

Do English Language Teacher Qualities Affect Student Performance?: An Explanatory Study From Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on a mixed-method study conducted to investigate the correlation between English language teacher quality and student performance at a private university in Bangladesh. A closed questionnaire was used to generate quantitative data on teacher quality and student performance from 580 second year undergraduate students of BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration), CSE (Computer Science and Engineering), and LLB (Bachelor of Law) who completed an intermediate level English course from the university. Qualitative data on the same topic were collected through three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) from 24 students (8 participants in each FGD) who responded to the quantitative questionnaire. A linear multiple regression analysis was performed using SPSS 16.0 to identify the relationship between teacher quality and student performance. On the other hand, qualitative data were analyzed adopting the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to capture the lived experiences of the students in the classroom. Quantitative analysis shows that ‘caring behavior’, ‘teacher friendliness’, and ‘teacher fluency’ positively correlate with student performance whereas ‘understanding students’ mood’ negatively correlates with the performance of the students. Qualitative data corroborates the quantitative findings to a large extent. However, analysis of FGD data reveals that teacher quality can predict the performance of low-proficiency students, but it does not affect the performance of above average students. This paper concludes with a call for nurturing positive qualities of English language teachers at tertiary level education.

KEYWORDS: English language teacher quality, student performance, cognitive theories, affective filter hypothesis

Introduction

The relationship between teacher attributes and student performance is one of the significant issues in the field of teacher education (Townsend & Bates, 2007). The term ‘teacher quality’ is used synonymously with ‘teacher attributes’, ‘teacher characteristics’, and ‘teacher personality’ (Andabai, 2013; Strong, 2011; Wichadee, 2010a; Zumwalt & Craig, 1990) whereas the term ‘student performance’ is used interchangeably with ‘outcome’ and ‘achievement’ (Wenglinsky, 2001; Yusuf, 2002).

According to Zumwalt and Craig (1990, p. 415), teacher quality refers to both intellectual competence and personal attributes. Intellectual competence of teachers involves verbal ability, content knowledge, pedagogic skill, and teaching experience whereas personal attributes encompass caring and respectful behavior, enthusiasm, dedication, kindness, patience, flexibility, open-mindedness, and optimism (Dincer, Goksu, Takkac, & Yazici, 2013; Stronge & Hindman, 2006). According to Wenglinsky (2001), the term ‘performance’ generally refers to students’ scores in test. Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq and Berhanu (2011), Hoffmann and Oreopoulos (2009), Rockoff (2004), and Yusuf (2002) also maintain that test scores are a measure of students’ performance or achievement.

Knowledge regarding the relationship between teacher quality and student performance benefits both teachers and academic institutions. To be specific, teachers can modify their behavior in accordance with students’ preference instead of relying on myth pertaining to desired teacher quality. In addition, academic institutions can take initiatives to nurture teacher quality which may impact on student performance (Park & Lee, 2006). In this study, we have investigated the association between personal and pedagogic attributes of English language teachers and student performance at a private university in Bangladesh.

Literature review

A large number of studies tried to detect different types of qualities of effective teachers. Strong (2011) divides teacher qualities into three groups: (a) personal attributes (e.g. kindness, patience, compassion), (b) pedagogic skills and practices (e.g. teaching strategy, classroom management skills), and (c) effectiveness (i.e. success of teaching demonstrated by students’ achievement). Dincer et al. (2013) record four types of teacher quality which partly matches with Strong’s (2011) categorization: (a) socio-affective skills, (b) pedagogical knowledge, (c) subject-matter knowledge, and (d) personality characteristics. According to Dincer et al. (2013), *socio-affective skills* refer to the ability to motivate students, create stress-free environment, and help students; *pedagogical knowledge* refers to the knowledge concerning the strategies of teaching; *subject-matter knowledge* means knowledge on a particular subject; and *personality characteristics* encompass tolerance, patience, kindness, sensibility, open-mindedness, optimism, and enthusiasm.

Phern and Abidin (2012), reviewing a large number of literature on teacher quality, note the following personal characteristics of an effective teacher: maintenance of a good teacher-student relationship, management of student behavior, ability to inspire students, and sense of humor. Thompson (2008) points out that 21st century teacher should be able to build rapport with students, create supportive environment, and should be approachable. Thus, the

theoretical discussion on teacher quality/attributes revolves mainly around pedagogic and personal characteristics of teacher.

Researchers around the world made attempts to explore the association between teacher attributes and student performance. For instance, Adewale (2013) carried out a research to identify the relationship between teacher quality and student performance in Nigeria. The participants of this study were secondary school teachers who opined that communication (i.e. ability of teachers to convey messages to students) has 45% impact; subject knowledge has 25% impact; and teacher's behavior has 30% impact on students' learning. Andabai (2013) also conducted a survey among tertiary level students in Nigeria and found a positive correlation between teacher's personality (both personal and pedagogic qualities) and students' learning.

Chan's (2002) study yielded positive correlation between teacher quality and student performance. The participants of this study involved 57 tertiary level teachers from Open University of Hong Kong and 1106 students from the same university who rated their teachers' quality. The researcher dealt with the following four personality characteristics: *renqing* (i.e. emotional response), face (i.e. generosity, dignity, and friendliness), harmony (i.e. maintenance of power equilibrium), and leadership. Analysis of data reveals that teachers who scored high on the four personality characteristics were rated as effective teachers by their students.

Hashim, Alam and Yusoff (2014) identified a positive association between teacher quality (i.e. ability to understand students' problems, concern for students, knowledge about students etc.) and college students' (n=400) English proficiency in Malaysia. In this study, students were asked regarding teacher's characteristics and the improvement of their English proficiency in the classroom. Khatri's (2011) study on 133 Grade XII students in Nepal suggests that teachers' classroom behavior can positively impact on students' learning. Thus, studies on the relationship between teacher quality and student performance show that there is an impact of teacher quality on student performance.

The studies mentioned above exhibit some common limitations. First, these articles exclusively used quantitative methods to analyze data. Second, the studies did not adequately theorize their findings; therefore, they simply inform us whether teacher quality correlates with student performance. Third, these researches do not place equal emphasis on pedagogic and personal qualities of teachers; they either highlighted personal qualities or pedagogic qualities.

In our study, we tried to transcend the typical limitations of research on teacher quality and student performance. In particular, we adopted mixed method approach to generate and analyze data. Second, we used relevant constructs to sufficiently theorize data. Third, we made an attempt to offer a balanced analysis of both pedagogic and personal qualities of teachers presupposing that these two types of qualities are not isolated, rather two different dimensions of human quality.

Methodology

Research design

This is a mixed-method study which synthesizes the principles of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. We generated quantitative data from 580 second year undergraduate students of a private university located in Dhaka city using a closed questionnaire. We collected qualitative data through three FGDs (each FGD contained 8 participants and lasted one hour) from the second-year undergraduate students of the same university. We analyzed quantitative data through SPSS 16.0. On the other hand, we used Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) to analyze qualitative data.

Theoretical framework

In order to understand the impact of teacher quality on student performance, it is essential to analyze the experiences and characteristics of learners and its connection with teacher's behavior/attributes. For instance, if a teacher can create anxiety-free environment in the classroom, it lowers the *affective filter* of the students that lead to better performance (Ellis, 1985). Besides, the relationship between teacher quality and student performance is not unidirectional; it depends on *individual learner differences* (Ellis, 1985), i.e. individual characteristics of learners as well. An *inductive learner* (Felder, 1995, p. 26) who learns easily from examples and tries to understand lessons will find it difficult to perform well in the classroom of a teacher who exclusively place emphasis on rote-memorization. In other words, the match/mismatch between teachers' technique and students' *learning strategy* (Oxford, 1990) such as the ability to rote memorize might produce different results.

In the analysis, we used both *affective* and *cognitive* theories to explain the impact of teacher quality on student performance. Krashen's *affective filter hypothesis* (i.e. effect of emotion in English language learning) helped us examine the emotions generated by teachers in the classroom and its impact on students' performance (Ellis, 1985). In contrast, cognitive theories, i.e. 'inductive learner' and 'learning strategy' unfold how teacher quality interacts with learner characteristics and influences student performance.

Setting

We generated data from Southeast University, a private university of Bangladesh located in Dhaka city which offers both graduate and undergraduate degrees. The undergraduate curriculum of every discipline includes some service English courses which teach general English (with emphasis on four skills) to students. Teachers of English department with degrees in English literature or ELT (English Language Teaching) teach service English courses.

Sampling

We collected quantitative data from 580 second year undergraduate students of CSE, BBA, and LLB at Southeast University who attended *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* course. We followed the process of 'simple random sampling' (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, pp. 210-211) to determine the quantitative sample size. The student population size of Southeast University is approximately 12,000. The sample size from this population is 572

with 95% confidence level and $\pm 4\%$ confidence interval. Thus, by generating data from 580 students, we maintained a representative sample size.

We randomly selected 24 students (8 participants in each FGD) from CSE, BBA, and LLB (one FGD for each discipline) to generate qualitative data. We determined the size of the group following the trend of qualitative research. Bernard (2011, p. 237) maintains: "Focus groups typically have 6-12 members...if a group is too small, it can be dominated by one or two loudmouths; if it gets beyond 10 or 12, it gets tough to manage". The FGD participants also attended *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* course in their previous semesters and recollected the quality/behavior of their English language teachers in their discussion. The focus groups consisted of participants with varying grades, ranging from A+ to D, in the aforementioned English course.

Instrumentation

We used a closed questionnaire with a 5-point rating scale to generate quantitative data (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses regarding students' grade (i.e. performance) and both personal and pedagogic qualities of their teachers. The questionnaire has been developed on the basis of the discussion of Stronge (2007) and Stronge, Tucker and Hindman (2004) on teacher quality. We used an FGD schedule (with topics that have been covered in the quantitative survey) to generate qualitative data on teacher quality and student performance (see Appendix B). We took extensive field notes while conducting FGD sessions. The similar topics in quantitative survey and qualitative FGDs allowed us to verify and compare/contrast qualitative and quantitative data on teacher quality and student performance.

Data analysis procedure

We used SPSS 16.0 to analyze the quantitative data. Specifically, inferential statistics, i.e. linear multiple regression analysis (criterion variable: students' result; predictor variables: teacher qualities) was performed to explore the correlation between teacher qualities and student performance. With regard to criterion variable (i.e. students' performance), we coded F=0, D=1, C=2, C+=3, B-=4, B=5, B+=6, A-=7, A=8, and A+=9. In other words, lower grade has been assigned lower score and higher grade has been assigned higher score. Likewise, while coding teacher quality questionnaire in SPSS 16.0, we used low score for undesired/negative qualities and higher score for desired qualities. For instance, in the case of the first question in the section on personal quality (see Appendix A) (i.e. 'How caring was your teacher?'), we coded Not Caring=0, Slightly Caring=1, Moderately Caring=2, Caring=3, and Very Caring=4. Thus, by performing linear multiple regression analysis, we detected whether teacher quality can predict student performance.

In the analysis of qualitative data, we adopted Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA). IPA is an analytical method which is used to describe subjective lived experiences of people. The fundamental features of IPA are as follows: (a) IPA provides detailed account of the cases; (b) IPA describes phenomena from the perspectives of the research participants; and (c) IPA detects both commonalities (convergence) and differences (divergence) in data (Griffiths, 2007). Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008) point out that IPA involves two layers of interpretation: First, the researchers accept the interpretation of the participants of their own experiences; second, researchers make sense of the participants' interpretation of phenomena by using theoretical tools. In the analysis of FGD data, we first examined the data to identify

common themes and to locate disconfirmatory cases. Next, we described the subjective experiences of the participants under the themes that emerged in the discussion. Finally, we interpreted the experiences of the participants using *cognitive* and *affective* theories.

Quantitative findings and discussion

In the quantitative analysis, in order to demonstrate the correlation between teacher quality and student performance we present ANOVA table (i.e. joint effect of teacher quality on student performance) (Table 1) and the table of linear multiple regression analysis (i.e. individual effect of teacher quality on student performance) (Table 2 and Table 3).

Table 1. Joint effect of teacher quality (both personal and pedagogic) on student performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	214.600	23	9.330	2.863	.000^a
	Residual	1812.192	556	3.259		
	Total	2026.791	579			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hard-Working, Sympathy toward wrong responses, Showing respect to students, Teacher's fluency, Concern for emotional and physical well-being, Accepting responsibility for students' grades, Preparing materials in advance, Creating anxiety free environment, Understanding students' mood, Listening to students' questions, comments, and concerns, Teacher's patience, How caring was your teacher?, Monitoring and assessing students' progress, Rewarding positive behavior, Motivating students in learning, Giving clear, specific, and timely feedback, Creating supportive and warm classroom environment, Examples and guided practice, Teacher's Friendliness, Paying attention to weak students, Rapport building, Focus on understanding rather than memorization, Well-behaved

b. Dependent Variable: Grade

[Note: $p \leq 0.01$]

The result of linear multiple regression analysis (Table 1) shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between teachers' quality and students' performance. The analysis demonstrates that the p value of ANOVA is 0.00 which is smaller than the expected value (that is 0.01) which means there is a joint effect of predictor variable (i.e. teacher quality) on dependent variable (i.e. student performance).

Table 2. Individual effect of personal quality on student performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.042	.285		17.698	.000
	How caring was your teacher?	.170	.080	.104	2.119	.035
	Concern for emotional and physical well-being	.002	.066	.002	.032	.974
	Showing respect to students	.021	.090	.012	.239	.811
	Understanding students' mood	-.128	.062	-.099	-2.050	.041
	Sympathy toward wrong responses	-.064	.058	-.051	-1.101	.271
	Teacher's patience	.079	.062	.063	1.290	.197
	Teacher's Friendliness	.183	.082	.124	2.236	.026
	Well-behaved	.091	.092	.056	.999	.318
	Rapport building	.011	.076	.008	.145	.884
	Hard-Working	.133	.076	.087	1.756	.080
a. Dependent Variable: Grade						

[Note: $p \leq 0.05$]

Teachers' care, friendliness, and student performance

Table 2 shows the individual effect of personal quality of teachers on student performance. Only two qualities of teachers, i.e. 'caring behavior' and 'teachers' friendliness' significantly and positively correlate with students' grade (correlation significant at 0.05). The coefficient for teachers' caring behavior is 0.170 ($p=0.035$); for every unit increase in teachers' fluency, a 0.17 increase in students' grade is predicted, holding all other variables constant. The coefficient for teachers' friendliness is 0.183 ($p=0.026$); for every unit increase in teachers' friendliness, we expect an increase of 0.18 in students' grade, holding all other variables constant.

These findings lend support to Krashen's *affective filter hypothesis* (Ellis, 1985) which maintains that low level of anxiety improves students' performance. In this study, teachers' 'caring behavior' and 'friendliness' appear to have decreased students' anxiety in the classroom which resulted in better performance of the students. It also gives credence to the researchers' belief that effective English language teachers are emotionally responsive. In this context, Wichadee (2010b, n.p., italics in original) notes: "Perhaps equally significant in terms of teacher effectiveness is *the use of psychology in the classroom*. It is related to interpersonal concern/effective motivation such as concern, caring, availability, friendliness, accessibility, helpfulness, encouragement, and challenge".

Teachers' understanding of student mood and performance

In the linear multiple regression analysis (Table 2), a negative correlation has been found between students' performance and teachers' understanding of students' mood. The coefficient for understanding students' mood is -0.128 ($p=0.041$); for every unit increase in understanding students' mood, we expect a decrease of 0.13 in students' grade. Thus, in the regression analysis, we get one conceptually unexpected result. Particularly, 'understanding students' mood', a positive personal attribute of teachers, is supposed to positively affect

students' performance (see Markman, 2010). However, the analysis suggests that if teachers understand students' mood, students' grade will decrease.

Our experience of teaching in Bangladesh supports the finding to a certain extent. In Bangladeshi English language classroom, non-English major students (e.g. BBA, CSE, LLB) sometimes try to distract teachers saying that they are not interested to study on a particular day. If it occurs regularly and if the course teacher keeps accommodating students' mood, it might be difficult to complete the syllabus and ensure learning of the students. Eventually, understanding students' mood might lead to poor performance. Therefore, teachers need to be cautious while considering students' mood in teaching. We suggest that teachers may try to convert negative mood of students into positive and may occasionally accommodate students' mood.

Table 3. Individual effect of pedagogic quality on student performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.203	.286		18.191	.000
	Creating supportive and warm classroom environment	.059	.074	.040	.804	.422
	Accepting responsibility for students' grades	.039	.067	.027	.577	.564
	Preparing materials in advance	.033	.075	.022	.436	.663
	Examples and guided practice	.124	.081	.082	1.533	.126
	Focus on understanding rather than memorization	.146	.088	.096	1.662	.097
	Giving clear, specific, and timely feedback	-.145	.084	-.095	-1.717	.086
	Monitoring and assessing students' progress	.079	.079	.052	.997	.319
	Listening to students' questions, comments, and concerns	-.005	.081	-.003	-.058	.954
	Rewarding positive behavior	-.026	.083	-.016	-.318	.751
	Motivating students in learning	-.098	.086	-.061	-1.135	.257
	Teacher's fluency	.218	.071	.142	3.062	.002
	Paying attention to weak students	.019	.074	.013	.254	.799
	Creating anxiety free environment	.062	.070	.043	.888	.375
a. Dependent Variable: Grade						

[Note: $p \leq 0.05$]

Teachers' fluency and student performance

In case of pedagogic quality of teachers, as Table 3 shows, only teachers' fluency has a statistically significant positive correlation with student performance. The coefficient for teachers' fluency is 0.218 ($p=0.002$); for every unit increase in teachers' fluency, we expect an increase of 0.22 in student performance. This data confirms the findings of previous

research on effective English language teachers which maintained that effective English language teachers are fluent (see Barnes & Lock, 2013, p. 21; see also Mahmoud & Thabet, 2013, pp. 73-74). Other pedagogic qualities of teachers do not significantly correlate with student performance.

Qualitative findings and discussion

We conducted three FGD sessions in December 2014 where students from different sections of the following disciplines participated: Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), and Bachelor of Law (LLB) (students of these three disciplines completed *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* course with three different teachers). In the subsequent sections, we present the findings and analysis of the FGD data.

Teachers' compassion and student performance

By 'teacher's compassion', we mean *care, support, rapport building, and friendly* behavior of teachers. In the discussion on 'caring behavior', one student from BBA and one student from CSE reported that their *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* teacher was caring. The student of BBA pointed out that his teacher took make-up exams whereas the CSE student mentioned that her teacher showed sympathy when she was sick. When asked whether the caring behavior of the teacher helped improve their grade, the students answered in affirmative. The quantitative analysis supports this finding (see Table 3).

With regard to *supportive behavior* of teachers one student from CSE and one student from BBA (both attained A grade in *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* course) enthusiastically proclaimed that their teachers helped them in both academic and non-academic issues (e.g. addressing personal problems). Other students said that they did not find any supportive behavior in their teacher. In order to generate more data regarding teachers' supportive behavior, students were asked to talk about whether their teachers responded to their emotional needs. This time, only one student of BBA could recall that her teacher encouraged her to celebrate *Pahela Falgun* (Spring Festival) and ended the class early on a particular day. Other students said that their teacher remained indifferent to their emotional needs. The students who attended the class of a teacher with supportive behavior reported that as the teacher addressed individual problems, they could obtain higher grade. On the other hand, those who attended the class of an unsupportive teacher said that their teacher's behavior demotivated them and they lost their interest in the course.

In the FGDs we raised questions about teacher's effort to *build rapport* with students. In the discussion on this topic, most of the students expressed their dissatisfaction regarding their teacher's behavior. Some students complained that their teacher built rapport only with their favorite students and ignored the majority. All the students of the three disciplines supported this observation and reported that this behavior of teachers affected their grade because they could not individually seek help from teachers.

Another topic pertaining to teacher's compassion was teacher's *friendliness*. All the students of LLB reported that their teacher was unfriendly, uncooperative, and unapproachable. Their teacher did not help them to complete their assignments. Besides, after observing the behavior of their teacher, some students lost their interest in the course and felt helpless. The students said that most of the students received low grade since their teacher was unfriendly.

On the contrary, the students of BBA and CSE appreciated the friendly behavior of their teachers and reported that it had a positive impact on their grade. The quantitative analysis also reveals that there is a statistically significant positive association between friendliness and student performance.

Krashen's *affective filter hypothesis* maintains that learners with high motivation, high self-confidence, and low anxiety will learn more and perform better (Ellis, 1985, p. 263). In case of this study, teachers' behavior seems to have an influence on students' affective filter. Teacher's *caring behavior, supportive behavior, friendliness, and rapport-building* appear to have decreased the anxiety of the students and increased the level of motivation. As a consequence, students who attended a teacher with these qualities could obtain higher grade. For instance, the teacher who cared about student's illness could decrease the anxiety level of the student that eventually helped her perform better. The student who was encouraged to celebrate *Pahela Falgun* felt emotionally attached to the course since the teacher accommodated the student's feeling. This factor also increased the level of motivation of the student.

On the other hand, the teacher who ignored the emotion of the students and displayed unfriendly behavior contributed to increasing the level of anxiety and decreasing the level of motivation that affected the grade of the students. All the FGD participants from LLB and BBA reported that their teachers could not create 'anxiety free environment' in the class. This factor, as students reported, had a negative impact on their grade. Teachers' negative behavior created high *affective filter* among students, i.e. students felt anxious and could not process input provided by the teachers (see Ellis, 1985, p. 263). To put it another way, as English language teachers of BBA and LLB could not create 'anxiety free environment', students' level of anxiety remained high and performance declined. Contrastively, as the teacher in CSE department demonstrated compassionate behavior, the students gained higher grades as the *affective filter* among these students remained low.

Understanding students' mood and performance

In the FGDs we invited students to discuss whether their teachers were aware of their mood. The participants of CSE (who obtained high grade) reported that their teacher was aware of their mood in the class whereas the students of BBA and LLB (who obtained low grades) reported that their teacher was never aware of their mood. This finding contradicts the result of quantitative analysis. The quantitative analysis reveals a negative correlation between understanding students' mood and their performance.

The contradiction may be interpreted in the following ways. If teachers always accommodate students' mood, the grade of students (who always carry an anti-learning mood) may decline, as the quantitative analysis suggests. On the other hand, if teachers never take students' mood into account, it may negatively affect students' grade, since mood, as an ingredient of emotion, plays a significant role in learning process (see Febrilia & Warokka, 2011). Therefore, on the basis of both qualitative and quantitative analysis, it may be suggested that teachers should sometimes take students' mood into account while teaching in the classroom.

Teachers' feedback strategy and student performance

In this study, *feedback strategy* incorporates the following elements: *corrective feedback, rewarding positive behavior, and monitoring and assessing students' progress*. In regard to

corrective feedback, majority of the participants from CSE and BBA reported that their teachers provided explicit corrective feedback, i.e. teachers pointed out students' mistakes and discussed them in the classroom. These students appreciated explicit corrective feedback since it helped them learn and remember lessons. Ellis (2009, p. 3) notes: "In pedagogical theory positive feedback is viewed as important because it provides affective support to the learner and fosters motivation to continue learning". The experience of the students of BBA and CSE lends support to the pedagogic theory regarding positive feedback.

By contrast, students of LLB said that their teachers rebuked them if they made any mistake. These students reported that they felt humiliated and became demotivated after being criticized by their teachers. The students also said that teacher's behavior negatively affected their grade. The experience of LLB students indicates that humiliation in the classroom generated low self-esteem among students that deteriorated the performance of the students. In this context, Rubio (2007, p. 7) asserts that:

Generally speaking, self-esteem is one of the central drives in human beings. When the level of self-esteem is low, the psychological homeostasis is unbalanced, creating insecurity, fear, social distance and other negative situations. Self-esteem can exercise a determining influence on a person's life, for good or bad; when there is very low self-esteem, this may even bring about a need for clinical treatment. However, though in the context of language learning low self-esteem is a non-clinical phenomenon, it can have serious consequences. Students may avoid taking the necessary risks to acquire communicative competence in the target language; they may feel deeply insecure and even drop out of the class.

In the discussion on how teachers *rewarded positive behavior*, students of BBA and LLB said that their teachers did not reward positive behavior. Therefore, they did not enjoy the class and did not find any motivation to complete the task of the class. Contrarily, students of CSE reported that their teacher rewarded positive behavior by giving chocolates if they could complete the task or assignment on time. The teacher also appreciated students by saying 'excellent' or 'very good'. This finding confirms the theory of *positive reinforcement* (McLeod, 2007) which maintains that reward (in this case, 'praise' or 'appraisal') contributes to reproducing positive behavior.

In relation to *monitoring and assessing students' progress*, students of BBA and LLB reported that their teachers never monitored and assessed their progress and did not address their problems. Students said that this factor had a negative impact on their grade. On the contrary, CSE students reported that their teacher assessed their progress, identified their problems (e.g. difficulty in understanding grammar, vocabulary etc.), and solved those problems. The approach of teacher helped students improve their grade. This data suggests that feedback, an essential aspect of language teaching, helps improve students' performance (see Ellis, 2009).

Teachers' oral proficiency and student performance

In the discussion on teachers' fluency, 3 students of CSE reported that their teacher was fluent. These students appreciated teacher's fluency and said that teacher's fluency inspired them to work hard to learn English and attain higher grades (i.e. A/A+). On the other hand, all the FGD participants in BBA and LLB reported that their teachers were not fluent. When

asked whether teacher's lack of fluency had any impact on their performance, students reported that this factor demotivated them since they expected fluency from English teachers.

It is to note that in the quantitative analysis, a statistically significant correlation has been found between teacher's fluency and student grade. The qualitative data lends support to the quantitative analysis. In particular, qualitative data suggests that teacher's fluency generates "aesthetic pleasure" among students (as can be insinuated from CSE students' response) that eventually contributes to increasing the level of motivation. By contrast, if an English language teacher lacks fluency, students miss an 'ideal'/model to imitate or appreciate (see Harmer, 2001, p. 65) that appears to affect their motivation and performance.

Listening to students' voice and performance

Teachers of BBA and LLB, as students reported, displayed negative behavior with regard to the following factors that negatively affected their grade: 'paying attention to weak students' and 'listening to students' questions, comments, and concerns'. Contrarily, students of CSE said that their teacher paid attention to weak students in the class and listened to questions, comments, and concerns of individual students which contributed to improving their grade. The SLA (Second Language Acquisition) theory of *individual learner differences* holds that "learners vary on a number of dimensions to do with personality, motivation, learning style, aptitude, and age" (Ellis, 1985, p. 99). In other words, students have different needs in an English language classroom. In case of BBA and LLB students, teachers did not address individual needs that had a negative impact on students' grade whereas the teacher of CSE addressed individual needs which had a positive impact on students' grade.

Teaching technique and performance

In the FGDs we posed questions about the teaching technique of teachers and its impact on performance. The following two topics were covered: 'use of examples' and 'focus on understanding rather than memorization'. In the discussion on 'use of examples' students were invited to reflect on whether they liked the way their teachers taught reading, writing, speaking, listening, and grammar. BBA and CSE students said that they liked the examples given by their teachers to clarify a grammar point. The students reported that this teaching technique had a positive impact on their grade. On the other hand, the teacher of LLB did not use examples to clarify grammar lessons which resulted in poor learning and affected the grade.

In the literature on *individual learner differences*, 'inductive learner' has been explained as a learner who "proceeds from particulars (observations, measurements, data) to generalities (rules, laws, theories)" (Felder, 1995, p. 26). Felder notes that inductive teaching (i.e. moving from examples to rules) facilitates language learning and improves student performance. In case of this research, the students who appreciated the teaching strategy displayed the characteristic of inductive learner. Teacher's teaching technique matched students' preference that helped students improve their grade.

Teacher's 'focus on understanding rather than memorization' also relates to *individual differences* of learners. In the FGDs, all the students of BBA and LLB reported that the teacher required them to memorize answers for the exam. Therefore, they struggled to obtain higher grade. Memory strategy, a sub-category of *learning strategy*, refers to students' ability to memorize and retain information (Oxford, 1990). In this research, the students of BBA and

LLB, as they reported, lacked the ability to rote-memorize. Teachers did not take students' learning strategy into account; therefore, students appear to have received low grade.

The English language teacher of CSE department, as the students reported, encouraged creativity (e.g. creative writing) and focused on understanding rather than memorization which contributed to achieving good grade. CSE students reported that while dealing with English texts, the teacher emphasized understanding and tried to avoid memorization. The teaching method of CSE teacher matched with the cognitive strategy (i.e. analyzing and understanding) (Oxford, 1990, p. 19) of the students.

Students with highest grade and the correlation: An exception

Two students from BBA and one student from LLB who obtained A+ in *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* course shared a different view regarding the correlation between teacher quality and student performance. They said that their teachers possessed negative pedagogic and personal qualities. The teachers were unfriendly, uncaring, and unsupportive; in addition, the lessons were uninteresting and unclear. Nevertheless, they obtained the highest grade in the course. They reported that they had good command over English from their school level (they obtained A+ at SSC and HSC level) which helped them earn high grade. They also said that though they were not satisfied with the personal and pedagogic qualities of their teachers, they fulfilled the requirements (e.g. submitting assignment and attending quizzes) of the course, spent time on self-study, and completed the syllabus by their own.

Dornyei (1998, p. 119) discusses *attribution theory* and *self-efficacy theory* that explain learners' interpretation of their own success/failure in language learning and language competence. To be specific, *attribution theory* examines the attribution of an incident to a past incident. The above mentioned high-achievers of BBA and LLB attributed their performance to their past achievement, i.e. to their SSC and HSC performance.

Self-efficacy theory refers to the judgment of one's own ability. In the FGDs, the high achievers asserted that they are good at English which demonstrates a positive judgment regarding their self-efficacy. Thus, attribution to successful past experience and assessment of high self-efficacy appear to have constituted the high level of self-confidence that encouraged the students to complete the syllabus by their own to attain high grade, though they got teachers with negative qualities.

Conclusion

Quantitative analysis suggests that pedagogic and personal qualities of teachers jointly predict student performance. Therefore, teachers may try to nurture the qualities mentioned in this study. However, teachers may pay more attention to 'caring behavior' and 'friendliness' since in the quantitative analysis, a statistically significant positive correlation has been found between these two personal qualities and student performance. Qualitative findings lend support to the quantitative data. Therefore, it may be suggested that English language teachers should be caring and friendly in the class. With regard to pedagogic quality, a statistically significant positive correlation has been found between teacher's fluency and student performance. Qualitative data supports the quantitative analysis. Therefore, teachers should speak fluently in the classroom.

In the quantitative analysis, a statistically significant negative correlation has been found between teacher's understanding of students' mood and student performance. Qualitative data slightly disagrees with the quantitative analysis. Considering both qualitative and quantitative findings, it may be argued that English language teachers may occasionally accommodate students' mood. Besides, teachers may try to influence students' mood to engage them in academic activities in the classroom.

We would like to register a caveat pertaining to the interpretation of the findings of this study. The study is based on the data of a single university in Bangladesh. Therefore, it may not represent the scenario of the whole country. Further research is warranted to generalize the findings of this study. Nevertheless, this study can be replicated in other Asian countries to detect the correlation between teacher quality and student performance because qualities that affect student performance might vary across cultures.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

We are conducting a research on teacher quality and student performance. Your careful response will help us explore some dimensions of English language teachers' quality in Bangladesh. The data generated through this questionnaire will be used only for research purpose and your identity will not be revealed. Please read the following questions and respond. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Part I

1. Your grade in *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* course:
0.F 1.D 2.C 3.C+ 4.B- 5.B 6.B+ 7.A- 8.A 9.A+
2. Your department:

Part II

How was your teacher of *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* course? Please read the following questions and choose an option.

Personal qualities

1. How caring was your teacher?
0. Not caring 1. Slightly caring 2. Moderately caring 3. Caring 4. Very caring
2. My teacher showed concern for my emotional and physical well-being.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
3. My teacher showed respect to all students.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
4. My teacher understood my mood.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
5. My teacher was sympathetic about my wrong responses.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
6. My teacher was patient.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
7. My teacher was friendly.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
8. My teacher was well-behaved.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always

9. My teacher tried to build rapport (good relationship) with me.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
10. My teacher was hard-working.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always

Pedagogic qualities

1. My teacher created a supportive and warm classroom environment.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
2. My teacher accepted responsibility for students' grades.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
3. My teacher prepared materials in advance and had them ready to use.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
4. My teacher gave clear examples and offered guided practice.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
5. My teacher was concerned with having students learn and demonstrate understanding of meaning rather than memorization.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
6. My teacher gave clear, specific, and timely feedback.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
7. My teacher monitored and assessed students' progress.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
8. My teacher listened to my questions, comments, and concerns.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
9. My teacher rewarded positive behavior (e.g. praised correct responses).
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
10. My teacher motivated me in learning.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
11. My teacher was fluent in English.
0. Not fluent 1. Slightly fluent 2. Moderately fluent 3. Quite fluent 4. Fluent
12. My teacher paid attention to weak students of my class.
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always
13. The class of my teacher was anxiety-free (tension-free).
0. Never 1. Rarely 2. Occasionally 3. Almost always 4. Always

APPENDIX B

FGD Schedule

We are conducting a research on teacher quality and student performance. For this purpose, we are interested to know about your experiences with your *ENG 1002: Intermediate Composition* course teacher. Your experiences and comments will be used for research purpose only and your identity will not be disclosed. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Part I

Personal qualities

1. Please tell us how caring your teacher was.
2. Please share your personal experiences about how supportive your teacher was.
3. Did your teacher try to build rapport with you?
4. How friendly was your teacher?
5. Was your teacher aware of your mood? Can you recall any incident?

Pedagogic qualities

1. Can you tell us how your teacher used to give feedback?
2. Did your teacher reward positive behavior?
3. Did your teacher monitor and assess your progress?
4. Was your teacher fluent?
5. Could your teacher create anxiety-free environment in the classroom?
6. Did your teacher listen to your questions, comments, and concerns?
7. Did your teacher pay attention to weak students?
8. Did your teacher use examples while teaching reading, writing, speaking, listening, and grammar? Did you like the way your teacher taught these skills?
9. Did your teacher focus on understanding rather than memorization?

Part II

1. Did the qualities of your teacher affect your grade?