

STUDIES

Does Test-Anxiety Experience Impair Student Teachers' Later Tendency to Perspective-Taking?

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DOI: 10.2478/atd-2020-0001

Received: October 30, 2019; received in revised form: January 11, 2020;
accepted: January 13, 2020

Abstract:

Introduction: We aimed to examine whether student teachers' tendency to test anxiety relates to their later perspective-taking tendency and self-efficacy. The purpose of the presented study was to obtain first insights into the relationship between test anxiety, perspective-taking, and self-efficacy tendencies in student teachers. These tendencies may determine student orientation across different situations. We tested the hypothesis that the test anxiety components emotionality and worry relate to later low perspective-taking and self-efficacy.

Methods: We conducted a longitudinal study with 275 student-teachers and analyzed the obtained data using structural equation modeling.

Results: The data analysis revealed that only emotionality is related to lower perspective-taking and self-efficacy in later life.

Discussion: We conclude that lowering student teachers' test anxiety emotionality (e.g. through interventions) would result to later increased perspective-taking tendency.

Limitations: Participants attended the study voluntarily, so it was a self-selected sample. We employed a correlational design over two measurement times instead of experimental methods.

Conclusions: The obtained results give an explanation of why student teachers focused rather on themselves than on school students in classes.

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Acta Educationis Generalis
Volume 10, 2020, Issue 1

The perspective-taking tendency is important for teachers' student orientation. The role of perspective-taking in different teaching situations might be investigated in further research.

Key words: student teachers; emotionality; worry; test anxiety; perspective-taking.

Gender Issues in English Language Teaching: Views from Turkey

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DOI: 10.2478/atd-2020-0002

Received: October 2, 2019; received in revised form: October 29, 2019;
accepted: November 4, 2019

Abstract:

Introduction: Research into gender diversity and equality of gender in humanities has been mounting since 1960s, when post-modernism and post-structuralism emerged as a reaction to metanarratives of modernization. Methods and approaches in ELT also arose in the same years. However, queer and LGBT identities were intentionally ignored in ELT discipline and departments, although English as a lingua franca was already hailed in the inner circle. This study aimed to unearth the views of young adult learners of English regarding LGBT. Two data collection instruments were administered. A standard scale composed of 21 items that measure homosexuality attitudes was given to the participants (N=113). In addition, a semi-structured interview was prepared to elicit the participants' views (N=12). The results of the study show that most of the participants showed a positive attitude towards LGBT. However, they reported that this topic was never addressed in ELT settings.

Methods: The study was qualitatively designed to elicit the views of young adult learners regarding homosexuality. A standard scale developed by Kite and Deaux (1986) and which was psychometrically sound and reliable to identify the attitudes towards homosexuality and a descriptive phenomenographic research method were used to learn the ideas of the participants. Phenomenographic research method aims to elicit lived experiences of individuals by using experiential description. Although there were 600 young adult learners of English, only 113 of them volunteered to participate in the study. The participants studied English as a foreign language at a public university in Turkey. The average age of the participants was 18. A semi-structured interview was conducted with 12 of the participants.

Results: The findings of the study represent that most of the participants ascribed positive attitudes towards homosexuality. Further, a big number of the informants put forward the significance of such concepts as freedom

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and respect for personal preferences. Besides, an average number of respondents attributed homosexuality as a hormonal disorder encountered in society. The majority of the respondents put an emphasis on the taboo of religion. They revealed that homosexuality is a taboo which is strictly forbidden in Islam and such issues should not be voiced explicitly in our daily life.

Discussion: This study dealt with the issue of LGBT and homosexuality in foreign language settings by taking the views of young adult learners of English into consideration. The results show that homosexuality representation is insufficient in ELT textbooks, curriculum and materials. Although most of the participants showed a positive attitude towards the representation of homosexuality, they noted that LGBT was never addressed in classroom settings. Similarly, Gray (2013) also emphasizes that LGBT identity was not represented in ELT, though considerable progress has been legally made in the UK. Nelson (2002) strongly recommends that queering ESL through discourses may help ESL develop a more diverse attitude towards LGBG identity.

Limitations: This study was limited to only young adult learners in English language teaching. In addition, only two collection data tools, a standard homosexuality scale and a semi-structured interview form, were used. Besides, convenience sampling was used. The sampling was confined to 113 participants for the scale and 12 learners for the semi-structured interview form.

Conclusions: The results show that most of the participants have positive attitudes towards acceptance of homosexual identities. Although ELT textbooks and materials tend to discard LGBT identity, teachers and students can queer ELT, EFL and ESL classrooms by using the tenets of progressive education and critical pedagogy. The use of participatory approach can be reinforced and expanded in ELT world encompassing not only inner circle but also outer and expanding circles. Materials, tasks and activities need to be updated in ELT curriculum. The first discussions of equality of gender in post-modernist and post-structuralist theories can be perceptibly seen in ELT by endorsing and developing critical pedagogy.

Key words: gender, identity, homosexuality, queer, LGBT, English language teaching.

Investigating the Policy-Reality (Mis)Match in IELTS and TOEFL from the Perspectives of Global Englishes

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DOI: 10.2478/atd-2020-0003

Received: November 2, 2019; received in revised form: December 22, 2019;
accepted: January 10, 2020

Abstract:

Introduction: In recent years, the number of test-takers of international tests of English has grown at an exponential rate. Those whose first language is not English, i.e. non-native English speakers (NNES), constitute the predominant majority of these test-takers, largely based in non-Anglophone contexts. Thus, the state of whether the international tests of English are fit for purpose and reflect the current realities of language users, especially in higher education institutions, has become a matter of serious concern recently. Hence, we aim to analyze the websites and language documents of two major international tests of English boards (i.e. IELTS and TOEFL) in relation to the kind of Englishes against which they judge their test-takers' English proficiency - either by implication or by explicit expression.

Methods: To analyse the websites and language policy documents of the major international tests of English boards, we adopted a qualitative research design in which our prime purpose was to collect a blend of textual, visual and audio materials from their websites as well as publicly available documents, such as skill-band-descriptors, sample test materials, and handbooks for test takers. The analysis of the data was multimodal, utilizing a mixture of qualitative frameworks to analyze the websites and documents.

Results: The findings reveal that IELTS and TOEFL promote themselves as welcoming international test takers, while in practice, most of the contents in their examinations still draw on NES norms based on what is considered standardized English. Visual portrayals on their websites indicate that these tests are aware of English diversity and aim to embrace multicultural clients. However, no remedial measures seem to have been taken in practice as can be understood from their test and measurement criteria as regards writing and speaking.

Discussion: Drawing on the results, it may be argued that the visual portrayals are merely the tools to attract NNES test takers and the covert message is that those who are NNESs should take these proficiency

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examinations. Moreover, many listening exams employ NESs to produce the voices or simulate the conversations. Although the tests claim that the voices are from diverse accents, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA; they fail to recognize that many more English varieties exist within the Outer and Expanding Circle countries.

Limitations: This research has only dealt with two major international tests of English, namely IELTS and TOEFL. There are other major tests of English available in the market. Therefore, sufficient caution should be exercised while generalizing the results to other tests as there may have been some rethinking and awareness in other tests with respect to their future test-takers' profile and linguistic diversity.

Conclusion: The findings illustrate a degree of recognition of Global Englishes (WE and ELF) at a "theoretical level" in the international tests of English, but at the "practical level", many crucial principles are absent as the tests, judging international test takers, remain confined within the native-norm territory. In short, the phenomenon demonstrates a theoretical level of awareness, but such awareness is not further applied at the practical level.

Key words: global Englishes, world Englishes, English as a lingua franca, assessment, (non)native English speakers, standard English.

Investigating the Empathic Skills of Physical Education Teachers

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DOI: 10.2478/atd-2020-0004

Received: September 17, 2019; received in revised form: February 3, 2020;
accepted: February 5, 2020

Abstract:

Introduction: As one of the most important requirements for healthy communication, empathy is vital in a great many occupations. Various studies have investigated the importance and level of empathy in various occupation groups. One of the leading occupations requiring strong empathic skills is teaching. Teachers need empathy to create an effective learning environment, develop good communication with their students, and understand them well. The current study investigates the empathic skills of physical education teachers to evaluate various variables.

Methods: The research participants comprised 152 physical education teachers in Turkey, 39 women (25.7%) and 113 men (74.3%), who completed the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI). Descriptive statistical methods and the Kolmogorov Smirnov test were used to determine whether the data were normally distributed. The data were analysed using ranking t-test and correlation methods as well as descriptive statistical models ($\alpha=0.05$). The total internal consistency coefficient of the scales, measured by Cronbach's Alpha, was .56.

Results: Regarding the IRI scores for the physical education teachers, the highest mean score was for emphatic concern, followed by perspective taking and fantasy. Teaching duration was associated with higher empathic skill scores. Empathic skills were also positively correlated with higher educational level. Finally, the mean fantasy scores were statistically higher for participants who were not training a school team.

Discussion: Physical education courses contribute to the physiological, sociological, psychological, and moral development of students. For this reason, physical education and sports is a compulsory component of the education system from an early age all around the globe. This makes it essential that physical education teachers have appropriate characteristics that they exhibit in their teaching. In the first place, it is necessary to have healthy communication between the physical education teacher and students.

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Limitations: The current study gathered data from one specific region in Turkey, from physical education teachers in the city of Kütahya. Consequently, the demographic data were evaluated only for statistically significant variables. Other variables that were not numerically equal, were not investigated.

Conclusions: Physical education teachers should adopt an empathic approach to teacher-student relationships. Educational institutions should organise activities to develop these empathic skills in teachers.

Key words: empathy, empathic skills, physical education teachers.

Quality of Life and Value Orientation of University Students in Middle-Adulthood

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DOI: 10.2478/atd-2020-0005

Received: January 9, 2020; received in revised form: February 27, 2020;
accepted: March 4, 2020

Abstract:

Introduction: Every person needs to define their own parameters of values and quality of life as there is a range of life circumstances and objective or subjective factors which force individuals to make decisions and select from available solutions depending on their personalities and other determinants. Currently, these notions have been broadly discussed and the authors of the presented study believe, that in the context of value orientation and life quality, there are new interactions, correlations and new truth to be revealed.

Methods: The presented research aimed to find out about the respondents' perception of their quality of life and value orientation using WHOQOL-BREF 1996 questionnaire and Vonkomer's HO-PO-MO questionnaire and unrevealing the relations between them. The research sample consisted of 300 in their middle-adulthood involved in external university study programs.

Results: The results presented in this study indicate that from the aspect of the subjective perception of the quality of life by individuals, external factors such as age or place of residence are not decisive. The most important finding of the research is that, as well as value orientation focusing on the values of knowledge, education and economic aspects leads to a better quality of life; a better quality of life is determined by a value orientation focused on the fields of knowledge, education and economic values.

Discussion: The attention of professionals from various fields of science and their research activities is given mostly to the relatively small population of young generation, the process of the creation of their value orientation and thus, their subjective quality of life. The presented study is focused on productive generation of middle-aged adults involved in tertiary education, which has experienced several massive changes in the society and received primary and secondary education in an educational context different from the present situation.

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Limitations: The conducted research into the respondents' quality of life is limited by the applied methods as it focuses on four basic areas of quality of life and quantitative methods are used. The advantages of this approach lie in exactly defined fields and quantitative data which enable comparison. One of its shortcomings is that it does not find out anything about the qualitative, dynamic aspects of the respondents' reflections about their own quality of life.

Conclusion: The findings show that quality of mental life correlates with educational value orientation as well as quality of social relationships with social value orientation. It can be stated that, as well as value orientation focusing on the values of knowledge, education and economic aspects leads to a better quality of life; a better quality of life is determined by a value orientation focused on the fields of knowledge, education and economic values.

Key words: quality of life, values, value orientation.

ARTICLES

Teaching Professional Technical Subjects Accepting Current Trends in Field Didactics

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DOI: 10.2478/atd-2020-0006

Received: February 11, 2020; received in revised form: February 27, 2020;
accepted: February 28, 2020

Abstract:

Introduction: In the theoretical study, the authors describe current approaches enriching the theory of field didactics concerning teaching technical subjects. They focus on developing the psychomotor dimension of students' personalities, which they consider to be an important part of the modern young generation's culture concept. In order to ensure this role in vocational-technical education, it is necessary to innovate the pedagogical preparation of teachers of technical subjects with a focus on achieving the required teaching competences. A part of the presented study deals with the determination, analysis, and representation of individual teaching competences in the doctoral study plan in the conditions of DTI University in Dubnica nad Váhom, Slovakia.

Methods: The theoretical study is based on a theoretical analysis of the issues of teaching technical subjects in vocational schools. For the purposes of theoretical analysis, the following research methods have been implemented:

- content analysis of the issues of teaching vocational subjects (current innovative trends in field didactics; theories of psychomotor learning; vocational subject teachers);
- logical operations (analysis, synthesis, comparison);
- generalization and recommendations for the school practice of field didactics.

Results: For the development of specialized didactics, it is necessary to take into account the newest results of scientific investigation in general didactics and field didactics; and to apply them in the existing and also

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new teacher training programs under development as only these facts create new possibilities for improving the quality of education in vocational schools. A consistent development of vocational subject teachers' teaching competences in the process of their preparation for the teaching profession following current trends and intentions in the field of didactics can become the carrier of positive changes.

Discussion: The authors of the study consider it extremely important to accept the latest trends in educational theory in the training programs for teachers of technical subjects. The result of this is the current doctoral study program offered by DTI University in Dubnica nad Váhom, Slovakia, which is organically linked to the master study program Teaching Technical Subjects. In the current academic year, DTI University has been granted the right to conduct habilitation and inauguration procedures in the field of study Didactics based on continuous and successful research activities in the above field with results comparable to the results at an international level and accepted by the professional international community.

Conclusions: In the conclusion, the authors of the theoretical study point out that a teacher developing students' personalities in all directions is the decisive factor in the educational process oriented on efficiency and high-quality results of students. To achieve this effect in the context of vocational schools, it is necessary to reform the training programs for future teachers of technical subjects.

Key words: general didactics, field didactics, technical subjects, trends in field didactics, psychomotor skills, teaching competences.

Homeschooling in Secler Region, Romania

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DOI: 10.2478/atd-2020-0007

Received: November 5, 2019; received in revised form: January 31, 2020;
accepted: February 10, 2020

Abstract:

Introduction: In the presented article, we are looking for the solutions and challenges of homeschooling in terms of further education and labour market inclusion.

Purpose: The purpose of the paper is to discuss the conceptual framework of a research-initiative on homeschooling. What are the consequences? Because of a lack of adequate state language usage, is there a forced migration in the pupils' career paths? To what extent are homeschoolers included into traditional compulsory education, lifelong learning, the labor market, and the society?

Methods: This is a paper with the conceptual framework of a research, where snowball sampling based qualitative interviews are planned.

Results: From the research to be conducted, the authors expect a reliable picture of the causes, challenges and consequences of homeschooling on lifelong learning, the labour market and social inclusion.

Discussion: It seems that homeschooling in the Seclerland is a de-schooling solution, because it is usually opted by parents dissatisfied with the quality of education. It helps them avoid Romanian language tests of skills and maturity examinations. We assume that those with outstanding competencies (e.g. in music or sports) or those with a certain handicap (e.g. health problems), as well as those temporarily living abroad are choosing it. It can be a sort of forced solution, a self-defense strategy that protects students from increasing school conflicts, and a reaction to the lack of satisfactory educational offers, commuting, or school segregation.

Limitations: Limitations of research are due to the snowball sample method and time/money limits.

Conclusions: We hope that, above all, the results will help parents to take a wise decision on whether to choose this option or not, but also schools and decision makers in education to assess their roles in the process and make changes if they want to and can do so.

Key words: homeschooling, inclusion, lifelong learning, higher education, labour market, Secler-region.

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