

# The Impact of Negative/Positive Emotions on English Language Teachers' Identity: A Qualitative Research

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This study was a qualitative research into the impact of emotions on the professional identities of teachers. The researcher follows Zembylas (2005a, 2005b) in conducting this study following the argument that politics and disciplinary power affect every aspect of teachers' lives, hence their emotions and professional identities. Foucault (1975 & 1984) was the source of theoretical underpinning in this study. The researcher used an open written interview and a written narrative inquiry. Ten English language teachers (8 English Institution teachers, 2 public school teachers) took part in the first phase. Finally, six English language teachers participated in the final phase. The study indicated that both groups of teachers have held negative emotions because of institution and governmental rules and positive emotions because of their success and their relationships with their students. English Institution teachers also experience negative emotions because of underpayment. This study implies that politics has its own way even in shaping the way teachers think they should express and suppress their emotions. Politics has penetrated deep enough to tell teachers what to teach, how to teach, and when to show emotions. Hence, teachers' dissatisfaction with institution and school strategies, policies, and rules.

## INTRODUCTION

English language teachers affect the realm of English language teaching in the direction of the identities that they have defined and made for themselves. So, researchers and practitioners need to be mindful of the factors that shape, affect, form, and modify English language teachers' identities. Needless to say, identity is not a simple notion, rather a complex process that has many sides to it (Clarke, 2009). The point is that many things have bearing on identity in one way or another. For example, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) point to how the social context in which an English language teacher is working or becoming a teacher affects his/her identity. This is termed as social identity theory which puts emphasis on the social side of identity.

However, other theories define and approach identity in other ways too. For instance, poststructuralist theories on identity are characterized by an awareness of the impact of discourse on identity formation. It means that the discourse under/within which a teacher is becoming a teacher defines teaching and being a teacher based on what it appreciates and values (Baxter, 2016). To put it in another way, the dominant discourse in any society affects the educational system and discourse, hence teacher education system too. So, in any society there is a discourse definition of who a good or bad teacher is.

Another factor influencing teacher identity formation is emotion which the researcher will approach from a poststructuralist point of view. Zembylas (2003 a) believes, in line with poststructuralist views, that emotion is affected by power and politics in the society. He admits that society to some extent forms teacher identity, but that is not all. Any society is shaped to sustain power in the interests of some and Iranian society is not an exception. Thus, from a poststructuralist point of view, an Iranian English language teacher identity can be studied in terms of the effect of emotion as power-oriented and power-stricken entity (Britzman, 1992; Zembylas, 2003a &b).

### **Theoretical Background**

The researcher follows Zembylas (2003 a, 2003 b, 2005 a, 2005 b) and Foucault (1975) in defining identity. Foucault (1975) terms identity as subjectivity reasoning that individuals are formed and shaped under the impact of power holders and power relations hence being objectified and subjectified. He notes that the social rules and regulations along with the disciplines at work take hand in hand to form individuals in the interests of the powerful. In a series of studies, Zembylas (2003 a, 2003 b, 2004 a, 2005 a, 2005 b) has actualized Foucault's (1975) ideas in his studies showing how power relations affect even the way that individuals feel and are allowed to feel.

Teacher identity as a role identity (Oyserman et al, 2012) is what self-defines for oneself as a teacher. The relation that you have with your students, the expectations you are entitled to, the subject you teach, the institution where you work, and the relationship you have with your colleagues all form one's professional (teacher identity) (Oyserman et al, 2012). What the researcher hereby aims to focus on is the ELT teachers' professional identities from a Foucaultian perspective. Following Foucault (1975), the researcher wants to find how emotions have their own say on ELT teachers' professional identities. Foucault believes that power and power relations and their traces are present everywhere. Teachers' emotions can be studied from this point of view because as a result of power and power relations or the institutional rules which are in the interests of some, teachers' emotions may be disciplined or managed for the interests of the powerful. This fact may lead to the formation or transformation of ELT teachers' professional identities in some planned or arranged-for manner.

What the researcher means by emotion here is well proposed by Zembylas (2005b). In his note to his book *Teaching with Emotion*, Zembylas (2005b) deliberately prefers the term emotion to such other terms as feeling and affect arguing that the latter "refer[s] to bodily and sensational experiences of an emotion" (p. xxv). He regards emotion as a multiple entity which is an

amalgamation of “ethical, moral, evaluative, cognitive, affective, and sensational” traces (p. xxv). The other distinction that he makes regards emotion and attitude; he defines attitude as a tendency to react “in a favorable or unfavorable way with respect to a person, an object, or an idea” (p. xxv). His definition of attitude depicts emotion as contributing to attitude because attitudes are like situations involving “emotions, beliefs, and behaviors” while “emotions are acts” reflecting the performative essence of emotions. According to Zembylas (2005 b), emotion and attitude also differ in duration meaning that the former is short whereas the latter is longer.

Zembylas (2003a) explicitly notes “teaching practice is necessarily affective and involves an incredible amount of emotional labor” (p. 113). He refers to “policy issues, [and] social relationships” (p. 109) and point it out that the social interactions that teachers have, the culture in which they become teachers, and the organization and/or the situation where the teachers work shape their emotions and feelings. What Zembylas (2003a) regrets is that researchers have been negligent of the role power and politics play in teachers` emotions. Drawing on Foucault, Zembylas (2003a) argues for “a view of power so all-pervasive that there is no space left for an individual to look for “a true self”” (p. 114). He writes “missing is an exploration of teacher emotion as embedded in school culture, ideology, and power relations” (p. 113).

#### **a. Post-structuralism**

As the word speaks for itself, post-structuralism is what came after structuralism and is characterized by three fundamental characteristics (Pennycook, 2001). First, post-structuralists regard reality as what is created in a sociocultural context. They believe even sign system through which meaning, and consequently reality is transferred is, indeed, socio-culturally constructed. Second, they problematize what is given and accepted in the society assuming that nothing is objective rather socio-cultural productions. They question all the categories accepted in the society not because they are some already-existent tacit categorizations but produced and maintained in the sociocultural context. Third, they are anti-essentialist in that they are doubtful of pre-determined categories; they look askance at knowledge, culture, difference, and language because they believe this is all about a matter of whose knowledge, culture, language, and truth is assumed and arranged to be taking the upper-hand ground (Jordan & Weedon, 1995).

#### **b. Michael Foucault**

Foucault (1984) clearly confesses that he is not obsessed with power as much as he is keen on “a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (p. 208). He further notes that “the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others” (p. 208). Through this division which is an “objectification and categorization” technique individuals acquire “both a social and a personal identity “(Foucault, 1980, p. 8). In an interview with Robinow (1980), Foucault defines ideology as being in opposition with truth. He is interested in finding out “how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false” (p. 60). Foucault (1980) holds that

it [power] doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourses. It needs to be considered as a productive network which run through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression (p.61).

Foucault (1984) is astonished how new techniques of power from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on is so successful in societal domination. He says "a form of power comes into being that begins to exercise itself through social production and social service" (p. 60). He exemplifies that school discipline is one of the methods by which new form of power penetrates into individuals' "bodies, acts, attitudes, and modes of everyday behavior" (p. 67). He sums up his interview on truth and power by noting that "Truth" is to be understood as system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements" (p. 74). He talks of a "regime" of truth assuming that truth and power has a bondage which "produce and sustain it" and truth has also a bondage with "effects of power which it induces and which extends it" (p. 74).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1975) defines the aim of disciplinary power as training "in order to levy and select all the more" (p. 170). He further mentions that it is the discipline that builds individuals and in the process of disciplinary construction individuals are built both as objects and help building by acting as its exercise instruments. He points it out that discipline does not mass up individuals into a single unit rather it classifies, segregates, and divides individuals in a way that many "single units" are formed (p. 170). Foucault (1975) believes that disciplinary power owes its success to 3 factors which are hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination that is a combination of the other two factors.

On hierarchical observation, Foucault (1975) talks of

the minor techniques of multiple and intersecting observations of eyes that must see without being seen; using techniques of subjection and methods of exploitation, an obscure art of light and the visible was secretly preparing a new knowledge of man (p. 171).

He further argues that there is a bondage between architecture of such places as hospitals, asylums, prisons and schools with discipline since they allow an "internal, articulated, and detailed control- to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals" (p. 172). He goes on to say that "Stones can make people docile and knowable" because they help "act on those it [they] shelter, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them" (p. 172). He gives the architecture of school buildings as an example of how stones can make people docile by alluding to the distribution of rooms at regular distance with a window on the walls of each class that allows observation while being monitored by a headmaster or so.

Foucault (1975) calls institutions such as schools, hospitals, and military states "disciplinary institution [which] [secret] a machinery of control that [functions] like a microscope of conduct; the fine, analytical divisions that they created formed around men an apparatus of observation, recording, and training" (p. 173). On the role of disciplinary architecture, Foucault (1975) notes

all the buildings were to be arranged in a circle, opening on the inside, at the center of which a high construction was to house the administrative functions of management, the policing functions of encouraging obedience and work; from here all orders would come, all activities would be recorded, all offences perceived, and judged; and this would be done in immediately with no other aid than an exact geometry (pp. 173-174).

To sum up, the ultimate objective would be to reach “a political utopia” (p. 174).

On the second factor, Foucault (1975) talks of an “infra-penalty” (p. 178) which deals with details too small to be dealt with the laws; disciplines started to focus on trivial things that had been left unnoticed by the punishing systems before. He adds “Disciplinary punishment has the function of reducing gaps. It must therefore be essentially corrective.” (p. 179). He refers to the double system of disciplinary punishment known as “gratification-punishment” (p. 180) which means that instead of punishing students teachers should provide them with rewards to encourage them towards better activities.

He points it out that expiation or repression is not what the disciplinary power is pursuing. He summarizes the functions of disciplinary power in five categories. First, it brings about a whole set of rules that are to be obeyed by individuals to have better actions. Second, it separates individuals from one another by the extent they follow rules and norms set up. Third, it hierarchizes the individuals according to their “value, the abilities, the level, and [their] nature” (p. 183). Fourth, it sets up the “constraints of a conformity that must be achieved” (p. 183). And finally, it normalizes individuals` actions and the rules to be followed.

The third success factor of disciplinary power is examination which Foucault (1975) holds to be a combination of the other two factors; namely, observing hierarchy and normalizing judgment. Examination is believed to act like a “surveillance” that yields qualification, classification, and punishment (p. 184). Foucault (1975) explicates that examination makes individuals visible to the extent that they can be differentiated and judged. With a reference to the subjectifying and objectifying nature of discipline, examination, Foucault (1975) believes, is the techniques which “manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected” (pp. 184-185). He gives the example of schools where examinations are run repeatedly in a way that ensures both the measurement of students` knowledge and judgment of them. Hence, examination acts as a guarantee of the transmission of knowledge to the student.

Foucault (1975) notes “The examination introduced a whole mechanism that linked to a certain type of the formation of knowledge a certain form of the exercise of power” (p. 187). He summarizes the knowledge formation process of examination in 3 statements which are as follow:

1. *The examination transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power (p. 187).*
2. *The examination also introduces invisibility into the field of documentation (p. 189).*
3. *The examination, surrounded by all its documentary techniques, makes each individual a “case” (p. 191).*

1. He clarifies the first statement by making a comparison between power and disciplinary power noting that in the past it was the power that was stressed to be shown, but now it is the subjects or the objects that discipline emphasizes to be seen and scrutinized. Foucault believes that the invisibility of discipline guarantees the visibility of those on whom disciplinary power is exercised. Therefore, through the conduction of examination “It is

the fact of being constantly seen, of being always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (p. 187). Foucault maintains that discipline always puts its objects and subjects into manifestation and on them it illuminates “its effects--- in replica, as it were--- on their bodies, which had become precisely legible and docile” (p. 188).

2. On the explication of the second statement, Foucault points out that writing is a network which discipline puts individuals into; in a sense, through the art of writing individuals are documented, described, classified, and checked by the writings that they do about themselves and the writings that are done about them. Writing is part of the observation goals that discipline on the whole and examination seeks in particular. In addition, he says “[network of writing] engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them” (p. 189). On the importance of writing, Foucault sums up

Thanks to the whole apparatus of writing that accompanied it, the examination opened up two correlative possibilities: firstly, the constitution of the individual as a describable, analyzable object, not in order to reduce him to ‘specific’ features, as did the naturalists in relation to living beings, but in order to maintain him in his individual features, in his particular evolution, in his own aptitudes or abilities, under the gaze of a permanent corpus of knowledge; and, secondly, the constitution of a comparative system that made possible the measurement of overall phenomena, the description of groups, the characterization of collective facts, the calculation of the gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given ‘population’ (p. 190).

3. The third statement is the illustration and/ or accomplishment of the second statement. Because of writing, Foucault emphasizes, each individual is made a case of in the sense that “it is the individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality; and it is also the individual who has to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded, etc.” (p. 191). Foucault explains when the chronicle of important people were written and recorded it was counted as a privilege and functioned political purposes. He notes, however, that individuals are described and made a case for purposes of controlling which is a technique of discipline and disciplinary power. This act is no longer a case of heroization or anything else just a matter of better control, objectification and subjectification. Foucault regards the examination to the pinnacle of the disciplinary techniques in that it “constitutes the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge” (p. 192).

On the importance of discipline, Foucault (1984) writes “The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of ‘ideological’ representation of society; but, he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called ‘discipline’” (p. 204). He calls for stopping to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it “excludes”, it “represses”, it “censors”, it “abstracts”, it “makes”, it “conceals”. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of his belonging to this production (p. 194).

Foucault (1984) believes that discipline is a kind of power in itself that can be called a technology because it has its own “instruments, technique, procedure, levels of application, [and] targets” (p. 206). He thinks of disciplines as techniques that guarantees “the ordering of human multiplicities” (p. 207). However, what makes discipline unique and special, Foucault (1984) believes is that by acting as tactics of power discipline accomplish three purposes:

1. Discipline exercises power with the least cost possible because of its invisible nature and because it does not manifest itself in a way that causes negative reactions on the part of the individuals.
2. Discipline succeeds in extending its power to the greatest extent possible.
3. Discipline connects the economic growth of power with all the other dimensions of the society. In Foucault’s own words “it increase[s] both docility and the utility of all the elements of the system” (p. 207).

On the role of discipline in dealing with individual multiplicities, Foucault (1984) states

It could reduce what, in a multiplicity, makes it much less manageable than a unit; reduce what is opposed to the use of each of its elements and of their sum; reduce everything that may counter the advantages of number. That is why, discipline fixes; it arrests or regulates movements; it clears up confusion; it dissipates compact groupings of individuals wandering about the country in unpredictable ways; it establishes calculated distributions” (pp. 208-209).

## **Review of Literature**

Zembylas (2005a) conducts a post-structural study in line with and or in continuation of his earlier study mentioned above. Using the term “genealogies of emotions in teaching” (p. 936), which he defines as “accounts of the strategies and tactics that have taken place in various emotional practices at different moments in relation to one’s teaching” (p. 936). He does an ethnography which lasts for three years and aims to find out how emotion is shaped by power and how in turn resistance to power or subjection to it results in teacher identity. He concludes that emotional norms in teaching are historically dependent; that teachers can control or discipline their own emotions; and that the emotional atmosphere dominant in an institution whether stringent or lenient affect how a teacher feels or thinks of right or wrong to be felt.

Zembylas` purpose (2005 b) in his book *Teaching with Emotion* is to find out how teacher emotions impact their teaching and how their identities as teachers are shaped as a result. He believes that the way emotions are treated and regarded in the institutions have something to do with the history and culture of the society. That is why, a deconstruction of power relations and structures “that normalize life at school and into the classroom” (p. xx) requires finding the cultural, political, and social traces in teachers` emotions. In short, he is interested in “discursive structures and normative practices” (p. 5) so as to find how teaching is formed and forms teacher emotions and subjectivities. More idealistically, he aims for problematization of emotion rules and

expectations to question the fact that some emotions are allowed to be shown and expressed while some others are to be banned and discarded.

Zembylas (2005 b) criticizes the mainly social constructionist, contextualized, and psychological nature of the studies conducted in the first and second phase. Hence, he calls for an awareness of “political and cultural issues- for example, how different practices establish, and regulate emotional rules and require emotion management in the context of curriculum and teaching” (p. 15). He also calls for developing pedagogies that empower teachers and their sense of professional selves.

Ginsburg and Kamat (2009) discuss how “teachers work and live within unequal relations of power” (p. 231). They believe that power relations such as capitalism and patriarchy are present everywhere whether in “local, national, and global communities” (p. 231) or in teachers’ work settings. They note that whatever teachers do in their classrooms or the institutions where they work or out of them has to do with a) “the material and symbolic resources” (p. 231), and b) “the structural and ideological power used to control the means of producing, reproducing, consuming, and accumulating material and symbolic resources” (p. 231). They draw on Giroux (1988) who believes

rather than being objective institutions removed from the dynamics of politics and power, schools actually are contested spheres that embody and express a struggle over what forms of authority, type of knowledge, forms of moral regulation and versions of the past and the future should be legitimated and transmitted to the students (p. 126).

Sociocultural distance between teachers and others is due to the fact that teachers are from one culture, social class, and age while their students happen to come from another culture and class. This in turn yields distance between these groups and make teachers think of their students as “other people’s children” (Delpit, 1993 as cited in Hargreaves 2001). Hargreaves (2001) believes this type of distance causes teachers “to stereotype and to be stereotyped by the communities they serve” (p. 1062). Moral distance has to do with teachers’ goals and purposes. This distance comes across when teachers find discrepancy between their purposes and the experiences they come to have. Teachers may feel positive emotions when receiving gratitude; they may feel negative emotions when what they do is not valued and thanked for. Professional distance arises from the classical professionalism that mainly draws on “the traditionally male preserves of medicine and law that require professionals to avoid emotional entanglements with their clients’ problems and to maintain professional distance from them” (p. 1069). Physical distance is the degree of proximity and closeness that are defined for teachers and might be enhanced or worsened by the frequency or the infrequency of interactions between teachers and students. Last but not least, political distance is due to the power relations teachers are exposed to by experiencing feelings of powerfulness and powerlessness.

Sutton (2004) conducts a study on why teachers regulate their emotions and what strategies they make use of in this respect. She interviewed middle school teachers in North East Ohio, USA for this purpose. All the participants admitted regulating their emotions except for one. The teachers in this study noted that regulating their emotions contributes to effectiveness of their teaching and brings them closer to their ideal image of teacher emotions. Researcher found



teachers making use of preventative and responsive emotion regulation strategies. This classification comes from Gross (1998 a) who also calls the former antecedent-focused and the latter response-focused.

Cowie (2011) examines the contribution of emotions to the professional lives of EFL teachers in the context of Tokyo. The researcher found that the teachers tended to like and care for their students which brought about emotional warmth towards their students. On the contrary, teachers' emotions towards the institutions and their colleagues were mainly negative which resulted in their anger. The researcher urges EFL practitioners to recognize the importance of emotions in teaching.

Yuan and Lee (2016) takes a narrative approach to teacher identity inquiry with the concern that pre-service teacher's struggles in terms of their emotions experiences should be studied and taken into consideration as emotions are an inseparable part of teacher identities. The researchers conduct narrative inquiry with a student-teacher with the name of Ming who is faced with the challenge of experiencing contrasting emotions in the way of becoming a teacher. They found that the negative emotions coming from school context, embedded emotional rules, his mentor's constraints distorted Ming's self-belief and left him with professional identity issues. His positive emotions came from his students' success in learning. The researchers argued that professional learning which occurs in specific cultural contexts yield a certain kind of teacher identity.

Schutz and Lee (2014) believe that institutions and workplace settings define emotional display rules that are the rules and regulations which determine which emotion to be expressed and which to be suppressed. In other words, emotional display rules pave the way for appropriate emotional expressions. They believe that these rules have their roots in social-historical context. Consequently, in an institution like school and ELT institutions, teachers may be laboring emotionally. Accordingly, while individuals are allowed to express their emotions openly in individualistic cultures, religious cultures give value to the expression of behaviours and emotions that result in harmonization and order (Klimes-Dougan and Zemnan, 2007 as cited in Schutz and Williams-Johnson, 2009).

Chen (2016) makes an inquiry of the emotions that primary school teachers experience in Hong Kong and Mainland China and out of a pilot study with 254 teachers develops an inventory of teacher emotions with 5 factors i.e., Joy, Love, Sadness, Anger, and Fear. In the main study which was conducted with 1830 teachers, Joy and Love are reported to be the most repeated and least repeated emotions among the teachers, respectively. Positive emotions are associated with classroom experiences, public and social recognition, and college interactions while the negative ones are associated with social pressure, competition with colleagues, educational policies, professional lives imbalance, and educational changes.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the common positive/negative emotions among ELT teachers in Iran and what are their sources?

2. How do public school teachers and English language institution teachers see their identities formed under the emotional experiences that they have had as teachers?

## **METHOD(S)**

### **Research Design**

This study was a qualitative research into the impact of discourse and emotion on English language teacher identity formation process in light of poststructuralist theories. The narrative inquiries were carried out to answer the questions in the mind of the researcher after the collection of initial data. In addition, narrative inquiries are expected to illuminate underlying and unconscious beliefs of the teachers of which they themselves may not be aware. These unconscious facts may be under the influence of power relations that are cherished by the discourses in which they have been brought up.

### **Setting and Participants**

This study was a two-phase research which required different participants for each phase. In the first phase, which was run in the form of a written open interview, 8 female and 2 male ELT teachers participated in the study. In the second phase, which was the narrative inquiry phase, 6 ELT teachers voluntarily participated-- 3 English institution teachers and 3 public school ELT teachers. The number of participants for the qualitative phases was small so that descriptive explanation could be obtained to make the questionnaire which was in turn made to obtain comprehensive results.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), “[t]he qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p. 1). Barkhuizen, Benson, and Chik (2014) note that interviews can be regarded as the best tool to make inquiry on language- related personal perspectives. There are three types of interviews according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009); namely, structured interviews, un-structured interviews, and open interviews. In structured interviews which are known as oral questionnaires, the researcher has some pre-set questions which determine what the participant should give information on. In un-structured interviews, the interviewer has some core questions to clarify the stance, but the questions can be extended when the interviewer add follow-up questions to gain more information on a question that the participants have answered. In an open interview, there are no pre-set questions. The interviewer just informs the interviewees of the interests and concerns of his/her research and interviewees give any information that they have of the research interests.

The open written interview which was the first phase of the study was conducted by sending the written format of the interview to the interviewees through Telegram by which they were generally familiarized with the research interests and asked to name three common positive and negative emotions along with their sources and effects. Ten ELT teachers participated in this phase 8 of whom were English institution teachers and 2 were public school English teachers. The reason for stopping data collection at 10th participant in this phase was data saturation.

According to Dorneyi (2007), saturation is the repetition of findings in research data. In fact, the data were repeating themselves in all the documents received.

All the participants were female in this phase. The participants typed their answers in the Microsoft Office Word document and sent them to the researcher. The reason for using written interview was that participants complained that they could not remember the emotions instantly which was also the reason why the researcher did not succeed at an oral attempt.

## **Data Collection Method(s) and Analysis**

### ***Narrative Inquiry***

Connelly and Clandinin (1999) argue that all people naturally live “storied lives” (p. 2) and narrate their stories to each other while narrative inquirers aim to provide a description of people’s lives by collecting and narrating people’s narrations and putting their experiences into written texts.

Following Clandinin et al (2007), the researcher personally justifies using narrative inquiry since she is an English language teacher herself and has many stories to share which all mark a point in her identity. From a practical point of view, she argues that listening to the narrations of English language teachers’ experiences may reveal the issues that the whole ELT community or field is grappling with. And from a social point of view, the researcher reasons that as English language teachers are all subjects of the society their stories can reflect the traces that power, power relations and socio-political discourse leave on their identities, lives, and narrations or lived stories.

The narrative inquiry made for the study was piloted with 3 ELT teachers to find if the format assesses what is supposed to be assessed. After piloting the study, the main narrative inquiry was mainly run in written form and was sent to the participants through Whatsapp and Telegram. Thus, the phases suggested by Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) were somewhat flexible regarding the way this phase was run. Consequently, the concluding talk also took the form of chats between the researcher and the participants. In this phase, participants recorded their voices and sent them to the researcher who made transcriptions of them for further analysis.

### ***Data Analysis***

The data obtained through the first research tool, written open interview, were analyzed through thematic analysis. The data obtained through narrative inquiry was analyzed using thematic analysis. According to Barkhuizen et al (2014), thematic analysis “involves repeated reading of the data, coding and categorization of data extracts, and their reorganization under thematic headings” (p. 75). They further note that in order to do a good theme analysis, the researchers should go back and forth, whether they have pre-determined themes or not, over their themes, the categorizations, and so on “to refine themes and theoretical relationships” (p.76). Both of the research questions were answered through the thematic analysis of the interview and the narrative inquiry.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Question One

The first research question was answered through thematic analysis of written open interview and narrative inquiry.

*Table 1: Themes of Written Open Interview and Narrative Inquiry*

<i>Positive emotions</i>	<i>Sources of positive emotions</i>	<i>Negative emotions</i>	<i>Sources of negative emotions</i>
<b>Happiness, Joy, Energeticness, cheerfulness, excitement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Helping others learn</li> <li>- Students` fast learning / success</li> <li>- Close and intimate relationships with the students</li> <li>- Students` enjoyment when doing class activities</li> <li>- Mental and emotional engagement of the students</li> <li>- Pleasant classroom atmosphere</li> <li>- Students` love</li> </ul>	<b>Stress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not being prepared</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency, helpfulness, self-satisfaction, and usefulness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doing something useful and playing a helpful role for the students and the society</li> <li>- Students` improvement</li> <li>- Students` comments and success</li> </ul>	<b>Powerlessness and limitedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not being able to give fail scores to the students</li> <li>- Institution syllabus and rules</li> <li>- Government</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students</li> </ul>	<b>Hopefulness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students` gratefulness and success</li> </ul>
<b>Love</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students</li> </ul>	<b>Confusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students` failure to learn</li> </ul>

			<p><b>and understand something</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Unexpected challenges coming from the students and the classroom</b></li> <li>- <b>Noises from the students</b></li> </ul>
		<b>Demotivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Students do not learn</b></li> </ul>
		<b>Ineffectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Students` failure to get desired scores</b></li> </ul>
		<b>Anger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Students` deviations from classroom rules</b></li> <li>- <b>Rudeness and noisiness of the students</b></li> <li>- <b>Strict rules</b></li> <li>- <b>Students` carelessness about their homework</b></li> </ul>
		<b>Tiredness and Boredom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Teaching takes physical and mental energy</b></li> <li>- <b>The educational setting and the students</b></li> <li>- <b>Institutional disrespect</b></li> <li>- <b>The students` reluctance</b></li> </ul>
		<b>Disappointment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Students do not understand</b></li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Low income at language institutes</b></li> <li>- <b>Students` dissatisfaction with the class</b></li> <li>- <b>Disrespect for the teachers` ideas by the institutions</b></li> <li>- <b>Institution strict rules</b></li> </ul>
<b>Sharing positive feelings</b>	<b>Improves learning and teaching</b>	<b>Attempts to control negative feelings</b>	<b>May impede with teaching process and not appropriate according to the culture</b>

The positive emotions which are love, respect, happiness, hopefulness and satisfaction arise from the students, and teacher-student close relationships. As Chen (2016) also finds in his research joy is the most repeated positive emotion among the teachers interviewed, and love is the least repeated positive emotion which in the case of this study was alluded to only by two of the participants. The sources of positive feelings in this study are also associated with classroom experiences as Chen (2016) also finds in his research.

*Extract 1*

My students make me feel loved and respected and still love my career in spite of difficulties.

*Extract 2*

The best thing that I like about my job is actually my students. I love them. You know! Seeing them encourages me; being with them makes me feel energetic. Ahhhh, I think it is the best thing I like about my job.

The teacher above also adds

*Extract 3*

You know! My work conditions don't affect me, you know, there are some days which I'm sad because of the places I'm working, because of the people with whom I'm working, but they do not have any effect on me. You know! I actually try to do my best, and ahhhh, actually work as hard as I can and be a sensitive teacher towards her students. And, I find myself as a strict teacher, ehhh, but emotional because I care, I really care about my students when they have a problem I get really sad, you know, for example, I have a student who has problems with her heart, you know. I am really sad about her, and I can do everything to help her in her English lessons. And, again, I have a student who is paralyzed and I'm really sad about her and I try to be really nice with her. That's it.

Hargreaves (1998) who looks at teaching as an “emotional practice” writes “teachers’ emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes” (p. 319) because if they do not reach educational and moral purposes in teaching, they will be demoralized. The excerpt given above shows how teachers may try to reach for the fulfillment of their moral purposes and values along with their educational goals. This excerpt supports Hargreaves (1998) argument that emotions not only cannot be separated from teaching and teachers but also can go further enough to engage their moral goals and values. This is in line with the emotional attachment and commitments Golby (1996) and O’Connor (2006) find between the teachers and their students in their studies.

The negative emotions, on the other hand, are not merely attributed to one source. The sources of negative emotions are various including classroom challenges, students’ dissatisfaction, institution rules, government, and low payment. Chen (2016) also finds association between negative emotions and educational policies. The attribution of negative feelings to institution rules are in line with the findings of Kelchtermans’ (1996) study in which he cites the institution policies, limitations imposed on teachers and teachers’ professional relations with others as sources of teachers’ vulnerability. For example, teacher A talks of how she sadly cannot give fail scores to her students because the institution holder does not want to in which case the number of students in one class may decrease and the class maybe cancelled which is a problem for the institution holder.

#### *Extract 4*

I feel unauthorized in giving fail score to weak student because of the institution’s rules.

The following teacher who is a public-school teacher believes that she feels socially dissatisfied and limited because of the government.

#### *Extract 5*

Government makes me feel socially dissatisfied and limited.

Another public-school teacher describes thoughtless stakeholders as the worst thing about her job explaining

Thoughtless stakeholders, regardless to more salary which is essential for our job, we need more social respect. We need the governors bring back the important role of teachers and reflect it in our society. We don't have enough respect in our country just because of the governments’ wrong strategies. I need it. I hate their thoughtless strategies and rules which is govern in our country for teachers.

The governments’ wrong strategies about which the teacher above complains are considered to be among the disciplinary techniques which Foucault (1984) believes “increases both docility and utility of all the elements of the system” (p. 207).

Along the same line, Sara writes in her narrative

#### *Extract 6*

There are several instances of inconsistencies between my beliefs about teaching and the institutes’ rules which cause tensions in me. For instance, we are expected to use specific books in our classes which do not motivate

students. Once I decided to play a song by Cyrus in my class and asked my students to close their eyes and pay attention to her accent. Everything was going well but suddenly the institute manager opened the door and asked me to turn off the computer. Later the same day, he warned me not to use illegal materials in my classes. I realized that if I do not obey the rules, he will not assign me any classes. I was terribly demotivated. I thought I was doing something great, I was motivating my students.

Foucault (1975) distinguishes discipline from power in that it deals with details too small to be dealt with power. He points out “disciplinary punishment has the function of reducing gaps. It must therefore be essentially corrective” (p. 179). Teacher B complains that she was deprived from motivating her students the way she wanted because the institution manager thought her method of motivation was illegal. Even, a small act of playing songs in the class might be regarded to be illegal and not correct because the institution in specific and the government in general does not approve of it. Foucault (1975) also regards that stones and buildings architecture make obedience and work and help the managers police the actions of the individuals. The excerpt given above clearly shows how the architecture of institutions allow for policing the acts of teachers and the students. Foucault (1975) believes from among the different functions that disciplinary power fulfills one is setting up “the constraints of a conformity that must be achieved” (p. 183) and normalizing individuals` behaviours, consequently. Hence, the justification of the institution manager above.

Another source of negative emotions for the teachers is low payment. Teacher H who is an institution teacher notes in her written interview

#### *Extract 7*

The financial problems have led many teachers to teach just to make money and become heedless of their real roles. I have been teaching for 4 years. During these years, I have been teaching English to gain experience; however, I will not rely on teaching as my main career in the future.

This is what Jacob (2007) notes in his study that English language teachers normally leave their profession at high rates. So, in our study, the reason is financial according to teacher H. The following excerpts from other participants` narrative inquiry transcriptions allude to the same financial dissatisfaction.

#### *Extract 8*

The thing that I don` t like about my job is ahhhh actually money. It`s not that much high-profile job. Actually, you don` t get the money that you expect. Ahhh, so just money, financial issues. Something like that.

#### *Extract 9*

The only bothersome issue of teaching is low payment.

The negative emotions aside, the participant teachers make repeated references to negative emotional episodes by which they attempt to control and suppress their feelings. This is what William-Johnson et al (2008) find the fact that teachers are expected to feel in a certain way and not in another way and that makes them express positive emotions and suppress negative ones. The following excerpts are instances of these emotional attempts.



*Extract 10*

I think that it is not appropriate to show some kinds of feelings or emotions because that may intervene with the process of teaching properly. I mean that sometimes when you show your feelings, your negative feelings, that thing that I used to do when I was much younger. It really gives you a kind of negative portrait and it will really impede students from learning. That's my idea. It is not right to show negative emotions ahm to the students I guess. It is ok to show the negative emotions to the authorities but not to the students. On the other hand, I think that it's quite necessary and essential to show your positive feelings towards the students. I like CLT; I admire task-based teaching and I always talk about it and discuss it with my students. And, I guess it really, really motivates them too.

*Extract 11*

About the reaction or emotions that I show, ah, I usually try to be neutral, you know, I try not to react somehow, for example, when I face the rules which I don't like, I cannot do anything because it is my job as a school teacher. You know! I knew the limitations, and eh. You know! I myself become angry, but I try do not show my feelings because ah actually it doesn't have any effect whether I'm angry or happy. These are the rules and I have to follow.

Another public school teacher

*Extract 12*

Because as a teacher, we forgot the difficulties or problems which related to the incomes of this job. I try to do my best never show my negative emotion, but sometimes, unconsciously happens. Control is overwhelmingly important.

Hargreaves (1998) regards that teaching is always filled with emotional labor which he defines as the fight that teachers make to struggle with the right emotions and live up to the institutional and professional expectations. The instances of teachers laboring emotionally can be clearly seen in the excerpts given above. Zembylas (2004) categorizes emotion manifestation into three classes the third of which is political manifestation by which he means that teachers evaluate themselves based on "accepted emotional rules" (p. 109). Consider the following excerpt from the narrative of an English Institution teacher.

*Extract 13*

I prefer not to show my negative feelings, and I think that it is different from culture to culture. In our culture, if you show your negative feelings, they consider you as a weak person and weak people are not accountable. I mean people cannot trust weak people as teachers. I think teachers must be in authority and charge of anything and powerful. At least, they must seem so.

The teacher notes that in their culture showing negative emotions is not welcomed which is one of the reasons she suppresses her negative feelings. This statement resonates Zembylas (2005a) study in which he asserts that emotional norms are historically dependent which, is the reason why teachers struggle to control and discipline their emotions. The participants' reference to her culture supports Hargreaves (1998) study in which he finds teachers emotions to "vary with culture and context" (p. 319). Klimes-Dougan and Zemnan (2007) hold that religious cultures value the expression of behaviours and emotions that result in harmonization and order (as cited in Schutz

and Williams-Johnson, 2009). As the Iranian government is religious and yields a religious culture in turn the teacher above justifies the suppression of her emotions by the cultural norms of the society where she lives. Boler (1997) believes that “institutions are inherently committed to maintaining silences (e.g., about emotion) and/or proliferating “discourses that define emotions by negation” (pp. 203-231). Note the following excerpt as an instance

*Extract 14*

I must say that showing emotions is definitely a good thing, ahhhh, but unfortunately in educational system we cannot do that, you know, for example, if I say, “why are you telling me to not to wear jeans?” it will be a problem for me. You know! I like to show my feelings, and I like to say that I do not like your ideas, and, ahhh, I actually hate this kind of thinking but I cannot, you know, I must be silent and I must say “ok, as you say, or as you wish”. Because in educational system, if you, let’s say hmmm, tell your real ideas you cannot work anymore.

The public-school teacher above is involved in deep acting as noted by Hochschild (1983) because she self-polices and regulates her real emotions and tries to feel in an expected and accepted manner.

**Research Question Two**

The second research question is “how do public school teachers and English language institution teachers see their identities formed under the emotional experiences that they have had as teachers? and is answered through the thematic analysis of narrative inquiry data. Both groups of teachers report suppressing their emotions and regulating them. Their reasons include their powerlessness, their goals to keep their students motivated, and their own personal beliefs. Look at the extracts below showing examples of such reasons in teachers’ narratives.

The public-school teachers in the final phase believe that the negative feelings and associations that they attribute to their jobs are due to wrong governmental strategies, the work settings, and their colleagues. Only one of them dislikes the stress of evaluation of her students as her disliked factor. They are happy with their jobs thanks to the positive feedback they get from and success that they witness in their students. The English institution teachers, nevertheless, mention another issue besides the powerful as the disliking factor. They all complain about the fact that they do not get paid enough for the rewarding work that they do. These two groups feel both satisfied and dissatisfied in their jobs. The dissatisfaction comes from the rules and conditions they work under, and the satisfaction comes from the fact that they are useful in the society and they get positive feelings and impressions from their students. They all choose to care for their students and get emotionally engaged with their students. However, they all feel dissatisfied and unhappy because of the rules and regulations they work under and believe there is room for the powerful to respect them more. As Zembylas (2004) rightly puts, teachers can evaluate their life, world, and career through the lens of their emotions. Through the educational discipline, government makes sure that individuals’ multiplicities are ordered and catered for (Foucault, 1984). With all that being said, it is worth reiterating the following excerpt from Foucault (1984)

*Extract 15*

It could reduce what, in a multiplicity, makes it much less manageable than a unit; reduce what is opposed to the use of each of its elements and of their sum; reduce everything that may counter the advantages of number. That is why, discipline fixes; it arrests or regulates movements; it clears up confusion; it dissipates compact groupings of individuals wandering about the country in unpredictable ways; it establishes calculated distributions” (pp. 208-209).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The researcher used an open written interview, an attitudinal questionnaire, and a written narrative inquiry. Ten English language teachers (8 English Institution teachers, 2 public school teachers) took part in the first phase. In the second phase, six English language teachers participated in the final phase. The study indicated that both groups of teachers have held negative emotions because of institution and governmental rules and positive emotions because of their success and their relationships with their students. English Institution teachers also experience negative emotions because of underpayment. This study indicated that politics has its own way even in shaping the way teachers think they should express and suppress their emotions. Politics has penetrated deep enough to tell teachers what to teach, how to teach, and when to show emotions. Hence, teachers` dissatisfaction with institution and school strategies, policies, and rules.

As such, as qualitative research this study was an attempt to investigate the professional identities of the Iranian English teachers in two kinds of settings—public schools and English institutions. The traces of disciplinary power which Foucault (1975) talks of can be easily found in the teachers` professional identities through the textbooks that are defined for them, the strategies that are imposed on them, and the underpayment that they face because the powerful take more of the money.

This study showed that both groups of English teachers are both satisfied and dissatisfied with their jobs. Dissatisfaction is due to the rules and regulations that they do not believe in but they have to follow because they have been defined by the government and the powerful to fulfill their interests. Satisfaction comes from the fact that they maintain positive relations with their students and feel useful in the society because of the contribution that they make to the society. Teachers regulate their negative emotions to fulfill their professional roles, to keep up with the society, and help students learn in a positive atmosphere more effectively.

### **Implications of the Study**

This study implies that power relations and power are felt and present everywhere. They can be incorporated into the teachers` professional roles in the form of the materials that they teach, the rules that they have to follow, the way that they have to feel and so on and so forth. The participants of the study reported that they feel dissatisfied a lot but because they do not think they can do anything about the situation they keep their complaints to themselves especially the ones related to social and governmental rules.

The study also showed that the individual feelings and the social relations were the main source of satisfaction among the teachers when they came to feel personally satisfied with their jobs because of the success that their students achieved and the respect that they show them. However, the work settings, rules, regulations, and underpayment which are all brought about by the powerful and government were the main source of dissatisfaction.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Considering the fact that we are faced with dearth of research on teacher emotions from a post-Structuralist point of view in the Iranian ELT context, the researcher invites ELT researchers, stakeholders, and practitioners to change their views on teacher emotions and show their care for this important fact in the teacher training courses that they offer the novice and pre-service teachers.

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