

UDC 37.016:811.111

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LANGUAGE TEACHING: DISCOVERING TEACHERS' PRINCIPLES

Formulation and justification of the relevance of the problem. On the surface, teachers appear to be eclectic in their practice. Over time they build up practical skills that involve dealing with the interaction of a complex array of factors (Anning, 1988). These factors include a detailed knowledge of the language being taught, the course content, their understanding of how students learn a language, the characteristics of the learners, and their perception of how best to teach language. Cognisant of their need to be good at classroom and time management, as well as their need to solve problems on the spot, teachers adopt a variety of strategies, often on the basis of what they believe work well. In turn, they integrate these skills into a complex set of teaching practices which are readily observable by other teachers and researchers.

It is quite difficult to determine why teachers teach the ways they do: their theoretical frameworks or guiding principles which shape and justify their classroom practice (Calderhead, 1988). The terms 'beliefs', 'principles' and 'theories' often seem to be used interchangeably in studies dealing with the way teachers think about their classroom practice. In overviews of research into teacher thinking, Pajares (1992) and Pope (1993) identify the variety of theoretical constructs that have been proposed by *Principles & Practices of ESL Teachers* researchers. Terms range from 'teachers' understandings', to 'intuitive or implicit theories' to 'professional craft knowledge'.

This research mediates between a teacher's beliefs or theories and the teacher's on-going decision-making and actions in a language class. Principles are shaped by beliefs which encompass views about learning, learners, the classroom, the language being taught, and how a teacher might best enable an effective interaction between these things.

A teacher's principles are therefore embedded in their practice. Discovering what these may be and, crucially, how they relate to each other may be seen as a means to understanding teaching. With this aim in mind, Breen suggests four major reasons for investigating the pedagogic principles of language teachers:

They can generate alternative frameworks for language pedagogy

– They are a source of experientially-based

professional wisdom and as such can serve as a focus for initial language teacher education and ongoing language teacher development.

– They enable the researcher to go beyond what teachers do in language lessons towards understanding and explaining why.

– A teacher's greater awareness of their own principles can facilitate harmony between a particular innovation or external curriculum for language teaching and the teacher's enacted interpretation of it in the classroom [1].

The purpose of the article. The aim of the article is to discover main principles and show the role of the teacher in language teaching.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. The recent detailed investigations of Burns (1993), Gimenez (1995), Freeman (1991), Johnson (1989), and Woods (1996) show a rapidly growing interest in how language teachers conceptualise their work. These studies have been largely inspired by a number of influential accounts during the 1980s of the beliefs and knowledge of novice and experienced teachers across subject areas and levels in the education system (Calderhead 1987; Clandinin, 1986; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Elbaz 1983; Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Shulman, 1987) Several researchers in the field of second language teaching see their work as informing teacher education (Flowerdew, 1992; Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

According to Sifakis, EFL (English as a lingua franca) teachers are «language and teaching specialists» who attend university courses to enter the profession; they should thus be informed about the most relevant key aspects both regarding the language and the methodological approaches to teaching English today [6]. According to Matsuda (2009), if trainee teachers are equipped with the analytical and reflective skills to interpret their encounter with these new concepts, they will not only gain a knowledge base but also be able to use the exposure to these concepts to (re)shape their perception of English and English speakers [7].

The study reveals a complex interaction between teacher thinking and classroom behaviour. These findings represent a challenge to research on teachers' classroom behaviour. It is impossible to infer the reasons why teachers work in the ways they do only from observations of classroom practice. The findings also represent a challenge to research on language teacher thinking. The actual classroom behaviour of teachers can not be predicted from the rationale

they provide for the ways they prefer to work. It is also doubtful that the researcher can describe practice on the basis teachers' own accounts of how they work without reflecting with them upon actual instances of classroom practice. The findings also raise questions for teacher education. To what extent does initial teacher training relatively focus upon practices and principles? In what ways might the trainer's rationale for a particular practice coincide with the trainee's own principles relating to teaching derived from their experiences as a learner? To what extent might trainee's principles be mobilised as a basis for interpreting and adopting appropriate practices? Given that pedagogic principles are likely to be deeply held and often resistant to change, what should be the focus of in-service professional development aimed at facilitating change in teachers' classroom practices [1].

The main material of the study. The goal of teaching is obvious. Teaching is aimed at creating optimal conditions for desired learning to take place in as short a time as possible. Even such a seemingly simple statement hides a troublesome correlation: a cause effect relationship between teaching and learning.

The role of the teacher has been a topic of discussion in the field of general education as well as in language education. We are unable to precisely define the role and function of the teacher. The teacher has been variously referred to as an artist and an architect; a scientist and a psychologist; a manager and a mentor; a controller and a counselor and more. Each of these metaphors captures the teacher's role partially but none of them fully. To fully evaluate the teacher's role it is necessary to understand how the concept of teacher role has developed over the years, and how that development has shape the nature and scope of institutionalized education. Thus outlines the following roles of teachers: (a) teachers as passive technicians, (b) teachers as reflective practitioners, and (c) teachers as transformative intellectuals [5].

Teachers as Passive Technicians. The basic tenets of the concept of teachers as technicians can be partly traced to the behavioral school of psychology that emphasized the importance of empirical verification. In the behavioral tradition, the primary focus of teaching and teacher education is content knowledge that consisted mostly of a verified and verifiable set of facts and clearly articulated rules. Content knowledge is broken into easily manageable discrete items and presented to the teacher in what might be called *teacher-proof* packages. Teachers and their teaching methods are not considered very important because their effectiveness cannot be empirically proved beyond doubt. Therefore, teacher education programs concentrate more on the *education* part than on the *teacher* part. Such a

view came to be known as the *technicist* view of teaching and teacher education.

Classroom teachers are assigned the role of passive technicians who learn a battery of content knowledge generally agreed upon in the field and pass it on to successive generations of students. They are viewed largely as apprentices whose success is measured in terms of how closely they adhere to the professional knowledge base, and how effectively they transmit that knowledge base to students. In this technicist or transmission approach, the teacher's primary role in the classroom is to function like a conduit, channeling the flow of information from one end of the educational spectrum (i.e., the expert) to the other (i.e., the learner) without significantly altering the content of information. The primary goal of such an activity is to promote student comprehension of content knowledge. In attempting to achieve that goal, teachers are con-strained to operate from handed-down fixed, pedagogic assumptions and to seldom seriously question their validity or relevance to specific learning and teaching contexts.

Viewing teachers as passive technicians is traditional and is still in vogue in many parts of the world. The technicist view provides a safe and secure environment for those teachers who may not have the ability, the resources, or the willingness to explore self-initiated, innovative teaching strategies. The technicist approach to teaching and teacher education is clearly characterized by a rigid role relationship between theorists and teachers: theorists conceive and construct knowledge, teachers understand and implement knowledge. Creation of new knowledge or a new theory is not the domain of teachers; their task is to execute what is prescribed for them. Such an outlook inevitably leads to the disempowerment of teachers whose classroom behavior is mostly confined to received knowledge rather than lived experience. That is why the technicist approach is considered «so passive, so unchallenging, so boring that teachers often lose their sense of wonder and excitement about learning to teach» [4, p. 204].

Teachers as Reflective Practitioners. The idea of teachers as reflective practioners was originally proposed by educational philosopher John Dewey in the early twentieth century. He has articulated his seminal thoughts on reflective teaching in several of his books, particularly in *How We Think* (1933). Dewey makes a distinction between action that is routine and action that is reflective. Routine action is guided primarily by an uncritical belief in tradition, and an unflinching obedience to authority, whereas reflective action is prompted by a conscious and cautious «consideration of any belief or practice in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads» [2, p. 4].

According to Dewey, teaching is seen not just as a series of predetermined and presequenced procedures but as a context-sensitive action grounded in intellectual thought. Teachers are seen not as passive transmitters of received knowledge but as problem-solvers possessing «the ability to look back critically and imaginatively, to do cause-effect thinking, to derive explanatory principles, to do task analysis, also to look forward, and to do anticipatory planning» [2, p. 13]. Reflective teaching is a holistic approach that emphasizes creativity, artistry, and context sensitivity.

In 1983, Don Schon published a book titled *The Reflective Practitioner* in which he expands Dewey's concept of reflection. He shows how teachers, through their informed involvement in the principles, practices, and processes of classroom instruction, can bring about fresh and fruitful perspectives to the complexities of teaching that cannot be matched by experts who are far removed from classroom realities.

In their 1996 book *Reflective Teaching: An Introduction*, Kenneth Zeichner and Daniel Liston caution that «not all thinking about teaching constitutes reflective teaching. If a teacher never questions the goals and the values that guide his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumptions, then it is our belief that this individual is not engaged in reflective teaching» [8, p.1].

They then go on to summarize what they consider to be the role of a reflective practitioner. According to them, a reflective practitioner: 1) «examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice; 2) is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching; 3) is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he [8, p. 6].

By defining these five roles, Zeichner and Liston make it clear that learning to teach does not end with obtaining a diploma or a degree in teacher education but is an ongoing process throughout one's teaching career. Reflective teachers constantly attempt to maximize their learning potential and that of their learners through classroom-oriented action research and problem-solving activities.

In *Training Foreign Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach* (1991), Michael Wallace offers ways in which a reflective approach can be applied to many areas of teacher development, including classroom observation, microteaching, and teacher education.

In a book titled *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms* (1994), Jack Richards and Charles Lockhart introduce second language teachers to ways of exploring and reflecting upon their classroom experiences, using a carefully structured approach to self-observation

and self-evaluation.

These initial efforts to spread the values of reflective teaching among second and foreign language teachers have been further strengthened by Donald Freeman and Karen Johnson. In his book *Doing Teacher Research: From Inquiry to Understanding* (1998), Freeman demonstrates how practicing teachers can transform their classroom work by doing what he calls teacher research. He provides a teacher-research cycle mapping out the steps and skills associated with each part of the research process. In a similar vein, Johnson, in her book *Understanding Language Teaching: Reasoning in Action* (1999), examines how «reasoning teaching represents the complex ways in which teachers conceptualize, construct explanations for, and respond to the social interactions and shared meanings that exist within and among teachers, students, parents, and administrators, both inside and outside the classroom».

Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals. The idea of teachers as transformative intellectuals is derived mainly from the works of a particular group of educationists called critical pedagogists. They include general educationists such as Henry Giroux (1988), Peter McLaren (1995), and Roger Simon (1987), and language teaching professionals such as Elsa Auerbach (1995), Sarah Benesch (2001), and Alastair Pennycook (2001). All of them are heavily influenced by the educational philosophy of the Brazilian thinker Paulo Freire. Following Freire's philosophy, critical pedagogists believe that any pedagogy is embedded in relations of power and dominance, and is employed to create and sustain social inequalities. For them, schools and colleges are not simply instructional sites; they are, in fact, «cultural arenas where heterogeneous ideological, discursive, and social forms collide in an unremitting struggle for dominance» [1, p. 30]. Classroom reality is socially constructed and historically determined. What is therefore required to challenge the social and historical forces is a pedagogy that empowers teachers and learners. Such a pedagogy would take seriously the lived experiences that teachers and learners bring to the educational setting.

Conclusions and prospects for future researches of directions. This study shows that, during teaching, principles and practices constantly interact in selective and complex ways. It may be that forms of reflective dialogue between trainers and trainees and between the providers and recipients of in-service professional development of the kind adopted in our research could be one way of approaching questions such as these. The particular research procedures adopted in the study may be seen as enabling a strong degree of congruence between the teachers' practices and principles not least because, for each

teacher, the profile of practices may have been only a selective picture. The principles were uncovered initially from a close consideration by teacher and researcher of practices adopted in the first observed lesson. Although these were supplemented by the teachers' specification of other favoured practices and from a lesser number practices observed in two further lessons, they represent a mere snapshot of the teachers' potential repertoire. This implies that even the wide range of practices revealed in the data was not as diverse as it may have been if we had identified practices across a larger number of lessons. However, it remains likely that more data on practices would further confirm the patterns discovered in the study.

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Дата надходження рукопису 12. 03. 2018 р.

Рецензент – д.п.н. професор В. В. Радул

УДК 141.7:316.61

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ДО ПИТАННЯ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ ЗРІЛОСТІ ОСОБИСТОСТІ В УМОВАХ ОНОВЛЕННЯ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ СУСПІЛЬСТВА

Постановка та обґрунтування актуальності проблеми. Упродовж останнього століття світ був свідком колосальних змін в житті людей і суспільства, в розвитку технологій і культури. Основним елементом, що супроводжує ці зміни, є зміни в людській комунікації.

Більшість дослідників ролі персональних компютерів і комп'ютерних мереж відмічають, що їх поширення веде до становлення інформаційного суспільства. Проте

впровадження інформаційних технологій як засобу пошуку, збору, зберігання, обробки, надання, поширення інформації в житті людини не наближує нас до інформаційного суспільства, про яке писали Д. Белл, А. Турен, Е. Тоффлер, П. Дракер, З. Бжезинський, Й. Масуда та ін. Інформаційне суспільство ще не відбулося, хоча основні атрибути присутні. Інформації в сучасному суспільстві багато, вона відіграє колосальну роль, проте в триаді повідомлення – комунікація – інтерпретація