

Linguistic and communicative competencies that teachers have to possess.

الكفاءات اللغوية والتواصلية التي يجب أن يمتلكها المعلمون

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Abstract :

A range of factors have contributed in making English teaching and learning in general and its grammar in particular unsatisfactory at the level of most Algerian secondary schools mainly of the third year classes. One of the highly basic foundations to overcome these difficulties in learning English and its grammar is the teacher. Indeed, no other factor has more impact on pupils learning than a teacher. For this purpose, teachers need to develop their classroom skills continuously to meet the requirements of the teaching and learning situation.

In this article, we try to cite how teachers development and critical reflection on their own teaching experiences, as well as fulfilling certain basic tasks and roles and having some effective teaching skills can enhance EFL learners' level.

Key words : learning English ; grammar ; teacher ; teaching skills ; teachers development ; critical reflection ; teacher's roles and tasks.

ملخص:

قد ساهمت مجموعة من العوامل في جعل تعليم وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل عام وقواعدها بشكل خاص غير كافية على مستوى معظم المدارس الثانوية بالجزائر وبالخصوص على

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مستوى السنوات الثالثة نهائي. أحد الأسس الأساسية للتغلب على هذه الصعوبات في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية وقواعدها هو المعلم. في الواقع، لا يوجد عامل أكثر تأثيراً على تعلم التلاميذ من المعلم. لهذا الغرض، يحتاج المعلمون إلى تطوير مهاراتهم بشكل مستمر لتلبية متطلبات عملية التعليم والتعلم في الوقت الحالي.

في هذه المقالة نحاول أن نذكر كيف يمكن لأمر منها: تطوير المعلمين والتفكير النقدي على خبرات التدريس الخاصة بهم، فضلاً عن القيام ببعض الأدوار الأساسية والاتصاف ببعض مهارات التدريس الفعالة، أن تعزز مستوى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. الكلمات المفتاحية: تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية؛ النحو؛ المعلم؛ مهارات التدريس؛ تطوير المعلمين؛ التفكير النقدي؛ أدوار ومهام المعلم.

Introduction

Teachers' role is of a paramount importance in EFL classrooms in spite of the introduction of the CBA in which the learners form the centre of the teaching-learning process. Indeed, no other factor has more impact on pupils learning than a teacher. For this purpose, teachers need to develop their classroom skills continuously to meet the requirements of the teaching and learning situation. In fact, the profession of teaching is not easy, rather it is stressful mainly at the beginning. However, it can be very rewarding and enjoyable when the pupils progress and their teachers recognize that they helped them in doing so (Harmer, 2007).

To fulfill the required duties, teachers should have a strong will to develop their own professional growth through varying teaching strategies to be adequately meet their learners' needs (from OECD, 2013). To achieve this, teachers should reflect critically on their teaching practices, fulfill certain basic tasks and have some effective teaching skills.

1. Teacher Development and Reflective Teaching

Because of the continuous change in the field of EFL teaching mainly grammar teaching and the new requirements of the application of CBA in the Algerian context, the teachers are recommended to look back into their previous teaching practices for the purpose of changing or developing them to meet the current requirements. This is what is known as reflective teaching. It refers to teachers subjecting their teaching thoughts and practices to a critical analysis (Farrell, 1998). Teachers can use a variety of approaches to reflect on their own actions. One of the most valuable professional development tools is peer observation.

Peer observation provides an opportunity not only for novices to develop their ways of teaching but also experienced teachers. It is a valuable means to stimulate teachers' own ideas about their teaching (Kyriacou, 1998). It provides a chance to see the way other teachers teach grammar and to reflect on one's own teaching. It develops teachers' self-awareness of grammar teaching strategies and

classroom processes. It is a means of getting feedback on all what may concern their own teaching (Lavigne and Good, 2013). Moreover, it has social benefits since teachers share ideas and experiences.

At the level of the secondary school, official peer observation in a form of class demonstration is planned once a month including a variety of lessons and depending on the teacher's choice of the course. However, it needs to be carefully implemented at least once a week. It should give more importance to sessions for teaching grammar strategies, mainly how teachers start and end the lesson, how they assign corresponding tasks and how they assess their learners' learning. These class demonstration sessions as well as coordination sessions should be programmed on the teachers' timetables and considered as one of the teachers' professional duties. In these meetings of groups of colleagues teaching English either from the same school or different schools, teachers improve their teaching effectiveness and learn from each other. Through collaborative planning of grammar lessons, teachers can identify problems related to grammar teaching and present better grammar lessons.

Besides, the use of written accounts of what happens in classrooms is a useful way of engaging in the reflective process. These written accounts may be self-reports in a form of checklists or inventories that reflect teaching practices (Richards, 1990). Another

valuable tool for self-development is the use of the journal or dairy in which teachers record what happens in the classrooms. Moreover, recording lessons provide teachers with opportunities to observe themselves and capture all the steps of the lesson through the use of audio or video recording of courses such as using cameras (Chalikandy, 2014). Furthermore, workshops and seminars about how to teach and assess grammar can provide teachers with opportunities to reflect on their own teaching.

Teachers do not need just experience to accomplish their mission. But, with a critical reflection on that experience, they may enhance their professional development so that they can perform their tasks.

2. Teacher Tasks

Teachers tasks are the necessities that teachers are required to do or have for their profession. One of these basic necessities is to be knowledgeable in the subject they teach; they should have a good command in English and its grammar. Moreover, they should have effective ways to transmit that knowledge to their learners.

2.1. Teacher Content Knowledge

Teacher content knowledge refers to the information that teachers have and are expected to teach in a subject matter. Teachers need to know as much as possible about the subject they are teaching

(Harmer, 2007). Teachers with highly content knowledge in a specific subject tend to be more effective teachers because *“it tends to be the teacher the pupils will ask when they want to know”* (Burgess and Head, 2005, p.2). Some researchers suggest that there is a necessity to develop strong pedagogical content knowledge which means that they should master the most effective ways to teach learners that particular subject (from the Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). More importantly, they need to find out new ways to make their teaching effective. One of the ways of doing this is through keeping up- to-date new developments in teaching approaches and techniques via seminars, magazines and online resources.

Language teachers in general need to have the knowledge of grammar and grammatical functions (Harmer, 2007). Grammar teaching is one of the essential aspects of language teaching, it requires pedagogical content knowledge. Teachers of English have to know a lot about English grammar to teach English in general and its grammar in particular. They must have a knowledge of the grammatical rules to be able to teach them because having an accurate and comprehensive understanding of English grammar makes teachers feel more confident as teachers and gain respect from both colleagues and learners (Cowan, 2008).

A good knowledge of English grammar enables teachers to evaluate the textbook and examine courses and tasks used so that they could organize lessons in more effective ways than those presented in the textbook and supply the information needed for the exam. This is one skill of pedagogical content knowledge. Without being transmitted to the learners, knowledge is passive. Thus, another necessary factor for achieving effective teaching is the good preparation of lessons to transmit that knowledge to learners.

2.2. Lessons Preparation

Good preparation of lessons is an effective factor of effective teaching. For teaching any English lesson, it is necessary to prepare it in advance. The same thing should be done with grammar lessons. Planning gives lessons a framework and it is as a guide that involves what is intended to achieve and the way to do that (Harmer, 2007). Taking time at the planning stage to think about all what can make their lessons effective and successful and about the steps to present them help to have good lessons. Langdon (1978) notes that lesson plans exist to serve two main primary functions: first, they are plans of what will occur in the classroom and second, and the least utilized, they record the necessary changes to make the lesson effective for future use.

First of all, it is important to determine the objective of the lesson and sometimes the sub-objectives that lead to the final one as

well as the learning outcomes at the end of the lesson. More importantly, teachers should think about ways to raise their pupils' interest and motivation so as to draw their attention from the beginning to the new grammatical point. This can be through starting their lessons with visual aids or challenging them. The activities should be selected carefully and presented in a logical order to achieve the objective of the lesson and should have a logical link so that pupils can follow easily since "*a good lesson needs to contain a judicious blend of coherence and variety*" (Harmer, 2007, p.157).

The teacher should know how to present and explain them. This explanation should be short and clear. It is useful to predict problems that might be encountered during the lesson. Taking time at the planning stage to suggest possible solutions can lead to have good lessons. In this respect, Killen (2006) suggests some useful planning steps to plan lessons effectively: Considering the purpose of the lesson, determining the pupils learning outcomes, determining the content of the lesson, organizing in suitable sequences and appropriate examples, selecting appropriate teaching strategies, determining the possible constraints, planning ways of evaluating the success of the lesson and assessing the pupils' achievement.

The steps of grammar lesson plans depend on the lesson itself, time available, pupils' level and learners' styles. There are different

models of planning a grammar lesson such as PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production), TTT (Test, Teach, Test) and ESA (Engage, Study, Activate)(Cotter, 2010) . However, the most utilized one seems to be PPP model, “*Grammar lessons are usually composed of three phases: Presentation, Practice, and Production*” (Shojaee, 2014). Larsen-Freeman (2009) notes that “countless generations of pupils have been taught grammar in this way- and many have succeeded with this form of instruction” (2009, p. 523). Sárosdy (2006) adds another essential step with which each lesson must be closed; that is a feedback part of both form and content. Good lessons have various types of balance which are: balance of work forms(frontal, group, pair), balance of skills (receptive/productive, oral/written), a balance of activities(warm-up, 3 Ps, feedback) and a balance of stirring and settling activities (competition, challenge) (Sárosdy et al, 2006).

In the presentation phase, the teacher presents the new grammatical point in a meaningful context that should be attractive and motivating. The teacher should make his pupils aware of the need of the grammatical structure . At this stage, it is essential to choose which approach is appropriate for the situation, either the deductive or the inductive approach to teaching grammar. Ur (1996) notes that the choice between these two ways depends on many things. The former is more suitable with lower level pupils and it saves time and allows more time for practising the language items. However, the latter is

often more beneficial to pupils with an acceptable level in the language since it encourages them to discover structures by themselves based on their background knowledge. In the practice phase, pupils need to practice the new structure so that they master it. In the last one ; that is production stage, learners need time to use the new structure in their own oral or written language.

However, Harmer (2007) suggests ESA model which he considers as elements for successful language learning. In this model, pupils are engaged through using certain activities such as games, music, stimulating pictures, discussions, etc. Their involvement in the study activities makes them concentrate on the construction of particular elements of grammar. In activate activities, pupils are asked to use all and any language that may be appropriate for the situation as freely and communicatively as they can.

As it has been mentioned earlier, teachers' choice of planning depends on many factors. However, whatever the model is, certain elements as mentioned above are usually included in plan formats. The following lesson plan is suggested depending on the PPP model.

Class:	No. of pupils	Level:
Class profile:		
Topic:	Language element:	
Aims: what the teacher intends to do		

Objectives: what the pupils are expected to do							
Assessment:							
Materials:							
Presentation phase:							
Timing	Procedures		Interaction	Anticipated problems	solutions	Success indicators	Aims of the stage
	Teacher activity	Student activity					
Practice phase:							
Timing	Procedures		Interaction	Anticipated problems	solutions	Success indicators	Aims of the stage
	Teacher activity	Student activity					
Production phase:							
Timing	Procedures		Interaction	Anticipated problems	solutions	Success indicators	Aims of the stage
	Teacher activity	Student activity					
Additional possibilities:							
Homework/further work:							

Table : Suggested Grammar Lesson Plan (adapted from Harmer, 2007, pp. 161-163)

According to Harmer (2007), in the success indicators column the teacher should note ways to measure the success of what happens. In other words, “*if the learning outcomes have been met*” (2007. p. 162). This is one of many forms of plan formats. However, it depends on each teacher to design his own formats that suit the circumstances in which he teaches. What is important is to meet the predetermined goals of effective learning.

However, transmitting knowledge through good lesson plans necessitates adapting different roles.

2.3. Teacher Roles

Teachers should play different roles depending on the different situations in the class. Teachers roles are “*the different functions and personalities the teacher takes on at different times (e.g controller, resource, etc) in order to help pupils engaged in different kinds of learning task*” (Harmer, 2007, p. 283). According to him, the teacher can be a resource of language information, a controller, an organizer, an assessor, a prompter and a participant . According to Spratt et al (2011, p. 199), the teacher can be a planner, a manager, a monitor (an observer), a facilitator, a diagnostician, a language resource, an assessor and a rapport builder.

First of all, teachers should be able to function as a resource for knowledge since they are the persons whom learners refer back to get information. Thus, a good command in English and its grammar is essential to be an affective teacher. As a diagnostician, the teacher should work out of the causes of learners difficulties (Spratt et al, 2011). In activities in which accurate reproduction is required and frontal activities such as grammar presentation, s/he can be a controller. In grammar tasks that require working in peers or groups , s/he can be a promoter to fit positive feedback (Harmer, 2007). As a monitor or an observer, the teacher can check learning and provide support during individual, pair and group work activities (Spratt et al, 2011, p.199).

One of the most important roles that teachers should perform is to be a manager. Teacher should organize their work, classroom activities, the classroom interaction and their teaching materials so that the pupils can benefit from the teaching process. As a planner, the teacher should prepare grammar lessons and reflects on them before teaching. In this way, s/he can predict problems and the errors that pupils may make . Accordingly, s/he can set appropriate materials to avoid or overcome them (Spratt et al, 2011). Tasks should be arranged from the simplest to the most complex to respect the gradation in acquiring structures since “ *numerous grammar*

constructions...have to be taught and learned based on their progression of complexity” (Hinkel, 2015, p. 125)

Activities should be selected carefully to meet individual learners' interests. Thus, the teacher should be motivated and act as a motivator. However, most of learners find learning grammar boring or difficult. It is the teacher's role to increase their motivation about learning grammar through making it enjoyable and easy through building a good rapport with learners and varying grammar tasks and the ways in which they are presented. Making it easy can be through acting as a facilitator since the previous study shows that New Prospects is full of authentic texts (reading and listening passages) for studying grammar. The sentences, that are taken from these texts, are full of difficult words that are often beyond the third year secondary school pupils level. Therefore, the teacher's role is to simplify these sentences so as to encourage the learners' grammar learning. Teachers as adapters should benefit from the course book activities in a way that decreases their difficulty and engages learners in autonomous learning because being responsible for their own learning is a key component in sustaining motivation(Harmer, 2007).

In this case, the teacher's role is to facilitate learning and guide pupils to acquire grammatical points through objective means to

develop learners' responsibility for learning. Finally, s/he acts as an assessor to evaluate the learners' outcomes (Harmer, 2007).

Fruitful learning depends to a great extent on the teacher's success in adopting different roles appropriate to fit different contexts. This success helps in creating an effective grammar learning atmosphere in the classroom through building a good rapport with pupils and classroom management. These are the most important teacher skills.

3. Teacher Skills

Teachers skills are the abilities that teachers possess to make their teaching effective. One of these basic necessities is to have a good rapport with their learners and ability to manage their classes.

3.1. Rapport

The type of the relationship between the teacher and his pupils determines the language classroom climate. This teacher-learner relationship is known as rapport. Having a mutual respect and rapport is highly recommended in schools (Kyriacou, 1998). The classroom atmosphere can promote grammar learning if it involves good teacher-learner relationship which encourages a friendly and stress-free learning environment. A positive, enjoyable and respectful relationship is a common feature in the best lessons (Harmer, 2007).

According to Kyriacou (1998), respect and rapport can be developed from the pupils perceptions about their teacher; his competence as a teacher, care about their progress through planning and conducting good lessons .

According to Harmer (2007), a good rapport is built up when teachers are qualified in terms of professionalism. Besides, respect is very important. Good teachers react to indiscipline and solve problems respectfully. Treating all pupils fairly and equally establish and promote good rapport. It is widely argued that good rapport between the teacher and his pupils motivate them to learn more. Some way of doing so are by recognizing them through knowing at least their names, their family background and their social situation, listening to their interests and problems and respecting them.

However, this does not mean to be too friendly because this tends to lose authority over learners. That is why, it is essential to establish a relationship in which pupils accept teachers authority to manage classroom activities for effective learning progress (Kyriacou, 1998).

Establishing a good rapport is one of the factors that facilitates teaching and learning. One of the benefits of a mutual respect and rapport is the ability to manage their classes successfully.

3.2. Classroom Management

Classroom management was traditionally regarded as the ability to exert control over learners. However, more recently it has been seen as an art of establishing a good classroom climate and managing instruction in effective ways and actions (Hue and Li, 2008). It is a necessary factor in teaching since *“effective teaching and learning can take place only if there is a good order and positive learning climate in the classroom”* (Hue and Li, 2008, p. 5).

Most teachers find difficulties in managing their classes. This is because of many causes such as the inability to offer good lessons, lack of motivation and overloaded classes. Overcrowded classroom is one of the biggest problems that face teachers, and one which leads most of time to other problems. Even the most effective teachers may find it hard to overcome. The most problematic one is its negative impact on the quality of learning. Teachers in overcrowded classes cannot provide individual learners help on regular basis or test pupils individually. Moreover, noise is an expected consequence in an overcrowded class, which increases discipline behaviours (Meador , 2015).

To deal with the aforementioned issues and improve a good learning environment, teachers must be well organized and prepared for every session and for exceptional events and things. Lessons should be simplified, engaging, challenging and somehow enjoyable

so as to increase motivation and pupils' interest. Assigning seats towards the front for pupils who are weak or misbehave is necessary to manage overcrowded classrooms and prevent misbehaviour (Meador , 2015). Teachers have to establish their rules from the beginning of the year and try to be hard in some cases. In the same vein, Hue and Li (2008) note four components of classroom management. They are managing the physical environment of the classroom so that it promotes a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere of learning, managing the teaching and learning materials that serving the learning objectives and content, managing procedures and establishing rules and finally managing discipline system.

Conclusion:

As it has been mentioned before, one of the highly basic foundations to improve learners level in learning English and its grammar is the teacher; skillful and knowledgeable teachers. However, effective teaching and learning cannot be the responsibility of the teacher only. Educators cannot reach the predetermined objectives if the learners don't take part efficiently. The learner's role is of a paramount importance in the learning process because "teaching cannot be defined apart from learning" (Brown, 2000, p. 7). They are required to be involved and share the responsibility in the learning process.

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