

Teacher Roles and Students' Attitude in "Freedom Writers" Movie

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Abstract:

This study is about teacher's roles and students' attitudes in *Freedom Writers* movie. There two objectives of this study which is to find teacher's roles and students' attitudes. The subject of the data are the teacher named Erin Gruwell and the students inside the classroom. The theory used in this study was the theory from Harmer (2001) that explained about teacher's roles, and the other theory was from Brown (2007) and Wenden (1991) about the students' attitudes. The findings revealed that teacher's roles have effect on the attitudes of the students whether the attitude is positive or negative from three components: cognitive, behavioral, and evaluative. Finally, the writer concluded that students' attitudes depend on the teacher's roles.

Keyword : Teacher's roles, Students' attitudes, *Freedom Writers*.

INTRODUCTION

Classroom management is defined as "the action that teachers take to create a supportive environment for the academic and social-emotional learning students (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Another researcher, Brophy (2006), defined classroom management as "actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction (arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students' attention to lessons and engagement in activities)" (p. 17). From those two definitions, teachers need to create a supportive environment in order to get the students' attention and make the students engaged in the classroom. In order to make supportive environments for the students, the teacher needs to play various roles in the classroom. Therefore teacher's roles would become a focus in the next discussion.

The teacher has a big role in supporting school and students. whether the teacher plays the roles informally or formally (Killion & Harrison, 2007). With this role, the teacher helps the school to increase the capacity of the school (Killion & Harrison, 2007). Besides supporting the school capacity, the roles of the teacher are also important in the students' life. In supporting the school to improve the capacity, teacher's roles are very important to discuss. The role of the teacher is defined as the act of the teacher "to insert scaffolding in learning plans of a learner, assist the teacher in taking control of the teacher learning and help the teacher to realize the learning goals" (Shaikh & Khoja, 2011). There are many researchers such as Littlewood, (1981); Richard & Rodgers, (1986); Tudor, (1993); and Harmer, (2001), who suggest that teachers have many potential roles (Brown, 2007). This gave the inspiration to study about the teacher's roles found in the *Freedom Writers* classroom scenes.

Besides the teacher's roles, this part discusses the students' attitudes because students' attitudes are as important as the teacher's roles because students' attitude can help the teacher to know the students having positive or negative attitude. First of all, an attitude is defined as "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards the socially significant object, groups, events or symbols" (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005, p. 150). Based on this definition, this study gives further explanation about attitudes by the social psychologist. In social psychology, the term "attitudes" has three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Salta & Tzougraki, 2004). There is another study about attitudes by Wenden (1991), who states that "attitudes have three components: cognitive, behavioral and evaluative component". Cognitive components refer to beliefs

and ideas. Behavioral components refers to action in a certain way. Evaluative components refer to “likes or dislikes”, “agreement or disagreement”, “approval or disapproval” (Wenden, 1991). Based on those three components explained by Wenden, (1991), this study would tell whether the students have the positive or negative attitude the component using the theory of Brown (2007) and Wenden (1991) found in the *Freedom Writers* movie.

Freedom Writers is a 2007 US movie by Paramount Picture, written by Richard LaGravanese and produced by Danny Devito, Michael Shambert, and Stacey Sher (Dargis, 2007). The source of data of this movie and the transcript that can be reached from (<http://www.script-o-rama.com>). The movie tells the true story of the students in the Woodrow Wilson Highschool, most of whom are the part of the gangsters and some of whom were victims of the gangsters' violence. Later, in the story, there was a new teacher named Erin Gruwell who started to teach that class. During her first day of teaching that class, she expected to meet some motivated and keen students. In fact, she did not get what she expected. In her attempt to confront the problem, she tried to make the students see what segregation and racism led to during the Second World War. Then, the movie showed that the students changed their attitudes from racism became gathering together and also they could become motivated in learning (Houjin, 2011). From that little summary, I decided to see the roles that the teacher, Erin Gruwell, plays in the classroom and the students' attitudes. The teacher's roles can be identified from the utterances between Erin Gruwell and the students in the classroom scenes. The classroom scenes are limited to the chosen classroom scenes: classroom scenes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 because those chosen classroom scenes show more about the teacher's roles and students' attitude.

In this study, I used the theory from Harmer, (2001) for the teacher's roles. In addition, I also focused on the students' attitudes toward the teacher's roles as seen as in the movie because students' attitudes can help the teacher to know whether the students have positive or negative attitude. In analyzing the students' attitudes, I used the theory from Brown, (2007) and from Wenden, (1991) as the supporting theory. For the teacher's roles, according to Harmer, (2001) there are eight roles, namely, controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, and observer. Besides, there are two types of students' attitudes; positive and negative attitudes (Brown, 2007). According to Wenden (1991), the positive and negative attitudes can be seen from the three components: cognitive, behavioral and evaluative. This study also focused on the changing of the students' attitudes from the first until the last meeting from the chosen classroom scenes.

METHOD

In this study, the writer used the qualitative approach. The instrument of this study was the writer, who collected and analyzed the data based on the theory in Chapter two. The data in this study were all interactions between Erin Gruwell and the students inside the classroom found in the chosen classroom scenes which show the roles of teacher and the students' attitudes. The focus of the analysis was on the roles implemented by the teacher, Erin Gruwell in the chosen scenes in the movie, the students' attitudes, and the changing of the students' attitudes.

In the process of doing the data collection, the writer downloaded the movie, watched the movie and looked for the transcript from a website. Then, in order to get the complete information, the movie and the transcript were matched. Furthermore, the teacher's utterances would be distinguished by bolding those utterances. After that, every utterance would have the numbering system to differentiate which one is Erin's utterances and which one is the students' utterances using the three digits of number such as 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 3.1.1. The first digits refer the classroom scenes, the second digits refer to the speaker, and the third digits refer to the utterances. In the second digits, the teacher got number one and the students got number two. In the third digits, different utterances would get different numbers.

In the data analysis, firstly, the theory was applied to analyze the roles of the teacher and students' attitudes that can be seen from the roles of the teacher that Erin Gruwell plays and put it into the table 3.1. The table was used to analyze the utterances that show teacher's roles and students' attitude.

Table 3.1 Roles of the Teacher and Students' Attitudes

Number	Utterances	Teacher's Roles	Students' Attitudes		Notes
			Positive	Negative	

Notes:

Types of Teacher's Roles:

Cont: Controller

Part: Participant

Or: Organiser

Re: Resource

Ass: Assesor

Tu: Tutor

Ob: Observer

Prompt: Prompter

There are five columns in the table above. The first column is the number. The number consists of the three digits of a numbering system that has already been explained before. The second column is the utterances. Then, in the teacher's roles column, the abbreviation would be written there. Besides the abbreviation, in analyzing teacher's roles, non verbal and verbal action would be considered. The fourth column is the students' attitudes to identify whether the students' attitude shows the positive or negative one. The last column is the notes to give explanation about the teacher's roles and the students' attitudes.

The data analysis also explains about the changing of the students' attitude. In order to know the changing of the students' attitudes, there would be table 3.2 about the changing of the students' attitudes. Besides table 3.2, the chosen classroom scenes would be analyzed one by one and looked from the context of the chosen classroom scenes 1 until 7 to get the positive or negative attitude of the students.

Table 3.2 Changes of Students' Attitude

Scenes	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 7
Attitudes						
+						
-						

After all those processes of the data collection and data analysis, the writer arrived at the findings and discussion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 4.1 Summary of the findings related to Teacher' roles and Students' attitude

Roles	Cognitive		Behavioral		Evaluative	
	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)
Controller	√		√	√	√	√
Organiser	√		√	√	√	√

Participant		√	√		√	√
Resource		√		√	√	√
Observer			√			√

The table shows that there are five teacher' roles, and those five teacher's roles have the students' attitudes whether it was the positive or negative from the three components (cognitive, behavioral, evaluative).

Controller

Example:

1.1.1 T: **“My name is Erin Gruwell. Welcome to Freshman English”.**

The context in this utterance is the new teacher or Erin Gruwell welcomes the students who come to the class or Freshman English. This first utterance shows that Erin Gruwell acts as the controller because when she said **“My name is Erin Gruwell. Welcome to Freshman English”**, it shows that Erin Gruwell, at that time is in charge of the class and the activity taking place.

Organiser

Example:

3.1.3b T: **“Raise your hand” .**

This context tells about the teacher that asks the students whether the students like Tupac Shakur or not and then asks the students to raise their hand if they like Tupac Shakur. This example of the utterance in the classroom scene three shows that Erin acts as the organizer.

Participant

Example:

4.1.13b T: **“So why don't you explain it to me? “**

The context in this classroom scene is that Erin Gruwell tells the students about Holocaust and then the students feels that the teacher is judging them so there is one student that cannot accept it and makes Erin ask the students **“So why don't you explain it to me?.”** This utterance shows that the teacher acts as the participant because at that time the teacher joins in the discussion by asking a question to the student.

Resource

Example:

1.1.3 T: **“Well, for some reasons they have you registered in this class.”**

The context here is about Jamal that asking to himself why he is sitting in the classroom that he taught it was a bad class. From this utterances, it shows that the teacher acts as the resource person because at that time the teacher gives information that the student' needs.

Observer

Example:

4.1.3a T: **“Because I know how much you love to read”.**

This context in this classroom scenes tells Erin Gruwell chooses Gloria to read the first sentence in the board because Gloria reads the newspaper and Erin knows that Gloria likes to read. This utterance show that the teacher acts as the observer because at that time the teacher is observing what the student does.

Positive Attitudes

Cognitive Component

Example:

2.2.3 S: **“Mrs. Gruwell, he just took my damn bag!”**

This context in this classroom scene is there is that another student that takes the bag of another friend so the classroom become noisy. In that utterances, the student has the positive attitude from the cognitive component refers to the student's belief that telling the problem that is faced by the students to the teacher is something good.

Behavioral Component

Example:

2.2.5 S: “Okay” < **Jamal returns her backpack**>.

The context tells about Jamal that take the bag of his friend and at that time, Erin ask Jamal to return the bag. This student’s utterance shows that the student has the positive attitudes from the behavioral component based on the student’s action obeying the teacher’s instructions to return the backpack

Evaluative Component

Example:

2.2.2 S: “Okay”

The context of this scene is when Erin Gruwell explains about Homer The Odyssey that will be discussed in the class and when Erin said that the Homer is not the same like what the students think. The student’s utterance show that the student has the positive attitude in an evaluative component that refers to the student’s feeling by expressing their agreement by saying “Okay” toward the teacher’s explanation.

Negative Attitudes

Cognitive Component

Example:

1.2.4 S: “Yeah, and that’s some bullshit. It’s the dumb class, coz”.

The context in this scene is when Jamal thinks that the class is in a bad condition because of their friends in that class are bad people such as gangster. This example shows that the student has negative attitude toward the condition of the classroom, from a cognitive component that refers to student’s belief that something is not good inside the classroom.

Behavioral Component

Example:

4.1.6 S: “< The students are discussing and laughing because of a picture from Tito >”.

The context in this scene is when Tito draws something to mock Jamal and the other students laugh when they saw that picture. This shows that this is the negative attitude related to behavioral component referring to the action showing “dislike” to the one of the students named Jamal.

Evaluative Component

Example:

4.2.4 S: “Just leave it alone”.

This context tells when Erin Gruwell see the picture that Tito’s draw and Jamal feels ashamed of it. This example shows that the student named Jamal has the negative attitude from the evaluative component that refers to the “dislike” feeling toward Erin’s attitude toward the picture.

The Changes of Students’ Attitude

Table 4.3 the Changes of Students’ Attitude

Scenes	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 7
Attitudes						
+	1	3	2	12	15	4
-	7	4	8	18	0	0

From this table, it can be seen that there is a change in the student’s attitude by looking at the numbers of positive and negative attitude of each chosen classroom scenes. In the first scene, there is one positive attitude and seven negative attitudes. In the second scene, there are three positive and four negative attitudes. In the third scene, there are two positive and eight negative attitudes. In the fourth scene, there are twelve positive and seventeen negative attitudes. In the fifth scene, there are fifteen positive and no negative attitude related to the student’ attitudes. In the seventh scene, there are four positive and no negative attitude.

This result can be seen from the context that happens in that condition and the students’ attitudes when Erin Gruwell as the teacher says something.

CONCLUSION

This part presents the summary of everything that has already been done in this study. The focus of this study was about teacher's roles, students' attitudes, and the changing of the students' attitudes found in the chosen classroom scenes in *Freedom Writers* movie. There were two theories used in this study. The first theory was about teacher's roles. The second theory was about students' attitudes. The data were collected from the chosen classroom scenes of the movie.

From the analysis, it was revealed there were five teacher's roles played by Erin Gruwell in the chosen classroom scenes: controller, organizer, participant, resource, and observer. Those five roles can be found in Erin Gruwell's utterances with the students. Besides, there were two types of students' attitude: positive and negative attitudes from three components: cognitive, behavioral, and evaluative components. Another thing, there was a changing of the student's attitudes in the chosen classroom scenes. Those changes can be seen from the numbers of the positive and negative attitudes in each chosen classroom scene, it can be seen from the context, and also by some events that happen in the chosen classroom scenes. Teacher's roles played by Erin Gruwell in that movie has an effect on the students' attitudes whether the attitudes is positive or negative attitudes.

Lastly, I hope that this study can give inspiration and knowledge to every teacher, and other researchers who wanted to conduct similar study about the importance of the teacher's roles and the students' attitudes in the language classroom in every different context.

In conclusion, this study wants to tell that every teacher's roles have an effect on the students' attitude whether the attitude is positive or negative attitudes. Teachers need to see the roles that the teacher played to make the students have the positive attitudes. Besides, teachers also need to know how to change the negative attitudes into positive attitudes by applying for the appropriate roles in the classroom.

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