

The Role of Teaching Methodology and Teacher Personality in English Language Teaching

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Abstract

Frequently, the roles of teachers of English are thought to be limited to the transmission of content knowledge. The methodologies of teaching language have been classified into strategies such as direct methods and audio-visual methods. Many previous studies have left out motivation which is a strong teaching and learning strategy. This qualitative research depends largely on the critical analysis of acknowledged and established research works pertaining to the importance of teaching methodology and its relationship with the personality of a language teacher. Based on a pragmatic examination of the subject of the research, this study analyzed how teaching methodologies and personality traits help to produce more competent teachers of the English Language. More recently, in the last two decades, more researchers have studied pedagogies with the aim to understand how they help to achieve better motivation in students. This study also concentrated on the personality characteristics of teachers. In particular, it analyzed how teachers can make use of such nuances as personality traits in order to develop an efficient learner-centered approach to language teaching. The present research is an attempt to ascertain and elaborate that teaching methodology must correspond to the teacher's personality to ensure a successful language learning atmosphere. Conclusively, this study has found out that the significant personality traits which impact language teaching strategies are: being polite with students, equal and fair treatment of all students, giving positive feedback, avoiding sarcasm, and developing engaging and interesting class tasks.

Keywords: English language, teachers, teaching methodologies, teacher personality, teaching style

1. Introduction

1.1 Traditional and Modern Roles of Teachers in English Language Teaching

As far as English Language teaching to foreign students is important, one of the most important factors in this aspect is the teacher (Archana & Rani, 2017). To understand the pedagogy of teaching as a theoretical concept, it is required for English Language instructors to know their roles. Also important is the need to learn innovative knowledge and skills rather than just traditional knowledge taught in classrooms to intending teachers. In previous studies, it has been proved that many teachers are not willing to explore modern teaching methods (Trent, 2011). Rather, many think of these methods as being purely theoretical. A look at the traditional roles of teachers in English Language teaching points out that teachers are only expected to develop course materials, organize learning activities and monitor students. This is the traditional part. This role is not obsolete. However, the modern expectation is abstract. The part that has been paid the least attention are methodology, pedagogy and consequently, and motivation of students. Teaching methodology refers to the principles, pedagogy, and management techniques used to enable students' learning. Pedagogy is a much deeper concept which highlights students' needs, background, individual customs, and interests of students. Many more non-native English speakers use the English Language compared to what was obtainable three decades earlier. This is because English is now required for more diverse purposes (Renandya, 2012).

The primary role of teachers is to deliver instructions and content to students. The secondary role of teachers is to teach in a way that engages students and ensures optimal performance. In teaching English Language, it is essential to ensure that instructions given to students are clear. One key role played by the teacher is 'motivation.' Motivation plays a definitive role in learning, in general. Motivated learners are enthusiastic, goal-oriented, committed, persistent, and confident learners (Renandya, 2012). Both of these roles (traditional and new pedagogies) have to co-exist. While traditional roles are cognizant of sound educational principles, new

pedagogies introduce ‘motivation’ as a really important aspect of language teaching (Lamb, 2017). A teacher should be a motivator rather than a controller. On the traditional role continuum, a teacher is also a resource. The teacher is a resource in that he introduces a lesson, which was previously unknown to students. The teacher explains difficult grammar concepts and vocabulary. It is also the responsibility of the instructor to coordinate group activities. Classroom sociologists have found that incorporating humane activities into teaching activities enhances learning in all aspects (Fernandez, 2003).

Teachers’ personal traits are examined qualitatively rather than quantitatively. The main variables recognized in teacher personalities are linked to the ability to understand students’ learning problems, background knowledge of the students, and positive or negative attitude towards teaching (Hashim, Alam, & Yusoff, 2014). In many studies, the outcome of this variable or the dependent factor is the performance of students. Siefert, Kelly, and Payne (2017) also named the ability of students to be able to interact freely with their teachers as one of these characteristics. Most of all, many studies have emphasized that teachers need to combine both curricular knowledge and pedagogical abilities (Avargil, Herscovitz, & Dori, 2011). In a foreign English language class, it is important that the teacher has a prepared mindset to teach English language to students from varying backgrounds. According to Hashim, Alam et al. (2014), the following interpersonal traits: high levels of discipline, coping with diversity, and having a positive attitude are also important traits. Teachers are expected to adapt lesson contents into practical activities for students and judge intellectual and language development. All these improve students’ performance when carried out properly. Typically, students’ development and self-confidence are always influenced by teachers’ attitudes. The present study examines the roles of teachers in terms of the methodologies that they use in classrooms, and suggests how teachers have to change their personal whims and fancies with regard to teaching and develop a personality and choose a methodology that they are going to use in a language classroom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Who is a Good Teacher?

Holding a good degree does not necessarily associate with being a good teacher. Rather, many other qualities are pertinent. Quite necessarily, a good teacher needs to have personal effectiveness, interaction skills, and intercession skills, which are collectively known as people skills alongside traditional teaching skills. And to teach the English language in a non-native context, ‘global skills’ (Haines, 2019) is a necessity. This skill includes abilities of communication and collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, intercultural competence, and emotional self-regulation and wellbeing, which empower one to work in an international setting. It also includes cultural awareness and language and communication skills. The English Language has been continually taught in many more regions of the world. It is the role of stakeholders to influence the necessary competency level required for teachers in all aspects of teaching. Stakeholders in English Language teaching include students, administrators, and other teachers. It is the role of policymakers (administrators) to define the required competencies (Arkoudis & Tran, 2010). Miller (2012), in her research work, summarized the characteristics of a good teacher as possessing enthusiasm, creativeness, spurring students to learn, displaying a positive attitude towards teaching, having good content knowledge, and imparting equal treatment to all students. Beyond ‘good’ is ‘great’. A teacher can go from ‘good’ to ‘great’ by including personal human traits such as patience and tolerance. In all, possessing a diverse teaching experience is valuable.

2.2 A Cultural Context

Many studies have introduced a cultural context in teaching pedagogies. This is important because the personalities of individuals are influenced by cultural factors. All over the world, the educational setting is highly inspired by the West. This includes such nations as, The United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Germany, and New Zealand. The English Language is the predominant language in many of these nations. Some of these countries were responsible for the colonization of countries in many other parts of the world. In the Caucasian context, Inan (2014) found that there is a varying difference in teachers’ characteristics depending on the country or which part of Europe they were from. In her study, Inan listed Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, Austria, Spain, England, France, and Germany, as the Western countries that were discussed in her study.

2.3 Comparing the Personalities of Teachers in the West to Teachers in the East

Among the tools used to measure the characteristics of teachers is that designed by Oruç (2008), ‘The Questionnaire of the Good Teacher Characteristics’. The questionnaire is divided into three categories: ‘Background Knowledge’, ‘Professional Skills’ and ‘Personal Qualities’. In the same study carried out by Inan (2014), comparing the behavior of teachers in the East to those in the West, and fluency in different academic areas seem to be a top pick among students from the Eastern Europe region. This is classified under the Teacher

Background Knowledge group. Western European students, however, preferred observing proper class management skills in their teachers. This falls under the heading of professional skills. The significance of views from different cultures is important. The geographical locations of students' home countries have an influence on what they expect from their teachers. This reflects on the significance of practical knowledge of students in Eastern countries. Western countries, on the other hand, have been known to hold abstract values, such as motivation (and, in this case, class management skills) high.

The culture being referred to includes the following components: the culture of the nation, the culture of the academic discipline being taught, international education, and the host institution. A comparison of countries in the West to countries in the East on English Language studies is a major theme in comparative studies of English Language teaching. It is more common to observe this comparison between the countries in the West and the countries in the East. Interest in the comparison of cultures of teachers and teaching between the West and the East began in 1979. This comparison has majorly revealed that students in the West generally scored lower compared to students in Asian countries. Studying Fang and Gopinathan's (2009) text on this topic, students in the U.S. scored much lower compared to students from China, Japan, and Korea. These observations have led to other studies (in the context of the age gap and subject studies) being carried out.

3. Purpose of the Study

This research was carried out to examine the functions of teachers in the learning of English Language. More specifically, the study views the roles of teachers in terms of the methodologies used in classrooms. These methodologies have been used as a tool in classroom teaching and include:

- i. The direct method: This approach dates back to the 19th century. The teacher describes events in a particular setting. Thereby, getting the opportunity to teach the language content (vocabulary) in this setting. Along the line, the notions of grammar, phrases used by students, and syntax are corrected (Nagaraj, 2004) (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).
- ii. The audio-lingual method: This method was developed in America in the Forties, Fifties, and Sixties (Celce-Murcia, 2001). This method proves that language learning can be based on scientific disciplines such as linguistics and psychology. It focuses on the learner's ability to gain communicative skills required for everyday use. It particularly targets the skills of listening and speaking (Satya, 2008).
- iii. The communicative teaching method: Communicative Language teaching method is an approach to language teaching that underscores communication as both the means and the fundamental aim of language learning. This is a pedagogic intuition that arises from experience. This focuses on the development of competence in language learning. In this context, learners are required to practice continuously (Nagaraj, 2004).

Other researchers have been known to classify these pedagogies differently (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

While these methods are important, this research also focused on the human traits required by teachers in order to teach English Language effectively. These include:

- i. The teacher's attitude towards students—strict or generous
- ii. Teacher's accent and voice
- iii. Teacher's personality—cheerful or introverted
- iv. Leadership style—authoritative or compassionate
- v. And most of all—making use of interesting materials, clear explanations, and engaging tasks.

Along with all these, feedback is an important aspect of teaching (Matsumoto, 2011). Whatever strategies the teacher uses or personalities the teacher portrays influences students' motivation and, consequently, their performance. Learners are influenced by what they feel about their teacher's personality. The teacher is an important factor in language learning. The personality of the teacher as well as the learner always interplays in the dynamics of learning. Specifically, it is important that the teachers give positive feedbacks. Where students have not performed up to expectations, the teacher is expected to encourage students (Matsumoto, 2011).

4. Discussion

Students are the consumers of teachers, so their views are pertinent to determining a good teacher. Many scholars have decided that the opinions of students should be the deciding factor in identifying a successful teacher. The opinions of students vary on what they need to learn and how they expect to learn it. Students' different academic fields also have an influence in this category.

On the other end of the spectrum, it is important to determine if these abilities produce and reflect desired results. This, of course, can only be demonstrated by students' performance or quantitatively by students' average grades. To ensure improvement on a larger rather than individual scale, paying attention to how teachers make use of and develop content from seminars is also a good way of determining teachers' abilities. When studies on teachers' methodologies and pedagogies are carried out, the competencies of teachers are measured along the lines of culture, gender, age, and mode of study (Shah & Udgaonkar, 2018).

4.1 Effects of Teachers' Style and Personality on Students' Learning

Teaching style, here, refers to a chosen form of teaching by the teacher (Gilakjani, 2012). For a long period of time, the teaching style stays with the instructor. The preferred style of a teacher sheds light on teaching and learning processes. Teaching styles impact the scope of knowledge acquired by learners (Larenas, Moran, & Rivera, 2011). Teachers are constantly driven by improving teaching methodologies and pedagogies to encourage students to adapt and enhance their learning styles. The setting also almost often influences teaching styles. A variety of factors affect them. One such is a personality trait (Larenas et al., 2011). The preferred style of an instructor covers the personal approach to teaching, the behavior, and the media of teaching.

Teaching styles are primarily divided into two forms: teacher-centered and learner-centered (Alfassi, 2004). The main goal of a teacher-centered style is the transmission of information. In this setting, the transmission of information is solely by lecturing. The efficacy of this approach is shown by the ability of the learner to reproduce the information imparted. These are mainly demonstrated by good grades. Although this method would work well for theoretical knowledge, the same may not be applicable for practical knowledge (Smit, Brabander, & Martens, 2013). A learner-centered approach, on the other hand, appears to be more realistic. It encourages learners to participate in activities based on what they have learned (Alfassi, 2004). By obtaining valuable data about the success of students, an instructor positively encourages learning. More significantly, through this approach, the teacher is capable of outlining and discovering the reason for the success or failure of his methods.

Students are the object of measurement of the effectiveness (or non-effectiveness) of a teaching method (Barnes & Lock, 2010). To inspire and boost better academic performance, it is necessary to understand students' learning habits. The association between learning styles, personality traits, and academic success is undeniable (Siddiquei & Khalid, 2018). The interrelationship between personality characteristics, learning styles, and academic achievements has been covered by several research studies. Traits predict shifts in the personality growth and development of individuals (Kell, 2019). The style of learning is a behavior that demonstrates how a person learns and gets used to a subject. Every individual has a unique character when it comes to learning. Adopted modes of learning are affected by the instructional styles used by teachers. Students change their learning styles as the instructional style used in teaching changes. This helps them learn better. In the end, a teaching style determines the familiarity of a student with the subject.

Although a context understanding of the material is a must, still, the instructor is required to consider the complexities behind individual differences and use this to help the learners. Teachers are burdened with tasks—from the very simple to the complex. Mostly, in Western settings, many students expect their teachers to encourage, stimulate and inspire them (Arthur, 2011). This much is observed all around the world. Teachers are expected to understand the diversity present in each classroom, be it gender, culture, language abilities, or interest.

Results have also shown that successful methods of teaching are those that meet students' standards. This shows that teaching styles can help to interpret the effect of teachers on students' success (Opdenakker & Damme, 2006). Teachers who constantly assess their teaching methods continually develop their ability to interact with a wide range of students (Gomendio, 2017). It is important to establish a partnership focused on mutual respect and support. Hurtful comments or sarcasm are not tolerated. Nevertheless, it is essential that the teacher is able to hold his/her position as an authority (Pollard, Triggs, Broadfoot, McNess, & Osborn, 2003). Respect will most likely not be earned by the student being scared of the teacher revealing his nastier side.

Zhang, Fu, Li and He (2019), in their research work, explored the competence and effectiveness of teachers with regard to the emotional factors in teaching and their teaching styles. They collected the teaching portfolios and records of two hundred and thirty teachers from a number of higher educational institutions in mainland China. The researchers evaluated each teacher's emotions in teaching, teaching effectiveness, and style, respectively. Adaptation levels among students were found to greatly increase when such nuances as emotional factors were considered. This was so compared to students with whom only direct teaching style was used. Their results have influenced the researches on emotions in teaching, on teaching styles, and on teacher's 'academic self-efficacy'.

While this critique affects the importance of the positive relationship between teachers and students, it nevertheless notes that it is still a significant variable that leads to better attendance, spending more time studying, avoiding

problematic behavior among students, higher learning satisfaction, engagement, self-efficacy, and better grades (Zhang et al., 2019).

Normally, when students perform woefully, they expect negative feedback. The opposite is the norm for students who perform well. This, however, seems to be unbalanced. Rather, teachers should introduce platforms in which all students are treated equally regardless of their difficulties. More expectations from students to do well always almost tend to mean that those students invariably perform well (Daniels & Perry, 2003). Beyond the support-motivation continuum, the relationship between teachers and students go further to include formal and informal communication. Teachers who lead without so much authoritativeness produce better success results in students.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, no one basic form of teaching engages all students. No unique style of teaching helps to improve all learners at the same time. Helping students connect to content is key. One specific style of teaching is not enough. Instead, teachers are also encouraged to vary their methods of teaching and strategies for greater performance. Despite obstacles and barriers, students are required to work hard. They are expected to take delight in accomplishing their work. In all spheres, curiosity leads to learning. A variation in styles and methods of teaching ensures that students are not bored. Information adapted outside classroom learning means that students acquire a broad range of skills that ensure that they are not bored in the classroom. Overall, such styles (techniques) have been shown to be productive in classroom teaching. These include giving positive feedback to students, encouraging students—ensuring they believe they can do well, and giving students opportunities to prove themselves. Students should be assigned tasks that are not too challenging at each unique time frame—rather just ensuring that they are not only competent but challenged (Khandaghi & Farasat, 2011).

Although teaching methods and styles are important, the key prerequisite for continuous achievement is a learner-centered approach. A learner-centered strategy demonstrates sensitivity to individual differences between students, it involves learners in decision-making, it recognizes the developmental, personal, and relational needs of students (Pollard et al., 2003). Teachers and students are both influenced by the standards expected by the other. Thus, pragmatic and threadbare analysis of the fundamentally important researches undertaken on the function of teaching methodology, academic self-efficacy, and teacher personality in the English Language classrooms and an empirical observation on the meaningful relationship among the fields of educational psychology and Language teaching have provided enough evidence to support the usefulness of educational psychodrama in higher education. The conclusions and findings of the qualitative research will carry significant and far-reaching practical inferences and references for improving language teaching and university teacher training programs and can be utilized as a resource to encourage excellence in the language teaching-learning processes and positive student outcomes.

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