

English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Common Mistakes: Different Personality Traits¹

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to search English language teachers' perceptions about common mistakes regarding their personality traits. It aims to examine common mistakes made by English language teachers to find out the effects of teacher personality to language teaching process. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative research methodology have been applied. In the light of the literature and the opinions of the experts in the field, a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was administered to 175 English language teachers working at primary schools, secondary schools, high schools and universities. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, Cronbach Alpha Reliability, Non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test and Non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-Test by using SPSS 20. 15 English language teachers were also asked to answer semi-structured interview questions to explain unclear points in the study. The interviews were transcribed and the qualitative data were analyzed via content analysis. Non-parametric tests indicated that there is a significant difference between teachers' workplace/gender/teaching experience and mistakes regarding teacher personality. The results show that teachers believe that they do not respect what students believe or say and they do not have to be friendly; their responsibility is just to convey their instructional knowledge. These are the most common mistakes made by the participants. Besides, female teachers make more mistakes regarding their personality traits than male teachers. Participants who have less teaching experience have been observed to make more mistakes regarding their personality traits more than the others who have more experience in teaching. On the other hand, teachers who show 'extraversion' and 'agreeableness' dimensions of five-factor model of personality were observed to make mistakes more frequently.

Keywords: Teacher Mistakes, Teacher Personality Traits.

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İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Yaygın Hatalara Dair Algıları: Farklı Karakter Özellikleri

Özet: Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin karakterleri ile ilgili yaygın hatalarına dair algılarını arařtırmaktır. Çalışma, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin kişiliklerinin dil öğretim sürecine etkilerini arařtırmak için yaptıkları yaygın hataları incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada nitel ve nicel arařtırma yöntemleri uygulanmıştır. Alan yazın taraması ve uzman görüşleri ışığında bir anket tasarlanmıştır. Anket ilköğretim okullarında, orta öğretim okullarında, liselerde ve üniversitelerde çalışan 175 İngilizce öğretmenine uygulanmıştır. Veriler, SPSS 20 kullanılarak tanımlayıcı istatistik, Cronbach Alfa güvenilirlik katsayısı,

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parametrik olmayan Kruskal-Wallis Testi ve parametrik olmayan Mann-Whitney U-Testi ile analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada belirsiz olan noktaları da netleştirebilmek için 15 İngilizce öğretmeninden görüşme sorularına cevap vermeleri istenmiştir. Görüşmeler yazıya dökülmüş, veriler içerik analizi ile analiz edilmiştir. Parametrik olmayan testler, öğretmenlerin işyeri / cinsiyet / öğretme deneyimi ile öğretmen kişiliklerine ilişkin hatalar arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğunu göstermiştir. Sonuçlar, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerin inandıklarına veya söylediklerine saygı duymadıklarını düşündüklerini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, “Öğretmenler, öğrencilerin arkadaşları değildir, bizim işimiz bilgimizi aktarmaktır” hatasının da katılımcılar tarafından en sık yapılan hatalar arasında olduğu görülmektedir. Bayan öğretmenler kişilik özelliklerine ilişkin olarak erkek öğretmenlere göre daha fazla hata yapmaktadırlar. Diğer taraftan, daha az mesleki deneyimi olan katılımcıların, kişilik özellikleriyle ilgili olarak deneyimli katılımcılardan daha fazla hata yaptıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca, beş faktör kişilik modelinin "dışa dönük" ve "uygunluk" boyutlarına ait olan hataların, öğretmenler tarafından daha sık yapıldığı gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen Hataları, Öğretmenin Karakter Özellikleri.

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing efficiency of language teaching is one of the most important topics in the literature. Research studies that examine effective language teaching see the personality factor as an important part of students' success in language learning. Dugan (1961) states that personality traits of teachers have been the focus for a long time in searching for effectiveness in teaching. Moreover, teacher personality influences the climate of the classroom (Walberg, 1968). To Feldman (1976), effective teachers are the ones who are described as respectful, warm, fair, friendly and open to any new ideas, which also proves the reflection of power to the teaching and learning process by contributing the conditions of learning environment. In addition, personal characteristics of teachers and their preference of teaching styles which are based on personal characteristics of teachers affect both teaching and learning (Tonelson, 1981). Feldman (1986) points out that personality factor can be vital in enhancing the quality of instruction. Teachers' behaviours towards students and their reactions towards students' acts are related to the personality factor.

While Zhang (2007) underlines that personality traits of teachers shape teachers' way of teaching, it cannot be expected from teachers to shape their whole identity. The purpose here is to raise awareness of teachers. It cannot be denied that psychological factors also shape teaching styles of teachers in many ways. Although shaping one's personality is very difficult, changing teaching styles on the basis of different situations or factors is possible. Using different teaching styles can help both teachers and students in that it can appeal to different students in the classroom and it can make teachers get rid of habitual thinking styles. As a result, this study aims to contribute to develop an effective teaching process by attributing to personality factor of language teachers. Thus, this study aims to draw attention to teachers' other identities other than formal instruction. By drawing attention

to teachers' mistakes regarding their personality, it has been aimed that mistakes of teachers can be used to decrease the number of mistakes made in the classroom.

The Five-Factor Model of Personality

In this study, personality is categorized and studied under "Five-Factor Model of Personality" theory. Within this model, personality is studied under five dimensions. John and Srivastava (1999) developed the Big Five Inventory that measures five dimensions of personality known as "Openness", "Conscientiousness", "Extraversion", "Agreeableness" and "Neuroticism". John and Srivastava label these factors as;

- Extraversion (talkative, assertive, energetic)
- Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful)
- Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable)
- Neuroticism (calm, not neurotic, not easily upset)
- Openness (intellectual, imaginative, independent-minded)

Costa and McCrae (1992, as cited in Komarraju and Karau, 2005) claimed that the Big Five traits reflect basic features of personality, and shape the ways of person. The model has attracted attention and been used so commonly. They state that it is based on longitudinal and cross-observer studies and it still keeps its validity in different cultures.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The study focuses on language teachers' perceptions regarding their personality traits. It aims to investigate common mistakes made by language teachers concerning the effects of their personality traits to teaching process. It also aims to contribute to the field by searching qualifications of effective teachers by examining their mistakes.

The study was carried out in the light of the following research questions:

1. What are English language teachers' perceptions of common mistakes about their personality traits?
2. Is there a significant difference among English language teachers' perceptions of common mistakes about their personality traits in terms of:
 - a. the type of school they teach?
 - b. their gender?
 - c. their work experience?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, “mixed method sequential explanatory research design” was used (Creswell, 2003). Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were carried out to get more reliable data concerning English language teachers perceptions.

Participants

175 teachers working at 4 different types of schools contributed to this study as participants. The participants were chosen using snowball sampling technique. The total population consisted of 90 female and 85 male participants.

Data Collection Tool

Reviewing the literature, researchers constructed the items of questionnaire. The ideas of some experts in the field of English Language Teaching were taken into account to enhance the questionnaire. Most of the items of the questionnaire were adapted from the article written by Frunza (2014) and the book by Orange (2008). A semi-structured interview was also used to get a deeper understanding of teachers’ perspectives on their common mistakes. Fifteen English language teachers contributed to the interview sessions.

Analyzing the findings gained from the pilot study, Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient has been calculated to identify internal consistency of the items.

Table 1. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for Internal Consistency Reliability of the Questionnaire

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.974	.976	53

As shown in Table 1, Cronbach’s Alpha score was found out as $\alpha = .97$. The finding displayed that the questionnaire had a high reliability score (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Thus, researchers decided to use the same questionnaire for the main study.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Reliability, Non-parametric Kruskal- Wallis Test, Mann-Whitney U Test analysis were utilized. For the interview part, the data were first transcribed. Then, the transcriptions of the interviews were examined through content analysis.

Data Collection Process

Teachers working at primary schools, secondary schools, high schools and universities contributed as participants. Firstly, the researchers sent the questionnaires via e-mail. At this point, with the help of snowball sampling, 175 teachers participated in the study. Additionally, a digital form of the questionnaire has been designed to reach teachers living and teaching in different cities. Besides, 15 teachers participated in the study by taking part in the interviews.

FINDINGS

Findings of the study are discussed under each research question.

RQ1: What are English language teachers' perceptions of common mistakes about teacher personality?

In order to find out English language teachers' perceptions of common mistakes about teacher personality, descriptive statistics were used. As it can be seen from Table 2, item 26 (Teachers do not have to be friendly; our responsibility is just conveying our instructional knowledge) is the most common mistake made by the participants. However, studies recommend more socialization along with the instruction in formal curriculum (Brophy, 1988). Interviewee 8 and 5 also supported this result. The other item that has been observed to be one of the most common mistakes is item 25 (I do not respect what students believe or say). Participants tend to admit students as targets to be filled up with formal instruction and it is only teachers whose opinions or decisions matter in the classroom.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Common Mistakes regarding Teacher Personality

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
P25	175	1	5	4.70	.665
P26	175	1	5	4.78	.596

RQ2: Is there a significant difference among English language teachers' perceptions of common mistakes about teacher personality in terms of the type of school they teach?

Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results of Difference between the Type of School They Teach and Perceptions of Their Common Mistakes regarding Their Personality Traits

	Type of School	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square X ²	p
P2	Primary school	43	92.77	3	8.332	.040
	Secondary school	47	79.85			
	High School	40	76.24			
	University	45	102.41			
P4	Primary school	43	99.30	3	11.763	.008
	Secondary school	47	84.97			
	High School	40	67.70			
	University	45	98.41			

P6	Primary school	43	71,33	3	9.825	.020
	Secondary school	47	90,79			
	High School	40	99,59			
	University	45	90,72			
P10	Primary school	43	80,72	3	12.717	.005
	Secondary school	47	91,96			
	High School	40	74,33			
	University	45	102,98			
P12	Primary school	43	89,37	3	9.924	.019
	Secondary school	47	86,95			
	High School	40	72,91			
	University	45	101,20			
P17	Primary school	43	74,99	3	11.942	.008
	Secondary school	47	92,94			
	High School	40	76,94			
	University	45	105,11			
P20	Primary school	43	84,92	3	8.788	.032
	Secondary school	47	89,07			
	High School	40	73,63			
	University	45	102,60			
P21	Primary school	43	85,58	3	8.963	.030
	Secondary school	47	87,94			
	High School	40	76,79			
	University	45	100,34			
P25	Primary school	43	83,01	3	10.570	.014
	Secondary school	47	92,56			
	High School	40	77,31			
	University	45	97,50			
P26	Primary school	43	93,41	3	8.637	.035
	Secondary school	47	88,09			
	High School	40	72,11			
	University	45	96,87			

Of all the items, items 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 17, 20, 21, 25, and 26 showed significant differences between teachers' perceptions of their common mistakes regarding teacher personality and the type of school they teach. The mean rank of the item 2 [$X^2(3) = 8.332$; $p < .05$] presents that teachers tend to avoid using humour especially at universities. Besides, interviewee 7 also supported this result with his comments. Item 6 [$X^2(3) = 9.825$; $p < .05$] shows that teachers working at high schools tend to make moral mistakes like grading. Besides, item 20 and 26 respectively showed that the participants give priority only to instructional part of the education [$X^2(3) = 8.788$; $p < .05$], [$X^2(3) = 8.637$; $p < .05$].

RQ3: Is there a significant difference among English language teachers' perceptions of common mistakes about teacher personality in terms of their gender?

Table 4. Mann Whitney U-Test Results of Difference between Gender of Participants and Perceptions of their Common Mistakes regarding Their Personality Traits

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
P1	Female	90	100.28	9025.50	2719.500	.000
	Male	85	74.99	6374.50		
P2	Female	90	99.83	8984.50	2760.500	.001
	Male	85	75.48	6415.50		
P4	Female	90	102.17	9195.50	2549.500	.000
	Male	85	72.99	6204.50		
P5	Female	90	100.05	9004.50	2740.500	.000
	Male	85	75.24	6395.50		
P7	Female	90	95.56	8600.00	3145.000	.010
	Male	85	80.00	6800.00		
P8	Female	90	99.91	8991.50	2753.000	.000
	Male	85	75.39	6408.50		
P9	Female	90	102.16	9194.50	2550.500	.000
	Male	85	73.01	6205.50		
P10	Female	90	95.35	8581.50	3163.500	.013
	Male	85	80.22	6818.50		
P12	Female	90	101.19	9107.50	2637.500	.000
	Male	85	74.03	62.92.50		
P15	Female	90	100.78	9070.50	2674.500	.000
	male	85	74.46	6329.50		
P20	Female	90	99.52	8956.50	2788.500	.001
	Male	85	75.81	6443.50		
P25	Female	90	97.63	8787.00	2958.000	.000
	Male	85	77.80	6613.00		

The mean ranks of items 1, 4, 9 and 15 display the fact that female teachers make more mistakes regarding their personality traits than male teachers ($U = 2719.500$; $p < .05$), ($U = 2549.500$; $p < .05$), ($U = 2550.500$; $p < .05$), ($U = 2674.500$; $p < .05$). As a result, male teachers have been observed to be more neutral compared to female teachers. Besides, items 5 and 12 show that female teachers have

difficulty in accepting making mistakes regarding their personality factor and apologizing to students when necessary within the classroom ($U = 2740.500$; $p < .05$), ($U = 2637.500$; $p < .05$).

RQ4: Is there a significant difference among English language teachers' perceptions of common mistakes about teacher personality in terms of their experience?

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results of Difference between Teacher Experience and Perceptions of Their Common Mistakes regarding Their Personality Traits

	Teacher Experience	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square X2	p
P2	1-7 years	72	96,35		16.799	.000
	7-14 years	59	96,84			
	14 - ... years	44	62,49	2		
P5	1-7 years	72	96,96	2	8.432	.015
	7-14 years	59	89,53			
	14 - ... years	44	71,28			
P7	1-7 years	72	86,83	2	6.668	.036
	7-14 years	59	97,53			
	14 - ... years	44	77,14			
P10	1-7 years	72	92,88	2	8.864	.012
	7-14 years	59	93,69			
	14 - ... years	44	72,39			
P12	1-7 years	72	95,13	2		
	7-14 years	59	89,48		6.973	.031
	14 - ... years	44	74,34			
P19	1-7 years	72	93,77	2	6.017	.049
	7-14 years	59	90,92			
	14 - ... years	44	74,65			
P21	1-7 years	72	94,17	2	6.108	.047
	7-14 years	59	88,80			
	14 - ... years	44	76,83			
P24	1-7 years	72	92,03	2	7.774	.021
	7-14 years	59	92,86			
	14 - ... years	44	74,90			

In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between English language teachers' perceptions of their common mistakes regarding personality and their teaching experience, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test was utilized. Of all the items in the first part, items 2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 19, 21 and 24 respectively showed significant differences between teachers' perceptions of their common mistakes about teacher personality and their teaching experience [$X^2(2) = 16.799$; $p < .05$], [$X^2(2) = 8.432$; $p < .05$], [$X^2(2) = 6.668$; $p < .05$], [$X^2(2) = 8.864$; $p < .05$], [$X^2(2) = 6.973$; $p < .05$], [$X^2(2) = 6.017$; $p < .05$], [$X^2(2) = 6.108$; $p < .05$], [$X^2(2) = 7.774$; $p < .05$]. Participants who

have less teaching experience make more mistakes regarding their personality traits more than the others who have more experience in teaching. It can be concluded that as the experience of teachers' increases, the mean rank of mistakes due to teacher personality decreases.

Table 6. Dimensions of the Five Factor Model of Personality

	Part 1 items
Extraversion	1,2,3
Agreeableness	5,6,7,8,10,13,14,15,16,17,18 19,20,23,24,25,26
Conscientiousness	11
Neuroticism	4,9,12,21,22,27,28
Openness	

As it can be seen from the Table above, teachers' frequent mistakes regarding personality are the ones that show the features of "agreeableness" dimension of five factor model. In other words, teachers who are less energetic and co-operative tend to make more mistakes than the other teachers.

CONCLUSION

Personality factor in searching effective teaching has been accepted as one of the most important qualities of teachers. In this sense, this study is in attempt to search and present enhancing effectiveness of teaching and avoiding teacher mistakes. Barbetta, Norona and Bicard (2005) suggest that teachers should be flexible in order to meet changing needs of students. However, the findings reveal that teachers especially working at universities do not pay attention enough to the needs of learners. Teachers working at universities consider their jobs as carrying out formal responsibilities. On the other hand, as it can be seen from item 12 in Table 5 less experienced teachers have fear of losing the authority in the classroom. Since less experienced teachers' main concern is classroom discipline, they tend to make this mistake more frequently than experienced ones.

As to gender factor, items 1, 4, 9 and 15 in Table 4 present that female teachers make more mistakes regarding personality factor than male teachers. Male teachers were observed to be more neutral and objective compared to female teachers. Besides, female teachers were observed to be more stubborn in accepting making the mistake and apologizing.

Non-parametric tests have displayed that there is a significant difference between teachers' workplace/gender/teaching experience and teachers' mistakes regarding teacher personality. Besides, teachers who show "agreeableness" dimensions of five-factor model of personality have been observed to make mistakes more frequently. In other words, teachers who show less concern and

empathy for others and who are more stressful make the common mistakes mentioned above more frequently.

A classroom represents a variety of personality types, in which differences among individuals are respected. Teachers should notice the fact that each person is unique coming from different backgrounds and having different psychological and educational needs. As a result, in regard with effective teachers, personality factor has a big role since interpersonal and empathy skills are vital elements to enhance cognitive dimension of the instruction. So, this study underlines these cognitive concepts that are neglected in searching effective language instruction. It is an undeniable fact that teachers' formal instruction knowledge or exam results are the only factors in teacher selection process. However, this study displays that mistakes resulting from teachers' personality affect both language teaching and student-teachers relationship. Thus, being aware of those mistakes and changing teachers' behaviours in a positive sense will help the teaching and learning process to be more effective.

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Appendix A The Final Version of the Scale Constructed for the Study

Dear English Language Teachers,

This questionnaire has been prepared to form a basis for a study entitled as “**English Language Teachers’ Perceptions on Their Common Mistakes regarding their Personality**”. Your experiences and ideas are really important for the study. Sincerity of your responses is vital for the reliability of the study. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Note: As the survey will be evaluated in bulk and kept confidential, you do not need to write your name.

Gender: Female Male
Years of experience in teaching: 1-7 7-14 14 and above
Type of school you are working in: primary school secondary school
 high school university

<i>This part consists of English language teachers’ common mistakes concerning personality factor. Please put a cross (X) to the suitable choice according to how often you make the mistake.</i>	ALWAYS	USUALLY	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1. I don’t feel optimistic, energetic and enthusiastic in the classroom.					
2. I don’t show humour in the classroom.					
3. I have distant relationship with students.					
4. I can be easily disturbed by any behaviour of students.					
5. I don’t admit my errors easily.					
6. I’m not honest and objective in treatment of students.					
7. I’m not friendly and kind while dealing with students problems.					
8. I don’t help students in their personal problems as well as the school.					
9. I generally have bad expectations for students.					
10. I don’t treat my students fairly.					
11. I don’t criticize myself in the classroom since I can lose the authority.					
12. If I make a mistake that will hurt a student, I don’t apologize to the student.					
13. I don’t model moral behaviours in the classroom.					
14. I may show negative attitudes that can damage students’ self-esteem.					
15. I don’t show patience and understanding towards their hard work and effort.					
16. In any existence of problems in the classroom, I’m not sensitive to the students’ feelings.					
17. I treat in an offensive way when there is a problem.					

18. I don't balance my negative criticisms with positive ones.					
19. I don't show empathy towards students.					
20. I don't show interest to students' distress since my job is to cover the syllabus.					
21. I don't respect students' ideas if they are different from mine.					
22. If my students don't agree with me, it makes me angry.					
23. Since I'm authority of the classroom, it should be only me whose opinion matters in educational matters.					
24. I don't value students' responses if they don't agree with me.					
25. I don't respect what students believe or say.					
26. Teachers don't have to be friendly; our responsibility is just conveying our instructional knowledge.					
27. I can't tolerate getting criticism from students.					
28. I don't take full responsibility of my actions in the classroom.					

Appendix B

INTERVIEW FORM

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Date:

Duration:

Dear Colleagues

I am conducting a research on "English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Common Mistakes Regarding Teacher Personality". Sincerity of your responses is extremely important for the reliability of the study. This interview will almost take 15-20 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

1. Do you make mistakes as a result of your personality traits?
2. If yes, what are your mistakes regarding your personality traits in your English classes?