Comparing Teaching Styles and Personality Types of EFL Instructors in the Public and Private Sectors

Una comparación de los estilos de enseñanza y los tipos de personalidad de profesores de inglés de los sistemas educativos estatal y privado

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This is an exploratory non-experimental research study whose main objective is to compare the teaching styles of a group of thirty teachers of English working in either public or private secondary education in Chile. In order to collect the required data, two instruments were administered to the participants: a teaching style inventory and a personality type index proposed by Grasha. Results indicate that public sector participants show a facilitator teaching style and an extrovert personality type, whereas private sector participants reveal a more authoritative teaching style and an introverted type of personality.

Key words: English teachers, personality types, teaching styles.

Este estudio exploratorio de naturaleza no-experimental tiene como objetivo principal comparar los estilos de enseñanza de un grupo de treinta profesores de inglés que trabajan en el nivel de enseñanza secundario del sistema educativo estatal o privado, en Chile. Para la recolección de datos se utilizaron el inventario de estilos de enseñanza y el índice de tipo de personalidad de Grasha. Los resultados indican que los participantes del nivel de enseñanza estatal presentan un estilo de enseñanza de naturaleza facilitadora y un tipo de personalidad extrovertido, mientras que los participantes del nivel de enseñanza privado revelan un estilo de enseñanza más autoritario y una personalidad más introvertida.

Palabras clave: estilos de enseñanza, profesores de inglés, tipos de personalidad.

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**Introduction**

The English teaching and learning process is a pedagogical act that involves both teachers and students. Both students and teachers are unique individuals who possess their own way of learning and teaching, but do public and private sector EFL teachers reveal similar teaching styles and personality types? The point of this research is to find out whether the socio-cultural context the participants work in (public and private) impacts on their teaching style and their personality type. Teaching styles, as Brown (2007) states, refer to the enduring preferences within an individual and they vary with each one; therefore, the style a teacher possesses is an essential aspect to better understand the teaching and learning process. In fact, several studies on the field of teaching styles point out that more research has to be done to really unravel the impact and the consequences of a determined teaching style on students and their learning (Eggen & Kauchak, 1996; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Macaro, 2003).

Having said the above, it is then important for educators to have an overview of their own teaching styles, particularly of the one that predominates in their own teaching practices. To get some insights into this topic might help teachers to become more aware of the way they teach and to self reflect on their own teaching (Medgyes, 1994; Puchta & Rinvolucrri, 2005).

One might argue that teachers have a predetermined teaching style regardless of the educational sector they work in: public or private. Others, however, believe that teachers’ teaching styles depend on the social environment they are in. As a matter of fact, teaching styles can be influenced by many factors e.g. personality traits (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Roberts, 2002). These factors are sometimes so strong that they could define the way a teacher teaches in the classroom.

Through a teaching style inventory and a psychological type index, this exploratory non-experimental study (Ruiz, 1996; Sabino, 1996; Sandin, 2003) focuses on determining the public and private sector participants’ teaching styles and their psychological types.

**Theoretical Background**

**The Concept of Teaching Style**

Teaching style is a concept that has been studied by only a few authors (Bowen & Marks, 1994; Evans, Harkins & Young, 2008). It is for this reason that there is no single definition. However, different authors (Graves, 2000; Zhang, 2008) offer their own definitions in order to clarify and characterize the concept itself. Table 1 shows a chronology of five definitions of the concept of teaching styles. This study used Grasha’s (1996) definition stated below as the guiding principle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bennett (1976)</td>
<td>Teaching styles refer to the teacher’s pervasive personal behaviour and media used during interaction with learners. It is a teacher’s characteristic approach whatever the method used. (p. 27)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heimlich &amp; Norland (1994)</td>
<td>Teaching styles refer to style as a predilection toward teaching behaviour and the congruence between educators’ teaching behaviour and teaching beliefs. (p. 34)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Definitions of teaching styles types