



ROLE OF ENGLISH TEACHER IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

English as a world language is becoming more and more important in our culture, thereby affecting the English classroom and its participants. The whole process of teaching English has been changing during the last decades and so have the students. They already start learning their first foreign language at a primary school level and teachers have to be flexible to enable students to learn. Thereby teachers not only educate students what English is about and how it works, but also the usage of it and particularly communication skills. Every student has a different ability when learning a second language. Some grasp it easily and develop a sympathy to it, others struggle and have difficulties which could lead to being demotivated and lack of interest. This leads to the question what an English teacher can and has to do, in order to teach students successfully. Nowadays teachers are supposed not only to educate, but also to create an suitable environment for learners.



Therefore it is necessary to perform many different roles in the classroom to fully achieve the best learning development. Roles which have its own characteristics, work differently and have various aims. First, this leads to the question "what a role actually is" and I will give a short definition of it. Afterwards the various roles will be introduced and then described in detail. What are the characteristics of a role? What does it mean to perform it? Why is it necessary to do so? These questions will be answered later on. Finally, I will give a conclusion and a brief overview about the portrayed roles.

KEYWORDS: *teaching English , characteristics , learning development.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20 years, national processes for research-quality assessment have been introduced or amended across Europe. Whatever the benefits of these systems might have brought to the organisation and quality of research most of them have contributed for a devaluing teaching and to a growing separation between the research worlds of the university and student learning. This study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of research for the quality of teaching and student learning and, through the collection of good practices and recommendations, argue for the integration of these indicators in research quality assessment tools and evaluation frameworks. The outcomes indicate the need to discuss the role of teaching, staff professional development, assessment criteria and the impact of research on graduate/ postgraduate student learning. Research assessment systems should value teaching and student learning through research and, at an institutional level, planning must support this link through the development of strategies based on a broader and context-driven conception of 'scholarship'.

In today's global world and with the help of modern technology, English has become the most common and dominant language spoken and used both at the national and international levels. It has been playing a major role in many sectors as medicine, engineering, politics, economics, international relations, and higher education in particular, the most important area where English is needed. It has also become a medium of instruction at universities in a large number of countries, a basic means of second language learning / teaching, an accessing source of modern knowledge and scientific research, and a means of global communication and earn living.

Higher education instruction in English in non-English speaking countries has become a reality in several countries and contexts. The policy towards the adoption of English as language of medium of instruction (EMI) has led to a situation in which students are faced with the need of coping with learning new content in a language different from their mother tongue and teaching staff needs to deliver their courses in English, which is not their first language in many cases. The present review article focuses on the studies concerning EMI in higher education, reporting on didactical strategies employed by the teaching staff and students to cope with the learning context. Studies were acquired via 'Web of Knowledge' building on the following inclusion criteria: they dealt with EMI in higher education, did not have language teaching as main focus and reported didactical strategies utilized by the teaching staffs and/or the students. From 417 articles, only 10 articles met all inclusion criteria. Seventeen additional articles could be identified by consulting the references from the first studies, resulting in 27 studies being reviewed. The literature reviews results in a collection of 38 different didactical strategies employed by teaching staffs and 23 by students.

The increasing demand for English language in higher education and research over the last decades is often assumed to be "a parallel and unavoidable process resulting in improved international academic communication worldwide". (Balan, 2011) Due to the importance of English as an international language whereby education and cultures are exchanged at all levels. It comprises a major tool for obtaining academic degrees programs.

The concept of Education

Education in its general sense is "a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through discussion, teaching, training, and / or research." (Wikipedia). In other words, Education is a process of enlightenment and empowerment through which individuals can develop their skills and abilities to developing and secure a better quality of human life. It aims at the growth of body, mind, intellect and soul. It also brings change in behavior and nurtures good qualities of citizenship like morality, honesty and humanity. And no one can deny that without education one can't perform successfully in any aspect of life. Education is normally obtained by learners themselves or by others guidance. Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. Education is obtained at different ages and levels from childhood up to the end of life. It is always a very important requirement that can't be dispensed with anytime

In other words, "Education should be a lifetime experience" (Webb, 2000), not restricted to age to overcome barriers. It inspires and is developed throughout students' interest in learning that goes on with them during their lives. Typical employers nowadays are hiring well educated and highly qualified graduates for academic posts and business jobs. E-learning, on the other hand, becomes nowadays an educational pattern that the present education system completely depends on. It concerns students' motivations, challenges and interests, on one hand, and their intellectual talents on the other to learn and search in an easiest and most up-to-date ways sidestepping with textbooks within which students are able to develop the interest of learning as a lifelong process.

English as a Tool for Obtaining Global Education

In the present time, English becomes the most important and vivid means of global communication which prevents our isolation from the world, and a window to the rapid progress

and development in all spheres of life. It is the most spread and commonly used language among different nations and individuals worldwide for cultural and educational exchange. In addition, the use of English language becomes now a must not only at the level of local but global education as well. Many countries long ago have started making use of English and have even been promoting the benefit its use for education receivers as globally useful language for further studies in future. (Balan, 2011) Hence, if students abroad study from a non-English medium, may have problems. Today, English has multipurpose social and educational services. It is used as medium of instruction in a large number of universities in the national and international world. Now, it has realized by all countries the necessity of providing education to its citizens in English (Balan, 2011). Every country now demands their governors, representatives, officials or professionals to draw their students and learners attention to the language which will be helpful both in improving the standard of one's living and will directly or indirectly help to enhance the country's economy. Because, if education is received in this medium then it will allow an individual to develop more professionally and will invite chances of gaining success for respecting the country in the fields of economy, politics, science and technology, arts, medicine etc.

Modern Technology and English Language Teaching & Learning

Simply, Technology could be defined as "the systematic application of scientific and other organized knowledge to practical tasks". (Moursund & Bielefeldt, 1999). It is implemented to facilitate peoples' life. The term in fact is loosely used to encompass various computer applications that are integrated into the learning process. It is a complex, dynamic, and ever-changing part of our society and the world of today. Computer applications are currently employed in the field of education to facilitate instruction and learning process. In other words, technology could be anything that helps us in our life, electronic and non-electronic. One of the advantages of modern technology is the use of Internet and software which has started a new era in all aspects of our lives, specifically in education. As a result, both English language teaching and learning are facilitated. Students now learn faster and easier than before by using technology. Computer based effective teaching and implementation of computational tools offer powerful, interesting and new ways of providing knowledge to students. Thus teaching in physical classroom becomes now a dominant form of delivering lectures, instead of the boring traditional teaching styles

Definition of the Term „Role“

Before describing the various teacher roles, it is important to explain briefly what a „role“ actually is. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1317) describes a role as: "The function or position that sb has or is expected to have in an organization, in society or in a relationship." Whether we realize it or not, we are acting in roles in many situations on a daily basis and while doing so we are confronted with expectations. Thereby, one can act in various roles: For example a manager acts in an authoritarian role at work, as a loving father at home and in his football team as a captain. These roles differ from each other in a way of choice: he can choose whether he wants to act as a manager or not, but his children will always perceive him as a father. He does not have to be the captain of his team but by fulfilling this role his team members expect him to act appropriately. The same happens when one chooses to be a teacher.

Roles of a Teacher

In the English classroom a teacher fulfills many roles with different aims. The most common thought of a role might be the fully organized classroom in which everything is controlled by the teacher (Controller). (Harmer 1991, 236) Also teachers are expected to assess their students by correcting them and giving feedback to their development and performance (Assessor). (Harmer 1991, 237) Another very important role is the one of the classroom manager. Good organization is a key factor in planning a syllabus, a lesson or just a particular task and helps to discipline the students Furthermore, the teacher acts as a resource by helping the students if necessary. He/She provides

additional information or simply talks to them providing the resource of spoken language. To increase the effectiveness of learning it is sometimes necessary to act with the students on the same level as a participant. Not only will the teacher gain an insight about the way students develop, but also give them the chance to interact with someone who has a much higher comprehension of the target language. A role not directly related to the behavior of the teacher is the investigator. The teacher analyzes the way of teaching, observes what is going on in the classroom and investigates the ways students learn, with the aim to develop his/her methods of teaching.

The last role is the role model which goes beyond the classroom influencing children throughout their whole life. Honesty, affection or fairness for example, are not only learned from parents but also from teachers at school. Therefore a teacher must be fully aware that his behavior in general has a huge impact on the personal development of his/her students. Additionally, it is important to mention that roles also differ in their influence on the lesson and whether they are fulfilled actively or rather passively. The following diagram shows an overview about the different roles, whether they can be seen as active or passive and how far they are related to each other:

Teacher as Controller

As I said the role as a controller, standing in front of the class, talking to the students and giving instructions, might be the most common role of a teacher. Harmer (1991, 236) points out that teachers, fulfilling this role, "[...] control not only what the students do, but also when they speak and what language they use." Everything what happens in the class is controlled by the teacher and is in his/her responsibility. He/She educates the students by introducing the target language, giving tasks, using repetitive drilling techniques and leading them through the content. Furthermore, the teacher has complete control when it comes to the pace of a lesson, which means that everyone in the class is taught on the same level. The way of leading a class depends on the character of the teacher. Every person has his/her own style of teaching. Some teachers are very open minded and do not hesitate being the centre of the lesson, whereas others prefer to let the students interact by themselves. (Harmer 1991, 236) Very authoritative persons will not have many problems with discipline but also a shy personality does not automatically mean chaos in class. Teachers who are popular among the pupils have less problems to keep them motivated and pass on knowledge. Wright (60) quotes that "[...] even a person who is not a born teacher can improve a lot by learning to smile, to be enthusiastic and patient, and to be constantly looking for new ways of getting his message across to the pupils." (Wright 60) What every "Controller" has in common is, that his/her language output is the central means for developing the students' comprehension and I will deal with this so called "teacher talk" in more detail later on. A crucial factor however is, that the teacher keeps in mind not to act too much. Students also need to have their own free time to learn the treated content which means that control has to be reduced sometimes. Otherwise one risks to hamper the student's progress. Therefore, too much talking is not recommendable as students do not get the chance to communicate by themselves.

English teacher responsibilities include:

- Planning course material and activities
- Assessing the students' progress (e.g. homework, exam grades, etc.)
- Building trusting relationships with students, parents, and other staff

Responsibilities

- Organize classroom lectures and coursework
- Prepare materials and activities
- Assign homework and interesting exercises
- Identify students with special requirements and create individualized plans
- Determine exam and assignment grades
- Provide feedback based on workload and classroom behavior
- Keep a record of students' attendance and grades

- Research new language teaching methods
- Manage classroom crises and resolve conflict
- Inform parents about their children's performance
- Collaborate with teaching staff and administrators to foster a good student experience

Higher education is becoming a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy. The imperative for countries to improve employment skills calls for quality teaching within educational institutions. National and transnational debates like the Bologna Process, direct state regulations or incentives, competition among private and state-owned institutions all prompt institutions to put quality teaching on their agenda. Moreover, national quality assurance agencies push for reflection on the subject, even if their influence is controversial. As higher education systems grow and diversify, society is increasingly concerned about the quality of programmes. Much attention is given to public assessments and international rankings of higher education institutions. However these comparisons tend to overemphasise research, using research performance as a yardstick of institutional value. If these processes fail to address the quality of teaching, it is in part because measuring teaching quality is challenging. 6. Institutions may implement evaluation mechanisms in order to identify and promote good teaching practices. The environment of higher education institutions can enhance the quality of teaching through various means. For example, a national policy run by the public authorities or recommendations issued by quality assurance agencies are likely to help university leaders to phase in a culture of quality that encompasses teaching.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION :

There are universal teacher characteristics considered important, such as reading and speaking proficiency, arousing students' interest in learning English, and building students' self-confidence , and motivation. However, other characteristics are group-specific. For example, the teachers and the students placed more weights on listening proficiency and grammatical proficiency, respectively, The male students reported having a good sense of humor as important to teaching more than the female students did, whereas the female students reported pronunciation proficiency, teaching how to learn English, and treating students fairly as important teacher characteristics. The largest differences between the high and low achievement students were found in speaking proficiency and being helpful to students in and outside the classroom in favor of the high achievement students and in teaching tailored to students' proficiency levels and learning styles in favor of their counterparts.. As findings of the present study indicate, male and female Iranian teachers and learners of English hold different views toward some characteristics of an effective English language teacher.

CONCLUSION:

Whatever the benefits of these systems might have brought to the organisation and quality of research most of them have contributed for a devaluing teaching and to a growing separation between the research worlds of the university and student learning. This study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of research for the quality of teaching and student learning and, through the collection of good practices and recommendations, argue for the integration of these indicators in research quality assessment tools and evaluation frameworks. The outcomes indicate the need to discuss the role of teaching, staff professional development, assessment criteria and the impact of research on graduate/ postgraduate student learning. Research assessment systems should value teaching and student learning through research and, at an institutional level, planning must support this link through the development of strategies based on a broader and context-driven conception of 'scholarship'. The policy towards the adoption of English as language of medium of instruction has led to a situation in which students are faced with the need of coping with learning new content in a language different from their mother tongue and teaching staff needs to deliver their courses in English, which is not their first language in many cases. For example, the teachers and the students placed more weights on listening proficiency and grammatical proficiency, respectively, The male students reported

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