

A Study of Students' Attitude toward Teachers' Affective Factors in EFL Classrooms

Nahid Amini Ranjbar

Department of Foreign Languages, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran

E-mail: Amini.Nahid2010@gmail.com

Mehry Haddad Narafshan (Corresponding author)

Department of Foreign Languages, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran

E-mail: mnarafshan@yahoo.com

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Abstract

In any teaching-learning situation, teacher plays a significant role in the classroom. This study aimed at investigating the students' attitude toward teachers' affective factors in EFL classrooms. In this study, the students' population was 300 pre-intermediate (based on the institutes' placement test) female EFL students (10 to 25 years old) in four English language institutes located in Rafsanjan. In accordance with Morgan and Krejcie table (1970), 160 pre-intermediate female EFL students were selected randomly as the sample size from four English language institutes in Rafsanjan. The results revealed that teachers' self-confidence, attitude toward English culture, attitude toward English language, attitude toward English people, lack of anxiety(class management), lack of anxiety(topic management), integrative motivation, and instrumental motivation were the affective factors that could affect students' English language learning. The most important factor to affect the students' achievement was teachers' integrative motivation and the least important factor was teachers' lack of anxiety (topic management).

Keywords: Affective Factors, Attitude, EFL (English as a foreign language) students

1. Introduction

Kirova, Petkovska and Koceva(2012)mentioned that "Language is a truly human characteristic, and self-identity is intermingled with language" (p.1). Mahu(2012) stated that English is accepted as the official language in many countries and also it is spoken broadly in other countries where it is not an official language because it is needed in many subjects and careers. As an international language, it is an urgent need for EFL learners to learn speaking English. In foreign language speaking learning, there are different factors that influence the learning process such as, teachers' personal factors (age, level, gender,etc), teachers' social factors(culture, religion, etc) and teachers' affective factors(motivation, self- confidence, attitude, anxiety, etc).Due to its enormous importance, the affective side of the teachers is one of the most important factors in language learning success or failure. Rashidi, Yamini, and Shafiei (2011) claimed thataffective factors are those that are related to emotional reaction and motivation which directly influence on the learning. Dornyei (2001) and Hurd (2008) considered the affect as the emotions, feelings, and attitudes that everybody brings to the learning situation and the role these play in motivation. Dornyei (2001) believed that teachers' behavior is a powerful motivational tool. Teachers' behavior can attract and involve the students in the learning process. Marzban and Sadighi (2013) stated that "Affective variables are the only important factors involved in foreign/second language learning" (p.155). The present study investigates the EFL learners' attitude toward teachers' affective factors in English classrooms.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Affective Factors

Brown (2014) stated that the growth of affective states or feelings entails different personality factors, feelings both about people themselves and about others with whom they communicate. Dornyei (2001) and Hurd (2008) believed thataffect refers to the emotions, feelings, and attitudes that individuals bring to the learningexperience and the role these play in motivation. Du (2009) claimed that "affective factors in language learning are like a filter which filtrates the amount of input in learners' brain"(p.162).Krashen (1988) has mentioned that there are four factors that can influence the second language acquisition which are related to the individual differences: motivation, attitude, anxiety, and self-confidence.

2.2 Studies done on Teacher's Motivation in Foreign Language Classrooms

Yuan (2006) investigated the work motivation and job satisfaction among 200 teachers from 4 universities in Hunan, China. This study stated that work itself and interpersonal relationship were main positive factors that motivated teachers in the universities. The most negative factor contributed to dissatisfaction was the inadequate professional training and limited opportunity for promotion. According to this study, male teachers and female teachers had similar conception about work itself and interpersonal relationship. However, female teachers had more satisfaction of income, administration and promotion than male teachers. Despite this, other background factors of teachers, age, degree, work experience and marriage status had no significant effect on work motivation or job satisfaction.

Pu (2006) did a research on teachers' motivation and job satisfaction among 125 teachers from 4 universities in Hebei, China. This study showed that interpersonal relationship was the most important factor that contributed to job satisfaction while policy and the administration were the most important factors that led to their job dissatisfaction. University teachers had different attitudes toward job satisfaction considering their different marriage condition, position and department. Single teachers had less job satisfaction of income than teachers who were married. The higher position the teachers had the more satisfaction of income they showed.

Dweik and Awajan (2013) investigated the motivational level of English language teachers in Jordan. To achieve the goal of the study, the researchers used an English language teachers' questionnaire. Second Educational Directorate had been purposively selected to respond to the questionnaire. Data obtained indicated that the Ministry of Education, the school principals, the English language supervisors, the teachers' colleagues and their students did not motivate the English language teachers in the Jordanian public secondary schools. The study also showed that the teachers of English language are motivated because they like their jobs, and teaching will help them in their future. Teaching also gives them security for their families and it is prestigious to be an English language teacher.

2.3 Studies done on Teacher's Anxiety in Foreign Language Classrooms

Tum (2010) conducted a study with 79 non-native EFL teachers from a Middle East University and 131 non-native EFL student teachers attending teacher education programs to investigate whether the different participants experienced feelings of foreign language anxiety and examine the relationship between personal characteristics and the levels of anxiety experienced. The participants were found to experience higher levels of foreign language anxiety than nonnative EFL teachers. Merç (2011) conducted a qualitative study with 150 Turkish EFL student teachers to find out what the sources of teachers' foreign language anxiety are. The sources of foreign language teacher anxiety were found in the areas of dealing with students, maintaining classrooms, teaching a difficult subject or teaching a subject for the first time, being observed by cooperating teachers, being interrupted by mentors suggesting ways to teach students properly during students' teaching, and miscellaneous.

Aslrasouli and Pourvahid (2014) investigated teacher anxiety among practicing EFL teachers in the Iranian context. In particular, this study tried to identify different sources of anxiety among male and female teachers across novice and experienced EFL instructors. The researcher used a self-report questionnaire to collect the data from 114 EFL teachers working in universities, high schools and language centers. The analysis of data revealed that about 57.65% of teachers had the feelings of anxiety in one way or another. Furthermore, of five main categories, interpersonal relations had the highest impact whereas employment structure seemed to have the lowest effect on anxiety. Other categories, language proficiency and knowledge, facilities and resources and other Factors, had moderate effects on teacher anxiety. The study also found that of 48 items as the sources of anxiety, most of the localized items had a great influence on teaching anxiety.

2.4 Teacher's Attitude in Foreign Language Classrooms

Brown (1982) believed effective teachers understand the problems of students. They are empathetic, considerate and reflective. They know the diversity of issues associated with students and plan how to solve their problems. Brown and Richard (2008) stated teachers' attitude also affects their own abilities. Positive approach in teaching enables the teachers to create a learning community where every student has access to meaningful learning opportunities. Teachers with positive attitude do not show mistakes of students, rather they work to improve their talents.

Carr (1990) believed that professional attitude of a teacher is the demonstration of his/her likes or dislikes, feelings, emotions or behavior towards teaching and learning practices in the realm of education. Research has proved that teachers with positive attitude perform better in teaching and learning. They are more cooperative and dedicated in the dispensation of their duties as teachers. Professional attitude of teachers plays a fundamental role in shaping the behaviors of teachers. Bass (1999) stated that teachers who accept teaching as their profession keep direct relationship with other teachers, students, parents, communities and the society at large. They do not hesitate to share their experiences with their colleagues. Rather they seek guidance and provide support to others in the field of education. They consider themselves as guides, coaches and leaders in the process of teaching and learning. Hence, most attitudes are the result of direct experience and observations from the environment in which teacher operate as practitioners.

Baxter (1989) believed that teachers with positive attitude have stable emotions and feelings. They demonstrate affection, patience, sincerity and care while interacting with other teachers, parents or school staff. They do not work in isolation. Such teachers work in collaboration and they have high self-confidence. Students do not hesitate to meet them as they are accessible to everyone openly. Bean (1996) claimed positive professional attitude helps teachers develop the ability to establish shared environment where everyone is able to contribute. They have a decent and complete control on the teaching and learning environment and monitor it effectively. Black (1989) stated that modern concept of

classroom is that it is a community of learners. Students have the right and the responsibility to contribute. Therefore, it is important for teachers to allow students both fair responsibly and freedom to act. Teachers who have a positive thinking are able to create learning communities.

3. Methodology

The population of this study was 300 pre-intermediate (based on the institutes' placement test) female EFL students (10 to 25 years old) in four English language institutes located in Rafsanjan. In accordance with Morgan and Krejcie table (1970), 160 pre-intermediate female EFL students were selected randomly as the sample size from four English language institutes in Rafsanjan. Among all 160 students who took part in this study, 79(49.4%) of the students' age range was 10-15 years old, 70(43.8%) students were 15-20 years old. In addition, 11(6.8%) of the students were 20-25 years old. A structured interview was administered to the students, and it was used for collecting the data on students' attitude toward teachers' affective factors in EFL classrooms. In the structured interview, the questions were divided into eight parts of the attitude of teachers towards English culture, the attitude of teachers towards English language, the attitude of teachers towards English people, self-confidence, teachers' lack of anxiety(class management), teachers' lack of anxiety (topic management), teachers' integrative motivation, and teachers' instrumental motivation.

4. Results and Discussion

Regarding Table 1, 21 students (13.1%) believed that the teachers' self confidence, 8 students (5%) believed that attitude of teacher toward English culture, 15 students (9.3%) believed that attitude of teacher toward English language, 7 students (3.7%) believed that attitude of teacher toward English people , 5 students (3.1%) believed that lack of anxiety of the teacher to the class management, 2 students (1.2%) believed that lack of anxiety of teacher to the topic management, 90 students (56.2%) believed that integrative motivation of teacher, and 13 students (8.1%) believed instrumental motivation of teacher can make an emotional relationship between the teacher and the students in the classroom. Thus, more than half of the students (56.2%) believed that integrative motivation of teacher can affect the students' performance. As the table 2 and figure 1 show, the mean scores of teachers' self-confidence, attitude toward English culture, attitude toward English language, attitude toward English people, lack of anxiety(class management), lack of anxiety(topic management), integrative motivation, and instrumental motivation were 5.46, 4.43, 5.22, 3.78, 3.25, 3.24, 4, 5.73 and 4.89. The highest mean score was for teachers' integrative motivation (M=5.73) and the lowest mean score was for teachers' lack of anxiety (Topic Management) (M=3.24).

Table1. Frequency distribution of Students' Attitude towards Teacher's Affective Factors in EFL Classrooms

Situation	Frequency	Percent
Self-Confidence of Teacher	21	13.1%
Attitude of Teacher toward English Culture	8	5%
Attitude of Teacher toward English language	15	9.3%
Attitude of Teacher toward English People	6	3.7%
Lack of Anxiety of Teacher to the Class Management	5	3.1%
Lack of Anxiety of Teacher to the topic Management	2	1.2%
Integrative Motivation of Teacher	90	56.2%
Instrumental Motivation of Teacher	13	8.1%
Total	160	100%

Table 2. Friedman Test of Students' Attitude towards Teacher's Affective Factors in EFL Classrooms

Factors	Mean Rank	priority
Self-Confidence of Teacher	5.46	2 nd
Attitude of Teacher toward English Culture	4.43	5 th
Attitude of Teacher toward English language	5.22	3 nd
Attitude of Teacher toward English People	3.78	6 th
Lack of Anxiety of Teacher (Class Management)	3.25	7 th
Lack of Anxiety of Teacher(topic Management)	3.24	The last
Integrative Motivationof Teacher	5.73	The first
Instrumental Motivationof Teacher	4.89	4 th

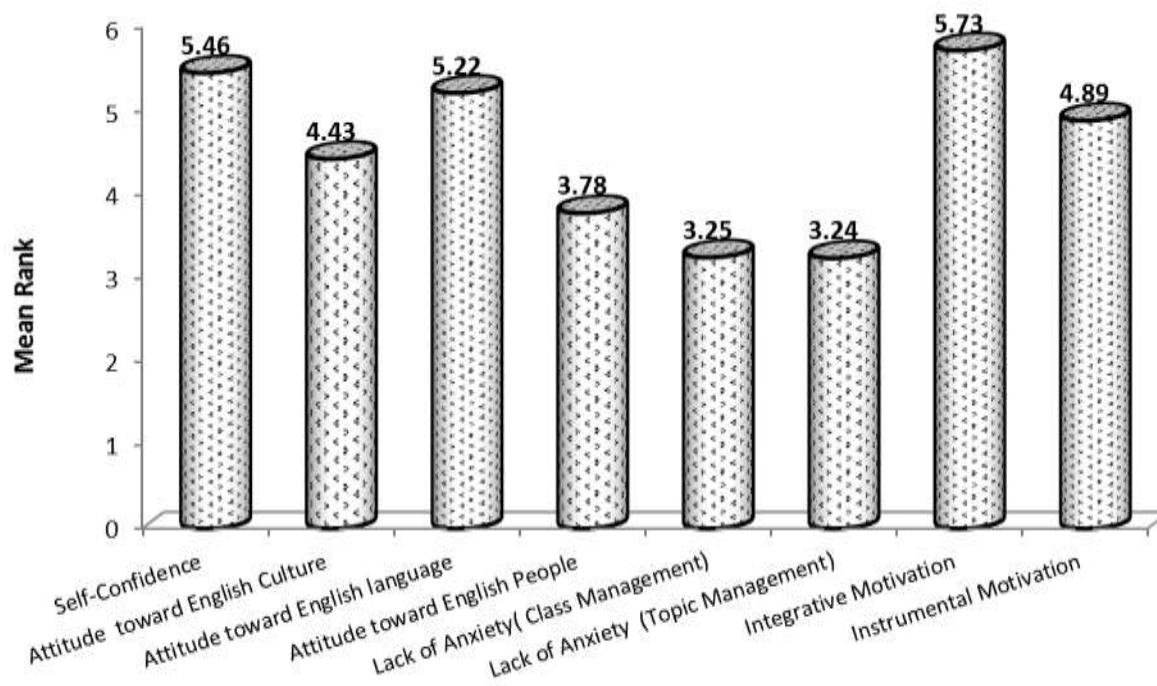


Figure 1. The Mean Scores of Teachers' Affective Factors in EFL Classrooms

5. Conclusion

The evidence from this study revealed that teachers' self-confidence, attitude toward English culture, attitude toward English language, attitude toward English people, lack of anxiety(class management), lack of anxiety(topic management), integrative motivation, and instrumental motivation were the affective factors that could affect students' English language learning. The most important factor to affect the students' achievement was teachers' integrative motivation and the least important factor was teachers' lack of anxiety (topic management).

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