

PERSONALITY TRAITS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS

^aLENKA HRUŠKOVÁ

*Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice,
Okružní 10, 37001 České Budějovice, Czech Republic
email: "hruskova@mail.vstecb.cz"*

Abstract: The influence of a teacher cannot be replaced by textbooks, through moralizing or by a set of punishments and encouragements. The example set by a teacher and the influence of their personality are irreplaceable. A teacher's work often has a far reaching, long term and suggestive impact on the development of a pupil's personality, their behaviour and feelings. In our paper we try to describe some of the personality traits of English teachers in primary education in selected schools in the Czech Republic with the use of standardized psychological tests (quantitative method) and personal interview (qualitative method).

Keywords: personality traits, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, NEO personality inventory

1 Factors influencing the teaching process

The relationship between pupils and teachers is to some extent "symbiotic" (Kohoutek 2004). A teacher at primary, as well as secondary and tertiary educational levels is perceived as an intermediary of new knowledge as well as serving as an example because their own behaviour can greatly influence that of their pupils too. One of the basic factors which influences the success (or lack of success) of the teaching process is the interaction between the teacher and the pupil (pupils). Pupils perceive the teacher's personality through the way he act and behave whilst managing the teaching process. The teaching strategies of every teacher are closely related to the teaching and educational strategies of every school as well as to the individual teaching style of every teacher, as mentioned above. The frequency with which different strategies are utilised reflect the teacher's personality. Different authors have given a lot of attention to teachers, the personality of a teacher, their strategies, methods, and tactics (e.g. Průcha 2000, 2002; Spousta 1995; Blížkovský 2000; Kurelová 1998; Pelikán 1995, 2008; Gavora 2005; Petty 2004; Vašutová 2001, 2004 aj.). It can even be said that a teacher is one of the most frequented topics in pedagogical research. However, if reaching the aims, competencies and outcomes of the Framework of Educational Programme currently requires a change in the paradigm of the pupil in the educational and teaching process, then it is necessary – in parallel with this new attitude to the pupil - to also reassess the requirements for changing the paradigm of the teacher (comp. Kratochvílová, Horká, Janík and Filová 2011). At present, changes to the concept of the teaching profession are focussed on its professionalization, a shift towards a model of wider professionalism which requires a change in teachers' roles. What are the personality traits of a teacher at a primary school? Are they different from those of a teacher at secondary level? Does a language teacher have different personality traits than those for mathematics or science?

1.1 Personality traits of a teacher

Traditionally, professional competencies are divided into personal, subject and pedagogical and psychological competencies. The pedagogical dictionary defines a teacher's competencies (Pedagogický slovník, 2003, p. 103) as: "A set of professional skills and dispositions, which a teacher should possess in order to be able to effectively carry out their profession. Usually, personal and professional competencies are stated. Personal competencies include responsibility, creativity, ability to solve problems, to work in a team, to be socially perceptive and reflective.

Our work and research is based on data which we obtained from psychological research in which we worked primarily with personal characteristics and the psychological definition of personality i.e. "its feelings and behaviour, conscious and subconscious aspects in activities, in interactions with the environment" (Čáp and Mareš 2007, p. 26). "Behaviour and

feelings are always a manifestation of a personality of an individual person with generally human and individual characteristics, aims, joys and problems" (ibid, p. 24). A teacher as an individual personality must have general abilities (including above average intelligence) and special abilities which are crucial for the teaching profession. They include "didactic abilities which are related to the use of relevant teaching methods, interesting presentation of the subject matter, developing creativity and volitional characteristics of pupils. The basis of constructive abilities is the formulation of teaching and educational processes; perceptive abilities are related to perception of the children in the classroom and perception of the pupils' needs. Expressive abilities demonstrate themselves by understandable verbal and non-verbal expression; important communication abilities influence the interaction between a teacher and pupils. Organizational abilities prove the teacher's ability to manage their pedagogical work and the pupils' activities. A teacher should also have the ability for self-reflection which comes from feedback from themselves and/or from pupils. Pedagogical tact which demonstrates itself through empathy, quick decision making, sense for fairness, objective attitude and interest in pupils and their problems is an integral and important part of a teacher's personality (Pruner 2003, p.109-110). Professor Kohoutek adds that teachers who have mental health issues may cause anomalies in the development of their pupils' personalities; these anomalies are often accompanied by stress. On the basis of his research (2008) he expressed his opinion that due to the extraordinary demands of the teaching profession on mental health there is a need to consider health and mental issues when selecting teachers. Pedology (discipline of teacher personality) has advanced considerably in recent years. Two approaches to the study of teacher's personality are used: normative and analytical.

1.2 Typology of teacher personality

"Type means a group of people with certain common mental characteristics in which they differ from other groups or types." (Čáp and Mareš 2007, p. 175). In ancient Greek the term *typos* meant picture, feature, appearance, shape which a hard thing imprints, punches or hammers into malleable material. Within the framework of personality typology individuals with common traits are ranked into given types with the same characteristics. "An ideal type is an individual who has only these characteristics. In practice there are no ideal types and we talk about so called real types" (Nakonečný 1997, p. 352). Our typology of pedagogues is based on the assertion of Čáp and Mareš (2007, p. 352) who add that the expression "type" is also used to describe an individual who is a characteristic, "typical" representative of such a group". Our typology of pedagogues bears in mind representatives of a certain kind, a collection of certain characteristics which are typical for several pedagogical personalities. Typology is a sort of mirror for teachers. It is important for self-knowledge from which comes self-evaluation and self-education.

W. O. Döring (in Chlup – Kopecký et al. 1967, p. 327 - 329) described six basic types of teacher personality which he based on the personality typology of the German psychologist Eduard Spranger:

- Religious type - reliable in character, serious, withdrawn, without a sense of humour. Due to the fact that they do not have a lot of sense for child's play, they are not able to approach pupils; they are meticulous and pedantic. Mentally this type is split into two sub-types: a more emotional one (pious) and a more intellectual one (orthodox).
- Aesthetic type - primarily characterized by intuition, fantasy and the heart of a pedagogue. Due to the predominance of an irrational element, this type has the ability to put themselves into the pupil's personality and form it. This type finds the highest value in beauty, harmony, shape,

grace, symmetry, style; they have a tendency towards individualism and independence. This type has two variants: actively creative (original) and passively receptive.

- Actively creative type - form pupils' personality according to themselves with a complete disregard for the individuality of each individual.
- Passively receptive type - popular with pupils thanks to their ability to put themselves in any personality and develop it even if the pupil's personality is different from their own.
- Social type - characterized by their love of people, altruism and philanthropy. The basis of this type is very close to the religious type. Their aim is to educate citizens beneficial to society which is why they patiently devote time to all the pupils in the class regardless of their knowledge and skills. Teachers of this type are popular with pupils.
- Theoretical type - more interested in the subject matter than in the pupil. Usually they do not even aim to get to know the personality of a pupil and understand them in detail.
- Economical type - characterized by striving to achieve maximum results with pupils using the minimum of energy, strength and effort. They often use individualized teaching strategies in the teaching process because they tend to be very successful methodologists. They often underestimate or do not fully appreciate creativity, fantasy and originality in their pupils.
- Power type - have a tendency to always push through their own personality, they are very demanding and even unreasonably so, critical too; they always want to gain ground at all costs.

According to Döring's typology, and Döring himself, the most suitable type for the teaching profession is the social type. The aesthetic and the religious type are also suitable despite their type shortcomings.

E. Luka bases his typology of pedagogues on two criteria:

1. the way the pedagogue reacts to stimuli,
2. the way they mentally process external stimuli, in their psyche:
 - reflective, adaptive type: reflect on external stimuli and on their reactions to them
 - naive type: natural, spontaneous and expressive and typically react to stimuli without thinking, often impulsively.

With regards to the personality of teachers Luka divides them into four types:

- Naively reproductive type - those who simply mediate knowledge to pupils and only demand memorized knowledge. They do not often encourage pupils to initiate independent creative work, to form their own opinions, attitudes, etc.
- Naturally productive type - typically self-assured in decision-making and alert in the education process. They achieve excellent results because their teaching is based on their own opinions and attitudes and they pass on this knowledge to the pupils in a very original manner. They encourage pupils to be creative and active.
- Reflectively reproductive type - finds it difficult to approach their pupils, they think at length and in a complicated way about everything and cannot creatively enrich nor express their knowledge. New unexpected situations prove difficult for them and they often resolve them unsuccessfully.

- Reflectively productive type - processes external stimuli with consideration, they often reshape them and creatively think them through. If they are outstandingly intelligent and creative, their pedagogical measures are adequate. On the contrary, if they are less intellectual and creative, their pedagogical measures and solutions for pedagogical situations are not of good quality (comp. E. Vorwickel, Caselmann in Kohoutek, 1996).

1.3 Personal traits

It is clear from the above just how important it is to create an adequate profile of a teacher in primary education, a profile which must include required personality traits. The traits of a teacher's personality are given by the type of teacher (see typology of a teacher's personality) and concrete personality manifestations and traits:

- creativity – ability to find something new, new methods, techniques, tactics, strategies
- principled moral attitude – based on humanism, sense for democracy, attitude to work, discipline, strong will
- pedagogical optimism – a belief in the effectiveness of pedagogical work, in the pupil's strengths and their positive characteristics
- pedagogical tact – respecting the pupil as a unique individual who has the right to be treated correctly, respect and approval, ability for self control, the skill to say unpleasant things in a relevant non-destructive manner
- pedagogical composure – patience, unhurriedness, calmness, not easily unnerved, react adequately without emotion
- pedagogical passion – enjoys their work, has a tendency to influence other people, has a desire to educate and teach, regard their work as being important
- be strictly fair – do not show favouritism, resist subjective psychological effects

A different view of teacher's traits is based on the division of characteristics into:

- primary (with innate basis or adopted in early childhood), e. g. dominance, sociability, adequate frustration tolerance, self control, self assurance and a sense for a bearable level of risk, emotional stability
- secondary (obtained through upbringing and education), e.g. ability to manage the activity of a group, to learn about others, social responsibility, professional competence, sense of fair play, ability to admit their own mistake, pedagogical skills, pedagogical expressiveness, ability to teach others and influence them by education, formal speech, adequate vocabulary, clear pronunciation, clarity, emotionality of speech and its dynamics
- tertiary (super structural, resulting from the specific role of a teacher as a representative of educational aims of the society). This characteristic includes a system of interiorized values and attitudes with regard to contents – especially motivation and commitment.

The success of any teacher's teaching also depends on external factors such as the level of psychosocial climate. According to Prunner (2003, p. 122 - 123) "a teacher's personality greatly influences the climate in the classroom. According to research, certain characteristics of a teacher such as warmth, emotional stability, self confidence, rational approach, dynamics of a personality which enables the teacher to flexibly react to changes, and dominance contribute to a conflict free environment and to the positive development of pupils".

2 Materials and methods

In our research, we focused on the personality traits of teachers of English. In personality psychology cognitive styles, goals, interests, motives, needs, personal projects, values are examined. Some psychologists believe that all these elements are contained in the features, which are the core of every person. They then manifest as ways of thinking, feelings and actions by which people differ from each other.

With the help of discussions and a standardized NEO five-factor inventory we attempted to find personal differences in the personalities of teachers of a foreign language (English).

2.1 Psychological measurement of foreign language teachers

In order to specify the general information about the personality of foreign language teachers, NEO personality inventory psychological measurement was carried out (NEO-FFI compiled by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae). It is a method created to measure five general dimensions of personality - Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (the so-called Big Five). The short version of inventory includes a total of 60 items (12 items per domain).

The Revised NEO Personality Inventory, or NEO PI-R, is a 240-item measure of the Big Five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience). Additionally, the test measures six subordinate dimensions (known as facets) of each of the 'FFM' personality factors. The test was developed by Paul T. Costa, Jr. and Robert R. McCrae for use with adult (17+) men and women without overt psychopathology.

The NEO PI-R and NEO-FFI were updated in 2010 in a manual called the NEO Inventories for the NEO Personality Inventory-3, NEO Five-Factor Model 3, and NEO Personality Inventory-Revised. While the NEO PI-R is still being published, the NEO-PI-3 and NEO-FFI-3 feature updated normative data and new forms.

A list of the personality dimensions measured by the NEO PI-R, including facets, is as follows:

1. Neuroticism (Anxiety, Hostility, Depression, Self-Consciousness, Impulsiveness, Vulnerability to Stress)
2. Extraversion (Warmth, Gregariousness, Assertiveness, Activity, Excitement Seeking, Positive Emotion)
3. Openness to experience (Fantasy, Aesthetics, Feelings, Actions, Ideas, Values)
4. Agreeableness (Trust, Straightforwardness, Altruism, Compliance, Modesty, Tendermindedness)
5. Conscientiousness (Competence, Order, Dutifulness, Achievement Striving, Self-Discipline, Deliberation)

The standardized inventory used for all teachers of foreign languages in primary educational sector can be used in projects aimed at ascertaining the degree of individual differences. The method is time-consuming and provides information about the five levels of general dimensions of personality.

The 'Big Five'

Individual differences cannot be reduced to five dimensions only, but we can say that the five dimensions relatively well capture the overall structure of personality. Five-dimensional description of the personality structure derived from a lexical study in Czech language (Hřebíčková 1997) works with the following factors:

- Extraversion - Vivacity are represented by synonyms expression chattiness; on the other hand introversion is significantly characterized by reclusiveness and introversion (sociable - retiring; talkative - taciturn, aggressive - unassertive).

- Agreeableness and its positive pole is represented by adjectives like hearted, tolerant, friendly; including adjectives that affect the morality: honest, ethical, upright (good-natured - insensitive; kind - unkind; tolerant - intolerant).
- Attitude to work and a sense of duty or, on the other hand, rejection and inconsistency is expressed by the Conscientiousness factor. These features are represented by words like diligent, hardworking, effortful, (consistent - inconsistent; careful - careless; responsible - irresponsible)
- Emotional stability is characterized by two sub-dimensions: emotional stability expressed by adjectives like calm, serene, confident and emotional lability expressed by words like nervous, restless, labile (calm - restless; relaxed - tense, emotionally balanced - emotionally unbalanced).
- Intellect's positive pole is expressed by words like natural intelligence, knowledge and talent Its negative pole is characterized by words like narrow-mindedness, ignorance, talentlessness (reflective - unreflective; intelligent - unintelligent; educated - uneducated).

2.2 Discussions with teachers of foreign languages

At the end of the measurement, i.e. during the autumn of 2011, discussions (discussion was used as an extensive qualitative research method) were conducted with teachers of English. Beseda as a variant of the interview was to our advantage that we get more opinions and views. The directors of individual schools were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured; the author of the questions has prepared the questions partially in advance and partially he asked according to the responses given to him grabbing the possibility to get more information about the school as a whole and thus emphasize the use of teaching strategies, methods and techniques by individual teachers.

Naturally, it included a direct interpersonal contact with all the teachers who participated in the testing of students in English classes of the fourth and fifth grades. During discussions at individual schools, open and semi-open questions were given priority. Utterances of teachers were recorded and processed qualitatively as a description which should illustrate the data obtained from standardized psychological investigation.

2.3 Data Processing

A. The NEO Personality Inventory was filled out by the teachers individually according to precise instructions. The inventory contained 60 items which the teachers answered on a five point scale:

- 0 (strongly disagree)
- 1 (disagree)
- 2 (neutral)
- 3 (agree)
- 4 (strongly agree)

Time needed to complete the inventory was approximately 10-15 minutes.

B. Individual responses from the discussions and was recorded and processed as qualitatively transcript free answers with minimal correction.

3 Results – Interpretation

3.1 The NEO Personality Inventory Assessments

With compliance to the scheme, it was necessary to calculate individual teachers' ratings for all items. Assignment of numbers to the so-called rings corresponded to the dimension pole related items. Identified scores of scales were compared with standardized norms, as there exist differences between men and

women of all ages. Standards were created in the form of percentiles.

Tab. 1: Facts comparison

PRIMARY SCHOOL	F/M	AGE	POINTS					PERCENTILES				
			N	E	O	P	S	N	E	O	P	S
MALONTY	F	41	16	27	36	42	39	29	31	44	0	88
STRAKONICE	F	58	15	28	19	39	33	26	35	6	90	45
	F	58	12	27	24	18	22	12	31	28	1	5
RUDOLFOV	F	52	23	34	27	33	41	67	60	52	43	94
	F	34	23	34	18	31	34	67	60	4	26	54
	M	37	20	30	21	35	31	63	46	7	75	53
VYŠŠÍ BROD	F	50	9	31	25	34	32	3	49	33	51	39
TÁBOR	F	31	31	30	37	34	29	92	43	95	51	26

Source: author

Table 2: Frequency according to gender

	Frequency	Relative frequency in percent
Women	9	90 %
Men	1	10 %
Total	10	100 %

Source: author

The ratio of men and women in the teaching profession (teachers of English language) fairly accurately reflects the feminization of this profession and coincides with the data published by the Institute for Information on Education for the year 2010/2011 when the majority of the primary school teachers were female (26,354 of a total of 27,796; source: <http://www.uzis.cz/link/ustav-pro-informace-vzdelavani>).

Table 3: Frequency according to age

Age	Frequency	Relative frequency in percent
20-30	0	0 %
31-40	4	40 %
41-50	2	20 %
51-60	4	40 %

Source: author

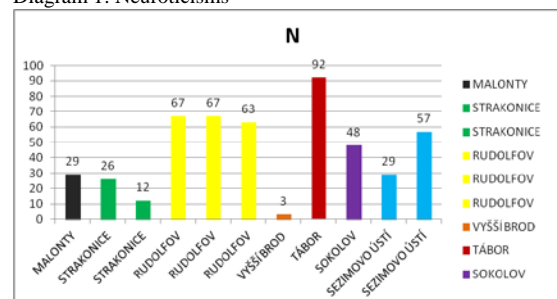
Extraversion and Agreeableness factors were especially important for us because they are indicators of interpersonal behavior. Extraversion factor determines the quantity and quality of interpersonal interactions, activation level, need for stimulation. Agreeableness factor determines the quality of interpersonal orientation on a continuum from compassion to hostility in thoughts, feelings and actions. From the score, we could easily note vast differences in individual teachers, which are reflected in their interaction styles and teaching strategies. The data showed personality differences in the approach to cooperation (high scores in extraversion) and competition; e.g. a teacher from the primary school in Sokolov has reached a very high percentile in Extraversion factor – she has been described as an active woman who easily builds interpersonal contacts favoring cooperation; at the same time, according to the Agreeableness factor she reached percentile 1 which identified her as a selfish, self-centered person. Extreme values of Agreeableness factor were reached by two more teachers: a 41-year-old teacher from Malonty (0) and a 58-year-old teacher at the primary school in Strakonice. It was interesting that both teachers reached the same percentile in the Extraversion factor (31), a confirmation of their modesty, independence and perhaps even autonomy and propensity to teach according to competitive strategies in group teaching, but also according to individualized instructional forms. The second female teacher from Strakonice (90) and a male teacher from the primary school Rudofov (75) were placed high on the scale of Agreeableness which could theoretically be a good prerequisite for the two to employ cooperative strategies in the classroom. However, not one of them was a forged 'extravert' (in Extraversion factor they

did not reach the 50 percentile), although they predominantly tended to cooperation, they exclusively employed teaching competitive strategies in their foreign language lessons. The opposite was characterized by female teachers from Rudofov and Sezimovo Ústí who reached a high percentile in Extraversion factor. The female teachers prefer a common purpose to their own purposes (tend to group teaching) but their score on the scale of the Agreeableness factor shows us that one teacher from Rudofov (43) and one of Sezimovo Ústí (31) were relatively skilled to teach using competition and elements of cooperation just according to the situation in the class. The other two female teachers tend primarily to competition.

The results in the area of Neuroticism yielded interesting findings - all women teachers were placed on a scale that determines how negative emotions are experienced (in a wide range between 3-92 percentiles). The female teachers from primary schools in Brod (3) Malonty (29), young female teachers from Sezimovo Ústí II (29) and Strakonice (26, 12) reached lower neuroticism score - they are calm, balanced and emotionally stabler than their colleagues from Tábor (92) and the primary school in Rudofov (67, 67) that are mentally unstable, and their psychological balance may be easily disturbed. Unlike emotionally stable colleagues, they reported more negative experiences and difficulties in overcoming them. They may be more easily embarrassed, feel abased, insecure, they are often nervous, anxious, experiencing intensely fear, worries and sadness. The teacher from Tábor (92) showed increasing failure to cope with stressful situations combined with anxiety and sometimes even with mental exhaustion. The female teacher from Sokolov (48) and the senior teacher from Sezimovo Ústí II (57) scored around the mean value.

The male teacher from the Rudofov scored 63 on the percentile which means a value a little lower than the average. He is a little better mentally balanced than his two female colleagues from his school and the teacher from Tábor but, on the other hand, in comparison with the other teachers from elementary schools, he is mentally unstable, finds difficulties to handle stressful situations in the class; sometimes he experience feelings of guilt, fear and sadness.

Diagram 1: Neuroticisms



Source: author

Finally, it is necessary to objectively evaluate the data obtained from the standardized psychological questionnaire which helped us uncover some of the identity features of English teachers who play an important role in our research. According to the research, it is clear that the special traits of the teachers' personality and character does not have to have a direct impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of foreign language teaching, and that the teacher's characteristics has not a direct impact on the benefit of students (a choleric may be a relatively good teacher), and that it does not matter so much what qualities a teacher has, but rather what the teacher does and how he does it. As there is no universal definition of a good or effective teacher, there is no correlation between the teacher's personality and teaching effectiveness, perhaps due to a fact that the educational results are not decided by a teacher but by many other variables. The data obtained by us reflect mostly the pedagogical competencies (ability to control, teach, etc.) that are the target categories of the teaching profession in a changing school; thus they are capable

of development, variable and flexible and less dependent on the personality of the teacher.

4 Conclusion

NEO inventory does not detect intelligence or ability of teachers is not intended to detect mental disorders. In our case, it has been used as important information about various personality types of teachers of foreign languages and as a default information leading to their teaching styles, teaching strategies, methods and techniques. While examining the relationship between instructional strategies of teachers and pupils is very difficult (since the learning outcomes can also be influenced by factors other than the teaching strategies and interaction styles of the teacher), nevertheless, some relationships may be considered very probable. With the increasing demands on the teacher (both on physical endurance, health and mental toughness), as well as increasing requirements for the educational, psychological education which includes moral and environmental education and special training requirements.

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