

TEACHERS' ROLE TOWARD STUDENTS' AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT.

This paper presents teachers' role toward students' affective factors in teaching and learning process in the foreign language context. Teachers play crucial roles as facilitators, instructors, advisors and models in English language classroom. Teachers make various efforts to shift the students' behavior from being unmotivated to be motivated, from being shy to be talkative and self confidence to participate in teaching and learning process. It is evident that teachers' performance at class will give an influence for their students. The teachers who lack self-esteem will find it difficult to create self-esteem of their students. The teachers who do not lead a warm atmosphere at class will find low spirits of students to learn. So the teachers' role is very critical and crucial in language teaching.

Key Words: teachers' role – affective factors – English language teaching

INTRODUCTION

One can hardly deny that English plays a very important role in the major aspects of life in this global era. It is the most widely spoken language in the world so that English today is fast becoming a lingua franca of international trade and commerce. With the challenges posed by globalization and technological advances, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become the most crucial one in gathering scientific information available on

electronic media. It is also observed that most of the books of science and technology are written in English.

In Indonesia, English is one of the foreign languages being taught from elementary schools up to university. At the elementary level, it is taught as a local content at year one until three, while at year four to six, it becomes a compulsory subject with two class-hours a week. At junior and senior high schools, it is offered as a compulsory subject with a time allocation of four class-hours a week, whereas at the university or college, it is accorded for two to six credit-hours and the curriculum focuses on English for specific purposes.

The main goal of teaching English at elementary school level in Indonesia is to have learners possess basic competence as follows: (1) to develop communicative competence of limited verbal language accompanying action of four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing in school context; (2) to implant consciousness of the importance and role of English as a competitive language in global era.

The objective of teaching English at secondary school levels (SMP/SMA) in Indonesia is to develop communicative competence in spoken and written English, and to gain informational literary level through developing skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Having the mastery of these skills, learners are expected to possess the consciousness about the importance of English as one of the foreign languages, and are able to be competitive in the global era and also to improve the learners' understanding both in language and culture (BadanStandarNasionalPendidikan 2005: 2)

BACKGROUND

More elementary school students still fail to acquire essential elements of four language skills & Language components, and some are scared and worried to learn English – unmotivated and frustrated.(Zainil 2005) Futhermore, Piaget (1972) states that - 6-12 years old – concrete operation, but more teachers teach abstract

things and explain grammar explicitly. (Piaget 1972 & Brown 2001) Most of the students are passive language learners. They are shy to use English in real communication. They only pay attention to forms and rules when they communicate with others. They do not practice English in real communication and situations. Only a few of them practice and use it in the classroom. Consequently, they fail in acquiring English (Zainil 2003, 2004).

Suwarsih (2002: 142) has found that senior high school graduates who have learned this language for six years, with almost 900 hours of school teaching, are unable to use this language for communication purposes. This phenomenon can also be observed among university graduates and even among faculty members. The teaching of English has so far been unable to achieve its declared goals despite many efforts made to improve its quality.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many factors influence the students to gain the instructional objectives of learning English, such as, affective strategy for the students' learning motivation, attitude and interest; cognitive strategy for the competence of the English teachers, memory strategy for the students' inadequate basic knowledge (Zainil 2005). Lack of learning facilities, irrelevant method and ineffective language learning strategies used by the students as well as inadequate teaching strategies by teachers are other factors that provide hindrances in English teaching and learning process.

RATIONALE OF AFFECTIVE FACTORS

1 The Definition of Affect

Actually, it is hard to give an accurate definition of affect as Fehr and Russell (1984) once noted "Everyone knows what an emotion is, until asked to give a definition". Affect refers to emotion or feeling (H.D. Brown, 2001). Dickinson (1987) describes it as being concerned with the learner's attitude towards the target language and users of it, and with his/her emotional responses.

Damasio (1994) differentiates the term emotions as “changes in body state in response to a positive or negative situation” from the term feelings as “perceptions of these changes. Arnold (1999) defines affect as “aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behavior”. It can be seen that the term “affect” sometimes replaced by “emotions”, “feelings” or “affectivity” was defined from several perspectives such as educational one, psychological one.

2. Affective Factors

Though affect cannot be separated as a complex system in some sense, studies tend to name different aspects of affect in order to carry out specific research of each aspect. In general, emotions which affect language acquisition can be classified as personality factors and factors between learners themselves and their relationship with teachers. Personality factors involve self-esteem, motivation, anxiety, and inhibition while the other involves empathy, classroom transactions and cross-cultural processes. Among these factors there are positive ones which can encourage learners and negative ones as well which will be hindrance to English learning such as anxiety, sadness.

3. The Role of Teachers in English Classroom

It is evident that teachers’ performance at class will give an influence for their students. A teacher who lacks self-esteem will find it difficult to make self-esteem of his students. A teacher who does not lead a warm atmosphere at class will find low spirits of students to learn. So the teachers’ role is very critical in language teaching. According to Yan & Zhang (2002), there are three basic roles for teachers: “lecturer”, “teacher”, and “facilitator”. They made distinctions among the three based on the theory of affective factors. “Lecturers” are those who solely consider their professional skills but neglect teaching methodology. “Teachers” here refer to those who possess professional skills and teaching methodology but seldom care students’ affective experience. “Facilitators” are like those who not only take characters of the former two but also care students’

affective state and learning process to help them in language learning by self-consciousness-raising.

Hence, the teachers can create and maximise learning opportunities by involving the learners in the teaching and learning process because teaching and learning are essentially collaborative in nature. Teaching is basically the transmission of items of knowledge, and learning accretion of them. Paradigm has changed that is “focus on learners’ or ‘learner centered’. As we have already observed and seen, the traditional method of teaching English makes the teachers the all-powerful authorities in the classroom, almost obliterating the existence of their learners sometimes. Tudor (1996) points out ,”a widespread desire in the language teaching community to develop means of allowing learners to play a fuller, more active and participatory role in their language study”.The Contemporary Online Language Education Journal 2011, 1, 33-40.38 desire to make language teaching “more flexible and more responsive to students “real world communicative needs” (Tudor 1996:7). Innovative role of the teacher in task-based language teaching , which is basically an offshoot of communicative language teaching, learner-centeredness has found a new expression, as Nunan (2004) points out, “experiential learning” or “learning by doing”.

4. How to be Facilitators in the Classroom

4.1 Being a Humanistic Teacher

To be a humanistic teacher means a teacher’s behavior should be democratic and his teaching aims at student-centered classroom in which a teacher acts as an organizer, encourager, and guide. Rogers (1969) argued that learning that combines intelligence and affection would promote the whole-person development. He regarded himself as a facilitator and asserted that significant learning can be facilitated by establishing an interpersonal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. Teachers should treat their learners as individuals with specific needs to be met and provide them with trust and emphatic understanding. Through the understanding and promotion

of inner factors, students' learning strategies and even their learning outcomes would be of much distinction compared with what they did before. According to Gage and Berliner (1991), feelings are as important as facts. Much work from the humanistic view seems to validate this point and is one area where humanistically-oriented educators are making significant contributions to our knowledge base.

4.2 Motivating in English Teaching Process

It is well acknowledged that motivation is very crucial in language learning as Dornyev(1998) mentioned that motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence success of second/ foreign language learning. Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the foreign language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. Therefore, at class teachers should give their priority to motivation. Students will learn from their experience and keep collecting to develop their full potential. Otherwise, classroom realities increasingly ask awareness to an overlooked aspect, i.e., the motivational needs from teachers, since teachers' motivation has direct influence to students' language learning efficiency.

4.3. Designing affective Course

Affective course requires teachers' large amount of time and energy contributed to make a good arrangement of class which not only develop students' academic skills but also stimulate their inner motivation. Teachers have to develop not only their academic skills but also stimulate their inner motivation. Furthermore, in the process of English teaching, teachers should pay more attention to establish certain relationship with their students. A harmonious and pleasant climate in the classroom can help to reduce the anxiety of the students and able to form emotional bonds between teachers and students at the same time. Teachers can create the classroom a welcoming and relaxing place where psychological needs are met

and language anxiety is kept to be a minimum (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). In addition, Gage and Berliner (1991) state that students learn best in a non-threatening environment. It is clear that where humanistic educators have this is an area where humanistic educators have had an impact on current educational practice.

Conclusion

To summarize, affective factors cannot be neglected in English language teaching. Among the three basic roles, “facilitators” are the most ideal one the responsibility of which is to organize effective and efficient teaching strategies for arousing students’ awareness of affect and take their needs into consideration in order to equip them to learn with self-consciousness and efficiency. As Pine & Boy (1997) mentioned: the more the teacher humanizes his teaching, the more teaching humanizes him. The more the teacher cares for his students, the more they will care for him. The more the teacher frees his students to grow, the more he frees himself to grow.

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