The Teacher's Role and the Students 'Autonomy under the LMD and the Integration of ICT

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Abstract

The role of the teacher has changed to suit more the freedom given to the students 'autonomy under the LMD (Licence, Master Doctorate) system. Thus, the teacher has to accept now his/her role as a mediator, a facilitator of knowledge and learning processes. The teacher, therefore, is no more the only, exclusive omnipotent holder of knowledge. S/he is called to master not only the subject s/he teaches but also the methodological competencies that allow him/her to clearly define the objectives of the learning process as well as the referential of the competence on which the control of the learning process is based. In this respect, the present study focuses on what teachers have to do in their classrooms when teaching under a learner-centered approach or orientation. This paper attempts to work on the modern relationship between the teacher and the learner in the classroom under observational experiences using ICT (Information and Communications Technology) as a motivating tool.

Key words: Learner-centered, Autonomy, Teachers, Role and ICT

1. Introduction

An obvious relationship appears in terms of autonomy and competencies between the modern teacher and the learner in the classroom. This qualified relationship has started since 2004 when Algerian universities adopted a new system brought to higher education to help develop procedures, methods and techniques used by the traditional teachers, under the classical (or previous) system, in most discipilines and particularly in teaching Foreign Languages. The LMD has also the aim of achieving the learners' autonomy and innovation that is to be noticed when reflecting on the succession of new educational reforms adopted by the Algerian makers. Within a contextual framework of the new procedures, methods and techniques, the modern teacher has to be able to transmit the knowledge to a process of evaluation which is rather more complete. The evaluation of students relies now on a set of procedures meant to measure the results of the latter in terms of the grasped knowledge, the deduced comprehension and the acquired competence. The issue raised in this work clarifies   to what extent do the teachers'knowledge affect the learning process to improve the students'autonomy under the LMD and the integration of ICT. To engage in this issue, we need first to shed light on the former method that was adopted by teachers in the classroom to see the difference between the traditional teacher/method and the modern teacher/ method or student-centred orientation. Reference to the importance of the use of ICT in the classroom is also discussed.

2. The Former Method

The traditional method is teacher-centred, i.e., the teacher is the provider of knowledge thinking that s/he is the only source of knowledge. S/he was the centre of the teaching-learning practices (teacher-centred approach). In other words, in the traditional classroom, the teacher is the only actor who can direct with authority his or her classes; s/he imposes himself/herself on the learners' FL aquisition by making them reliant and dependent without making much effort to develop their skills in the classroom. They learn passively, focusing upon the teachers' instructions and their performance (presentation).

Dupin-Bryant (2004, p. 42) delineates teacher-centred teaching style as "*a style of instruction that is formally controlled, and autocratic in which the instructor directs how, what, and when students learn*". We understand from this quotation that there is a kind of authority which is the relationship between teachers and students. In addition, what helps and makes the teachers gain authority is the lack of methodology and practice. To put it differently, the teacher must not be present all the time to find himself /herself authoritarian without paying attention to the pedagogical process s/he is following in teaching in the classroom. The teacher must not be authoritarian to use any methods and techniques to rise the learners' awareness. He must be present to guide, explain and select the various tasks because there are many; he must be present to enable the students knowing what skills they must be good at in order to achieve their goals in learning English. In this context, the next section is devoted to make clear what is the learner-centred.

3. The Learner-Centered View

According to what we have understood from the previous section, the modern method is now called learner–centred, and not teacher-centred. It is the teachers' ability to cope with the changes brought to higher education that helps obviously the learners to express independently their individually and opinions and to demonstrate their skills to act in English using a variety

of skills acquired from the new learning strategies. Thus, the next section is devoted to give an idea about the characteristics of the teacher's and the learner' roles in the classroom today.

4. The Teacher's and the Learner' Roles in the Classroom Today

Because the process of learning and teaching has changed in the last two decades, the teacher's role and the learner's role in the classroom have changed too. These changes appear in the following table.1 :

Teacher's role	Learner's role
- be helpful - be observer	- be active in the classroom.
- be controller	- be independent and autonomous
- be less authoritarian	- be learner-centered in the classroom
- be passive in the classroom	- be innovative and interactive
- be contributor to the learner's knowledge	- be curious and ready for problem solving
- be facilitator supporting learners as they acquire and develop skills	- be the doer while doing tasks
- be challenger	- be challenger

As mentioned above about the importance of the ICTs use in the classroom under the LMD, the next discusses the use of the ICTs in the classroom .

5. ICT Use in the Classroom

The promotion of the use of ICT in the Algerian Universities started in 2004. Such use has become very needed with the introduction of the LMD system. Thus, it is required that equipment with data-logging must be available in the classrooms so as to contribute to enhance the learning and teaching of English as a Foreign Language. The use of ICT in the classroom helps teachers to facilitate their role as well as it can participate in making lessons more objective, attractive and efficient. On the basis of the data we have collected from the majority of EFL teachers through questionnaire, we may deduce that using ICT impels and motivates both teachers and learners to reach success in their autonomy and willing under the LMD. It becomes quite useful and beneficial to individuals everywhere because it helps them engage in various social, cultural and scientific activities and then it prepares them for the professional life. Furthermore, it provides all kinds of opportunities to make learners as well as teachers familiar with research or how to seeking information to look for their places, and here we are pointing at their love of curiosity and creativity.

The use of the ICT in the classroom helps facilitate as much as it makes the teachers' lesson easy, clear and attractive by using the data show, and it saves time and chases away that burden on teachers such as : using the chalk, the blackboard, drawing pictures and so on. It also makes them updated with other foreign schools and universities or in other words, it makes them connected to professionalism and it serves to make them good and efficient in the world of technology such as: being good at the use of the computer and surfing on the net.

6. The Method

The sampling method used in this study was purposive sampling, a method considered appropriate within the realm of qualitative research. According to Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, N. E. (2010) who engage in some form of qualitative research are likely to select a purposive sample, that is, they select a sample they feel will yield the best understanding of what they are studying". Our informants were given a series of questionnaires, and then given time to respond to our questions freely.

7. The Context

The research study took place in Mostaganem. This location, Mostaganem city, was selected because Mostaganem University is among the pioneering universities to adopt LMD as well as the integration of the ICT use in the classroom. Thus it may provide us with a sample of students and teachers whose characteristics are appropriate for the research study.

8. The Participants

In fact, the one suitable sampling method we used in our investigations was the probability sampling because we had to select groups of students and teachers from different levels randomly at English studies departments, and a maximum of thirty participants was decided for Mostaganem to generate the findings on larger communities – the LMD students' community and the teachers' community. Thus, for this study, our participants were as follows:

  - Thirty Mostaganem University English LMD students from L1, L2, L3, M1 and M2,
  - 12 EFL teachers at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaganem
    The age range of the informants was between 18 and 22; 70% of these students are acquainted with ICT. The informants, males and females, were chosen purposefully from different levels according to the conditions mentioned before.

9. Data Analysis

Being modern is to rely on the new techniques and tools which represent modern technology. Among the characteristics of the modern teacher to develop teaching is that to be more crafted in dealing with computers, how to use data shows and how to substitute books and dictionaries with research engines and websites like *Google* and *Yahoo* for the preparation of their lectures and lessons. For instance, data shows have become part and parcel of the technological progress intended by the Algerian high educational authorities. Because most, if not all, amphitheatres in our university, faculties and departments are now equipped with data shows in classrooms, amphitheatres and auditoriums, a pressure was exercised upon most university teachers –directly and indirectly –but this pressure had a double influence on most teachers: some have found it more relaxing and time consuming to use electronic boards and data shows instead of spending a longer time writing explanations, lessons and exercises, while others find it a waste of time bringing a laptop to the amphitheatre or the classroom, install the data show, and wait for slow students to write what is on the slide show. At abdelhamid Ibnbadis University, English department, the responses and attitudes of teachers towards using Power Point slides and slide shows in the classrooms and amphitheatres were a bit divergent. To test and investigate their responses, some permanent teachers in our department were asked whether they used data shows or not, how often and what they use them for. In the following bar graph, we display the different answers of our colleagues among whom only 12 teachers said they used the data show in their tutorials and lectures frequently when available.
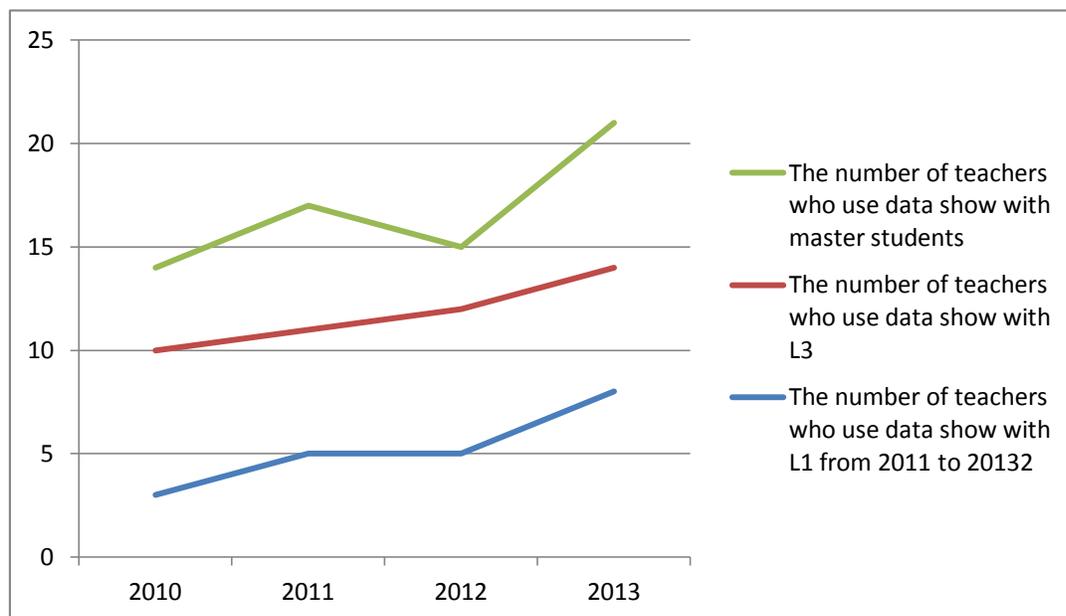
*Figure 1.***The Use of the Data Show (Power Point slides) in the Classroom**

Displaying the graph, we clearly notice three differently coloured increasing lines which represent the rate of use of data-shows by teachers with three various levels: L1, L3 and Master. The elimination of L2 was done on purpose because we based our estimation on L1 as a first introductory year, on L3 as the final year of Licence and Master as a different level. What we may deduce from the displayed results on the graph is that the number of teachers who use the data show to present their lectures and tutorials has risen from 2010 to 2013 for the three levels. We can explain this increase by a growing awareness of the didactic benefits of using the data show which contribute to shortening the time and the effort of lectures.

However, we also notice that the percentage of teachers using the data show with Master students is much more important than that of other levels, and that with L1 students less teachers use data shows. This can be due to the number of students enrolled for the Master's Degree that is less important than that of L3 students, and L1 students. In fact, comparing fifty Master students with two hundred L3 students (per section) and more than two hundred fifty L1 students (per section) leads us to conclude that the larger the number of students, the less enthusiastic and encouraging for teachers to use data shows is.

Moreover, we can also suggest that L1 students are neither well-prepared nor ready to read on the slide show, and this might be less noticeable in L3 and Master students. The other factor that we may infer from our interpretation of the graph and our experience in teaching with and without the data show is the type of teaching unit at stake. On the one hand, there are some teaching units which may be better taught with the data show as the case may be for Methodology, Discourse Analysis, Grammar and Oral Expression. On the other hand, some other teaching units like Linguistics, Literature and Human Sciences need more explanation and interaction between the teacher and his or her students than only data displayed on the slide show.

10. Results and Discussion

The results show that the integration of the ICT in the classroom is more helpful in terms of specialization-focused-teaching. It helps teachers reach the required level of high quality teaching that could be achieved through the integration of new technologies as teaching materials. Faced with a new generation of learners who are constantly using new high-tech facilities, teachers find it compulsory to use ICT to narrow the gap that may set the two partners apart in the modern partnership-based classroom.

According to most teachers, the implementation of a new system purpose must give more importance to the students' capacities and learning abilities, and thus more focus is on the teacher vs. the learner partnership rapport which depends on the teachers' ability to comprehend their students' needs and the competencies of the students; in addition to the availability of the materials, the space factor, the time factor and above all the psychological and physical factors; this is mostly related to what extent the teachers and their students are physically and psychologically ready to interact and communicate using ICT in the classroom.

11. Conclusion

On the basis of the data we have collected from the majority of EFL teachers through a questionnaire, we deduce that using ICT impels and motivates teachers and learners to be successfully autonomous, their love of curiosity, creativity under LMD in terms of getting a wide range of instructions and language forms to be in contact with society. So, the modern relationship between the teacher and the students in the classroom as being observed when using ICT as a motivating tool contributes to enhancing the teaching and learning process on the one hand and making modern teaching learners-centred on the other hand. In other words, modernity in teaching helps both teachers and students to engage in various social, cultural and scientific activities and then it prepares them for a professional life. Moreover, it provides all kinds of opportunities to make learners as well as teachers efficient in society.

About the Author

Dr. Hanane Sarnou conducts research on Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics. Her research interests focus on English language teaching methodology, curriculum design, and the use of ICT in learning language. She has contributed to some international conferences in Algeria, Turkey, Tunis and France.

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