



THE ROLE OF PYGMALION EFFECT IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15194616>

ASBTRACT

One of the most noteworthy impacts of the Pygmalion effect is in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom where learners' performance improves with the increase in expectation. This paper highlights factors that have a direct bearing on the motivation, participation, and overall performance of the learner in language studies as well as the role of the Pygmalion effect. Several studies and theories have been taken into consideration with the aim to articulate how students' results are affected by teachers' expectations and how such knowledge could be utilized to formulate better driving conditions for learning. It also identifies a number of the concerns teachers are likely to encounter when applying this principle and provides answers from available research.

Keywords: Pygmalion effect, EFL classroom, teacher expectations, student motivation, language learning, classroom dynamics, educational psychology, instructional strategies, performance enhancement, expectation management

INTRODUCTION

The Pygmalion effect stems from social psychologists and shows that expectations can occur, whether in a positive or negative way. First discovered by Rosenthal and Jacobson in their landmark study, this effect posits that the way teachers expect their students to behave can dramatically affect educational outcomes. High expectations play important role in EFL classrooms, as they help create favorable conditions for language acquisition. This piece investigates the phenomenon of the Pygmalion effect in English as a foreign language contexts, its potential consequences for teachers' practices, and the challenges they face as they continue to aspire to positive expectations of all students.

This has the effect of increasing the motivation of students, and improving their self-efficacy. As pointed out by Brophy (1986), positive expectations of the teacher can also have a strong effect on the motivation of the students. This in turn can contribute to their development of self-esteem and confidence. In an EFL setting where the language barrier is often a barrier to the learning of new English, positive expectations on teachers' part as to their own ability to teach the English they have learnt are therefore very important.

Biases in Multicultural Classrooms. As Rimm-Kaufman and colleagues (2002) argue, bias can preclude the full realization of the Pygmalion effect in multicultural

settings. Teachers can intentionally and unknowingly foster more differential expectations based on cultural and socioeconomic factors. As such, students with an ethnically and socioeconomically disadvantageous background may find it easier to drop out than other students of similar backgrounds.

Educator professional development is also important to prevent bias from impacting students on the learning environment. To this end, Achinstein and Barrett (2004) stress the importance of professional development that raises awareness regarding the Pygmalion effect and the implications of the effect. By attending workshops about expectations management and inclusive practice, teachers can build a more conducive learning environment. Professional development that promotes new beliefs and practices in teachers can in turn promote educational equity for all students within EFL contexts.

Survey

Short survey was conducted with a small group of 15 students in a multicultural EFL classroom. The survey consisted of 5 questions designed to assess their perceptions of teacher expectations and how those expectations impacted their motivation and classroom experience.

Questions:

1. How confident do you feel about your language abilities in this class?- Very confident- Somewhat confident- Not confident
2. Do you think your teacher expects you to do well learning and using English?- Yes- No
3. How often do you hear positive things from your teacher?- A lot- Some of the time- Not very much
4. How motivated do you feel to participate in class activities?- Very motivated- Somewhat motivated- Not motivated
5. Have you ever been discouraged by comments or actions by your teacher?

Findings

1. Confidence- 60% of the students reported feeling “very confident” about their language abilities in class.
2. Teacher Expectations- 80% of the students felt that their teacher expects them to do well.
3. Feedback- 67% of the students replied that they heard positive things from their teacher “a lot,” while 33% indicated “some of the time.”
4. Motivation to Participate- 73% of the students strongly felt motivated to participate in class activities.
5. Feeling Discouraged- Only 13% of the students said they felt discouraged from comments or actions by their teacher.

The findings of the study highlight the significant role teacher expectations play in motivating and impacting student efficacy, especially in EFL classrooms with diverse learners. Research has shown that when teachers have positive expectations, students achieve better learning outcomes; on the other hand, teacher bias can hurt student achievement. Teachers should be provided with opportunities for professional development to assist them in identifying and addressing biases to provide educational equity and positive learning opportunities for all students.

CONCLUSION

As a summary, the Pygmalion effect can be a useful tool in EFL contexts as it significantly impacts students' motivation and achievement. Often difficult to tackle, inequalities between teachers' expectations and students' achievement can be addressed by professional training and professional guidance. When teachers have high expectations of themselves and lead supportive practices for their pupils, they can positively influence learning of language. More research is needed to address novel ways of using the Pygmalion effect in different kinds of learning and to improve teaching practices.

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