



Insights Regarding Students Perception of the Teacher Role and the Process of Teaching - Case Study

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Abstract

In the learner-centered educational process, both the curricula and the evaluation are adapted to answer the young adult learner expectations. We should keep in mind that adults hold a distinct motivation, quite different from the one we observe in children. The present paper presents a case study on 56 foreign medical students learning Romanian during the first year of their medical studies within the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova. We used an anonymous Google form questionnaire sent through e-mail, designed exclusively for this study, comprising 14 questions regarding the skills and way of teaching of their Romanian teacher, focusing on *how the teacher explains the objectives and requirements of the course, whether the teacher explains the subject clearly, if the teacher presents the material in a variety of ways* and so on. The results showed that the majority of students were pleased with their teacher methods and way of teaching, with very few exceptions, namely the reinforcement of rules, whether the teacher makes the classes interesting and relevant or whether high standards and expectations are set for all students.

Keywords: Teacher role, medical students, Romanian language.

Introduction

Never do we know enough in this ever-growing, ever-changing world. As such, we are forced to explore possibilities beyond the classical or obsolete ones in the process of our education. The learner-centered model continues to be adopted as an effective way of answering the questions of this demanding knowledge-based society. As education itself has gone through lots of changes, alongside a society that requires us to be adaptable to new things, we are faced with an ever-challenging heterogeneous type of learner.

In the learner-centered educational process, both the curricula and the evaluation are adapted to answer the young adult learner expectations. We should keep in mind that adults hold a distinct motivation, quite different from the one we observe in children. As such, young adults prefer to incorporate their own experience into the educational process, as well as finding an immediate application for their studied subject. They have distinct modes of cognition and a certain emotional reaction (Popescu, 2010). As a result, when we design or moderate courses for young adults, we should always keep in mind that times have changes and traditional education makes more and more room to online education and non-formal methods and approaches.

Medical universities have also resorted to the e-learning process of educational programs, both during and after the COVID-19 period. Teaching Romanian language to foreign medical students has always been a challenge, especially because they learn this as a third or fourth language. Most medical foreign students are aged between 18 and 20 years old when starting to learn Romanian within the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova. Their mother tongues are Arabic, Greek, Italian, Spanish, English, etc. As such, learning Romanian as a foreign language as young adults raises both challenges and difficulties for the teacher.

The present study was conducted in order to highlight the students perception on the teacher and possible ways of improving the teaching and learning process. It is well-known that we are never aware of the impact the teacher has on the students and the process of learning. Similarly to all medical schools in Romania, the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova has an English section for learning medicine. Foreign students from four continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, North America) are admitted to this university every year. All these foreign students come with zero background knowledge of the Romanian language. The university provides practical courses of Romanian language once a week, with a duration of 50 minutes, for a period of two academic years. It is clear that the level of Romanian that students reach at the end of the second academic year is quite low, namely A2. As a Romanian teacher, I have always tried to find the best and most practical solutions for my students to learn Romanian in an effective way. I focused mainly on communication and Romanian general language during the first academic year and especially on Romanian medical language during the second academic year. I have conducted periodical studies like the present one in order to establish the level of my students experience during my lesson, trying to discover both the strong points and the weak ones regarding my teaching.

Material and Method

The present paper presents a case study on 56 foreign medical students learning Romanian during the first year of their medical studies within the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova. We used an anonymous Google form questionnaire sent through e-mail, designed exclusively for this study, comprising 14 questions regarding the skills and way of teaching of their Romanian teacher, focusing on *how the teacher explains the objectives and requirements of the course, whether the teacher explains the subject clearly, if the teacher presents the material in a variety of ways* and so on. The collected data were analyzed from a descriptive and statistical point of view, according to the criteria included in the questionnaire and answers of the students involved.

Findings

All 56 students included in this study are enrolled in the English program of medical studies within the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova. They come from four continents, namely: Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. The cultural and linguistic variety adds an interesting flavour to the work and involvement of these students within the Romanian language practical course. Quite often, they make correlations to their native language regarding the Romanian general and medical vocabulary and this is quite an asset both for the students and the teacher during the teaching and learning process.

As far as the first question included in the questionnaire, namely “Does your teacher explain the objectives, requirements and grading system of the course?”, 53 students (94.6%) answered with **Yes**, while 2 students (3.6%) with **Sometimes** and 1 student (1.8%) with **No** (Figure 1):

Does your teacher explain the objectives, requirements and grading system of the course?
56 responses

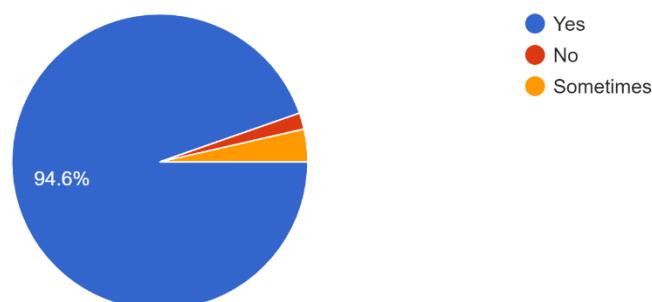


Figure 1: Answers of the students when asked whether the teacher explains the objectives, requirements and grading system of the course.

Regarding the second question of the questionnaire “Does your teacher explain the assignment clearly?”, 55 students (98.2%) answered with **Yes** and only 1 student (1.8%) answered with **No** (Figure 2):

Does your teacher explain assignments clearly?

56 responses

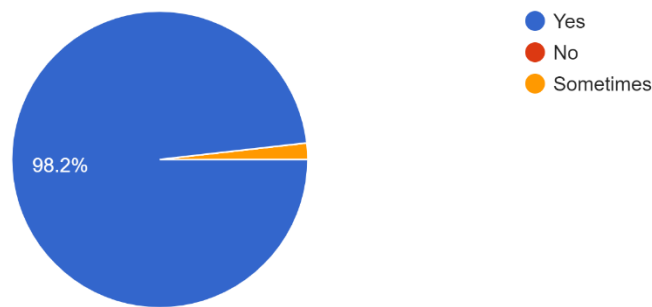


Figure 2: Answers of the students when asked whether the teacher explains assignments clearly.

For the third question included in the questionnaire in this study, namely “*Does your teacher set high standards and expectations for everyone?*”, the answers got a little interesting, raising some questions for the assessed teacher, as 33 students (58.9%) said **Yes**, 12 students (21.4%) said **Sometimes**, while 11 students (19.6%) said **No** (Figure 3):

Does your teacher set high standards and expectations for everyone?

56 responses

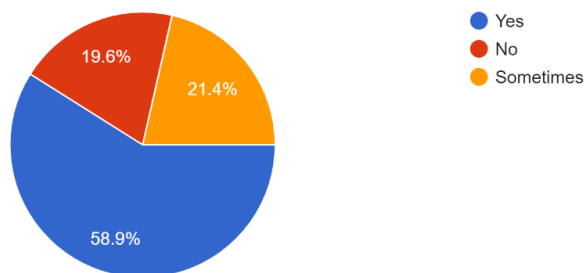


Figure 3: Answers of the students about the standards and expectations being set high for everyone.

The fourth question of the questionnaire distributed to the students asked about whether “*the teacher makes the class interesting and relevant*”, we recorded 51 answers (91.1%) of **Yes**, 3 answers (5.4%) of **Sometimes** and only 2 answers (3.6%) of **No** (Figure 4):

Does she make class interesting and relevant?

56 responses

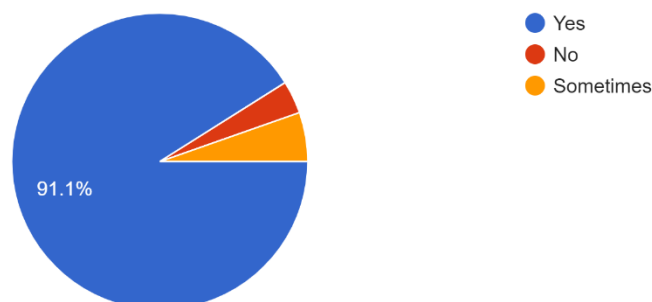


Figure 4: Answers of the students whether the teacher makes the class interesting and relevant.

Regarding “*the use of time effectively*”, 53 students (94.6%) answered with **Yes**, 2 students (3.6%) answered with **Sometimes** and only one student (1.8%) answered with **No** (Figure 5):

Does she use class time effectively?
56 responses

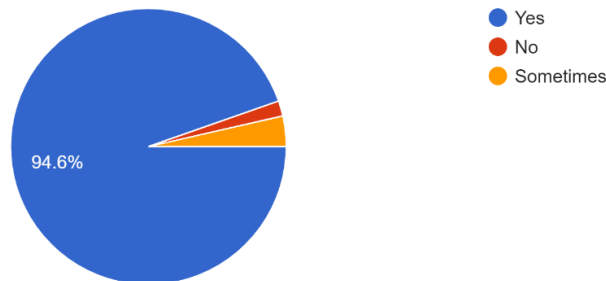


Figure 5: Answers of the students whether the teacher uses the time effectively.

When asked if “*the teacher knows the subject matter*”, there were 53 students (94.6%) who answered **Yes**, 2 students (3.6%) who answered **No** and one student (1.8%) who answered **Sometimes** (Figure 6):

Does she know the subject matter?
56 responses

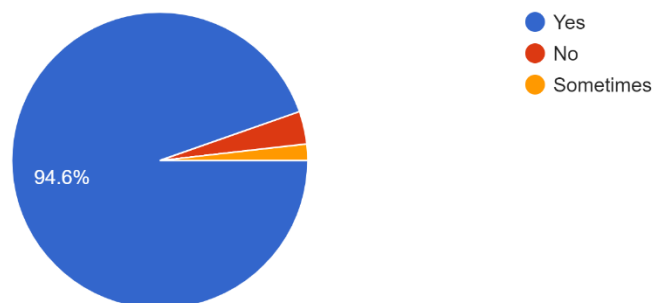


Figure 6: Answers of the students whether the teacher knows the subject matter.

The 7th question in the questionnaire included in the study referred to whether “*the teacher presents the materials in a variety of ways (group activities, written, orally, electronic files, etc)*”. As such, 54 students (96.4%) said **Yes**, 1 student (1.8%) said **Sometimes** and 1 student (1.8%) said **No** (Figure 7):

Does she present the material in a variety of ways (group, written, orally, electronic files, etc.)?
56 responses

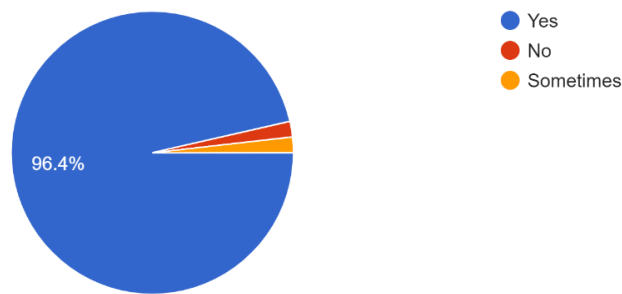


Figure 7: Answers of the students whether the teacher presents the material in a variety of ways (group, written, orally, electronic files, etc).

Regarding the “recognition and acknowledgement of effort”, 55 students (98.2%) answered with **Yes** and only one student (1.8%) answered with **No**. There were no answers with **Sometimes** for this question (Figure 8):

Does she recognize and acknowledge effort?
56 responses

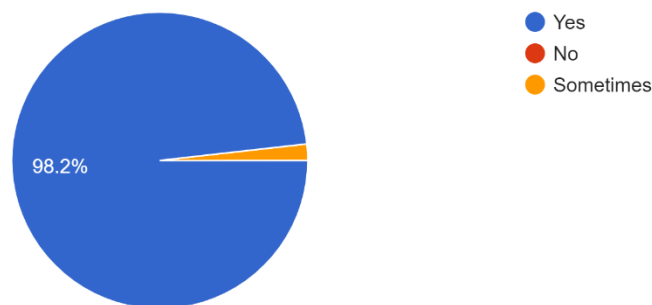


Figure 8: Answers of the students whether the teacher recognizes and acknowledges their effort.

When asked if “the teacher is approachable and willing to help me”, 54 students (96.4%) said **Yes**, one student (1.8 %) said **Sometimes** and one student (1.8%) said **No** (Figure 9):

Is she approachable and willing to help me?
56 responses

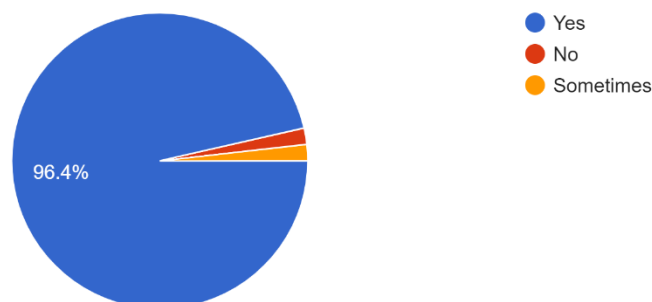


Figure 9: Answers of the students whether the teacher is approachable and willing to help them.

The 10th question in the questionnaire included in the study referred to whether “the teacher encourages and accepts different opinions”. Of the total number of students, 54 (96.4%) answered with **Yes**, one (1.8%) answered with **Sometimes** and one (1.8%) said **No** (Figure 10):

Does she encourage and accept different opinions?

56 responses

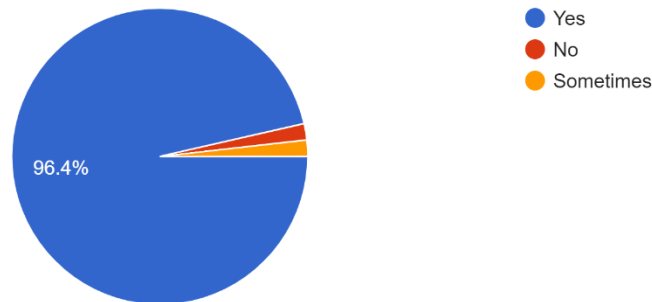


Figure 10: Answers of the students whether the teacher encourages and accepts different opinions.

When asked if the teacher manages a classroom that allows the student to work and learn with few disruptions, 52 students (92.9%) answered **Yes**, 3 students (5.4%) answered **Sometimes** and only one said **No** (1.8%) (Figure 11):

Does she manage a classroom that allows me to work and learn with few disruptions?

56 responses

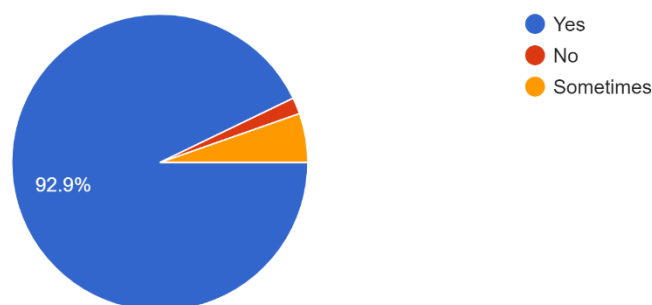


Figure 11: Answers of the students whether the teacher manages a classroom that allows the student to work and learn with few disruptions.

Regarding the fact whether the teacher “enforces rules fairly and consistently”, 52 students (92.9%) said **Yes**, 3 students (5.4%) said **Sometimes** and only one said **No** (1.8%) (Figure 12):

Does she enforce rules fairly and consistently?

56 responses

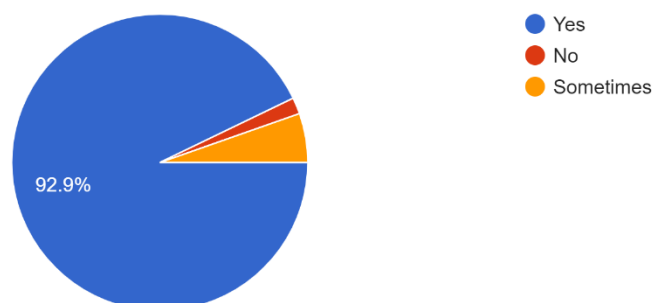


Figure 12: Answers of the students whether the teacher enforces rules fairly and consistently.

The 13th question of the questionnaire was whether the teacher “encourages cooperation and participation”. Of all the students included in the study, namely 56, 53 (94.6%) answered **Yes**, 2 students (3.6%) answered **No** and only one (1.8%) answered **Sometimes** (Figure 13):

Does she encourage cooperation and participation?
56 responses

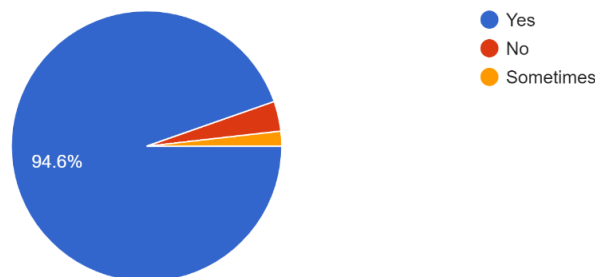


Figure 13: Answers of the students whether the teacher encourages cooperation and participation.

The last question of the questionnaire asked whether the teacher encourages students to think for themselves. The results showed that 52 students (92.9%) said **Yes**, 2 students (3.6%) said **Sometimes** and 2 students (3.6%) said **No** (Figure 14):

Does she encourage me to think for myself?
56 responses

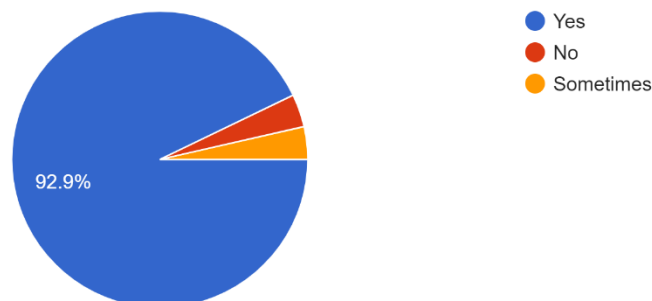


Figure 14: Answers of the students whether the teacher encourages students to think for themselves.

Conclusions

The present study was performed in order to assess the Romanian teacher who conducted this study, in particular, by the foreign students studying medicine within the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova. The results showed that the majority of students were pleased with their teacher methods and way of teaching, with very few exceptions, namely the reinforcement of rules, whether the teacher makes the classes interesting and relevant or whether high standards and expectations are set for all students. Further discussion and studies are required in order to improve and clarify these issues, as my main purpose as a teacher is to make all my students should be challenged by the content and form of the Romania language course, both in terms of the subject matter and as far as their mental and educational comfort is concerned.

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