

English Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Management Skills at Dong Hy High School, Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam

Ha Minh Tuan ¹, Vu Kieu Hanh ²

^{1,2} Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry, Thai Nguyen, Vietnam

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate English instructors' perspectives of essential classroom management abilities at a high school in Thai Nguyen. This study employed an exploratory research approach. The study's participants were carefully picked from among eight English professors. A structured questionnaire was utilized to obtain data regarding instructors' assessments of classroom management abilities and their usage of such skills in managing English classrooms. After that, an informal interview was done to get more detailed information regarding instructors' perspectives and motivations for what they did in class. The data was objectively and qualitatively analyzed and provided in tables and translation scripts. The study's findings indicated that English teachers at a high school in Thai Nguyen province have a favorable opinion of their students. They all played 8 dominant roles in managing their class. (Controller, Organizer, Assessor, Prompter, Participant, Resource, Tutor, and Observer). In addition, in order to play the roles through classroom activities more effectively, besides having a deep understanding of the teacher's roles, the ways of acting their roles, and knowing how to apply them appropriately.

Keywords: *classroom management, English teachers, high school, perception, teacher's roles*

1. Introduction

Being an international language, English is now a required subject for students at all high schools in Vietnam. Different responsibilities for managing their students are required of teachers in English classes. Ince (2000) emphasized that teachers needed to have classroom management skills and teach pupils how to do the same. Additionally, the researcher's school has regarded English as one of the most crucial topics in the process of students' learning, realising the advantages that English brings in the present. There are now more hours spent teaching English in class than ever before, and textbooks and teaching techniques have evolved as well. Each of these aims to improve pupils' English language proficiency at our school. Moreover, students at high schools must make every effort to complete the graduation test at B1 (CEFR) level, which is a requirement. On the one hand, the researcher discovered that classroom management is crucial to improving students' English language performance during the course of teaching English in the school and via the teaching experience she gained from the National Foreign Language Project 2020. Most students would benefit if their teachers provided them with both information and skills.

There are many common important roles that English teachers act in language teaching. Moreover, to effectively supervise English lessons, they need to learn more about these skills. Like many English teachers in Vietnam, English teachers at various high schools deal with the same issue: a lack of the requisite classroom management abilities. In fact, there are many reasons for the shortage of necessary skills that need to be investigated. Moreover, the author has gained a lot of knowledge and abilities in managing the class as a result of participating in the NFL 2020 as a trainee throughout those previous summers. Therefore, the researcher decided to explore English teachers' classroom management skills in a high school in Thai Nguyen province, Vietnam.

2. Literature Review

There are many different expressions about the importance of English teachers. Alberto & Troutman (1986, p. 404) mentioned that "classroom management can be defined as the teacher's ability to co-operatively manage time, space, resources and students' behaviors to provide a climate that encourages learning". From this statement, it can

be seen that the teacher plays an important role in managing English classes. The teacher has the ability to manage and encourage learning environment in the classroom. Moreover “success in learning a language depends less on materials, technique and linguistics analysis, and more on what goes on inside and between people in the classroom” (Stevick, 1980, p.4 cited in Gebhard, 1996, p. 69). These elements aid educators in performing their duties successfully. Even if we have everything we need, including resources, teaching aids, time, knowledge, an appropriate technique, and English language proficiency, we still won't have successful and effective courses if we lack the ability to manage the class.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that the language teacher with the necessary skills plays an important role in teaching an English class. Harmer (1994) demonstrates that effective classroom management abilities are crucial for the performance of teachers and the activities that are employed in the classroom. However, Davies and Pearse (2000, pp. 117-123) claim that “you can not plan everything that will happen in a lesson. You need strategies to respond to actual events, including unexpected ones”. This remark implies that the teacher needs skills to deal with events that arise unexpectedly during his or her classes because he or she is unable to foresee them. As a result, having the ability to manage English lessons is crucial for both teaching and learning.

No matter how much time teachers spend with pupils, they must still manage English classes. They play several roles that influence how well their students learn. Others come about as a result of students' interactions with teachers in large school settings and may have an impact on students' general linguistic, social, and cultural development. Some of these functions are visible through daily contact with students in the classrooms and concern related instructions. Language instructors are always faced with choices. Other decisions that the teacher should think about could be the major roles of the teacher in managing English classes and what are the potential roles that the teacher can play and lead to the best results in giving students opportunities to participate and to be responsible for their learning. Some of the decisions are relatively minor. Different teaching strategies have dealt with these roles in different ways.

Harmer (1994) showed that the teacher's duties include presenting students with various scenarios drawn from real-world experiences. Students will receive numerous opportunities to experience real-world scenarios that will help them understand concepts more clearly. Language skills are demonstrated to students, and it is determined which skills are more crucial for each level. Larsen-Freeman (1986) also added that the teacher can be a supporter. In order to foster students' independence, teachers should encourage them to work independently. The teacher is also seen as a motivator and stimulator, a prompter. These viewpoints demonstrate that teachers must take their students' needs and expectations into account when acting in any role. When applying these roles with their own students in learning activities, teachers are aware of what to do and how to do it..

Harmer (1994) mentions a list of roles of a language teacher as a prompter, a participant, a resource, an assessor, a controller, a tutor, an observer and an organizer.

In the role of a prompter, the teacher gives a group or a pair advice on how to move forward while also assisting students with vocabulary. In order for students to work independently, teachers also encourage speaking English and pose questions to gauge comprehension. However, the teacher must use description in a sensitive and motivating manner.

When the teacher participates in the activities as *a participant*, he/she motivates students to take part and assists them with the solutions. Teachers may exhibit dominance because, if they aren't careful, students will become passive while they participate in activities.

When pupils require knowledge or advice on where to find more information, the teacher serves as *a resource* for them. encouraging and immediately increasing a student's level of academic independence.

As *an assessor*, the teacher gives pupils feedback, makes corrections, assigns grades, and sets standards for them. Teachers should be fair and supportive in this capacity, making it simple for pupils to understand their thoughts.

When a teacher is as *a controller*, the students are taught, informed, directed in a question, and given knowledge. When students misbehave or cheat on tests, the teacher regains control. In addition to these benefits, this profession also has certain drawbacks. Due to limited speaking opportunities and lack of hands-on learning, students become passive. Both students and teachers could be worn out. There are no activities, making the environment in the classroom dull.

When students are working on lengthy projects, the teacher directs, guides, and points them in the right direction. A teacher should use caution when acting as a *tutor* rather than taking charge. Teachers provide tutoring to everyone who needs it, not just the student they particularly like.

In the role of an *observer*, it is crucial for teachers to provide students with insightful comments and assistance with note-taking. If it is a success, teachers will experience many emotions. If there are issues, students will assist teachers in identifying solutions. Teachers need to be cautious not to be overbearing (officious). At order to avoid disturbing students while they are thinking, teachers should sit in the rear.

Organizing is one of the most important roles that teachers have to perform in English class. For this role, the teacher plans activities, divides the class into groups or pairs, assigns tasks to the students, and provides instructions on how to complete them. The teacher provides brief, precise instructions before students begin their activity and informs them of the time allotted. After finishing, the teacher halts the class and provides feedback.

In fact, there are a number of responsibilities in language instruction that English teachers should decide whether or not they will play effectively in English classes. They must take on various parts and act them out appropriately. To improve the quality of the teaching and learning process, teachers must identify the roles that are best suited for their students.

Cross (1995), on the other hand, highlighted that aspiring language teachers should make every effort to stay current on local and international news, social issues, local businesses, economic concerns, and the target culture. Their responsibilities as language instructors should not be confined to the classroom or isolated from daily life. Whereas Balderrama (2001) outlined the roles of the instructors and thought it was essential to the fight for educational justice and success. She stressed the efforts made to humanise teachers' contributions to the critical analysis of education. The teacher should actively research, pay attention to, and consider the psychological learning environment and the student's internal learning process. The objective is to encourage students to take full responsibility for their education. In addition, Peterson (2004) felt that teachers are used to being in the spotlight because they work in the field of education.

Clarkson & Gill (2000) provided their observations of two different English teachers, one who had taught for a long time and one who was in her fourth year of teaching. They discussed their connection with one another as well as their professional experiences. They left with a strong emphasis on the value of their mentor and their respective duties.

In sum, in language teaching, English teachers must choose between a variety of roles before they can effectively participate in English classes. They must take on various parts and act them out appropriately. To improve the quality of the teaching and learning process, teachers must identify the roles that are best suited for their students.

3. Methodology

The study is designed to explore English teachers' perceptions of classroom managing skills at a high school in Dong Hy district, Thai Nguyen province. Therefore, the exploratory research design was employed in order to answer the research question: What are English teachers' perceptions of managing their English classes? Eight English teachers participated in this study. The researcher employed questionnaires and informal interviews to collect the necessary data for this study. The questionnaires are mainly used for exploiting teacher's perceptions, behavior, experience and attitude toward the roles of the teacher in class in managing English classes. An informal interview is like a friendly conversation in which the researcher asks teachers questions randomly and takes notes during break time. Data collected from questionnaires and informal interviews were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

4. Results

4.1. Results from the questionnaire

After collecting and necessary calculations of the data, the teachers' attitudes towards their teaching and their roles

in classes are present in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Teachers' attitudes in English teaching and teachers' roles

No.	Questions	Choices	Number of teachers	Percent (%)
1	Do you think that teacher's roles in an English language class play the most important?	a. Yes	7	87.5
		b. No	0	0
		c. Others:	1	12.5
2	In your opinion, you use your roles in English language classes...	a. Well	4	50
		b. Normally	3	37.5
		c. Not so badly	1	12.5
		d. Badly	0	0
3	When students are organized to do activities, they participate...	a. Actively	5	62.5
		b. Passively	1	12.5
		c. Forcedly	2	25
		d. Others:	0	0
4	In your opinion, an English class is managed efficiently when...	a. The teacher plays appropriate roles	8	100
		b. Classes are organized in a suitable way for the learning activities	6	62.5
		c. Students have good co-operation	5	62.5
		d. There is discipline and harmony in the class	2	12.5
5	The factors which you think can affect most on the success of managing	a. The teacher's teaching experiences	3	37.5
		b. The good organization of students' activities	5	62.5
		c. The English language proficiency of the teacher	1	12.5
		d. The English language proficiency of the students	6	75
		e. The hard work of the students	7	87
6	Do you think that teachers' roles in an English class play the most important?	a. Yes	7	87.5
		b. No	1	12.5

Regarding the importance of the teacher's roles, most of the teachers (87.5%) recognized teacher's roles play the most important in an English language class. Only one person (12.5%) chose other options and none of them did not see the importance of the teacher's role in class.

In terms of the teacher's roles were used in English language classes. 50% of teachers found they used their roles in English language classes well and 37.5% of them used it normally and one person admitted using it not so bad. None of them chose to use it badly.

Referring to students participating in activities when they are organized by their English language teacher. Most teachers (62.5%) say that their students participate actively, or forcedly (25%). Surprisingly, 12.5% of teachers answered that their students participate passively. This means that their students don't understand what is going on in the class (daydreaming). None of them chose other options.

All the teachers (100%) answered that an English language class is managed efficiently when the teachers play appropriate roles, next is classes are organized in a suitable way for the learning activities (75%). When the teacher plays appropriate roles it means they put students into pair work/group work, get students involved, tell them how to start or finish the various activities. Students have good co-operation with the teacher (50%) and there is discipline and harmony in the class are equal (50%). Only one person (12.5%) chose other options. To answer for question 5, the factors that can affect most on the success of managing classes. With the same view in the question 3, most the teachers (87.5%) considered teacher's good preparation and the hard work of students (87.5%), next is the English language proficiency of the students (75%), then the teacher's good organization students activities (62.5%). The others have little influence on the teacher's roles.

In sum, the majority of teachers are aware of how effectively the roles play in administering English language lessons. Students' diligence, the instructor's thorough planning, their language skills, and the teacher's natural activity organisation are the major elements that have the biggest impacts on how well the teacher performs their duties. In addition to these, there are some additional challenging aspects, primarily the size of the language class, the diversity of the pupils, the classroom environment, and the amount of time allotted for each learning session. The classes they oversee greatly influence these variables.

Table 2 below presented the teachers' experience in managing their classes.

Table 2: Teachers' experiences in managing class

No.	Questions	Options	No	(%)
7	In your opinion, managing English classes the most successfully, the teacher has to...	a. Prepare the lessons carefully	6	75
		b. Well organize students' activities	5	62.5
		c. Have good co-operation from students	3	37.5
		d. Make the tasks suitable to the students	4	50
		e. Set clear goals for students	1	12.5
		f. Others:	0	0
8	What are the benefits of managing English language classes well?	a. To help the teaching and learning process run smoothly	8	100
		b. To make the class more interesting	4	50
		d. To get students in good orders	6	50
		e. To make students more motivative	8	100
		f. Others		
9	In your opinion, which are the most difficult factors in the roles of a class manager?	a. Language class-sized	8	100
		b. Students at different levels	8	100
		c. Students do not co-operate well	4	50
		d. Class facilities	6	75
10	Being successful in teaching English, the teacher should.	a. Use appropriate methods at pre, while and post stages of teaching	2	25.0
		b. Change roles appropriately to the teaching stages and activities	8	100
		c. Maintain discipline in the class	5	62.5
		d. Well organize activities naturally	7	87.5

	e. Provide clear instruction before the work with samples	6	75
	f. Control the tasks	4	50
	g. Others:	0	0

Regarding factors affecting successful management class, 75% of the teachers believed that the teacher's lesson planning was the most crucial component. Therefore, in order to successfully handle English classrooms, the teacher must prepare each session in advance. 62.5% of the teacher must carefully plan the activities of the kids. This relates to the teacher's responsibility to direct or plan the activities in the classroom. Half of the teachers (50%) answered the teacher has to make the tasks suitable to the students. They seemed not to concentrate on the student's cooperation from students (37.5%) and to set clear goals for students (12.5%). None of them chose other options.

In terms of the benefits of managing English language classes well. All the teachers (100%) answered is to help the teaching and learning process run smoothly and to make students more motivate (100%). Half of them saw the benefit of teacher's roles is to make the class more interesting (50%) and 50% as getting students in good order. Only one person (12.5%) chose to help the teaching and learning process run smoothly. They seemed not to find the benefits of the teacher's roles in it. None of them chose the other options.

When asking about the most difficult factor when teachers play the role as a manager, noticeably 100% of the teachers in this school say that the most difficult factors in the roles of a class manager are language class-sized and students at different levels (100%). They paid less attention to class facilities (75%), then due time per learning period (62.5%) and not good student co-operation (50%). No one chose other options.

In finding how to have successful teaching in class, 100% of teachers considered changing roles appropriately to the teaching stages and activities, 25% using appropriate methods at pre, while and post stages of teaching, organizing students' activities well (87.5%), providing clear instruction before the tasks with samples (75%), maintaining discipline in the class (62.5%). While 50% of teachers chose to control the work (62.5%).

Table 3 below shows the dominant roles of English teachers in their English class and the difficulties in applying these roles in their classes as their perceptions.

Table 3: Dominant roles of English teachers in English classes

Teacher's roles	Number of teachers	Percent (%)
Controller	8	100
Organizer	8	100
Assessor	8	100
Prompter	8	100
Participant	8	100
Resource	8	100
Tutor	8	100
Observer	8	100

Table 4: Teachers' perceptions on difficult roles in English classes

Teacher's roles	Number of teachers	Percent (%)
Controller	0	0
Organizer	7	87.5
Assessor	5	62.5
Prompter	6	75
Participant	6	75
Resource	0	0
Tutor	0	0
Observer	0	0

As can be seen from the tables, all the teachers (100%) have a coincidence in the eight main roles that they are responsible for putting into practise in their English classrooms. They continue to struggle in these jobs, nevertheless. In contrast, 87.5% of the instructors thought of the teaching responsibilities as a controller, prompter, participant, and assessor (of of the 8 roles). This indicates that while the teachers at Dong Hy high school have utilised their duties in English language classrooms, other roles are challenging for them to implement. Students will receive the information they need through various learning activities if the English language teacher plays these responsibilities effectively. Thus, recognising the challenging tasks that instructors play enables them to adapt their instruction to fit the English language proficiency of their students. These findings enable researchers to identify the dominating roles played and the challenging roles to play in English language classrooms and to determine the most effective strategies to use the teachers' responsibilities. These results agree with Larsen-Freeman (1996) who believed that teachers could play different roles in English language classrooms.

4.2 Results from Informal interviews.

The results from informal interviews provided in-depth information collected from the questionnaire. English language teachers from a high school in Thai Nguyen province considered that in order to act the teacher's roles well, an English language teacher should prepare the lessons well before at home. The reasons are because they wanted to determine the knowledge that students need and to organize suitable activities to the students' language levels.

English teachers often also asked their students to work in pair work, group work during frequent activities. Besides, in order to make the atmosphere fresher, the teachers often let their students play some more language games to motivate them in different ways. This means that through these activities, teachers used and acted their roles. These answers have the same results as the language teaching questionnaires.

The informants also stated that the teachers here acted their roles in different ways. One teacher often played the roles in appropriate ways to make the work suitable for students to get a higher result in the learning process. Another one indicates that he/she often combined his/her roles in different periods to make it suitable to the lessons' content and students' levels. Moreover, he/she considered that the most important thing is the ways of organizing, helping and taking part in activities with their students. Despite the fact that they have few different answers, they all determined how to use their roles in the classrooms effectively.

In responses to the question of how often they used English or Vietnamese in the classrooms, English teachers responded that they often used both English and Vietnamese in the classrooms but indifferent circumstances. However, they used English with simple sentences in daily conversations or make requests or orders. When explaining complicated English grammar structures, they used Vietnamese to get students to understand easily. This means that teachers here prompted students to use English rather than their mother tonguebut not much.

With the purpose to find out the ways that teachers did for students to get good results in learning, two of the English teachers answered by encouraging students to participate and instructing what they should do in their activities and then correcting, giving feedback and grading for them. However, teachers should do it sensitively and fairly to make students better later. Both the teachers answered the ways of organizing students' activities, they all determined and tried their best to act their roles well by encouraging students to take part in activities, prompting

them to use English in the classrooms and preparing the lessons well before. Although they acted their roles in students' activities, they met some difficulties. One of the important things is motivating students to speak English more and more because during the activities they have to frequently use it. They will find the activities teachers organized interesting enough to them. On the other hand, students will have more passion or interest in their learning which helps teachers act their roles well. The student's ability to use English communicatively in the classroom is the measure that led to the success of the teachers.

5. Conclusion

English teachers at Dong Hy high school in Thai Nguyen province have a positive perception of their roles in managing the learning process of their students. Teachers' roles are used widely, but the effects of skills need discussing. Teachers need more necessary skills for managing English language classes. In fact, all teachers know how to apply the teacher's roles, the ways to carry out the learning activities, and the purpose of the roles. Although they have tried to manage their English language classes well but it seemed not to be so successful. They have prepared the lessons well, but they still lack some necessary skills in the role of a class manager. The teachers in the school always use their roles in English language class well and their roles have a good influence on students' learning activities.

References

1. Alberto, P.A & Troutman, A.C. (1986), *Applied behavior Analysis for Teachers*, ed. Wadsworth Publishing Company, USA
2. Balderrama M. (Sept.2001) Perception of Teachers in the Proposition 227 Era": Humanizing Teacher Roles and Their practice. *Urban Review*. 33 (3) pp.225-267.
3. Clarkson E and Gill P. (2000). So you want to be an English Teacher?. *English is Australian*. 126, pp.24-28
4. Cross, P. (1995) Language Teacher Preparation in Developing Countries. Structuring Pre-Service Teacher Training Programs. *English Teaching forum* 6 (2), pp.34-36
5. Davies, P & Pearse, E (2000). *Success in English Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press
6. Harmer, J. (1994). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. New York: Longman
7. Larsen - Freeman, D. (1986). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
8. Peterson, T. August (2004). The classroom as a stage and the teacher's roles. *Teaching and teacher Education*. 20, pp. 589-596
9. Stevick, E. W. Memory. (1996). *Meaning and Method*. Boston MA: Heinle and Heinle.

Corresponding author: Vu Kieu Hanh

Address: Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry, Thai Nguyen, Vietnam

Email: vukieuhanh@tuaf.edu.vn