



Original Article

Effective Methods and Techniques of Teaching English to Students of Medicine

Seyed Mohammad Ali Mansoorian¹, Abbas Ali Ebrahimimehr^{2,*}

¹Clinical Research Development Unit Beheshti Hospital, Yasuj University of Medical Sciences, Yasuj, Iran

²Assistant Professor of Islamic Education Department, Clinical Research Development Unit Beheshti Hospital, Yasuj University of Medical Sciences, Yasuj, Iran

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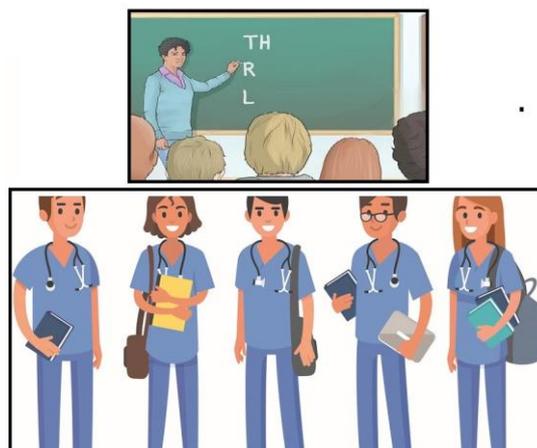
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ABSTRACT

The study followed two fundamental aims. The first aim of the study was to explore EFL teachers' perceptions about effective teaching and learning and its second goal was to explore participants' beliefs about the best methods and techniques of teaching. This is a survey that used a researcher-made questionnaire to garner data from the participants. It had two main dimensions, one focusing on the nature of children's learning, and the other was focusing on methods and techniques of language teaching. The participants were EFL male and female teachers who were selected through a convenient sampling method from some language institutes in Shiraz. To analyze the data, the researcher made use of a one-sample t-test. The results showed that teachers' awareness about language learning and teaching was higher than average. The mean scores of the participants in all the dimensions, including traditional concepts, constructivist concepts, and humanistic concepts, were higher than average. The results also depicted that teachers' awareness about the methods and techniques of teaching was also higher than the average domain. The participants' mean scores in all the dimensions of the grammar-translation method, communicative approach, and teaching practices were higher than average in the communicative approach.

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



* Corresponding author: Abbas Ali Ebrahimimehr

✉ E-mail: ebrahimimehr@gmail.com

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Introduction

Medical schools and health care institutions are best prepared to intervene and improve medical students' learning experiences by recognizing their learning styles and the factors that affect them [1-5]. If appropriate efforts were made to encourage change, learning approaches could change over the course of a medical degree program [6]. As a result, a comprehensive understanding of the most common learning styles and how various demographic factors can influence medical students' learning styles is critical in assisting educators in intervening and creating a more conducive learning environment to improve student learning and better prepare them for the future [7-10]. Teachers ignore their power in forming professional learning and the quality teaching that flows from it. Leaders can approach intentions about professional development with intellectual rigor and discipline or give them a cursory treatment as an afterthought to more pressing matters. Likewise, their decisions may be implemented with attention to quality and serious reflection on their impact or haphazardly executed with a sense of discharging an unpleasant responsibility. Those are the choices leaders face each time they meet to plan professional teaching [11].

In another study [12], it was revealed that the teachers' different years of experience significantly affected the relationship between their collective efficacy and collective responsibility. Although the relationship with respect to all three experience categories turned to be significant, the strength of the relationship increased as the teachers got more experience.

The tremendous amount of educational study in the last 25 years has recognized the impact of teacher perception on teachers' professional lives, and this has generated a substantial body of research [13-16]. Several reviews of this work have been undertaken [17] and the assumptions on which it is based are now largely uncontested: Teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs. In this framework of educational setting that is rooted in an analysis of pathway educational research language teacher perception research has emerged [18]. The study of teacher perception is generally defined by a multiplicity of labels that have been posited to describe, wholly or in part, the psychological context of teaching. This is because, as Verloop et

al. [19] maintained, in the mind of the teacher, components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined. Similarly, Kennedy [20] found that, although elementary teachers wanted their students to be actively engaged in learning, there was a restriction to how much engagement they would tolerate, for too much engagement led to too much noise and classroom instability.

There has been little investigation into the construct of EI as a predictor for success in English since teachers' professional job is under the influences of their ideas about effective teaching; they are by definition not merely offering new ideas but rather different ideas from those that have guided teachers in the past. Teachers' ideas about language education have already developed their practice, and they have already found pathways to balance among their many competing challenges and ideals. Concepts also might have developed the teacher's professionalism. They are likely to have shaped habitual responses to students jumping out of their seats, and favor certain methods of portraying particular curriculum content and certain seating arrangements. Thus, any new idea offered by teachers' cognition and consequently their professional development requires not merely adoption but also the abandonment of a prior approach and classroom practice [21]. Effective professional development requires to be sustained over time, with vast learning experiences, and it demands to be contextualized [22]. All this happens in particular educational policy environments or school cultures, some of which are more appropriate and conducive to learning than others [23].

It is also worth mentioning that the influences of any concepts rely heavily on teachers' motivation and that to alter their practice, concepts using mandatory assignments may not have much effect on learning. This is not to state that teachers will actively reject but rather that they will forget about the ideas that come to their minds when they enter the classrooms. It is so fundamental to learn more about how education programs address these concept challenges of teachers' professional development and their classroom practices and whether their solutions make a difference to student learning [24]. Therefore, the present study is going to find out if teachers create brilliant concepts about teaching practices and methods in their professional development and lead to effective teaching outcomes. That is, this study intends to explore

language teachers' ideas about the concepts they have about professional teaching and effective methods of second language teaching and learning. Conversely, the mainly qualitative work reported so far in this section, two questionnaire-based studies, shed further light on cognitive change in language teacher education. In fact, the present study pursues the following salient objectives:

First, the study intends to show EFL teachers' perception of professional teaching. That is, the study aims at exploring teachers' ideas about professional teaching. Second, it is an investigation of EFL teachers' perception of effective language learning and teaching [26,27]. In fact, the study intends to reveal the teachers' concepts of the essence of efficient language learning and teaching. Third, the present study aims at making EFL teachers' beliefs clear about the most effective techniques and methods of language teaching. It is going to state teachers' opinions about the most workable language methods. Fourth, this goal of the study is to reveal if male and female language teachers have different cognitions about professional teaching. The study actually decides to distinguish the role of gender in teaching concept creation. Fifth, the study wants to display EFL teachers' cognition about professional teaching.

Material and methods

Design

The present study was a quantitative study because all the stages of the data gathering and analysis were numerical. The study was a non-experimental study since it did not involve the manipulation of the independent variables. Actually, the study was a type of small-scale survey in which the researcher intended to explore the participants' opinions about some issues.

Population and setting

English teachers who were working in different language institutes in Shiraz, Iran, participated in this study. They were 99 male and female English teachers.

Instruments

To glean the required data, a researcher-made questionnaire called the Questionnaire of Elementary School English Teachers' Teaching Beliefs was applied. This questionnaire is written in English and composed of 40 discrete items, and is organized into three major categories to assess participants' beliefs about teaching children English. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked to assess their beliefs about teaching English to elementary school students on a five-point Likert scale. In addition to the selected response items on the questionnaire, one open-ended question was added to the end of the questionnaire: "What qualifications does a person need to acquire in order to be a successful English teacher in an elementary school?" Teachers could respond in Chinese to this question using their own words so that we could elicit free-form responses about additional beliefs from the participants.

Result and Dissection

As the Table 1. shows, 44/10 percent of the participants were male, and 55/10 percent of them were female teachers. Table 2. displays the frequency and the percentage of the participants with respect to their academic degree.

Table 1: The Frequency and percentage of the participants with respect to their gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Male	49	44.10	44.10
Female	62	55.90	100
Total	111	100	

Table 2: The Frequency and percentage of the participants with respect to their degree

Level of education	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Bachelor	32	28.80	28.80
Master's degree	55	49.50	78.40
PhD	24	21.60	100
Total	111	100	

The data in Table 2. depicts that most of the participants (49/50) had MA degrees. In addition, 28/80 percent of the participants had BA, and 21/60 percent had Ph.D. degrees. Table 3.

Table 3: The mean and standard deviation of the age and job experience of the participants with gender discrimination

Variable	Male		Female		Total	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	33.12	6.13	30.74	5.93	31.79	6.11
Job experience	9.92	5.44	8.34	4.88	9.04	5.17

Table 3. demonstrates that the mean age of the male participants was 33/12, and the mean age of the female participants was 30/74. Besides, the mean of the male participants' job experience was 9/92, and the mean of the female participants' job experience was 8/34.

A one-sample t-test was used in addition to descriptive statistics, including calculation of the frequencies and mean scores.

Examining the first question

First, the perception of EFL teachers toward effective teaching and learning was investigated [28–32]. The researchers made use of the one-sample t-test. Due to the fact that the dimensions of the nature of the children's language learning

Table 4: Results of one-sample t-test to assess the mean score of the participants in “the nature of the children's learning” dimension

Subscale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test value	T	Df	P
traditional concepts	111	22.25	3.68	18	12.16	110	0.0001
constructivist concepts	111	24.16	3.20	18	20.32	110	0.0001
humanistic concepts	111	15.32	2.62	12	13.36	110	0.0001
The nature of children's language learning	111	61.74	7.57	48	19.12	110	0.0001

Table 4. shows that the mean score of the participants in all the nature of the children's learning dimensions is significantly higher than the average. Therefore, based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the teacher's awareness about the nature of the children's learning was higher than average. Here, the mean, standard deviation, and the percent of the teachers' answers to each of the items are

illustrates the mean and standard deviation of the age and working experience of the participants in a gender discrimination vein.

had three features, including traditional concepts, humanistic concepts, and constructivist concepts and the answer of each of the items of the questionnaire contained a domain from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree) and number 3 (not disagree, not agree) was accounted as the mean of each item, thus, number 3 was multiplied by the total number of the items to obtain the mean of the so-called dimension. Then, the mean of the participant's scores was compared with the obtained average number via one-sample t-test to reveal if the mean score of the participants in the nature of the children's learning was lower or higher than the mean score.

reported. The traditional view of teaching and learning is characterized by teacher-centered teaching, a quiet classroom, the importance of knowing grammar rules, assessment, and especially by the goal to attain native-speaker pronunciation. Table 5. displays the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and the mean of the items related to the nature of the children's learning in the dimension of traditional concepts.

Table 5: Mean, standard deviation, frequency and the percent of the items related to “the nature of the children’s learning” dimension of traditional concepts

Item Description	M	SD		Fully disagree	Somehow disagree	Neither agree nor	Somehow agree	Fully agree
1- It is better when teachers, not students, decide which activities are to be used in the class.	3.39	1.31	Frequency	9	28	11	37	26
			percent	8.11	25.23	9.91	33.33	23.42
4- Teaching students the rules of English language structure is important.	3.97	1.03	Frequency	7	0	18	50	36
			percent	6.31	0	16.22	45.05	32.43
5- A quiet classroom is needed for effective learning.	3.23	1.27	Frequency	11	24	26	28	22
			percent	9.91	21.62	23.42	25.23	19.82
10- It is important to be accurate (grammatically correct) in expressing one’s thoughts in English.	3.92	0.96	Frequency	1	10	20	46	34
			percent	0.90	9.01	18.02	41.44	30.63
17-Students learn English with different learning styles in the classroom.	4.16	0.99	Frequency	4	5	7	48	47
			percent	3.60	4.50	6.31	43.24	42.34
24- Knowledge about different cultures helps to learn English.	3.58	1.01	Frequency	3	15	27	47	19
			percent	2.70	13.51	24.32	42.34	17.12

Table 5. reveals that the mean of all the items in the dimension of traditional concepts is higher than 3/5. In addition, most teachers (78%) agreed that teaching rules and language structure is important (item 4), and 85.60% supported the need for multiple assessments (item 17). 45% agreed that a quiet classroom is needed for efficient learning (item 5), and 72.1% of the teachers considered language accuracy important (item 10). Teacher-centered teaching was considered important by 56.80% (item 1) and

native-speaker-like pronunciation (item 24) was a goal for 59.50 % of teachers.

A constructivist view of teaching and learning is characterized by valuing students’ reasoning and deductive processes, that is making mistakes is considered normal in activity-based learning processes, where the teacher’s role is to be a facilitator. Table 6. shows the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage of the items of the ‘nature of children’s learning” in the dimension of constructivist concepts.

Table 6: Mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage of the items related to constructivist concepts

Item Description	M	SD		Fully disagree	Somehow disagree	Neither agree nor	Somehow agree	Fully agree
6- Thinking and reasoning processes are more important than specific content items.	3.53	1.03	Frequency	6	7	40	38	20
			Percent	5.41	6.31	36.04	34.23	18.02
11-Students raise questions and find the answer to them collaboratively. The Teachers' role in this process is as a facilitator.	3.83	1.05	Frequency	3	11	21	43	33
			Percent	2.70	9.91	18.92	38.74	29.73
14- Students should have the possibility to deduce grammar rules themselves.	3.70	0.88	Frequency	2	7	31	53	18
			Percent	1.80	6.31	27.93	47.75	16.22
16- The most important element in teaching English is vocabulary.	4.47	0.75	Frequency	2	1	2	44	62
			Percent	1.80	0.90	1.80	39.64	55.86
22- It is important to acquire native speaker pronunciation.	4.35	0.83	Frequency	1	3	10	39	58
			Percent	0.90	2.70	9.01	35.14	52.25
23- The most important element in teaching English is grammar.	4.28	0.78	Frequency	0	4	10	48	49
			Percent	0	3.60	9.01	43.24	44.14

As it is seen, the average of all the items is higher than 3/5. In addition, 87.40% of respondents agreed that making mistakes is a normal part of learning (item 22), its mean of 4.35 (SD 0.83) being the highest result of the whole questionnaire. Basically, all the teachers (95.5 %) were of the opinion that students acquire English best when doing various activities (item 16), and almost two thirds (68.5%) saw the teacher as a facilitator in students' inquiries (item 11). 87.4% of the teachers supported the practical approach to learning language rules (item 23), and 52.3 %

considered thinking and reasoning processes were more important than specific content items (item 6). More than half of the teachers (64%)believed that students should be given opportunities to deduce grammar rules themselves (item 14). The humanistic approach to learning was addressed by four items (19, 27, 29, 30). Table 7 displays the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage of the items of the nature of the children's learning in the dimension of humanistic concepts.

Table 7: Mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage of the items in the humanistic concepts

Item Description	M	SD		Fully disagree	Somehow disagree	Neither agree nor	Somehow agree	Fully agree
19- English pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary should be taught in an integrative manner rather than separately.	4.38	0.76	Frequency	2	1	4	50	54
			Percent	1.80	0.90	3.60	45.05	48.65
27- Every student can learn English well.	3.40	1.06	Frequency	3	9	31	38	30
			Percent	2.70	8.11	27.93	34.23	27.03
29- It is best for students to start learning English as early as possible.	3.75	1.03	Frequency	5	2	34	39	31
			Percent	4.50	1.80	30.63	35.14	27.93
30- Students learn English more quickly than other languages	3.80	1.02	Frequency	5	2	34	39	31
			Percent	4.50	1.80	30.63	35.14	27.93

Table 7. points out that the average of all the items in the humanistic concepts is higher than 3/5. In addition, almost all teachers (93.7%) agreed that students' learning styles differ from item 19. No teacher disagreed with the statement regarding students' learning style differences. External support (item 30) for learning English was considered important by 63.1% of teachers. With respect to starting to learn English as early as possible (item 29), teachers' opinions varied more; 61.3% supported an early start, and 10.8% opposed it. 27.9% did not have (or did not want to express) a clear opinion about it. Nearly half (49.5%) of teachers agreed that every child is capable of learning English well (item 27); at the same time, 19.8% disagreed, and 30.6% did not have an opinion about it.

It can be claimed that the average of the participant's scores in the different dimensions of their beliefs related to the nature of the children's learning is higher than moderate.

Conclusion

The present study was done to answer three research questions that seemed to be fundamental in pedagogy. So, based on the results of the statistical data analyses and the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: The first goal of the study was to examine EFL teachers' perceptions about effective teaching and learning. It was intended to show if EFL teachers have higher than average domain effective perceptions about language teaching and learning. It was shown that teachers' awareness about language learning and teaching was higher than average. In addition, it was revealed that teachers believed in the importance of vocabulary, grammar, and native-like pronunciation. The mean scores of the participants in all the dimensions, including traditional concepts, constructivist concepts, and humanistic concepts, were higher than average.

In addition, the second purpose of the study intended to display the most effective methods and techniques of language teaching according to teachers' beliefs. The results of the analysis depicted that teachers' awareness about the methods and techniques of teaching was also higher than the average domain. The participants' mean scores in all the dimensions of the grammar-translation method, communicative approach, and teaching practices were higher than average except for item 13 in the communicative approach.

Further, the results of the complementary data analysis illustrated that there was no relation between the gender of the participants and their answers to the questionnaire's dimensions. It was also shown that there was no relation between teachers' academic degrees and their answers to the questionnaire's dimensions.

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Authors' contributions

All authors contributed toward data analysis, drafting and revising the paper and agreed to be responsible for all the aspects of this work.

Conflict of Interest

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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