English Language Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Teacher Communication Behavior in Selected Secondary Schools in Ethiopia

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to examine the accords and discords between English language teachers' and students' perceptions of teacher interpersonal behavior in four selected secondary schools in Ethiopia. The samples of the study were 48 English language teachers and their respective 420 students. In order to collect data, questionnaires were administered to both students and teachers. To analyze and interpret the data, a two-tailed independent sample t-test was used. Accordingly, the findings revealed that teachers rated themselves considerably higher for helpful/friendly, leadership, and strict behaviors and lower for uncertain, admonishing, student freedom/ responsibility and dissatisfied behaviors as compared to their students' rating of them. However, no significant difference was found between the two bodies for understanding interpersonal behavior. Similarly, teachers notably felt they were highly in control of classroom communications and had more affiliation/ connection with the students in the process of communications than their students' perceptions of them. Hence, there were much discords between English language teachers' and students' perceptions of teacher interpersonal behavior. Following the findings, some recommendations were forwarded.

Keywords: Accord, discord, interpersonal behavior, perception, teacher, students

Introduction

Teachers and students spend a huge amount of time together in the teaching- learning processes. In these periods of time, a lot of communications will take place between the two bodies. However, much may not be acquired unless effective interpersonal communication is maintained between these bodies (Wong & Wong, 1998; Lourdusamy & Khine, 2005). In order to communicate meaningfully with each other and learn sufficiently, establishing dependable relationship between teachers and students is paramount important. Particularly, in EFL settings where the learning of English language takes place in the classrooms with little or no environmental support, optimal teacher-student interpersonal communication is not optional. At the onset, good teacher–student interpersonal relationship is believed to provide a favorable classroom environment for students' engagement in learning activities (Wubbels, Créton, & Hooymayers, 1985; Smith, 1998; Brekelmans, Sleegers & Fraser, 2000; Knapp & Antos, 2009; Opdenakker, den Brok & Bosker, 2011). Moreover, studies pointed out that the way teachers affiliate with students and control classroom learning processes are linked with the cognitive and affective development of students (Wubbels, Créton, & Hooymayers, 1985; Smith, 1998; den Brok, Brekelmans & Wubbels, 2004; Lourdusamy & Khine, 2005; Akbari & Allvar, 2010).

It is palpable that classroom interaction is a reciprocal process that the behavior of the teachers and students influence each other mutually (Wubbels, Créton, & Hooymayers, 1985; Wubbels & Levy, 1993). To acquire balanced view and get comprehensive image of teacher interpersonal behavior, both teachers' perception of themselves and students' perception of the teachers appear to be necessary. Besides, considering the perceptions of both bodies on teacher interpersonal behavior offers careful and reflective understanding of the teaching-learning

situation in the classrooms (Lourdusamy & Khine, 2005). Furthermore, Bell (2005) as in Hidayet (2010) claims that a study that would compare teacher and student belief systems would elucidate effective foreign language teaching behaviors. To address these issues, studies have been conducted in many parts of the world although most of them concentrate either on students' or teachers' perceptions alone.

The communication between teachers and students is determined on how cooperative (proximate) they are with each other and the amount of control (influence) in the interaction. Accordingly, studies on students' and teachers' perceptions of influence and proximity dimensions of teacher interpersonal behavior indicated that students' perceptions of the two dimensions were found to be lower than teachers' perceptions of their own behaviors (Brekelmans & Wubbels, 1991; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 1997; Rickards & Fisher, 1998; den Brok, 2001; Brekelmans, Wubbels, & den Brok, 2002). Similarly, studies on science teachers' interpersonal behavior in Turkish secondary schools revealed that teachers perceived themselves higher on both dimensions while their students' perceived them moderately dominant and highly cooperative on the average (Telli, den Brok & Cakiroglu, 2007; Telli, den Brok & Cakiroglu, 2007-2008). Nevertheless, few studies revealed that there were no significant differences between students' and teachers' perceptions of the two dimensions of teacher interpersonal behavior (Wubbels & Levy, 1991; Fisher & Rickards, 2000; Ben-Chaim & Zoller, 2001).

Specific to the sub-dimensions of the interpersonal behavior, studies depicted that teachers reported higher ratings of their own leadership, helpful/friendly, strict and understanding behaviors as compared to their students. In contrast, the same teachers reported lower perceptions of their own uncertain, dissatisfied, student freedom and admonishing behaviors than their students (Wubbels, Brekelmans & Hooymayers, 1992; Fisher & Rickards, 1999; Rickards & Fisher, 2000; Telli, den Brok & Cakiroglu, 2007-2008). In addition, statistical tests indicated significant differences between teachers' perception of themselves and students' perceptions of them on teacher communication behaviors (Lourdusamy & Khine, 2005). Accordingly, teachers perceived themselves more helpful/friendly, leadership and understanding and less uncertain, dissatisfied and admonishing in their communication behaviors than their students' rating of them.

Few but significant implications can be drawn from studies made above. Consequently, most of the studies on students' and teachers' perceptions with respect to influence and proximity dimensions of teacher interpersonal behavior showed that teachers rated themselves favorably higher than their students' rating of them. In other words, most studies pinpointed discords between these two bodies on teacher interpersonal behavior despite the existences of few accords. Specific to the sub-scales, the preceding studies disclosed that teachers largely considered themselves more leaders, helpful/friendly and understanding in their behaviors than their students' perceptions of them. Nonetheless, these teachers reported lower perceptions of their own uncertain, dissatisfied, student freedom and admonishing behaviors as compared to their students' ratings of them. Thus, teachers inflated rating their positive interpersonal behaviors and deflated their negative behaviors as compared to their students' ratings of them. This implies that teachers' perceptions of their own interpersonal behaviors and their students' rating of them are conflicting with each other that teachers could not able to make critical reflection of them to see their real communication behaviors.

Studies on teacher interpersonal behavior from teachers and students perspectives are regarded as important for various reasons. At the onset, the accord between teachers and students on the issue could be an indicator of the teachers' understanding of their students' perception of them and the consequent changes made on their behavior to optimize the quality of teacher–

student relationships (Wubbels et al., 1992). In addition, the accord between students and teachers belief systems signifies the effectiveness of instruction (Hidayet, 2010). Moreover, accord between the two bodies on teacher interpersonal behavior has been argued to enhance students' learning outcomes (Adderley, 1987; Malinsky, 2001; Zhang, 2006). Conversely, discord is regarded as one of the most serious impediments to learning (Nunan, 1987 as in Hidayet, 2010; Brekelmans & Wubbels, 1991). Furthermore, it has also been claimed that the mismatch between the two bodies on teacher interpersonal behavior influences students' learning outcomes negatively (Adderley, 1987; Malinsky, 2001; Zhang, 2006). Finally, discords in expectations between the two bodies in classroom teaching are thought as real gaps upon which reflection should be made in order to improve teacher-student relationship (Brekelmans & Wubbels, 1991; Brown, 2009 as in Hidayet, 2010).

Despite the fact that many studies have been carried out elsewhere on teacher interpersonal behavior, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no local study has been carried out on EFL teachers' interpersonal behavior in Ethiopia. Consequently, English language teachers' interpersonal behavior is still unknown. Moreover, the findings made elsewhere may not be generalizable to Ethiopia as perception and communication are sensitive to the perceivers' cultural and education backgrounds (Grossman, 1995; Levy, Wubbels, Brekelmans, & Morganfield, 1997; Rickards & Fisher, 2000). Hence, it seems important to see if Ethiopian EFL teachers' interpersonal behavior is shared or colored due cultural differences as compared to other nations. Furthermore, differences between teachers and students perceptions of teacher interpersonal behavior were not as such tested statistically to see whether there is significant differences or not between the views of the two bodies. Therefore, this study sought to compared English language teachers' perceptions of themselves and their students' views of them pertaining to teacher interpersonal behavior at some selected secondary schools in Ethiopia.

More specifically, the study intended to address the following two specific objectives: (1) to scrutinize the accords and discords between students' and teachers' perceptions of teacher interpersonal behavior with reference to the eight sub- scales, and to examine the accords and discords between students' and teachers' perceptions of influence and proximity dimensions of teacher interpersonal behavior.

It is hoped that the results of this study may provide English language teachers with reflective feedback on how they perceived their behavior vis-à-vis their students' perceptions of them with regards to interpersonal behavior. In other words, the result of the study may let teachers see themselves critically and reflect on their own behavior and be aware of the discrepancy between their own and their students' perceptions of them on interpersonal behavior. This awareness may provide them with opportunities to improve their interpersonal behaviors which, in turn, affect their students' cognitive and affective learning. Moreover, the finding may provide teacher education institutions with points to tackle in the preparation of English language teachers on teachers' interpersonal behavior. Furthermore, this study may instigate others who wish to investigate on the same or similar area.

Literature Review
Theoretical Framework

The communication between teachers and students depends on the kinds of relationship between them. To characterize the types of communication between them, Leary's (1957) communication model which had dominance/submission and cooperation/opposition dimensions was extended to accommodate eight sub-dimensions to map teacher-student interpersonal

behaviors better (Wubbels, Créton, Levy & Hooymayers, 1993). Accordingly, the communication between teachers and students is determined on how cooperative (proximate) they are and the level of control (influence) in the interaction.

The two dimensions principally constitute every teacher's behavior and can be used to subdivide interpersonal behavior in eight sectors, each describing different aspects of interpersonal behavior (Wubbels, Créton, & Hooymayers, 1985; Wubbels, Créton, Levy & Hooymayers, 1993). The sections are labeled as DC, CD, CS, SC, SO, OS, OD and DO according to their positions in the coordinate system. For instance, the two sectors DC and CD are both characterized by dominance and cooperation. In the DC sector, however, the dominance feature prevails over the cooperation aspect while cooperation takes over the dominance aspect in the adjacent sector CD (Créton, Levy & Hooymayers, 1993). The eight coded sectors are labeled as leadership, helping/friendly, understanding, students' responsibility/freedom, uncertain, admonishing, dissatisfied, and strict behaviors respectively.
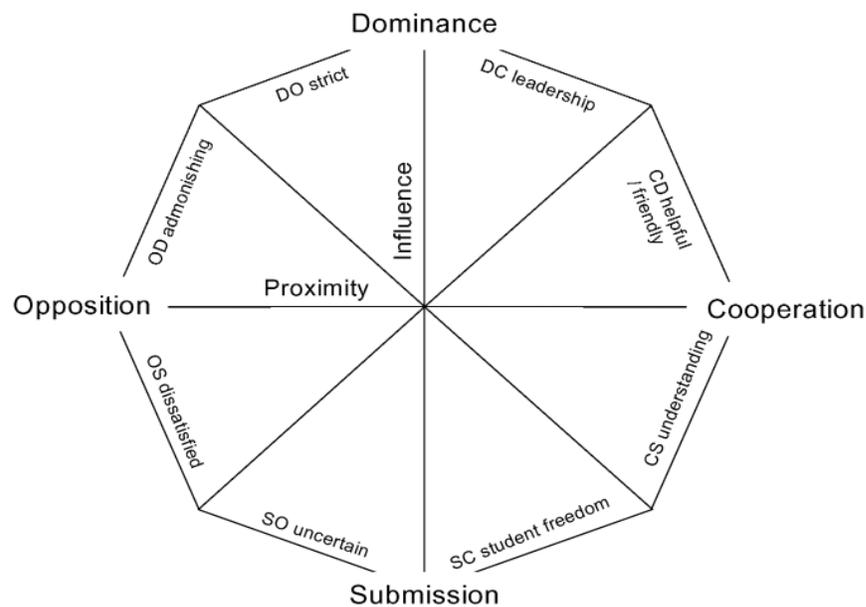

Figure 1. *The Wubbels model for teacher interpersonal behavior as in Fisher and Rickards (1998)*

Wubbels, Créton, Levy and Hooymayers (1993) provided a description of typical teacher behaviors belonging to each of the eight sectors. Accordingly, teachers with leadership (DC) behavior notice what is happening, lead, organize, give orders and determine procedure, and structure the classroom situation, explain and hold attention. On the contrary, the uncertain (SO) teachers behave in an uncertain manner and keep a low profile, apologize, wait and see how things go in the classroom. On the other hand, the strict (DO) teachers keep the reins tight, get the class silent, maintain silence, and set rules while teachers who give responsibility/freedom (SC) to their students' offer opportunity for independent work; give freedom and responsibility to the students. Similarly, teachers characterized with helpful/friendly (CD) behavior show interest, behave in a friendly or considerate manner and inspire confidence and trust their students whilst dissatisfied (OS) teachers express dissatisfaction, look unhappy, criticize, consider pros and cons, look glum, question and wait for silence. By the same token, teachers with understanding (CS) behavior are thought to show confidence and understanding and are open with students.

Moreover, the teachers listen with interest, empathize, accept apologies, look for ways to settle differences and be patient. As opposed to this, teachers in admonishing (OD) sector get angry, express irritation and anger, forbid and punish.

It has been discussed that classroom interaction is a reciprocal process that the behaviors of the teachers and students influence each other mutually (Wubbels, Créton, & Hooymayers, 1985; Wubbels & Levy, 1993). Thus, to acquire balanced view and observe the comprehensive image of teacher interpersonal behavior, both teachers' perception of themselves and students' perception of their teachers appear to be necessary. Besides, considering the perceptions of both bodies on teacher interpersonal behavior would provide reflective understanding of the teaching-learning situation in the classrooms (Lourdusamy & Khine, 2005). Furthermore, Bell (2005) as in Hidayet (2010) claims that a study that would compare teachers' and students' belief systems would elucidate effective foreign language teaching behaviors. To this effect, both teachers' and students' perception of teacher interpersonal were considered in the study; and hence teacher interpersonal behavior of Wubbels, Créton, Levy & Hooymayers (1993) model was adopted.

Methodology

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to compare English language teachers' perceptions of themselves with their students' perceptions of them pertaining to teacher interpersonal behavior in some selected secondary schools in Ethiopia. To this effect, cross-sectional descriptive survey design was adopted as it enables to collect data from large sample, compare and describe groups with regard to their beliefs, opinions, or practices (Creswell, 2002).

Participants

Participants of this study were English language teachers and their students at four Secondary schools in Arba Minch and surrounding districts of South Regional State, Ethiopia. The schools selected for the study were found in Arba Minch, Gumayede, Konso and Gidole towns. All available English language teachers who were teaching in grades 9-12 in the four schools listed above in 2016 academic year were considered in the study due to the fact that survey study requires large sample. To this effect, 48 sample English language teachers took part in the study. Corresponding to the sample teachers, 10% of the students' were selected on stratified random sampling technique taking grade as strata. As a result, 440 students took part in the study though only 420 responded properly to the questionnaire.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to gather data from both students and teachers on their perceptions of teacher interpersonal behavior, student and teacher versions of the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction QTI (Wubbels et al., 1993) were adopted. This questionnaire consisted of 48 items. The items were divided into two major dimensions - influence and proximity and eight sub-scales that conformed to the sectors of the model. The eight domains were: leadership, understanding, helpful/friendly, dissatisfied, admonishing, strict, uncertain, and student/responsibility/freedom. Each domain had six items to be responded on a five-point scale (1-5) with the extreme alternatives of Never-Always.

The QTI has been shown to be a valid and reliable instrument (Wubbels et al., 1993; Den Brok, 2001; Den Brok, Wubbels & Rodriguez, 2003). These scholars reported that the internal consistency reliabilities for QTI scales range from 0.76 to 0.84. Moreover, it has been proved to be valid for mapping teachers' interpersonal behaviors that are transferable to different cultural settings (Wubbels et al., 1993; Opdenakker, den Brok & Bosker, 2011). However, in order to let

the students fill the questionnaires easily, the English version of student questionnaire was translated into Amharic by translation experts. Furthermore, the translation was checked by two Amharic instructors to ensure that each item retained its original meaning.

Scale scores was scored on the basis of eight sectors and two summarized dimensions of Influence (DS) and Proximity (CO). The Dominance/Submission (DS) dimension is primarily comprised of behaviors in the sectors closest to the DS axis - strict, leadership, uncertainty and student responsibility/freedom. The sectors that mostly make up the Cooperation/Opposition (CO) dimension are helpful/friendly, understanding, dissatisfied and admonishing.

Data Analysis

The aim of this study was to examine whether there were significant differences in the perceptions of teachers and students on the different aspects of teacher interpersonal behavior. To this effect, data analysis was carried out on the basis of dimension scores using the individual participants' perception mean scores as the unit of analysis. To address each specific objective, independent sample t-test was employed at ($p<0.05$) level of significance. In order to address the assumptions of the t-test, the data were checked against the assumptions. Thus, the data were found distributed normally with limited skewness and kurtosis. In addition, unequal variances were assumed throughout the analysis.

Results

This study intended to examine the accords and discords between students' and teachers' perceptions of influence and proximity dimensions of teacher interpersonal behavior. Moreover, it was to scrutinize the accord and discord between the two bodies perceptions of teacher interpersonal behavior with reference to the eight sub-scales. The tables below depict these two issues.

Table 1. *Comparison between teachers' self-perceptions and students' perceptions of their teachers' on teacher interpersonal behavior sub-scales*

Teacher Behavior	Group	Mean	Std.	t-value	p
Leadership	Teacher	4.73	0.25	11.54	0.000
	Student	3.97	1.10		
Helpful/Friendly	Teacher	4.25	0.17	14.69	0.000
	Student	3.32	1.18		
Understanding	Teacher	4.53	0.14	0.21	0.83
	Student	4.53	0. 53		
Student Freedom	Teacher	2.17	0.159	-9.95	0.000
	Student	2.87	1.36		
Uncertain	Teacher	1.81	0.20	5.07	0.000
	Student	2.20	1.42		
Dissatisfied	Teacher	1.44	0.16	-8.5	0.000
	Student	1.86	0.90		
Strict	Teacher	4.03	0.20	17.83	0.000
	Student	3.04	0.96		

Admonishing	Teacher	2.21	0.16	-5.36	0.000
	Student	2.56	1.25		

As shown in table 1 above, the mean values for leadership, helpful/friendly, understanding and strict behaviors range from 3.04 to 4.73 as perceived by teachers and students. On the other hand, the mean values for student freedom, uncertain, dissatisfied and admonishing behaviors range from 2.87 to 1.44. This depicts that teachers' display high leadership, helpful/friendly and understanding behaviors along with to being strict and less student freedom, uncertain, dissatisfied and admonishing behaviors. However, the statistical data on differences between English language teachers' self-perceptions and students' perceptions of their teachers show significant differences on all sub-scales except for understanding one. As the result, teachers rated themselves higher than their students' rating of them for leadership, helpful/friendly and strict behaviors. Divergently, the teachers rated themselves considerably lower than their students' rating of them for uncertain, student freedom, dissatisfied and admonishing sub-scales. Nevertheless, there was no difference between teachers' self-perceptions and that of the students' views of the teachers on understanding sub-scale of teacher interpersonal behavior. Therefore, it seems evident to conclude that there are many discords than accords on how teachers saw themselves and the students viewed their teachers on teacher communicative behaviors.

Table 2. *Comparison between teachers' self-perceptions and students' perceptions of their teachers' on influence and proximity dimensions*

Dimension	Group	Mean	Std.	t-value	p
Influence (DS)	Teacher	1.30	0.11	42.56	0.000
	Student	0.36	0.31		
Proximity (CO)	Teacher	1.54	0.080	9.22	0.000
	Student	1.26	0.57		

Table 2 above shows statistical data on teachers' self-perceptions and students' perceptions of their teachers' influence and proximity behaviors. Accordingly, teachers perceived themselves on the average highly dominant (1.30) and cooperative (1.54) on both dimensions while the students perceived their teachers moderately dominant (0.36) and highly cooperative (1.26) on the average. Similarly, the t-test values between the views of the two bodies on teacher interpersonal behavior show significant differences at ($p< 0.05$) for both dimensions. In other words, teachers rated themselves significantly higher in the amount of control and affiliation they had with their students than their students' perceptions of them.

Discussion
Concerning the differences between English language teachers' self-perceptions and their students' perceptions of the teachers with regards to the sub-scales of teacher interpersonal behavior, the results revealed discords between the two bodies in all sub-scales except for understanding one. Accordingly, teachers rated themselves considerably higher than did their students for leadership, helpful/ friendly and strict sub-scales. Conversely, the study indicated that the teachers rated themselves significantly lower than their students' perceptions of them for

uncertain, student freedom, dissatisfied and admonishing behaviors. Studies disclosed that the earlier sub-scales were found positively related to students' achievement while the later sub-scales were negatively related to cognitive development of students (Wubbels & Levy, 1993; Rickards & Fisher, 1996; Smith, 1998; Fraser, Aldridge & Soerjaningsih, 2001). Nevertheless, accord was found between the two bodies for understanding behavior which implies that both bodies agreed that teachers exhibited understanding behavior- confidence, understanding and openness with students.

It seems apparent to conclude that there were significant discords in how English language teachers see themselves with the way students viewed them except for understanding behavior. This implies that teachers viewed themselves favorably high for positive behaviors and low for negative ones as compared to their students' perceptions of them for most of the interpersonal behaviors. This finding is more or less consonant with other works which portrayed teachers' inflate or deflate rating of their behavior as compared to their students (den Brok, Levy, Rodriguez & Wubbels, 2001; Lourdusamy & Khine, 2005).

The second aspect of the study was to see students' and teachers' perceptions of influence and proximity dimensions of teacher interpersonal behavior. Influence (dominance–submission) dimension designates the degree of dominance or control displayed by the teacher or students, while proximity (cooperation–opposition) describes the level of cooperation/connectedness between teachers and students in the process of communication (Wubbels et al., 1992; den Brok, Levy, Rodriguez & Wubbels, 2001). Therefore, the result indicated significant differences between the two bodies with regards to both influence and proximity dimensions of interpersonal behavior. In other words, teachers rated themselves significantly higher in the amount of control and affiliation/ connectedness than their students' perceptions of them in the process of communication. This finding is harmonious with some previous studies which indicated teachers' higher rating of themselves than the students' perceptions of them on these two dimensions (Rickards & Fisher, 1998; den Brok, 2001; Van Oord & den Brok, 2004; Telli, den Brok & Cakiroglu, 2007; Telli, den Brok & Cakiroglu, 2007-2008).

Though there could be various reasons for differences between the two bodies in the ratings of teacher interpersonal behavior, one possible reason could emanate from teachers' failure to see themselves to reflect accurately on their behaviors (Dunning, Johnson, Erlanger & Kruger, 2003). Furthermore, other potential variables such as gender, ethnic background/culture, age of students and teachers and experiences of teachers could bring differences to the perceptions of teacher interpersonal behavior (Fisher & Rickards, 1997; Levy, Wubbels, Brekelmans & Morganfield, 1997; den Brok, Fisher & Rickards, 2004; den Brok, Bergen & Brekelmans, 2004).

Conclusions

This study uncovered remarkable discords between how English language teachers perceived themselves and the way students viewed them on teacher interpersonal behavior except for understanding behavior. Therefore, teachers viewed themselves favorably higher for some positive behaviors (leadership, helpful/ friendly and strict) and lower for other behaviors (uncertain, student freedom, dissatisfied and admonishing) as compared to their students' perceptions of them. However, the two bodies agreed teachers exhibited understanding behavior. Therefore, although teachers demonstrated the attested interpersonal behaviors while communicating with their students, they viewed themselves inflated for positive behaviors and deflated for negative behaviors as compared to their students' views of their teachers. Concerning the two dimensions, teachers notably felt they had high amount of control and affiliation/

connectedness in the process of communication in contrast to their students' perceptions of them. In summing up, it seems evident to conclude that there were discords between the two bodies almost in all behaviors except for understanding one. In addition, teachers felt that they had more affiliation/ connectedness with students and in control of the classes in the process of communication in contrast to their students' perceptions of them. This implies that teachers did not make critical reflections of themselves on their interpersonal behaviors. Consequently, English language teachers should take the issues of discords as potential impediments of teaching-learning up on which they should see themselves critically to improve their interpersonal behaviors.

By the same token, teacher education institutions should take the interpersonal behavior as an essential point and consider it in their curricula.This study has some limitations to mention. The sample size of this study was small and was limited to English language teachers and students in four secondary and preparatory schools in Ethiopia. To this effect, it is difficult to make generalizations. In addition, only questionnaires to both teachers and students were used to elicit teacher interpersonal behavior. Studies that will be done in the future should consider large participants to generalize to wider area. Furthermore, other data collection tools should be thought to generate in-depth data on teacher interpersonal behaviors.

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