

English Language Teacher's Roles as Perceived by Senior High School Students

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the teacher's roles played by English language teachers at a senior high school. It analyzed the levels of students' perception of which teacher's role is the preferred one and which one is mostly played by their teachers. This study was conducted on 55 language major students at a public senior high school. To gather the data, it used questionnaires about different teacher's roles in the classroom. It was a descriptive quantitative research which utilized statistical analyses to analyze the data. Based on the existing findings, there are a few conclusions drawn. First, students show good preference for all types of teachers' roles (controller, director, manager, facilitator, and resource). However, they show a very good preference for one type of role, that is as a facilitator. In other words, the English teachers who play their roles as facilitators would be the most preferred by the students in English learning. Second, since the English teachers at the school proportionally play all types of roles in their teaching activities, this indicates that the English teachers fully realize the importance of playing all types of roles when teaching rather than emphasizing only one or two types of roles.

Keywords—language teacher, teacher's roles, English teacher's roles, teachers as facilitators

INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers in the classroom is crucial because, to some extent, how they instruct the pupils affects how they learn. Teachers are given a framework by role identity that indirectly aids in the interpretation and evaluation of experiences and events relevant to teaching as well as the decision-making process (Horn et al., 2008). The teacher has the role of a figure who guides and teaches students related to a certain subject. Rahmat and Jannatin (2018) explained that the role of the teacher is very important in the learning process. A teacher should prepare students to be ready to accept and follow the learning process to achieve the learning goals that have been set. Teachers' role is a crucial factor when it comes to learning a foreign language (Atasheneh, 2012). A professional teacher must be able to carry out his/her role, namely, to teach as well as to educate, and the teacher must be able to improve the abilities of students and share useful learning experiences with their students.

In the classroom learning process, in general, the teacher has a role as a figure who guides and teaches students related to a certain subject. The relationship between the teacher and the students is called a mediating relationship where the teacher provides his/her knowledge as well as provides an assessment related to the good and bad behavior of students in the classroom (Aldrup et al., 2018). In general, the role of teachers in English language learning, which is mostly dominant in schools, is that teachers use monotonous, classical, and teacher-centered teaching styles, which makes students lazy and bored with learning because they are often given tasks (Rahmat & Jannatin, 2018).

Like in any other classroom, language teachers also play similar roles in teaching languages in language classrooms. For example, Brown (2001) stated that teachers can play some different roles such as controller, director, manager, facilitator, and resource. In the process of learning English, the role of the teacher that is mostly liked by students is the role as a guide or facilitator when students face difficulties in speaking, especially related to foreign language knowledge, where the teacher does not dominate the learning process (Oktaviana, Emzir, & Rasyid, 2020). Alternatively, Oktaviana, Emzir, and Rasyid stated that the teacher must also be a tutor, who is not only a facilitator in the classroom but also provides an overview as well as instructions on learning. Thus, in the English learning process, there will be a relaxed, familiar, and comfortable learning atmosphere that encourages student learning motivation.

When English teachers do not play the proper roles their students want, it impacts the quality of learning and the potential of students in learning. English teachers usually play a role in teaching English effectively by providing teaching materials that focus on students (Rinantanti et al., 2017). Another phenomenon that is also found in learning where teachers, in their role as educators, often make students feel heavy-hearted and dislike participating in English language learning. This is because the English teacher puts prolonged pressure on teaching where the teaching process uses a method that forces students too harshly to understand English.

Some research in English language teaching revealed that English teachers practice various roles in their teaching experiences. Jaidi, Amalia, and Uswatun (2021) researched a private elementary school and found that English teachers act as controllers, drivers, facilitators, models, and assessors. In another study conducted by Nurfalah and Pupah (2022) on seventh-grade students of junior high school in Garut, West Java, Indonesia, they found that in most classroom activities, the students still depend on their teachers and see the teachers as the center of the classes. This is an indication that teachers need to switch roles as learning organizers rather than being the students' learning sources. The third related study was conducted at an elementary school by Safitri and Dafit (2021) to show how teachers help students in primary schools learn to read and write. The result of this research shows that teachers' responsibilities include directing students to the appropriate reading materials, acting as facilitators by offering services to speed up the learning process,

and inspiring learners. In the meantime, teachers' roles in writing involve instructing students in producing written works, serving as a facilitator by making learning enjoyable for students, and assessing the output of students' work, including activities like writing poetry, rhymes, and summaries.

In another related study, it was found that English teachers also show significantly different roles. Oktaviana, Emzir, and Rasyid (2020) assessed the function of teachers in the educational process, particularly while using ICT to learn English in class X at SMA Islam Nurul Fikri Boarding School, Banten Province. An ethnographic approach is used in the research process, which is qualitative. The results of this study show that in the ICT-based English learning process, the teacher's responsibilities also include serving as a student's learning partner, mentor, evaluator, inventor and coder, and role model. The teacher must take on the unique and primary role of a developer or programmer in ICT-based learning, though. In this situation, teachers must be able to create educational materials and media using ICT.

What roles do English teachers mostly play in their classrooms? Teachers in carrying out their roles certainly have different characteristics. This is what causes different perceptions in students when participating in learning, such as English learning. Teachers with an interesting and mastered way of teaching students usually get a good perception of the students and can motivate students to follow the learning. On the contrary, teachers with disliked roles in teaching will make students saturated and lazy, so as not to motivate students to follow the learning. In a study conducted by Burns and Myhill (2004), the role of the teacher in the classroom that still dominates is the teacher as a guide, where the teacher tends to explain and establish more dominant communication in the classroom.

Based on observations in the research on the roles of the English teachers of SMA Negeri 2 BITUNG, teacher as a guide is also a dominant teacher's role modeled by the English teachers in the teaching activities. For the sake of knowing which teacher's role the students prefer the most and whether the English teachers also played other types of roles in the classroom, this study was conducted. For this reason, the main objective of this study is to find out which role is most liked by students at SMA Negeri 2 Bitung in English learning. Another goal is to find out the types of roles their English teachers mostly play in daily teaching. Based on these objectives, the following research questions were formulated: (1) What are the most preferable English teacher's roles perceived by Grade XI Language and XII Language students at SMAN 2 BITUNG? and (2) What types of teacher roles do their English teachers mostly play in daily teaching? A research design with a proper data collection instrument and analyses were then chosen to answer these questions.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This research is a descriptive quantitative study where the data collected from respondents were analyzed statistically. In descriptive studies, research focuses on describing individuals, events, or conditions by studying them as they are in nature" (Siedlecki & Sandra, 2020). Because, according to Apuke (2017), in a quantitative research method, variables are quantified and analyzed to produce results, the variable of the research is identified and described quantitatively. It is a descriptive study because it is intended to know what is the most preferable English teacher's role perceived by students at SMAN 2 Bitung, and what types of teacher roles their English teachers mostly play in daily teaching.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were students of SMA Negeri 2 BITUNG who were made up of students of grade XI Language and XII Language in the second semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. Class XI Language and Class XII Language have different teachers, called Class XI A language teacher and Class XII B language teacher. The number of Grade XI Language students was 28 and the number of Grade XII Language students was 27. The respondents consisted of 21 males and 34 female students out of the total 55 students in the population.

Instruments

The research instrument used in this research to collect data was two different self-constructed questionnaires. The first questionnaire measures preferred English teachers' roles perceived by students, which has a total of 19 questions. On the other hand, the second one measures the dominant types of teachers' roles played by the English teacher, and it is also composed of 19 questions. In the first questionnaire, the respondents chose one of the following five-point Likert Scale responses on each question item: really like, like, less like, dislike, and really dislike. Similarly, for the second questionnaire, there are also five different responses the respondents had to choose, consisting of always, often, rarely, very rarely, and never.

To make sure that the questionnaires were valid and reliable, they went through a series of assessments and analyses. During the construction of the questionnaires, three educational experts in English teaching assessed the accuracy of each item to measure the components, and they criticized some weaknesses and gave suggestions for item improvement. The items were later improved based on their comments and suggestions. To check the reliability of the questionnaires, they were tried out to seven respondents [at least between five to ten respondents (Johnson & Christensen, 2014)]. The reliability analyses using Coefficient Alpha showed that the reliability index of the first questionnaire is .70 and of the second questionnaire is .87. Because the reliability coefficients have exceeded the minimum accepted reliability index, which is at least .70 (Reynolds et al., 2009), this shows that the two questionnaires are reliable or consistent for use.

Data Analysis

The data gathered through the offline administration of the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. During the analysis, the means of respondents' responses were calculated for each type of teacher's role. Finally, all the means of respondents' responses were summed up and divided by the number of respondents to calculate the overall mean of each teacher's role.

To interpret the mean of each teacher's role, it used two different five-level scales. To interpret the preferred English teacher's roles perceived by students, it used the following scales: 4.50 – 5.00 = mostly preferable, 3.50 – 4.49 = preferable, 2.50 – 3.49 = less preferable, 1.50 – 2.49 = undesirable, and 1.00 – 1.49 = mostly undesirable. Finally, to interpret the dominant types of teacher's role played by the English teacher, the following scales were used: 4.50 – 5.00 = mostly dominant, 3.50 – 4.49 = dominant, 2.50 – 3.49 = less dominant, 1.50 – 2.49 = not dominant, and 1.00 – 1.49 = least dominant. The whole mean of each teacher's role was then described using the scale descriptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What are the most preferred English teachers' roles perceived by Grade XI Language and XII Language students at SMA Negeri 2 Bitung? This is the first research question needs to be answered. The descriptive statistics analyses show the following results (see Table 1 & 2).

Table 1. Levels of Grade XI Language Students' Perception on English Teacher's Roles

| Type of Role | Controller | Director | Manager | Facilitator | Resource |
|--------------------|------------|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Mean | 4.07 | 4.18 | 4.01 | 4.61 | 4.30 |
| Standard Deviation | .60 | .46 | .53 | .27 | .46 |
| N | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |

Table 1 shows the levels of Grade XI Language Students' Perception of English Teacher's Roles. First, the level of perception on teacher as controller falls under the category of preferable (M=4.07). This means that students prefer the teacher as controller. Second, the perception level of the teacher as director is 4.18, which is also interpreted as preferable. This means that students also prefer the teacher as director. Third, the mean of the teacher as manager is 4.01. This can also be described as preferable or that the students prefer the teacher as a manager. Fourth, the mean of the teacher as facilitator is 4.61, or it can be described as mostly preferable. This means that the students mostly prefer the teacher as a facilitator. Fifth, the level of students' perception of the teacher as a resource is 4.30 (preferable). This means that, like the other three types of roles, the students prefer the teacher as a resource. To summarize, the students prefer the teacher's roles as controller, director, manager, and resource, but show the most preference for the role of facilitator.

Table 2. Levels of Grade XII Language Students' Perception on English Teacher's Roles

| Type of Role | Controller | Director | Manager | Facilitator | Resource |
|--------------------|------------|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Mean | 4.09 | 4.02 | 4.17 | 4.19 | 4.11 |
| Standard Deviation | .64 | .61 | .62 | .70 | .62 |
| N | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 |

What are the levels of Grade XII Language Students' Perception of English Teacher's Roles? Table 2 shows that the mean of the teacher as controller is 4.09, which indicates that the students prefer this type of role. The second teacher's role, director, is also preferable in the students' perception (M=4.02). Third, the role of teacher as manager is perceived as preferable by the students (M=4.16. This means that students like the teacher as a manager. Similarly, the fourth role (facilitator) and the fifth role (resource) are perceived as preferable (M=4.19 and M=4.11) by the students. To sum up, these results show that Grade XII Language students show the same level of perceived preference toward all types of teachers' roles, with none being higher than the others.

Table 3. Levels of Teacher's Roles the English Teachers Mostly Play in Daily Teaching as Perceived by Students

| Teacher | Controller | Director | Manager | Facilitator | Resource |
|-------------|------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Teacher A | 3.91 | 3.84 | 3.97 | 4.13 | 3.91 |
| Teacher B | 4.00 | 4.03 | 4.12 | 3.94 | 4.04 |
| Description | Dominant | Dominant | Dominant | Dominant | Dominant |

What types of teachers' roles do the English teachers mostly play in daily teaching? In Table 3, the results show that the levels of all types of roles fall in the category of dominantly played. It means that, from students' perception, both Teacher A and Teacher B equally and dominantly play all types of roles when they teach in the classroom. In other words, none of the types of roles is more dominantly played by the teachers than the other roles. This finding is similar to the findings of the research conducted by Annisa et al. (2021). In the research, they found that two of three teachers they investigated played all the teacher roles in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the existing findings, there are a few conclusions drawn. First, students of Class XI and XII Language at SMA Negeri 2 BITUNG show good preference for all types of teachers' roles (controller, director, manager, facilitator, and resource). However, they show a very good preference for one type of role, that is as a facilitator. This means that English teachers who play their roles as facilitators would be the most preferred by the students in English learning. Second, since the English teachers at SMA Negeri 2 Bitung proportionally play all types of roles in their teaching activities, this indicates that the two English teachers (Teacher A and Teacher B) fully realize the importance of playing all types of roles when teaching rather than emphasizing only one or two types of roles.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, this study provides several recommendations. Firstly, English teachers need to proportionally play their roles in teaching as a controller, director, manager, facilitator, and resource to create a positive environment for the English learning process in the classroom. Secondly, English teachers need to be aware that teachers as facilitators is the most preferred role in the classroom, so they may play this role more frequently in teaching. Finally, future studies may add other variables to similar studies like this study, for example, to study the relationship of teacher roles with other variables or what factors affect English teachers' ability to play their best roles in the classroom.

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