Construction of Iranian TEFL Doctoral Candidates' Scholarly Position during Writing for Publication

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate how doctoral candidates are positioned by journal editors and reviewers and how they establish their own position while attempting to get published, as well as the challenges and opportunities they confront throughout this process. Data were gathered from two doctoral candidates at a public university employing a mixed-methods conversion design whose qualitative phase was a multiple case study. In-depth interviews, metalinguistic commentary, and document analysis were used to track the positioning patterns. Data analysis utilizing the Appraisal model revealed that doctoral candidates were perceived as novice researchers by journal editors and reviewers. In addition, doctoral candidates' own positioning gradually shifted from being novice and intolerant researchers to being independent and tolerant ones. Moreover, the findings revealed that doctoral candidates face different challenges during the process of writing for publication, which makes this process more difficult for them. Based on the interviews, different requirements from different journals, obligations, limited sources of help, and lack of experience were among the most important challenges the participants had to deal with. On the other hand, they mentioned that publication provided them with the chance of expressing themselves and having their own voice, which could be considered as an opportunity in this process.

Academic discourse socialization, which is a developing subfield of language socialization (Duff & Hornberger, 2008; Duff & Talmy, 2011; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2012),

Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	**2**
	Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

refers to the process by which newcomers and novices learn about academic procedures and values in their fields (Kobayashi et al., 2017). Being dynamic and multimodal, this process is contingent upon and influenced by several social and cultural factors from both macro and micro-contexts (Duff, 2010; Qaleshahzari et al., 2020). More specifically, it is concerned with understanding the processes by which newcomers pick up a particular community's conventions and norms including its academic discourse (Fazel, 2018; Rezvani & Mansouri, 2013). According to Casanave (2002), "academic discourse is a 'second' language to everyone" as it is "full of terminology (necessary), jargon (needless and pretentious), formal turns of phrases, and unfamiliar research methods, theories, and philosophical stances" (p. 23). As a result, understanding and internalizing the use of academic discourse in the disciplines is difficult, regardless of linguistic background, for both English L1 and English as an additional language (EAL) speakers, as it is influenced by individual, social, cultural, political, and linguistic factors (Prior, 1998; Qaleshahzari et al., 2020).

Through academic discourse socialization, novices are gradually introduced into the academic discourses which are associated with expert researchers and therefore, socio-culturally valued in a discourse community (Duff, 2010). Furthermore, the fact that socialization, and by extension academic discourse socialization, addresses questions of power and agency as well as dominant ideologies and "identities made available to learners and whether they are taken up or contested" makes it a powerful explanatory framework for doing research (Duff & Talmy, 2011, p. 105). Given these perspectives, for novice researchers, engaging in the paper publication could be an attempt to socialize into the discourse community of more experienced researchers (Fazel, 2018).

Besides, in universities, publishing is considered a criterion against which academic advancement and research funding are determined, and personal and institutional success is assessed (Kamler, 2008). When research findings are not made public, there are fewer opportunities for professional dialogue and awareness building that can move a field forward. Many countries have introduced policies requiring quality publications from academics for academic promotion purposes and also from graduate students as a prerequisite for their graduation (Braine, 2005; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Duzsak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Li, 2007). As a result, as Uysal (2012) rightly stated, academics in different parts of the world are under considerable pressure to publish globally in order to find a job, get a promotion, share their experiences with colleagues throughout the world, and contribute to their field by advancing and disseminating scientific knowledge.

One of the most important aspects of writing for publication is students' perceptions of their own position. Students have a difficult time transitioning from the position of a student to that of an autonomous researcher (Aitchison et al., 2012). Because of the difficulties of this role shift, doctorate students struggle to publish because they do not present themselves as credible researchers with anything substantial to add to their academic or professional domains in their work (Kamler & Thomson, 2008). Furthermore, they struggle to criticize and participate in the discourses of established

Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ)
(Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills)
42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23

3

Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

academics in their disciplines (Lee & Aitchison, 2009), and these difficulties appear to hinder their ability to publish.

All in all, novice scholars are being encouraged to publish both throughout their enrollment as university students and after graduation. Publishing articles in quality journals has become a criterion against which their scholarly identity and membership in an academic community are determined. In this line, the role of learners' agency in socialization cannot be neglected. From the standpoint of socialization, the agency is described as an individual's ability to make decisions, accept responsibility, self-regulate, and thus follow their goals, thereby resulting in social or personal change (Duff, 2012). The interaction between agency and socialization is, in reality, bidirectional and socially determined (Duff & Doherty, 2015); learners' level of agency can influence their positioning and the way they are positioned, and the construction of their identities. On the other hand, writing for publication is often a long and laborious process full of challenges, especially for inexperienced writers. Patience, determination, and perseverance are needed to successfully manage this process (Belcher, 2007; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Flowerdew, 2000; Li, 2005).

That being said, the present study was an attempt to look into the writing-for-publication process of Iranian TEFL doctoral candidates who are new to the field. That is, the way editors' and reviewers' feedback might have influenced their academic (re)positioning as well as the way they position themselves during this process were investigated. In addition, the challenges and opportunities that they experience as novice researchers were also examined. To these aims, the study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. In what ways are Iranian TEFL doctoral candidates positioned by journal editors and reviewers, and how do they, in turn, position themselves and their interlocutors (i.e., journal editors and reviewers)?
2. What challenges and opportunities do they experience as novice researchers during the process of publication?

Literature Review

During the last few decades, examining writing-for-publication practices of researchers, especially novices, has attracted the attention of a surging number of scholars (Abdi et al., 2019; Cho, 2004; Fazel, 2018; Habibie, 2016; Ho, 2017; Li 2005, 2006a, 2006b, and 2007; Rezvani & Mansouri, 2013). The contract extension, tenure, and advancement in academia are all dependent on academics' ability to publish. Publications are increasingly being used as a benchmark for academic promotion and competitive research grants, as well as to evaluate personal and institutional achievement in universities. Getting published in indexed journals is usually a long and difficult process and is even much more complicated and demanding for those with no prior experience and those who have had no formal training in writing of any sort (Cargill & O'Connor, 2006; Cheng, 2006).

| Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ)
(Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills)
42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23 | **4**
Zahra Alimorad |

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

Gosden's (1995) study was the first and leading project in this area which focused on the textual revisions seven Japanese doctoral students in sciences made to their articles. The researcher analyzed the revisions made between drafts which led up to the publication of their seven articles. He used a systemic functional linguistics analysis and the findings indicated that rhetorical revisions accounted for 61% of the revisions. In addition, the results showed that the bulk of the redrafting process involved textual changes "towards satisfying the perceived target rhetorical goals of the scientific RA [Research Article] genre" (p. 52). Although Gosden focused on textual revisions made and ranked them based on their types, he did not take into account other possible aspects or challenges which might have influenced the process of publication.

Contrary to Gosden (1995), Nam and Beckett (2011), attempting to take account of the social aspects, looked into access to and use of technical and social tools by five Korean ESL graduate students as they socialized into American academic writing discourse. Interviews were used to gather data for the analysis over a four-month period. The findings revealed that integrating into American academic writing discourse was challenging, exhausting, and disempowering, as well as limited by a lack of resource coordination. Further, the participants remained peripheral passive consumers of university recourses like the writing center, an ESL curriculum, and study courses designed to assist them.

Seloni (2012) also examined in-class and out-of-class writing habits and socialization of six multilingual freshman Ph.D. students in the United States. The participants were all English L2 speakers, with some citing English as a third or fourth language. The researcher noted the resistance and difficulty some of her students encountered in establishing hybrid models of literacy practices through dialogic experiences in both formal and informal classroom environments as well as in more informal situations and academic support groups outside the classroom where they could reflect on and discuss expected academic literacy practices.

Anderson (2016) investigated the academic discourse socialization of seven foreign Chinese Ph.D. students at a major Canadian research university in the faculties of arts and education. The different sources of socialization and their consequences in terms of the students' academic trajectories were explored using a multiple-case study approach. The key data sources were semi-structured interviews performed at the beginning and conclusion of the study period, narratives created by each participant tracking their academic writing experiences, and academic articles that had been willingly provided by the participants with various levels and types of written comments from the reviewers. Results revealed that in some cases, students were given inadequate or unfavorable academic help, which resulted in missed opportunities to develop academic language and literacy practices, as well as subsequent socialization into discourses and societies. However, students who were talented and highly motivated could manage feedback admirably, identify their own areas of weakness, and display resiliency in achieving their self-defined goals. Anderson (2016) concluded that such accounts of success and failure,

Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ)
(Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills)
42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23

5

Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

as well as the socialization that occurred or did not, are pedagogically and theoretically significant in assessing best practices in doctoral education.

In a similar line, Ho (2017) tried to investigate the writing-for-publication processes of 19 English Taiwanese Ph.D. students. Results of the study showed that when advisory advice and support were available and adequate, they could greatly assist the students in coping with issues in the process. The majority of the participants made substantial efforts to learn to write for publication and manage the academic publication process without relying much on their supervisors.

In another study, Fazel (2018) investigated how two native-English speakers and two EAL doctoral students attempted to publish their papers in scholarly journals. The researcher also wanted to uncover the obstacles that the participants encountered and the methods they used to publish their articles. Moreover, he interviewed 27 journal editors to learn about their perceptions of the key obstacles that novice scholars face while attempting to publish in academic journals. Results of his study suggested, besides learning how to write academically, inexperienced scholars must also learn how to manage the publishing process, including how to interact with journal reviewers and editors.

More recently, Yu and Jiang (2022) evaluated the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive responses of two Ph.D. students to reviewers' comments on their manuscripts. The results of this study demonstrated the intricate and dynamic interconnections between the two students' affective, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. It was also found that while the nature of feedback and the researcher experience primarily constructed novice researchers' affective engagement with reviewer feedback, inconsistencies were observed between the affective and behavioral dimensions of engagement because the students had to apply reviewer comments under the pressure of academic publishing.

In another recent study, Geng and Yu (2022) analyzed 16 doctorate students' emotional expressions throughout academic writing contexts. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and the Critical Incident Technique. Results indicated that among the 65 instances of distinct emotions, worry, perplexity, and annoyance were the most often reported negative emotional states. The participants did, however, also feel gratefulness, inspiration, and happiness which were positive. The study identified 13 specific techniques used by doctoral students to control and soothe their emotions in feedback situations. These techniques fell into four major categories of emotion-regulation strategies; that is, task-related regulation, cognitive change, co-regulation, and attention deployment.

Overall, it appears that although previous studies have tried to investigate issues in socialization and positioning of novice scholars into scholarly roles around the globe, a general look at surveys and current theoretical trends carried out on this issue reveals that still, there are gaps concerning this subject. More specifically, just a few studies have ever addressed this important issue around the world (e.g., Fazel 2018; Ho, 2017). Moreover, too little mixed-methods research (Fazel, 2018; Habibie, 2016; Ho, 2017; Li, 2005) has been conducted on the topic investigating the issue in detail although mixed methods can

provide a more comprehensive picture than solo quantitative or qualitative research (Ary et al., 2019) because they incorporate the strengths of both methodologies. Further, compared to previous research, the context of the present study is unique given the sanctions leveled against Iran and the resulting restrictions researchers face regarding access to resources and networking with their colleagues in other parts of the world (Riazi as cited in Maniati & Jalilifar, 2018), which may affect their publication processes. Finally, the role of journal editors and reviewers as one of the main stakeholders has not been sufficiently investigated. That being so, the present research is an attempt to fill the above-mentioned gaps in previous studies.

Method

Design

Having been conducted between June 2021 and April 2022, this study enjoyed a mixed-methods conversion design with a multiple-case study acting as the qualitative phase. Mixed-methods research incorporates components of qualitative and quantitative research procedures toward the general goals of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Ary et al., 2019). Concerning the conversion design, in this study, qualitative data were coded and quantified in an attempt to add extra discoveries to the results. Further, a multiple-case study was chosen as the qualitative phase to give " a thick description of a complex social issue embedded within a cultural context" because it has the potential to produce "rich and in-depth insights that no other method can yield" (Yin, 2009, p. 155).

Participants

The participants of the present study were two doctoral candidates of TEFL at a public university in Iran. The candidates were selected using criterion sampling which is a kind of purposeful sampling procedure (Ary et al., 2019). The criteria were to: (a) be enrolled as full-time Ph.D. students at a public university, (b) have past attempts in writing for scholarly publication in English, and (c) be planning to write for publication as a prerequisite to get permission for defending their dissertation within the timeframe of the study. To protect their identities, they were invited to adopt pseudonyms for themselves at the outset of the research.

Alix

Alix, who was 31 years old at the time of this study, was a Ph.D. candidate in his fifth year at that public university. He had been working on his Ph.D. dissertation for two years before he tried to publish his paper. He was trying to get published in a high-quality journal. He benefited from the supervision of a distinguished professor in the department. He had previously published a paper in an international journal.

Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	**7** **Zahra Alimorad**

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

Maria

Maria was 29 years old and in her fourth year at the university under investigation. She was also working on her Ph.D. dissertation for one and a half years before attempting to publish her article. She was attempting to get published in a high-quality journal under the guidance of her distinguished supervisor. She had already experienced an unsuccessful attempt while trying to get published since her previous paper submitted for publication had been rejected.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

The study employed in-depth interviews and metalinguistic commentary to collect data from doctoral candidates and document analysis to analyze journal editors' and reviewers' comments.

In-Depth Interviews and Metalinguistic Commentary

Interviews in the present study were semi-structured so that the researchers could have the flexibility needed for initial and following questions arising in the course of the interviews (Denscombe, 2010). Given that the participants were doctoral candidates of TEFL, they were envisaged to be able to speak and understand English well. Therefore, the interviews were conducted in English and then, audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Each interview lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. Interview questions were drawn from previous literature (e.g., Cho, 2004; Fazel, 2018; Habibie, 2016; Ho, 2017). The first interview was conducted at the outset of the study and before paper submission for publication to uncover their feelings, attitudes, and perceptions beforehand. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the interviews were done virtually or on the phone.

Regarding metalinguistic commentary, in each interview session, except for the first one, the participants were also provided with some of the reviewers' and editors' comments on their submitted manuscripts and they were asked to talk about those comments and express their feelings when seeing them for the first time (see the appendix). Because the number of comments on different manuscripts for each participant varied, the duration of the interviews was different for each interview session. Overall, Maria was interviewed four times and Alix three times before they could publish their papers because they received four and three revision requests from the journals before their manuscripts were accepted for publication, respectively. After each request for revision, they were interviewed and asked to express their feelings and emotions while trying to respond to the reviewers.

Document Analysis

The participating doctoral candidates were asked to share with the researchers editors and reviewers' comments on their manuscripts submitted for publication as well as the emails sent to and received from them so that they could have deeper insights into their process of positioning during the publication process.

Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	8 Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

Data Analysis

Given that the study was longitudinal in nature, data collection and analysis were carried out in a continuous, recursive, and simultaneous manner (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The analysis was conducted in broad agreement with systemic functional linguistics (SFL; Halliday, 1994) and, more specifically, in compliance with the principles of the appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005).

Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a linguistic methodology pioneered by Halliday (1985). While many contemporary linguistic theories focus on language as a mental activity, SFL is closely linked to sociology in that it investigates how language is utilized in social contexts to achieve certain goals. It offers ways to explore meaning in language and relate language use to its social context. Halliday (1994) further described how language simultaneously achieves three functions in constructing meaning. While the ideational metafunction constructs ideas and experiences, the interpersonal one enacts social roles and power dynamics, and the textual one manages the flow of information to make extended discourse coherent and cohesive. Appraisal framework, which was developed under the interpersonal metafunction of SFL, is commonly used to investigate evaluative interpersonal language where opinions and emotions are communicated (Abdi et al., 2019; Martin & White, 2005; Stewart, 2015).

The Appraisal Theory

As an extension of SFL (Martin, 1992), Appraisal Theory (AT) is a particular approach to describing and explaining the way "language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positioning and relationships" (White, 2001, p. 1). Martin and Rose (2007) describe appraisal as an evaluation framework that considers the types of behaviors that are negotiated in a document, the way feelings are expressed, and readers are aligned.

AT consists of three parts: Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement (Figure 1). The term attitude refers to statements that can be interpreted as indicating whether or not an individual, object, circumstance, behavior, event, or state of affairs should be perceived positively or negatively (White, 2001). Attitude is concerned with our emotions, including emotional responses, behavioral decisions, and item evaluations. Graduation is concerned with the phenomenon of grading, in which emotions are intensified and distinctions are blurred (Martin & White, 2005). As White (2001) put it,

> Graduation is concerned with gradability. For attitude, since the resources are inherently gradable, graduation has to do with adjusting the degree of an evaluation – how strong or weak the feeling is. This kind of graduation is called 'force'; realizations include intensification, comparative and superlative morphology, repetition, and various graphological and phonological features. (p. 37)

	Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	**9** **Zahra Alimorad**

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

Engagement refers to the language resources used by speakers/writers to take a position on the value perspectives mentioned in the text and those they debate (Martin & White, 2005). Engagement encompasses two subsystems: monoglossic and heteroglossic. Propositions that "are construed as having either no alternatives or challenges at all or no alternatives or challenges which need to be acknowledged or engaged within the current communicative context" (White & Sano, 2006, p. 192) are considered monoglossic. On the other hand, all formulations that portray the speaker as someone who engages with other voices and viewpoints are labeled as heteroglossic (White & Sano, 2006).
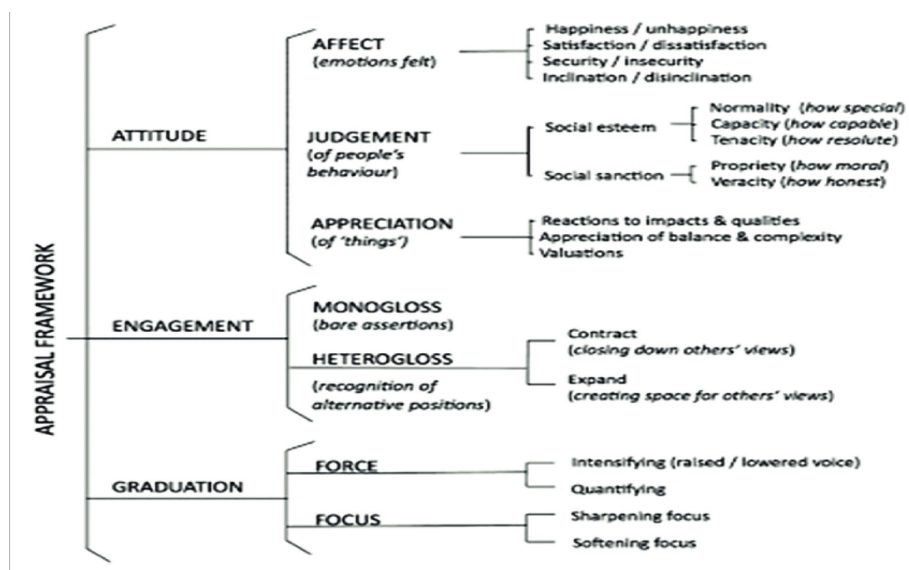

Figure 1. Appraisal Model (Martin & White, 2005)

The procedure

By applying the AT framework, the data were analyzed iteratively from the outset of the data collection to investigate the way the participants were (re)positioned during the process of writing for publication. References to each AT dimension were investigated and afterward statistically and qualitatively analyzed (Martin & White, 2005). With respect to the former, the frequencies and percentages of each AT type were computed while in terms of the latter, all the categories were interpreted vis-à-vis other data sources and analysis. The UAM Corpus Tool was used to analyze the data according to AT categories. This software is specially built for linguistic analysis in SFL or related subjects, with unique features for appraisal analysis incorporated (O'Donnell, 2008). To clarify how the coding was done, an example from the study interviews is given in this section:

"The reviewer who I should [Engagement: Entertain] say is so [Graduation: Force] uneducated [Attitude: Judgment] made me angry [Attitude: Affect]."

In the above example, "should" was coded as [Engagement: Entertain] since the authorial voice of the teller creates a dialogic relationship by using the modal "should". Although "should" denotes relationships of control and resistance, it still opens up the dialogic space to alternatives and indicates an obligation rather than a command (like imperative forms) (Martin & White, 2005). "So" was coded as [Graduation: Force] since it includes evaluations of the amount and degree of intensity. "Uneducated" was coded as [Attitude: Judgment] since it is considered a resource for assessing a person's behavior. Angry was coded as [Attitude: Affect] since it deals with the emotional reaction toward something or someone (Martin & White, 2005).

Further, interview data were closely analyzed to identify the challenges and opportunities perceived by the participants by employing a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique for analyzing qualitative data that involves looking through the data set to find recurring themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this regard, the researchers, first, read and reviewed interview transcriptions several times to get familiar with the data. Then, they tried to inductively extract recurrent themes, i.e., themes repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees.

Rigor of the Study

In this study, to ensure the credibility of the findings, several sources of data (i.e., data triangulation) including interviews, metalinguistic commentary, and documents were utilized. Further, to be reassured about the interpretive evidence, at the end of the data collection period, the researchers asked the participants to review the collected data and their analysis and interpretations for accuracy and conciseness. Through this member checking, the researchers demonstrated courtesy to the participants by letting them read and approve what had been written about them (Ary et al., 2019). Moreover, to ensure the reliability of the coding procedures, intra- and inter-coder agreement were calculated. While the index of the former was 91.7, that of the latter was 87.8, which seemed acceptable considering the purposes of the current study.

Ethical Considerations

Attempts were made to protect the participants' rights by obtaining their informed consent for partaking in the study and by keeping their names anonymous (Ary et al., 2019; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). To preserve confidentiality, they were issued codes when transcribing their data and to keep their identities disguised, they were asked to choose pseudonyms. Their permission to record the interviews was secured prior to the interviews, and they were offered the option of withdrawing from the study at any moment without any adverse consequences.

Results
I. The way doctoral candidates were positioned by editors and reviewers

In order to uncover how journal editors and reviewers positioned these two candidates, their emails, comments, and feedback on their submitted manuscripts were

Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ)
(Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills)
42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23

11

Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

analyzed by applying the AT framework and using the UAM software. The results of these analyses are displayed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1
AT Analysis of the Editor and Reviewers' Feedback on Maria's Manuscript

	Positive	Percentage	Negative	Percentage
Attitude	82	39.04	128	60.96
Engagement	66	45.20	80	54.80
Graduation	71	42.01	98	57.99

As is obviously observed in Table 1, the editor and reviewers' negative remarks on Maria's submitted manuscript are more than positive ones, regarding all three aspects. For example, in one of the emails, the editor mentioned "I am sad [Attitude: Affect] to inform you that although [Engagement: Disclaim] the topic of your submitted manuscript is promising [Attitude: Appreciation], it requires lots of major revisions [Graduation: Force]".

Analyzing the comments and feedback on the manuscript, the researchers found plenty of instances of Deny which is categorized as Engagement: Disclaim, "I'm not convinced with this part…", "You don't need to…", "Don't use…", "you did not provide…" etc. Moreover, the reviewer showed a negative Attitude: Appreciation, like "this part is weakly written", "this sentence is unreliable since it doesn't have any reference", and "this part is irrelevant" in different parts of Maria's manuscript. Given the higher number of negative remarks and comments on Maria's manuscripts, and asking for revisions four times, it could safely be implied that Maria was positioned as a novice researcher by the editor and reviewers of the journal where she submitted her manuscript.

Table 2
AT analysis of the Editor and Reviewers' Feedback on Alix's Manuscript

	Positive	Percentage	Negative	Percentage
Attitude	51	31.09	113	68.91
Engagement	49	40.83	71	59.17
Graduation	44	31.88	94	68.12

Similar to Maria's case, Alix received a higher number of negative remarks and comments compared to positive ones. Additionally, in their emails, the editor had uttered negative remarks like, "you should [Engagement: Entertain] justify the gaps since the current form is insignificant." [Attitude: Appreciation], "…many grammatical mistakes." [Graduation: Force], and "it is not [Engagement: Disclaim] based on the recent version of APA style."

Moreover, instances of negative appreciation, [Attitude: Appreciation] like "this part is unclear…", and "what is the use of this sentence? It's ineffective", and engagement, "obviously, this part needs revision" [Engagement: Proclaim], "…, but unnecessary."

[Engagement: Disclaim], and, "It <u>seems</u> <u>confusing</u> to me." [Engagement: Entertain and Attitude: Appreciation], were notable in the reviewer's comments.

Considering the large number of entertain resources like "It <u>should</u> be revised", "you <u>should</u> provide more evidence", and "<u>it is expected</u> to explain more", in addition to the fact that the negative remarks and comments outnumbered the positive ones, and asking for revisions for three times, it could safely be inferred that the reviewers had positioned Alix as a novice researcher, too.

II. The way doctoral candidates construct their own positions

Analysis of the two participants' interview data revealed the following results.

Maria:

Table 3

AT Analysis of Maria's Corpus

		Positive	Percentage	Negative	Percentage
Attitude	1st interview	21	24.70	64	75.30
	2nd interview	36	46.15	42	53.85
	3rd interview	53	65.43	28	34.57
	4th interview	75	79.78	19	20.22
Engagement	1st interview	16	32	34	68
	2nd interview	26	49.05	27	50.95
	3rd interview	50	74.62	17	25.37
	4th interview	59	86.76	9	13.23
Graduation	1st interview	34	29.31	82	70.68
	2nd interview	54	55.67	43	44.32
	3rd interview	62	63.26	36	36.73
	4th interview	81	79.41	21	20.58

In the first interview and after receiving the first feedback from journal reviewers, in Maria's speech, instances of criticism outnumber those of praise: "the reviewer is <u>so</u> [Graduation: Force] <u>picky</u> [Attitude: Judgment]. It <u>was not</u> [Engagement: Disclaim] <u>necessary</u> [Attitude: Appreciation] to write a comment about this part <u>unless</u> [Engagement: Disclaim] <u>he or she wanted to say that I am the reviewer and I have the power</u>" [Attitude: Judgment]. Later, she went too far with her harsh comment: "Oh, I <u>think</u> [Engagement: Entertain] this reviewer <u>is not</u> [Engagement: Disclaim] <u>professional</u> [Attitude: Judgment] at all".

Maria's use of negative judgments and remarks spread all over her first interview. These negative comments which were explicit were often coded as either [Focus: Sharpen] or [Force: Intensified]: so peaky, very careless, lots of mistakes, etc. In the first interview, Maria was so harsh with regard to her own remarks and barely accepted the reviewer's comments, most likely because of being novice and intolerant. But as it is

obvious in the table, through the process of publication and in the next interviews, positive and insightful comments replaced early harsh and emotional ones, which indicates how she positioned herself as a more independent and tolerant scholar: "Well, although [Engagement: Disclaim] I don't [Engagement: Disclaim] like it [Attitude: Appreciation], I think [Engagement: Entertain] the reviewer is true" [Attitude: Judgment] (the second interview). Or, "I feel happy [Attitude: Affect] that my paper is getting better by the reviewers' comments. They are professional [Attitude: Judgment]" (the last interview). Figure below shows clearly how Maria's negative comments decreased from the first interview, 180, to the last one, 49, through the process of publication.
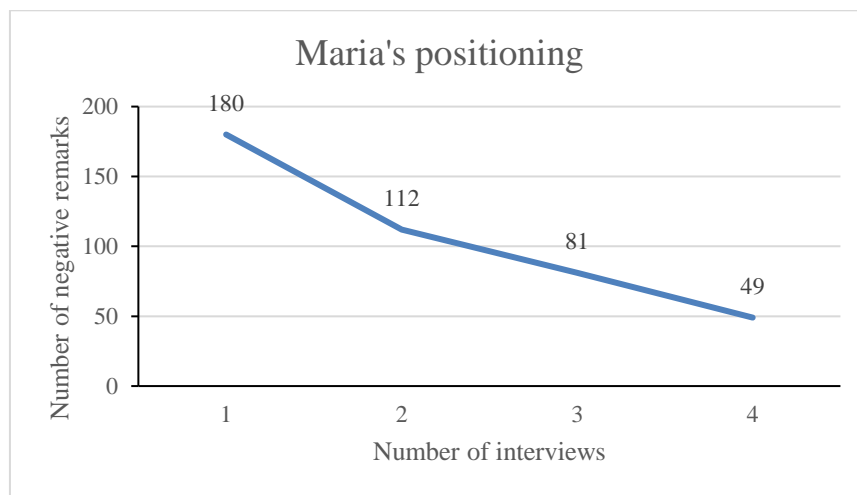

Figure 2. Maria's Positioning through the Process of Publication

Alix:

Table 4

AT analysis of Alix's Corpus

		Positive	Percentage	Negative	Percentage
Attitude	1st interview	16	29.09	39	70.91
	2nd interview	33	57.89	24	42.11
	3rd interview	47	77.04	14	22.96
Engagement	1st interview	11	29.72	26	70.28
	2nd interview	27	57.44	20	42.56
	3rd interview	44	78.57	12	21.43
Graduation	1st interview	39	35.45	71	64.55
	2nd interview	58	58.58	41	41.42
	3rd interview	73	70.87	30	29.13

Alix had 39 negative comments regarding Attitude in his first interview which turned to 14 in the last one. Similar to Maria's results, Alix turned from being critical and harsh in his first interview,

> Can you believe that? The reviewer who I <u>should</u> [Engagement: Entertain] say is <u>so</u> [Graduation: Force] <u>uneducated</u> [Attitude: Judgment] made me <u>angry</u> [Attitude: Affect]. You know better that this is <u>so</u> [Graduation: Force] <u>boring</u> [Attitude: Appreciation] and <u>useless</u> [Attitude: Appreciation] in the end (the first interview).

into being more patient in the last one,

> Well this is an <u>appropriate</u> comment [Attitude: Appreciation] which shows how <u>careful</u> [Attitude: Judgment] the reviewer was, even to details. Although [Engagement: Disclaim] the reviewer <u>could</u> [Engagement: Entertain] show some <u>flexibility</u> [Attitude: Judgment], I am <u>fine</u> [Attitude: Affect] with that because I know it is <u>valuable</u> [Attitude: Appreciation] and <u>helpful</u> [Attitude: Appreciation] to my final work.

Alix had 97 negative expressions regarding engagement and graduation in his first interview, "The reviewer <u>did not</u> [Engagement: Disclaim] need to mention this…", "This comment is <u>kind of</u> wrong…" [Graduation: Focus]. Results, however, show a gradual increase in his positive engagement and graduation in the next interviews, "I made a <u>small</u> [Graduation: Force] mistake here and the reviewer has mentioned it.", which indicates tolerance as reflected in 117 positive expressions he used in the last interview,

> I <u>believe</u> [Engagement: Entertain] this comment by the reviewer is <u>right</u> [Attitude: Appreciation]. This <u>shows that</u> [Engagement: Entertain] the reviewer is <u>very</u> [Graduation: Force] <u>careful</u> [Attitude: Judgment] about what he or she is doing. <u>In my view</u>, [Engagement: Entertain] this can help to increase the quality of my paper by revising these <u>small</u> [Graduation: Force] mistakes.

The following figure shows how Alix's negative comments decreased from the first interview, 136, to the last one, 56, through the process of publication.

	Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	**15** Zahra Alimorad

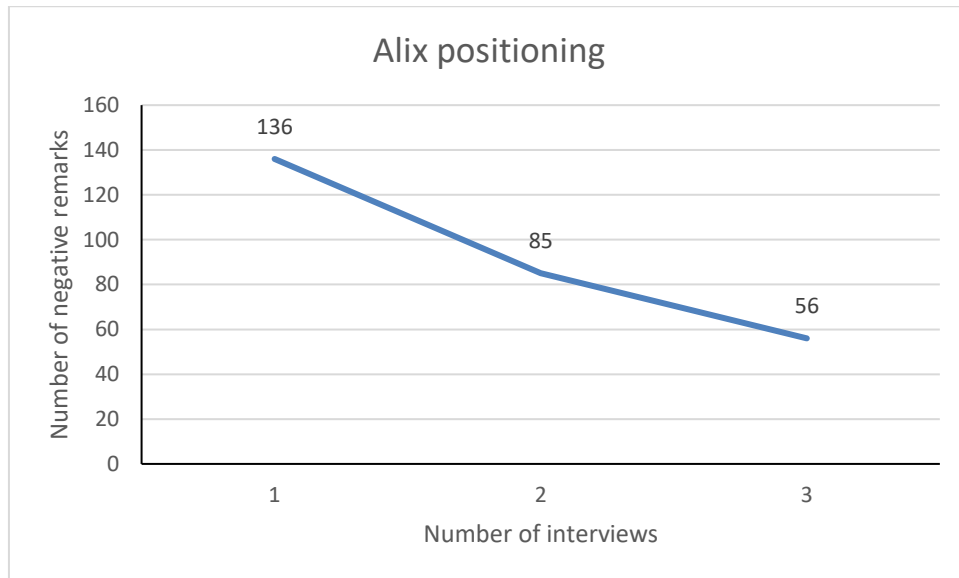CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

Figure 3. Alix's Positioning through the Process of Publication

III. Challenges and Opportunities during Writing for Publication

Following a thematic analysis of the interview data, the following themes emerged as the obstacles and possibilities experienced by the two Iranian Ph.D. candidates of TEFL when attempting to get published.

Different Journals, Different Requirements

One of the challenges that both participants referred to during the process of writing and getting published was the lack of consistency among different journals regarding their requirements for submission and publication. Alix complained a lot in this regard,

> Different journals require different word limits. So, this word limit interferes with the content of the article. What to put in the article or what not to put, what to keep or what to delete. Sometimes, it takes a lot of time and you should delete some important parts to fit the journal requirement. I don't want to be rejected because of word limitations.

In a similar vein, Maria mentioned,

> Different journals require different frameworks and sections. One might require the significance of the study to be included, the other one might not. One might require merging results and discussion into one section, the other might need it in two different sections. There is no universally fixed requirement that you can adjust yourself to.

TESL Quarterly	Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	16 Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

Obligation

Publishing an article is a prerequisite and obligation for doctoral students in Iran before they are allowed to defend their dissertation, and that was a point reiterated by the participants in their interviews, which acted as a serious challenge during the process of writing for publication. Maria described this point as,

> First of all, I want to publish my article because it's an obligation and as you know, we need to publish an article extracted from the thesis in order to be allowed to defend our thesis; so, this is the first reason I want to publish, which makes a stressful situation for me and all the Ph.D. candidates.

In another interview, Maria said,

> Well, I have to publish this paper as soon as possible since this is the prerequisite for my defense session. This puts me under lots of pressure and stress. Sometimes, I feel desperate and don't know what to do.

Limited Sources of Help

In response to a question regarding their sources of help, both participants referred to their supervisors as the only source of help during the process of writing for academic publication. In their opinion, the only person they could refer to is their supervisors whose already hectic schedule has reduced the possibility of offering detailed guidance to them, which they considered as a challenge during this process. Alix stated,

> Just my supervisor. She has a lot of experience dealing with these kinds of processes but I think I need more sources of help. Although she had lots of students and supervised lots of theses and dealt with lots of publication processes, having more people to help me can make this process easier and more efficient. She just can help and tell me what journal to select and how to select it or how to write the article. She is also the only person that revises my article and gives feedback on it.

Maria also said,

> Definitely, my professor, first and foremost. She always directs me to the right direction. I know some people may use like I don't know the internet and other sources, but I just can go to my professor. This might be a shortcoming for me that I only can receive help from my supervisor and no other sources.

Lack of Experience

Another challenge for the participants was the lack of enough experience regarding publication, which made the process more difficult and stressful for them. Alix explained,

> Lack of experience is another issue. I have not published a lot of articles so I don't have enough experience in this regard. How to write an article in a way that certainly be accepted. It is difficult because I am not sure what areas to focus on when I am preparing my article.

Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ)
(Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills)
42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23

17

Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

Publishing as a Way of Having a Voice

Both participants repeatedly referred to the point that they could express themselves by publishing their works in scholarly journals because their voices would be heard by other scholars and researchers around the world. As an example, Maria said,

> I really like to have my ideas heard. I guess when you have a paper published, it shows that someone else has found your idea interesting and worth spreading, especially when it gets published in a credible journal or something.

In this regard, Alix mentioned,

> Publishing an article would add to the literature, my voice will be heard, and it makes me feel good about myself because I can assume that my studies have been fruitful to the EFL community and others can build on my findings in order to publish their own articles.

Discussion

With respect to the first research question, given the high number of negative remarks and comments regarding attitude, engagement, and graduation on both participants' manuscripts, and asking for revisions three (Alix) and four (Maria) times, it could be argued that journal editors and reviewers positioned both doctoral candidates of the present study as novice researchers. These findings support the findings of Fazel's (2018) study in which journal editors and reviewers positioned the participants as inexperienced who needed to learn how to write academically, and how to manage the publishing process, including how to interact with journal reviewers and editors.

Despite numerous negative and direct attitude resources which were seen in Alix's and Maria's discourse in their first interview and after receiving the first feedback, they gradually positioned themselves as more independent and tolerant researchers and reacted to feedback more patiently. That is, they both showed more tolerance and were less judgmental regarding journal editors' and reviewers' comments. This finding supports that of Casanave (2002) who concluded that students adapted to varied teachers' levels of specific instruction in spelling out their expectations for individual writing projects. Casanave (2002) also demonstrated that the literacy-related behaviors in which students participated in the program all contributed to students' changing identities: from students to members of the TESOL professional community.

As mentioned earlier, the participants of the present study in their last interview showed their independent and tolerant positions regarding editors' and reviewers' comments. These results confirm the findings of Liu (2004) and contrast with those of Flowerdew (1999). Despite many rejections, the participants in the former study, unlike the individuals in the latter one, did not feel discriminated against because of their position. They saw rejection as a natural part of the process and valued the feedback from reviewers and editors, which they believed helped them improve their articles and have them published. In a similar vein, Anderson (2016) showed that students who were talented and highly motivated had the ability to manage feedback admirably, identify their

Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	**18** **Zahra Alimorad**

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

own areas of weakness, and display notable resiliency in achieving their self-defined goals while they were trying to get published.

In response to the second research question, results revealed that different challenges were perceived by doctoral candidates during the process of writing for publication. More specifically, limited sources of help and support and lack of experience were reported as challenges by these students during the publication process. This finding corroborates those of Wette and Furneaux (2018, p. 186) who discovered students' "unfamiliarity with aspects of source-based, critical, and writer-responsible writing, and self-perceived inadequacies regarding their knowledge of discipline-specific academic vocabulary, metadiscourse strategies, and the ability to compose concise, coherent texts" could be considered as significant challenges during this process.

The current study's findings regarding limited sources of help and support and a lack of experience are in line with those of Abdalla Salih et al. (2014) which indicated that limited access to reliable sources like experienced researchers and poor research skills are challenges that non-native English teachers face when attempting to get published in refereed journals. Other researchers (e.g., Canagarajah, 1996; Salager-Meyer, 2014) also reported a lack of research assistance as a possible challenge of getting published, which is supported by the findings of this study.

Furthermore, results indicated that considering paper publication a requirement for graduation put doctoral candidates under undue pressure. In a similar vein, Li (2007) reported that the institution where her study participants were enrolled implemented a policy requiring Ph.D. students to publish in order to graduate and compete with other prestigious universities which added to the stress and challenges on their way to getting published.

In contrast to the current study's findings, previous research has suggested that poor linguistic skills could be perceived as an additional source of challenge during this process and may even lead to paper rejection (Abdalla Salih et al., 2014; Coates et al., 2002; Maniati & Jalilifar, 2018). However, in this study, although there were comments from journal reviewers regarding linguistic issues, neither of the participants mentioned it as a potential challenge given that they were highly proficient graduate students, TEFL doctoral candidates.

Despite the mentioned challenges, the participants of the present study perceived to have the opportunity of having a voice. In this vein, Fazel (2018) demonstrated that the students in his study were fully aware that investing in academic publishing could bring about affordances such as the opportunity to participate in scholarly discussions in their own discipline. Participants in his study believed that such benefits would provide them with more symbolic capital and social power in the sense that they would be recognized in the scholarly community, which could lead to academic positions in the future. Flowerdew (2000), in contrast, reported a lack of authorial voice as an important problem, in addition to other challenges and problems, during the publishing process.

	Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	**19**
		Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

Conclusion

This study provides a glimpse of how journal editors and reviewers position doctoral candidates and how these candidates establish their own position while attempting to get published, as well as the challenges and opportunities they face throughout the process. The study adds to the growing body of literature on the socialization and positioning of novice scholars into scholarly publication, which has potential implications for graduate programs in general, and for Ph.D. student supervision, in particular. It emphasizes the need for developing research networks for graduate students where they could negotiate the navigation process with their peers and raise their understanding of the possible obstacles and opportunities in the writing-for-publication process.

Regarding journal editors and reviewers, one critical way they can assist novice scholars is by providing constructive feedback, which could assist them in revising satisfactorily. Equally important, editors and reviewers need to be more mindful of their linguistic choices while giving feedback. Too harsh comments could be counterproductive, thereby undermining emerging scholars' identity and investment.

The current study, like any other educational investigation, has some limitations and constraints. This study solely focused on doctorate candidates in TEFL at one public institution in Iran. Future research might also look into the experiences of freshly graduated Ph.D. students before employment, specifically how they seek to publish papers from their dissertations and the extent to which they are successful since it might be an important requirement for finding a job in academia.

Furthermore, while the study's extra perspective of journal editors and reviewers from their comments and feedback was a particular strength, other studies can use interviews in order to investigate their perspective in more detail. Besides, integrating other participant groups, notably supervisors, might have potentially expanded the existing findings, as they play important roles during this process.

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	Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ) (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills) 42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23	**22**
		Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

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Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (TESLQ)
(Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills)
42(2), Spring 2023, pp. 1-23

23

Zahra Alimorad

CONSTRUCTION OF IRANIAN TEFL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES' SCHOLARLY

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Appendix
Interview and metalinguistic commentary questions

1. Why do you want to publish?
2. Do you find writing for publication difficult?
3. What sources of help do you seek help from during this process of publication?
4. What specific challenges do you experience in the process of composing the drafts? Which sections of the text do you find most challenging? What have you learned over time?
5. How are you trying to deal with those challenges?
6. Did you find the editorial feedback helpful?
7. What do you think about this comment? Why?
8. How did you feel after seeing this comment? Why?
9. Do you agree with this comment? Why?