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A Comparison Between Roles of Professors Teaching English and Professors Teaching Literature at B.A Level and Studying the Effect of Students' Gender on Their Choices in the Light of Goffman's Footing Theory

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Abstract:

In any classroom context, different factors affect on the learners' achievement of knowledge from which the most crucial one is the role of teacher. According to Goffman's Footing theory, the speaker's role is categorized in three types of animator, author, and principal. The problem is that what kind of teacher's role students prefer for their teacher to be more motivated. And another important issue is the effect of students' gender on their selection. Also, this research wants to investigate if students of different majors have the same or different views toward their own and their ideal professors. In this study, 57 Iranian BA students of English (30 male & 27 female) and 57 Iranian BA students of Literature (30 male & 27 female) are asked to fill metaphor checklist to represent their teacher's role in learning context. Consequently, statistical results of Chi-Square indicated that the English students prefer teachers who have principal role in English learning context. But Literature students prefer author role for their professors.

Key words: Footing Theory, animator, author, principal, gender

Introduction:

In every teaching and learning context teacher's role is more considerable. A teacher carries a big responsibility in her classroom. One reason is that all students depend on her/him and everything the teacher says will have an impact on the students and teachers are responsible for the social behavior in the classroom (Rose & Gallup, 1997). Teachers are agents for change in a world in desperate need of change: change from competition to cooperation, from powerlessness to empowerment, from conflict to resolution, from prejudice to understanding. According to Goffman's footing theory, teacher's role as animator, author, or principal is regarded. Moreover, gender of the teacher has an effect on students' motivation in participating in learning context.

According to Dee (2006) the gender interactions between teachers and students have statistically significant effects on a diverse set of educational outcomes: test scores, teacher perceptions of student performance and student engagement with academic subjects. There are also pointed disagreements among studies that stress the role of environmental influences. In particular, the so-called "gender wars" have recently offered sharply contrasting inriages of how interactions with teachers may shape the relative cognitive development and intellectual engagement of boys and girls.

Review of Literature:

Introducing the concept of Footing in conversation, Goffman (1981) defined Footing as the alignment that participants in interaction take with regard to one another. In other words, "the alignment of an individual to a particular utterance can be referred to as Footing" (Goffman, 1974, cited in Goffman, 1981, p.221). Goffman (1981) believed that the terms speaker and

hearer are too shallow to provide us with anything beyond sound. Furthermore, the term speaker is troublesome and ambiguous since it does not decompose the role of the one who speaks into smaller and more detailed elements. As a result, Goffman rejected the oversimplified notion of speaker and proposed Footing theory. According to Footing theory, a speaker may take on three roles of animator, author, and principal. As Goffman (1981) explained, animator is identified as the talking machine who is engaged in acoustic activity. An animator is merely concerned with issuing sound from his/her mouth and moving his/her lips up and down. Reading aloud from a fully memorized text or a prepared script allows us to animate words we have no hand in and to express opinions, beliefs and sentiments we do not hold. We can speak for someone else and in someone else's words. As a result, it can be said that animator and recipient are in the same level of analysis. The speaker's second role identified by Goffman (1981) is author. An author selects the sentiments expressed and the words in which they are encoded. To put in other words, authoring an utterance means reformulating and paraphrasing the statements having been made before. Reading off from a text or a group of utterances not having been memorized gives the speaker the role of author. Principal, the speaker's third role clarified by Goffman (1981), is someone who expresses his/her own beliefs, someone whose position is identified by his/her ideas expressed and the one committed to what s/he says. The principal role entails "the extraporaneous, ongoing assembly and encoding of the text under the exigency of immediate response to one's current situation and audience, in a word, fresh production" (p.227). As shifting from one role to another, for example from repeating a text to expressing original ideas, a speaker is changing his/her footing. A

change in footing implies "a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the other present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (Goffman, 1981, p.128). The combination of these three roles taken on by a speaker in a specified turn is named production format (Hancock, 1997). A speaker can adopt different production formats by taking on each of the roles animator, author, and principal. Various production formats provide the speaker with different relationships to the words he produces and to his hearers (Goffman, 1981). In a conversation, when the speaker takes all three roles, the production format is said to be complete. In cases in which the speaker does not take on the role of principal the production format is incomplete (Hancock, 1997). According to Goffman (1981), different production formats in conjunction with the participants' status comprises frame space. A frame space is the space in which the speaker operates while availing himself/herself of certain options and forgoing the others.

According to (Fatemi, Pishghadam, and Heidarian, 2011) the first language and instruction, differences in setting, age, gender, and individual learner differences affect learning process. Among these important factors teacher's gender is also a crucial element affecting learners' motivation in class activities participations in the processes of learning. For all the differences between the sexes, here's one that might stir up debate in the teacher's lounge: Boys learn more from men and girls learn more from women. Dee (2006) found that having a female teacher instead of a male teacher raised the achievement of girls and lowered that of boys in science, social studies and English. Looked at the other way, when a man led the class, boys did better and girls did worse. Assignment to a same-gender teacher significantly improves the achievement of both girls and boys as well as teacher perceptions of student performance and student engagement with the teacher's

subject. For example, assignment to a female science teacher increases the likelihood that a girl views science as useful for her future (Dee, 2006).

Research Questions and Hypothesis:

Q1: Is there any significant difference among the animator, author, and principal metaphors selected by BA students of English about the university professors teaching English?

Q2: Is there any significant difference among the ideal role of the English teacher?

Q3: Q1: Is there any significant difference among the animator, author, and principal metaphors selected by BA students of Literature about the university professors teaching Literature?

Q4: Is there any significant difference among the ideal role of the Literature teacher?

Q5: Is there any significant difference among participants' gender to choose a certain role for their professor?

HO1: There is no significant difference among the animator, author, and principal metaphors selected by BA students of English about the university professors teaching English.

HO2: There is no significant difference among the ideal role of the English teacher.

HO3: There is no significant difference among the animator, author, and principal metaphors selected by BA students of Literature about the university professors teaching Literature.

HO4: There is no significant difference among the ideal role of the Literature teacher.

HO5: There is no significant difference among participants' gender to choose a certain role for their professor.

Methodology:

Participants:

The present study consisted of two groups of participants. The first group was 57 BA English students from Ayatollah Borujerdi University of Borujerd (30 males and 27females) whose age ranged from 19 to 22 were studying in the second, third, or fourth year of their study at the university. The second group was 57 BA Literature students (30 males and 27females) with the same age from the same university.

Instrumentation:

The students of both groups were asked to fill out the metaphor checklist 1 in 20 minutes. The students were required to select the metaphor which best categorized their attitudes. This checklist consists of two prompts: "The university professors teaching English are like ……" and "An ideal professor should be like a ……." The options regarding Guffman's Theory consisted of 7 metaphors reflecting animator role, 7 metaphors representing author role, and another 7 ones identifying the principal role. The prompts were followed by some options which had been selected based on checklists presented in Saban, Kocbeker and Saban (2007), Saban (2010), Saban (2004), Pishghadam, Torghabeh and Navari (2009), Nikitina and Furuoka (2008), De Guerrero and Villamil (2002).

The reliability of this checklist was computed by Cronbach's Alpha which is 0.80 for the whole sample and the content validity was confirmed by three experts in the field.

Then, in order to find out the effect of teacher's gender on students' motivation another objective checklist was delivered to students to fill out.

Procedure:

The procedure of collecting data through filling out the checklists continued for two months begins from June 15th. By the first checklist students clarifies the professors role as animator, author, or principal. Then, by the second checklist the students chose the metaphors that best characterized the ideal teacher in their mind. In all these phases, we regard to the gender of each participant because at the end of this stage we are pleased to know if the students' gender affects their choices or not.

Data Analysis:

As the students were asked to fill out two mentioned checklists, a quantitative approach was used for analyzing the data. For the first checklist which students were supposed to choose a role for an English teacher as animator, author, or principal the frequency of the metaphors of each group was computed and also by SPSS (version 17) Chi-square was used to find out that whether the difference among the groups is significant or not. These two processes were also used for the second checklist for both English and Literature students.

Results and discussions:

Table 1 shows the results of Chi-square to represent the role of English Teacher. The related metaphors are chosen by 57 B.A English students. According to this table, there is a significant difference between animator, author, and principal as professors role in English classes based on Coffman's Footing theory (sig= 0.000).

Table 1. The results of Chi-square for the metaphors selected by English Students about their professors

	Observed N	Expected N	df	sig
animator	385	399.0		
author	468	399.0	2	.000
principal	344	399.0		
Total	1197			

Metaphor revealed author was chosen by 468 participants that are more than the other metaphors whereas the expected number is 399. But the number of participants who selected two other metaphors – animator and principal– were less than expected (N=385, N= 344). In this regard, the first hypothesis- *There is no significant difference among the animator, author, and principal metaphors selected by BA students of English about the university professors teaching English.* - is rejected. In fact, principal is the least dominant role chosen by English students at BA level.

Table 2 represents the preference of participants about ideal professors in their mind. Regarding to this table the most dominant role is principal with 600 observed number that is significantly more than expected number that is 399. The number of the rest of metaphors (animator=284 and author=313) are less than expected number.

Table 2. The results of Chi-square for the metaphor selected by English students about the ideal professor in their mind

	Observed N	Expected N	df	sig
animator	284	399.0		
author	313	399.0	2	.000
principal	600	399.0		
Total	1197			

Accordingly, the second hypothesis - *There is no significant difference among the ideal role of the teacher* - is rejected too because sig=.000 which shows the significant difference between three mentioned metaphors. In fact, animator is the least dominant role for English professors chosen by the participants.

Afterwards, exactly the same processes have done for students studying Literature. In comparison with English students, the number, age, educational level and all other conditions were the same. The present research wanted to compare English students with Literature Students in selecting the role of their professors and their ideal professors.

Table 3. The results of Chi-square for the metaphors selected by Literature Students about their professors

	Observed N	Expected N	df	sig
animator	665	399.0		
author	306	399.0	2	.000
principle	226	399.0		
Total	1197			

According to table 3 Literature students believe that their professors mostly have animator role in classroom contexts because the observed number for animator is 655 that is higher than expected one that is 399. The observed number for other metaphors are less than expected number (author=306 and principal=226). Also, there is a significant difference between animator, author, and principal as professors role in Literature classes based on Coffman's Footing theory (sig= 0.000). So the third hypothesis -*there is no significant difference among the animator, author, and principal metaphors selected by BA students of Literature about the university professors teaching Literature*- is rejected.

Table 4. The results of Chi-square for the metaphor selected by English students about their ideal professor

	Observed N	Expected N	df	sig
animator	298	399.0		
author	644	399.0	2	.000
principal	255	399.0		
Total	1197			

In relation to table 4 the preference of Literature students about their ideal professors is a teacher to have an author role. Regarding to this table the most dominant role is author with 644 observed number that is significantly more than expected number that is 399. The number of the rest of metaphors (animator=298 and principal=255) are less than expected number. In accordance with this table the fourth hypothesis - *There is no significant difference among the ideal role of the Literature teacher-* is also rejected.

As mentioned in previous part of this study, the fifth research question wants to investigate that *Is there any significant difference among participants' gender to choose a certain role for their professor?* In this regard for each item in metaphor checklist the gender of each participant is considered because we wanted to reflect the role of gender in selecting these roles.

Table 5. The results of Chi-square for the effect of participants gender

	Observed N	Expected N	sig	df
male	1504	1197.0	.000	1
female	890	1197.0		
Total	2394			

It is obvious that there is a significant difference between students' gender for selecting different metaphor as the role of their English teacher (sig= .000).

Conclusions:

The present study considered Coffman's Footing Theory regarding the role of English professors and Literature professors in learning context. Related roles are categorized into animator, author, and principal. To conduct this research, participants were asked to fill out two different metaphor checklists: one to describe their own English professor and the other one to describe an ideal professor in their mind. In all these phases the gender of each participant was considered in order to investigate the role of their gender on the metaphor selection.

The results reveal that an author role for English teacher and animator role for Literature teacher are significantly more dominant in comparison with the other roles. It means that more English students believe that their English professor has an author role in class reading off from a text or a group of utterances which has not been memorized and gives the speaker the role of author. In other words, "authoring an utterance means formulating and scripting the statements that have been made" Goffman (1981). Metaphors such as scaffolder and summarizer identify professors' roles as author. To put it clearly, a professor taking on author role in classroom is someone who simplifies, reformulates and summarizes what is presented in textbooks. And also, more Literature students believe that their Literature professors have an animator role in class. Likewise, by selecting metaphors such as copy machine and parrot, students convey that professors' dominant role is animator. As an animator, a professor repeats everything exactly from the textbooks without expressing their own

original ideas. Such a professor just recites a fully-memorized text and makes the voice of material louder.

Then, English students who were asked to represent the best role for an English professor show that they prefer principal role more than the other roles. It means that they wish their teacher who generates and transfers his/her original ideas. In other words, such a professor provides light through conveying his/her own beliefs and ideas. Metaphors such as writer and spring chosen by students display professors' roles as principal. But Literature students wish their professor to have an author role. Another important finding of this research is the considerable role of student's gender in metaphor selection. It means that in all phases of this study the gender of each student was closely considered to find if different genders have different views toward teacher's role in learning context. It was attempted to choose participants from two different majors but with the same educational level at university considering their gender and their age to have approximately homogeneous groups of participants. The same study can be conducted for students from another educational level like high school students. Moreover, the gender of teacher can also be taken in to account.

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