveness at curriculum level but also needs to be expanded to address how different Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA)s (Althusser, 2008) like how business and media play a role in reproducing normative femininities and masculinities at societal levels.

Findings of this study also take critical perspective of Kubota (2004). Kubota (2004) problematizes *conservative and liberal multiculturalism*. In her view, conservative multiculturalism advocates a centric mode of thinking, knowing and valuing in educational practices which may, in effect, result in excluding other cultures in favor of social divisionism. She argues that liberal multiculturalism which respect for various forms of differences, never takes into account issues of situatedness, complexities and discursivities embedded in each context. Hence, she argues for *critical multiculturalism*, a discursive construct and advocates a non-essentialist understanding of inclusiveness. She also problematizes the issue of differences and argues that literacy in education need to address issues of power and privileges not only in practice but also in policy. In her view, this can also contribute to transforming people’s way of thinking, knowing and doing among people outside the language class to bridge the possible social injustices even at the collective/societal level.

6.3.2 Summary of Findings of Research Question Two

The second research question focused on how, at the micro-level level, the same teacher implements the teaching of English language literacy in two EFL classrooms in Iran from two classrooms in two schooling systems i.e., the mainstream public schooling system, and the non-mainstream privately-run schooling system. The findings revealed sharp differences between implementing teaching practices in the two classrooms. The gist of the main differences were:

6.3.2.1 In Classroom A, in Mainstream Public Schooling System

The teacher often monitored and self-regulated himself by resorting to strategies of avoidance, resistance and silence for ensuring that he did not violate the official discourses of the textbook or examination. Indeed, he resisted or avoided any sensitive socio-political implications by using two different strategies: a) being indifferent to critical comments, and b) shifting the topic of discourse to that of textbook or textbook. The teacher did not perceive this classroom not as a “ pedagogical safe house” (Canagarajah, 2005). In this class, he gradually pushed his students towards a culture of silence even though in some moments of his classroom interactions he was faced with some resistances from some students. Neglecting parts of curriculum which were not relevant or questioned in the high-stakes examinations, he takes tests and examinations as his main focus of interactions.

In his interactions with his students, the teacher’s main focus was on the textbook and testbook. Hence, a rather strong “[manifested] curricular authority” was observed in this class. As a result, classroom interactions were rather decontextualized and just were centered on linguistic rather than content knowledge or even a critical perspective to literacy. Indeed, the teacher and his students reproduced “taken-for-granted assumptions

in the curriculum” without questioning them. A strong “test-taking” and “banking pedagogy” (Friere , 1970) was evident in this class.

6.3.2.2 In Classroom B, in the Privately-Run School

The same teacher allowed his students to engage in alternative/not always official public discourse. Perceiving the class as a “pedagogical safe house” (Canagarajah, 1999, 2004, 2005), he went beyond the high-stakes examinations without denying the examination requirements. Indeed, in this class, the teacher perceived examinations as a trigger for classroom interactions and focused on linguistic and content knowledge and linked interactions with real-life issues. As a result, classroom interactions became much more contextualized, and were intertextually related with the real life issues. In a nutshell, the teacher in classroom of the privately-run school pushed his students towards active engagement through posing and welcoming critical discussions with the possibility of transformation. He applied a shunting back and forth between banking and critical pedagogy to not only meet examination-requirements but also make his students become critically engaged in questioning taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in the textbook and testbook.

6.4 Contributions of the Study

The main questions raised in the study are why the teacher showed two different pedagogical stances in the two school settings, although the same textbook and the same high-stake examinations were used in both schools? How did he reconcile between school ethos to meet not only examination requirements and his personal philosophy of teaching? Why did the same teacher in the mainstream school with more fixed ethos resort to a banking pedagogy and strongly focus on the textbook and testbook? Why did this very teacher in the privately-run school with much more dynamic ethos resort to a

shunting back and forth between banking and critical pedagogy? Generally, the answer to these sets of questions coming from the heart of findings in this study can contribute to theory and practice in critical perspectives to literacy studies in education, especially in high-stakes examination-oriented settings.

Hence, in this study I address not only the theoretical but also the practical contributions of the study. Although I consider the theoretical and practical contributions of the study separately, I do not in effect see contributions of the study in a binary of theory and practice. I hold the view that all practice has an embedded or explicit theory and all theory has implied and actual practice.

6.4.1 Contributions to the Theory

The present study is important because it has some contributions to theory which can be explained as followed:

6.4.1.1 Critical, Situated Understanding of Literacy Education in High-Stakes Examination-Oriented Settings

This study has argued for research on critical, situated understanding of literacy education in high-stakes examination-oriented settings which still remain underrepresented in research on literacy studies. Educational settings where socially constructed relations of power have been operating need to have a socially-situated, critical perspective to literacy. I have seen these critical perspectives to literacy at two levels of macro and micro. I call these literacy practices little “l” literacy practice to distinguish them from big “L” Literacy Practice.

Literacy Practice with a capital “L” is about official discourses, their stances and definitions of literacy education which are supposed to act as guidelines for teachers’ practices in educational settings. It is also rather indicative of ideologies, ways of

thinking, knowing and valuing. It also reveals taken for granted assumptions in relation to power, based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality and globality. These assumptions are translated into policy, instructional materials and assessment materials prepared by official authorities.

Little “l” literacy practices, on the other hand, is about the micro-level, namely pedagogical practices. It is about the minute-by-minute choices and decisions that teachers make, and the stances they take when they use the textbook and testbook. It is about a combination of desire and constraints; how teachers construct these combinations and how these combinations construct teachers and their teaching practices. It is about the complexities and discursivities of power relations in each context and their impact on teaching; it is about small triumphs and defeats in achieving a critical perspective to literacy; it is about winners and losers; it is about how teachers treats students day by day in high-stakes examination-oriented settings; it is about whether or not teachers and students translate literacy practices embedded in the curriculum or redesign their own. Little “l” literacy practice is about taking seriously the critical perspective that literacy education *is always complex, discursive, socially-situated and power-related*.

In discrepancy between Literacy (Literacy with a big “L” and literacy (Literacy with a small “l” involves (in)equities, (mis) matches, (non) alignments in literacy. Findings of the study did not suggest that *literacy practice* (micro-level) has nothing to do with *Literacy Practice (Macro-Level)*. On the contrary, the socio-historical contexts in which we live produce different conditions of possibility and constraint that teachers all have to negotiate as meaningfully as they can. While the social and power-related constructs who we are, so do we construct the social. This dialectic relationship is dynamic and fluid, making possibilities for social action and change. The findings of this research have shown the complex, discursive, socially situated and power-related

dimensions of literacy in high-stakes examination-oriented settings not only at macro policy and practice level as seen in national curriculum, national mandated textbooks and assessments but also at micro level as seen in classroom pedagogical practices.

6.4.1.2 Literacy as Discursive Policy Practice

In order to have a critical, situated understanding of how literacy is constructed at the macro level, findings of the study showed how the complex power relationships at the policy level are shaped in the official policy documents, national textbooks and national high-stakes examinations. It also showed how these power-relations may operate in a discursive manner to resist or neutralize the critical stance to literacy called for in educational reforms and the official core curriculum. Specifically, focusing on macro-level literacy practices in the official texts and addressing a set of tensions and paradoxes, I tried to show how power relations at the policy level may act discursively to advocate and legitimize some specific literacy practices in the interests of some specific groups. The complexities, tensions, and paradoxes at the macro level contributed to problematizing a simplified and monolithic understanding of literacy education at macro level. Findings of the study also showed how the new core curriculum accruing from educational reforms would support critical literacy. However, the impact of the hegemony of high-stakes examinations in the school settings and also existence of some discursive tensions and paradoxes at macro-level literacy practices, may invariably undermine educational reforms.

6.4.1.3 Literacy as a Discursive Agentive Practice

There are few studies which addressed the situated understanding of teaching literacy practices of different teachers working in one formal setting (Morgan, 1996, Canagarajah, 2005) through interpretation of literacy practices in these settings. This

study is original because it focused on the case of one teacher's teaching literacy practices in two settings with the same core curriculum, the same textbook and the same high-stakes examination. The uniqueness of this case contributed to providing a deeper understanding on how the stances of the person are shaped in each setting.

The two pedagogical stances of the teacher in the two high-stakes examination-oriented settings can explain how individuals' literacy practices may be shaped and influenced by individuals' perceptions of discursive power relations embedded in each setting.

Indeed, the findings of research question two showed that individuals' different stances and their literacy practices not only reflect the larger power relationships on a global scale in society, in school, but also they are defined and situated within their perceptions of these discursive power relations in each setting they are positioned. This is an issue which has not so far been addressed in literature, especially in high-stakes mandated assessment settings.

More precisely, these findings, in effect, showed how the literacy practices of the teacher in the two settings seemed "agentive", situated within his individual contexts. These contexts define individuals' perceptions, their definition of discursive power relations in each setting and their stance on how to implement their literacy practices in each setting. Based on their agencies, individuals take their different stances from appropriating to resistance or even other possible responses which can be placed in a continuum of agentive practices in implementing literacy education to cope with environmental enforcements.

6.4.1.4 Towards a Model for Curriculum as a Verb not a Noun

Taken from a macro and micro level of analysis, this study can also be contributive to introducing a model for the construct of curriculum in literacy studies as well. This model can be consisting of four curriculum components: *Articulated Curriculum*,

Manifested Curriculum, Hidden Curriculum and Enacting Curriculum. In this model, an *Articulated Curriculum* is a set of educational policy documents which defines standards of literacy, the official missions and goals for literacy education in general and English literacy education in assessment and instruction, specifically in my study this comprised two policy documents namely the FRDE and NCD.

A *Manifested Curriculum* is also a translation of ethos of these documents by textbooks developers and test-takers as seen in national textbooks and national high-stakes examinations. Power relations operate at two levels of macro societal and micro school and classroom levels in a discursive manner. These complex power relations make a *Hidden Curriculum* which influences the teacher in the use of textbooks and testbooks. Hence, the process of *curriculuming* (or enacting the curriculum) is strongly influenced by the teacher's perception of power relations operating in an " invisible" school ethos and society. Hence, we witness that, in the mainstream school setting, the teacher willingly submits to discursive power relations which make hidden curriculum. He reproduces many taken-for-granted assumptions in the available textbook and testbook, in effect, to possibly serve not only his own interests, but also interests of different stake holders. However, in another setting, namely privately-run schooling system, the same teacher does not submit to the discursive power relations acting in high-stakes examination-oriented settings. He often questions and critiques knowledge and literacies in the manifested curriculum to transform his students' ways of thinking, knowing, valuing and even doing.

The *Articulated Curriculum* (in the study, *the FRDE and NCD*) called for a critical perspective to literacy. However, the critical stance to literacy was not be translated in the *Manifested Curriculum*, namely textbooks and high-stakes examinations. The critical perspectives to literacy was also in tension with discursive power relations coming from school ethos and society and create a *Hidden Curriculum*

by legitimizing the high-stakes examinations like NHSGE and the Konkoor. Based on all these tensions, achieving a critical perspective with a bulk of tensions and paradoxes at such settings approximately seemed to be problematic. Notably, in the process of enacting the *Manifested Curriculum*, namely the textbook and testbook, the different ways of enacting curriculum by the same teacher were observed. These multiplicities in ways of enacting by the teacher also provide evidence to develop the construct of curriculum from “noun” as a fixed entity to “verb” as a dynamic enterprise.

Findings of this study also invite us to have a relook at the assumptions about teacher's roles and stances in the process of curriculuming. Indeed, it argues for the developing meaning of curriculum by the agentive role of teachers. There is an abundance of research which has examined the role of teachers as curriculum developers. However, this literature on teacher as curriculum developer in high-stakes examination-oriented settings has still ignored role of teachers as a critical developer of curriculum (see, for example, Tan & Miller (2007)). The literature adopts a determinism view by presenting a view of teacher submissive into the hegemonic impact of high-stakes tests in the process of education without explaining all the discursivities and complexities. This accrues, in part, from the need for accountability from teachers working in these assessment-mandated settings. The findings of the study showed, in actual settings, when curriculum is enacted, based on people's agency different literacy practices may occur in actual settings. Thus, relating the construct of curriculum with the ideological model of literacy and also social theory of power can, in effect, contribute to developing a more multifaceted/multidimensional construct of curriculum, which views that curriculuming as a “dynamic” process, as “a verb” as developed by teachers and students in classroom in natural classroom setting. Curriculum is not just “a noun” or a “fixed entity” to be directly translated into the official texts. The teacher and even students as agentive people may confer a dynamicity to the use of textbooks

and textbooks as official sources in their socially situated interactions. Therefore, there is a need to revisit and to rethink of the construct of curriculum, especially in high-stakes examination-oriented-settings.

As an initial contribution to the process of theorizing curriculum in high-stakes examination settings, a model of curriculum as a verb can be developed based on findings of this study. This model which considers critical perspectives to dimensions of literacy practices situated in two levels of macro and micro, thus views curriculum along four dimensions: as a discursive policy, as a discursive policy-practice, as discursive contextual power-related practice and as a discursive agentive practice. It can also be diagrammatized in figure 6. 1 as follows:

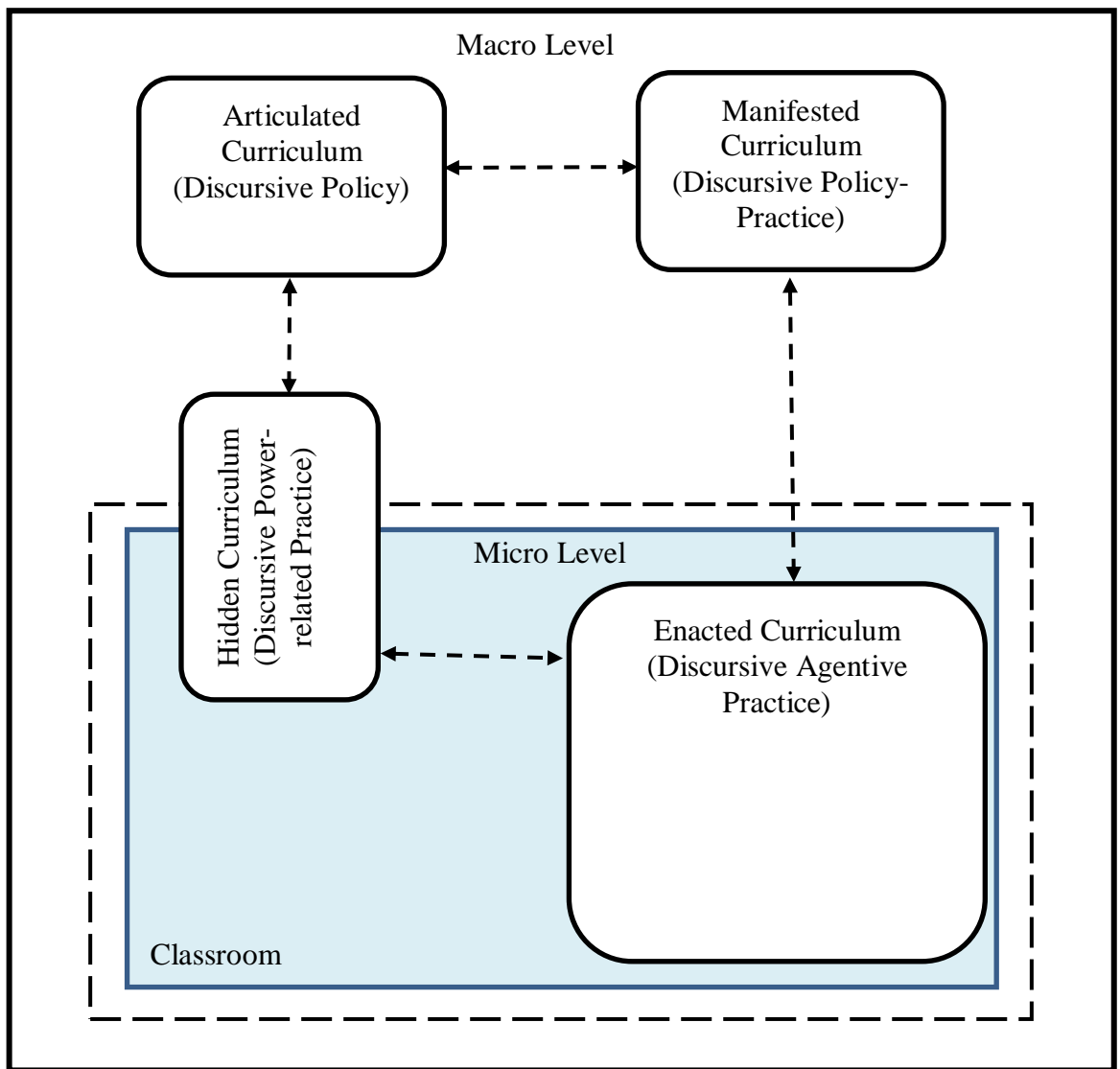


Figure 6.1. A model for curriculum as a verb (not a noun):

-----possible tensions

6.4.2 Practical Implications

In the section, I will address some practical implications of the current study for policy makers, curriculum, material developers and also private and public educational publishers.

6.4.2.1 Policy Makers, Curriculum and Material Developers

Findings of research question one can also have some implications for policy makers, instructional and assessment materials developers who are working at the macro level.

This case study disclosed aspects of complexities and discursivities of literacy practices in the high-stakes settings. It was a description of how the teacher will handle such paradoxical discourse. In classroom A, he is obedient of high-stakes testing regime while in classroom B, he alludes to an alternative approach. This different ways of teaching make us understand how criticality in the high-stakes settings is also possible. However we should not forget that many States conduct the work of leading their societies forward through policy generation and implementation. Despite the states attempt at calling for critical literacy, we will witness the general populace of high-stakes tests originating from different sources, ether publishers via their different arms, namely media, parents and learners and school boards' pressures in high-stakes testing settings. As a result, in these settings, the teachers may face feelings of disempowerment and undue pressure to be compliant with the high-stakes testings. These sets of expectations as the literature on the pedagogical impacts of high-stakes settings show may often lead to disengagement of teachers and negatively teachers' agency.

Examining literacy as a highly situated construct in this show also show how policies that emerge from good intentions may frequently make as burdensome due to its paradoxes for those on whom they have an impact either teachers or learners. Indeed,

this study can deepen their understanding and raise their awareness of the necessity for transforming or (re)aligning patterns of literacy practices articulated and manifested in official texts from educational policy documents to textbooks and national high-stakes examinations.

While the recent educational reforms in Iran suggest a move towards critical perspective to literacy, it is not fully matched with the curriculum document as shown in the findings of research question one. There is thus a need to revisit the curricular and assessment materials for the Konkoor and NHSGE to ensure greater alignment with the policy documents.

Revisiting the structure and content of the tests and textbooks can be contributive to reducing tensions and paradoxes shown in the official textbooks and testbooks. It can also be contributive to the future of literacy education in Iran which sets the stage for a critical turn to literacy education at the micro level.

6.4.2.2 Implications for Private and Public Publishers

Redesigning instructional and assessment materials can have impact on transforming the role of other stakeholders operating in the circle of high-stakes examination-oriented schoolings. As Apple (2001) argues, these testing agencies are the ‘technical intelligentsia’. As shown in chapter one (section 1.2, context of the study) and findings of research question two on the interview with the teacher (see, for example, section 5.4), in actual life, we cannot ignore the role of often ignored positioning of private and public testing agencies or publishers in promoting high-stakes tests, at least in educational settings like Iran. Discursive power relations act to support these test taking agencies. Reconsidering the role of these agencies is a necessary part of promoting a critical perspective to literacy, as suggested by the macro-level policy documents like

the NCD and FRDE. The role by publishers, especially in the private sector in the Iranian context can be reconsidered by the Ministry of Education.

This would help in the designing and redesigning innovative textbooks and testbooks to serve as an arm for real reform in literacy education. Well-written textbooks and testbooks would certainly help the education reform for criticality. Unfortunately, in the Iranian context at present textbooks and testbooks play inordinately strong influence in driving instruction and even may negate the critical perspective promoted by textbooks for some teachers. This feature of the Iranian education needs to be revisited. Transforming role of these agencies can transform education as well. It can make a jeopardy i.e. resisting critical perspective to literacy to an opportunity i.e. advocating for a critical literacy.

6.5 Directions and Suggestions for Future Studies

This study is the first of its kind to investigate how one teacher adjusted his pedagogy in two settings (mainstream and private, both of which were defined by a high-stakes examination-oriented ethos, though with variations).

Further follow-up research on the phenomenon investigated here may consider the following aspects:

- a) In-depth ethnographic investigations could focus on other teachers in other settings, at different levels in the education system and in the English Language Institutes.
- b) Studies could be conducted on students' responses to teachers' stances in these settings and focus also on variation in learners' adaptation or resistance to teacher' pedagogical stances or beliefs about teaching and learning, in high-stakes examination-oriented settings.

- c) Research on the role of “external authorities”, such as school boards, parent-teachers associations or community-based originations could shed light on the complex, socially-situated and power-related nature of literacy practices in these settings. They could also throw light on the complex, multifaceted nature of teachers’ agentive practices in classroom settings.

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APPENDIX A

A₁: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form for the Teacher

Authentic Inquiry:

Researcher: Mojtaba Rajabi

Affiliation: Faculty of Education (UM)

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to find out ideological practices at macro (national level) and pedagogical practices at micro (local level) in examination-oriented settings in secondary school.

Information

I will be interviewing participating teachers during the process of this study. Likewise, I will be observing the entire class a minimum of 6 months during the academic year in the chosen classroom. I will be recording and analyzing classroom discourse which happens in classroom. Likewise, I will check with teachers throughout the study to check my evolving interpretations.

Each interview will last approximately one hour. I expect that another hour of time will be devoted to member checks throughout the study. Also, there may be follow-up interviews when necessary.

Confidentiality

Because I am a researcher at the site where I am conducting research, I am especially sensitive to the need for confidentiality. Any participant is free to leave the study at any time. Interviews will be audio taped, but tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the day. The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. In reporting on the research no real names will be mentioned and the research site-its location will be anonymous. Data will be stored securely for the purpose of the research. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Benefits

I believe that there will be several benefits to teachers participating in the study. Teachers will be given opportunity to express and share their opinions to make the research meaningful, therefore contributing to the existing knowledge base in the field of literacy in education.

Confidentiality

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be make available only to the person conducting the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Compensation

For participating in this study, you will receive a gift as appreciation from the researcher. If you withdraw from the study at any time, you will still receive the gift. You also have opportunity to share the results of the study.

Contact

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Mojtaba Rajabi, by ragabi.m57@gmail.com.

Participation

“Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed”.

Consent

I have read and understood the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Investigator's signature:

Date:

A₂: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form for Students

Authentic Inquiry:

Researcher: Mojtaba Rajabi

Affiliation: Faculty of Education (UM)

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to find out ideological practices at macro (national) level and pedagogical practices at micro (local) level in pre-university examination-oriented settings.

Information

I will be interviewing all the students of chosen class during the process of this study. Likewise, I will be observing the entire class for 6 months during the academic year in the chosen classroom. I will be recording and analyzing classroom discourse which happens in the classroom.

I expect that student interviews will last approximately half an hour each, for each interview. There may be follow-up interviews when necessary.

Confidentiality

Because I am a researcher at the site where I am conducting research, I am especially sensitive to the need for confidentiality. Any participant is free to leave the study at any time. Interviews will be audio taped, but tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the day. The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. In reporting on the research no real names will be mentioned and the research site-its location will

be anonymous. Data will be stored securely for the purpose of the research. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Benefits

I believe that there will be several benefits to students participating in the study. Students will be given opportunity to share their opinion to make the research meaningful, therefore contributing to the existing knowledge base in the field of literacy in education.

Compensation

For participating in this study, you will receive a gift as appreciation from the researcher. If you withdraw from the study at any time, you will still receive the gift. You also have opportunity to share the results of the study.

Contact

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Mojtaba Rajabi, by rajabi.m57@gmail.com.

Participation

“Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed”.

Consent

I have read and understood the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature:

Date:

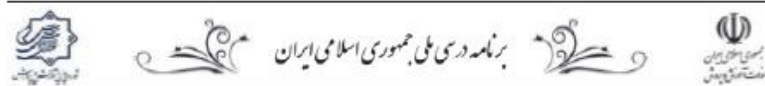
Investigator's signature:

Date

APPENDIX B

B₁ Fundamental Reform Document in Education (FRDDE)





باسمه تعالی

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنشَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (نحل ۹۷)

هر کس، مرد یا زن، عمل صالح انجام دهد و مؤمن باشد، قطعاً به «حیات طیب» زنده‌اش می‌داریم و همانا آن‌ها را، در برابر بهترین اعمالی که انجام داده‌اند، پاداش خواهیم داد.

پیش‌گفتار:

تحول بنیادین در آموزش و پرورش، تحولی عمیق و ریشه‌ای است که به تحول در مفاهیم نظری، روندها و فرایندها، نقش‌ها و کارکردها و رویکردها منجر خواهد شد. در تحول بنیادین نوع نگاه به معلم، کتاب، مدرسه، کلاس درس و به ویژه دانش‌آموز دگرگون خواهد شد. این نگاه، معلم را در قله می‌بیند و همه شرایط و امکانات را برای الگوپذیری و تأسی دانش‌آموز به معلم جهت دستیابی به قله‌های انسانیت، علم و ادب و اخلاق فراهم می‌آورد. تفکر و تعقل، خلاقیت و نوآوری، بهره‌مندی از روش‌های نوین و فناوری‌های جدید، ایجاد محیطی با نشاط و شاداب، برپایی مدرسه دوست داشتنی، همه و همه در خدمت تربیت دانش‌آموزان برای دستیابی به مراتبی از حیات طیب و قرب الهی می‌باشند. تحقق این مهم نیازمند باز مهندسی نیروی انسانی با محوریت استقرار نظام رتبه‌بندی و نظام جذب و نگهداشت معلمان می‌باشد که به لطف الهی در دستور کار قرار دارد.

اینک که «سند تحول بنیادین آموزش و پرورش» به مثابه قانون اساسی برای تحولات همه جانبه و دراز مدت به تصویب شورای عالی انقلاب فرهنگی و شورای عالی آموزش و پرورش رسیده و در دستور کار وزارت آموزش و پرورش قرار گرفته است، باید تمام زیر نظام‌ها و مؤلفه‌های خرد و کلان نظام تعلیم و تربیت مورد بازخوانی و بازتولید قرار گیرد.

«برنامه درسی ملی» به عنوان یکی از زیر نظام‌های اصلی سند تحول بنیادین و به منزله نقشه جامع یادگیری، زمینه ایجاد تحول همه جانبه، گسترده و عمیق در مفاهیم و محتوای آموزشی را فراهم می‌آورد. این برنامه تحول آفرین

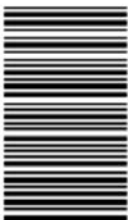


در بهمن ماه ۱۳۸۷ آماده شد. هم زمان با بررسی و تصویب سند تحول بنیادین در شورای عالی آموزش و پرورش (آذرماه ۱۳۸۸) و با عنایت به راهکار ۱-۱ سند مذکور، کار بررسی و اصلاح برنامه درسی ملی نیز سرعت یافت و تا سال ۱۳۹۰ بارها در معرض نقد و بررسی صاحب نظران، مدیران و معلمان قرار گرفت و سیر تکاملی خود را سپری کرد تا به شورای عالی آموزش و پرورش ارائه شد. در دبیرخانه شورای عالی با تشکیل کار گروهی مرکب از کارشناسان شورا و جمعی از دست اندرکاران تدوین و صاحب نظران سازمان پژوهش و برنامه ریزی آموزشی، ضمن وفاداری به بنیان‌های اصلی برنامه از جمله الگوی هدف گذاری و عناصر و عرصه‌های چهارگانه ارتباطی و با تکیه بر مبانی و دلالت‌های مفاهیم سند تحول بنیادین آموزش و پرورش، متن جدید بازنگری، اصلاح و آماده شد. جلسات هماهنگی برای تفاهم و اجماع بر اصول و مبانی سند را که اینجانب نیز بر آن تأکید داشتم برگزار و طرح را نهایی نمودیم. بالاخره پس از ۱۱ جلسه، به تصویب شورای عالی آموزش و پرورش رسید و برگ زرینی به تاریخ آموزش و پرورش کشور افزوده شد.

اینگ یادآوری چند نکته را ضروری می‌داند:

- ۱- تدوین و تصویب برنامه درسی ملی به عنوان نقشه جامع یادگیری برای اولین بار در تاریخ آموزش و پرورش افتخار بزرگی است که خداوند نصیب فرمود؛ بر این موهبت بزرگ الهی سر تعظیم فرود آورده و شکرگزاری می‌کنیم.
- ۲- این برنامه باید نقشه راه کلیه سیاست گذاری‌ها و تولید محتوای آموزشی و تربیتی از جمله تولید راهنمای برنامه‌های درسی دوره‌ها و پایه‌های تحصیلی، تعیین زمان و ساعات آموزشی تدوین و تألیف کتاب‌های درسی و کمک آموزشی، تولید بسته‌های آموزشی، رسانه‌های دیداری و شنیداری و الکترونیکی و ... قرار گیرد.
- ۳- اجرای مطلوب این برنامه، نیازمند مساعدت و توجه ویژه معلمان عزیز و بهره‌مندی از صلاحیت‌ها و شایستگی‌های حرفه‌ای و تخصصی مناسب آنان می‌باشد، لذا مفاد آن باید در مهندسی نیروی انسانی و در برنامه‌های آموزشی، جذب و توانمندسازی و بازآموزی معلمان در سطوح مختلف توسط دانشگاه فرهنگیان، دانشگاه تربیت دبیر شهید رجایی و مراکز آموزشی‌های ضمن خدمت مورد توجه جدی قرار گیرد.
- ۴- تدوین برنامه راهبردی و جامع یادگیری مبتنی بر آموزه‌های اسلامی و معارف و حیاتی، متناسب با نیازهای حال و آینده جامعه در دنیای متحول کنونی، منطبق با ویژگی‌ها و نیازهای دانش‌آموزان و بهره‌مند از آخرین یافته‌های علمی و پژوهشی، کار سترگ و بلندی است که با عنایت الهی و تلاش دست اندرکاران، گام نخست آن برداشته شد و تکمیل و تکامل آن نیازمند همراهی و مساعدت صاحب نظران و کارشناسان مجرب است که همگان را به یاری می‌طلبیم.
- ۵- در پایان لازم می‌دانم از تلاش‌ها و زحمات کلیه کارشناسان، محققان و پژوهشگران، دست‌اندرکاران،

B3: The National University Entrance Examination (The Konkoor)



520A


520

A

نام
نام خانوادگی
محل امضاء

دفترچه شماره ۲

عصر جمعه
۹۱/۴/۹



جمهوری اسلامی ایران
وزارت علوم، تحقیقات و فناوری
سازمان سنجش آموزش کشور

اگر دانشگاه اصلاح شود مملکت اصلاح می‌شود.
امام خمینی (ره)

آزمون سراسری ورودی دانشگاه‌های کشور - سال ۱۳۹۱

آزمون اختصاصی
گروه آزمایشی زبان

نام و نام خانوادگی:

شماره داوطلبی:

تعداد سؤال: ۷۰

مدت پاسخگویی: ۱۰۵ دقیقه

عنوان مواد امتحانی آزمون اختصاصی گروه آزمایشی زبان، تعداد، شماره سؤالات و مدت پاسخگویی				
ردیف	مواد امتحانی	تعداد سؤال	از شماره	تا شماره
۱	زبان انگلیسی اختصاصی	۷۰	۱۰۱	۱۷۰
				مدت پاسخگویی: ۱۰۵ دقیقه

حق چاپ و تکثیر سؤالات پس از برگزاری آزمون برای تمامی اشخاص حقیقی و حقوقی تنها با مجوز این سازمان مجاز می‌باشد و با متخلفین برابر مقررات رفتار می‌شود.

(A Sample)

Part A: Grammar

Directions: Choose the word or phrase (1), (2), (3), or (4) that best completes each sentence. Then mark the correct choice on your answer sheet.

- 101- As you ----- the hotel, you will see a lake.
1) approach 2) will approach 3) are approaching 4) would approach
- 102- As soon as you -----, call a taxi.
1) finished to pack 2) finished packing
3) have finished to pack 4) have finished packing
- 103- Not once ----- warm me to bring my umbrella.
1) did she 2) she did 3) she does 4) does she
- 104- Never ----- such an incompetent secretary. Sounds more pompous.
1) I knew 2) did I know 3) have I known 4) I have known
- 105- The car ----- outside was a special limousine.
1) waited 2) waiting 3) has waited 4) was waiting
- 106- Help yourself to a drink, -----?
1) do you 2) will you 3) don't you 4) won't you
- 107- I wore thick boots ----- damage my feet in winter.
1) so not to 2) in order not 3) so as not to 4) so that not
- 108- The guards ----- the cellars but they didn't.
1) can't have checked 2) must have checked
3) needn't have checked 4) ought to have checked
- 109- I ----- to university in 1990, but I failed my exams.
1) would be going to go 2) was about going
3) had gone 4) had been going to go
- 110- Until they ----- our room, we will wait in the hotel lobby.
1) will prepare 2) prepared 3) have prepared 4) are preparing

Part B: Vocabulary

Directions: Questions 111-125 are incomplete sentences. Beneath each sentence you will see four words or phrases, marked (1), (2), (3), and (4). Choose the one word or phrase that best completes the sentence. Then mark the correct choice on your answer sheet.

- 111- It was really a(n) ----- plan to build a very big stadium in a small city.
1) partial 2) controversial 3) expansive 4) extensive
- 112- He was ----- in the peace-making process, so the nation respected him.
1) instrumental 2) relevant 3) profitable 4) consistent
- 113- He was not ----- for the scholarship.
1) qualitative 2) eligible 3) considerable 4) aware
- 114- He has been living in Britain for 20 years but has ----- his American accent.
1) retained 2) acquired 3) improved 4) influenced
- 115- Those people having office jobs should do more physical exercises than the ones who are in ----- jobs.
1) tireless 2) manual 3) dynamic 4) artificial
- 116- The death rate may increase ----- if the war continues.
1) concretely 2) luckily 3) basically 4) considerably

PASSAGE 2:

Sharpshooter Annie Oakley is a mainstay in the folklore of the Old West. Born Phoebe Ann Moses in 1860, Annie learned to shoot at a very young age out of necessity: she hunted for birds and small game animals to help feed her family and to make some extra money by supplying the local hotel restaurant with her catch. She soon became known for her excellent marksmanship and began taking part in shooting competitions at a very young age. It was rather unusual for a young girl not only to take part in such competitions but to win over older, more experienced male competitors. At the age of fifteen, she defeated Frank Butler, a professional marksman, in a competition. She and Butler were married a year later, and together they took part in shooting exhibitions.

In 1885, the couple joined probably the most famous of all western shows, Buffalo Bills Wild West touring show. As part of their act, Annie shot a cigarette out of her husband's mouth; Frank Butler's participation in this part of the act clearly demonstrated his faith in his wife's shooting ability. Annie also accepted volunteers from the audience to take part in her act, and on one occasion, while touring Europe, she even shot a cigarette out of the mouth of Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany.

158- What does the passage say about Annie' hunting?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) She hunted for pleasure. | 2) She hunted competitively. |
| 3) She hunted out of adventure. | 4) She hunted in order to survive. |

159- The word "folklore" in the first line means -----.

- | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) traditional stories | 2) fun stories | 3) western stories | 4) children's stories |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|

160- The author implies that -----.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Annie did not use a nickname | 2) Phoebe Ann was her surname |
| 3) Annie did not like her real name | 4) the name "Ann" was out of date |

161- Annie became known for her -----.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) ability with a gun | 2) courage in performance |
| 3) ability to make money | 4) perseverance though poverty |

162- In what way was Annie different from other girls?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) She worked at young age. | 2) She won in shooting contest. |
| 3) She performed at young age. | 4) She has masculine characteristics. |

163- Why was Butler probably attracted to Annie before their marriage?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1) She worked voluntarily. | 2) She joined western shows. |
| 3) She defeated him at young age. | 4) She took part in a shooting exhibition. |

164- The pronoun "their" in line 11 refers to -----.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) the couple | 2) the competitors |
| 3) Phoebe and Moses | 4) the exhibition groups |

165- Why did Annie shoot a cigarette out of the mouth of Wilhelm?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) They were enemies. | 2) She wanted to show her hatred. |
| 3) She wanted to show her courage. | 4) He participated in the exhibition. |

B4: The National High School Graduation Examination (The NHSGE)

(A Sample)

In His Name

Pre – University

Final Exam(Book 2)

Time: 100 Min

Name.....

Pre_ University Center

(Note: Write all the answers on the answer sheet)_

Grammar:

A. Choose the correct option.

1. Shehave stayed with her sister, but she didn't.
a) would b) might c) must d) could
2. The first thing to do was to develop powerful rockets..... a satellite in to orbit.
a) so that b) in order that c) to d) because
3. They wanted to keep on playingthe weather was not suitable at all.
a) since b) therefore c) because d) although

B. Complete the following sentences.

4. Why didn't the man welcome us? I don't know exactly.
He.....our message. (receive)
5. She was speaking English well, although.....

C. Put the words in correct order to make meaningful sentences.

6. IT- an important – information – role – in today's – technology – plays – communication.
.....
- 7.....I was often absent.
Excellent – are – my grads – always – although

Vocabulary:

A. Fill in the gaps with the words given. There is one extra word.

charity - measure - annoyed - astronaut -
devoted - poverty - suffered

8. Mother Teresaherself to working among the poor people.
9. Edison worked until he was very old, although hefrom many diseases.
10. Sputnik carried instruments tothe density and temperature of the Earth's upper atmosphere.
11. Child labor is both a result and a cause of
12. My brother getsif you keep him waiting for a long time.
13. Someone who travels to other planets is called a(n).....

B. Match the definition in column (A) with the words in column (B). There is one extra word in column (B).

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
14. A person who is learning a job.	a) agriculture
15. The science or practicing of farming	b) complex
16) Created by people . Not natural	c) artificial
17. An important subject	d) apprentice
	e) issue

C. Choose the correct choice.

18. Be careful. Internet can be, You don't have enough time to waste on it.
a) continues b) transferable c) addictive d) useful
19. It is easier tothe disease than to cure it.
a) provide b) prevent c) prepare d) produce
20. With my parents', I am going to go on a picnic.
a) permission b) prevention c) prediction d) presentation

D. Fill in the blanks with a suitable word of your own.

21. One special area on the internet which is often used interchangeably is

22. It is an instrument that magnifies the distant objects. It is a(n).....

Sentence Function

Match the item in column (A) with the appropriate phrases in column (B) to make meaningful sentences. There is one extra item in column (B)

A

23. Child labor is not work

24. A space probe is a robot vehicle ...

25. Although we are good friends,

B

a) used in order to explore deep space.

b) that stops children from going to school.

c) done around the house.

d) she never talks about her problems

Comprehension

A. Sentence Comprehension: Read the following sentences and choose the correct choice.

26. Besides gathering and storing information, computer can solve complicated problems. According to this, which of the following sentences is not correct?

a) computers gather information

b) computers solve only complicated problems.

c) computers store information.

d) computers are used in research objects.

27. ...It allowed people to observe objects in space in much greater details. In this paragraph **It** refers to.....

a) robot vehicle

b) satellites

c) telescope

d) Sputnik

28. The memory of Edison will live on because of his services to mankind. It means that.....

a) As Edison invented many things, we'll never forget him.

b) Edison is still alive and invents things

c) Edison had a good memory and remembered things easily.

d) The services Edison made aren't remembered by everyone.

APPENDIX C

C₁: A GUIDELINE FOR TEACHER INTERVIEWS

(CONDUCTED IN PERSIAN)

A. Teacher Background

- a) Age
- b) Gender
- c) Place of birth
- d) Religion
- e) Race/ethnicity
- f) Mother language
- g) National Language
- h) Academic Qualification
- i) Number of years teaching
- j) Socio-economic class
- k) Common literacy activities
- l) Grade/level taught
- m) Gender and level of students being taught
- n) Pre-service teacher education
- o) Special workshops in the last 3 years
- p) His familiarity with new curriculum (the NCD and the FRDE)
- q) Any new instruction recently learnt through training

B. General Questions

1. Which factors did influence on your decision on teaching in this school?

2. As a seasoned teacher, which differences and similarities do you see in the schools?
3. Did these similarities and differences influence your motivation and even your way of teaching in these schools?
4. Have you faced any challenge in these schools during teaching years? If yes, how and why did it happen?
5. What imperatives did you face in your teaching in these schools?
6. How do you recognize the imperatives?
7. How do you respond the imperatives?
8. How would you describe a successful teaching in this school?
9. What are important things which are required in teaching English language in this school?
10. How do you feel the Konkoor and the NHSGE influences your teaching?
11. What is your idea on the role of testbooks in your teaching in this school?
12. What are the benefits or risks of these testbooks in your teaching?
13. How did these testbooks influence your teaching negatively or positively in this school? Why?
14. How do you define a successful student in this school?
15. Would you like to talk about sth which is not in the textbook but it is related to the students' lives in this school?
16. What are your priorities in teaching in this school? Why?
17. Do you have any idea on the new curriculum document?
18. What are the norms in this schooling system? Who sets them? How

C₂: A GUIDELINE FOR STUDENT INTERVIEWS

A. Student Background

- a) Age
- b) Gender
- c) Place of birth
- d) Religion
- e) Race/ethnicity
- f) Mother language
- g) National Language
- h) Socio-economic class

B. General questions

1. How do you spend your life as a school student?
2. Do you like your English language class? What makes it interesting or boring for you
3. How do you define a successful teacher and teaching?
4. How important is your success in the Konkoor and the NHSGH?
5. Who and what did influence on your success in examination?
6. What expectations do you have from your teacher?
7. Do you like the textbook? Why?
8. Are the classroom activities fascinating or boring in the class for you? Why? Which activities are boring or interesting?
9. How do you define a successful learning? Why?
10. Can you share your experience when you had some conflicts with your teacher or peers? Why did it happen?

11. Do you like your textbook? Which topics and activities do you prefer to have in your class?
12. What are imperatives in your class which you do not like?
13. How do you respond these imperatives?
14. Do you like to get engaged in you classroom discussion? Why?
15. What is your role as defined by the teacher in this class? Do you like this role or not?

APPENDIX D

A GUIDELINE FOR OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES

Observer:

Date:

Session:

lesson topics:

Areas of focus during classroom observation	Researcher's comments, insights
<p>This guideline is open-ended. Each lesson or literacy session and its constituents episodes are separately described:</p> <p>The following characteristics are, for example, the focus of this observational guideline:</p> <p>i. Type of activity</p> <p>With reference to the kind of activity, the observer firstly identifies its types e.g. drills, discussion, translation, and so forth).</p> <p>ii. Materials used and their purposes</p> <p>Besides, in category of materials, the materials used in combination with classroom activities are described. Specifically, the observer focuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kind of materials (e.g. textbooks and actual high-stakes examinations, and so forth).• Purpose of materials (e.g. specifically designed for L2 teaching, or students' success in high-stakes examinations and so forth. <p>How materials as components of curriculum are used in the classroom interactions?</p> <p>How do these materials construct classroom interactions?</p> <p>Are these materials highly-controlled? (Is there a close alignment between interactions based on these materials?)</p> <p>Are the materials or minimally controlled? (Do the materials act as a starting point for ensuing interactions so that they may include a range of topics and discourses?)</p>	

iii. Participants' focuses and their roles

In this section, the observer draws his attention on participants' focus and their roles in classroom interactions to address how power relations (critique, resistance and reproduction of knowledge) are played out in implementing teaching practices in every context. Hence, for example, the notes, specify:

- Whether the classroom participants work individually or some are working in groups and others are working on their own.
- Whether the students work on their own or in group on the same task or different task.
- Specifically, whether one central activity led by the teacher is perpetuating so that the interaction is driven by the teacher to his student or class and vice versa.
- How do the students respond to the teacher's focus?
- Whether one central and the related interaction led by a student is developed by the student to student or student (s) to class and vice versa.
- Whether interactions are part of the curriculum or go beyond the curriculum.

iv. Content of each literacy classroom/session

With reference to content of classroom session, in this guideline, the observer also describes:

The subject matter of the activities in classroom sessions among the class and the teacher, that is, he observes whether language skills (grammar, vocabulary, reading and so forth)

or

Other discourses (subject matter of classroom discourse) are explicitly focused.

- Whether the teacher is just narrowly focused on curriculum
- The teacher interactions /the topics are broadened and go well beyond the curriculum and include references to and discussions on controversial topics /issues

APPENDIX E : A SAMPLE OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript of classroom interactions (Translated from Persian)	Pedagogical stance as mediated by the textbook
<p>Mr. Shayan: Ok, have a look at your textbook, Lesson 8. At this page, you see a set of before you read or pre-reading questions. <i>Let's not focus and spend much time on this section because they are not questioned in the Konkoor or the NHSGE. Just read them and translate the questions into Persian. There is no need to answer them.</i> Ok Read aloud the whole questions and translate them to the class. Ok, Morteza you please.</p>	<p>The teacher attempted to align the textbook practice exercises with the high-stakes examination questions (The teacher transformed the pre-reading activity to an examination-format exercises)</p>
<p>[The students read and translate the pre-reading questions in the textbook].</p>	
<p>Mr. Shayan: <i>The only possible questions related to this section can be the new vocabularies which are stated in your textbook.</i> Write the synonyms of the two new vocabularies in this section, <u>famous is synonymous with well-known</u>, who can give a synonym for the word <i>following</i>?</p>	<p>The teacher provided a rationale for his focus on examination with reference to synonyms</p>
<p>Reza: below</p>	
<p>Mr. Shayan: Yes, exactly. Ok, we will practice more actual examination questions later after we finished the reading passage in the textbook.</p>	