



THE ROLE OF TEACHERS PERSONALITY AND METHODOLOGY IN ENGLISH

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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.

KEY WORDS: Roles, Teacher, Honesty, affection, fairness, kids, TLMS

INTRODUCTION

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.

Role 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 (Manager). (Müller-Hartmann 32)

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 (Resource). (Harmer 1991, 242)

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 (Participant). (Harmer 1991, 241)

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 (Investigator). (Harmer 1991, 242)

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. (Role Model) (Mathew)

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. (Harmer 1991, 235 / Müller-Hartmann 32) , whether they can be seen as active or passive and how far they are related to each other:

TEACHER AS CONTROLLER

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.

CONCLUSION

At the academic level, Education is "the knowledge of basic skills; academic, technical disciplines, citizenship and best processing that knowledge using inspiration, visionary ambitions, creativity, risk, and motivation". (Webb, 2000) To Webb, these skills are mainly depend on understanding the value of knowledge, best experienced and measured inside the class. As such, many super achievers, as Thomas Edison who never finished school, have succeeded because they knew how to research information for a selected project and best processing that knowledge to the service of humans' needs.

Thus, pleasing the teacher to get high grades in the exams is sufficient to create motivation for knowledge-processing skills, but rather how the latter is accompanied by a professional skill that fulfils life requirements. For instance, natural skills students intuitively have, if not measured by tests and students performance if not academically challenged, they don't have value by themselves. For what is exercised inside the class grows stronger, especially when the available information are processed by problem-solving procedure, the competition created among students to drilling, tasking, answering questions and trouble shooting.

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