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ROLES OF TEACHERS A CASE STUDY BASED ON: *DIARY OF A LANGUAGE TEACHER (JOACHIM APPEL 1995)*

Autora

Elina Vilar Beltrán
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RESUMEN

Este trabajo es un estudio del “estilo del profesor”, tácticas que utiliza para el buen funcionamiento de la clase con el fin de conseguir el máximo rendimiento y los mejores resultados del alumno. El análisis se hizo extrayendo situaciones reales del libro “Diary of a Language Teacher”, escrito por Joachim Appel. Como base teórica se fijó el tema principal de la investigación, el papel del profesor en el aula, con los condicionantes que una institución como la escuela supone y la relación entre la función del profesor y la del alumno.

La ponencia comenzará con la definición del término “role”, aplicándola después al profesor y relacionándola con el alumno y con el aula.

A continuación, se enumerarán los diferentes comportamientos y actitudes que puede adoptar un profesor para que las condiciones de aprendizaje sean óptimas y brevemente se explicará que papel juegan los materiales de apoyo del profesor.

Finalmente, el trabajo concluirá con una breve comparación del funcionamiento de una clase, sobre todo la relación profesor-alumno, dependiendo de las diferentes personalidades y algunas experiencias personales que fundamentarán las teorías.

1 WHAT IS A ROLE?

Role: actor's part; one's function, what person or thing is appointed or expected to do.

That is the definition given by the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1982), but in our daily lives we fulfil roles that have features of all these defining characteristics. We have roles in society – we play parts in society. These differ: some roles are hard to avoid (e.g. father); some roles may be thrust upon us by circumstances (e.g. school pupil); on the other hand, we choose for ourselves many of the roles we fulfil (e.g. teacher).

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The concept of role is very wide and extends far beyond the idea of putting on a calculated performance. It is frequent to find the term 'role' in many situations, the following are some examples but I will focus only in the teacher's role as the development of a job.

For instance; **role conflict** is the condition where an individual is unsure of what his or her precise role is in an organization or social relationship. Another examples are **role expectations**, which are one's expectations of the appropriate behaviour of an individual in a given role. **Role network** or relationships between different roles in an organization. **Role relationship** is the way individuals behave when cast in opposing or complementary roles. Finally, the individuals and groups who influence the behaviour of a role holder are the **role set**.

Probably most of the roles we play help us to express our 'real' selves rather than the reverse. As long as what we are expected to do is congenial to us, we may not realize that we are playing a role. Sometimes, of course, we do feel constrained to behave in a way that contradicts our inner feelings. We may then speak of 'putting on an act', as if it were a stage performance.

The term 'role' is borrowed from the stage. Dramatists recognized the significance of roles in 'real' life long before anyone claimed to be a social scientists. The dramatists show us roles in action. From the spectacle of life presented to us in the theatre, we turn with fresh insight to the spectacle of life around us, and we may say, 'All the world's a stage'. A simple event will illustrate this and help to clarify the concept of role.

The range of roles open to selection will, of course, vary very much with the individual's resources –money, age, appearance, speech, education and so on. Social class is the main factor at work here, and, where children are concerned, the attitudes of the parents to local opportunities in education and work. There is evidence that the children of workers are required to live within restricted traditional settings, one effect of which is to limit the development of vocabulary and educational ability. In general, however, our complex society appears to be providing an increasing variety of roles open to choice or competition, and this must be regarded as an important aspect of personal freedom.

Whether our roles have been freely chosen or not, they cannot be wholly acceptable to us all the time. We may find some behaviour required of us distasteful, or we may be bored by it. We say we do not have our heart at what we are doing, and we shall probably show this by a display of weariness, by seizing upon distraction or striking up an irrelevant conversation. Many roles are not demanding enough to occupy all of a person's attention. When a person is not fully absorbed into his role behaviour and allows it to be seen that this is so, we speak of role-distance. Some degree of role-distance will clearly help a person to feel that he is not merely a machine operative or any other artificial object. One can play these roles in such a way as to suggest 'I am very much a person, quite beyond what you can see of me in this role'.

In any case, once we are placed or place ourselves in a role, others will expect certain types of behaviour of us.

1.1 BEHAVIOUR IN ROLES. THE ROLE-SYSTEM OF A SCHOOL.

A school is an institution largely made up of clear-cut roles. A pupil in school is expected to work as the teacher may require, to give attention, to keep reasonably quiet, to be proper when talking to a teacher...All these, means a degree of subordination to and distance from the teacher. A teacher is expected to control, instruct, guide, help and discipline pupils. He has responsibility for, and a corresponding degree of authority over, them. In the normal course of events, teachers and pupils

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do not need to think much about what is expected of them, and do not feel they are putting on an act during the course of a lesson.

But in the incident below described, teacher and pupils did feel this because they had become familiar with each other in a different social setting.

“Two young men arrived on a Friday night in a Southern town. Having settled in their lodgings they went in search of entertainment and discovered a local dance hall. There they met two young girls and spent the night with them. After the dance they took the girls home. These two young men were students from a College of Education, sent to the town for teaching practice. On Monday, one of the young men, facing his first class in the secondary school to which he was assigned, was disconcerted to observe the two girls sitting in the second row.”

In this classroom situation the three people concerned would behave very differently from the way they had behaved the Friday before. Differences in dress, speech, and modes of address would at once be apparent. All three people concerned would be aware of the differences, and would feel some uncertainty in committing themselves to the different relationship required by their positions in the school.

One need not be conscious of one’s role, unless some incident makes one aware of it. On the other hand, everyone is aware of other people’s expectations and the regular ways of doing things; each person is also aware of his need to find a place in society and to have regular relationships with at least a few people, based on mutual acceptance. Roles must embody both social demands and individual needs.

2 ROLES OF TEACHERS

First of all it would be convenient to consider this characterization of the teacher’s role by Gerald Dykstra:

“...near automatons who stand up, call roll, talk a lot, give cues, ask simple content questions, check for comprehension, check for recall, keep records, discipline students, bestow grades and generally carry on with clerical tasks far below what their won level of ability might be.”

(Dykstra 1978:4)

Essentially, teachers have two major roles in the classroom:

to create the conditions under which learning can take place: the social side of teaching;

to impart, by a variety of means, knowledge to their learners: the task-oriented side of teaching.

The first is known as the ‘enabling’ or managerial function, the search for the proper conditions and means for teaching, and the second the instructional function with the teacher as the so-called “instructor”.

They complement each other; the latter would be more or less impossible without the former. In practice, it is very difficult to separate the two and often one act in the classroom can perform both functions simultaneously.

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The instructional side of a teacher's role is likely to be goal-oriented, task-dependent, knowledge-based and underpinned by a set of attitudes and beliefs, not only about knowledge, but also the appropriate instructional strategies to employ in the classroom. Furthermore, it is likely to influence the types and modes of evaluation most favoured by teachers.

A teacher can pursue his instructional role in a variety of modes. It is rare for a classroom language teacher to stick to only one mode during the course of a lesson. However, teachers tend to favour particular modes of instruction which suit either the personality of the teacher, the materials being used, the expectations of the learners, the prescriptions of school administrators, the subject matter being treated, the preferences of teachers for certain types of classroom process or the teacher's interpretation of the idea of 'instruction'.

The 'school of thought' or discipline in which a teacher is trained will undoubtedly influence his ideas about teacher and learner roles. This set of beliefs and attitudes is likely to be reinforced by views about the role of teaching materials, including textbooks, in the language classroom.

Then we come to the question: "Are teaching materials the servant or the master of the language teaching/learning process?"

One commonly held view is that the teaching of the materials is the primary goal; hence the attitude that material should cover the syllabus.

An alternative view is that teaching materials are only a means to an end. Teachers use certain materials because they help to promote language learning. Such a view would lead to the conclusion that teachers are best left to the fostering of a good classroom climate while the learners work on the materials.

But there is another question to bear in mind: "Do teachers teach with or through materials?"

If a teacher teaches "through" material, problems may occur. With a textbook as the master, the learning objectives are the textbook's, there is little room for improvisation and teacher and learner roles may well be predetermined and contrary to expectations.

If the teacher teaches "with" the materials, with the textbook as servant, then he is freer to improvise and adapt the course of lessons to the needs of the learners. Teachers and learners can also generate new content from within and from outside the materials, or concentrate on interpersonal relationships in the class.

2.1 ROLES OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

Many different and complex factors influence the roles that teachers adopt in the classroom. An appreciation of these factors is essential if we are to understand teaching activities. Although often the social and psychological factors inherent in the roles are hidden, the process of learning a language in the classroom is underpinned by the teacher/learner relationship.

There are some factors that influence the role relations between teachers and learners.

Interpersonal factors:

Status and position: Teachers and learners are accorded social status depending on what we value in their performances. The relative positions are usually fixed, although types of teaching and learning situation differ a great deal.

A power relationship exists between teachers and learners in which power is not shared equally. This fact, combined with perception of status, gives rise to social distance.

Attitudes, beliefs: While teachers have a set of professional attitudes, personal attitudes and

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beliefs are likely to differ considerably between teachers and learners. The attitudes may be towards teaching and learning, the ‘content’ of learning or each other as people.

Personality: All individuals bring their personalities into social encounters. Indeed, social life is a major factor in shaping personality. In the intimacy of the teaching/learning situation, it is extremely likely that personalities will be modified. An additional complication arises in the situation where learners are trying to cope with a foreign language. The internalisation of the new language may bring about changes in the personality of the learner.

Motivation: Teachers have motivations for teaching and learners for learning, both instrumental and integrative. Teachers and learners also have deeper, more personal goals. These are linked to

Task-related factors:

Goals: Every task has goals or solutions. Individuals’ personal goals may be activated by tasks. Teachers and learners are engaged in an activity that is very dependent on goals.

Tasks: As well as the affective, or ‘personal’, side of tasks, there is the cognitive, or mental side. During group tasks in the classroom, there is an interplay between the two aspects.

Topics: Tasks themselves usually have ‘subject matter’ or skills inherent to them. While doing a task, an individual may also have to decide on the procedure for doing the tasks. A great deal of classroom activity is devoted to topics, both procedural and ‘subject’.

This interdependence between teacher and learner roles is well illustrated by the quotation which follows.

“...in general it might be said that teachers would be expected as a minimum part of their role to have adequate knowledge of their subject matter, to know something of how children learn and develop and to be able to devise appropriate learning/teaching experiences in the light of these two considerations. Pupils would be expected as a minimum part of their role to be interested in being learners, to develop the skills of listening to a teacher’s exposition of a topic and to acquire the skills of reading about and understanding subject matter as well as developing some skill with numbers.”

(Cortis 1977:20)

3 TEACHING STYLE IN DIARY OF A LANGUAGE TEACHER BY JOACHIM APPEL.

Joachim Appel wrote *Diary of a Language Teacher*, as a result of his first years and experiences teaching English. This diary reads out like a guide for a beginner in the teaching world. He is a German teacher of English who has also written a lot about methodology.

Teaching style is a combination of belief, attitude, strategy, technique, motivation, personality, and control. The teacher employs all these attitudes and behaviours to create the best possible conditions under which learning can take place.

The teacher’s primary role when setting up learning activities is more focused to classroom management than discipline or seating arrangements.

3.1 MOTIVATION

A primary function of teachers' management role is to motivate the learners who are demotivated and to nurture those who are already well motivated to the task of learning a foreign language. There are several ways in which teachers can achieve this.

1. Adopting a positive attitude towards the learners.

16th August *WE ALL GO TO THE WINDOW.* (Chapter 1, page 1)

*“First lesson in grade 5. It went fine. I told them to wait at the door until I (teachers are the people with keys) had unlocked it. They went in quietly. I talked to them for a while, until they started looking out of the window. I could understand that, because the school is high up on a hill and the view was, on this summer day, magnificent. **I suggested we all go to the window and have a look round.** I asked them to show me their villages in the distance. They hesitantly did so. I could see it was not their idea of a first lesson in secondary school.”*

2. Giving pupils meaningful, relevant, and interesting tasks to do.

10th January *RECITATION.* (Chapter 5, page 86)

*“Spent 15 minutes in grade 8 working on a line from Dickens’ A Christmas Carol: ‘A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner.’ At first I had thought this line should be simplified because none of the words were known to the students. I then reminded myself that Dickens had in fact created the version I was using to be read to children. I therefore tackled the line head-on, giving the class a very brief translation of each of the words. Then I told them that it was the sound of the words, all the clenched consonants that showed us how tight Scrooge’s grip on his money was. We started speaking the sentence together, trying to bring out the sound of these consonants. It was like a theatre rehearsal. **I could go for a degree of perfection in pronunciation that would have been impossible in a normal language class.**”*

Maintaining discipline to the extent that a reasonable working atmosphere is established. This does not necessarily mean total silence, rather an atmosphere of calm and organization.

22nd June *ASSESSING THE DAMAGE.* (Chapter 1, page 9)

*“Assessing the damage. They show me how disappointed they are in me. Perhaps it was the wrong thing to do. It is pretty exhausting to bear the consequences. On the other hand, on a technical level, **it has been quiet for the last two lessons. When I warn them, my warning is taken seriously.** However, my shining self-image as a liberal teacher (‘I’m able to manage without formal punishment’) is dented. I am trying to edge away from being tough. It’s not what I am anyway.”*

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Being motivated and interested themselves. It is an inevitable outcome of any occupation that one becomes bored and uninterested from time to time.

18th July ON IT GOES. (Epilogue Year ten, page 135)

*“At times I run out of things to say. Everybody is tired and on it goes: grade 11, grade 7, grade 9, grade 13. **I will have to think of something to bring myself and the classes back to life. I must stop drawing out the material just to fill time.**”*

Involving the learners more actively in the classroom process in activities that demand inter-student communication and co-operative efforts on their part.

25th October WORK EXPERIENCE. (Chapter 4, page 66)

*“**I go in and ask them whether they have ever worked for money during the school holidays.** All of them nod. Mild interest. I tell them the story of how I spent two summers in an office earning money as a student and about how boring and alienating it had been. **Afterwards I split them up into pairs and ask them to tell each other stories about experiences at work.** After twenty minutes of animated discussion they report back to the group and, after initially very short comments, a lively discussion about school in comparison to professional life follows. (Many of their peers who left school earlier are by now earning their own money.)*

The good atmosphere somehow transferred itself to the rest of the lesson. It had been a good start and so the following part of the lesson on grammar went well too. In fact, it seemed as if after this ‘free’ activity at the beginning the rather tightly structured grammar work I followed it up with was more welcome than usual.”

Introducing learners to the concept of self-appraisal and self-evaluation through reports and discussions.

20th April COMMITMENT. (Epilogue Year ten, page 134)

*“**Ben in grade 6 wants to read a passage.** His reading is rotten. I decide to keep the class waiting and practise one sentence with him until there are no more mistakes in it. **He has to read it ten times.** The class get mildly interested. Do I want to punish him? He has, after all, volunteered. Exactly for this reason, however, no punishment can be intended. That’s how Ben sees the situation, too. **He knows that neither the teacher nor the class is against him.** There is some laughter, though, when he makes his eleventh attempt. It stops **after trial number eleven turns out to be successful.**”*

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Giving positive feedback on written assignments.

10th January MICHAEL. (Chapter 3, page 38)

*“Tried a similar procedure in 11c today and **read out a passage of student writing**. I read it in a completely neutral tone of voice, correct sentences as well as incorrect ones. Students were to write down the correct version. I started to dictate sentences from Michael’s text. He took exception, saying the others would laugh at his mistakes. I only just persuaded him. **In the event the others found some of his mistakes but accepted a lot of the others as correct. After the exercise he looked satisfied. He had seen that the majority of the class would have made the same mistakes.**”*

Encouraging pride in achievement by allowing learners to display their work on the classroom walls and noticeboards.

30th June NO NEED TO CALM THEM DOWN. (Chapter 3, page 41)

*“The end of the school year is approaching fast, we have finished the book and are reading short stories now. I had given the class an option: they could either write an essay or perform one scene of the story for the class. **In today’s lesson two pupils take the stage**. There are two roles in the scene. One is that of a headmaster. It involves long passages. The other is that of a schoolboy. It is only a few lines. There is utter concentration and attention during the play. No need to calm them down. The performance is followed by a lively discussion about the quality of the acting and how this is to be assessed because the roles differ so much in length.”*

3.2 CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE

Many views on teachers’ managerial role derive from the assumption that teachers have a great deal of power over their learners. The discipline imposed by the teacher in the classroom is very important but there is a further strand of control that we must mention. Teachers also control the social and learning behaviour of their learners through the choice of activities and the ways in which they organize the learning group to do the activities.

Furthermore one thing to bear in mind is that maybe more responsibility needs to be given to the learner for deciding the agenda for learning and the best way to go about it.

13th September MISSED THE VITAL CLUE. (Chapter 1, page 2)

*“Four weeks into the school year. 10a has developed into a nightmare. I don’t know how it happened. **I lost control**. I didn’t even notice that it happened. I am on the defensive. I must have missed the vital clue. Acknowledging their difficulties might have been a mistake. Trying to solve their grammar problems for them was probably another. **The rule of the game now is that their English and their learning are my responsibility instead of theirs.**”*

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11th November *I CAN BREATHE.* (Chapter 2, page 24)

*“With 10a (now 11a) I have gone over to spending the afternoon lessons in the lab. I have prepared worksheets with listening comprehension tasks. They work through the tapes individually. Preparing the worksheets takes a lot of time and the exercises are not very popular. But the class actually works. And so, much to my surprise, does Oliver. However difficult he may be to talk to in a situation when I stand in front of the class in the role of the teacher (whom he sees as the incarnation of adult power which is to be defied), he is now quite happy to direct the energy he usually puts into disrupting my lessons towards a task. **With the imposition of authority removed he sits over his piece of paper and works hard. Many of the others do so, too. As far as discipline goes the lab lessons are a truce. Confrontation has been reduced. I can breathe.**”*

3.3 ORGANIZING THE LEARNING GROUP

There are several possible ways of organizing the learning group. Each one entails different types of relationships between teachers and learners and may be employed for a variety of different reasons. As well as implying different social relationships between participants, the various organizational patterns also entail different types of product or contribution from the learners.

11th September *CAREER IN ENGLISH.* (Chapter 5, page 85)

*“Started a new advance class. Many of them know me. This time it is rather a disadvantage, because they know me from 10a/11a. Once you’ve got the wrong image, it is almost impossible to shake it off. On the other hand: I ask them to write about their ‘career’ in English as a school subject during the last seven years. **We sit in a circle and they read what they have written.** I try hard –against all my teacher’s instincts_ simply to accept what they say. To nod when Robert says he hates English or when Tina claims she has no gift for languages and that whatever I might teach, it would be wasted on her. I try to react as if she had just told me an interesting fact about herself. **They wait for me to react like a teacher. The fact that I don’t changes the tone of our conversation slightly for the better.**”*

16th January *I FEEL LESS EXPOSED.* (Chapter 2, page 26)

*“With yesterday’s encouragement behind me I also gave groupwork a second try. This time I was more careful. I told them what I thought had gone wrong the lesson before and then gave them very strict instructions about noise. **I told them it could not be helped if they were in a different group from their friends. I also told them to listen to my instructions until I clapped my hands.** Only then were they allowed to begin. **Groupwork went much better this time, because they seemed to be a little more used to it. The class did get noisy again. I knew it would, but I was less frightened of it now. I tried to calm them down to a reasonable decibel level, but I also reminded myself that I had decided on this form of work and that I could not expect the same behaviour as in a normal teacher-centred lesson. Bearing***

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this in mind helped me not to get disheartened and to fight the feeling that I had abandoned teaching in this lesson. It was my own will that was behind the lesson. It is becoming clear to me that noisy phases do not mean that from now on all my lessons will end in chaos. There is always a next lesson, good or bad, which can take a different course or at least it is up to me to set a different frame on another occasion. I feel less exposed.”

3.4 TEACHER'S PERSONALITY

It is believed that teaching style is fundamentally a matter of personality. It may be true that teachers who are predisposed towards communicating with others and who are interested in learners as people are more likely to succeed in the classroom than those who regard teaching only as the routine transmission of knowledge. On the other hand, a teaching style that is centred on personal relationships rather than learning tasks can only succeed if the learning group accepts such a strategy, or the school authorities sanction such behaviour, or parents and other sponsors believe this to be in the best interests of the learner.

It is worth considering whether we can modify our personalities to suit different circumstances. We can only do this if we have a greater awareness of the social psychological reality of the classroom.

14th September TUNNEL VISION. (Chapter 1, page 2)

“Staying rational when I write about an incident is one thing being in the acoustic, organizational and emotional turmoil of the classroom is another. Far too often I am caught up in chaos. I watch myself going into the classroom armed with the right plans and doing the wrong thing. ‘Adolescence is a long dark tunnel.’ So are my lessons. Looking at them is like looking through a tunnel, too. The only thing I can see at its end is a tiny segment of reality. This segment is 10a. I cannot help looking at it. I now measure my professional success in terms of success in 10a. I keep telling myself: most lessons, especially those in grade 5, are going well. Yet this does not seem to count. What counts is 10a and whether I survive them three times a week. If things go well in 10a, everything is good. Thursday 12.45 and I am finished with them for the week. It feels as if the weekend has already started. Fridays and Saturdays are good days, because I can allow myself not to think of them. Come Sunday afternoon it starts all over again.”

12th January THE TEACHER SHOWS INTEREST. (Chapter 3, page 39)

“Detail: Andreas leans back and yawns. I ask him if he is tired or exhausted from listening to English. I do so without any intention of calling him to order. He immediately assumes this is a reprimand and is about to defend himself, assuming that if the teacher shows interest in him it can only be for disciplinary reasons.”

3.5 TEACHER'S ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

The teacher's style is inevitably going to be influenced by his beliefs and attitudes.

These include:

- cultural and social beliefs and attitudes about how to behave in social groups
- beliefs about the role of knowledge in teaching and learning
- beliefs about the nature of learning
- beliefs about the nature of knowledge (in this case, language teachers, a view of language).

Teaching style lies at the heart of the interpersonal relationship between teacher and learner. However, a basic set of factors lies behind teaching style. These are related to: attitudes towards knowledge and learning; preferred means of maintaining control over learners; preferred ways of organizing class activities; positive or negative feelings about teaching itself; beliefs about the purpose of education in general; influences from within the teacher's role set; tendencies towards behaviour which favours the taking of risks or towards conformist behaviour; beliefs about the best ways of learning a language; attitudes towards learners.

8th August DON'T TRY TO BE THEIR FRIEND. (Chapter 1, page 1)

"The crunch, the head told me, is grade 10. Grade 5 should be OK. Everybody is keen to have them, because at the age of ten or eleven they are still kids and enthusiastic. They are supposed to be good fun to teach. With grade 10 it is different. They are 16 and in the midst of adolescence. 'Adolescence', he said, 'is a long dark tunnel.' Many pupils of the class I am to take will leave school at the end of the year. I will have only limited influence over them. 'Don't try to be their friend,' he added, 'they don't want that. They want a teacher, someone they respect'."

20th December WHAT A FOOL. (Chapter 2, page 25)

"I am still used to measuring my success as a teacher in terms of the silence I am able to produce. I still remember my RE teacher in secondary school. After I had left school we once met and he told me one of his early maxims as a teacher, which was 'My classes must be so quiet that you can hear a pin drop.' 'What a fool I was,' he added twenty ye

4 CONCLUSION

General conclusions of the role-concept:

- A person's behaviour is largely determined by the role he is in at any given time.
- Each person has a number of different roles.
- Roles may be socially prescribed (e.g. pupil) or self-chosen (e.g. teacher).
- Institutions and groups vary in their role expectations.
- Individuals vary in the way they play roles.
- The same people may relate to each other in quite different ways when they change roles.

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- Role expectations frequently conflict with each other.
- All social behaviour is in roles: therefore personality can never be directly observed.
- A person in a role may show varying degrees of identification with, or distance from his role-behaviour.

It is unlikely that the teacher and learners will always adopt the same role relationships whenever they step into the classroom. In the language classroom, as in life outside the classroom, teachers and learners will adopt a range of roles, although in any given classroom, the teacher or student may be characterized by a limited set of roles. As we shall see, these roles are not discrete. Rather they overlap, which can cause complications, confusion, and even conflict.

An additional factor to consider is that roles are dynamic, not static, and are subject to change according to the psychological factors brought by participants into the classroom and also the dynamics of group activity within the classroom.

Behaviour problems can occur if there is a mismatch between the perceptions held by teachers and learners about their respective roles.

Everyone has different roles in life. A teacher, for example, has his role as a father, as a worker, etc.

It may be objected that the term ‘role’ is being used to embrace every possible action. In the following story we see that it may seem there is some danger of taking any kind of behaviour, attaching to it a label which includes ‘role’, and then supposing that one has explained something:

“A boy who regularly shop-lifts on Saturdays is then in the role of a juvenile thief; but does this help to explain his actions?”

Different writers use the term ‘role’ in somewhat different sense. It is sometimes used to refer to the expectations of other people, sometimes to the way the individual thinks he is expected to behave, and sometimes to his actual behaviour.

To identify closely with one’s roles, or to establish a measure of detachment from them, are both possible defensive strategies. One might throw oneself into a role, to shut out conflicts in the background of one’s mind or social life. One might play the role with considerable distance so as to reduce exposure to conflicts in the role. Or one might go beyond an undemanding role by offering to establish additional and more satisfying role-relations.

In any case the task to be accomplished must be well defined and the role that everyone plays in it too because if the appropriate role is not identified and acted upon, the effectiveness of the task will be reduced.

4.1 PERSONAL OPINION

As many other jobs, teaching is an exciting and uncertain profession.

From my own experience as a student and as three year English teacher, I can say that I have never found two classes to be exactly the same. I agree with the ones that think that it has a lot to do with the personal relationship between teacher-student and student-student.

There are times when, through nobody’s fault, the intangible and indefinable mix of factors fails, and every lesson is a struggle. Fortunately, that is only from time to time and normally due to external factors with one solution or another.

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Sometimes the teacher-students or even the own students relationship doesn't work. However, it is noticeable that when the connection between the various personalities making up the class work, the atmosphere in it is better as well as the learning increases.

It may be true that teachers who are predisposed towards communicating with others and who are interested in learners as people are more likely to succeed in the classroom than those who regard teaching only as the routine transmission of knowledge. In my opinion if a teacher doesn't show a little of his human side, the atmosphere of the class is not favourable for the learning process. I think that a teacher should always try to leave a print. On the other hand, a teacher style that is too much centred on personal relationships rather than learning tasks can only succeed if the learning group accepts such a strategy, or the school authorities sanction such behaviour.

We should consider whether we can modify our personalities and at the same time if that would help to suit different circumstances. In any case it is not that easy, because we all fix our personality through the years. But that may be possible if the teacher has a great awareness of the social psychological reality of the class.

It is very important to state from the first moment what the teacher expect from the students and it could be very convenient if the students could express their expectations too.

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