



## A PROFILE OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER OF ENGLISH: A QUALITATIVE STUDY FROM POLAND

### ETKİLİ BİR İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENİNİN PROFİLİ: POLONYA'DAN NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper presents and discusses a research study aimed at defining the profile of an effective Polish teacher of English. The study, which is qualitative in nature, has been conducted among English language teachers in Poland who are considered excellent in their professional environment. Their kinds of knowledge and their beliefs about the language taught, the curriculum, learning, teaching, and their language profession will be explored.

**Keywords:** effective teaching, teaching english, teacher's kinds of knowledge, teacher beliefs.

**ÖZET:** Bu bildiri Polonya'da etkili bir İngilizce öğretmeninin profilini tanımlamayı amaçlayan bir çalışmayı sunmakta ve tartışmaktadır. Esas itibarıyla nitel olan bu çalışma, Polonya'da mesleki alan açısından uzmanlıklarında ileri seviyede kabul edilen İngilizce öğretmenleri arasında yapılmıştır. Bu öğretmenlerin öğretilen dil, müfredat geliştirme, öğrenme, öğretme ve dil uzmanlıkları açısından çeşitli konularda bilgi birikimleri ve inançları araştırılacaktır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** etkili öğretim, ingilizce öğretimi, öğretmenlerin farklı alanlarda bilgi birikimleri, öğretmen inançları.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

A language teacher's job has been understood differently at different times and in different settings. Traditionally, the function of the teacher was to transmit knowledge, give instructions and control the process of student language learning. The 'traditional' (Larsen-Freeman 2000:17) teacher dominated the classroom, while learners were passive and totally dependent on her. In contrast to this traditional role, the contemporary language teacher's function is less directive. Instead of controlling, the role of the language teacher is now understood as facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn or setting the best conditions for learning. Therefore, in the contemporary classroom, the language teacher should be preoccupied with individual learners and the most effective ways of language teaching for them.

For some time now researchers have recognised the importance of examining teacher effectiveness. Initially, the answer was provided in the analyses of language teaching methods. The 'good' teacher was supposed to execute a set of characteristic procedures of a method in a careful and efficient way, which, in turn, was to bring about success in the teaching process. Later, under the influence of humanistic psychology, attention was directed to the human factor. It was realised that a teaching/learning situation is a unique and individual experience for every person, and that a more important issue than the method seems to be the person involved in this process. This emphasis has resulted in a huge amount of research designed to investigate different teacher variables and their impact on teacher effectiveness.

The task of understanding a teacher's 'knowledge has gained great importance in the field of English language teaching' (Sarac-Suzer, 2007: p. 255). Although the findings of 'good teacher'-oriented research (Arikan, Taser & Sarac-Suzer 2008, Stronge 2002) undoubtedly have many important implications for teacher education, most of them cannot be directly applied to the present Polish context because they were conducted either in other countries or in different Polish socio-political conditions. Hence, the purpose of this article is to rectify some of these problems by investigating the teachers of English in Poland who are recognised as excellent in their professional

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environment at present. It aims to show a profile of an English language teacher in Poland through examining the competencies she has at her disposal, as well as the beliefs directing her actions.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Participating teachers

The researcher assumed that the best source of information allowing a selection of teachers for the project would be the evaluation of teachers by their methodological advisers firstly because they observe 'their' teachers' lessons regularly and, having made informal and holistic judgements about them, are probably more able to determine the quality of the teachers' work than any other party. As a result, methodological advisers from different provinces in Poland were contacted and asked to name the outstanding teachers of English and their places of work in their areas. Consequently, the author was confined to examining 9 female teachers who were willing to assist her in her research endeavour. The subjects came from the following places: Gdańsk, Kalisz, Łęborg, Poznań, Ustka, Warsaw (3 persons) and Wrocław.

After the observation of all the lessons, the researcher conducted an interview with the teacher which, like all the observed lessons, was recorded on cassette. The interview was semi-structured. It was 'structured' in the sense that the teacher answered the questions asked by the researcher, and these questions generally indicated the direction of the talk. However, it was not fully 'structured' because if the teacher elaborated on some aspects of teaching barely related to the question asked, she was not interrupted. At all times the author tried to refrain from putting words into the teachers' mouths, and the occasional additional questions were only asked for the sake of improving clarity. Each interview lasted 75 minutes on average.

It should be noted, however, that not all the points were fully addressed by all the teachers. The answers depended on the teachers' ability to reflect and their willingness to talk about the issues questioned. Although teacher kinds of knowledge are undoubtedly one of fundamental issues in teacher education, there is no general consensus as to what they consist of. In this study, the selection of teachers' kinds of knowledge has been made on the basis of the literature in the field (cf. Bress 2000, Harmer 2007, Pearson, 1994, Richards 1998, Tsui 2003). For the sake of clarity, the key points that the researcher attempted to infer about different kinds of English teacher knowledge are presented below:

- Linguistic knowledge: level of language knowledge with reference to fluency, accuracy, lexicon, pronunciation, knowledge of target language culture, etc.,
- Methodological knowledge: the use of methods and techniques in the lessons, knowledge of current methodological trends, lesson preparation, methodological development, etc.,
- Psychological knowledge: creating friendly relations between the teacher and student, offering help, contactability, etc.,
- Pedagogical knowledge: lesson time management, system of assessment, lesson pace, etc.,
- Normative knowledge: values governing teacher behaviours, etc.,
- Experiential knowledge: length of years as a teacher, the importance of experience, etc.,
- Contextual knowledge: making use of the available context, promoting the values of the educational reform, etc.,
- General knowledge: teacher interests, analytical skills, personal culture, etc.

There is a growing body of evidence to indicate that teachers are highly influenced by their beliefs and assumptions, which in turn are closely linked to their values, views of the world and to their conceptions of their place within it. Reflecting upon their belief systems is personally meaningful and significant in teachers' professional roles because it enables them to better understand their own actions. Teachers' beliefs about language, learning, curriculum, teaching and the teaching profession will affect almost everything that they do in the classroom, be it implicit or explicit. Because these deep-rooted assumptions pervade teachers' classroom actions to such a great extent, it seems crucial that teachers understand and articulate their own theoretical underpinnings with regard to these

aspects. For the sake of clarity, it is also worth presenting the most important points which were sought after in teacher beliefs. These comprise the following:

- language: what 'language' means for the teacher, attitude to teaching language skills, subsystems, culture, etc.,
  - syllabus: attitude to the use of course books, the role of aims in teaching, etc.,
  - learning and the learner: associations with learning, the role of the learner, etc.,
  - teaching and the teacher: associations with teaching, the role of the teacher, strategies, etc.,
- profession: job satisfaction, opinions of Polish language teachers, attitude to the Polish educational reform, etc.

## **2.2. Observations**

The researcher observed several lessons conducted by the selected teachers of English. Prior to the researching of the particular teachers, appointments with them were made, and such days of observation were chosen when the teacher had been teaching the same classes since the beginning of their learning, that is the 1<sup>st</sup> class, in the school visited. The teachers were told that any normal class activities would be of interest to the author and that they should not deviate from their original plan for the day because of the study. The researcher's presence during all the lessons involved enabled her to take notes on some of the most interesting aspects. The notes were basically made according to the classroom observation checklist, but other comments or the researcher's associations concerning the observed teacher's classroom procedures were also put down. In order to get a more reliable and accurate picture of the lessons conducted by the selected teachers, all the lessons were recorded on cassette with the use of a Dictaphone equipped with a condenser microphone. At all times the researcher tried to keep a low profile and spared no effort to make the observations as unobtrusive as possible by taking seats at the back of the classrooms. Both the notes and the recordings turned out to be invaluable in the later analyses of the lessons.

## **2.3. School principals**

In order to further validate the data and gain yet another perspective on the teacher investigated, the researcher talked in each case to the school principal about the selected teacher's work and her achievements. All the principals turned out to be full of praise about the work of their teachers, and there is no basis to question the validity of these opinions. The principals' assessments, therefore, are treated in the study as further evidence for the correct selection of the teachers. Conversations with the school principals usually took place during the long break between the observed classes.

## **2.4. Pupil questionnaires**

An important role was ascribed to the questionnaires distributed to the students participating in the study. It was hoped that this introspective method of data collection would provide the author with information about phenomena that might not be directly observable in the classroom or perceived by school principals. The purpose of the questionnaires was explicated to the learners, and they were assured that no data collected in the course of the study would be made available to their teachers. In the questionnaires the students were asked to give their percentage estimations of how much of their English knowledge was thanks to learning in their current school, a previous school, private lessons or language courses, self-study or other factors. The objective was to see what percentage of the students' present knowledge of English was, according to them, due to their teacher. The students were also asked to name 6 features typical of the teacher investigated. This question was aimed at receiving confirmation of the positive qualities of the teacher in her students' opinion. Additionally, students could name the features that they would like to change in their teacher. It was assumed that naming many such features could be evidence of questioning the teacher's effectiveness in the eyes of her students. The questionnaires were administered within the last 10 minutes of the last lesson observed in their class.

## 2.5. Analysis of the data

On the basis of the information resulting from lesson observations, interviews with teachers and their school principals, and questionnaires for students, a profile of each teacher investigated was formulated. This was accomplished in three phases. Firstly, all the data concerning the individual teacher were transcribed. This was done through listening to the cassettes, rereading the notes or calculating the arithmetic averages from the student questionnaires. This was usually achieved within a week of the completion of each study, when the memory of the interview details was still fresh in the researcher's mind. Secondly, an analysis of all the data for each teacher under investigation was carried out. The analysis was produced with a view to exploring individual teachers' kinds of knowledge as well as their beliefs.

The data collected in these ways ensured a more comprehensive picture of the phenomena under investigation and, thus contributed to methodological triangulation in accordance with the view that only a combination of different instruments of data collection can be the most effective when carrying out classroom-oriented research (Nunan, 1992). The data were collected from both grade 1 and grade 4 as well as from the beginning classes of lower secondary school because, during the year when the research was being conducted, the teacher investigated happened to teach only such classes. This is why the figures received for the questionnaire item asking for giving percentage to the sources of your English language knowledge cannot be directly compared. 1<sup>st</sup> grade pupils' linguistic knowledge can originate to a greater extent from other sources than the investigated teacher, and the teacher might have received a higher result with regard to that question had the research been conducted in more advanced classes. The students' age might also have had an influence upon the evaluation of the teacher. The older students are usually more critical towards their teachers, but they are usually better able to assess their teachers' real contribution than the younger ones. Imperfect as they are, these data were utilised in the analysis of teacher effectiveness wherever it was deemed possible and necessary. It should also be remembered that the whole research project employed more than one instrument of data collection and, thus the potential drawbacks of some of them were to a large extent counterbalanced by the information obtained from the other sources. The interpretation of results concerning the studies of all teachers investigated follows. The collected data providing the necessary information for the following interpretations are available in respectively.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Kinds of knowledge

**Linguistic knowledge:** All the subjects demonstrate a very high level of English proficiency. They represent a constant readiness to use the language through the almost total elimination of Polish from their own utterances in the lessons. On the basis of the data collected it cannot be concluded that there exist certain aspects that all the teachers teach most and least willingly. Probably this is influenced by teachers' individual interests and preferences. This also means that this issue does not have an influence upon the effectiveness of their teaching.

Despite a very high level of language proficiency, the teachers who are not graduates of English seem to exhibit more pronunciation problems, usually concerning word stress. The best knowledge of English seems to characterise the graduate of studies abroad who, apart from the so-called philological dimension of language gained at English departments in Poland, possesses a wider range of vocabulary, especially collocations. Pursuant to the dimension of language as behaviour, linguistic proficiency can also signify a good mastery on the part of the teacher of those aspects of the language which are expected of students. Although naive at first sight (how can a teacher fail to acquire what she is expected to teach), on second thoughts this statement is not devoid of meaningfulness. There are still teachers who teach how to write essays and have never attempted to write an essay themselves, or those who assign books to read without bothering to read them as well. The teachers who seemed to treat language as knowledge of behaviour (reading all the articles beforehand and looking up all the unknown words, writing essays in order to better acquire the form of an essay type, or taking a CPE

examination themselves) stated that this aspect seems to be invaluable in their teaching. Such 'authentic' knowledge, acquired and personally processed, is certainly better understood by the teacher and consequently more successfully imparted to students. This dimension of language, however, is not typical of all the subjects, although most of them are aware of its benefits.

**Methodological knowledge:** The lessons of the teachers are generally characterised by a fast pace, a frequent change of activities and forms of interaction, as well as a variety of teaching aids, usually photocopies, pictures, diagrams or the tape recorder. All the teachers plan their lessons, sometimes write down the procedure in note form, and almost always assign homework, which is checked at random. Generally, the teachers under investigation seem to be thoroughly prepared for their lessons. Nevertheless, few of them regularly take advantage of book offers for language teachers, and methodological books do not seem to be very popular among them. Only two of the teachers investigated were really well informed about current methodological aspects, and other two were relatively well-oriented in one aspect of ELT trends, connected with their personal or other professional interests. These four teachers are, or at one time used to be, teacher advisers, so the knowledge of methods is/was in their job descriptions. The remaining teachers do not seem to be interested in methodology, are rather unwilling to talk about it, and do not appear to be aware of these shortcomings. They function as effective teachers, probably compensating for their methodological deficiencies with other characteristics.

**Psychological knowledge:** All the teachers under investigation declare that they like teaching and, to confirm these statements, they are usually perceived by their students as people who are open, friendly, helpful, and often distinguished by a good sense of humour. Although none of the teachers ever refuse to help students, it transpires from the interviews that this help usually concerns learning problems, and almost never other problems of young people, such as building teams in/outside the class. The teachers respect students and, generally speaking, no fault can be found with them. However, the majority of them prefer to be identified as subject teachers than as teachers who are also educators. For example, four of the teachers do not fulfil tutoring duties out of their choice, claiming that they would give up the job altogether if they had to do tutoring. Therefore, they renounce the traditional role of the teacher, as distinguished by abilities in which the teacher makes use of her psychological knowledge. This state of matters also casts a shadow on their teacher authenticity. In brief, not all the effective teachers considered here are exceptional teacher educators.

**Pedagogical knowledge:** All the teachers studied manifest pedagogical preparation in their teaching. Their lessons have a definite aim, whose formulation usually serves as a starting point for conducting a lesson. The time of their lessons is maximally used: there are no unnecessary five minutes or lengthy activities. Most of them, although perhaps not too fond of assessing, perceive the assessment system as a significant element of teaching and consistently apply either their own criteria or those generally approved of in regular assessment. What is more, almost half of them pay attention to facilitating the process of knowledge acquisition by students through making students familiar with various learning strategies, or just offering variety in covering the topics, so that students can find the easiest ways of learning by themselves. Generally speaking, pedagogical knowledge in terms of lesson time management, student assessment and teacher facilitation of student knowledge acquisition is on the whole well represented in the system of professional knowledge of the Polish teacher of English.

**Normative knowledge:** All the teachers with no exception emphasised honesty with its related notions, such as objectivity or fairness. Their students also defined the teachers as just and truthful people. Apart from the value of honesty, the subjects convey to their students the values important to them personally, such as logical conduct in all that they do, constant development of one's knowledge, exacting from others what they present themselves, optimism, providing a moral and intellectual authority, openness to people, perfectionism. Being hard working, conscientious and dutiful are also the features often mentioned in the student questionnaires. Therefore, the Polish teacher of a foreign language is above all a fair and involved person, who additionally instils into her students the values she herself cherishes.

**Experiential knowledge:** The interviews with the outstanding teachers seem to confirm the minor role which is played by experience in the teacher's work. The teachers with the longest experience maintain that it can help consider students more holistically but, generally speaking, involvement in work is far more important. Four teachers claim that they were equally effective at the beginning of their pedagogical careers, whereas experience increases the danger of routine. Younger teachers admit that thanks to experience they are less afraid of unexpected problems, and if these appear they can solve them correctly (cf. Appel 1995). However, their pedagogical experience in terms of number of years is not impressive and this is why their opinions are not conclusive. In the case of two subjects, though, experience played a primary role because, unwilling to become teachers while they were studying, they concentrated on subjects other than the pedagogical ones. Having started pedagogical practice, however, they had to learn teaching on the job. Hence, teacher knowledge based on experience is not a definite indicator of teacher effectiveness, because it varies among teachers.

**Contextual knowledge:** The teachers exhibit contextual competencies only to a limited extent. Their understanding of context is usually connected with the ideological policy of the school, which almost always promotes a linguistic programme. Hence, the very preparation and conducting of English classes is in their understanding the implementation of the school policy. Besides, the values promoted in the Polish educational reform, such as student co-operation, the development of student autonomy and responsibility, multicultural aspects or forms of work such as the project technique, discussions and debates, and problem-solving activities were in a sense advocated in English language teaching a long time ago and, as a matter of fact, not many teachers of English have had to get used to completely unknown forms or contents. Hence, through implementing the contents of the approved syllabuses, they implement the educational policies of their schools. However, they seldom, attempt to excel in such contextual aspects, as co-operation between the teacher and students' parents, co-operation with other teachers or making use of local resources, which is so much recommended in the guidelines of the educational reform. In brief, the contextual knowledge of a Polish teacher of English is not too impressive because it is dominated by a traditional perception of context, which is limited to the classroom.

**General knowledge:** Each of the teachers investigated conveys her interests to students. In one case these are travelling or socio-political interests, in two cases musical, mathematical, literary and computer interests, in three cases linguistic ones. The conclusion is that these teachers do not limit their teaching to specialist knowledge but additionally, 'smuggle' other contents into their own programmes of teaching. This aspect certainly influences students' perception of teachers as intelligent, involved and hardworking individuals who organise their language lessons in an interesting and original way. Perhaps not all the students realise that the language teacher's enthusiasm may result from her other passions which, together with the passion for language, are inculcated into their students' minds.

To conclude, it can be stated that of all kinds of knowledge discussed, the teachers under investigation demonstrate linguistic knowledge, as characterised by a very good command of a foreign language, pedagogical knowledge with a consistent system of assessment, normative knowledge based on honesty, and general knowledge based on implanting teacher interests in students. The methodological knowledge of the subjects is relatively good, although not all of them are oriented in methodological trends concerning English language teaching, and they openly admit this. Psychological knowledge is not dominant in all the teachers, contextual knowledge is only partly represented, and experiential knowledge is not highlighted unambiguously. Hence, a Polish teacher of English is still a teacher of her subject, most willingly fulfilling the role of a provider of information about the English language.

### 3.2. Teacher beliefs

**Beliefs about language:** According to the teachers investigated, the most difficult aspect of the English language seems to be grammar. Their arguments concern the specificity of English grammar, the necessity to memorise grammatical rules, and the current emphasis on speaking in most teaching syllabuses, which devalues the importance of grammar and decreases the amount of time spent on

grammar teaching. The second aspect deemed problematic for Polish learners is pronunciation. Most teachers do not think that it is important to teach native-like pronunciation. Nonetheless, all the subjects pay attention to the comprehensibility of information transfer and the necessity of student exposure to various accents, out of which the British variety seems to appear more often than the others. The culture of English-speaking countries occupies an important place in the lessons of all the subjects. Some of them restrict the cultural component to the regular devotion of all lessons to cultural topics, whereas others explain cultural differences as they appear in a topic. For all of the teachers, the English language is an important subject, often perceived as a magnet attracting students to school, necessary for them to master in order to pass the examinations or practise communicative abilities. Their students' viewpoints do not basically differ from those of their teachers.

**Beliefs about curriculum:** All the teachers studied use course books in their lessons. Yet no one restricts her teaching to course books exclusively, and lessons are enriched with additional materials selected on the basis of what teachers find interesting for their students and themselves. This criterion is mainly applied as a reason for using supplementary materials. Three teachers claim that they could teach their lessons without a course book, for the others a course book is a basis and a challenge against which they introduce new content. They thereby indicate their independence through the coverage of non-coursebook topics in the manner that they perceive to be the most effective, for example the personalisation of the content. The teachers seem to attribute an important role to the aims, attaching more importance to general aims than to specific ones. Probably general aims, just like the course book, give teachers a sense of direction, and this is why they may be deemed important. Specific aims, on the other hand, may restrict the teachers too much, especially those who prefer feeling unconstrained and changing their decisions according to the students' response.

**Beliefs about learning and learner:** Almost half of the subjects value the learner's activity in learning a language based on thinking and associating, learning strategies and being open in a broad sense of the word (openness to variety of teaching methods and the target language culture, tolerance of foreign language ambiguity, etc.). Additionally, the teachers encourage students to co-operate, and one of them even said that teaching others is the most effective way of learning. Interestingly, students' language aptitude is not considered important, although two teachers paid attention to the advantages resulting from students' extrovert characteristics. Most of the teachers opted for an attitude of partnership towards students. Also, such words as autonomy, learning strategies, co-operative learning, student rights and task-based approaches appear in their utterances, which supports to point out that the teachers favour learner-centred approaches. In fact, only one of the subjects maintained that students expect meticulous provision of deductive knowledge by their teachers. However, from the lessons observed it transpires that most of the teachers use frontal teaching much more frequently than pair or group work. Nonetheless, all of them make use of projects far more rarely than lockstep teaching.

**Beliefs about teaching and teacher:** The Polish teachers of English investigated in the study represent almost all teaching styles. They are autocratic, laissez-faire, paternalistic, participatory and democratic teachers in terms of Komorowska's (2001) taxonomy. In terms of Fenstermacher and Soltis's (2000) classification, the therapeutic style, in which the teacher clearly understands the students, seems to be as popular as the liberating style, in which the teacher pursues her vision of teaching in a consistent way. Each teacher, however, is also a conservative teacher, because none of the subjects renounces the traditional role of a controller. Referring to Stern's (1992) division, the majority of the teachers considered effective use an intralingual strategy, both analytic and experiential, more often an explicit than an implicit one. The effective teachers, especially the older and more experienced ones, are still of the opinion that a good teacher is first of all a teacher instructor and an excellent user of language who can train students to be the same. The teachers with particularly friendly and communicative personalities stress an ability to communicate with a student as equally important. The most reflective and intellectually sophisticated teachers, in turn, seem to emphasise in their teaching the role of a teacher educator assuming the other two roles: a user of language and a friend of students, coupled with the role of a charismatic master who influences the global development of a learner.

**Beliefs about profession:** All the teachers investigated like their work, and helping students as well as earning student gratitude lead to the teachers' satisfaction. Nevertheless, the viewpoints concerning the Polish educational system are not always congruent. Three of the teachers reproach a typical Polish teacher of English for her poor professional preparation, especially with regard to psychological and pedagogical abilities, randomness in the choice of profession, lack of creativity or autonomy. At the same time they identify a second strand of reflections concerning the language teacher's role. This refers to the considerable possibilities of English teachers in forming students' personalities through the application of content that makes use of young people's interests, often including cultural aspects. Thus, in order to influence the personality of the student, the teacher herself must possess a lot of target language cultural knowledge, which is rarely encountered in untrained teachers of a foreign language. Hence, philological preparation and pedagogical training may ensure the proper kind of knowledge in the contemporary teacher. The educational changes connected with the educational reform are generally not received favourably by the teachers. Of the teachers involved in the study only one was applying for professional promotion but even she sounded negative about the process of documentation required in her professional advancement.

From the analysis of the data it emerges that most of the teachers pursue other interests apart from teaching. They are frequently connected with education and may influence the teacher's work in the classroom. Therefore, teachers writing books for testing test their students using various methods, those interested in culture or social content have much to say on these topics in lessons, or those fascinated by information technology enrich their language teaching with IT dimensions. In conclusion, the enrichment of an English teacher's work with new challenges can animate their professional performance.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the in-depth analysis of the nine effective language teachers' profiles, effective teachers in Poland do not follow a uniform pattern. Among them there appear all types of teacher personalities and teaching styles previously discussed. Nevertheless, having analysed their kinds of knowledge and beliefs, there appear spheres that are given prominence by all of the teachers, most of them, some of them and single individuals. The number in brackets shows how many of the teachers investigated are distinguished by this characteristic.

All the teachers demonstrate a very good, and still developing, command of English (6), related to the target culture (4), at times virtually indistinguishable from a native-like proficiency (2). Additionally, in each case great emphasis is placed on fairness in teacher-student interactions, which was also endorsed in the supporting data. Through the intensive investigation of the recommended teachers, the study has revealed that a majority of the teachers observed seem to be aware of how significant it is for the teacher to be dutiful and truly involved in what they do (6). Through their conscientiousness they provided living examples of 'good practice' which certainly contributed to their teaching success. Along with their involvement, most of the teachers seemed friendly to students (5), apparently understanding when there is need to be demanding of their pupils, and when it is better to leave them alone. This empathetic attitude to students appears to suggest that effective teachers are not indifferent to problems experienced by their learners.

After completion of the project, it can also be concluded that certain characteristics of the 'good' teacher of modern languages are present in only some of the teachers studied. These are as follows: consistency and determination in achievement of objectives (4), making use of target culture materials or teaching various content through language (4), promoting learner centeredness through teaching learning strategies, autonomy and responsibility (4), high demands (3), paying attention to co-operative student behaviours (3), high level of personal culture and moral integrity (3), continuous professional development (2), extensive general knowledge and wide interests, which impress students (2). Some features appear to be characteristic of only single persons. These teachers place great emphasis on speaking and reading skills, liveliness and enthusiasm in conducting lessons, an image of



being perceived as an effective teacher, an internal conviction of purposefulness of what is being done and informing students about it, a sense of humour, and a nice and charming personality.

In summary, it can be stated that once again a real-world effective Polish teacher of English is above all equipped with linguistic knowledge, which is principally responsible for enabling her to fulfil the role of an instructor, or a teacher of a subject. A good mastery of the target language is typical of all the teachers without exception and can resemble Underhill's (1999) terminology of lecturer because the main qualification here is knowledge of the topic. Apart from familiarity with the topic, some of the teachers pay attention to the learning atmosphere, thereby indicating their well-developed psychological knowledge. They, in turn, can be compared to Underhill's facilitator, who has the highest qualifications in the areas of topic, method and inner processes.

Even fewer of the investigated teachers can be called true educators, probably because this role is the most demanding. Along with good linguistic abilities and immaculate psychological competencies they have to impress students with their knowledge, compel genuine respect or possess charisma and, in a word, provide a valuable role model to imitate. These teachers are usually assisted by their powerful general or normative knowledge but, possessing all the other kinds of knowledge to an equally considerable degree, they seem to enter the innermost secrets of the teaching profession.

To conclude, the most effective language teacher as derived from the recommended examples of 'good practice' embraces the features of a good language user, an empathetic and friendly psychologist and a genuine educator attending to the global development of a young person. Such a teacher attempts to combine a number of roles expected of them, activating all kinds of knowledge that are at her disposal.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Bir süredir öğretmen etkinliğinin ölçülmesinin önemi araştırmacılar tarafından fark edilmiştir. İlk olarak cevap, dil öğretim yöntemlerinin incelenmesiyle sağlanmıştır. Daha sonra insancıl yaklaşımın etkisiyle dikkat konusu olarak insana yönelinmiştir. Vurgunun insana kaymasıyla farklı öğretmen değişkenleri ve bu değişkenlerin öğretmen etkinliği üzerine etkisine yönelik pek çok çalışma yapılmıştır. "İyi öğretmen" odaklı araştırmaların (Arikan, Taser & Sarac-Suzer, 2008, Stronge, 2002)

sonuçları öğretmen yetiştirme yönünde pek çok önemli çıkarımlar ortaya koysa da, bu çalışmaların Polonya ortamında uygulanabilir olması mümkün görünmemektedir çünkü bu çalışmaların çoğu ya Polonya dışında farklı ülkelerde ya da Polonya'nın farklı sosyo-kültürel ortamlarında uygulanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı Polonya'da şu anda mevcut öğretim kariyerlerinde çok iyi oldukları kabul edilen İngilizce öğretmenlerini araştırarak problemlerin bazılarını çözüm aramaktır. Bu çalışma, Polonya'daki bir İngilizce öğretmenin sahip olduğu yetenekleri ve kendisini yönlendiren inançları araştırarak onun profilini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışmanın yazarı mevcut çalışmayı mükemmel oldukları düşünülen 9 İngilizce öğretmenini inceleme yoluyla daraltmaya gitmiştir. Her bir öğretmenle uzun görüşmeler yapıldıktan sonra araştırmacı bu öğretmenler tarafından yapılan bazı dersleri gözlemlemiş ve veriyi daha da geçerli kılmak için okul müdürüyle çalışmaya konu olacak öğretmenin mesleki başarısı üzerinde görüşülmüştür. Seçilen öğretmenlerin öğrencilerine dağıtılan anketle de çalışmanın önemli bir parçasını oluşturmaktadır. Anketlerin amacı öğrencilerin İngilizce seviyelerini ölçmek ve bunda öğretmenlerinin rolünü bulmak olmuştur.

Seçilen dokuz etkili öğretmenin profillerinden anlaşılacağı üzere Polonya'da etkili öğretmenler belirli bir model takip etmemektedirler. Öğretmenlerin hepsi çok iyi İngilizce seviyesine sahip olduklarını göstermişlerdir. Üstelik her bir öğretmen tarafından sınıfta öğretmen öğrenci ilişkilerinin tarafsızlığına vurgu yapmışlardır. Seçilen öğretmenlerin detaylı analizleri sonucunda çalışma, izlenen öğretmenlerin çoğunun öğretmenin sorumluluk sahibi olmasının ve yaptığı işin farkında olmasının ne denli önemli olduğunun farkında olduklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Öğretmenler aynı zamanda “iyi uygulama” örnekleri vererek öğretim başarılarına katkıda bulunmuşlardır. Katılımlarının yanında öğretmenlerin çoğu öğrencileriyle iyi ilişkiler kurmuş ve öğrencileri ne zaman kendilerine ihtiyaç duyacaklarının ve ne zaman yalnız bırakacaklarını farkında oldukları görülmüştür.

Projenin tamamlanmasından sonra, “iyi” öğretmen niteliklerinin sadece araştırılan birkaç öğretilerde var olduğu kanısına varılabilir. Bunlar: hedeflere ulaşmada tutarlılık ve azim, erek kültür öğelerini içeren materyallerin kullanımı, farklı içeriklerin öğretilen dille anlatılması, öğretim ve öğrenme stratejilerini kullanarak öğrenci merkeziliğinin artırılması, özerklik ve sorumluluk, yüksek beklenti, işbirlikçi öğrenci davranışlarının göz önüne alınması, yüksek kişisel kültür ve ahlaki bütünlük, sürekli mesleki gelişim, ve öğrencileri etkileyecek kapsamlı genel kültür ve ilgi alanları. Bazı nitelikler sadece belirli öğretmenlerin özellikleri olarak gözlemlenmiştir. Bu öğretmenler konuşma ve okuma becerilerine, derslerin işlenişinde canlılık ve coşku, etkili bir öğretmen olarak görülmeye, neyin neden yapıldığının farkında olmak ve bunu öğrencilerin aktarabilmek, mizah anlayışına sahip olmak ve düzgün ve ilgi çekici kişiliğe sahip olmak gibi konulara vurgu yapmışlardır.

İyi bir Polonya'lı İngilizce veya herhangi bir alan öğretmenin, her şeyden önce öğretmenlik mesleğinin uygun bir şekilde yapılabilmesini sağlayacak dilbilimsel bilgiyle donatılmış olduğu belirtilebilir. Belki de bu en zor görevlerden birisi olduğu için, araştırma yapılan öğretmenlerin tamamı gerçek öğretmen olarak nitelendirilememiştir. Sağlam dilbilgisi ve psikolojinin yanında, iyi bir öğretmen, bilgisiyle öğrenciyi etkilemeli, gerçek saygıyı ve karizmayı kazanmalı ve bir anlamda geçerli bir model olabilmelidir. Bu öğretmenler çoğunlukla genel kültürleri ve hukuk bilgileriyle mesleklerini icra etmekte ve bunların yanında diğer pek çok konuda bilgi birikimine de sahip olarak, öğretmenlik mesleğinin gizli sırlarına erişmiş gibi görünmektedirler.

Sonuç olarak üzerinde çalışılan örneklerden anlaşılacağı üzere öğretmenlik mesleğinde “en etkili öğretmen, dili iyi kullanma, karşı taraftakini anlayabilme ve arkadaşça yaklaşabilme ve aynı zamanda gençlerin gelişim süreçlerine gerekli ilgiyi gösterme ve böylece gerçek bir eğitimci olabilme gibi özelliklere sahip olmalıdır. Böyle bir öğretmen sahip olduğu bilgi ve beceriler dâhilinde kendisinden beklenen bir takım rolleri sentezlemeye çalışır.