LINELT 2013

The Effect of Peer Observation on Iranian EFL Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Mousavi, S.M [a]*

[a] English Department, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Damavand,

Abstract

Self-efficacy beliefs influence teaching process. Researcher believes that peer observation, as an instructional strategy might be effective for increasing self-efficacy beliefs. Also the lack of refreshment especially in Iranian context in this regard, is another reason of conducting it. The purpose of this study is to test the relationships between peer observation and teacher self-efficacy. The participants are 48 English teachers of English language Institutes in Mashhad. After manager's permission, the volunteer teachers are randomly assigned into two groups, to one of which the peer observation program administered and to the other the conventional program. OSTES and Metcalf are used to measure teacher self-efficacy and teacher instructional skills respectively. The comparison is made based on pre-test, post-test in control and experimental groups. After calculating the mean scores and standard deviations, paired and independent samples t-tests are utilized. Observation sessions are done two times after a 7-10 day intervals. Statistics illustrates that self-efficacy level of control group's participants and their instructional skills has no changes after participating in this program, but peer observation improves observer teacher's self-efficacy (as high as supervisors self efficacy) and observer's teaching skills.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, teachers are not looked upon as passive figures and only performers of prescribed methods. There are much evidence of the ways in which teachers' beliefs influence what they do in the classroom" (Phipps & Borg, 2007). Saha and Dworkin consider teachers and their activities for learning processes as the central element at all levels of educational system (Saha &Dworkin ,2009). Most scholars, such as Coburn , Rosenholtz , Runhaur,

*Corresponding author name: Seyedeh Maryam Mousavi. Tel.: +98-091-5314-5226
  E-mail address: Smaryammousavi@yahoo.com

Spillane et al. , and Veen et al., cited in Thoonen et al., believe that teachers' personal and psychological factors are the key elements affecting their teaching and learning (Coburn ,2003;Rosenholtz 1991;Runhaur ,2008; Spillane et al. 2002; and Veen et al.,2005, cited in Thoonen et al., 2011).Bandura's social cognitive theory is that people are the agents of change in both themselves and their environment through their interaction with that environment. In the later refinement of his theory, the primary influence on personal agency is a person's self-belief or belief in their efficacy: Their ability to exercise control and achieve the goals that they have set themselves. Self-efficacy influences goal-setting, motivation and the effort a person expends on a task, even in the face of difficulties or obstacles (Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy beliefs influence on teaching process. It might be achieved through successful experiences with peer-observation. Peer observation is a beneficial and bilateral road for teachers, those who are observed and those who do observation. Bell, in reporting on the evaluation of a peer observation, first noted that observers or "reviewers" gained significantly "from the opportunity to observe a colleague teaching"(Bell, 2001, p. 37). Bell and Mladenovic found that peer observation was perceived as valuable participants intended to change their teaching as a result of the process (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008, p. 743). Donnelly explored staff perceptions of a reciprocal peer observation "scheme" and assumed Bandura's later work on self-efficacy as one of several theories that "underpin" the scheme, and interprets the perceptions of some participants as evidence that they were "developing a sense of confidence in their teaching approach", and thus their "self efficacy for teaching was enhanced"(Donnelly, 2007) .

1.1. Statement of Problems

The improvement of teaching practices has traditionally been left to individual teachers working in isolation rarely follow up with peer observation or workshops or even feedback and support or continued training. This study tries to remove teachers' negative reactions to teacher's observation and especially to trigger a new spot of energy in the teachers ' mind and beliefs in the context of Iran in the status of teacher observation. This research tries to examine whether we can change the level of teachers' self-efficacy and their beliefs about ability to can do everything by participating in peer observation program and try to insert peer observation as a vital component of professional development programs. Additionally, researcher hopes to inform teachers of self-positive effect of peer observation for peers themselves and tries to motivate them to more voluntarily accept it and welcome it.

1.2. Purpose of Study

Explore how peer observation can promote teachers' self-efficacy to improve classroom instruction. To give participants the flavor of peer observation to open their classrooms' door and to have a reciprocal visits and observations. Improving self-efficacy leads to improving Teachers' sense of efficacy (TSE) that has been linked to quality of teaching and level of student achievement (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989; Soodak & Podell, 1993).

2. Research Design

This study is designed to offer insight into the teacher efficacy of a group of Iranian EFL teachers and tries to find out the effect of peer observation on self-efficacy. Then, these two variables, peer observation as an independent variable and teacher's self-efficacy as dependent variable are under investigation in an experimental method. For the purpose of this study a pretest-posttest control group is employed. Teachers randomly are assigned into two groups. To one group a peer observation program is administered and to the other a traditional and conventional supervisor program. The teachers in the control group are under observation by the supervisor in a traditional manner and in experimental group peers do it. Then, they are compared based on their (a) self efficacy, and (b) professional development by two questionnaires. OSTES is used before starting first session and after ending second session and Metcalf is used after finishing every session of observation.

2.1. Participants

The participants in this study include a group of 48 EFL teachers, male and female; all are over 18 years of age

with different range of teaching experiences (more than 3 years) and various backgrounds of classroom observations. Based on practicality and feasibility of doing this research in EFL institute classes of Mashhad and after manager's permission, the participants are selected and divided into two groups. Individuals are allowed to select his/ her own peer in experimental group. This may have many benefits for teachers to feel secure and experience a stress less teaching program.

2.2.Instrumentation

The instruments, which are used here, include: -Questionnaire   -Observation

The first instrument is the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES long form)), (A 9-point scale with 24 items). TSES long-form comprises three subscales: Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Strategies, and Efficacy in Classroom Management (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001). Observation is done based on Metcalf's instructional skills. Metcalf (as cited in Goker, 2006) suggested seven skills, generalizable across content areas that contribute to clarity of instruction: (a) informing students of lesson objectives; (b) repeating important points; (c) using examples; (d) repeating information students do not understand; (e) asking questions; (f) providing opportunities for student engagement; and (g) furnishing practice opportunities. According to Goker "these seven instructional skills are essential for foreign language teaching because they enhance teacher's presentations of real life situation tasks, organization of communicative activities and classroom management. All these skills are also a cluster of teacher behaviors that result in student's gaining knowledge or understanding of a topic if they possess adequate interest, aptitude, opportunity, and time" (Goker, 2006, p.242).

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

Research is started by introducing the research objective to managers and by his permission. After a short introducing the research objectives, volunteer teachers randomly are divided into two groups of experimental and control group.   Each group contains twelve pairs (observer & observe). All control groups' observers are supervisors. Control group pairs only participate in two observation sessions in a traditional way without experiencing any treatment. Participants in experimental group select their peer and inform researcher and their pre-determined observation meeting. An overview of research process is represented in figure1. In pre-observation session the template of the work is explained precisely for them. Participants fill out a pre-observation form anonymously only with alphabetic characters e.g. (A – A`). They also complete the demographic section part. Researcher for further anticipated results puts this part.

Traditional Observation Template
Pre-observation session ⟹ TSE questionnaire ⟹ Observation session 1 (Metcalf's form 1) ⟹
 Observation session 2 (Metcalf's form 2) ⟹ TSE questionnaire2
Peer Observation Template
Pre-observation session ⟹ TSE questionnaire 1 ⟹ Observation session 1 (Metcalf's form 1) ⟹
      Post-observation session1 ⟹ Observation session 2 (Metcalf's form 2) ⟹ Post-observation session 2
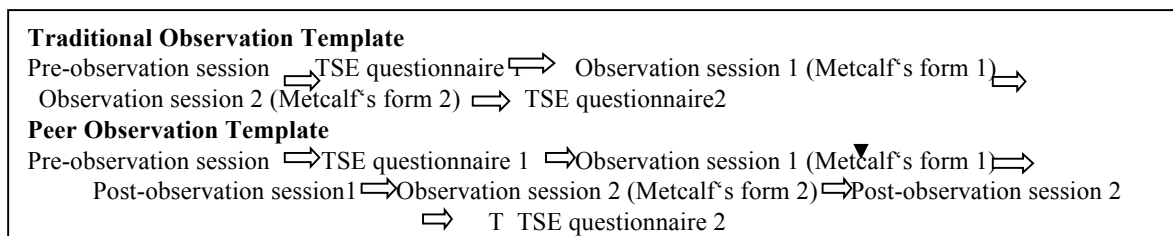   ⟹   T TSE questionnaire 2

 Figure 1: Template of observation

In this study, OSTES is used as a pre-test before first meeting session and as a post-test after ending second session. Each group of two participants does two sessions of observation during 7-10 days. Metcalf is filled out after each session of observation. Participants are provided with guidelines on how to rate the skills and how to score performance of observe and themselves in those specified skills. Time session is around 75 minutes. All questionnaires for observe are filled out by self-assessment procedure. Both groups participate in the pre-observation session with the aim of enhancing teachers' professional awareness along with research objectives. The experimental group receives an additional program, that is, post observation session. This part is the treatment and the most salient part of the research. For the control group, the supervisor observes teachers. Post-observation session is immediately taken place after the presentation of the lesson between peers.

2.4.Data Analysis

The long form of OSTES, which is utilized in the present study, comprises three subscales. Each subscale loads equally on eight items, and every item is measured on a 9-point scale from 1(nothing) to 9 (a great deal). Metcalf's questionnaire is used for evaluating level of improvement in teachers' instructional skills. The reliability for the long form as a unique questionnaire is a = 0. 840 and for the Metcalf's is a = 0.748. T-test and SPSS 18 are conducted to the data as a way of data analysis. Accordingly, appropriate descriptive statistical procedures follow to interpret the results of the document analyses quantitatively and determine the significant differences between teachers' self-efficacy before and after observation for both observer and observe. Independent sample t-test investigates difference between mean of two groups and paired sample t-test to investigate differences between pre-post test results of two groups.

3. Results

Statistics illustrated that self-efficacy level of control group's participants and their instructional skills had no changes after participating in this program. In other words, peer observation improved observer teacher's self-efficacy and observee's instructional skills. Also, observers' level of self-efficacy in experimental group was raised as high as supervisors' self-efficacy' in control group. What can be inferred from the findings of the study is that peer observation has an effect on teacher's self-efficacy and post observation session is the important part of this process.

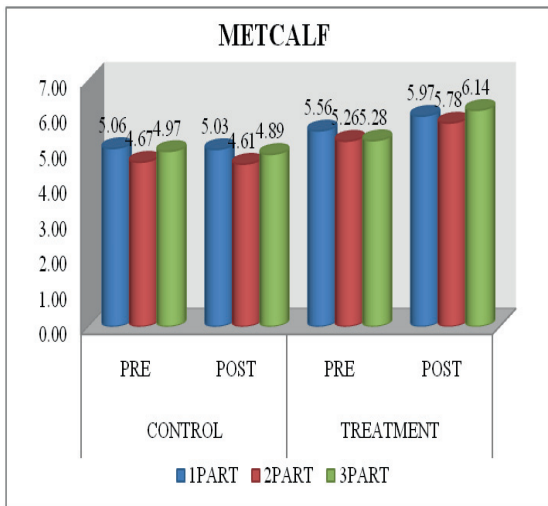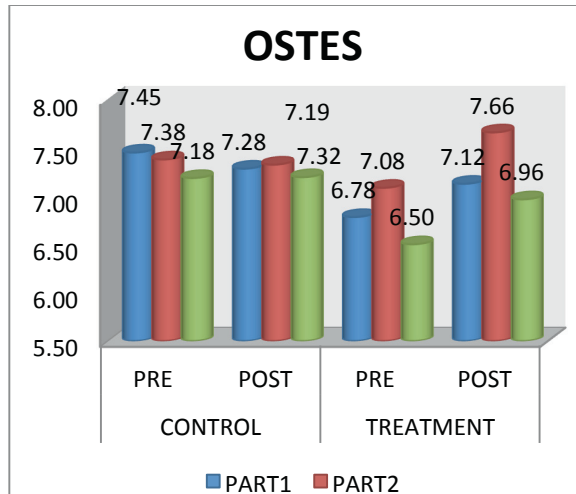**Figure 2 Observer's Metcalf 1& Metcalf 2 OSTES2**   **Figure 3 Observer's OSTES 1 &**

It is indicated that experimental's observers rate their peers in second session more than their previous session of meeting. It proves the effect of post-observation session on pairs of experimental's groups. It may infer that based on observers' witness- eyes the quality of observees' teaching is raised.

Figure 4   Observee's Metcalf 1 & Metcalf 2
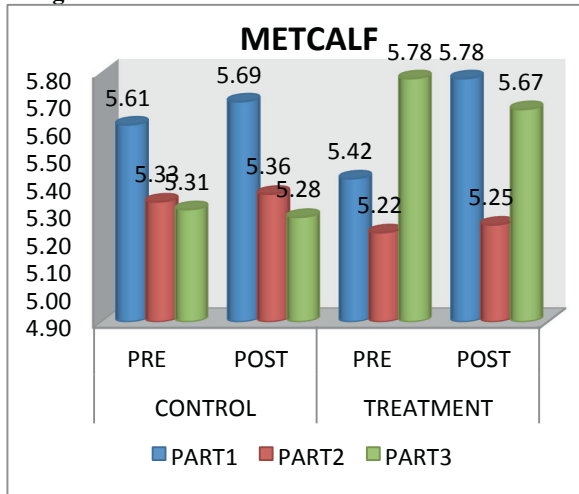
Figure 5 Observee's OSTES 1 & OSTES 2
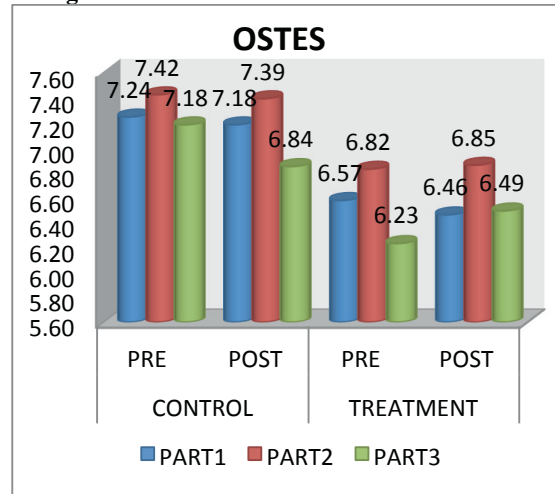
The OSTES bar graph of observes indicates that self –efficacy of observe 's control group at first was higher than self-efficacy of experimenter's observe. After second session of observation, the changes in Scores' bars seemed ignorable. There is a little increase in self-efficacy of treatment's group, which is not statistically meaningful.

3.1.Conclusion

The results here suggest that participation in peer observation is perceived to be a valuable experience. The process was unique to each of the participants and was unlike educational programs they had been involved in their previous years of teaching.

References

Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. American Psychologist, 44(9), 1175-1184.

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. Educational Psychologist, 28(2), 117–148.

Bell, M. (2001). Supported reflective practice: A programme of peer observation and feedback for academic teaching development. The International Journal for Academic Development, 6(1), 29-39.

Bell, A. & Mladenovic, R. (2008). The benefits of peer observation of teaching for tutor development. Higher Education. 55,735-752.

DeZure, D . (1993). Opening the Classroom Door. Academe 79, no.5 (September/October 1993): 27-28.

Donelly, R. (2007). Percived impact of peer observation of teaching in higher education. International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.19(2), 117-129.

Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement .American Educational Research Journal, 37, 479-507.

Goker, S. D. (2006). Impact of peer coaching on self-efficacy and instructional skills in TEFL teacher education. System, 34(2), 239-254.

Keig, L. & Waggoner, M.D. (1994). Collaborative peer review: The role of faculty in improving college teaching. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, No.2. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Development.

Midgley, C., Feldlaufer, H., & Eccles, J. (1989). Change in teacher efficacy and student self- and task-related beliefs in mathematics during the transition to junior high school. Journal of Educational Psychology, 81, 247–258. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037%2F0022-0663.81.2.247

Phipps, S., & Borg, S. (2007). Exploring the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice.The Teacher Trainer, 21,17-19

Saha, L., & Dworkin, A. (2009). Introduction: new perspectives on teachers and teaching. In Saha, L., & Dworkin, A. (Eds.). International Handbook of Research on Teachers and Teaching (pp. 3-11). New York: Springer.

Soodak, L., & Podell, D. (1993). Teacher efficacy and student problem as factors in special education referral. Journal of Special Education, 27, 66–81.

Thoonen, E., Sleegers, P., Oort, F., Peetsma, T., & Geijsel, F. (2011). How to improve teaching practices: the role of teacher motivation, organizational factors, and leadership practices. Educational Administration Quarterly, 47(3), 496–536.
 http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11400185

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: capturing an elusive construct. Teaching and Teacher Education, 17, 783–805.