

Characteristics of a Good Teacher in the Communicative Student–Centered Classes from the Teachers’ Perspective in Jenin District

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Abstract: *This study seeks to examine the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative student -centered classes from the teachers’ perspective in Jenin District. A questionnaire of 25 items was used to collect the data necessary to answer the questions of the study and was distributed among the sample which was randomly selected from the teachers of English which consisted of 25 male and female teachers (9 males and 16 females). The descriptive statistical analysis along with means, standard deviations, percentages and T-test were used to collect and analyze the necessary data for finalizing the research. Results of the study showed that the respondents have a preference for teachers who give clear instructions and are professional in the target culture capable of developing authentic materials resented by using a variety of teaching skills in a conducive environment dominant by cooperation, class discussion, mutual respect, real willingness and appropriate rapports, additionally results showed that there were no significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the characteristics of good teacher in the communicative student -centered from the teachers perspective in Jenin due to the variables of gender, years of experience and qualifications. In the light of these findings, the researcher suggested further studies in other districts.*

Keywords: student-centered classes, teachers’ characteristics, teachers’ perspectives

1. Introduction

What exactly does the researcher want and willing to see is to transfer her classroom to student-centered? Theoretically speaking, a lot of study was mentioned by researchers in relevant areas which resulted in better teaching and sustainable learning. (Griffith and Lim, 2007). A good teacher in the communicative approach student -centered must have some qualities and characteristics that will help him engage his students in the learning process and make it fun. This means shifting the focus from grammar-based competence to more communicative competencies. This focus of learning is to make real communication; to provide opportunities to experiment and try to use the language; to provide opportunities to develop both accuracy and fluency; and to link the different skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) (Griffith & Lim, 2010 Raba’ and Hirzallah 2015). The question of what makes someone a good teacher is not restricted to a specific situation or to some teachers on the contrary, it is applicable to all teaching contexts in general and in specific to the field of English as a Foreign or second language where teachers can be hired simply for being a native language speaker who possesses accuracy and fluency (Darn, 2002).

Most people have an opinion on what qualifies someone to be a ‘good teacher’ based primarily on their own experiences in the classroom (McDonough and Shaw, 1993). Most, if asked, would be able to mention at least one teacher from their past who was memorable and kept in mind as a reference whenever the situation allows. In this regard, a question should be raised why they would keep these persons into that nebulous category. If explored further, they would probably be able to articulate, using adjectives similar to the ones used in the questionnaires included in this paper, who is a Good Teacher in the Communicative Student –Centered Classes from the Teachers’ Perspective?

Communicative language teaching emphasizes “self-direction for the learners”. (Oxford, 1990, p.10) As the teacher won’t be around to guide them the whole time, especially not when the learners speak the language outside the classroom they are expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning. According to Oxford, “this is essential to the active development of the new language” (1990, p.4). The learner should enter into situations where communication takes place as much as possible to increase his or her communicative proficiency. Learners have to participate in classroom activities based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning; they need to listen to their peers in order to carry out group work successfully. The teacher adopts different roles such as coordinator, an idea-person and a co-communicator, needs analyst, counselor and the group process manager (Oxford, 1990 and Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

2. Statement of the Problem

Give me a good teacher; I will give a good nation. Based on this assumption, the researcher sought to shed light on what makes a good teacher in the communicative approach student- centered from the teachers’ perspective via a discovery questionnaire suggested for the purpose

3. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to answer the question of the study:

1. What makes a good teacher in the communicative approach student –centered.
2. Are there Are there significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative student -centered from the teachers perspective in Jenin District due to the variables of gender, years of experience, and qualifications?

4. Questions of the Study

This study sought to answer these questions:

1. What are the good teacher characteristics in the communicative approach student-centered from the perspective of teachers in Jenin District?
2. Are there significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative student-centered from the teachers perspective in Jenin District due to the variables of gender, years of experience, and qualifications?

5. Significance of the Study

The role of the instructor in student-centered classrooms is to encourage learners to do more discovery learning and to learn from each other; the instructor focuses on constructing authentic, real-life tasks that motivate learners' involvement and participation. From this fact the study took its significance and importance.

6. Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to time, place and target: It took place during the first semester of the scholastic year of 2015/2016. It considered a sample from the teachers of English in Jenin district.

7. Literature Review

Hague (2008) states that in the context of the rapidly changing global scenario the importance of learning English as the main and only tool to communicate with the world can no longer be ignored. In the view of this, the research findings also have come up with in the same platform: It goes without saying that the "communicative language teaching" method is the most preferred technique. Most of the respondents realized this technique as one of the most effective tool, which was justified on the basis of comparative analysis of the opinion of both teacher and students. Communicative language teaching method is very important because this can easily be established and capture the students' attention. In the study, students were found more participating and encouraged to join in discussion session with their teachers.

Another important factor is, nowadays students are more extrovert, they always prefer group discussion, solve problem in groups, raise tiny association and team work to interact jointly. They believe in "united, act and solve". So the communicative Language Teaching is the most preferred method to overcome the weakness and fear of the students in developing their skill on English.

Lee (2007) explains that in a student-centered classroom, students are involved in the learning process and become committed to improving their English. Different learning styles can be accommodated, and students can help each other to develop their skills.

In a student-centered class, students get more "talking time." In a whole-class activity, the teacher may talk 50 percent of the time, and the students the rest of the time. No, wait! In a class of 50, each student would talk only about 1 percent of the time, and most wouldn't say anything. In groups of four, each student can talk about 25 percent of the time. In pairs, each student can talk about 50 percent of the time. If students want to improve their speaking skills, there's no substitute for pair and group work.

Student-centered activities are enjoyable and stimulating. Hearing different points of view, sharing experiences, brainstorming ideas, explaining things, reacting to other people, and expressing feelings with others in a well-managed classrooms which can be both funny and sustainable (Raba' 2016).

Yuan (2010) analyzed the situation with communication-based courses in EFL teaching in Chinese colleges. Reality is: local/foreign teachers use Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) not-very-effectively. He also analyzed practical aspects of the student-centered CLT model taught to passive and demotivated (in majority) private college students who suffer routine and stiff teaching techniques. He suggested an eclectic hybrid model combining Chinese and Western educational characteristics to aid local and foreign teachers to effectively train English learners by using the student-centered approach and CLT. Teacher's role in hybrid student-centered classes: preparing extra materials related to textbooks. Teachers encourage students' exploration in learning in different circumstances.

According to Chang (2011) foreign language teaching in many Asian-Pacific countries in recent decades shifted toward communicative-focused instruction. However, researchers reported a gap between policy and practice. To incorporate teachers' voices in adopting the communicative approach in the curriculum, this study explores factors that promote or hinder EFL teachers' implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Taiwanese college English classes. The findings revealed both hindrances and remedies in regard to the appropriate implementation of CLT. Ozsevik (2010) demonstrated similar challenges and suggested remedies in the implementation of CLT practices but in the Turkish context.

8. Methodology

Population of the Study: The study was conducted on English language teachers in Jenin in the first semester of the scholastic year of 2015/2016.

Instrument of the Study: In order to achieve the study objectives, the researcher reviewed the related literature and developed a questionnaire that consisted of 25 items.

Statistical Process: The results of the study were analyzed using SPSS program, extracting the averages and standard deviations, T-Test, and One way ANOVA test.

Variables of the Study: Independent variables are (Gender, Years of experience and qualifications.

Dependent variable (A good teacher in CLT)

Sample of the Study

The study population consisted of all male and female teachers of English in Jenin District. The sample consisted of 25 teachers 9 males and 16 females. Tables 1, 2 and 3 show frequencies and percentages for gender, qualifications and years of experience variables respectively.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of gender for teachers

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	9	36.0
	Female	16	64.0
Total		25	100.0

From the above table we notice that female percentage reaches 64%, whereas male percentage reaches 36%.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of qualifications

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Qualification	Diploma	1	4.0
	B.A	19	76.0
	M.A	5	20.0
Total		25	100.0

The above tables shows that the majority of respondents qualifications were B A with a percentage of 76%, then comes M A degree holders with 20%, and the lowest percentage was for Diploma holders with a percentage of 4%.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of years of experience

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Years of experience	Diploma	3	12.0
	B.A	17	68.0
	M.A	5	20.0
Total		25	100.0

The table shows that the highest percentage was for teachers with 5-10 years of experience with a percentage of 68%, and then came the teachers with more than 10 years of experience with a percentage of 20%, and the lowest percentage was for teachers with less than 5 years of experience with a percentage of 12%.

Instrument of the Study

The researcher used a 25-item questionnaire which was classified into two parts, the first included personal information about the respondents and the second part included the items of the questionnaire.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To test the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher used Cronbach-Alpha test on the study sample which was (0.84) and this suits the aim of the study. A group of specialists in TEFL from the directorate of education and

from different universities in the TEFL departments checked and assured the suitability of the items.

9. Results and Discussion

Results

The results of the main question “What are the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative approach student- centered from the teachers’ perspective in Jenin District?” Table (5) shows the results.

Table 5: Means, standard deviation and estimation level of the questionnaire items

No.	Item	Mean	S.D	Estimation Level
1.	Communicative student -centered approach requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English.	3.88	1.16	Agree
2.	Communicative student centered approach requires higher knowledge of the target language culture.	4.44	0.50	Strongly agree
3.	Students of low-level in English proficiency find it difficult to apply the communicative approach.	4.40	0.50	Strongly agree
4.	Students resist participating in communicative class activities.	4.32	0.47	Strongly agree
5.	Students lack motivation for developing communicative competence.	4.24	0.43	Agree
6.	Communicative approach to language teaching places emphasis on what learners know and do with language.	4.20	0.40	Agree
7.	The teacher prepares authentic material to enrich his students' learning in communicative approach.	4.20	0.50	Agree
8.	Teachers should emphasize communicative competence in communicative approach.	4.24	0.43	Agree
9.	Teachers focus on improving students' use of language for different purposes.	4.28	0.45	Agree
10.	Teachers are responsible for organizing the resources for the students.	4.20	0.40	Agree
11.	The teachers' tasks are true reflection to learners' needs.	4.24	0.43	Agree
12.	Teachers are facilitators in CLT classes.	4.20	0.40	Agree
13.	Teachers provide students with proper feedback in communicative classroom.	4.28	0.45	Agree
14.	Teachers correct all grammatical errors made by students in the communicative student centered approach.	4.24	0.43	Agree
15.	Teachers are error correctors in communicative classrooms.	4.16	0.37	Agree
16.	Students should interact through pair and group- work.	4.16	0.37	Agree
17.	Students act with each other more than with the teacher.	4.12	0.33	Agree
18.	Students practice language outside of the classroom as a result of applying communicative student -centered approach.	4.44	0.50	Strongly agree
19.	Students are self-motivated in the communicative student centered approach.	4.20	0.40	Agree
20.	Students work cooperatively rather than individually in the communicative student centered approach.	4.44	0.50	Strongly agree
21.	Teachers discuss more homework and assignments in communicative approach.	4.36	0.56	Strongly agree
22.	Teachers give instructions in the target language.	4.32	0.47	Strongly agree
23.	English is learned authentically through communication.	4.20	0.40	Agree
24.	Teachers do not have much time to develop materials.	4.36	0.48	Strongly agree
25.	Students use the language productively and receptively.	4.28	0.45	Agree
Total		4.25	0.24	Agree

The above table shows that the respondents strongly agreed with 8 items, two items are related to students namely Students of low-level in English proficiency that forms difficulty to apply the communicative approach and students who resist in participation in class activities). This agreement shows that teachers see that student may be a source of difficulty when applying the CLTA. Teachers also agree that (Communicative student -centered approach requires higher knowledge of the target language culture and Communicative student- centered approach emphasizes that students should have an opportunity to practice language outside of the classroom) which may lack both students and teacher and becomes a hinder to the teaching-learning process, they also see that (Teachers have little time to develop materials for communicative classes), since the time fixed for coving the current materials the students cover, they also agree that (In Communicative student-centered approach students should work cooperatively rather than individually) and that (the teacher discusses students homework and assignments) in addition to (Teachers give instructions in the target language in the Communicative student centered approach).

The agreements on these items show that teachers' perspective of the student- centered communicative approach are to some extent negative, for they agree mostly on the obstacles that may prevent them from applying this approach in their classrooms. The researcher believes that it is the responsibility of teachers to create the suitable learning atmosphere and materials to help learners be enthusiastic and willing to learn. In this regard the researcher agreed with Ozsevik(2010) and Chang (2011) who showed that there are difficulties facing the application of Student – Centered Communicative approach, stem from four directions, namely, the teacher, the students, the educational system, and CLT itself and only teachers who give clear instructions and are professional in the target culture capable of developing authentic materials resented by using a variety of teaching skills in a conducive environment dominant by cooperation, class discussion, mutual respect, real willingness and appropriate rappers can apply CLT appropriately.

The Study Hypothesis Analysis and Discussion

First hypothesis: There were no significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative student- centered from the

teachers perspective due to gender. T-Test was conducted on the independent sample; the following table shows the results of the test

Table 6: T-Test Results for the Independent Sample related to Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	S. D	t	Sig.*
	Male	9	4.30	.26	.783	0.693
	Female	16	4.22	0.22		

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The above table shows that sig. reached (.693) which is higher than alpha ($\alpha=0.05$), so there is statistically

Table 7: ONE WAY ANOVA results for the means of the study respondents due to qualification

The good teacher in the communicative student- centered		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	Between Groups	.014	2	0.007	0.115	0.892
	Within Groups	1.374	22	0.062		
	Total	1.389	24			

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The previous table shows that sig reaches (.892) which is higher than alpha ($\alpha=0.05$), it is clear that there are no significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative student- centered from the teachers perspective due to the variable of qualifications.

significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the good teacher in the communicative student- centered from the teachers' perspective due to gender.

Second hypothesis: There were no significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative student- centered from the teachers perspective due to the variable of qualifications. To test this hypothesis, One Way Anova was conducted and the following table shows the results:

Third hypothesis: There were no significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative student- centered from the teachers perspective due to years of experience.

To test this hypothesis, One Way Anova was conducted and the following table shows the results:

Table 8: ONE WAY ANOVA results for the means of the study respondents due to the variable of years of experience

The good teacher in the communicative student- centered		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total	Between Groups	0.017	2	0.009	0.140	0.870
	Within Groups	1.371	22	0.062		
	Total	1.389	24			

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The previous table shows that sig reaches (.870) which is higher than alpha ($\alpha=0.05$), it is clear that there were no significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=0.05$) in the characteristics of a good teacher in the communicative student- centered from the teachers perspective due to years of experience

teachers of high potentials capable of achieving the change we all wish to see.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The research showed that applying Communicative Student-Centered Approach faced difficulties on four levels: the teacher, the student, the educational system and the teaching material. Well-planned teachers who encourage cooperation and develop authentic materials in a good learning environment characterized by collaboration could help in appropriate transfer of the existing learning system.

The researcher recommended the inclusion of authentic materials that enable learners to use the language appropriately in real life situations. Additionally she invited the Ministry of Education to cooperate with all the educational faculties in private and public universities and colleges to modify the different courses to graduate

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