القدوات في تدريس اللغة: اساتذة اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية من العراقيين كحالة

أ. م. د. رائد لطيف عكله، م. شروق طلب جعفر

قسم الدراسات الاسلامية باللغة الانكليزية، كلية الامام الاعظم، قسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة ديالى، ٣٢٠٠١، ديالى، العراق.

raedugla78@gmail.com, shurooqtalab@al-yarmok.edu.iq

الخلاصة

تحاول هذه الدراسة التعرف على اهمية القدوة في تدريس اللغة. هذه الدراسة هي دراسة نوعية استخدمت فيها المقابلة الشبه منتظمة. تم تحصيل البيانات من سبعة اساتذة لغة انكليزية في جامعات عراقية مختلفة. من خلال البيانات المستحصلة من المشتركين في الدراسة، حيث بينت النتائج ان الاساتذة يعتقدون من المهم ان يكون هنالك قدوة يحتذى بها في تدريس اللغة الانكليزية، وتحديد القدوات الخاصة بكل واحد منهم، وماهي الخصائص التي يقدرونها كثيرا" في قدواتهم. تظهر نتائج هذه الدراسة انه من المهم جدا" ان يكون لديك قدوة تحتذي به او بها في تدريس اللغة الانكليزية وتعلمها. وبينت الدراسة ايضا" ان معلميهم كانوا مؤثرين بشكل كبير فيهم حيث عدوهم قدوات لهم. اخيرا"، عد المشتركون ان هناك خصائص يمكن تقديرها في القدوة كالتحفيز، وامتلاك اساليب تدريس مختلفة، التمييز، الحداثة، الابتكار، الاسلوب الأكاديمي، التفاعل الايجابي، والمعرفة، والحس الانساني العالي، والتفاني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اساتذة اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية من العراقيين، تعلم اللغة الانكليزية، تعليم اللغة الانكليزية، القدوة.

Role Models in Language Teaching: A Case of Iraqi EFL University Lecturers

Asst. Prof. Dr. Raed Latif Ugla, Shurooq Talab Jaafar

Department of Islamic Studies in English Language, Al-Imam Al-adham University College, Baghdad,10001, Iraq,

Department of English Language, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Diyala, 32001, Diyala, Iraq.

Email [1] raedugla78@gmail.com, [2] shurooqtalab@al-yarmok.edu.iq

Abstract:

This study tries to identify the importance of role models in language teaching. This study is a qualitative study, which used a semi-structured interview. The data were elicited from seven volunteered participants who are working as lecturers at different universities in Iraq. With data collected from those participants, the analysis investigated whether those lecturers think it is important to have an English language teaching role model, who are their role models, and what characteristics they valued most in their English language teaching role models. The findings of this study show that it is very important to have a role model in language teaching and learning. It also reveals that teachers have great effects to be selected as role models. Finally, it is found that the participants valued different characteristics in their model such as motivation, having different teaching styles, uniqueness, freshness, innovativeness, having academic style, positive interaction, being knowledgeable, having a high human sense, and devotion.

Keywords: Iraqi EFL lecturers; language learning; language teaching; Role model.

1. Introduction

The English language has a global reputation in the world, so learning and teaching the English language has crucial importance worldwide[1-4]. Therefore, finding the best ways in teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is of great importance to researchers in countries that use EFL [5-8]. A role model is a considerable issue in language teaching and learning [9-14]. Having a role model in life or carrier may help to motivate or enhance someone to do the best or to be more like him or her [15-20] emphasized the need for individuals to have a role models. "Role models of all kinds can exert considerable influence in shaping our values, attitudes, and beliefs [21]. According to [22], teachers could be considered role models in their classrooms and if those teachers are not native English speakers this will sometimes lead to teaching their students incorrect English language grammar rules or vocabulary. Accordingly, it is believable that teachers need to have native English speakers models to motivate and encourage them to struggle for being more effective in their teaching [23].

Since there are no studies in the Arab region regarding the effectiveness of role models in language teaching and there is no evidence that any other researchers tried to explain the importance of role models in language teaching with a special focus on the advantages and disadvantages of role model for EFL lecturers, this study will examine the importance of such models in EFL teaching, who they are, and what characteristics they have which effect in shaping Iraqi EFL lecturers' teaching way and style at tertiary level.

2. Review of Literature

By focusing on its educational significance, role modeling has its origins in the social learning theory [24-30]. Albert Bandura developed this theory in 1977 [31]. In his theory, the main idea was that people learn through interactions with others. More specifically, in a social context, people can behave similarly to others that they observe and watch. This means that those people develop behaviors more like those they pay attention to. They try to imitate them in everything since they consider those people as models. According to [32], social learning theory could be considered an effective learning theory. Learning needs to be preceded by observation and four steps: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Based on these principles, there is no need to have a change in our behavior in the learning process. People observe, pay attention, and imitate their models. Following that, people require storing the information they get from their models. Increasing and strengthening this information by focusing on continuous and repeated exposure, as well as practicing various forms of exercises, which leads to interpreting symbolic representations into actual action. Finally, people should be motivated well to imitate what behavior they observed. As a result of all these steps, learning will occur and this process represents what is called modeling.

The research has noted that there is a lack of research on role modeling in the field of English language teaching. By looking for previous studies of role models, it is found that medical education has much more studies in this regard. [21] mentioned that role modeling was enriched more in medical education. In their study entitled "Role Models in Language Learning: Results of a Large-Scale International Survey", they emphasized the importance of role models in mastering and learning a

second language. They also provided a framework of role model structure, which are "overall command of English, paralinguistic features, personal attributes and accent/variety of English" (p. 20).

3. Methodology

3.1   Participant

The participants of this study were seven lecturers who worked at three different colleges in Iraq. Those participants participated voluntarily in the current study. They are teaching at the department of English language at three different colleges as mentioned earlier. The following table shows their background information as follows:

Participants	Qualification	Major	Working Experience	Place of Work
NA1	Ph.D.	TESOL	More than 17 years	College of Basic Education/ Diyala
SU2	Ph.D.	English Literature	More than 10 years	College of Education for Human sciences/ Diyala
KA3	Ph.D.	Linguistics	More than 3 years	College of Education for Human sciences/ Diyala
AE4	M.A.	English Literature	More than 3 years	Al-Yarmouk University College/ Diyala
DU5	M.A.	Linguistics	More than 3 years	Al-Yarmouk University College/ Diyala
SH6	M.A.	English Literature	1 year	Al-Yarmouk University College/ Diyala
OM7	M.A.	Linguistics	1 year	Al-Yarmouk University College/ Diyala

3.2   Data Collection:

To get qualitative data from the participants, the current study used a semi-structured interview. This instrument is a widely used method of data collection in social sciences [33]. The researchers used this instrument because it enables to get valuable and more in-depth information regarding the participants' experience. The interview questions were validated by three experts in the field of the English language. Those experts agreed that all three questions of the interview are valid except question number three. They asked the researchers to use "English language teaching role model" instead of "role model". This change could be identified as follows:

- What characteristics do you value most in your English language teaching role model? Why?

The interviewees were asked three questions regarding role models. Before that, the participants were given a brief explanation showing what a role model means to get more in-depth responses from them. This explanation is as follows:

"A role model is someone who inspires you to do valuable or great things. He/ she may provide you with guidance, strength, or motivation in your life. You always respect and want to become more like him/ her. For example, if you are a talk show host, your role model might be:

"**Oprah Winfrey**"

or

"**Dr. Phil**"

I would like you to think about your English language teaching role model: he/ she might be a teacher, a friend, a linguist, a colleague, a philosopher, etc. Moreover, your English role model could be anyone who has achieved what you want to achieve in English language teaching!"

After that they were asked the following three questions:

Q1. Do you think it is important to have an English language teaching role model? Why?

Q2. Who is your role model?

Q3. What characteristics do you value most in your English language teaching role model? Why?

3.3   Data Analysis

After recordings, all the interviews, the researchers analyzed the data elicited from the participants. He transcribed the data by listening to interview recordings. He adopted six phases of analysis from [34]. These six phases could be identified as follows:

1.   Familiarizing yourself with your data
2.   Generating initial codes
3.   Searching for themes
4.   Reviewing themes
5.   Defining and naming themes
6.   Producing the report

Following the aforementioned phases of analysis, the participants' responses concerning the interview questions will be summarized in the following direct quotes. These responses were divided into three groups. Each group followed one interview question as follows:

Q1. Do you think it is important to have an English language teaching role model? Why?

Responses Group 1.

The following direct quotes show the participants' responses concerning question number one:

"Yes, I do think that it is vital for every English learner to have an English teacher as a role model. The reason behind having a role model is that teachers can motivate their students to work hard in order to improve their English language. Having a role model as an English teacher pushes students to do their best. If the English language teacher talks about his own experience of learning English, his students will try to follow the same strategies for learning the English language. As a result, they might end up doing like their role model or even better than him" (NA1).

" Yes, it is important to have an English language teaching role model because he will inspire me to follow his steps in success, and I will try to develop myself in order to be a successful person like him and work hard to achieve what I hope despite the potential difficulties if any" (SU2).

"Having a role model in our life is always a good idea not least in the teaching realm. Emulating a good teacher's actions and values will serve as a guiding light for us and inspire us to excel at our tremendous job. As regards English language teachers, I find it crucial to emulate someone of vast experience and knowledge and ask for advice and guidance" (KA3).

"English Language Teaching Role Models are definitely needed in Language learning and teaching as well. It is something inspiring to have a person who can guide you in the right manner in language learning. Usually, students place their model role for language learning in their teacher hence he is the first person whom they see in their language learning process. Further, the teacher can be a sublime model role in teaching the English language if he impresses his students with his style in language learning" (AE4).

"It is important to have a role model but it's not essential. However, having one might be a source of motivation" (DU5).

" Yes, it is important because the role model will act as a motivator for learners. However, I do not personally think that everyone needs a role model because sole learners have the will to learn from within" (SH6).

"Role model is important for self-improvement since he/she represents a reference to evaluate ourselves" (OM7).

Q2. Who is your role model?

Responses Group 2.

The following direct quotes show the participants' responses concerning question number two:

"My role model as an English teacher is Dr. Omran. He was one of my professors during my master's journey" (NA1).

"My role model is Angelina Jolie. She is a famous actress and a person who feels the suffering of others and has contributed to alleviating their suffering, especially in Africa" (SU2).

"I can't say I have a certain role model personally but I always seek my senior professors for help and guidance" (KA3).

"Personally, my role model in English language teaching is my professors at the college and precisely English Language Department Professors and other teachers who impress me along my English language learning process" (AE4).

"Frankly, through the years, I didn't have specific role models. So, I chose to consider certain characteristics from other instructors that I admire and consider those characteristics as a proper guide for being a better instructor" (DU5).

"Almost all my instructors are my role models" (SH6).

"For me, I have more than one role model during the stages of learning. Starting with the primary stage, the first person that inspires me was Mrs. Suham who taught me the strength of personality in performance because she formed a solid foundation, which motivated me to be an English teacher today. She gave me the opportunity to present and explain the material to the students as she sat to follow and guide me when I was eleven years old. During the intermediate and preparatory stages of learning, Mrs. Afaf was my model she was intelligent, justice, vital, and calm. She is beloved and respected by all of the students. In my higher studies for my master's degree, my role model is my supervisor Prof. Dr. Ayad Hameed. He has the ability to simplify difficult information by relating it to reality. He has had a great influence on me I have learned a lot from him and how to be a successful and cooperative supervisor in the future. He is a man of knowledge; answers questions confidently with an excellent and respectful speaking style" (OM7).

Q3. What characteristics do you value most in your English language teaching role model? Why?

Responses Group 3.

The following direct quotes show the participants' responses concerning question number three:

"One of the most significant characteristics that I really value in my role model was the way he made us stay motivated. In addition, he made us overcome many challenges and difficulties when he talked about the numerous challenges he faced" (NA1).

"Motivation is one of the most important characteristics of English language teaching role models because it will be a positive factor for students' success and help to guide them right in their study and life. He will also encourage them to move forward and achieve their ambitions" (SU2).

"I like the easy-going approach most of my professors adopt in their teaching. Setting up barriers between the teacher and the students should be to a certain limit because otherwise, disconnection will prevail between the two. Hence, the learning process will be put at a disadvantage. Another noteworthy characteristic here is innovativeness. Students like their teachers to be different, unique, and always fresh. These characteristics, among others, motivate the students and also define what a good teacher looks like" (KA3).

"Actually, my role models are characterized by their academic style and the simple language they use in English language teaching. They use simple phrases and up-to-date teaching methods besides making use of the educational materials in their lessons or lectures. Also, they make use of instant interactions with the students while teaching. They have a high human sense to keep their lesson or lecture feasible or easy for their students" (AE4).

"Devotion is the most important characteristic I look up to in any instructor not just my role models. Also, qualification, although it is a requirement, should never consider oneself as being fully qualified. So, a role model needs to be in constant pursuit of knowledge in his/her field" (DU5).

"They seem like almost perfect with all aspects of knowledge" (SH6).

"The strength of personality, a teacher who has desirable friendly personal characteristics towards his/her students is more able to bring changes in their behavior and is more able to arouse their interest and direct them in the right desired direction. Besides, the diversity in teaching methods that suits the student's level in order to achieve the educational goals. Being a knowledgeable person in his/ her field of teaching in order not to be embarrassed by students' questions" (OM7).

4. Discussion

Firstly, the findings of this study reveal that having a role model in language teaching and learning is very important. This is in line with the study of Muir et al. (2019) who believed in the importance of role models in language learning. In this study, most of the participants agreed that there is a need to have a role model in EFL teaching, but not essential as one of them mentioned. They explained that this importance is related to what role models can act in language teaching and learning. The findings also reveal that a role model might work as a motivator who could help his/ her EFL students in their learning by benefiting from his/ her experience in language learning. This model may inspire his/ her followers to be more like him/ her. He/ she could also act as a guide or as a reference to evaluate EFL learners.

Secondly, by focusing on the identity of their role model, most of the participants stated that their teachers and lecturers are role models. And since those role models are non-native speakers of English, it may deal with nothing with EFL teaching. [22] stated "While teachers serve as role models in classrooms worldwide, in cases when English is not the native language of the teacher, it can easily lead to students learning the wrong vocabulary or grammar rules" (p.285). One participant selected Angelina Jolie as a model. This means that teachers and lecturers have a great influence on language teaching and learning rather than famous persons. This effect does not merely affect the EFL students in their learning but it may continue in their career life.

Finally, with regards to the main characteristics of role models, which are identified in this study, the following characteristics are valued more by the participants (motivation, having different teaching styles, uniqueness, freshness, innovativeness, having academic style, positive interaction, knowledge, having a high human sense, and devotion).

5. Conclusion

This study was motivated by introductory information that shows the importance of having a role model in language teaching and learning. This information was based on many investigations, which have been done in the education field. The researchers conducted a qualitative study to explain this importance, identifying the role models that Iraqi EFL teachers have, and finally, what characteristics that valued more in those role models by our teachers. This study may be used as a baseline dataset for further studies in this field. Based on the results of this study, the researchers conclude that most EFL teachers have their own role models. This model may be closer to them, especially; their teachers who have direct effects on them. On the other hand, this study has outlined five categories of characteristics of role models that are highlighted by the participants in their role models. These categories could be outlined as follows:

Category	Characteristics
Personal	Uniqueness, Freshness
Relational	Positive interaction
Social role	Devotion, Having an academic style
Humility	Having a high human sense
Professional	Motivation, Knowledgeable, Innovativeness, Having different teaching style

These categories could be used as a baseline for further research to categorize the role models' characteristics. Researchers can expand this categorization by finding out more characteristics that may be related to many categories not identify in this study.

References:

[1]. Jaafar, S. Listening comprehension for first grade students of department of English language arts at AL-Yarmouk University College. Diyala Journal, (58), 799–819, 2013.

[2]. Jaafar, S. The effect of gender on the achievement of third year students in the area of English drama. Arts Journal, (110), 61–82, 2014.

[3]. Jaafar, S. Iraqi EFL college stduents' performance in the area of perfect tense, methodology of teaching English as a foreign langauge. Deutschland - Germany: LAP LAMBERT Acadmic Publishing, 2016.

[4]. Jaafar, S. Second year students' problems in mastering English sonnet. Al-Yarmouk Journal, 9(9), 101–113, 2017.

[5]. Jaafar, S. Buragohain, D., & Haroon, H. Differences and classifications of borrowed and loan words in linguistics context: A critical review. In D. Suryani, I. and Buragohain (Ed.), International Languages and Knowledge: Learning in a Changing World (2nd ed., pp. 95–112). Kanger: Universiti Malaysia Perlis Press, 2019.

[6]. Jaafar, S. Dzakiria, H., & Singh, M. Survey study of borrowings in the Arabic language based on the hierarchy of linguistics branches. The Asian EFL Journal, 25(1), 1–23, 2021.

[7]. Jaafar, S., Dzakiria, H., & Singh, M. Morphological descriptive study of borrowings In Iraqi undergraduate students. International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, 26(1), 163–175, 2022. https://doi.org/10.37200/IJPR/V26I1/PR340011

[8]. Jaafar, S. & Ugla, R. Tutorial overview by using self-evaluation and self-correction techniques. AL-Yarmouk Journal, 16(3), 199–224, 2022)

[9]. Gibson, D. Role models in career development: new directions for theory and research. Journal of vocational behavior, 65(1), 134-156, 2004.

[10]. Olsson, M. & Martiny, S. Does exposure to counterstereotypical role models influence girls' and women's gender stereotypes and career choices? A review of social psychological research. Frontiers in psychology, 9, 2264, 2018.

[11]. Gonzalez-Perez, S., Mateos de Cabo, R., & Sainz, M. Girls in STEM: Is it a female role-model thing?. Frontiers in psychology, 11, 2204, 2020.

[12]. Boldureanu, G., Ionescu, A., Bercu, A. M., Bedrule-Grigoruta, M., & Boldureanu, D. Entrepreneurship education through successful entrepreneurial models in higher education institutions. Sustainability, 12(3), 1267, 2020.

[13]. Adamson, M. & Kelan, E. 'Female heroes': celebrity executives as postfeminist role models. British Journal of Management, 30(4), 981-996, 2019.

[14]. Barber, S., Brettell, R., Perera-Salazar, R., Greenhalgh, T., & Harrington, R. UK medical students' attitudes towards their future careers and general practice: a cross-sectional survey and qualitative analysis of an Oxford cohort. BMC medical education, 18(1), 1-9, 2018.

[15]. Savickas, M. Career-style counseling. In Adlerian counseling and psychotherapy (pp. 201-225). Routledge, 2019.

[16]. Saputra, F. Leadership, communication, and work motivation in determining the success of professional organizations. Journal of Law, Politic and Humanities, 1(2), 59-70., 2021.

[17]. Winkel, A., Robinson, A., Jones, A., & Squires, A. Physician resilience: a grounded theory study of obstetrics and gynaecology residents. Medical education, 53(2), 184-194, 2019.

[18]. Rocha, V. & Van Praag, M. Mind the gap: The role of gender in entrepreneurial career choice and social influence by founders. Strategic Management Journal, 41(5), 841-866, 2020.

[19]. Locke, E. & Schattke, K. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: Time for expansion and clarification. Motivation Science, 5(4), 277, 2019.

[20]. Gibson, D. Developing the professional self-concept: Role model construals in early, middle and late career stages. Organization Science 14(5), 591-610, 2003.

[21]. Muir, C., Dörnyei, Z., & Adolphs, S. Role models in language learning: Results of a large-scale international survey. Applied Linguistics, 42(1), 1-23, 2019.

[22]. Bicaj, A & Shala, A. Theoretical approaches vs. teacher as a role model towards language learning. Educational processes: International Journal, 7(4), 278-290, 2018.

[23]. Ugla, R., Adnan, N., & Abidin, M. Study of the communication strategies used by Malaysian ESL students at tertiary level. International Journal of English Language Education, 1(1), 130-139, 2013.

[24]. Sinclair, R., Allen, T., Barber, L., Bergman, M., Britt, T., Butler, A., & Yuan, Z. Occupational health science in the time of COVID-19: Now more than ever. Occupational Health Science, 4(1), 1-22, 2020.

[25]. Chanana, N. Employee engagement practices during COVID-19 lockdown. Journal of public affairs, 21(4), e2508, 2021.

[26]. Biggs, J., Tang, C., & Kennedy, G. Teaching for quality learning at university 5e. McGraw-hill education (UK), 2022.

[27]. Byrne, J., Fattoum, S., & Diaz Garcia, M. Role models and women entrepreneurs: Entrepreneurial superwoman has her say. Journal of Small Business Management, 57(1), 154-184, 2019.

[28]. Syakur, A., Susilo, T., Wike, W., & Ahmadi, R. Sustainability of communication, organizational culture, cooperation, trust and leadership style for lecturer commitments in higher education. Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences, 3(2), 1325-1335, 2020.

[29]. Fountaine, T., McCarthy, B., & Saleh, T. Building the AI-powered organization. Harvard Business Review, 97(4), 62-73, 2019.

[30]. Donald, W., Ashleigh, M., & Baruch, Y. Students' perceptions of education and employability: Facilitating career transition from higher education into the labor market. Career development international, 2018.

[31]. Bandura, A. Social Learning Theory. Prentice Hall, 1977.

[32]. Nabavi, R. Bandora's social learning theory and social cognitive learning theory, 2012. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267750204_Bandura%27s_Social_Learning_Theory_Social_Cognitive_Learning_Theory).

[33]. Bradford, S. & Cullen, F. Research and research methods for youth practitioners. London: Routledge, 2012.

[34]. Braun, V. & Clarke, V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, (3) 77-101, 2006.