

A Comparison between ELT and ELL Graduates with regard to Their Perceptions of Effective Teacher Behaviours

Fadime Yalcin Arslan (Corresponding author)

School of Foreign Languages, University of Gaziantep, 27310, Gaziantep, Turkey

Abstract

It is mostly agreed that learning is a life-long process and teachers are mostly required to be equipped with sufficient and recent knowledge in their own fields (Torf and Sessions, 2008; Atay, 2006). In Turkey there are two departments graduating teachers of English. One of them is English Language and Literature (ELL) department, in which student teachers are exposed to all professional development (PD) courses during the last one and a half year and they have no chance to digest and practice these courses. The other department is English Language Teaching Department (ELT), in which all PD courses were spread to all four years of education, during which student teachers have the chance to digest and practice them. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether there is a significant difference between English Language Teaching department pre-service teachers' and English Language and Literature department pre-service teachers' perceptions of effective teacher behaviours. For data collection, a questionnaire prepared by Brown (2009) was used. It was administered to 22 ELL and 22 ELT pre-service teachers. Firstly data were analyzed quantitatively in order to see whether there is a significant difference between two groups of teachers. Later, an interview, consisting of significant items, was made with 4 participants from each group in order to confirm the findings gathered from quantitative analysis. It is considered that the findings may present some significant differences between two groups of teachers. It is considered that the results of the study may indicate there is a significant difference between these two groups of teachers' attitudes about PD.

Key words: teachers' perceptions, effective teacher

1. Introduction

Foreign language teachers and students may have different perspectives related to effective teaching. The intersections and differences between the two perspectives may affect language learning and teaching processes (Brown, 2009). Effective teaching has been identified in different ways by researchers. For instance, Ramsden (1992, cited in Chireshe, 2011, p.265) defines effective teaching saying, "effective lecturing is lecturing that creates an environment in which deep learning outcomes for students are made possible, where high quality student learning is promoted and where superficial approaches to learning are discouraged". Additionally, Bastick (1995, cited in Chireshe, 2011, p.265) identifies effective teaching as "increasing student achievement and course satisfaction". Similarly, Devlin (2003, cited in Chireshe, 2011, p.265) views it as "lecturing that is well organized and presented clearly and enthusiastically with variation and student involvement". When these descriptions are taken into consideration, it is observed that effective teaching is influenced by many factors such as learner needs and beliefs; teacher needs and beliefs, and environmental factors. Chireshe (2011) illustrates some characteristics of effective teachers from various studies (e.g.) as: friendliness, fairness, and preparedness, being knowledgeable, respecting students, motivating students and good lesson delivery.

Many studies have been carried out in the literature to find out the characteristics of the effective teachers, some of which are going to be summarized in the current study. One of them is Chireshe, (2011) who aimed to find out university students' perceptions about effective and ineffective lecturers. The findings of the study indicated that an effective lecturer is one who is knowledgeable in the subject area, organized, punctual, delivers well-prepared lectures, gives clear explanations, gives out handouts, and involves students in the learning/teaching process.

Similarly, Barnes and Lock (2013) inquired into effective foreign language teachers' qualities. The findings of the study revealed that students appreciate teachers who lower classroom anxiety, especially while students are trying to produce target language forms. It was also discovered that teachers should be patient, friendly and attentive as well as developing personal relationships with their students. The researchers also focused on the importance of investigating students' perceptions. They believed that if teachers and students have disparate notions, students may lack confidence in teachers' ability and this may lead to loss of motivation resulting in ineffective learning (Dörnyei, 2001).

Bulut and Ügüten (2003) also contributed to the field and compared students' and teachers' perceptions about English Language Teaching activities. They tried to investigate whether the perceptions of students match with those of their teachers. The results indicated that the perceptions of the instructors did not always match those of the students.

A similar study was conducted by Brosh (2009) in the Israeli context. In the study, the author tried to identify the characteristics of the effective language teacher as perceived by both language teachers and students. The results displayed various characteristics associated with the effective language teacher such as the teacher's command of the target language, his or her ability to organize, explain and clarify; his or her ability to arouse and sustain interest and motivation.

Yaman (2004) approached teacher thinking from a constructivist perspective. Teachers' personal theories through repertory grid were used to observe teachers in classes and to see their behavioral changes between the beginning and the end of the study. Using this tool, she was able to visualize the consistency between teachers' behavioral change and conceptual change.

Clark and Walsh (2002) discussed the elements needed by an effective teacher. Their model emphasizes two aspects of effective teaching tools. The first aspect relates to the domains of effective teaching that receive most of the attention in teacher education and evaluation, such as content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. The second aspect that the authors dwell on concerns personal knowledge and knowledge of context. Through literature and their research Clark and Walsh (2002) classified the components of effective teacher into four categories: content (discipline) knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and knowledge of context and personal knowledge. They emphasized that teachers' knowledge does not exist in isolation; they are part of a greater shared knowledge and practice and have a continuing dialogue with it. They attempted to locate teachers' knowledge within the physical, social, intellectual and emotional environment that a teacher inhabits. Thus, "the pedagogical knowledge is bound to the community of practice that the teacher contributes to. The teacher's knowledge of context exists in a continual dialogue with the actual context: classroom, school and community. The teacher's personal knowledge is bound into their relationship with those they relate to, both emotionally and socially". (p.6)

Another researcher who contributed to the field was Rosenberg (2002). In the study, the author aimed to investigate six teacher trainers' assessments of effective teaching in relation to each other and the reasons and justifications they gave for their judgments. The results demonstrated that each teacher has his/her "own system of belief with hierarchically organized ideas when it comes to judging what effective teaching is" (p.33).

Brown (2009) also conducted a study, which forms the foundation for the scientific design of our research, in order to identify and compare students' and teachers' ideals of effective teacher behaviors. The results revealed that there are some differences between teachers' and students' perceptions. Although teachers valued communicative approaches and meaningful information exchange over grammar, their students did not, or at least appeared not to, value it so much.

As stated above, studies on teachers' perceptions have been approached from multiple perspectives. They tried to analyze teachers' perceptions in different contexts and they compared teachers' or students' perceptions. In relation to these studies, the present study also aims to analyze teachers' perceptions but from a different perspective, which is to compare two departments, which train English teachers in Turkey.

One of these departments is English Language and Literature (ELL) department, in which the objective is to give students a basic understanding of the literature as well as specialized courses in the field. In this department, students are required to take a certificate including all methodology courses in order to become teachers of English. This certificate is provided to students after graduation upon the completion of a certificate program that takes 2 semesters.

The other one is English Language Teaching (ELT) department, which introduces the students to major theoretical and practical issues in language teaching. In the program, students are required to take all methodology courses besides other courses required by the program in order to become fully qualified teachers of English in primary and secondary schools and in higher education institutes in Turkey as well.

The present study contributes to the field by investigating whether there is a significant difference between ELT and ELL graduate pre-service teachers' perceptions of effective language teacher behaviors. The detection of a possible difference between the two groups will have pedagogic and curricular implications regarding the construction of the language teacher education system in Turkey.

2. Method

2.1. Procedure

In order to describe whether there is a significant difference between ELT and ELL in-service teachers' perceptions of effective teacher behaviours, Brown's (2009) study was adapted. The questionnaire prepared by Brown (2009) was given to ELL pre-service teachers and ELT pre-service teachers. Independent samples t-tests were conducted so as to find out whether there is any statistically significant difference between two groups of participants. Later, an interview was conducted with 8 of the participants, which accounts to four participants in each group, in order to support the results obtained from the quantitative analysis.

2.2. Participants

The participants for this study were 40 pre-service teachers, who were senior students at two different public universities in Turkey. 20 of them were ELL students and 20 of them were ELT students. All the participants were nearly between 21-22 years old.

2.3. The tool

The instrument used in the current study was a questionnaire used by Brown (2009). The author used this instrument in order to compare both teachers' and students' perspectives on L2 teaching practices directly and to do so in such a way as to allow for individual teacher comparisons (Appendix-A). The questionnaire consists of seven sub-categories and a total of 24 items. The categories are a) grammar teaching; b) error correction; c) target language use; d) culture; e) computer-based technology; f) communicative language teaching strategies; and g) assessment. Appendix B contains a concordance table placing each item on the questionnaire into an overarching category.

In order to compare students' and teachers' perceptions on a large scale, Brown (2009) used a likert-type, closed response format. Unlike that of Brown's, the current study, aims to support the data gathered from the participants with some qualitative data. The rationale behind the use of qualitative data is that likert-type scales might ignore personal construct theories of the individuals. Therefore, it was thought the analysis of qualitative data might tell us more about teachers' perceptions.

2.4. Procedure

The participants were administered the 24-item, likert-type questionnaire in the same week, but on different days. A week later, the researcher did an interview with four participants from each group in order to support the results obtained through the questionnaire.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through the "effective teacher questionnaire" by Brown (2009) and an interview. Independent-samples t-tests were conducted so as to analyse the results obtained from questionnaire quantitatively. Firstly, the results of the questionnaire were analysed in general; then, they were analysed through the sub-categories. Finally, in order to support the quantitative data, an interview was conducted and analysed qualitatively.

3.1. Quantitative analysis of the questionnaire

In order to analyse the data quantitatively, each sub-category was computed and analysed separately.

3.1.1. Analysis for grammar teaching

In order to analyse ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching in terms of effective teacher behaviours, an independent samples t-test was conducted and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. T-test Results for teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching

DEPARTMENTS	N	\bar{X}	Sd	df	t	p
ELL	20	8.55	1.57	39	-.276	.32
ELT	21	8.56	1.11			

As it is seen in Table 1, ELL teachers' mean score is 8.55 and ELT teachers' mean score is 8.56. They are very close to each other. In addition, the significant value is 0.32 ($p < .32$). Therefore, it can be said that there is no significant difference between ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching. It can be inferred that two groups of teachers have the same perceptions about teaching grammar.

3.1.2. Analysis for error correction

ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of error correction was analysed with the help of an independent samples t-test, the results of which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. T-test results of teachers' perceptions of error correction

DEPARTMENTS	N	\bar{X}	Sd	df	t	p
ELL	21	5.33	.91	40	2.85	.00
ELT	21	6.19	1.03			

As can be observed in Table 2, ELL teachers' mean score is 5.33 and ELT teachers' mean score is 6.19. The significance value is .00 ($p < .00$), which clearly indicates that there is a significant difference between ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of error correction. It demonstrates the fact that they have different perception of error correction.

3.1.3. Analysis for target language use

ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of Target Language Use (TLU) were analysed with an independent samples t-test and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. T-test results of teachers' perceptions of TLU

DEPARTMENTS	N	\bar{X}	Sd	df	t	p
ELL	20	14.20	1.90	40	1.12	.891
ELT	22	13.54	1.87			

Table 3 shows that ELL teachers' mean score is 14.20, while ELT teachers' mean score is 13.54. The significance value is .891 ($p < .891$). Therefore, it can be said that there is no statistically significant difference between ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of TLU.

3.1.4. Analysis for culture

In order to compare ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of the role of culture, another independent samples t-test was conducted and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. T-test results of teachers' perceptions of culture

DEPARTMENTS	N	\bar{X}	Sd	df	t	p
ELL	21	4.79	.94	40	-1.22	.1
ELT	21	5.19	1.28			

Table 4 illustrates that ELL teachers' mean score is 4.79 and ELT teachers' mean score is 5.19. The significance value is .100 ($p < .1$). Therefore, it can be said that there is no statistically significant difference between ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of culture.

3.1.5. Analysis for computer-based technology

ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of Computer-Based Technology (CBT) were analysed using an independent samples t-test and the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. T-test results of teachers' perceptions of CBT

DEPARTMENTS	N	\bar{X}	Sd	df	t	p
ELL	22	1.50	.109	42	.546	.421
ELT	22	1.59	.125			

Table 5 shows that ELL teachers' mean score for CBT is 1.50 and ELT teachers' mean score is 1.59. The significance value is .421 ($p < .421$). Therefore, it can be said that there is no significant difference between ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of CBT.

3.1.6. Analysis for Communicative Language Teaching Strategies

To compare ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of communicative language teaching strategies (CLTS), an independent samples t-test was conducted and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. T-test Results of teachers' perceptions of CLTS in terms of effective teacher behaviours

DEPARTMENTS	N	\bar{X}	Sd	df	t	p
ELL	22	15.09	2.42	39	.536	.705
ELT	19	15.47	2.09			

Table 6 indicates that there is no significant difference between ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of CLTS. Since ELL teachers' mean score is 15.09 and ELT teachers' mean score is 15.47. The significant value is .705 ($p < .705$).

3.1.7. Analysis for assessment

In order to compare ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of assessment, independent samples t-test was conducted and the results were shown in Table 7.

Table 7. T-test Results of teachers' perceptions of assessment

DEPARTMENTS	N	\bar{X}	Sd	df	t	p
ELL	20	8.40	1.78	37	-1.904	.146
ELT	19	9.36	1.34			

As it is observed in Table 4, ELL teachers' mean score is 8.40 and ELT teachers' mean score is 9.36. The significance value is .146 ($p < .146$). Therefore, it can be said that there is no significant difference between ELL and ELT teachers' perceptions of assessment.

3.2. Analysis of the items

Teachers' responses to all the items were analysed through independent samples t-tests with the purpose of identifying whether there are statistically significant differences between the two groups of teachers in terms of individual items (See Appendix C). Based on the item analysis, it was determined that there are a few significant differences between the two groups of teachers.

The first one of these differences was about statement 7. ELL and ELT pre-service teachers have differing perceptions about whether affective language teachers should use mother tongue in the foreign language classroom.

Another significant difference was obtained related to the item about culture. The participants from the two groups differed significantly in their perceptions of being knowledgeable about the culture(s) of those who speak the language as their mother tongue ($p > .009$). This can be related to their departmental courses because in ELL departments the focus is on the literature and culture, while in ELT departments the focus is on learning and teaching the language.

The other significant difference was in terms of statement 15, which states that effective foreign language teachers should not use predominantly small group or pair work to complete activities in the class ($p > .098$). Their perceptions differed in that aspect.

There is a statistically significant difference in terms of statement 21. The statement is about whether effective language teachers should use predominantly real-life materials in teaching the language and the culture rather than the textbook ($p > .010$).

3.3. Qualitative analysis of the data

In order to confirm the results obtained using quantitative data, an interview including questions about the items for which significant differences were obtained was conducted with the participants.

The first question was about statement 7, which was related to the use of mother tongue in foreign language classrooms. The responses obtained from ELL graduate teachers were more positive about the use of mother tongue. The comments about the use of mother tongue did not differ according to the proficiency levels of students. For example one of the participants commented that:

- (1) "If we use our mother tongue in the classroom, the learners will feel more relaxed".
- (2) "We should use it to some extent but not always".

However, ELT graduate pre-service teachers mostly focused on the use of mother tongue especially in beginner level classes. To illustrate:

- (3) "At the beginning 'yes'; the teacher can use the mother tongue for explanations".

- (4) "We have to use it at all levels to some extent, especially at the beginning. However, at advanced levels we should try to use it as little as we can".

The second question was related to item 9, which was being knowledgeable about the culture of those who use the language as a mother tongue. ELL graduate pre-service teachers more dominantly focused the importance of learning the culture of the language community. Some sample sentences from the interviews are as follows:

- (5) "Culture is a part of language. If you don't know about the culture, you may not teach or learn the language".
- (6) "Culture is a dispensable part of language. Cultural features should be known by the teachers."

ELT department pre-service teachers agreed the importance of it but not as much as ELL ones. For example;

- (7) "Language and culture affect each other, so we should learn about it".
- (8) "Since learning about culture enriches our language, we should learn about it".

The third question was about statement 15, which stated that effective foreign language teachers should not use predominantly small group or pair work to complete activities in the class. Both groups of teachers agreed with this statement. ELL pre-service teachers only mentioned that they are necessary in order to make students participate in the activities and involve all the class members in the activities. However, ELT pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of these activities better. They focused on the importance of interaction in language learning, the importance of collaboration during the activities. They also added the drawbacks such as the fact that shy students may not participate in the lesson actively during these activities.

The responses to whether effective language teacher should use predominantly real-life materials in teaching both the language and the culture rather than the textbook indicated that both groups are aware of the importance of using real-life materials.

In terms of error correction, ELL pre-service teachers emphasized that errors should be corrected explicitly. However, ELT pre-service teachers stated that it depends on the type of the error and where it is made in the writing or speaking. They added that speaking in daily life is spontaneous, so we can make errors.

4. Conclusion

When all the findings in the quantitative analysis for the sub-categories are considered, it is seen that there is not much difference between ELL and ELT graduate pre-service teachers. Their perceptions differ only in terms of error correction. They approached error correction during teaching from different aspects. It may be due to the content of courses taken during BA. ELT courses mostly emphasize the process of teaching and learning while ELL courses mostly focus on literature, language and culture.

From the differences in the item analysis, it can be interpreted that ELL students may have pedagogical knowledge about teaching language. However, they are not as knowledgeable as ELT students. What they have in their minds is more superficial. ELT students give more satisfying responses when it comes to teaching and learning. This judgment is supported by the results gathered through qualitative procedures. When the responses were analysed, it was understood that ELT students could support their ideas with more specific details while ELL students give more general responses. This finding may lead us to conclude that the ELT graduates are more conscious about the process of learning and teaching languages as opposed to ELL graduates.

Through the findings of the current study it can be inferred that there is a slight difference between ELL and ELT departments' pre-service teachers' perception about effective teacher behaviours. In view of this fact, professional development (PD) stands as a key issue on the agenda of the teacher education programs. Apparently, there is a need for a long-lasting PD. This can be done either by In-service Teacher Education planning, which does not work efficiently in the Turkish education system, or PD as a constructivist approach can be included in the initial teacher education programs so that a more constructivist teacher as a self-agent can be educated to meet the need.

References

- Atay, D. (2006). Teachers' Professional Development: Partnerships in Research. *Journal TESL-EJ*.
- Brosh, H.(2009). Perceived characteristics of the effective language teacher. *Foreign language annals*,29(2),125-136.
- Brown.A. (2009).Students' and teachers' perceptions of effective language teaching: a comparison of ideals.*The modern language journal*,93, 46-60.
- Bulut, T.& Ügüten, S. (2003). The importance of student perceptions in language teaching. *Çukurova üniversitesi sosyal bilimler enstitüsü dergisi*,(11)11,90-99.
- Chireshe, R. (2011). Effective and Ineffective lecturers: University students' perspective in Zimbabwe. *Antropologist*, 13(4), 265-269.
- Clark, J.C.&Walsh,J. (2002). *Elements of a model of effective teachers*. Paper presented at Australian association for research in education conference. Coldstream, Vic., 1-11.
- Devlin, M. (2003). Effective Lecturing: A Guide for Sessional Staff at Swinburne University of Technology. In Chireshe, R. (2011). Effective and Ineffective lecturers: University students' perspective in Zimbabwe. *Antropologist*, 13(4), 265-269.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation*. London: Longman.
- Ramsden, P. (1992). Learning to Teach in Higher Education. In Chireshe, R. (2011). Effective and Ineffective lecturers: University students' perspective in Zimbabwe. *Antropologist*, 13(4), 265-269.
- Rossenberg,C (2002). Exploring CertTESOL tutors' beliefs on effective teaching. *ELTED Journal*,(7), 23-43.
- Torff, B. & Sessions, D. (2008). Factors associated with teachers' attitudes about professional development. *Teacher Education Quarterly*.(35), 123-134.
- Yaman, Ş.(2004). A Research Tool In Investigating ELT Teachers' Thinking: The Repertory Grid Observation Tool (checklist & Notes). *Çukurova üniversitesi sosyal bilimler enstitüsü dergisi*,13(2), 219-231.

APPENDIX A

Instructions: Please reflect on your personal beliefs regarding what characterizes effective foreign language teaching. Carefully read each statement and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree by circling the statement that best describes your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers, just those that are right for you. Your sincere, personal responses will guarantee the success of the study. Thank you.

Fadime YALÇIN
Gaziantep University

Effective foreign language teachers should	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) frequently use computer-based technologies (Internet, CD-ROM, email) in teaching the language.				
2) base at least some part of students' grades on completion of assigned group tasks.				
3) devote as much time to the teaching of culture as to the teaching of language.				
4) require students to use the language outside of class with other speakers of the language (e.g., Internet, email, clubs, community events, etc.).				
5) <u>not</u> correct students <u>immediately</u> after they make a mistake in speaking.				
6) allow students to respond to test questions in listening and reading via English rather than the foreign language				
7) <u>not</u> use English in the foreign language classroom				
8) only correct students indirectly when they produce oral errors instead of directly (e.g., correctly repeating back to them rather than directly stating that they are incorrect).				
9) be as knowledgeable about the <u>culture(s)</u> of those who speak the language as the language itself.				
10) <u>not</u> grade language production (i.e., speaking and writing) primarily for grammatical accuracy.				
11) teach the language primarily by having students complete specific tasks (e.g., finding out prices of rooms and rates at a hotel) rather than grammar-focused exercises.				
12) have students respond to commands physically in the foreign language (e.g., "stand up," "pick up your book," etc.)				
13) address errors by immediately providing explanations as to why students' responses are incorrect.				
14) require students to speak in the foreign language beginning the first day of class.				
15) <u>not</u> use predominantly small groups or pair work to complete activities in class.				
16) mostly use activities that practice specific grammar points rather than activities whose goal is merely to exchange information.				
17) ask students to begin speaking the foreign language only when they feel they are ready to.				
18) <u>not</u> present a particular grammar point without illustrating how the structure is used in a specific, real-world context.				
19) speak the foreign language with native-like control of both grammar and accent				

20) teach grammar by giving examples of grammatical structures <u>before</u> explaining the grammar rules.				
21) use predominantly real-life materials (e.g., music, pictures, foods, clothing) in teaching both the language and the culture rather than the textbook.				
22) <u>not</u> simplify or alter how they speak so that students can understand <u>every</u> word being said.				
23) base at least some part of students' grades on their ability to interact with classmates successfully in the foreign language.				
24) use activities where students have to find out unknown information from classmates using the foreign language.				

APPENDIX B

General Categories of Questionnaire Items	Item Number
Grammar Teaching	10, 16, 18, 20
Error Correction	5, 8, 13
Target Language Use	7, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23
Culture	3,9,21
Computer-Based Technology	1
Communicative Language Teaching Strategies	11; 12; 2, 4, 15, 21, 23, 24
Assessment	2, 6, 10, 23

APPENDIX C

Statements	(p) Values
S1	.421
S2	.211
S3	.839
S4	1.00
S5	.969
S6	.311
S7	.073
S8	.672
S9	.009
S10	.193
S11	.755
S12	.287
S13	.472
S14	.256
S15	.098
S16	.848
S17	.123
S18	.929
S19	.754
S20	.385
S21	.010
S22	.518
S23	.723
S24	.925