



Teacher and His/Her Role in Teaching English

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Abstract

Teachers play a key role in the process of teaching. In this article it is tried to focus on some of the most important roles that the teacher of English language plays during the difficult process of teaching. The role of the teacher in class is important. In the class teachers are: leaders of the language, thinkers, administrators, surces experts, vigilants, material furnishers, organizers, performers, estimators, listeners and controllers. At the recent literature is posed the question of the ideal teacher, so what makes a good teacher? According to Medgyes P. All the teachers are extraordinary according to their ways and different from each other. According to him the concept of the ideal teacher does not fit to a single concept, because many things have to be taken into consideration. Another image of English teacher is the teacher who is expert of the English language. According to Whitaker the English teacher needs to own the subject and to make the students to follow willingly the subject. He not only should own the subject but he should also know how to explain it.

1. The Role of the Teacher in Process of Teaching

At the position of the teacher we will stop a little longer because many factors that influence in the process of teaching are related straightforward. For this issuea Hearn greaves comenting in a text of Huberman on the trait of professional career argues that: "teachers do not have simply work", they have personal and professional life too, so to understand the teacher is to understand the person that teacher is. To understand his role and his duty in the process of teaching, Woods also argues that "teaching is a matter of values". People teach because they believe in something. "They have an image of good society". According to Broughton mainly during a class of English teaching the teacher is involved in three process: presentation of a new material, practicing the knowledge that s knwn by the students and teasting.

At the recent literature is posed the question of the ideal teacher, so what makes a good teacher? According to Medgyes P. All the teachers are extraordinary according t their ways and different from each other. According to him the concept of the ideal teacher does not fit to a single concept, because many things have to be taken into consideration. For i.e is a good teacher someone who is fluent in the foreign language? Briten claims that owning very good English is a criteria for being a good teacher, and the person who is fluent in English will be professionally succesful. So in this regard it is a very useful claim that the English teachers have to improve themselves in this direction.

Even at the proces of teaching the rythm of learning the foreign language is not the same. Sometimes seems that students make good progress, and some other times the progress seems to be rather slow, or sometimes students need a longer time (days, weeks or months) before soemthing that they have learned really start to make sense for them. Although the teachers try to do teaching an organised and regular activity, learning remains something chaotic. Teachers of English have to admit it and help students to learn according to their pace. The role of the teacher in class is important. In the class teachers are: leaders of the language, thinkers, administrators, surces experts, vigilants, material furnishers, organizers, performers, estimators, listeners and controllers.

The importance of use of some of these roles may be more important than the use of some other roles. This depends mainly by the topic of the lesson, purposes of the class, content of the class, preferences of the students, strategies of the learning and preferences of the teachers themselves. Also at the end of the classes teachers make the assessments of the classes where they teach. They also assess their students with a test at the end of the term, or at the end of the course.

According to Conway and his colleagues four images of practice of teaching are identified:

1. Manager instructor
2. Person who cares
3. Expert
4. Citizen

The first image of the teacher is the image of the instructive manager. According to Westwood after the teacher has introduced the first part of teaching, he asks them to engage in activities that follow and allow them to work and apply what the teacher has demonstrated and explained. These activities may be different exercises, work sheets, or various works that the teacher himself may assign. He manages what is more important to the student and the way how the knowledge is delivered to them.

The second image is the figure of the teacher as a person who cares. The capable teacher is the one who assigns and evaluated the needs of the students to learn the foreign language and works to urge them with differentiated works and motivation. According to Westwood while students work, teacher start to move around in the class to see how they have understood the assignment, or identify any student who needs help or encouragement. According to him this is the stage when the teacher corrects any mistake and re-explains if it is necessary. A good teacher according to Westwood monitors closely the work of each student.

The third image of English teacher is the teacher who is expert of the English language. According to Whitaker the English teacher needs to own the subject and to make the students to follow willingly the subject. He not only should own the subject but he should also know how to explain it. He should be relentless with advices and suggestions for various sources of teaching. Lane considers the good knowledge of English as a fundamental characteristic of the good teacher. Britten also claims that owning good knowledge of English need to be a key criteria for hiring him in this position and a secure success in the teacher's later work.

The fourth but not the least image of the teacher is the image of teacher as a good example of the citizenship culture. He needs to be a good example for his students and show maturity in the process of teaching.

2. Pedagogy Abilities of the Teachers

There are four fields in which the good teachers express their abilities. These areas involve: presentation and explanation, giving feedback, students assessment and adjusting the differentiated lesson.

2.1 Presentation and explanation

Presentation of the information to the students, explaining and answering are three main activities that the teacher uses. Clarity in teaching is frequently the key quality that distinguishes a good teacher from the weak one. The expert teachers that have good results in their work are reported to have introduced the following features in their work:

1. Accurate presentation of the new assignment
2. Clear instructions
3. A wider multitude of topic explanation

Effective teaching like the formal teaching, requires clarity in presentation of the teacher. Poor explanation normally leaves the students confused. This lack of clarity could be due to the effective communication with the level of the language and abilities of the students, use of complex terminologies, failure in finding right analogies, or giving example outside of the meaning, not enough use of supportive materials, presentation of too many materials at the same time, not making clear the relationship or failure to find understanding.

Sotto 1994 believes that the clarity of teacher explaining depends on:

1. The good knowledge that he has for the subject
2. Evaluation for the topic as something that is taught for the first time
3. Stressing key ideas in what is learned
4. Explaining things in simple terms

A good explanation requires questions that are addressed to students to make sure that they make sense, also students have to be encouraged to ask the teacher during and after the explanation. Maybe the least helping question that a teacher can ask is "did you understand that?" because very few students would say that they did not understand that, especially those who have less self confidence or the weak ones. The teachers who try to reduce the failure of the students in class have to see closely the problems of clarity. One of the activities that a teacher can do in class is to record

the class in a tape and later could reflect the problems of explaining.

2.2 Giving feedback

Giving feedback is an important part of effective teaching and plays an important part in promotion of learning for both teacher centered method and student centered method. The researches have indicated that the teachers with high results in their classes make too many questions when they give instructions.

According to them asking question is done for this reason:

1. Facilitates the participation of the students
2. Focuses the attention on the key elements of the topic
3. Assesses the understanding of the student
4. Stimulates some different thinking of the students
5. Reviews the important content
6. Checks the group of the students and holds the attention

Some questions have to be important and straightforward that focuses to the fact and principles, some other can be more complicated ones that require more reflection, critical thinking and reasoning. An important aspect of giving the feedback is the time of waiting.

Teachers frequently ask from three to five questions in a minute during the presentation but they allow only one second for the students to respond, before they ask someone else or they respond themselves. When the teacher extend the time of answering in three or more seconds they will gain too many answers.

Some mistakes in giving feedback include:

1. Asking too many poor questions
2. Continuing asking even though students have shown that they have no knowledge about the subject
3. Continuing asking only the volunteer students
4. Failure in giving feedback on not accurate questions on incorrect ones.

In a study Good suggested that giving the feedback of the teachers was a factor that influenced passivity to the weak students. This was for two reasons. First is that the teachers have tendency to call weak students very rarely and the second reason is that they do not give them sufficient time to respond.

2.3 Students assessments

An important function in teaching is the students assessments by the teachers of foreign languages. The constructive comments by a teacher motivates the students and informs them that they are making progress and where they can focus more. The most valuable assessment comes immediately after the student has given a valuable answer or has completed a task. The assessment need to come in the form of "descriptive assessment" specifying why the assessment is done for i.e. "you described very well the use of the past tense in English" very frequently the correcting description requires teacher to explain again what is already taught before.

If this is possible then the teacher asks the students what they know about the topic then he may be focused where the confusion is. According to Kauchak and Eggen when the assessment is given it must be with positive emotional tone and not with anger and boredom. Students need to feel secure when they ask for help.

2.4 Adopting the differentiated lessons

The last component of the effective teaching is the response of the distinction of the differences between the students. The adaptive lesson is determined according to the features and needs of the students. Term differentiation is used in many countries determining the idea of adopting the lesson to adjust to the students abilities.

The most managing way of differentiation includes teaching the same curricula, changing the sources education activities, and the amount of support in accordance to the abilities of the students, whenever is possible to study the same topic in different way is considered as the most appropriate for any ambitious attempt to individualise the instruction, to decide on alternative courses or to share the students according to their abilities. The investigation of the class has showed that the effective teachers make great efforts to adapt the process of instruction. For i.e. the following tactics are observed during the class when the teachers are sensible for the distinction between students.

1. The teacher changes the method in accordance to the needs during the classes from the teacher centered

- method to the student centered method according to the needs and abilities of the students
2. Teacher simplifies and regroups instructions for some students
 3. Teacher places short terms goals for some students
 4. He monitors the work for some students
 5. He re-instructs for some students when he finds it necessary
 6. He accepts high quality work with books
 7. He gives assistance for students while they work
 8. He gives more descriptive assessment for some students
 9. He assesses more some students
 10. He assesses students in different ways
 11. He asks questions in different scales of complexity according to the abilities of the students
 12. He encourages the friends assistance
 13. He selects or creates alternative sources of materials

Sometime deliberately teachers may plan to prepare activities and differentiated assignments. Even rarer teacher may decide about differentiated home-works for capable students or more practical homework for those less capable. These strategies may be used rarer because they require considerable time and attempts by the teacher.

3. Elements of Teaching According to the Teachers

Jacobs suggests that teachers of English language consider eight key elements because of the influence that they have in the field of teaching and if these elements could have been used in an integrated way. These elements are chosen because they are necessary, are always in progress and are related to each other. According to Jacobs helping in the promotion, understanding and use of these eight elements teachers will be supplied with better uses of teaching sources. Naturally other elements of teaching and learning deserve attention too. These important elements are: 1. Encouraging the autonomy of students 2. Stressing the social way of learning, 3. Curricular integrity development, 4. Focus in meaning, 5. Diversity, 6. Extension of thinking abilities 7. Use of the alternative methods of assessment, 8. Promotion of teachers as co-learners.

4. Encouragement of the Autonomy of Students in Learning the Foreign Languages

Modern theories of acquisition stress the key role of the students at the process of education. Long time ago a special importance was dedicated to the teachers and materials, however now the attention is focused to the process of acquisition (styles of learning and strategies of acquisition) than to the teacher center method. On other words the center of attention in learning English as a foreign language has passed from the teacher and materials to the student.

This passage is known usually as the movement from teaching with the method teacher centered to the method student centered. The autonomy of the student is a key concept. Students have important responsibility to check their knowledge.

It has largely agreed on the conclusions of Csikszentmihalyi that the learning occurs when people do what they feel like an understanding job, and they feel motivated or they have the abilities to do that. In this context the classes may be taken as democratic practices but this would give us another rationale for the student centered method. This key concept is the hidden curricula (knowledge, values and belief that the school presents to the student) not from what is taught but from the process in which the actual relationship is developed. The problem is that schools and society talk about democracy but the practice does not reflect that because they are very autocratic. The students may not know how the democracy works at the student centered method or he may not insist for this if this right is denied.

To be autonomous then means that the students of the foreign languages have all the rights to have choices that what curricula may chose also at the same time they have to be responsible for their learning, and for the learning of those who interact with them. In the learning of the foreign language the autonomy of the student involves the awareness of their ways of learning such as their styles of learning and the strategies in such a way that they use their strong points in their work. When it is discussed about students' autonomy should be understood that the inner motivation plays an important role because autonomy of learning means that the teacher shouldn't hold all the burden of class management, with students who hold more responsibility for their acquisition in a method of student centered. Generally speaking when it is discussed about the autonomy of the student should be taken into account:

- Understand the knowledge, belief and needs of the students

- Help students to understand know and manipulate their weak and strong points
- Offer them as many choices as possible to check their acquisition
- Encourage the pleasure of learning in the process of acquisition
- To encourage the autonomy of students in such a way that they continue to learn long time after they have left the class and the schools
- All the above mentioned things must be taken into account when the new curricula is designed and implemented

However autonomy of students many times is misunderstood by leaving the students work on their own. However in the beginning teaching students to cooperate with his friends he may discover how to pass from the dependency by the teacher into individual work in his learning, so when we think about the students autonomy in general and student centered method of learning we see classes for learning the foreign language where students cooperate not only with the teacher but also with one another.

For example the use of small groups including friends of the class represents one of the tools of increasing the autonomy of the student. Also another tool of the implantation of the autonomy of the student is the use of an extended program for reading that may help students to become independent and to develop an assessment for the pleasure and knowledge that may be gained from reading in the foreign language encouraging them to make this as their custom. Self-assessment gives them another way to develop the autonomous acquisition.

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