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Characteristics of Effective English Language Teachers in the Light of Saudi Arabia's 2030 Vision

خصائص معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الفاعلين في ضوء رؤية المملكة العربية السعودية ٢٠٣٠

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Characteristics of Effective English Language Teachers in the Light of Saudi Arabia's 2030 Vision

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Abstract

This study explored the characteristics of effective English language teachers in Saudi Arabia in the light of Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision from the pre-service teachers› points of view.A survey descriptive approach was implemented using a questionnaire to collect the data. The participants were 50 female students studied in education factually in UQU for the second semester of the year 2017/2018. The findings indicatethat four main categories concerned with the technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills and personal qualities were considered highly effective and important characteristics of English language teachers that meet the Saudi Arabia 2030 vision in establishing positive outcomes in the field of education from pre- service teachers' perspective.

Keywords: teachers' characteristics, pre-service teachers, Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision.

خصائص معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الفاعلين في ضوء رؤية المملكة العربية السعودية ٢٠٣٠

د. عدوية طالب شواقفة

جامعة أم القرى – مكة المكرمة

الملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف خصائص معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الفعالين في المملكة العربية السعودية ضمن رؤية المملكة ٢٠٣٠ من وجهة نظر المعلمين قبل الخدمة. تم تطبيق المنهج الوصفي المسحي باستخدام الاستبانة لجمع بلغ عدد المشاركين في الدراسة ٥٠ طالبة من كلية التربية في جامعة أم القرى في الفصل الثاني من العام الدراسي ٢٠١٧/٢٠١٨. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الفئات ا ٔربع الرئيسية المعنية «بالمعرفة التقنية» و «المهارات التربوية» و«مهارات التعامل مع الآخرين» و «الصفات الشخصية» مع بنودها تعتبر خصائص فعالة ومهمة للغاية لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية والتي تلبي رؤية المملكة العربية السعودية ٢٠٣٠ في تحقيق نتائج إيجابية في هذا المجال من التعليم من وجهة نظر المعلمين قبل الخدمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: خصائص المعلمين، رؤية المملكة العربية السعودية ٢٠٣٠، معلمين قبل الخدمة.

Introduction

Teachers are the most vital factor in the teaching process, and policies that move toward teacher's adequacy lead to progressed learner outcomes. In a meta-analysis that concentrates on experimental studies of teacher's quality and capabilities, Rice (2003) found five wide categories of teacher's traits that contribute to teacher's quality: "(1) experience, (2) preparation programs and degrees, (3) sort of certification, (4) coursework taken in training for the profession, and (5) teachers' own test scores (p 51-52).

In their investigation of studies that examined the characteristics of effective teachers along with their relation to student efficiency, Wayne and Youngs (2003) also focused on teacher's quality. Like Rice, Wayne and Youngs examined the evaluations that teachers gained within the undergraduate institutions, their test scores, degrees plus the assignments, and certification status. They concluded that learners gain knowledge more from teachers who owned certain characteristics. Moreover, teachers vary significantly in their adequacy, but teachers who have and who have not distinct capabilities differ just a little.

Berry (2003) sets that as these teacher's virtues are without a doubt significant, they seem to have a solo concentration on subject matter knowledge. In addition, highly experienced teachers have to know how to organize as well as instruct their lessons in ways so as to guarantee varied learners can gain knowledge of those subjects. Teachers who are highly experienced don't only instruct well-designed, standard-based lessons; they also recognize how as well as why their students learn.

In the light of the SA vision, Ministry of Education has many strategic objectives which concentrate on improving all the education sectors to meet the future needs of the labor market. According to teachers' strategic objective (2), it aims to improve the recruitment, training and development of teachers. This goes along with vision 2030 objectives in establishing positive values and building independent personality for citizens. Moreover, it provides them with knowledge and skills to meet the future needs of the labor market. Therefore, the current study is designed to find out about characteristics of English language teachers to be considered highly effective and meet the SA2030 vision in establishing positive outcomes in the field of education from pre-service teachers' perceptions. Based on the results, training programs can be implemented to promote these characteristics among teachers in all regions.

Research Questions:

The current study aims to investigate the pre-service teachers' points of view in Umm-Al Qura University about the characteristics of an effective English language teacher in Saudi Arabia related and modified into four main categories concerned with the technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills and the personal qualities within Saudi Arabia vision 2030. The following research questions guide the study:

- What is the technical knowledge that effective English language teachers should have?

- What are the pedagogical skills effective teachers should have?

- What are the interpersonal skills effective English language

teachers should have?

- What are the personal qualities should effective English language teachers have?

Literature Review

Burton (2000) emphasizes that perfect teachers ought to have uniqueness, exchange, vital knowledge and professionalism. In his opinion, these merits take a part in effective instruction which can be classified into three major categories: professional knowledge or achievements, individual characteristics and teaching mode. Brown (2001) has offered his own idea of the characteristics of an effective language teacher; he divided these characteristics into four sub categories: functional knowledge, instructional skills, interaction skills and personal merits. Beishuize et al. (2001) proposed that teachers who take part in student-centered pursuits are different from the teachers   who function as a teacher-focused, and they take a main part in teacher's demonstration, the former are viewed as effective operators by students.

Koutsoulis (2003) distinguished 94 characteristics of effectual teachers by 25 high school students in Cyprus. These characteristics were classified into three categories as follows: characteristics that concentrate on human communication; others deal with teaching and production, and still others categorized the teacher's subject matter knowledge. One finding of this research was the students at various accomplishment levels comprehend teacher's efficiency in a different way. Students with low achieving level agreed more on human and communication characteristics than the students with high achieving level; on the other hand the

students with high achievement level approved more teaching and production characteristics than their partners did. Markley (2004) suggested that the role of ideal teachers cannot be undervaluing for enhanced learning particularly within the classroom. Recent research findings have concentrated upon two major characteristics of good teachers: personality and skilled ability.

With a sample of 169 teachers and 339 students in a high school in Korea, Park and Lee (2006), investigated the sample perceptions about the main characteristics of a successful English teacher. The data were collected by means of a self-survey questionnaire comprising three categories: English proficiency, educational knowledge, and socio-affective skills. In general, the teachers react to the three categories differently from the students. They are placing English proficiency as the highest, in contrast to the students who placed educational knowledge as the highest. Moreover the student subgroups grasped different views of effective teaching, the ones with high achieving level reported different characteristics than the students with low achieving level in educational knowledge and socio-affective skills. In addition, the male students illustrated different characteristics from the female students in socio-affective skills.

Huang (2010) outlined that, in English language teaching context, what makes an ideal teacher varies depending on many factors such as language proficiency, teaching styles, personal traits, and preferred teaching materials. According to Uduma, (2011) a language teacher relatively shoulders the extra accountability of curriculum promoting. Further, he has an impact on the atmosphere along with the management of the classroom. In general, research

suggests that a model teacher is considered as the main actor in the classroom who carries out many duties: administers runs and manages the students.

Blömeke and Delaney (2012) proposed a model so as to distinguish cognitive capacities and effective-motivational characteristics since the two major components of teachers' proficient competence. Guerriero (2017) outlined that literature highlights various qualities that characterize professional teachers, which contain broad educational subject matter knowledge, improved problem solving techniques, alteration intended for varied learners, decision making, awareness of classroom actions, superior understanding towards learning setting and more admiration for learners. A number of researches emphasize the significance of the knowledge teachers possess as an important factor of teacher's efficiency. To be a skilled teacher you should have besides educational Knowledge, motivation, positive attitudes and teaching skills.

Al-Khairi (2015) identified the qualities of an ideal English language teacher as perceived by a sample of two hundred and sixteen male and female undergraduates in Taif University who responded to a 32-item Likert scale questionnaire along gender lines. The results revealed that Saudi EFL learners have reported quite higher liking for personality and professional characteristics of ideal English language teachers. In both categories, the female participants have exhibited slightly higher values.

In sum, the characteristics of effective language teachers can be categorized into four different categories: technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills and personal qualities. The

findings of the previous research imply that the English teachers in SA who demonstrate these categories will be more effective than those who do not.

Methodology

Data collection and participants

This study was carried out in Umm Al-Qura University (UQU), Makkah. The sample consisted of 50 English language pre-service female teachers from the English language department. The participants were chosen purposefully. The data were collected over the second semester of the year 2017. A survey descriptive approach was used to carry out this study.

The instrument:

The data used for this study were collected through administering a Likert-scale agree-disagree structured questionnaire that measures the pre-service teachers's points of view towards the characteristics of an effective English language teacher in the light of Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision. It consisted of 30 items divided into four categories: technical knowledge (6 items), pedagogical skills (12 items), interpersonal skills (7 items), and personal qualities (5 items). The questionnaire's items were adopted from Brown's book Teaching by Principles (2001, p 430)) which proposed a checklist that contained the characteristics of a good language teacher. In this study, it will be used with the same setting, same subjects and for the same purposes. The researcher rated the relevance of each item to each category by answering strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree, and used

them to carry out this study according to Likert-scale.

Data structure and statistics

The data were analyzed by using SPSS package according to the four study questions. A number of statistical methods were used during the data analysis. Mean scores were calculated to estimate the average of reactions for each part of the questionnaire, and standard deviations were used to estimate how much variation is there in the reactions from the average for each item in each part.

Results:

The results of the study regarding the first research question which stated "What is the technical knowledge that effective English language teachers should have?" showed the mean scores of the first category "technical Knowledge" that concerned the first part of the questionnaire as presented in table

Items	M	SD	Per %
5. Understands the close connection between language and culture.	4.58	0.49	91.6%
3. Has fluent competence in speaking, writing, listening to, and reading English.	4.56	0.57	91.2%
2. Comprehensively grasps basic principles of language learning and teaching.	4.42	0.60	88.4%
1. Understands the linguistic systems of English phonology, grammar, and discourse.	4.40	0.60	88%

Items	M	SD	Per %
4. Knows through experience what it is like to learn a foreign language.	4.26	0.75	85.2%
6. Keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference / workshop attendance.	4.16	0.79	83.2%
Total of Category1	4.41	0.46	88.2%

Table (1) showed the mean scores and the standard deviation of the (6) items that referred to the "technical knowledge" as the first category of the teacher's effective characteristics. According to the results, the total score of technical knowledge category recorded a percentage of 88.2% with (M=4.41; SD=0.46). According to Likert Scale, this degree is supposed to be (strong). Specifically, it found the participants' agreement on the "Understands the close connection between language and culture" the highest characteristic that recorded a percentage of 91.6% with (M=4.58; SD=0.49) and is supposed to be (strong), and "Keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference / workshop attendance" is the lowest score that recorded a percentage of 83.2% with (M=4.16; SD=0.79) but is still (strong). To answer the second research question: "What are the pedagogical skills effective English language teachers should have?" The results in table (2) showed the mean scores and standards deviation of the second category "pedagogical skills":

Table 2: The Descriptive Statics of "Pedagogical Skills" Category:

Items	M	SD	Per %
15. Uses effective, clear presentation skills.	4.54	0.57	90.8%
7. Has a well-thought-out, informed approach to language teaching.	4.46	0.57	89.2%
14. Uses appropriate principles of classroom management.	4.42	0.60	88.4%
11. Effectively perceives students' linguistic needs.	4.26	0.80	85.2%
9. Efficiently designs and executes lesson plans.	4.24	0.62	84.8%
8. Understands and uses a wide variety of techniques.	4.16	0.68	83.2%
10. Monitors lessons as they unfold and make mid-lesson alterations.	4.08	0.75	81.6%
16. Creatively adapts textbook material and other audio, visual, and mechanical aids.	4.08	0.96	81.6%
13. Stimulates interaction, cooperation, and teamwork in the classroom.	4.06	0.79	81.2%
12. Gives optimal feedback to students.	4.00	0.90	80.%
17. Innovatively creates brand-new materials when needed.	3.92	0.567	8.4%
18. Uses interactive, intrinsically motivating techniques to create effective tests.	3.92	0.69	78.4%
Total of Category 2	4.17	0.45	83.4%

Table (1) showed the mean scores and the standard deviation of the (6) items that referred to the "technical knowledge" as the

first category of the teacher's effective characteristics. According to the results, the total score of technical knowledge category recorded a percentage of 88.2% with (M=4.41; SD=0.46). According to Likert Scale, this degree is supposed to be (strong). Specifically, it found the participants' agreement on the "Understands the close connection between language and culture" the highest characteristic that recorded a percentage of 91.6% with (M=4.58; SD=0.49) and is supposed to be (strong), and "Keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference/ workshop attendance" is the lowest score that recorded a percentage of 83.2% with (M=4.16; SD=0.79) but is still (strong). To answer the second research question: "What are the pedagogical skills effective English language teachers should have?" The results in table (2) showed the mean scores and standards deviation of the second category "pedagogical skills":

Table 3: The descriptive statics of "Interpersonal Skills" Category:

Items	M	SD	Per %
24. Cooperates harmoniously and candidly with colleagues (fellow teachers).	4.24	0.84	84.8%
22. Is patient in working with students of lesser ability?	4.22	0.73	84.4%
19. Is aware of cross-cultural differences and is sensitive to students' cultural traditions.	4.16	0.76	83.2%
20. Enjoys people; shows enthusiasm, warmth, rapport, and appropriate humor.	4.12	0.87	82.4%

Items	M	SD	Per %
25. Seeks opportunities to share thoughts, ideas, and techniques with colleagues.	4.12	1.08	82.4%
21. Values the opinions and abilities of students.	4.10	0.97	82%
23. Offers challenges to students of exceptionally high ability.	3.98	0.68	79.6%
Total of Category 3	4.13	0.57	82.6%

Table (3) showed the total score of "Interpersonal Skills" category with a record percentage of 82.6% and with (M=4.13; SD=0.57). According to Likert Scale, this degree is supposed to be (strong). Specifically, it found the item "Cooperates harmoniously and candidly with colleagues (fellow teachers)" is the highest score that recorded a percentage of 84.8% with (M=4.24; SD=0.84) and this is degree supposed to be (strong), and the item "Offers challenges to students of exceptionally high ability" recorded a percentage of 79.6% with (M=3.98; SD=0.68), and this degree is also supposed to be (strong).

The results of the study regarding the fourth research question: " What are the personal qualities should effective English language teachers have?" showed the mean scores of the fourth category " Personal Qualities" and the standard deviations that concerned its items as presented in table 4:

Table 4: The Descriptive Statics of "Personal Qualities" Category:

Items	M	SD	Per %
26. Is well-organized, conscientious in meeting commitments, and dependable.	4.46	0.61	89.2%
29. Sets short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth.	4.46	0.57	89.2%
28. Maintains an inquisitive mind in trying out new ways of teaching.	4.34	0.68	86.8%
27. Is flexible when things go awry.	4.08	0.80	81.6%
30. Maintains and exemplifies high ethical and moral standards	4.04	0.69	80.8
Total of Category 4	4.27	0.41	85

As shown in the results mentioned in table (4) the total score of "personal qualities" category record percentage of 85.4% with (M=4.27; SD=0.41). According to Likert Scale, this degree is supposed to be (strong). Specifically, we find the two items "Is well-organized, conscientious in meeting commitments, and dependable" & "Sets short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth" have got the highest in score as the most important personal qualities with a percentage of 89.2% and (M=4.46; SD=0.61 -0.57) and are supposed to be (strong), while "Maintains and exemplifies high ethical and moral standards" recorded a percentage of 70% with (M=3.535; SD=0.370) which is supposed to be (neutral).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the pre-service teachers' view about the important characteristics of effective English language teachers in the light of the Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision. The descriptive statics used in this study revealed the characteristics considered to be effective underlying four categories: technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills and personal qualities. The results were described according to the following criteria   as shown in table 5:

Table 5: Results Criterion

Mean	Degree
1.00-1.89	Very weak
1.90-2.79	Weak
2.80-3.69	Neutral
3.70-4.59	Strong
4.50 – 5	Very strong

The first category in this study was the "technical knowledge" in which the pre-service teachers show a strong agreement to consider it an important quality of the teacher's effectiveness. According to the Likert scale the agreement on the "Understands the close connection between language and culture" was strong which recorded the highest score as the most important characteristic within the first domain while, "Keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference / workshop attendance" is the lowest score within the same domain but is still (strong). These qualities have been mentioned in Saraç-Süzer (2007) as major characteristics

of effective foreign language teachers.

The second category of this study was the "pedagogical skills" that contains (12) items in which the pre-service teachers show a strong agreement to consider it an important quality of the teacher's effectiveness. This can be figured out from their responses to its items, in which they record a very strong agreement upon "Uses effective, clear presentation skills" as an important characteristic, while two items recorded a percentage to be the lowest in importance of characteristics: i.e. "Innovatively creates brand-new materials when needed" & "Uses interactive, intrinsically motivating techniques to create effective tests", still this degree is supposed to be (strong). These qualities expressed in this category items have been mentioned in Simpson and Mengi (2011) as major characteristics of effective foreign language teachers.

The third category of this study was the "interpersonal skills' which contains (6) items in which the pre-service teachers show a strong agreement to consider it an important quality of the teacher's effectiveness. This can be seen in the light of the first item which recorded a strong agreement among the pre-service teachers "Cooperates harmoniously and candidly with colleagues (fellow teachers)"as an important characteristic while "Offers challenges to students of exceptionally high ability" that recorded a percentage to be the lowest characteristic in importance, still this degree is supposed to be (strong). These qualities have been mentioned in Çelik, Arıkan, and Caner (2013) of which they believed to be the characteristics of a successful English language teacher. This was proved through a survey presented to 998 undergraduate students who are taking English courses at a state university in Turkey.

The fourth category of this study is the personal qualities which contains (5) items in which the pre-service teachers show a strong agreement to consider it an important quality of the teacher's effectiveness. This quality has been mentioned in Campbell et al. (2004), Brown (2001), and many other teacher studies, as one of the major characteristics of effective teachers. This can be noticed with the following items "Is well-organized, conscientious in meeting commitments, and dependable" & "Sets short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth". These two items have got the highest score as the most important personal qualities which recorded a strong agreement among the pre-service teachers while "Maintains and exemplifies high ethical and moral standards" recorded a percentage to be the lowest characteristic in importance among the (5) items, still this degree is supposed to be (neutral).

Conclusions

The current study indicates that the four categories with their items are considered highly effective and important characteristics of English language teachers and, thus, meet the Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision in establishing positive outcomes in the field of education from pre- service teachers' points of view.

A limitation of the present study is that its results are based on instruments conducted in Saudi Arabia and thus may not be generalizable to other countries. However, the findings may provide insights for future research concerning characteristics of effective language teachers, which can be investigated through designing qualitative and mixed method of studies which can provide in-depth analysis of the participants' experiences.

The results of this research have several implications and recommendations relevant to enhancing these characteristics among pre-service teachers. First of all, teacher educators encourage them to observe and reflect on in-service teachers' characteristics especially in their practicum courses. Also, pre-service teachers can be provided with the opportunity to use micro teaching activities in order to enhance their reflection on their own and peers' teaching styles and teaching strategies. Consequently, these activities may help them learn new teaching techniques and methods which are considered a sign of qualities and characteristics of effective English language teachers to meet the challenges of the current era.

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