

**T.C.**  
**AKDENİZ UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION**  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE MOVIES: FOCUS  
ON PEDAGOGY AND TEACHER IDENTITY**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

Banu CİVELEK KAZANCI

Antalya, 2017

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Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Arda ARIKAN

Antalya, 2017

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EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

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## ÖZET

### FİLMLERDE İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENİ: PEDAGOJİ VE ÖĞRETMEN KİMLİĞİ ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Civelek Kazancı, Banu

İngilizce Öğretmenliği Anabilim Dalı

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Arda Arıkan

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Öğretmenler çeşitli medya araçlarında genellikle belirgin karakterler olarak sunulurlar. Özellikle görsel medya, örneğin filmler ve televizyon dizileri, kurgu veya gerçek hikâyelerde, İngilizce öğretmenlerini mesleki ve kişisel hayatlarına odaklanarak tasvir eder. Medyanın insanlar üzerinde her şeyin gösterildiği gibi olduğunu kabul ettirme ve buna inandırma etkisi olması sebebiyle, öğretmen betimlemeleri insanların aklındaki öğretmen imgesine dönüşebilir. Bu betimlemeler toplumun inançlarını şekillendirebilir ve özellikle insanlar sürekli olarak benzer tasvirlerle maruz kaldığında bu onları İngilizce öğretmenleri hakkında farkında olmadan algılar oluşturmaya iter. Bu nedenle de İngilizce öğretmenlerinin medyada nasıl yansıtıldıkları büyük önem kazanır. Bu çalışma İngilizce öğretmenlerinin popüler filmlerde nasıl yansıtıldığını araştırmaktadır. Çalışma İngilizce öğretmenlerine ve bunların betimlemelerinin pedagoji ve öğretmen kimliğinin pek çok yönüne nasıl bağlanabileceğine odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma İngiliz dili öğretimi alanına medyada İngiliz dili öğretmenlerinin toplumdaki eğitimci bireyler olarak nasıl temsil edildiği ve bu temsillerin öğretmen eğitiminde nasıl etkili olabileceği konusunda veri sağlamaktadır. Analizler sonucunda filmlerdeki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin bazı ortak özelliklere sahip oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır. Bilhassa sınıf yönetimi, pedagoji ve öğretmenlerin öğrenciler, ebeveynler ve okul yöneticileriyle olan ilişkilerinde bu ortak özelliklerden söz etmek mümkündür. İncelenen filmlerde öğretmenler benzer kişisel özellikler ve tutumlar ile tasvir edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce Öğretmenliği, Öğretmen Kimliği, Pedagoji

## **ABSTRACT**

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE MOVIES: FOCUS ON PEDAGOGY AND TEACHER IDENTITY**

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Ph.D., Foreign Language Teaching Department

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Teachers are often presented in the media as vivid characters, particularly in visual media such as cinema and television series, where fictional or nonfictional stories frequently portray teachers by focusing on both their personal and their professional lives. Because all forms of media have a significant impact on the ways that people believe and accept things they see, the manner in which teachers are represented may in turn become the image that people hold in their minds. When people are regularly exposed to similar representations, this may lead them to unconsciously create fixed perceptions of English teachers. In this sense, media depictions may form the beliefs of society; and thus, the ways that English teachers are portrayed in the media becomes extremely important. Accordingly, this study examines the representations of English language teachers in popular films. The focus of the study is on English language teachers and how their depictions relate to the many facets of pedagogy and teacher identity. As such, the study provides data to the field of English language teaching regarding how the media depicts English language teachers as educational beings in society and how these depictions may impact the teacher education process. Analysis of the data revealed that English language teachers in the movies possess certain common personality traits and attitudes, which may be discussed in terms of classroom management, pedagogy, and their relationships with students, parents, and principals.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Teacher Identity, Pedagogy

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## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Introduction**

Teachers are often presented in the media as vivid characters, particularly in visual media such as cinema and television series, where fictional or nonfictional stories frequently portray teachers by focusing on both their personal and their professional lives. Because all forms of media have a significant impact on the ways that people believe and accept things they see, the manner in which teachers are represented may in turn become the image that people hold in their minds.

With these issues in mind, the aim of this study is to find out how teachers are represented in popular films. The focus of the study is on English teachers and how their representation in films relates to the many facets of pedagogy and teacher identity, thus providing data to the field of English language teaching with respect to (1) the way the media depicts English language teachers as educational beings in society; and (2) how these depictions may impact the teacher education process. Accordingly, the images of English teachers in the films and the perceptions of the media about them will be analyzed.

#### **1.1.1. Teachers' Roles**

Teaching has always been one of the most popular professions in the world. However, when it comes to explaining exactly what it entails, differing definitions have been offered. As Kansanen (1999) points out, it is a problematic issue to form an exact description of teaching, as it includes a variety of structures and dimensions. Thus, the definitions and explanations of the term range from “transmitting

information” from teacher to learner to “guiding and supporting the learners” throughout the learning process (Vermont & Verloop, 1999). In its simplest sense, teaching can be viewed as a means of moving certain types of information from an initial agent to a learner (Biggs, 1996). However, more sophisticated points of view define teaching as an act of helping learners to discover knowledge themselves, rather than directly serving them what they need (Jones, 2007). Over time, the meaning of teaching has evolved in line with changes in the expectations of the individuals involved in schooling, as the definition of teaching and of the teacher’s role are highly related to both learners and educators themselves, since teaching and learning are terms that have been intertwined (Brown, 2000).

Accordingly, in order to meet the needs of the learners, as well as to cater for the needs of society, teaching has repeatedly been reshaped throughout history. As Arkan (2010) states, "it can be expected that just as the roles associated with teachers evolve in time under the influence of all social, political, geographical, technological, cultural, and educational changes in the world, qualities attached to effective teachers will inevitably evolve" (p. 210). Namely, teachers have adopted different roles in line with contemporary expectations. In this sense, Harmer (1999) provides examples of teachers' descriptions of their profession as a starting point in listing the number of different roles teachers have in their classrooms, articulating that these differences derive from the numerous tasks inherent in teaching. Farrell (2011) explains the constant changes in the explanation of the role of a teacher "as related to the different roles they enact and the different professional activities that they participate in" (p. 12). Each classroom environment and each different group of learners create a new and unique stage, thus requiring the teacher to adopt an altered

role. As such, teachers must carry within themselves various identities (such as that of mother or father, judge, guide, and so on) and activities (methods, tasks, etc.) depending on the needs of the day. Therefore, they must be ready not only to sense and overcome the challenges they face, but also to react instantly in response to the necessities of their situation (Alsup, 2006).

In his overview of roles of the teacher, Harmer (1999) outlines five primary definitions. Stating the importance of teachers as facilitators of learning, he explains the major roles teachers might adopt to assist learning in the classroom. The first of these is that of the controller, wherein the teacher becomes the leader in the classroom and instructs learners on what to do. This is not an ideal role for a teacher, as it reduces the opportunities for learners to take the initiative for their own learning. However, it can still be useful at certain stages, when learners feel the need for authority. The second role of a teacher defined by Harmer is that of a prompter, in which the teacher pushes learners to continue when they are having difficulties in taking the next step. This role is characterized by the teacher making suggestions and keeping a balance between telling learners what to do directly and saying almost nothing. Thirdly, the teacher may be a participant. As the name suggests, this occurs when the teacher takes part in activities alongside learners; for instance, acting as a group member in a discussion activity. In this role, the teacher has the opportunity to view activities from the other side of the classroom – from the perspective of the students. The fourth role of a teacher, according to Harmer, is that of a resource; in other words, acting as a source of information or guiding learners to a source where they can find information they need. This approach encourages learners to produce more, as they feel confident that they will have help when needed. The final role of

the teacher is that of the tutor, one who assists learners individually, in pairs or in groups, by providing guidance on how to move forward with an activity on which they are working.

Aside from these definitions of the main roles of a teacher, other roles have been established according to the changing styles of and approaches to teaching. Grasha (1994), for instance, matches various teaching styles with the corresponding teacher roles. Namely, if a teacher embraces the role of an expert, his or her learners will be well-equipped with all the information necessary on a topic; whereas if a teacher chooses to be a formal authority, s/he will organize the learning space. Moreover, if the style of a teacher is a personal model, s/he will serve as a role model for the learners to take as an example, while in the case of a teacher who chooses the style of a delegator, the classroom will be highly autonomous. Finally, the teacher who acts as a facilitator takes on a guiding role, as seen in student-centered classes.

The role of the teacher has been further influenced by the integration of technology, as explained by McGhee and Kozma (2001). In their view, the first new role embodied by teachers in recent years is that of instructional designer, with teachers working to design new activities using technologies according to the general or individual needs of their learners. This role also supports the autonomy of learners, since most technology-based activities offer of the opportunity for online interaction. Another recently developed teacher role is that of a trainer, in which the teacher trains learners to use technology in their own studies. As such, both teachers and learners are able to develop their technology-related skills. Additionally, teachers may become collaborators with colleagues, as they work together in designing teaching activities and share materials; and beyond collaborating amongst

themselves, teachers may take on the role of team coordinators through organizing and managing the work of pairs or groups of learners. Moreover, it has become common lately for teachers to continuously observe how learners perform and to provide feedback in order to improve their learning; their role in this respect is that of monitoring and assessment specialist. Finally, another newly defined role, which is almost an exact match to the basic role of a facilitator, is the enabling advisor, wherein teachers respond to students' individual needs, suggest resources, and find ways to solve problems in their personal development as learners.

### **1.1.2. English Language Teachers' Roles**

One of the areas in education that distinctly shapes the roles of the teacher and assigns different meanings to teaching is the field of language education. Although research on language teaching has now achieved significant status, it was not until the eighteenth century that the teaching of foreign languages began to gain prominence. As interest in language teaching has grown over the years, numerous methods and techniques have emerged, transforming the field considerably in all respects (Richards, 2006).

Among all the languages taught, the primary focus in educational research has been on English language teaching, possibly as a result of the growing importance of English throughout the world. English is used as a tool for communication in many different parts of life and has dominated not only serious topics such as politics and trade, but also topics relating to daily life; and more importantly, it has become the foremost language of the Internet. That is to say, it is always possible to find online resources in English on a wide range of subjects, from how to play a game to how to carry out scientific experiments. Moreover, world leaders, businesspeople, and

scientists use English to carry out their work. As such, Harmer (1999) names English as an all-embracing world language and a *lingua franca*, the common language used by individuals from diverse countries, cultures, and backgrounds. Accordingly, English is a useful tool that has important benefits for people from all parts of the world and of all age groups.

Because of its popularity and practicality of English, more and more people have become motivated to study English; thus, the teaching of English for various purposes has become a major concern in field of language teaching area and plays a leading role in many studies. Such studies have affected how teachers, as well as researchers, perceive the teaching of foreign languages, and as a result, widespread changes have occurred in English language teaching methodologies and the roles of language teachers (Richards, 1984).

Originally, language teaching was conducted mainly as a transfer of sets of rules and vocabulary from teachers to learners, and for many years, language teachers were the focus in the classroom, thereby ignoring the individualities of the learners. As such, the only individual in the classroom was the teacher, who controlled and managed all of the learning activities that took place as they directly transmitted what they knew to their learners. In such an endeavour, Brown (2000) explains that language was not viewed as an oral tool for communication; rather, it was seen as a tool for scholars. With this in mind, more importance was given to reading and writing in a foreign language than to speaking. Under these conditions, teachers had to be perfect models for their learners; all teachers were expected to be accurate users of English, and learners were supposed to copy them. However, these designated roles ignored the potential differences in the classroom, as diverse learning types were not considered.

Under these circumstances, it was also impossible for teachers to possess different identities in the classroom, as they were expected to be perfect examples (Canale & Swain, 1980; Liu & Shi, 2007; Swaffar, Arens, & Morgan, 1982; Rodgers, 2001).

As times changed, priorities in language teaching were modified. In this respect, educators began to recognize differences among learners, and their identities became as important as the teachers'. The focus of the language classroom turned from teacher to student; and while the role of the teacher in the process of teaching and learning has never lost its significance, learners were placed in the center of the process. Thus, teachers were given new roles in order to adjust their classrooms to these changes, becoming more like guides who allow learners to discover knowledge themselves. This new perspective is almost opposite the view held in the past, which limited the aim of teaching to simply conveying a message (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Savignon, 1991). Given this new paradigm, teachers are leaving behind their roles as authority figures who are in complete control, and they are moving forward to sharing the task of learning with their students by supporting them in the process (Richards, 2006).

Aside from the ways that the teaching and learning process are conceptualized, innovations in daily life have also affected the field of teaching (Drame, 2016). Thanks to improvements in technology and communication, classrooms have become richer in terms of the instructional materials used. As Caner (2010) articulates, “advancements in technology and developments in teaching and learning methodologies have presented new circumstances for more efficient and effective implementation of learning programs” (p. 78). With this in mind, teachers are

expected to prepare richer and more innovative and interesting activities for their learners.

In line with the changes applied to teachers' roles in general, there have also been shifts in the specific roles of a language teacher, as the methods and techniques in the field of foreign language teaching have also undergone development. Research in the field indicates the various roles attached to language teachers in terms of numerous teaching methods. For instance, in the Grammar-Translation Method, the teacher is the main figure of authority in the classroom and is responsible for the transfer of information to students; whereas in the Direct Method, the teacher occasionally shares this responsibility with students, while still managing the activities overall. Similarly, the Audio-Lingual Method teacher is a leader and role model for learners, whereas the Silent Way teacher serves as a supporter and guide for the learners and provides help only when needed. On the other hand, with respect to Desuggestopedia, the teacher is the focus of respect for the learners, and they trust him/her as the exclusive source of information. According to the Community Language Learning approach, moreover, the teacher is responsible for organizing the learning context in order to facilitate learner participation and reduce anxiety, helping them to take the necessary steps to master the language. Likewise, in Total Physical Response, the teacher is a director of the learning activities and becomes a model for learners while promoting an enjoyable classroom experience. Finally, the Communicative Language Teaching approach views the teacher as a facilitator who provides assistance according to learners' demands (Brown, 2000; Celce-Murcia, 1991; Harmer, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Rodgers, 2001).

### **1.1.3. Teachers' Identities**

In addition to the roles that are assigned to teachers for use in the classroom as they carry out their lessons, teachers typically develop professional identities in order to come to terms with the images of a teacher that both they and others hold in their minds (Clarke, 2008). There is a slight distinction between the role and the identity of a teacher, yet teachers must make conscious decisions about which to select on both sides. In this sense, the *role* of the teacher is highly related to his or her in-class performance, whereas *identity* is more personal and concerns the feelings of individual teachers and their assumptions about teaching (Mayer, 1999). Both the identity and the role a teacher prefers to embrace may vary from one classroom to another. As Prabhu (1987) explains, it is not likely that teachers will maintain the same self in every classroom, nor is it possible to adhere to a specific role or roles as prescribed by the favoured teaching method. Not only may external factors such as other parties impact this process; the ongoing and active interactions in the classroom, which are formed by the sentiments of both teachers and learners, also play a part. It is these interactions, which differ from one group of learners to another, that may drive the teacher to change. Thus, Prabhu (1987) asserts that the teacher tends to adjust the personal self in each classroom, creating a balance between what is formally defined and perceptibly required. This identity formation of the teacher may also be affected by past experiences throughout their own educational lives, namely, through their observations of teachers as students and through the knowledge acquired during teacher training. With all of these factors having a strong influence, the teacher develops competence through the course of his or her teaching (Pappa, Moate, Ruohotie-Lyhty, & Eteläpelto, 2017). Therefore, it

may be said that teachers establish and alter their own identities depending on the circumstances; and that it may even be possible for a teacher to possess a variety of identities through involvement in numerous contexts and situations.

In expanding on the meaning of identity, Han (2017) contends that it "can be understood as a set of meaning systems which controls a person's cognition, emotion, and action in the interaction with the world" (p. 550). There are different types of identities, namely, personal, social, national, cultural and professional. A typical person embodies and evolves almost all kinds in time as a part of his or her personal development (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). While a teacher's identity may be thought of as professional, none of these types of identities can be explained without referring to the others. Thus, the other types of identities affect the development of teachers' identities, as well (Vesanto, 2011). Additional factors may also influence teachers in terms of developing their identities, as this is an individual process wherein not only the environment, but also the personal views of the teacher, has an influence on identity formation. Kreber (2010) articulates that:

Identity can refer, for example, to an individual's identification with certain groups, or with aspects of his or her being that have been recognised by others; but one might also think of identity as an image we construct of ourselves, from within ourselves, a view which links identity to humanist notions of individuation, self-actualisation and gaining greater self-awareness of who we are (p. 171).

In this sense, teachers' own ideas about themselves and their teaching directly help their creation of identity. New teachers, in particular, tend to move forward quickly when they create a bridge between the images they have in their minds of the teacher they are at present and the teacher they desire to become in the future. However, the identity they have shaped is not always the one they have envisioned beforehand, due

to the effects of the environment and the various situations they face during the process. Moreover, since each environment and each contact with individuals is unique, identity may go through a constant change to adapt to each context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Because of its fluid nature, Morgan (2004) emphasizes that the concept of identity has recently been accepted "not as a fixed and coherent set of traits, but as something complex, often contradictory, and subject to change across time and place"(p. 172). Thus, teachers alter their identities deliberately or unintentionally over time. When a new teacher steps into the classroom for his or her first lesson, s/he starts to develop an identity (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). This development does not have a final destination; as soon as teachers reach a target identity, there is always a new one. As Çelik, Arıkan, and Caner (2013) point out:

Even expert teachers start out as novices, gradually changing their teaching styles to fit their learners' needs and expectations. In this sense, it may be claimed that an effective teacher is always in the process of professional growth; and thus, teacher effectiveness should be perceived as a fluid rather than a fixed phenomenon (p. 295).

In this sense, the professional identities of teachers continue to evolve, regardless of their years of experience.

This process of identity creation depends on the teacher's unique circumstances, including the needs and demands of the learners, as well as the learning environment and the influence of other stakeholders. As such, each teacher's emerging identity is highly individualized (Rex & Nelson, 2004). Therefore, it may be accepted that it is not possible to put a limit on the identity construction of a teacher. For the same reason, it is difficult to offer an exact definition of identity.

While there are certain characteristics around which the definition may be framed, the shaping of identity is affected by so many factors that Ajayi (2011) posits that the various definitions of identity must all be accepted as correct (Ajayi, 2011). Namely, as all identities are derived from the individual teacher's personality and experiences, these definitions cannot be questioned.

It is also possible for each teacher to embody different identities within themselves. That is, a teacher's identity can differ depending on the context and the people around him/her. Hallman (2007) draws attention to the importance of the role of discourse in a new teacher's identity construction, observing this as a reason for teachers' attempts to adopt different types of identities in order to be accepted as a real teacher. In this respect, the same teacher may create an image in the minds of parents and principals that is different than the one adopted in front of learners. Additionally, the same teacher may adopt different identities during interactions with individual students versus larger group of learners. These varying personas might result from the gap between the teachers' notions of the ideal identity and those that they feel obliged to practise. Moreover, teachers' experiences "in relation to social discourses, policies, students and parents, their colleagues and their practices forms a meaningful signifier that embodies their professional identity" (Han, 2017, p. 551).

Burke (1991) asserts that identity is a whole of the meanings one assigns for himself or herself. He further argues that identity:

has four components: a standard or setting (the set of self-meanings); an input from the environment or social situation (including one's reflected appraisals, i.e., perceptions of self-relevant meanings); a process that compares the input with the standard (a comparator); and an output to the environment (meaningful behavior) that is a result of the comparison. The system works by modifying output (behavior) to the social situation

in attempts to change the input (reflected appraisals) to match the internal standard. In this sense, the identity control system can be thought of as having a goal - matching the environmental inputs to internal standards (p. 837).

This is the point at which the effect of other people (in other words, society) on teacher identity begins to emerge. Throughout the years, as the roles and identities of teachers have evolved in theory and practice, the ways that society views teachers have also changed. Thus, in addition to the roles and identities ascribed by researchers, teachers have attempted to comply with societal expectations, as well. Accordingly, the frameworks for the performances and choices of teachers in their classrooms have sometimes been outlined by the norms and descriptions of cultures in terms of how society perceives their roles (Alsup, 2006). In this respect, Morgan (2004) notes that a teacher's identity may begin its development during his or her own school years in order to comply with social norms.

As with other aspects of being a teacher, social standards and views of teaching and teachers have changed over time, with the image and characteristics of an ideal teacher undergoing significant transformation. In the past, parents and administrators particularly wanted teachers to set an example of perfection. Teachers were expected to live a simple, peaceful life, obeying the instructions that were defined by the norms of society concerning their living standards, their habits, and their duties both in and out of school. However, among these rigid expectations of the ideal teacher, nothing referred to the students themselves. It was far later that the idea came about that teachers were supposed to achieve better outcomes with their students (Cochran-Smith, 2005). New decades brought about changes and widened people's horizons; Being more as society became more flexible and less biased, teachers were allowed to be less strict. As such, classrooms became more motivational and fun for students.

Parents no longer expected teachers to simply present information. Rather, they wanted their children to find answers for themselves; therefore, they began to prefer teachers to help students develop the required skills. In recent times, because society is under a worldwide evolution centering on information, teaching is being reshaped accordingly, and the teaching of current skills that are needed to survive in modern society has become the focus of education (Beck, 2008).

With these issues in mind, it can be argued that teaching should be accepted as closely linked to the community, as it is constantly being redesigned through the advancements of society and variations in people's outlooks. Not only students, but also the parties involved in the educational process, expect teachers to be aware of the innovations and renew themselves and their teaching. This brings an ongoing alteration to the teaching profession, and the more complex these expectations become, the more important teachers and teaching become (Kaşkaya, Akar, Sağırılı, & Ünlü, 2011).

Taking these issues into consideration, it may be difficult to deny the influence of society on teaching and on teachers' roles and identities. As the teaching profession includes interaction with both learners and other stakeholders, it is not possible for teachers to ignore their expectations and demands. Thus, whether only to improve themselves professionally, independent from the views of others; or to keep up with advances in society and to satisfy the demands of others, teachers may feel obliged to embrace change as they develop themselves professionally. That is to say, all of the opinions and images relating their profession play a role in teachers' professional development, whether unintentionally or on purpose. Teachers cannot remain blind

to others' assumptions about their roles and identities. They make use of these views, regardless of being positive or negative, as guidance through their identity formation.

#### **1.1.4. The Media**

Regarding the effects of society on teaching, it is impossible not to mention the media, due to its substantial impact on the public and its role as one of the most commonly used communication tools. The media – encompassing printed and broadcasted materials, namely newspapers, television programmes, and films – is one of the most efficient means of communication, and accordingly, it has become one of the most influential tools for impacting society and people's views.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with advances in information technology, the media has gained greater importance with the advances in the information technology. Most individuals now have instant access to any information they need, and news can be transmitted worldwide nearly instantaneously. This allows people to have an idea about events happening all around the world; by simply turning on the television or the radio, it is like they are travelling around and visiting different countries or cities without ever leaving their homes.

In addition to the role of the media in disseminating information, it is a tool for entertainment, occupying the largest share of the free time and entertainment activities in people's lives. Individuals spend hours daily watching programmes on television, listening to the radio, reading magazines and watching films about topics that interest them.

Because people are so frequently exposed to different forms of media on a regular basis, either willingly or unwillingly, it can be understood to have control over the

daily lives of individuals around the world (Adorno, 1957). With this in mind, Kellner (2003) notes that the media shapes the views and identities of people, as well as serving leisure purposes. He further argues that:

Media culture helps shape the prevalent view of the world and deepest values: it defines what is considered good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. Media stories and images provide the symbols, myths, and resources which help constitute a common culture for the majority of individuals in many parts of the world today (p. 1).

Being so widely used and available to so many people, the media has various functions. Firstly, it adapts to current situations, and it is reformed depending on the expectations of the audience. As Rabison (2008) explains, "popular media is inextricably linked to popular ideas"(p. 4). The media shows people what they need or what they want to see in order to please them and keep their interest alive. Thus, the connection between society and the media is undeniable.

This ongoing relationship is not one-sided, as the media influences people as much as it is affected by them. People tend to believe what is presented to them through the media, since it is right in the heart of their lives, and representations in the media eventually become the images accepted by society. Take films as an example: with all the money spent on casting and production, they become powerful enough to make us believe that their definitions and representations are real (Boragina, 2004). In the early years of movies, the aim of filmmakers was simply to amuse ordinary people; however, they began to make people believe what is shown on the screen. This continued with their impact on the way people think, as films, accompanied with better audio and visual effects, made their way out of cinemas into people's homes (Nederhouser, 2000).

In particular, the media's representations of individuals may form identities in people's minds that are difficult to change. Gregory (2007) explains the reason for these assumptions as follows:

People fail to realize that the frame of mind they put themselves in when they pursue entertainments is a frame of mind in which they are least likely to power up their critical resistance, and is therefore the very frame of mind in which they are most susceptible to being influenced without noticing it (p. 8).

Therefore, besides its entertainment purpose and its function in spreading information to the masses of people, another significant role of the media is that, consciously or unconsciously, it forms images in people's minds. Nederhouser (2000) mentions this point in terms of films, in particular, noting that "although movies originated as an entertainment medium, they have since become a vehicle for cultural change" (p. 4).

One example of this creation of occurs when the media creates assumptions about certain characters in society. For instance, stereotypical characters in films, representing people from certain professions gradually shape a perception in the minds of people. Viewing the same character traits repetitively, people tend to believe that all the members of that profession exhibit the same features. As such, these become traits that society attributes to real-life individuals. Gregory (2007) cautions that, "since these fictional narratives nearly always deal in recycled stereotypes," the effect they have on people "is to mislead, confuse, and impoverish their evaluations" (p. 7).

Regardless of this effect, many people from various professions have been depicted in films or other forms of media. It is especially common to portray characters from professions which have the greatest number of members, as they allow viewers to

identify the character on screen with someone they know or someone they may encounter in real life. This makes it easy to personify the character in the minds of an audience, as well as to cause them to form an image and to shape the way people think. Thus, portrayals of such people in the media have also led to disputes among various audiences. In this sense, reactions from people in a given profession may be especially harsh, depending on the traits attributed to the character; namely, seeing a character portrayed with negative traits might result in frustration among real people who have the same professional status.

Over time, the teaching profession has been one of the most popular options for film producers. Various school environments, with different groups of teachers, engaged in numerous types of relationships and interactions with their students, have frequently been depicted on screen (Boragina, 2004). Because it has been repeatedly portrayed in the media, with different traits each time, the teacher image has frequently become a center of attention, relying on the belief that viewers tend to accept what they see as the truth. As Swetnam (1992) states, "The portrayal of teachers in fictional television programs and films influences the public's perception and expectations of individuals in our profession" (p. 30) which draws attention to the significance of fictitious characters and identities of teachers displayed on the screen. Boragina (2004) supports this idea, explaining that "these films portray a certain type of teacher, which may lead the viewer to create in their minds the idea that all teachers are like this, or should be like this" (p. 3).

For instance, if teachers are shown with positive characteristics in films, people choose to believe that real-life teachers are also pleasant individuals. However, the

opposite is also true; and therefore, it can also be said that film characters may shape not only positive, but also negative attitudes toward teachers.

## **1.2. The Statement of the Problem**

The influence of the media on public perception is undeniable; what an audience sees creates an image in their minds, which they may then choose to firmly believe. Therefore, what is served in the media has crucial importance, as it draws the framework for society and culture, and public perceptions created by representations in the media tend to become the reality that people accept. As people experience the world through the screen, the media becomes the path to reality. Hence, how images are represented in the media becomes extremely important at this point, because sooner or later, they become the perceptions of the public.

This relationship between media representations and public perceptions has attracted interest in the field of education. As Vandermeersche, Soetaert, and Rutten (2013) explain, the images represented in the media gain crucial importance for schooling as “popular fiction has become the dominant culture for the students we teach, and teachers also have often been inspired by popular films and television series as sources for their identities and pedagogies” (p. 59). Therefore, depending on the significance of the representative images in the media, the purpose of the present study is to find out how English teachers are depicted in movies.

## **1.3. Aim of the Study**

Within the norms of the twenty-first century, under the influence of rapid technological developments, the power of the media cannot be underestimated. The

enormous impact that the media has on every aspect of life causes it to have control in the evolution of society and culture. As Çubukçu (2014) notes, “far from an objective lens of events, the media are platforms wherein our social reality is not only reflected but to some extent negotiated and developed. One of the most influential media forms is movie” (p. 22). Indeed, whatever people are exposed to through the media is likely to have an effect on their perceptions, and what they repetitively view via the media becomes what they believe. In this sense, the ways that English teachers are portrayed in the media becomes extremely important, especially on condition that people are constantly exposed to similar representations, leading audiences to unconsciously develop fixed perceptions regarding English teachers.

With this in mind, the present study aims to determine the general qualities of the representations of English teachers in the media through film. Although there are a number of studies in the available literature that examine films depicting English teachers, most of these focus on the opinions of teachers or student teachers regarding those movies. Few studies have analyzed the details of the character traits and image representations of English teachers in the films. Thus, the present study examines English teachers as portrayed in the movies, focusing on pedagogy and teacher identity in order to identify common themes that may be useful in teacher education and training activities.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The main aim guiding this study is to determine how English teachers are portrayed in films. In the light of this central purpose, the following research questions are the focus of the investigation:

- 1) What are the general qualities of English teachers in American and British films?
- 2) Is it possible to identify some common themes that can be useful in teacher education and training activities?

#### **1.5. Definition of Terms**

For this study, an English teacher or an English language teacher is defined as an adult who is in charge of teaching any aspect of English to a group of learners in any school environment. The titles of teachers or the type and/or level of schools in which they teach were not considered. In other words, in one movie, the teacher may work in an elementary school, and in another, as a professor at a university, as long as they provide English instruction to their learners. In addition, the terms *student* and *learner* are used in the study to describe a person at any age attending courses for educational purposes at any institution, regardless of level.

A movie in this study refers to a feature-length film which has been available in cinemas, on television or DVD. The types of movies were not considered as an influential factor in the study. The movies were of different genres; namely, drama, comedy, and romance. Movie types not examined in the study were excluded on account of availability only. The terms movie and film are used interchangeably throughout the study.

## **1.6. Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study is the number of films examined. Because of limited availability in Turkey, eight movies were used in the study. A study with a wider variety of films could provide more generalizable results.

Another limitation concerns the school subject that the characters in the movies are responsible for teaching. The teachers in the films in this study are English language teachers. More applicable results could be provided with characters who are teachers of English as a foreign or second language. However, very few films involving such characters have been produced for release, and these are not easily available for viewing in Turkey.

Additionally, the present study is limited to twenty-first century films. Examining films released over a longer period might also offer more generalizable results.

## **1.7. Importance of the Study**

The present study is the first to analyze the qualities of English language teachers in films and also to suggest implementations for teacher education. The studies currently available in the literature focus either on the general qualities of teachers and shared themes in the films, or on the effective use of such teacher-centered films in the teacher training process. Films focusing on shared features typically examine either school principals or teachers of all school subjects when examining personality traits. Although there are studies in the field specifically regarding English language teachers in movies, these mainly intend to determine the influence of these characters on how English teachers or student teachers view their profession. Other studies centering on English teacher characters have made use of earlier films, and most of

them have presented their results with a focus on gender, ethnicity or background differences. However, this study intends to reveal the general qualities of the representations of English language teachers in twenty-first-century movies by examining pedagogy and teacher identity. Thus, the present study is the first in the field of language teaching to analyze the qualities of English language teachers in the films and also to suggest implementations for teacher education. The study may provide the field of English language teaching with data concerning how the media portrays English teachers, and therefore, how people not involved in the profession may view them. In addition, the themes that are found to be common in these films might be useful in teacher education and training activities.

## **CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, recent studies are reviewed in light of two main themes. First, studies that focus on shared teachers' images in the films are examined. Secondly, the studies associated with the use of films in education are analyzed in detail.

### **2.2. Teachers' Images in Films**

Teachers have been frequently portrayed in the media, and movies with school settings have become especially popular worldwide. Such films depict teachers of various academic subjects as either leading or supporting characters. Those with teachers as leading characters mostly center on their professional identities while depicting the difficulties they must overcome. The characters often have problems with their students or the school administration; in many cases, they have to deal with students who suffer from social issues such as abuse or discrimination.

On the other hand, teachers as supporting characters in films are often seen as helping a student overcome his or her problems. These problems are mostly with parents, and the teacher accordingly becomes the negotiator between the student and the parent. Research suggests that regardless of being the leading or supporting character in the movies, teachers all possess some common personality traits.

In this sense, Ehlers (1992) points out that the common characteristics exhibited by teachers in many films are directly related to public perceptions of schooling. She argues that these traits appear depending on the shared expectations of the public, in that:

The language of films has often been the language of stereotypes. The repeated use of physical characteristics or personality traits provides visual and narrative clues to the audience and simplifies the process of character development. The recognition of those clues, and, hence, the success of the characterization, depend on shared cultural values and experiences (pg. 117).

It can be assumed that there are certain common characteristics in teacher characters depicted in films. According to Grobman (2002), teachers are frequently portrayed as opposed to depending on any authority. They prefer to do things in their own way and reject social and educational norms. Additionally, they are eager to supply everything their learners need. Specifically, they provide students with perspective, self-confidence, and hope, as well as knowledge. These teachers are determined and dedicated, and nothing can deter them from doing what they believe is the right thing for their students.

Dalton (2004), analyzing films from numerous genres over a sixty-year period that include teachers as main characters regardless of their subject area, points out similar features that teachers have in common. He argues that teachers are portrayed as devotedly struggling to fulfill students' demands. These teachers all work to adjust the curriculum according to students' needs and develop rather personal relationships with their learners, while also learning from them. In addition, they frequently have arguments with administrators, and, finally, they are different from all the other teaching staff.

As such, in an analysis of fifty-seven high school films, Bulman (2002) claims that the teachers portrayed in movies are represented as heroic characters. Although the schools themselves and the other staff members are depicted with many faults, the teachers in these films are always saviors who come from a different environment.

They never feel any need for support from school administration, colleagues or parents; and with their idealistic manners and love for the students, these teachers manage to achieve success and save students from many situations.

Examining the teachers in popular films Harris (2010) limits the number of stereotypes to two: namely, dead poets and wonder boys. The former type is enthusiastic and inspiring, trying to teach students about life; while the latter is exhausted and sentimental about his or her own problems. Dead poets are seen as saving their students; however, wonder boys need to be saved. Nederhouser (2000) expands on the notion of the stereotypical teacher in an analysis of a sum of teacher movies over an extended period. He points out that especially in the last decades, teachers in the films are portrayed with stereotypical personalities, as unique and exceptional, as well as isolated from colleagues and society, since they do not conform to the common standards regarding teaching and teachers.

These images of these teachers in the movies may be accepted as typical, since films tend to reflect teachers according to certain themes. These images are usually positive, although some films portray teachers with negative qualities, as well. As for positive traits Burbah and Figgins (1993) list these as young and idealist, devoted to students with a deep love of teaching, and rich and unique in character. On the other hand, negative images include being incompetent, teaching without a proper education, having a passive and indecisive personality, being in a role that exists just to support the leading character, getting involved in dangerous or illegal activities after school, and finally, being a sex symbol. The researchers also added a third category in which they listed the images that are commonly used in films for other professions but are missing in teacher movies. Namely, teacher characters are not

richly developed, they do not fall in love very often, and they are not depicted as actually teaching in the classroom.

Such portrayals of teachers in films are often compared to the characteristics of real teachers in the literature. Having studied two teacher movies in detail, Boragina (2004) argues that although it is possible to associate some characteristics of teacher heroes in these films with real teachers, the messages they deliver are not realistic. In particular, teachers in movies dedicate much of their time to their learners and work too much, and despite having disputes with administrators, they carry on until they achieve their goals. However, in real life, it is not such a quick and easy process; therefore, these films may lead to disappointment. In addition, success in the movies means students getting high scores in tests, which would be an unfortunate goal for real teachers. Therefore, there is a risk that these films might set unrealistic expectations.

Similarly, looking at both positive and negative aspects of school films, Breault (2009) explains both the positive depictions of teachers and the hidden negative messages that these portrayals might convey about teaching in real life. Some examples of these are related to teachers' devotion to their work. That is to say, stereotypical teachers of films are usually portrayed as devoting their lives to their learners; however, this may also imply that teachers never have time for themselves. Another misleading depiction can be teachers' designing their own courses depending on students' concerns and bypassing the course books. In real life, on the other hand, it is impossible for most teachers to design a course without referring to an assigned course book. Moreover, the problems teachers face in films are always solved rather quickly, whereas for real teachers, it is not so easy to overcome

problematic situations. Thus, these school movies with ideal teacher characters are likely to be deceptive.

In this sense, Bauer (1998) also accuses movies of distorting the truth about teaching English, as they do not focus on classrooms themselves. Rather, English teachers are shown as role models who deal with private lives of their learners. They always create opportunities to teach about morals and virtues, and the classroom scenes, as well, are used for this purpose, instead of depicting actual teaching methods.

It can be assumed that teacher movies are selective in their representation of characteristics as similar to those of real teachers. Taking a comparatively moderate view, Tan (2000) claims that the teacher stereotypes in films are similar to real teachers, but that the films only reflect them in certain aspects. By excluding certain elements, they try to convey a certain, predetermined message about these teachers. For instance, teachers in movies are rarely depicted when they are preparing for lessons or grading papers. Instead, they spend time out of school for their students through activities such as school trips or home visits. Moreover, in film, it is more important for a teacher to be kind and close to students than to have qualifications. Finally, contrary to the efforts of real teachers, who try to reach every single student, these teacher heroes seem to help all of their students by reaching only a few individual students.

### **2.3. Films in Teacher Education**

Whilst the teacher portrayals in the media are critically important, considering their potential impact on public perceptions, another significant issue is their influence on the expectations of prospective teachers. Using films' power to arouse thoughts and

discussion is an effective means to lead teacher candidates reflect on teaching (Tan, 2006). With the help of portrayals of teachers in the media, prospective teachers may develop a better understanding of the meaning of being a teacher as they shape their opinions on teaching (Beyerbach, 2005).

Films are suggested for classroom use first and foremost for their motivational value, as there is a widespread interest in watching films in English (Ryan, 1998). This growing interest mainly corresponds to students' major involvement in new forms of media, which can be reached through the Internet as attachment to Internet technology and mobile phones escalates rapidly. Geographical distribution of Internet technology through mobile phones is widening, and students worldwide connect to the Internet, through which they can chat with their friends, read daily newspapers, listen to music, play games or watch films.

In a broader sense, as stated by Champoux (1999), use of films in the classroom helps learners to gain a better understanding of theories and to develop analytical skills. They serve as a powerful substitute for real experiences and “offer both cognitive and affective experiences. They can provoke good discussion, assessment of one's values, and assessment of self” (p. 12).

King (2002) articulates that films constitute authentic materials in which various linguistic, paralinguistic and cultural information are available for use, especially when the case of English as a second or foreign language classrooms is considered. She further argues that by means of films, learners may be exposed to language as it is used in real life:

Films are such valuable and rich resources for teaching for them present colloquial English in real life contexts rather than artificial situations; an opportunity of being exposed to different native

speaker voices, slang, reduced speeches, stress, accents, and dialects (no page number).

Knee (2001) further contends that films in which students are exposed to “language realistically employed ... with a range of often culturally specific nonverbal cues as well as a range of true-to-life interferences” (pg. 145) are a source of authentic material. As they motivate students by giving various contexts for the use of language, films are applicable even at beginning levels (Ishihara & Chi, 2004). Moreover, since they stimulate emotions, films awaken students’ interest and excite attention, fostering imagination, creativity, and understanding. In the anxiety-free atmosphere created by films, students may more easily express ideas, collaborate, and build connections (Berk, 2009).

Films in language classes serve many pedagogical aims when tasks are prepared accordingly. As well as providing language input, they motivate learners to discuss non-verbal elements in communication. As such, in addition to bringing authentic language to the classroom, the themes in films are opportunities to focus on different aspects of teaching (Seferoğlu, 2008). In this sense, films are vehicles that help learners understand concepts more thoroughly; as they illustrate theoretical information through film characters’ lives, the information is no longer abstract. Thus, learners can relate to characters in films in order to gain different perspectives and experiences (Gregg, Hosley, Weng, & Montemayor 1995).

In terms of conceptualizing teaching, Trier (2006) has shown that teachers’ views of schools and schooling have largely been formed through media representations. In his study, he showed that pre-service teachers found the process of analyzing the school films through the theoretical lenses provided by academic texts to be

engaging and productive, as they were able to deconstruct those representations through numerous activities designed for the purpose.

In this regard, research has shown that teachers' images, as they appear in films, can be used in pre-service teacher education to open discussions or to present these characters as role models. Grant (2002) studied teachers in popular films and used these characters to challenge pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching. She found that teachers in these movies were defined by their personal involvement with students as they rescued these students from the pathology of their homes and communities. Therefore, she articulated that these teachers, as images, can be used as starting points for reflection about learning and teaching, diversity, and working in educational communities.

Similarly, in their examination of themes in teacher movies, Raimo, Devlin-Scherer, and Zinicola (2002) looked into their implications in courses for prospective teachers. The combination of themes might suggest to prospective teachers that teaching requires social, as well as professional skills. Moreover, a successful teacher needs to be dedicated to his or her learners and prepared to reform his or her methods of teaching when necessary.

Much can be done by viewing films in teacher education or development programs. Tan (2006), for instance, in order to promote philosophical reflections in pre-service teachers studying in Singapore, employed a study design in which she watched four films with her students. She found that the pre-service teachers' reflections based on the films helped them to prepare for the teaching profession. From another angle, Trier (2001) focused on the cinematic representation of teachers as film characters in order to engage pre-service teachers in a critically reflective practice. In this case, the

prospective teachers' attention was focused on both individual and collective teaching practices that frame a teacher's world, both inside and outside the school.

Since candidate teachers' perceptions of their profession highly affect their success in teaching, Kontaş (2016) viewed a teacher movie along with prospective teachers to exam its influence on their attitude toward the profession. On analyzing the effects, he demonstrated that the motivation and attitude of the candidates towards teaching increased significantly after watching the film.

Moreover, by designing a module involving five teacher movies, Butler (2000) aimed to promote reflection among pre-service teachers regarding their perceptions and experiences of teaching. The results revealed that these films have a considerable influence on teacher candidates in terms of questioning their assumptions and facing the difficulties of the profession. Thus, such movies might serve in teacher education as a means to raise consciousness of significant aspects of teaching.

Delamarter (2015) similarly used teacher movies to challenge the idealistic expectations of two pre-service teachers. They attended a course that involved the analysis and reflection on Hollywood teacher movies. In the process, they examined the teacher characters by analysing their relationships with others and their teaching styles. The results showed that accurate interpretation has an effect of changing the ideas of pre-service teachers regarding the characteristics of an ideal teacher and their expectations of teaching. Moreover, prospective teachers construct their own preferences and ideals during their education, and they tend to believe that these choices will make them successful teachers.

Kaşkaya, Ünlü, Akar, and Özturan Sağırlı (2011) also argue that candidate teachers find it helpful to view and reflect on teacher movies, as this creates an opportunity

for pre-service teachers examine possible problems they will encounter when they start teaching. Being able to see the influence of teachers on their learners' lives builds strong awareness of teacher responsibilities, specifically role modelling and self-improvement. Moreover, it was evident in the study that these pre-service teachers developed more faith in themselves as teachers after viewing such films, as they became more confident in solving problems and interacting with students. Thus, school movies can be seen to have a positive effect on pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching.

In addition to broadening prospective teachers' views of teaching and learning, Paul (2001) claims that school movies also assist them in familiarizing themselves with the school atmosphere. When analyzed in terms of race, gender, and class, these movies help prospective teachers to observe students and colleagues, as well as issues relating to these. Namely, they can observe the school environment, student and teacher types, and the relationships among them.

However, when the images of teachers in films are not realistic, the messages they convey might negatively affect pre-service teachers' opinions on teaching. As Swetnam (1992) asserts, not only negative representations in the media, but also the positive ones, can deter future teachers when they are not credible. Candidate teachers might question the profession they have chosen when repeatedly exposed to negative depictions of teachers. Similarly, portrayals of teachers as perfect humans being able to deal with many things at the same time might cause disappointment among prospective teachers. The reason for this discontent is the fear of inability to fulfill all duties as a teacher.

When pre-service teachers step into the profession, they may find themselves in a multinational and multicultural atmosphere. Because education faculties intend to develop pre-service teachers' awareness of diversity in preparing them for every potential situation, films may serve to develop social and cultural awareness.

In this respect, Álvarez, Calvete, and Sarasa (2012), in an Argentinean English language teacher education program, studied the film *Slumdog Millionaire* from a critical and postcolonial perspective with the aim of making “student teachers aware of their need to critically address concepts related to race, ethnicity, class, religion, education, and language to unveil the political, economic, and social issues underlying the teaching and learning of English” (p. 61). They conclude, by underlining the importance of such film-based activities from a critical pedagogy perspective, that they:

Are confident that the implementation of critical pedagogy in the education of prospective teachers of English as a language of international communication will simultaneously enhance the learners' sociolinguistic competence and foster the development of their independent voices. Students who are encouraged to problematize situations and critically address social issues are more likely to become critical users of English and its mainstream materials and textbooks. (p. 68).

Another effective use of school films in teacher education concerns pre-service teachers' viewing of films from different years to gain an understanding of the changes that have occurred in education. For instance, Beyerbach (2005) contends that viewing films released over an extended period may help students analyze developments in the field of teaching. Moreover, focusing on teacher characters' race, class, and gender might help candidate teachers to make connections between social issues and their influence on teachers over time.

In line with the studies showing the impact of films on pre-service teachers regarding awareness of social issues, research in this area has concentrated on cultural issues, as well. Based on the results of their study carried out with freshman education students, Rorrer and Furr (2009) suggest that with analysis and discussion, films can be a source for awakening multicultural awareness. Since education faculties aim to prepare prospective teachers for multicultural environments in their profession, by introducing cultural concepts and ethnic differences through films in their courses, they can achieve this in a congenial class atmosphere.

Prospective teachers also confirm the effectiveness of reflection and discussion on teacher movies in their personal and professional development as future teachers. For example, Fennel (2013), on asking about the opinions of pre-service teachers regarding the benefits of the films they watched as a part of a course, notes their attitude as positive. The results of his study revealed that most candidate teachers perceived films as amusing tools to encourage discussion. Moreover, films allowed them to see the application and outcomes of various innovative teaching styles, as well as to observe the theoretical information encountered in their courses used in practice.

In this regard, research suggests that acquisition becomes more successful and recall is easier when theoretical information is combined with viewing of audio-visual materials (Butler, Zaromb, Lyle, & Roediger III, 2009; Michel, Roebbers, & Shneider, 2007), as they are "means to make concepts and theories more concrete" (Fennell, 2013, p. 457). With the choice of appropriate activities, students can reach higher achievement levels as compared to studying with printed materials only (Merkt, Weigand, Heier & Schwan, 2011). Thus, audio-visual materials have gained

importance in contemporary teaching; and films are one of the most significant of these in classroom use. Likewise, they are preferred in teacher education, wherein teacher-centered films are chosen by teacher educators who depend on their power "to promote preservice teachers' reflections on their professional identities and instructional practices" (Ryan & Townsend, 2012, p. 239).

## **CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, the research methodology of the present study is explained in detail by focusing on the research model, data collection, and procedures. The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

- 1) What are the general qualities of English teachers in American and British films?
- 2) Is it possible to identify some common themes that can be useful in teacher education and training activities?

### **3.2. Research Method**

The present study makes use of narrative structure analysis in the qualitative research method. Thus, as Todorov (1969) proposed, the study does not concentrate on descriptions of the movies; rather, it tries to reveal an understanding of their structures. In order to reach an understanding of these structures, the researcher applied the incident analysis technique in the data gathering process, since this technique provides the opportunity to discover similarities and differences (Hughes, Williamson & Lloyd, 2007). Following Flanagan (1954), the main incidents in the selected movies regarding the behavior of the English language teacher characters in various situations were collected according to the five-step incident analysis technique. Namely, the films in which English teacher characters appear were selected and viewed. Then, by using a checklist, eight films were chosen for further analysis. Finally, the characters of the English language teachers in these films were analyzed with a focus on pedagogy and teacher identity, and the findings were reported.

### **3.3. Data Collection**

In order to collect data for the present study, which aims to analyze the portrayals of the English language teachers in movies, the first step was to prepare a tentative list of the films to be examined. The list was prepared by referring to online movie lists. Films which were common in more than two lists were chosen, and in this process, a list of thirty films was prepared. Before the viewing of the films in this tentative list, a checklist for movie selection was developed.

The items that appear in the checklist were as follows: the title of the film, names of the characters, year of production, genre, country of origin, teacher's subject area, teacher's role in the movie, classroom scenes in the movie, and availability of the film in Turkey.

The teacher's subject area was the primary factor in movie selection. The films with teacher characters that were not active in teaching English, but in other school subjects, were eliminated because the study intended to examine only English language teachers in films.

Another element in the selection of the movies was the teacher's role. If the teacher was in the leading role, it was defined as a major character in the checklist. If the teacher was not a major character, but still had an important part in the film and a specific and significant relationship to the leading character, it was noted as a supporting character in the checklist. Films in which the English language teachers belonged to either of these two categories were selected.

As the present study focuses on pedagogy, being able to see the character in the teaching and learning environment was a major necessity. Therefore, if the scenes in

which the teacher was depicted in the classroom (in other words, while actively teaching) were not present or were very limited in number and duration, then the film was not chosen. Only the films with various scenes which depicted the character in the classroom during class hours were selected.

The year of release was also used as a factor influencing the film selection. The films to be further analyzed were selected from those released in the twenty-first century, and any produced before the year 2000 were removed.

The country of origin was important in the selection of the movies, as well. British and American films were chosen, as these are comparatively popular in Turkey. This issue was considered because the films examined in the study are suggested for use in teacher education; therefore, it would be more effective to make use of popular titles to awaken the interest of preservice teachers.

The final item of the movie selection checklist regarded availability. Films marked in the checklist as available in Turkey meant that they were once shown in cinemas in Turkey, or at least had been broadcast on one of the national movie channels. The availability was checked by using the website of the internet movie database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)) in order to find out the release dates for cinemas in Turkey and/or the Turkish titles of the films. In addition, the film lists of national television channels were also reviewed. Only one of the films selected for further analysis had not been seen in cinemas, but only on a national film channel. The other films analyzed were all available for public viewing in cinemas. The aim in including this criterion relates to the media influence on public views mentioned in the theoretical background of the study; namely, it may not be possible to discuss the impact of a film when it is not easily available for public view.

**Table 3.1*****Movie Selection Checklist***

	Film Title	Year	Genre	Country	Teacher's Subject Area	Teacher's Role in the Movie	Classroom Scenes in the Movie	Availability in Turkey
1.	Stand and Deliver	1988	Drama	USA	Mathematics	Major	√	√
2.	Dead Poets Society	1989	Comedy-Drama	USA	English	Major	√	√
3.	Lean on Me	1989	Drama	USA	Principal	Major		
4.	Mr. Holland's Opus	1995	Drama	USA	Music	Major		√
5.	Dangerous Minds	1995	Drama	USA	English	Major	√	√
6.	Good Will Hunting	1997	Drama	USA	Mathematics	Supporting		√
7.	Music of the Heart	1999	Drama	USA	Music	Major	√	√
8.	Finding Forrester	2000	Drama	USA	Author	Major		√
9.	Remember the Titans	2000	Biography-Drama	USA	Sports Coach	Major		√
10.	Donnie Darko	2001	Thriller	USA	English	Supporting	√	√
11.	The Emperor's Club	2002	Drama	USA	History	Major	√	√
12.	Mona Lisa Smile	2003	Drama	USA	Art History	Major	√	√
13.	Mean Girls	2004	Comedy	USA	Mathematics	Supporting	√	√
14.	Whole New Thing	2005	Comedy-Drama	Canada	English	Supporting	√	
15.	The Ron Clark Story	2006	Biography-Drama	USA	Elementary School	Major	√	
16.	Marked for Life	2006	Comedy-Romance	UAE	English	Major		
17.	Half Nelson	2006	Drama	USA	History	Major	√	√
18.	Freedom Writers	2007	Crime-Drama	Germany	English	Major	√	√
19.	The Great Debaters	2007	Romance-Drama	USA	Debate Coach	Major	√	
20.	The Class	2008	Drama	France	High School	Major	√	√
21.	Precious	2009	Drama	USA	Alternative School	Supporting	√	√
22.	An Education	2009	Drama	UK-USA	English	Supporting	√	√
23.	Easy A	2010	Comedy-Drama	USA	English	Supporting	√	√
24.	Beyond the Blackboard	2011	Drama-Family	USA	Primary School	Major	√	
25.	Detachment	2011	Drama	USA	Substitute	Major	√	
26.	Girl in Progress	2012	Comedy-Drama	USA	English	Supporting	√	√
27.	English Vinglish	2012	Comedy-Drama	India	ESL	Minor		
28.	The Perks of Being a Wallflower	2012	Romance-Drama	USA	English	Supporting	√	√
29.	The English Teacher	2013	Comedy-Drama	USA	English	Major	√	√
30.	The Gambler	2014	Crime-Thriller	USA	English	Major	√	√

After a first viewing of the films in the tentative list, only eight stood out. These eight movies met all the requirements in the checklist and were found to be appropriate for more detailed analysis. Thus, they were selected for a second viewing. The others were eliminated according to the factors mentioned above and were not considered in this study.

On the other hand, seven out of the thirty films in the tentative list were eliminated because they were not produced in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, five of them portrayed teachers of other subject areas, such as mathematics or history. Another five films were not suitable for the study as they were not available to the public in Turkey. In addition, three of the films lacked a sufficient number or duration of classroom scenes and therefore were not selected for further analysis. Another two films were eliminated because they were not produced in the USA or the UK, and one of those had the English teacher in only a minor role.

### **3.4. Procedure**

After the eight movies had been chosen to be viewed for the second time and to be analyzed in detail, a chart was prepared for use during the second viewing of the films. The main aim in the preparation of this table was to be able to identify detailed information about the English language teacher characters and to list the character features in an organized way. The items on this chart included the title of the film, the year of production, the name of the English teacher character, the teacher's characteristics, important quotes, and the teacher's role.

While viewing the films and completing the chart, the primary focus was on the general characteristics of the English teachers, as well as the important quotes or the

scenes that gave clues regarding their identities. The information added to the chart was used later for the deeper analysis of the English teacher characters.

Detailed analysis of the data regarding the main features of these characters that was gathered using the movie analysis chart was made after viewing the films for the second time. This further analysis related to certain characteristics of the teachers according to the predetermined fields of pedagogy and teacher identity.

First, a summary of the plot of each movie was developed to provide context, so that the features of the teachers would be more comprehensible. In the plot summaries, only the main events and important parts of the films were included. Moreover, these consisted mainly of an overview of the parts related to the English teachers. That is, the summaries mainly centered on the English teachers themselves and their encounters with the other important characters, in addition to giving a general outline of the plot.

After the plot summary of each film was provided, the first step in the analysis of the characters was to develop an in-depth interpretation of the character. This interpretation involved the pertinent information about the English teacher as a character. Accordingly, whether the teacher's role was major or supporting was explained in detail. Additionally, data regarding the significance of the teacher character in the movie and the influence of this character on others throughout the film was described. The personality traits of the teacher characters and their general qualities as a teacher were also included in the character interpretation.

The second step in the analysis of the characters was to provide data on the social identities of these English language teachers. This section involved, firstly, data on the main personal information about the teacher. As such, the teacher's age group,

marital status and elements of their personal preferences; for instance, clothes, accessories, and hairstyles, were described.

Additionally, the character's relationships and encounters with others were examined by illustrating the interaction between the English language teachers and individual students outside the classroom. Finally, the character's personal qualities and attitudes as a teacher as portrayed in scenes between the teacher and the students around and outside the school were described.

The final portion of the analysis consisted of a description of the pedagogical identity of the English teacher in each movie. This section concentrated on the teacher's self according to the character portrayals. The main part of this section was derived from the classroom scenes in the movies, as the teachers were depicted through specific aspects of their teaching. The classroom interactions among teachers and students were included, as well. Moreover, their teaching approaches and styles were exemplified. Another significant part of this section was the depiction of the English language teacher's encounters with and attitude towards school administrators and students' parents. This part aimed to display the features of the teacher in relation to other parties included in the educational process, as an addition to the teacher's association with students.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

The study made use of the inductive data analysis process outlined by Flanagan (1954). Accordingly, a frame of reference was developed, and then tentative categories for the incidents were determined. After submitting these for an expert's review, headings and sub-headings were determined, and the incidents were matched

to the categories. The findings of the study are presented as a thematic narrative categorized under the headings and sub-headings revealed by the data analysis.

## **CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, a detailed analysis of the data gathered through the viewing of the eight movies will be given. In the first section, information about general qualities of the English language teacher characters in each film will be presented, separated under the predetermined categories. In the second section, information regarding the common themes in these movies relating the shared features of the English teacher characters will be provided.

### **4.2. General Qualities of English Teachers**

The findings revealed in the detailed analysis of each film selected for this study are presented in this section. For each film, information about the plot is given, along with an interpretation of the English teacher character in the film and a detailed analysis of the social and pedagogical identities of the teacher.

#### **4.2.1. Freedom Writers**

Year: 2007

Genre: Crime-Drama

Country: Germany-USA

Teacher's Role in the Movie: Major

In a high school, a new program in which unsuccessful students from lower-class families are integrated into the classes is being tested. However, instead of putting new students into already-existing classes, the school administration decides to open

a new class just for these low-achieving newcomers, since they are unhappy that these students will decrease the school's high scores on exams. A young and enthusiastic English teacher, Erin Gruwell, is assigned to this first-year class of problematic students. She finds out immediately after her first lesson that their problems are not only related to academic success. These students also have socializing issues, as they are from different backgrounds and races. Moreover, their social groups also keep them from becoming regular students and try to pull them into illegal activities. As these students are seen as causing the school to fail, they are declared unwanted by school authorities and other teachers. Therefore, Erin is forced to cope not only with this extremely challenging class, but also with unfriendly colleagues. By giving most of her time and energy, Erin finds a way to communicate with these rejected kids, and afterward, she manages to reform them and turn them into eager, autonomous, and quite successful learners. Despite all the opposition from the school, and especially her husband, who ends up leaving her, she is able to continue with the class until their graduation, thanks to their considerable efforts.

#### **4.2.1.1. Interpretation of the Character**

Erin Gruwell is a young teacher who lacks experience. In her attitude, she is a little nervous, but highly enthusiastic about teaching. In the first part of the film, where she has just been appointed as the new English teacher, she seems excited about the job. She tries to do everything properly, from choosing her clothes to greeting colleagues and students. In the morning before her first day at school, she is shown to be very confused about what to wear to school. She is so unsure of herself that she wakes her husband up and asks, "Do I look like a teacher?" To her disappointment, when she meets the head teacher at the school, she receives criticism about her

choices. The principal, indicating her pearl necklace, warns "I wouldn't wear them to class," giving the impression of how dangerous her students might be. However, Erin is hopeful that her teaching experience with those students will not cause dismay. She states the expectation that, "I think the real fighting should be here in the classroom." That is to say, she believes that she can change these students from those who are prone to fighting outside to those who fight for their education. Nevertheless, upon seeing a fight at school for the first time, Erin cannot help crying when she arrives home.

In addition, Erin Gruwell is not reluctant to express her feelings or personality. She does not try to hide either her inexperience as a teacher or her excitement at having this job. At the beginning of the movie, she confesses, "I know I have a lot to learn as a teacher, but I'm a good student." In her first classroom scene, she is thrilled as she writes her name on the board before the students arrive. After that, she welcomes all of her students one by one into the classroom, smiling and saying "Hello!" to each of them, which really surprises them. It might be these unexpectedly sincere actions that evokes the interest of the students and eventually helps her connect with them.



*Figure 4.1 Ms. Gruwell's Classroom*

#### **4.2.1.2. Social Identity**

As a result of her love for and dedication to her profession, Erin Gruwell survives many difficulties. She is faced not only with her problematic students, but also with other people she encounters, in striving to achieve her aims as a teacher. As she becomes determined to make these low-achieving students successful, she spends all her time trying to find ways to reach this goal. Even in her leisure time, she cannot help thinking and talking about her students, which annoys her husband. From a loving and thoughtful person at the beginning, her husband becomes irritated and frustrated day by day, since he feels that Erin is more concerned with her students than with their marriage. He once says, "We don't talk about anything but your job." This growing annoyance eventually results in his break-up with Erin.

The situation at school is similar to that in Erin's private life. All of the other teachers at the school, as well as the principals, disapprove of her efforts, as they believe her students are costing the school its success. When Erin tries to obtain books for her

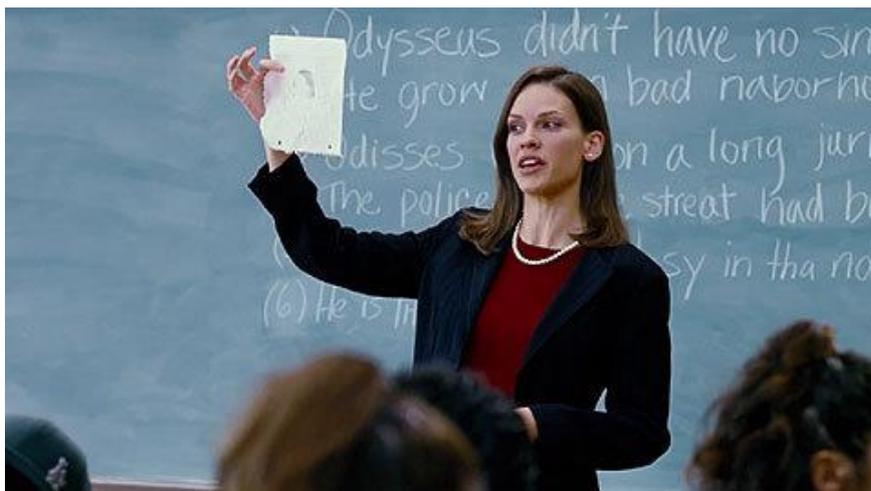
students, the head teacher does not allow her to take any from the school library, because she believes the students are going to harm the books, or at least not return them. Although the head teacher tries to discourage her by saying, "You can't make someone want education," Erin does not change her mind. She seeks support from other teachers, yet they make fun of her struggle to supply these entirely idle students with books. Not wanting to give up on her students, Erin applies to a higher authority to get some help. Finally, she starts finding temporary part-time jobs to make money for books. She receives the reward she has truly deserved for fighting all the odds when her students start to take interest in what she brings up in every lesson.

#### **4.2.1.3. Pedagogical Identity**

Although she is in her first teaching experience, Erin Gruwell is depicted as a passionate and dedicated teacher who makes a difference in her students' lives. She sets goals that may seem unrealistic for others, yet by doing her best, she achieves them despite all obstacles. In the initial classroom scenes, she is so insecure that the students do not actually listen to her; and moreover, they make fun of her. She seems too polite for these students, who are either members of gangs or at least have friends or relatives in gangs. In her first class, her language is kind and formal, she asks them to "Settle down" and be "Quiet, please." She tries to calm them down and attract their attention by saying, "Can you please sit back on your seats?" or "May I please get some help here?" Later, she decides to show some authority to arouse their interest. She changes the students' seats to shift the balance in the class by ordering, "I want you to move to this side, come on!" What is more, she forces them to take part in the lesson. For instance, she demands that one of her students, Gloria, "Read the first sentence on the board!" When Gloria asks, "Why me?" Erin says critically, "Because

I know how much you love to read. Close the magazine!" She uses the board for every lesson and makes students keep their attention on it. In one scene, she says "None of these sentences are correct. I'd like you to rewrite these sentences using appropriate tenses and spelling using page four on your books."

However, she finds out, through a drawing made by one of the students, that their anger is towards each other and the world, as they are from different ethnical backgrounds, all believing that they are abused. She then changes her approach in teaching. She plays music in class and uses lyrics to teach rhyme. She also makes the students play a game in which they make confessions, and it is through this game that they find out they are not as different as they thought. She asks, "Who here knows what the Holocaust is?" and only one of them raises his hand. Then she says, "Who here has ever been shot at?" and all except one raise their hands. Then she makes them personify themselves with Holocaust survivors. Together with the students, they visit a museum, and they invite a Holocaust survivor to class, which teaches them about hope.



***Figure 4.2 Ms. Gruwell***

Moreover, she buys the students notebooks to be used as diaries and makes them promise to write every day. However, their entries will not be graded and will not be read unless the owner wants them to. In this way, she encourages them both to write and to express their feelings and emotions. Later, when she organizes a parent-teacher meeting that no parent attends, she finds that the students have left their diaries for her to read. What is more, through the end of the film, when they hold a celebration in the classroom, one of the students reads from his diary in front of the class, saying, "My English teacher is the only person that reminds me of home. I'm home in class."

Thus, Erin manages to help her students overcome their prejudices, and she transforms them into motivated students and understanding individuals. Moreover, she also succeeds in her fight against the administration and her colleagues who did not believe in these students. Her success in this regard is proven when a high-achieving African-American student chooses her class because Erin uses a different syllabus than the other teachers. Thus, Erin challenges the traditional beliefs by embracing variety and by welcoming students who had been alienated by everyone else.

#### **4.2.2. The English Teacher**

Year: 2013

Genre: Comedy-Drama

Country: USA

Teacher's Role in the Movie: Major

Linda Sinclair, a high school English teacher, has a routine, even monotonous, life that revolves only around school and literature. She has no time for other things, and therefore, she is lonely. However, her life begins to change when Jason, a former student who has failed in his attempt to become a playwright on Broadway, returns to the town. As Ms. Sinclair is responsible for the school's annual play, she decides to choose Jason's play for the stage. Unfortunately, the school principals reject the play on the grounds that it has a fierce ending. Ms. Sinclair promises changes to the ending, and after that, she convinces Jason to let her use his play. Eventually, they begin rehearsals with students chosen for the specific roles. Jason and the drama teacher, Carl, attend the rehearsals with them every day. Meanwhile, Ms. Sinclair and Jason had sex out of passion, something she regrets and puts an end to right away. As the rumors spread, Ms. Sinclair is fired from school, although she was later invited to finish the play with the students. After an unfortunate accident, Ms. Sinclair meets Jason's father, who is a doctor, and learns that everything Jason told her about his father was a lie. In the end, they stage the play. It becomes a huge success, and Ms. Sinclair returns to her normal life with the difference that she now dates Jason's father, who shares her interest and passion for books and reading.

#### **4.2.2.1. Interpretation of the Character**

Giving the title to the film, the English teacher, Ms. Sinclair, is the main character on which the plot is centered. She goes through a transformation from the beginning to the end of the film. Initially, she tries to be the perfect role model and a figure for her students to admire in every respect. However, the former student Jason enters her life and turns her world upside down, and forcing her into a life she has always criticized. Without being aware, she becomes the opposite of the person she tries to impose on

her students as an example. Nevertheless, her destruction still aids the students by making them realize that perfection is not always possible. Moreover, her courageous return after all the unfortunate events illustrates a fierce struggle with the ups and downs in life. Even after her life, career, and image are ruined, she manages to keep her feet on the ground, as can be seen in how she proudly stages the play.



***Figure 4.3 Ms. Sinclair***

Ms. Sinclair is depicted as a dedicated teacher who places importance on discipline. Although her approach is authoritarian, rather than friendly, she cares a great deal about her students and even understands Jason's problems with his father after reading his play. Moreover, despite losing face because of her love affair, Ms. Linda Sinclair comes back for her students to help them stage their play. This is a sign of her dedication to her job and her students. Despite making a terrible mistake as a teacher, she manages to overcome this and goes through an evolution that shapes her personality again without losing her commitment to her profession.

#### **4.2.2.2. Social Identity**

Ms. Sinclair is a single, middle-aged woman who lives alone. In the first scenes, where her thoughts are voiced and displayed through subtitles on the screen, we can see that she defines herself as having "always been alone." She is also shown to be judgemental of all the people she meets; she gives them labels that are displayed on screen and tries to predict their personality traits as if she is reading a book. In fact, at the beginning of the movie, before her world is shaken with the presence of Jason, she lives her life as if she is reading a book or as if she herself is a character and her life is the novel she is in. Thus, she is shown to be highly interested in novels and reading. "Reader" is one of the words she uses proudly to define herself, as she says, "I'm not a writer, I'm a reader," to Jason in one of their first encounters. Fortunately for her, her job is to teach about the novels that accompany her in her life. As she greatly admires literature, she tries to live as one of the heroes in the books who personify the great virtues. It is obvious in her style and even in her language that she has high self-esteem, thanks to those heroic characteristics she believes she embodies. She always wears formal clothes, with a preference of skirts over pants, and she wears her hair in a ponytail, most probably to look decent. Another accessory she uses to make the impression of deep seriousness is her glasses, which she rarely forgets to put on.

Her language, even when she talks to her students, is elaborated. She is keen on sounding polite and formal in every conversation she has, with no exception for those with her students or Jason. In her dialogue with Sally, in which she tries to persuade her to break up with Jason, Ms. Sinclair explains her point carefully and politely:

MS. SINCLAIR: "Sally, may I speak to you for a moment, please? Take a seat. Well, first of all, I want to tell you what a fantastic job you're doing."

SALLY: "Oh, thanks. I'm working my butt off, but I love it."

MS. SINCLAIR: "I know how important this play is to you and I wouldn't want anything to jeopardize that."

SALLY: "Wait, am I in trouble?"

MS. SINCLAIR: "No, everything is fine. It's just, well, it's about Jason. Some of us have noticed that your behavior with him lately has been a little inappropriate."

SALLY: "I haven't done anything."

MS. SINCLAIR: "I know, but appearances are important, and people tend to make assumptions."

SALLY: "Well, they shouldn't."

MS. SINCLAIR: "I know, but they do. Now, I understand that you want to pursue acting as a career. Is that true? May I offer you some advice? As you go out on auditions, you'll be meeting a lot of men, powerful men who may be interested in you for reasons other than your talent that you are a very attractive young woman, and you may be tempted to take advantage of that. In the short term that may work, but in the long term, people might lose respect for you, and they may find you a little trashy. Sorry, I know I sound harsh, but I want you to earn respect as woman, not because of your body but because of your mind, and that is why you need to stay away from Jason. Am I making any sense?" (Despres, LeClair, Salerno & Zisk, 2013).

When she wants to talk to Jason or one of her students, even when frustrated, she utters, "May I have a private word with you? Please excuse us." or "May I speak with you a moment, please?" A further point she makes with her language is that in her dialogues, she frequently finds a way to emphasize her experience, which becomes a means for looking down on people. Furthermore, continuously keeping the traditional virtues in her mind, she does not hesitate to criticize people. She even judges herself when she makes a mistake or when she does not act properly; and Jason's father and her students are other people she criticizes openly. For instance,

she scorns Jason's father by accusing him of not respecting his son, saying, "you could start with the respect and freedom he deserves."

However, she begins to accept her mistakes and to see herself as an ordinary person after she makes her biggest mistake by having an affair with Jason, which she regrets immediately. Just after this affair is made public, she is initially ashamed and tries to avoid meeting Jason's father at the hospital. Later, she bravely faces him and says, "Just say what you need to say." This, in fact, marks the moment she goes through a transformation and embraces herself as she is, with her faults. After isolating herself for a while, she cannot resist the calls for help, and she turns back to school and the rehearsals of the play. At this point, she changes completely in terms of her attitude and looks; this includes her outfit, which becomes a little more casual, and her hair style, which is not controlled in a ponytail anymore.

#### **4.2.2.3. Pedagogical Identity**

As a teacher, Ms. Sinclair might be described as organized, disciplined and strict. In the classroom scenes, it can be observed that the noticeboards on the class walls are full of handwritten sheets of paper. This might demonstrate that she gives assignments to students and praises them by hanging their work on the walls, which means she is interested in their work and their written products. She also shows her interest in the disappointed playwright Jason's work by saying, "I could at least read your play," to encourage him. Another prop that attracts attention in her classroom at first glance is the photos around the board. On the sides, she has hung some colourful photos, and above the board are photos of authors in black and white, with their names written on them. It can be concluded that she makes use of visuals in her teaching and probably believes that they help to enhance learning. In addition, her

desk is always tidy and organized, symbolizing the order in her life. In classroom scenes when the board is visible, it is always full of her legible and well-organized handwriting, as well. As the English teacher, Ms. Sinclair gives quizzes to her students and reviews books together with them during class hours. She has a bittersweet style when telling or implying to her students that they are wrong. Moreover, when Jason visits her classroom as a former student, he says to her students, “You are lucky to have Ms. Sinclair as your teacher.”



***Figure 4.4 Ms. Sinclair’s Classroom***

However, although she is strict and seems insincere among the students, she actually does her best to motivate and support them. She shows this when she tries to encourage them to part in the school play by promising to pay the extra expenses of the production. Moreover, she shows her understanding of her students’ feelings when she refuses to cut the ending of the play so as not to disappoint them. Furthermore, when asked by Jason’s father during their quarrel whether she has kids, she responds, “I have got a lot of kids,” meaning she sees her students as her own children. In addition, she does not hesitate to stand up to a parent to protecting her

students, as she does when she intervenes with Jason and his father and talks to the parent about his son:

DR. SHERWOOD: "Jason, I don't believe this. I need to talk to you outside. Let's go."

MS. SINCLAIR: "Excuse me, but you can't just barge in here like this. We are rehearsing."

DR. SHERWOOD: "Excuse me. I'm going to talk to my son now. Let's go."

MS. SINCLAIR: "I don't think you understand."

JASON: "Ms. Sinclair, it is fine. Please."

(Jason and Dr Sherwood go outside, and Ms. Sinclair follows them.)

MS. SINCLAIR: "What is going on here?"

DR. SHERWOOD: "This is really none of your business."

MS. SINCLAIR: "No, this is my school. When I see someone being manhandled, it is my business."

DR. SHERWOOD: "Wait a second."

MS. SINCLAIR: "No, no you wait a second. For two weeks, your son has worked his fingers to the bone, challenged himself. Any parent would be proud of it. You finally show up and what do you do? Do you show any appreciation? No, you drag him from rehearsal."

DR. SHERWOOD: "Ms. Sinclair, with all respect, you have no idea what is going on here."

MS. SINCLAIR: "On the contrary, I know exactly what is going on."

DR. SHERWOOD: "What are you talking about? What is she talking about?"

JASON: "Ms. Sinclair, please."

MS. SINCLAIR: "You may fool most people, but you don't fool me."

DR. SHERWOOD: "I'm not going to listen to this. I don't want to hear this. I'm going to be in the hospital."

MS. SINCLAIR: "All right, go, but know this you cannot stop this play. Jason will have life he deserves as an artist." (Despres, LeClair, Salerno & Zisk, 2013).

Her words, “this is my school, and if someone is being manhandled, it’s my business,” imply that she feels responsible for students’ private lives, as well. She backs Jason up in his conflict with his father by stating about the father that “he’s a bully, and someone has to tell him that he’s wrong.” She encourages Jason to claim his rights by saying, “Do you want your father to win? I didn’t think so.”

#### **4.2.3. The Gambler**

Year: 2014

Genre: Crime-Thriller

Country: USA

Teacher’s Role in the Movie: Major

The university English professor Jim Bennett has a gambling addiction. He comes from a wealthy family, and he is well-educated. Although he has had a very successful career and a published novel, he has become a gambler and an irresponsible teacher. When his grandfather dies, he goes gambling and loses a great deal of money, which causes him a lot of trouble. As he cannot pay it back, and his wealthy mother refuses to give him money, he now owes two dangerous men. Meanwhile, he gets close to Amy, who is one of the most successful students in his class but works in the casino and meets him there. One of the men he owes learns about Lamar, another student of Jim, who is a successful basketball player. He forces Jim to give him Lamar's number so that he can win money on his game. To solve all these problems, Jim borrows money from another gangster, goes to the game, and wins with the help of Lamar. In the end, he gets rid of all his possessions, quits his

job, and pays all his debts. He then leaves town with Amy, who has become his girlfriend.

#### **4.2.3.1. Interpretation of the Character**

Jim Bennet, the English professor, leads a careless life with the wealth from his family. He has achieved success in his career, although he cannot find happiness and peace in his private life. He is admired by students, thanks to his negligent attitude, but it is the same characteristic of his that causes other people to stay away from him. In other words, he is not very popular among his colleagues, and the school administrators do not like him. In addition, his relationship with his mother is not healthy because of his gambling addiction. It seems that the only person he feels close to is his grandfather, who dies at the beginning of the movie. He is shown crying at his grandfather's deathbed, and this loss, in fact, is what urges him to play in the casino and lose his money. After this, he becomes even more reluctant to take responsibility and to live a routine life. Jim has achieved success before; thus, it seems that he has given up the idea of living in an ordinary, proper way.

He gives clues to his frustration with life and people in his talks with students during his class hours. He is annoyed and aggressive regarding school and the people around him; and because of this sense of irritation, he has constructed a life of isolation for himself in which he can live according to his own principles. Jim embodies opposites in his character. On the one hand, he seems to be leading a life of above-average standards, with his highly appreciated profession and financial assets. On the other hand, despite all his advantages, he chooses to be a rebel with his extremely assertive and aggressive personality.

#### **4.2.3.2. Social Identity**

Jim Bennet is a good-looking, middle-aged man with a successful career as a university English professor, as well as being a talented author. He is wealthy, and he is bold enough to show off with his expensive suits, state-of-the-art sports car, and lavish house. With the supreme arrogance he displays, he always tries to be cool and mean. However, he has a darker side that he tries to hide from people who know him as the arrogant and affluent English professor; as the title of the film suggests, he is a compulsive gambler. As his student and later girlfriend Amy, whom he encounters in the casino, points out in one scene with her statement that "I've seen you in your other life," Jim Bennet indeed leads two separate lives. In his life after school, he is introverted and devious. He lives alone and goes out alone. He visits casinos often and associates with people dealing with illegal concerns.

Although the people in his life are not aware of the fact that he is keen on gambling, they still notice his aggressiveness and insincerity when they meet him outside school. He prefers not to spare a moment to talk to his students when he encounters them in different places. For instance, when he sees Amy waiting tables in the casino for the first time in the movie, he pretends not to recognize her, despite having displayed his close observation of her talent in writing at school. Additionally, Jim's well-off mother takes tennis courses from one of the students in his class who is a successful athlete. When Jim visits his mother to ask for money, she is shown playing tennis with this student. Jim watches them for a while, and after they finish their lesson and approach him, he does not demonstrate any interest in the student. He says only "hi," to him, avoiding any longer conversation.

Moreover, he often does the same things that he criticizes in other people. As an example, in the class hour, when he is annoyed, he tells his students that they are a failure and they are not doing enough to appreciate their parents. He indicates that he believes they are wasting their parents' time and money with statements like, "Call your parents and apologize for wasting their money." However, Jim himself is not very different when it comes to his relationship with his mother. They do not seem to have a genuine mother-son relationship, and Jim is only concerned about her money. For example, when she gives him a huge amount to pay for his massive debt to gangsters, Jim shamefully tells her, "I want to take the money and go," implying that he does not want to have any conversation about the money or listen to his mother's advice. As such, he wastes her money, just as he says his students are doing. Similarly, when the gangsters demand that he help them cheat in his student's basketball game, he tells them, "I'd never do something like that;" he wants them to understand that he has the morals to keep him from putting money in a student's game. However, in the end, he asks Lamar to do what he wants. Thus, by doing what he says he would never do, he makes money from his student's game by cheating and contradicts himself once more.

#### **4.2.3.3. Pedagogical Identity**

As a teacher, Jim Bennet seems to hate his job. Despite giving clues of a teacher who is intensely interested in his students, as well as carefully observing them, what he implies in his interactions with them is just the opposite. In his behavior, he seems irresponsible, and the principal views him as not caring about anything. In his speech, he takes an aggressive tone, and his classroom talk is full of criticism and offence. For example, when one of his students gives an incorrect answer, he insults

him by responding, "Absolutely, not!" He criticizes other teachers, as well, saying, "They don't know grammar," while referring to himself as "having a last sixth bullet to himself" when he is in the classroom. Namely, he believes the students do not really understand or care about what he is trying to teach. In his view, real acquisition is not possible for them because they are not really trying, and they are attending the classes only because they must. In one scene, he illustrates this by standing on his desk and shouting at his students, "Do I look happy? I'm not, because to a class full of students who don't give a ..." In other words, he is trying in vain to teach them since they are not really interested. He continues, "I'm here pretending to teach, and you're here pretending to learn." After this burst of anger, he states that the class is over and sends the students away.



***Figure 4.5 Mr. Bennet's Classroom***

On the other hand, while he is teaching, Jim Bennet is depicted as comfortable and perceptive. In the first classroom scene in the movie, he calls students by their names

in a large class, even calling one student "brother." He uses slides to present the topics, and while he is explaining, he walks around the classroom in a relaxed manner, sits next to students and makes them laugh at his jokes. He asks about their experiences and tries to learn more about their backgrounds and opinions. Moreover, he seems to have principles and rules of his own. When the school principal wants him to help Lamar pass the course because he is a good basketball player, although he is not successful enough, Jim asserts that he does not want to "make a student pass because he is an athlete; as his grammar is not good, he is not a good student." This confuses the principal, because Jim is far from being strict and accountable, so he responds, "Why do you care about this while you don't care about anything?" Another example of his personalized rules is when he takes a mobile phone from a student who is busy doing something on it instead of paying attention to the class.

On the other hand, during the limited number of hours he spends with his students after class, Jim keeps his distance and tries to avoid personal conversations. In one instance, Amy comes to talk to him, asking, "Did you mean what you said about me having talent?" However, when she says, "I've seen you in your other life," he refuses to open up and asks her to leave, saying, "Serious go. You have to go." Furthermore, when he talks with Lamar about using his phone in class When he then explains how others do not care about him, Jim again does not show any friendly behavior at all. However, under the impact of his debts, he later manages to develop a connection with Lamar, even going to him for help. Thus, although he avoids personal interactions with his students, he is then able to connect with them to survive a problematic situation. Thus, with Lamar's help, he is able to pay all his debts; and he goes away with Amy in the end.

#### **4.2.4. Donnie Darko**

Year: 2001

Genre: Science-fiction-Thriller

Country: USA

Teacher's Role in the Movie: Supporting

Donnie Darko, the main character in the film, is a teenage boy with psychological problems, and he sees a therapist regularly. He cannot have healthy and smooth relationships with other people, either at school or home. Luckily enough, he survives an extraordinary accident in which a jet engine falls on his bed. However, after the accident, he starts seeing an imaginary friend who encourages him to commit crimes, and it becomes more difficult for him to cope with daily life. He believes everything taught at school is in vain, and he questions all the traditional syllabi, topics and teachers. One of the few teachers he can communicate with is his English teacher, Ms. Pomeroy, who is highly aware of both Donnie's insuperable problems and high intelligence. She also has her own issues concerning school traditions; and she has problems with some of the other teachers and the principals that eventually lead to her firing from her job. Things become complicated when Donnie reveals that a popular television presenter - a graduate of the same school - is a child abuser by setting his house on fire with the help of his imaginary friend. When a countdown that is going on all through the film comes to an end, the imaginary friend turns out to be a student wearing a rabbit costume who accidentally kills the girlfriend, and only friend, of Donnie. Afterward, time goes back to the day of the accident when the engine falls into his bedroom, and it is understood that Donnie did not actually survive the accident.

#### **4.2.4.1. Interpretation of the Character**

Ms. Pomeroy is not a leading character in the film. However, her role is important in making the point of the film. She is the only teacher who seems to take the students' side, and additionally, she is also the only one to have close relationships with them. She boldly challenges the ideas that are shared by the other teachers and administrators, and she tries to stop them imposing their views on the students. Therefore, the students become more interested in the class when she is teaching. However, she ends up losing her job as a result of the challenging ideas she tries to put into action.

In her last scene, Ms. Pomeroy is alone with Donnie in her classroom while she is packing to leave the school. This symbolizes the close relationship she has with Donnie, although they have not been shown interacting apart from classroom dialogues before. Notably, he is the only student she talks to before she leaves, and furthermore, this is a rare scene in which Donnie is calm instead of angry or aggressive. Ms. Pomeroy tries miserably to explain her thoughts, and when Donnie asks, "So, what do I tell the other kids when they ask about you?" she replies, "Tell them that everything is going to be just fine." This phrase proves to be much more important when Donnie uses the same words at the end of the movie, since it is not typical of him to take a teacher as an example. This indicates that although others do not completely understand them, Ms. Pomeroy and Donnie Darko can understand each other.

#### **4.2.4.2. Social Identity**

Ms. Pomeroy is a young and beautiful woman who is in a romantic relationship with the science teacher at the same school. She is passionate about teaching, and more

importantly, about offering the students a non-traditional education. Moreover, she tries to broaden her students' perspectives. She is different than the other teachers both in her ideas and in her physical appearance. She usually wears skirts and chooses quite formal clothes, which still seem casual compared to the other female teachers at school. As she has a different view of teaching and life, Ms. Pomeroy is constantly in disagreement with the other teachers, who fiercely criticize her, and with the principal, who ends up firing her. In particular, Ms. Pomeroy gets opposition from Mrs. Farmer, the health instructor, who is also the mother of a student, owing to her selection of books for the syllabus. When Mrs. Farmer puts forward this topic in a teacher-parent meeting, it is revealed that some teachers and parents view Ms. Pomeroy as a threat to the students, since her methods of teaching and her choices of material are different from the traditional ideas. As her approach to teaching is much more flexible, and she is really empathetic towards students, she receives resistance from most of the teachers and parents.

The main point that provokes criticism is her choice of materials, as the teachers at school and some parents disapprove of the writers whose novels she requires her students to read. Unfortunately, this judgement proves to be weak when Donnie's mother, who is one of the few parents supporting Ms. Pomeroy, asks Mrs. Farmer, "Kitty, do you even know who Graham Greene is?" and gets the response, "I think we've all seen Bonanza." In fact, what these people do not like about the English teacher is that she is entirely different. She does not wear the same type of clothing as the other teachers, she does not teach the way they teach, and most importantly, she does not have the same distant relationship with the students. Moreover, she believes that by to impose a certain point of view on students, teachers and parents

deter them from questioning life. This opinion leads to her being insulted by Mrs. Farmer, who says, "Excuse me, you need to go back to grad school." However, Ms. Pomeroy is a determined teacher and holds on to her beliefs. She never gives up fighting for what she believes is the correct approach to teaching. In addition, she is highly concerned about the students, because they are not receiving the education they deserve. In an argument with the principal, at the end of which she is fired, she tries to explain the danger with her words, "I don't think that you have a clue what it's like to communicate with these kids. And we are losing them to apathy, to this prescribed nonsense. They are slipping away." Furthermore, she criticizes the parents, claiming that, "The children have to save themselves these days because the parents have no clue." Ms. Pomeroy sees education as a way of preparing the students for life, and therefore, she believes it should teach them critical thinking, rather than clichés. She is eager to see her students achieve something, and even after she is fired, she goes to the auditorium and watches the students' music and dance shows proudly from the back row.

#### **4.2.4.3. Pedagogical Identity**

In her classroom, Ms. Pomeroy encourages students to think, and she tries to inspire them with the material she chooses. She reads to her students in class, and they discuss the events and actions of the characters in the stories, while she urges them to reflect on what they study. After reading a passage from one story, she wants the students to think about the message the writer is trying to convey, asking, "What is Graham Greene trying to communicate with this passage?" In an in-class dialogue with Donnie while they are reviewing a book, she guides him to think more elaborately and to continue expressing himself:

MS. POMEROY: “When the other rabbits hear of Fiver's vision, do they believe him?”

DONNIE: “Why should we care?”

MS. POMEROY: “Because the rabbits are us, Donnie.”

DONNIE: “Why should I mourn for a rabbit like it was human?”

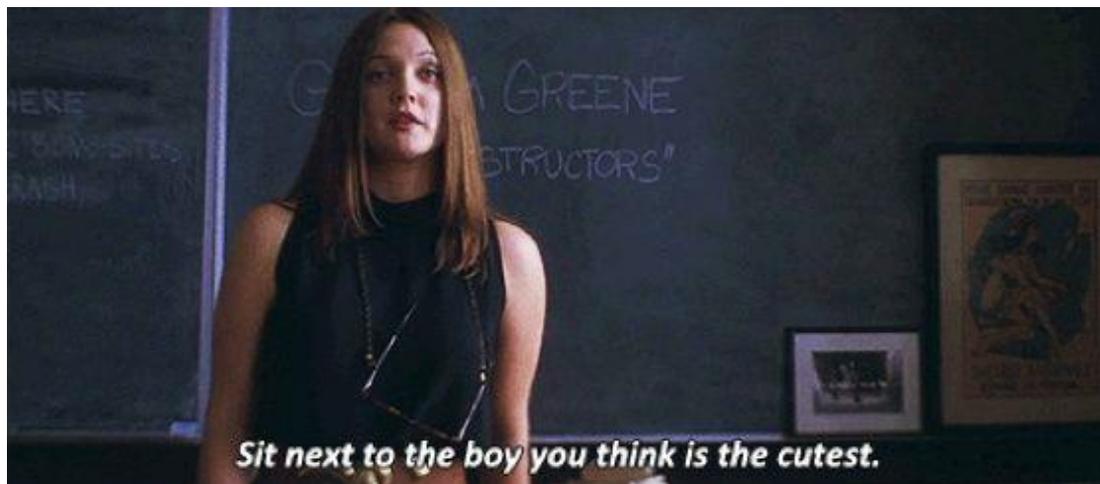
MS. POMEROY: “Are you saying that the death of one species is less tragic than another?” (Fields, Juvonen, & Kelly, 2001).



***Figure 4.6 Ms. Pomeroy's Classroom***

Although she is closer than the other teachers to the students during class hours, she criticises them when they do not study or complete the assignments. Once, when a girl carelessly makes comments about a story she has not read, Ms. Pomeroy offensively utters, "Joanie, if you had actually read the short story, which, at a whopping 13 pages, would have kept you up all night, you would know that the children find a great deal of money in the mattress, but they burn it." However, she is also entertaining in class, since she is flexible and lets the students stand out as individual characters. For example, when Gretchen, a new student, enters the class for the first time and asks, “Where do I sit?” Ms. Pomeroy tells her, “Sit next to the

boy you think is the cutest.” After that, the students in the class chuckle, and Ms. Pomeroy soothes them by saying “Quiet! Let her choose.”



*Figure 4.7 Ms. Pomeroy*

#### **4.2.5. An Education**

Year: 2009

Genre: Drama

Country: UK-USA

Teacher’s Role in the Movie: Supporting

Jenny Mellor goes through several events in the film which take her from the heart of childhood to the middle of adulthood. She gets a lesson on how difficult adult life can be for a young girl, despite how exciting and amusing it seems. Back in the 1960's in London, as a sixteen-year-old high school girl, Jenny dreams of studying English Literature at Oxford University. Both her teachers and her parents expect her to achieve this aim, as she is very successful in her courses, especially in English. However, on a rainy day, she meets David, who is a real gentleman twice as old as Jenny, and this completely changes her attitude towards life and her future. She

begins to date him, and tempted by a glamorous life, Jenny decides to marry him, and leaving behind her dreams of university, which seem boring and fruitless now. Unfortunately, her parents are in favour of David, and so they encourage her to drop out of school. The only person who tries to warn her against this marriage is her English teacher. Moreover, although Jenny does not take her advice and scorns her viewpoint, Ms. Stubbs, the English teacher, is the person who helps her get back on her feet after her engagement and life are ruined with the news that David is already married. The school does not accept her back, and thus Jenny misses her chances to graduate and go to Oxford; but Ms. Stubbs agrees to help her when she asks for private tutoring to be able to pass her exams and finish school. Thanks to her support, Jenny makes her way to Oxford after a year-long delay.

#### **4.2.5.1. Interpretation of the Character**

In Jenny's story, Ms. Stubbs becomes the only person in her life who tries to keep her on the correct path, showing her disapproval of David and Jenny's relationship with him. However, Jenny ignores Ms. Stubbs, and as she becomes more and more passionate about the life David offers her, she even looks down on her teacher. Despite Jenny's negative attitude, Ms. Stubbs does not let her down when Jenny wakes up from her dreams of marriage and a new life. Moreover, she helps Jenny to go back to her studies and build her future again.

#### **4.2.5.2. Social Identity**

Ms. Stubbs is a middle-aged, single woman who works at a successful high school for girls that has stringent rules. She always wears formal clothes and glasses, and she tries to be well-disciplined all the time. Furthermore, Ms. Stubbs wants her

students to obey the school rules; she often reminds them of these, and when they make mistakes, she warns them. Thus, she is usually strict, and the students comply with her expectations when she is around. For instance, when she enters the classroom to find the students chatting and laughing loudly, without saying a word, she makes them stop their conversation immediately with a vague gesture. After that, the girls take their things and leave the classroom quickly one by one. As they are leaving, she warns one of them, saying "Tina, top button," and the girl immediately buttons up. Another characteristic of Ms. Stubbs is that she always uses formal language when she is speaking to the students. This may be one of the reasons that her students take her seriously, and she is rather effective with them. For example, in a scene where Jenny talks to David about the time she spends with him, she says, "Action's character my English teacher says I think it means if we never did anything, we wouldn't be anybody," which shows she is really impressed by Ms. Stubbs.



*Figure 4.8 Ms. Stubbs*

In her private dialogues with Jenny, Ms. Stubbs can speak more frankly and reveal her real feelings and ideas. On one occasion, Jenny brings her an expensive bottle of perfume as a present from her trip to Paris. Since Ms. Stubbs does not want her to leave school and get married, she does not accept the gift. She puts her disapproval into words, as well, saying, "If I took it (perfume) I'd feel I'd be betraying both of us." Moreover, she tries to explain why she is disappointed and attempts to change Jenny's mind, stating, "You can do anything that you want. You know that you are clever and you are pretty." However, Jenny is so determined that Ms. Stubbs becomes emotional and insists, "I'm telling you to get to Oxford no matter what, because if you don't, you'll break my heart." Unfortunately, Jenny does not comply, and she even implies that she does not want a life like her teacher's. In other words, although Ms. Stubbs does her best to stop her, Jenny continues with her mistake. But in the end, when she needs help to go back to her studies after David's betrayal and the school rejecting her, Jenny goes to visit Ms. Stubbs at her house. There, the teacher talks to her student like a friend, and at the same time, she accepts her apology with her words "Let's forget about it." Furthermore, she eagerly agrees to help Jenny with her studies, stating, "I was hoping that's what you are going to say." Thus, the English teacher becomes the source of help and peace for a student who is in trouble and in need. Overall, Ms. Stubbs is an extremely strict English teacher, yet she still manages to reach a problematic student and offer a solution. The student in trouble sees her as the closest person in whom she can confide, and therefore asks for her help.

### 4.2.5.3. Pedagogical Identity

Despite being distant most of the time, Ms. Stubbs is rather flexible during her classes. For instance, she lets the girls talk about Jenny's love affair, identifying David with one of the characters in the novel they are studying. However, Ms. Stubbs criticizes this behavior later, as almost all of the girls have low marks on the assignment except Jenny. In another scene, students giggle and chat among themselves upon finding out about Jenny's engagement with David. Again, Ms. Stubbs does not interfere, but watches and listens to them with a disappointed look on her face. Then, however, she puts forward her strict identity and orders, "Take it off. You know the school rule about jewellery."



*Figure 4.9 Ms. Stubbs's Classroom*

On the other hand, she is more relaxed and comfortable while she is teaching. To put it another way, she sits on the table and makes students read the literary texts aloud

one by one. Furthermore, she does not criticize or correct the girls at all when they make pronunciation mistakes. Conversely, she lets them continue reading in order not to discourage them. As a matter of fact, she knows her students' capabilities well. In particular, she is aware of how successful Jenny is, as well as the extent to which the other girls can succeed. To illustrate, in the opening scene of the film, she asks a question of the class and Jenny is the only one raising her hand to give the correct answer. Seeing this, Ms. Stubbs asks, "Anybody else?" and looks around the class desperately, but nobody seems to know the answer. Thus, she says, "Jenny again!" after which Jenny gives the correct answer. Ms. Stubbs' reaction is smiling and saying "Yes." This attitude displays that she wants all the students to participate in the discussions and take part in the lessons. Moreover, she ignores their errors in order not to demotivate them, and she tries to encourage weaker students by keeping Jenny waiting to see if others can suggest an answer.

#### **4.2.6. Easy A**

Year: 2010

Genre: Comedy-Drama

Country: USA

Teacher's Role in the Movie: Supporting

This film tells the story of a high school girl, Olive, who turns her own life into a nightmare. It all starts with a white lie she tells her best friend about spending the weekend with a college boy. Rumor spreads around the whole school, and everybody starts to talk about Olive. Unfortunately, she begins to enjoy this and continues telling lies about being with different boys. Eventually, she becomes a popular girl

whom everybody talks about, but at the same time, a girl most people hate and insult. She keeps telling her family and teachers that there is nothing wrong, but she feels more and more desperate with every lie she tells, and she begins to feel lonely. As teachers and students start to turn their backs on her one by one and blame her for all the bad things happening, Olive feels she is losing control over the events. When Olive finds someone who really wants to be with her without judging her, she decides to reveal the truth about her so-called affairs. She records a video and broadcasts it online, and everybody from school watches her telling the true story.

#### **4.2.6.1. Interpretation of the Character**

The English teacher in the film is Mr. Griffith, who does not have a major part. However, Olive identifies her actions, and especially her peers' reactions, with the book they study in her English class. The book is called *The Scarlet Letter*, by Nathaniel Hawthorn, and Olive believes she is in the same condemned position with Hester Prynne, the main character in the book. This identification urges Olive to work harder on her assignment relating to the book, and thus, she feels closer to her English teacher while doing her homework. In the meantime, Mr. Griffith also understands what Olive is going through, and he is able to see her real personality despite all the rumors about her. Moreover, he tries to help her by asking his wife, who is the school counsellor, to see Olive.

Olive is aware of the difference Mr. Griffith makes in her life, as well. Even when she lies to everyone else, she can talk to her English teacher sincerely about her problems. She does not hide her admiration for him and openly says, "He's my favorite teacher." Additionally, coming to the end of all her lies and stories, she knows that after all his help, she owes Mr. Griffith an apology. Therefore, when

Olive records her confessional video, she dedicates one part of it to her English teacher and apologizes for upsetting him. This shows she feels close to him and has a need to explain things to him, because he has managed to help her in this problematic stage of her life.

#### **4.2.6.2. Social Identity**

As an English teacher character, Mr. Griffith is a middle-aged gentleman married to the guidance counsellor at the same school. He looks strict and acts accordingly. He wears rather formal clothes at school and does not smile a lot in the school garden and corridors. He strolls around like a walking notice board, reminding the students of school rules, important dates, virtues and the right things to do. When he comes across Olive and her best friend in the garden, he tells them, "Go hit the books, they don't hit back." Moreover, understanding that the girls' conversation is about boys, he also warns them against the dangers, adding "Also...not drugs, mess with boys... and other cliché you can come up with." After he is done with the girls, he is seen talking to other groups of students on his way. He does not hesitate at all to interfere in their conversations to give advice. In addition, after he finishes one of his classes, he shouts out "Don't forget, tomorrow is Earth Day," which is an example of his sensible personality. He tries to impose his awareness of important issues on his students, as well. Another significant point about his words is their indication that Mr. Griffith's expectations of his students go far beyond success in school. He wants them to be good people who know the difference between right and wrong. He also expects them to be reasonable and aware of the world around them.

Another of Mr. Griffith's characteristics is that he is responsive and more forthcoming in his interactions with individual students. That is to say, when there is

an argument in his class between Olive and another girl, he sends Olive to the principal's office because of her bad language. However, he apologizes for this when he meets Olive in his office after the class, confessing that he also hates the other girl but cautiously saying, "I'll deny it if you tell anyone." He also tries to make Olive open up to him in their office hours by giving clues about how much he knows about her. For instance, when they talk about Olive's assignment on *The Scarlet Letter*, she denies reading the whole book and says that she only watched the movie like the other students. However, Mr. Griffith gives the message that he understands how important this book and the assignment are for Olive by saying, "I know you read the book." He also tries to learn the truth about the events in her life and tells her, "I hear some rumor," implying that he does not believe what is being said of her. Thus, unlike the rule defender identity he adopts, Mr. Griffith is, in fact, a caring and tolerant teacher.

#### **4.2.6.3. Pedagogical Identity**

During his class hours, Mr. Griffith becomes more relaxed. Although he does not stop applying rules and criticizing students' bad behavior, he is depicted as a teacher with a sense of humor. For instance, while he is trying to encourage students to read the classics, he says, "Even I had trouble with him (Hawthorn) personally. I read him originally when I was five, but I struggled." When he wants to give some keywords from the book, he asks for a beat from a student and gives all the keywords with a melody, trying to combine classic novels and literature with popular music that most students enjoy. This indicates that his approach to teaching is rather amusing, and despite being strict and insincere outside the class, during his lessons, he wants his students to have fun learning. Thus, he tries to relate to their interests and dispel their

anxiety by making use of humor and entertainment. Thanks to this characteristic, he and the students in his class enjoy themselves during his class hours.



**Figure 4.10 Mr. Griffith's Classroom**

Moreover, in his teaching, Mr. Griffith prefers teacher-student interactions, and he tries to review the book they are studying along with his students. He often asks their opinions and wants to hear to their ideas, and he appreciates them. In addition, the students do not chat among themselves during his classes; instead, they listen carefully to what Mr. Griffith has to say; and when they have something to say about the topic, they join the discussion. Another detail about Mr. Griffith's classes is that he uses the board very often. In the classroom scenes, the board is full of keywords and questions regarding the book they are studying. By putting the highlights of the book on the board for his students to see, they can understand the important points and keep them in their minds.

#### **4.2.7. Girl in Progress**

Year: 2012

Genre: Comedy-Drama

Country: USA

Teacher's Role in the Movie: Supporting

This film tells the story of a single mother, Grace, and her teenage daughter, Ansiedad. Ansiedad seems to have some issues at school with her peers and teachers; her mother is also problematic, as she acts like a much younger woman than her age. As the events develop, it becomes apparent that her mother is the main reason for her problems. Although Grace really loves her daughter and works to provide her with a good education, she never shows this to anyone around her. She draws the portrait of a careless mother, as she dates a married man and often neglects her daughter. In the scenes in which the mother and daughter are together, it is the daughter who seems to be more mature and who looks after the other. However, when she is not with her mother, Ansiedad appears as a problem child. She tries to become an adult fully by preparing and following a list of steps. At the same time, she continues her own struggle and faces the realities of adulthood, her mother goes through some problems with her married boyfriend, who lies about leaving his wife; and with her job at a restaurant, where she is trying to get a promotion. In the end, when they both realize their efforts are in vain, Grace breaks up with her boyfriend, and Ansiedad decides to run away from her mother and their life together. Grace goes crazy upon learning about her daughter's escape and looks for her everywhere. Finally, when they come together and talk frankly, they overcome their problems and decide to have a better relationship.

#### **4.2.7.1. Interpretation of the Character**

In the film, the English teacher, Ms. Armstrong, is not the main character, but she still has an important role, as she takes the leading part in the main characters' personal development. The English teacher somehow provides a bridge between the mother and daughter. As she gets to know the girl quite well, Ms. Armstrong finds out about the lack of communication Ansiedad has with her mother. She then sheds light on the way for the mother to reach her child by helping her realize the girl's feelings.

Thus, the English teacher in *Girl in Progress* is depicted as a kind, sincere, friendly and caring person, far from being a classical teacher with traditional teacher characteristics and authority. However, while she demonstrates these characteristics outside of school, she tries to hold power in the classroom by acting strictly, reminding students of the rules, and wearing jackets and glasses all the time. Although she does not show any sign of giving priority to one student over others during class hours, after school, she spends a lot of time with Ansiedad. Thanks to these after-class studies, she manages to reach Ansiedad, becomes important in her life, and finally helps her improve her relationship with her mother. While Ms. Armstrong teaches the coming-of-age story, the story of a child's transition to adulthood, in her classroom, as well as assigning her students to write their own, she also helps Ansiedad survive in her personal, real-life coming-of-age story.

#### **4.2.7.2. Social Identity**

Ms. Armstrong is a single, middle-aged woman, usually seen wearing a jacket and glasses in the classroom. She frequently mentions the rules during her class hours by saying, "Students in my class raise their hand," or "Shouldn't you ask for

permission?" especially when students break the rules. However, although she says that students are animals, when she is with them, she truly sees them as young individuals trying to find their way in life. She is quite unfriendly during class hours, which is opposite to her character outside the class, when she is friendly and completely interested in her students. For example, she immediately realizes changes in her students' appearance, as when the teenage main character comes to school with her clothes in an entirely different style; here, she says "Are you trying out a new look?" This is important, because the girl's mother does not notice the difference in her daughter, whereas the teacher can see it at first glance; this suggests that she is more concerned about the girl than her own mother is.

In addition, she listens to students' personal stories and problems, and she gets in touch with parents upon seeing signs of neglect. Accordingly, she does not hesitate to meet Ansiedad's mother when she feels the girl is being neglected. This is a sign of the responsibility and dedication she feels towards her students. She is not able to ignore the problems her students have outside of school or with their family members, nor does she believe that students' school and personal lives can be separated. In fact, she feels responsible when there is a problem in a student's private life, since she can see the adverse effects of this on the student's academic success. Moreover, she refuses to give up trying until she manages to solve the problem. For instance, even though Grace, Ansiedad's mother, rudely states that the teacher is not wanted, Ms. Armstrong does not give up, and she continues her attempts to help this single-parent family. To achieve this goal, Ms. Armstrong not only tries to be understanding, as with her statement that "you don't have to go to Harvard to see a little girl crying out for help," when Grace looks down on herself as she is not well-

educated like the teacher; but also threatens that "the state would consider parental neglect" as a means to stimulate the mother to action. From the perspective of students, when Ansiedad becomes desperate and decides to run away from her mother, she leaves a letter on Ms. Armstrong's car explaining her behaviors. This act shows that she feels close to her teacher and has a need to justify her reasons for leaving. In this sense, Ansiedad believes she owes this explanation because Ms. Armstrong has offered the help she cannot get from anybody else. Therefore, it may be said that the English teacher in the movie manages to establish a strong teacher-student connection and to make a difference in a student's life.

#### **4.2.7.3. Pedagogical Identity**

In her classroom, Ms. Armstrong asks many questions of the students before explaining a new topic in order to attract their attention and to get them to start thinking more deeply about the topic. With each question, she encourages them to dig deeply in their minds and look for every detail they possess in their background knowledge, thereby leading them into thinking and discovering the answers they need. Only after she makes sure that students have put forward every idea they can come up with does she begin her explanation. Accordingly, in the first lesson about coming-of-age stories, which also represents Ansiedad's journey through the film, she initiates the topic by asking the class, "Can anyone tell me what a coming-of-age story is? Any of you familiar with that term?" When she cannot get any answers, she starts presenting the topic by explaining and giving examples to make it clear, saying, "All right, a coming-of-age story is of a young person's change from inner child to an adult.... In other words, think it as a template for leaving your childhood behind." During her presentation of a new issue, she tries to relate it to students own

lives. She mentions abandoning childhood in this scene, for instance, to help them feel familiar with the new topic, as the students in her class are also in the stage of transition from childhood to adulthood.

Additionally, as a teacher, she assigns her students to write a story of the same type. This approach depicts Ms. Armstrong as a teacher who expects her students to gain a better understanding of a topic by being personally involved in what they are studying. Through asking them to transfer their theoretical knowledge into practical, she encourages students to be productive. In this process, she supports them by spends time outside of class with them, providing help on their assignments and closely following each step of their work. It is these meetings that bring Ms. Armstrong and Ansiedad closer. These sessions usually begin with Ansiedad discussing her homework, yet the teacher and student end up having more personal conversations about the things going on in Ansiedad's life. In this manner, Ms. Armstrong is able to learn more about Ansiedad's personality and problems, and they become much closer to each other without showing any sign of this at other times.



*Figure 4.11 Ms. Armstrong with student*

#### **4.2.8. The Perks of Being a Wallflower**

Year: 2012

Genre: Romance-Drama

Country: USA

Teacher's Role in the Movie: Supporting

This film is about a teenage boy named Charlie who tries to adapt to life both in and out of school despite his psychological problems. Charlie's best friend has committed suicide, and this loss has caused Charlie to develop a mental illness and has made him shy and quiet. Back in school, he feels alone, but he works to make friends and participate in activities again after his best friend's death. Fortunately, he is befriended by Sam and Patrick, who really care about him. As part of a group again, he begins to feel better. In the meantime, from the first day of school, he makes a strong connection with his English teacher, Mr. Anderson. Their relationship initiates with talking about books, and gradually, they become friends and talk about life and people. Charlie returns to normal life with the help of both his friendship with Sam and Patrick and the attention from his English teacher. As he falls in love with Sam, he is upset when both Sam and Patrick graduate and go to university. However, Sam's confessing her interest in Charlie before she leaves, and the year that they have spent altogether, have made him stronger. Far from the weak and shy student at the beginning, in the end, Charlie starts his final year at high school confident and peaceful.

#### **4.2.8.1. Interpretation of the Character**

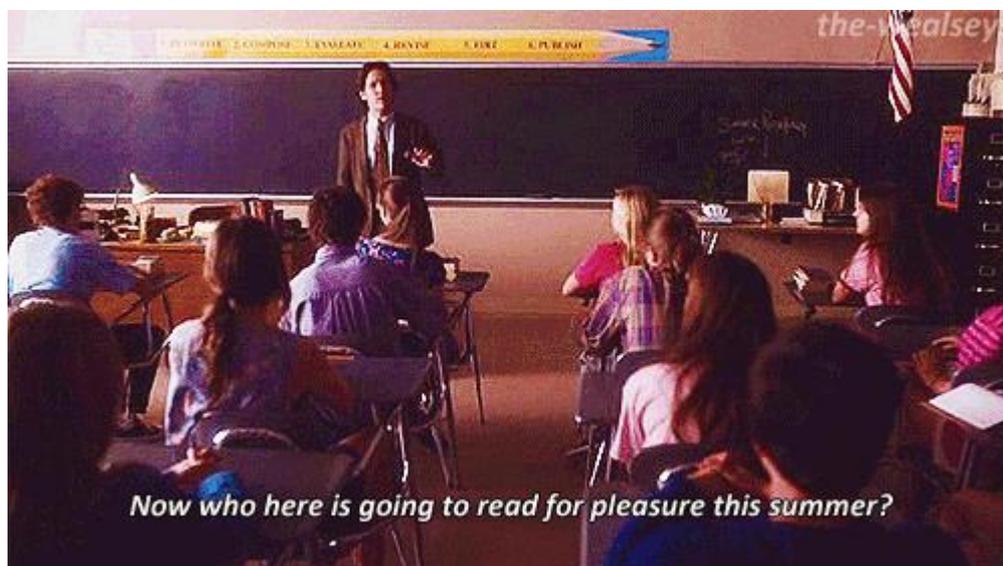
The English teacher, Mr. Anderson, does not take a leading part in the film. However, his role in Charlie's journey back to life is of particular importance. With the individual attention he pays to Charlie starting from the first day of school, Mr. Anderson becomes a strong support. The books he lends to Charlie create an intimate connection between the two and make time for them to have conversations out of class, not only about the books, but also about other issues. These conversations motivate Charlie to continue his struggle to reconnect to life.

The English teacher in this movie finds a way to help a struggling student overcome his problems. Although he seems authoritarian in the classroom, he is eager to make friends with his students after class time, encouraging them to share their problems or other aspects of their personal lives. For example, when Charlie requests, "Can I ask you a personal question?" Mr. Anderson consents, and they talk about love and other daily life topics in their one-to-one conversations. At the same time, Mr. Anderson keeps lending books to Charlie helping him to improve his performance in school, as well. Finally, he gives one of his books to Charlie as a Christmas present and proves his real friendship by saying, "This is my favorite book by far. This is my copy, but I want you to have it." Therefore, he becomes a guide to Charlie not only for his studies, but also in life.

#### **4.2.8.2. Social Identity**

During the film, Mr. Anderson is mostly seen in the classroom, either in or after his class hours, usually in interaction with Charlie. The English teacher is a young, married man who prefers to wear formal clothes and has an organized and tidy classroom. Although he seems rather serious and reserved during class, he is sincere

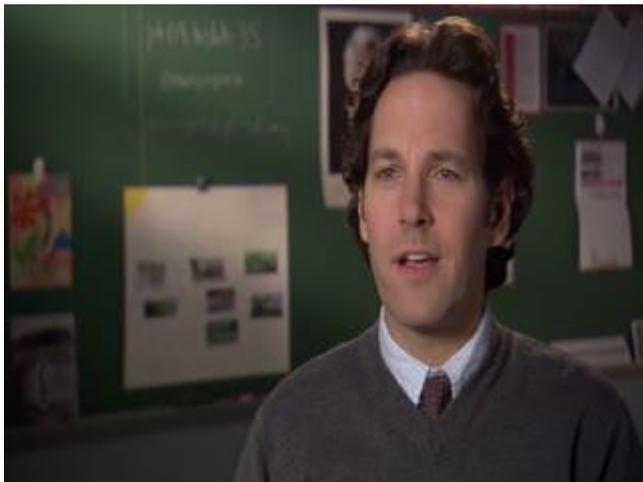
and talkative with individual students. His relationship with Charlie is the specific example of this shift in his attitude. As he knows about the mental problems Charlie has, he attempts to help him both as a friend in his personal life and as a teacher with his school performance. Through the year, he manages to reach the student by having after-class talks with him and giving him books to read. Eventually, at the end of the school year, Charlie comes to him and says he is the best teacher he has ever had and hugs him. Mr. Anderson smiles sincerely after this, which shows he is glad he helped the student to change. Moreover, on the last day of school, when he asks, "Who's going to read for pleasure this summer," Charlie is the only one to do so. Thus, the English teacher has had a great impact on a student who used to be problematic and who used to refuse to answer questions in class. In their final after-class talk, Mr. Anderson even encourages Charlie to write, saying "I think you could write one of them (books) one day."



**Figure 4.12** *Mr. Anderson's Classroom*

### 4.2.8.3. Pedagogical Identity

Mr. Anderson is strict and follows the rules in class. For example, he does not let students wear hats; when he sees one of them with a hat during his lesson, he takes it off. At the same time, he tries to maintain authority, he works to engage the students' attention and encourages them to participate in the lesson, walking around the classroom and asking questions. In his syllabus, he includes the book *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, by Harper Lee. This is a story depicting the significance of virtues and emphasizing equality among all people, representing Mr. Anderson's intent to convey moral and ethical messages through his teaching so that his students can be aware of the valuable things in life. As a teacher, he prioritizes providing students with the tools to succeed in both academic and personal life.



***Figure 4.13 Mr. Anderson***

Moreover, he is a good observer of his students' behavior; immediately recognizing Charlie's attention to the lesson and knowledge on the topic. Although Charlie never raises his hand, Mr. Anderson can see that he knows all the answers to the questions asked in the class; thus, it can be claimed that he is a teacher who is aware of the students' individual needs and capacities, and who approaches each one accordingly.

As such, he talks to Charlie privately after class because he understands that Charlie does not want other students to judge him if they learn that he is good at English or he is close to the teacher. In one conversation, Mr. Anderson says, "You should learn to participate. Why didn't you raise your hand?" As he sees Charlie is reluctant to communicate, he tries to encourage him by saying, "They call you the teacher's pet? If you make one friend on your first day, you are doing good." Thus, he implies that he wants to be friends with Charlie, and there is nothing wrong with having a friendly relationship with a teacher. This shows Mr. Anderson is really a friendly teacher who is eager to get to know his students better.

### **4.3. Common Themes**

In light of the data found through the analysis of the English teachers shown in the movies, some common characteristics can be seen across all representations. It is possible to talk about these shared features especially in terms of the teachers' classroom management and teaching techniques, as well as their relationships with students, parents, and principals. Namely, the data show that the teachers are depicted with similar personality traits and attitudes and that they are described as having similar reactions in certain situations. Furthermore, the English language teachers in these movies are mainly portrayed according to some common stereotypes. The following are the most distinctive features common to the English language teachers in the movies analyzed in this study.

#### **4.3.1. Classroom Management**

One of the characteristics that almost all of these characters share in terms of classroom management is their demand for discipline during class hours. Ms.

Sinclair from *The English Teacher* and Ms. Stubbs from *An Education* are characters who themselves have highly organized and disciplined lives, and thus, both require their students to have the same accepted behaviors; they work to impose their viewpoints and ways of conducting themselves. Furthermore, they appear as strict teachers both in and out of the classroom, while their involvement in their students' lives goes beyond the field of teaching. Ms. Stubbs even warns her students when she notices their untidy school uniforms; and she has imposed her authority to the extent that a student only needs to hear her saying, "top button," upon which the student responds quickly to arrange her clothing. Similarly, Mr. Griffith from *Easy A* is fond of school rules. Although he is relatively fun in class, he keeps reminding students of the rules and warns them against bad behavior in his strolls around the school garden. Moreover, Ms. Armstrong, in *Girl in Progress*, takes an angry tone in repeating the rules to students and expecting them to obey. For instance, she exclaims, "Students in my class raise their hand," or "Shouldn't you ask for permission?" to restate these rules in class. Moreover, despite having fewer classroom scenes, it is still possible to see that Mr. Anderson, in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, also believes in the importance of rules in the classroom, as with the example where he makes a student take off his cap. Even Mr. Bennet exhibits a strong belief in rules and respect in classroom, although he is not a very disciplined or responsible teacher himself. For example, he does not allow students to toy with their mobile phones during lessons, becoming frustrated when a student uses his mobile phone and asking to talk about this after class.

### 4.3.2. Pedagogy

Another aspect which is common in these characters' portrayals of teaching is that they always strive to get their students to take part in the lessons and to be confident enough to express their opinions. The teachers guide these young people to be independent, secure and assertive, and to speak up without hesitation. They want their students to have high self-esteem, and they are aware that their confidence in themselves starts in the classroom and continues in all aspects of life. Therefore, they encourage their students to take the first steps to becoming courageous and self-assured adults. The scene from *Freedom Writers*, in which students toast for a change, exemplifies this well:

MS. GRUWELL: "Ok guys and gals, listen up! This is what I want you to do. I want each of you to step forward and take one of these Borders bags, which contain the four books we're going to read this semester. They're very special books and they each remind me in some way each of you. But before you take the books, I want you to take one of these glasses of sparkling soda, and I want each of you to make a toast. You're each going to make a toast for change. And what that means is from this moment on every voice that told you you can't is silenced. Every reason that tells you things will never change disappears. And the person before this moment, that person's turn is over. Now it's your turn. Ok, you're ready to get this party going on?"

STUDENT 1: "Well, I have a boyfriend since I was like eleven you know. I was always supposed to know I'm going to get pregnant before I turn sixteen and drop out, like my mum. It isn't going to happen."

STUDENT 2: "They don't see the wars that we fight every single day...I will not die, and I will not tolerate abuse from anyone. I'm strong."

STUDENT 3: "My mum kicked me out when I got jumped into the gang life. But I'd like her to see me graduate, like to be eighteen." (DeVito, Shamberg, Shern & LaGravenese, 2007).

Mr. Griffith in *Easy A*, Ms. Sinclair in *The English Teacher*, and Ms. Pomeroy in *Donnie Darko* allow and even motivate their students to share their opinions on the

books they study as they review the books together in class. They have discussions during which all students can express their views openly by referring to the books; and Ms. Stubbs, in *An Education*, does not interfere when the girls in her class gossip about their classmate's love affairs. Despite being strict, she sees that they have already figured out the details about the characters in the book and they are now commenting on them. Rather, she takes the opportunity to identify the student and her lover with the characters in the book they are reading. Likewise, in *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, Mr. Anderson asks questions about the books in the lesson, and he expects his students to have a proper understanding of content and pay attention to the details. In his observation of the class during one of these question-answer sessions, he senses that the new student is not confident enough to respond with what he knows. Seeing this, Mr. Anderson wants the student to stay after the class so that he can encourage him to be more confident in the classroom. On the other hand, Ms. Armstrong, in *Girl in Progress*, asks numerous questions before she presents a new topic. In this way, she tries to get her students to reflect about the topic and come up with their own ideas. In addition, Jim Bennet, in *The Gambler*, asks about his students' experiences during his class hours and listens to them carefully in a supportive and caring manner. Erin Gruwell, in *Freedom Writers*, on the other hand, has more difficulty in getting her students to share their opinions due to the conflicts they have among each other. Her students are so aggressive that when they talk during the lesson, it is generally to make fun of other students, rather than to take part in the lesson. To overcome this issue, at first, Ms. Gruwell forces them to answer questions by ordering each student determinedly, such as by saying, "Gloria, read the first sentence on the board!" Later, as they get accustomed to each other in the class,

she brings them notebooks so that they can keep reflective journals. Although she cannot make them speak comfortably in the lesson, she at least gets them to express themselves by writing whatever they want, promising that she will not evaluate their journals unless they permit her to do so. By using this instructional material and activity, namely, keeping a journal, she causes her students to think about and reflect on their experiences.

Another significant characteristic of the English teachers in the films is their ability to observe their classrooms, as well as their individual students. This indicates their dedication to their students and their passion for teaching. Through this practice, they have the opportunity to witness and assess the change in each student. Mr. Bennet, in *The Gambler*, for instance, is such a good observer that he is aware of the writing talent of one of his students. Similarly, Mr. Anderson, from *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, observes his students so well that even in their first lesson, he can understand that the new student has read the book, although he does not answer the questions. With the power of being a careful observer, he is able to assess his students' strong and weak points without much difficulty. Ms. Armstrong is likewise quick to notice changes in the appearance of her students. Aside from the transformation in the student's behavior in accordance with coming-of-age stories, she recognizes that the student has developed a new taste in style, asking her, "Are you trying out a new look?" as soon as the girl enters the class. These examples show that the teachers portrayed in the films do not conceptualize teaching only as an instructional task. Rather, they consider it as a holistic, multifaceted profession. Furthermore, in *Easy A*, Mr. Griffith is also an excellent observer, and he can guess which student is capable of doing what. He is also the only person in the school who

does not believe the rumor about one of his students' immoral actions, since he has already formed his own opinion of her existence. Moreover, the teachers in *Donnie Darko* and *Freedom Writers* observe what the students need in general to succeed in their educational lives. In fact, Ms. Pomeroy risks her own career in her attempts to change people's opinions about teaching in order to help students achieve a better education. She offers her students what they are lacking, by employing innovative teaching techniques; for instance, she encourages her students to question and reflect on what they are taught and prefers class discussions, whereas conventional teachers adopt teacher-centered approaches and expect their students to assume that everything they hear from teachers is correct. Ms. Gruwell, as well, challenges the traditional approach in teaching to support her students in their hardships. First, she allows her students to express their anger towards other people, and she allows them to try to prove they are all different. Then, she shows them how similar they really are by encouraging them talk about their personal lives and interests. She makes use of songs, games, and out-of-school activities to engage the students in class discussions. Thus, through their understanding certain activities and behaviors are necessary for students to succeed, both teachers help them to gain a different point of view and broaden their horizons.

#### **4.3.3. Teacher-Student Interaction**

The teachers in the films stand out with their specific relationships with the students, parents, and principals. Generally, they establish a close rapport with their students, particularly with those who are problematic and difficult. The teachers are eager to spare time for their students after class hours, not only to support them in their studies or to help them in their assignments, but also to have discussions and give

advice on their personal issues. In the end, these teachers become the only adults whom their students can trust.

The best example of this ideal teacher is Erin Gruwell, in *Freedom Writers*. She is so dedicated to her students that she even finds part-time jobs so that she can afford to buy books for them. She takes them on trips, and they visit museums and eat out at hotels together. This commitment impacts her dissolving marriage; however, she does not let her students down amid her personal crisis. Through her support, although her students are low-achievers, they come to believe in their own potential, without which they cannot succeed. After all she has sacrificed, she becomes the symbol of hope for these students. Similarly, Ms. Sinclair, in the movie *The English Teacher*, is the only hope for the students when they are staging a play. She pays for the extra expenses of the production and rejects the changes in the play demanded by the principals in order not to disappoint the students.

In the other movies, the teachers also develop sincere relationships with students and help them solve their problems. In *An Education*, for instance, Ms. Stubbs tries to stop her successful student in her decision to get married, although everybody else is encouraging her. She advises her to continue her education, and when the student breaks up with her fiancé and comes back disappointed, it is again Ms. Stubbs who tutors her and helps her go on to university. Mr. Anderson, from *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, likewise becomes close to a new student who is struggling with psychological problems, giving him close attention starting with an after-class talk on the very first day. Furthermore, Mr. Griffith, in *Easy A*, does not believe in the lies about his student; rather, he encourages her by praising her strengths and abilities in their meetings spared for discussing assignments. In the end, the girl apologizes to

him for her lies and mistakes, showing the importance he had in her life. Likewise, in *Girl in Progress*, Ms. Armstrong develops a closer relationship with a student than the girl has with her own mother, as the student is able to share her problems with her English teacher. Thus, it can be seen that the English language teachers are friendly and responsible individuals in their relationships with their students, both in and out of class. Even though they are strict and direct during class hours, they do not hesitate to give up their rules when they feel the students need their help and compassion.

#### **4.3.4. Teacher-Parent Interaction**

The English language teachers shown in the films are also notable in their encounters with parents. Their involvement often centers on conflicts between students and their own parents, and it can be said that the English teachers in these movies are brave enough to stand up to parents when they sense that their students are being oppressed.

One of the most notable examples of this is the case of Ms. Sinclair in *The English Teacher*. When her former student convinces her that he has been abused and insulted by his own father for years, Ms. Sinclair instantly becomes tense and sharp in her dialogue with the student's father. She does not hold back from witnessing an argument between the father and the son, and she supports her student by blaming the father for not respecting his son. This is a result of the teacher's acceptance of her students as her own children. When the father asks if she has kids, she implies that she considers her students as her children and has a heated argument with Dr. Sherwood on being a good parent:

DR. SHERWOOD: “For the record, I did not go to the school because of the play. I was there because Jason lied to me. On Tuesdays and Thursday, he is supposed to be taking the prep class, he told me his rehearsals would not interfere with that. Now I found that he has been not only skipping the classes all together, but he lied to me about it.”

MS. SINCLAIR: “Oh come on, do you expect me to believe this?”

DR. SHERWOOD: “I do, look. He said this to me an hour before I saw you yesterday. (reading a text message) Hi dad, on my way to prep class, be back later tonight. You see that right?”

MS. SINCLAIR: “Well, if he had lied he feels he has no choice. How can he trust you? You are crushing his spirit.”

DR. SHERWOOD: “How am I crushing his spirit?”

MS. SINCLAIR: “Forcing Jason to go law school is like using up a Shakespeare for toilet paper.”

DR. SHERWOOD: “Forcing him? I’ve never forced Jason to do anything. Going to law school is entirely his idea.”

MS. SINCLAIR: “I’m sure you’re begging him not to go.”

DR. SHERWOOD: “There is nothing I can say to convince you.”

MS. SINCLAIR: “You know what you can do? You can start by giving Jason the respect and the freedom that he deserves.”

DR. SHERWOOD: “Oh, maybe I should stop talking to him altogether. That will work for you?”

MS. SINCLAIR: “That might be an improvement.”

DR. SHERWOOD: “Ok. You don’t have any kids.”

MS. SINCLAIR: “Excuse me but I’ve had hundreds of kids and I’ve had a lot of experience with them.”

DR. SHERWOOD: “Ok that’s my mistake. I’m doing the best I can with Jason.”

MS. SINCLAIR: “Perhaps, your best isn’t good enough.” (Despres, LeClair, Salerno, & Zisk, 2013).



**Figure 4.14 Ms. Sinclair observing a parent**

Another teacher who intervenes in her student's conflict with a parent is Ms. Armstrong, from *Girl in Progress*. The plot of the movie centers on this young girl's disagreement with her mother on almost everything; her English teacher is the person in whom she confides. Ms. Armstrong strives to help her student solve her problems, and when the mother seems neither welcoming nor understanding, Ms. Armstrong threatens to report her neglect to the state:

MS. ARMSTRONG: "I'm Joe Armstrong; I'm your daughter's English teacher. She's been skipping class."

GRACE: "Why hasn't the school called me?"

MS. ARMSTRONG: "Well, they probably have. I left you a message that your daughter erased. She told me so. You know, frankly, the state would consider parental neglect. But I'm not going to call the state. Your daughter, she thinks she is in a coming-of-age story; she's trying to grow up. I think she believes experiencing certain things will speed that process along; it's like she is name checking these hardships that she could skip to the point she is matured from experiencing them."

GRACE: "Oh God look I didn't go to Harvard ok? I don't have an education, but this stuff you're telling me that my mother would call tarado. Do you know what that means? Well, that means stupid."

MS. ARMSTRONG: "You don't have to go to Harvard to see a little girl crying out for help."

GRACE: "Have a nice day."

MS. ARMSTRONG: “She's trying to leave home like you left home.”

GRACE: “How dare you? I was 17, and I got a horror show for a mother, so how dare you judge me? I was a little kid. My mother was never there for me.”

MS. ARMSTRONG: “You know what? Ansiedad left this letter for me, but I’m sorry I think it’s for you.” (Fiedler, Odell, & Riggen, 2012).

Ms. Stubbs might also be considered as a teacher taking sides with a student against her parents; although she never comes face to face with them, her struggle to change a young girl’s mind about marriage can be accepted as a reaction to her parents’ ideas, since they believe their daughter should quit school and marry a wealthy gentleman.

#### **4.3.5. Teacher vs. the Administration**

Another distinctive feature these teachers possess is their conflicts with school principals. The English teachers in the movies analyzed tend to be innovative in their teaching styles, an issue perceived as a threat against the traditional approaches and techniques supported by the administration. At the same time, the teachers differ in the way they build connections with their students, which meets with disapproval by administrators who usually prefer conventional teaching methods. The two teachers that deserve particular recognition in their opposition against their principals are Ms. Pomeroy and Ms. Gruwell. The conflict Ms. Pomeroy has with the school authority results in her being expelled from school altogether, as she overtly criticizes the priorities of her school regarding the education it offers. The other teachers disapprove of her choices and attitude as well, including her selection of materials and methods of teaching. For instance, in a PTA meeting Ms. Pomeroy is harshly criticized by another teacher because of her selection of materials:

PRINCIPLE COLE: “In cooperation with the county police, we have begun an active investigation into the cause of the flooding. And our suspects include several of our own students. Now...”

KITTY FARMER: “I want to know why this filth is being taught to our children.”

PRINCIPLE COLE: “Kitty, I would appreciate, if you would wait...”

KITTY FARMER: “Dr. Cole not only am I a teacher, but I am also a parent of a Middlesex child. Therefore, I am the only person here who transcends the parent-teacher bridge. I have in my hand Graham Green’s *The Destructors*. This short story is part of my daughter’s English assignment. In this story, several children destroy an elderly man’s house from inside out. And how do they do this? They flood the house by breaking through a water main. And I think that this garbage should be removed!”

ROSE DARKO: “Excuse me. What is the real issue here? The PTA doesn’t ban books.”

KITTY FARMER: “The PTA is here to acknowledge that pornography is being taught in our curriculum!”

MS. POMEROY: “It’s meant to be ironic.”

KITTY FARMER: “Excuse me. You need to go back to grad school.”

ROSE DARKO: “Kitty, do you even know who Graham Green is?”

KITTY FARMER: “I think we have all seen *Bonanza*.”

PRINCIPLE COLE: “Well, while we are on other topics...”  
(Fields, Juvonen & Kelly, 2001).

Ms. Pomeroy believes that the students need to acquire knowledge individually and as independent learners, rather than being seen as all the same. She argues that the students are lost because nobody is really trying to fulfill their needs, and the school is reluctant to change the system to save them. It is these beliefs, and the way she states them as frankly and loudly as possible; and, moreover, applying her own methods in the class instead of what is required by the school, that causes her to lose her job:

PRINCIPLE COLE: “I’m sorry, Karen. This is a progressive school, but we don’t feel the methods you’ve undertaken here are appropriate.”

MS. POMEROY: “What exactly about my methods are inappropriate?”

PRINCIPLE COLE: “I am sorry that you have failed. Now if you excuse me, I have another appointment. You can finish out the week.” (Fields, Juvonen & Kelly, 2001).



*Figure 4.15 Ms. Pomeroy with another teacher*

A similar conflict takes place between Ms. Gruwell and her school principal. It starts on her first day at school, when the administration criticizes her for her choice of clothing. These attacks continue with her selection of instructional materials in her courses. She wants her students to have their own books, but the head teacher rejects her request, stating that the books might not be returned. Ms. Gruwell ignores the authority at her school and seeks help from higher authorities. In every attempt to achieve the best for her students, she is opposed by the head teacher and the other teachers in her school. Looking down on her students, these teachers believe that Ms. Gruwell will end up disappointed. However, she proves to be right in her rejection of

the traditional views when a successful student elects her course only because she offers a different and unique syllabus.

Given these characteristics, it can be seen that the English teachers are depicted as determined characters who stick to their own beliefs despite all sorts of criticism and disapproval. Although they are often disrespected and rejected by others, they never cease to fight for their own truth as educators.



*Figure 4.16 Ms. Gruwell with school principal*

## **CHAPTER V CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, the results of the analysis of English language teachers in films are summarized, and some implications for English language teacher education programs are suggested.

### **5.2. Conclusion**

With the guidance of the research questions, this study aimed to identify the general qualities of English teacher portrayals as characters in the movies, as well as possible common themes that may be effective in English language teacher education.

As for the characters' general qualities, it was revealed that there are certain characteristics typical of English language teacher characters, and those are: a preference for formal clothing; a tendency to be strict and disciplined, give homework assignments, make student observations, make use of visuals and the white/black board; application of student-centered teaching; spending time with students after class; having conflicts with school authorities; and willingness to make contact with parents.

The English language teacher characters in the films are similar in their appearance as they all prefer dressing formally. Although they can shift from being authoritarian to being friendly as a teacher, they would rather remind their strict and disciplined self to the students all the time by their formal appearance.

The English teachers in the films adopt a student-centered approach to teaching. They motivate their learners to take part in classroom activities with innovative

teaching skills. Ms Gruwell, in *Freedom Writers*, makes use of games and music in her classroom, for instance, so that she can attract the attention of her students. In the last classroom scene of *The English Teacher*, Ms Sinclair engages her students to creative writing by encouraging them to write an alternative ending to the novel they have studied.

Classroom discussions are one of the most popular activities the teachers make use of in their teaching. The English language teachers frequently ask open-ended questions in order to lead their students to think critically. In the scenes depicting classroom discussions regarding the incidents and characters in the novels they study, the English teachers in *Easy A*, *The English Teacher*, *Donnie Darko*, *An Education*, and *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* guide the learners to reflect on what they have read.

The blackboard is an important visual material in English language teacher characters' classrooms. In most of the classroom scenes in the movies, the blackboards are displayed full of teachers' handwriting. When they organize discussions or make reviews of novels with students, they write keywords, and important names and details on the board. It is only Erin Gruwell from *Freedom Writers* who uses the blackboard for different activities. That is to say, in one scene, she writes incorrect sentences for her students to find and correct the mistakes related to the topic they study.

Most of the English language teacher characters use various visual materials as well. In the classroom scenes of the movies, the English teachers' classroom is depicted as colourful with numerous pictures, posters, and photos on the walls.

In addition to tests and quizzes, the English teachers in the films *Freedom Writers*, *The English Teacher*, *An Education*, *Easy A*, and *Girl in Progress*, assign homework and their students are assessed according to the papers they write.

**Table 5.1**

***General Qualities of English Teacher Characters***

<b>Teachers' stereotypical characteristics</b>	<b>Freedom Writers</b>	<b>The English Teacher</b>	<b>The Gambler</b>	<b>Donnie Darko</b>	<b>An Education</b>	<b>Easy A</b>	<b>Girl in Progress</b>	<b>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</b>
Formal clothes	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Strict/disciplined		√			√	√	√	√
Homework assignments	√	√			√	√	√	
Student observation	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
Use of visuals	√	√		√		√	√	√
Use of white/black board	√	√		√		√	√	√
Student-centered teaching	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Time spent with students after class	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Problems with school authority	√	√	√	√				
Contact with parents		√		√	√		√	

As for the common themes, the analysis of the eight twenty-first century films with English language teacher characters revealed that the depictions share certain common features regarding the pedagogical and social identities of teachers. Some common themes occurred relating to classroom management, pedagogy, and interactions between teachers and students, parents and principals.

### **5.3. Suggestions for Teacher Education**

These films depicting English language teacher characters may serve as materials for teacher education, since teacher-centered films are viewed as significantly influential in teacher training for various purposes. The effectiveness of these films lies in the idea that, by broadening the perspectives of teacher candidates, they may inform their future teaching. Ryan and Townsend (2012) express the importance of these films in teacher education as follows:

Because preservice teachers do not yet have sufficient teaching experiences about which to reflect and little time to observe and consider adjustments in instruction over time, reflective analysis of popular media representations can offer surrogate experiences upon which to develop an educational philosophy and to consider classroom strategies as well as opportunities for future teachers to explore their own preconceptions about teaching that may well have been influenced by such representations (p. 239).

Thus, the movies analyzed in this study may be effective for preservice English language teachers in terms of providing the classroom experience they lack. As real classroom experiences of prospective teachers are inevitably limited in teacher education programs, viewing the teacher characters and the pedagogical identities represented in these films may support preservice teachers in developing a better understanding of the classroom atmosphere. Moreover, the English language teacher characters in each film teaches students from different age groups. Therefore, these films give preservice teachers the opportunity to view and reflect on methods of teaching with students of various ages. As well as viewing the films as a stimulus for discussion on the teaching techniques and styles used by the teacher characters, they may provide a framework for prospective teachers' reflection on applications and adaptations of these techniques in their own teaching.

From another perspective, the English teacher characters in the movies are able to develop a close rapport with their students. Despite challenges, and sometimes initial rejections from the learners, they manage to build good relationships, which helps the learners in terms of both academic success and personal development. This is one of the aspects that make these teacher characters heroic, as they succeed in their relationships with their students thanks to their ways of conflict management. Through their ability to solve the conflicts they have with their learners, as well as among the students themselves in the classroom or in their personal lives, the English language teachers become closer to the students. In the following table, various conflicts that the teacher characters in the movies encounter and their solutions to these are exemplified. These approaches may be helpful for both preservice and in-service teachers as a guide for conflict management.

**Table 5.2**

*Examples of Conflict Management Strategies*

<b>Title of the film</b>	<b>Conflict English teacher faces</b>	<b>English teacher's solution</b>
Freedom Writers	There is disagreement and hatred among students.	The teacher uses games and class discussions on daily life topics as icebreakers.
Freedom Writers	Students are not interested in the topics of the course.	The teacher makes use of innovative teaching techniques, such as using songs, reflective journals, and fun games, to attract students' attention.
Freedom Writers	School administration does not provide books.	The English teacher prepares her own syllabus and buys the books herself.
The English Teacher	Former student does not believe in his own talent as a playwright.	The English teacher selects his play to be staged by school's drama club.
The English Teacher	Father and son have an argument at school.	The teacher interrupts their argument and warns the father that he cannot behave aggressively at school.

The Gambler	School administration requires the English teacher to give high grades to a student who is a school team player.	The teacher rejects all the demands and fails the student, since he is not good at English.
Donnie Darko	Students make fun of or question the benefits of the books they study for the course.	If the students question the books after reading them, the English teacher encourages them to justify their arguments; however, if they make fun of the books without reading them, the teacher criticizes them sarcastically.
An Education	A student decides to quit school and get married.	The English teacher talks to the girl in private to change her mind, and in the classroom, she keeps implying how important it is to have a good education.
Easy A	Two students quarrel in the classroom.	The teacher sends one of them to principal's office as she uses inappropriate language, although she is the one that is right in the argument.
Easy A	A student starts telling lies about herself at school.	The English teacher talks to her in his office, and then organizes an appointment for her with the school counsellor.
Girl in Progress	A student has problems with her mother and decides to run away from home.	The English teacher visits the mother to make her aware of the situation and warn her about her daughter's plans.
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	A student does not have self-confidence to take part in class discussions despite being good at English.	The English teacher talks to the student after each class to motivate him and tries to become close to him by lending him novels to read.

Moreover, specific scenes from the films may be applied to certain courses in English language teaching departments in order to fulfill particular descriptors and achieve the defined aims of teacher training courses. The following are some examples regarding the use of specific elements from the films in English language teacher education.

### **5.3.1. Pedagogical Implications**

Research suggests that using movies in the classroom to enhance learning has become popular. Teachers apply films in their classroom for several purposes. Kuzma and Haney (2001) justify this trend, articulating that “we need to see our job not as teaching to students but rather as facilitating the learning process. Movies are useful and natural tools in this endeavour” (p. 36). Moreover, Kabadayı (2012) states that innovative teaching includes movies as materials, since “mass media is effective in every field of life by virtue of their audio-visual powers. In addition to usage of cinema for entertainment purposes, its educational role has been realized; and utilizing visual expression in education has been expanded” (p. 316). In this sense, movies are given importance in teacher education, as well as in other fields, with their ability to provide effective material for prospective teachers to reflect on their existing knowledge and beliefs about teaching.

This section suggests the implications of various scenes from the movies examined in the study as material for different courses in English Language Teaching departments as a means for prospective teachers to gain insight in teaching.

#### **5.3.1.1. The Line Game**

The scene from *Freedom Writers*, in which Erin Gruwell organizes a game in the class and uses it as an icebreaker for her students, might be used as an audio-visual material for Classroom Management or Effective Communication courses in English Language Teaching departments, since these courses have similar aims of equipping prospective teachers with the ability to solve communication problems in the classroom. The descriptors of the Effective Communication courses focus on the gender, age, background and ethnic differences among learners and the solutions to

the conflicts caused by these differences. Classroom Management courses, on the other hand, aim to teach prospective teachers how to orient and maintain a positive classroom atmosphere.

The game that the English teacher Erin Gruwell sets up in her class is called the Line Game. In this activity, the teacher draws a line in the middle of the classroom, and the students are divided into two groups standing on either side of this line. The teacher then asks successive questions and expects the students to come close to the line if their answer to the question is positive. After each question, the students move back to wait for the next one.



***Figure 5.1 The Line Game***

Erin's aim in using this game is to be able to show her students how similar they are in their lives, although they do not yet see this. Her selection of questions is also intentional. She picks questions related to real-life problems, including legal and

moral issues pertaining to students' lives. Since her students are from various minority ethnic groups, they tend to dislike each other, and it is impossible to have a peaceful and positive atmosphere in the classroom. By organizing this game and asking sentimental questions, Erin's goal is to make her students realize they have a lot in common, and in fact, they are not as different as they tend to believe. Below are some questions from the game:

1. How many of you have the new Snoop Dogg album?
2. How many of you know someone, a friend or relative, who was or is in juvenile hall or jail?
3. How many of you have been in juvenile hall or jail for any length of time?
4. Stand on the line if you have lost a friend to gang violence.

The game works well in Erin's class and helps the students to get to know each other in unique ways. Thus, the viewing of the game scene in the above-mentioned courses might be helpful for prospective teachers by giving them ideas regarding the management of problematic classes that may be characterized by hostility.



*Figure 5.2 The Line Game*

### **5.3.1.2. Presentation of a New Topic**

The scene from *Girl in Progress*, in which Ms. Armstrong introduces the new topic of coming-of-age story, could be applied in the teaching of all the topics in English Language classes. In this scene, Ms. Armstrong starts by asking her students whether they know what a coming-of-age story is. Therefore, before explaining the topic, she urges the students to think about it and consider their background information relating to the new topic. The students become familiar with the topic they will soon learn by making informed guesses about it, and when they cannot answer, Ms. Armstrong starts giving clues:

MS. ARMSTRONG: “Can anyone tell me what a coming-of-age story is? Are any of you familiar with that term? All right, a coming-of-age story is the story of a young person’s inner change from child to adult, and the transformative journey that brings about that change. In other words, think it as a template for leaving your childhood behind. Think of these stories as a haunted house. One full of stuff so horrifying that a kid goes in one end in a sense naïve and comes out the other side profoundly changed from the experience itself.”

ANSIEDAD: “How? How did the characters leave their childhood behind? Like, if they hated, if it sucks?”

MS. ARMSTRONG: “By taking on the traditional challenges of adolescence. Those challenges are called rites of passage. They are like unwanted but necessary stops on the highway to adulthood and independence. I want all of you to write this down; rites of passage.” (Fiedler, Odell & Riggen, 2012).

First, she gives a formal definition, and then she continues her explanation with terms that are more familiar to the students. After this classroom scene, a student is viewed in the library trying to find out more about the topic. Thus, it can be said that the teachers’ successful presentation of topics lead and motivate students for autonomous study. To view this scene with English Language Teaching students in the context of Methodology or English Teachers’ Presentation Skills courses might help them to become aware of the significance of attracting learners’ attention to a topic. Furthermore, with the help of this scene, prospective English teachers may become aware of the importance of developing familiarity with a topic before presenting it to enhance students’ curiosity.

#### **5.3.1.3. Visuals**

Using the scenes showing Ms. Sinclair’s classroom from the film *The English Teacher* might be effective for demonstrating to prospective teachers how to organize a classroom that is conducive to learning. Her use of classroom walls and noticeboards illustrate the display of visual materials such as pictures, photographs and posters, all of which can help bring prospective teachers’ attention on the classroom space as an aspect of learning.



***Figure 5.3 Visuals in Ms. Sinclair's Classroom***

Additionally, the materials she has put on the walls might be used in Materials Development courses to suggest ways of teaching with visual materials for prospective English teachers.



***Figure 5.4 Visuals in Ms. Sinclair's Classroom***



***Figure 5.5 Visuals in Ms. Sinclair's Classroom***

#### **5.4. Discussion and Suggestions for Further Studies**

The English language teachers represented in the movies examined in the present study are either British or American, and when they are compared with each other according to the general qualities they possess, it can be argued that there is no a significant difference. However, in terms of their potential effectiveness in teacher education in Turkey, when these teachers are compared to Turkish instructors, there are some points in which they differ. First, the English language teachers in the movies are not teaching English as a foreign language, in contrast to their Turkish counterparts. Therefore, their syllabi are composed of well-known literary works. Moreover, the American teachers, in particular, work in multicultural classrooms, and some face serious problems because of the racial and cultural differences among their students. Despite such differences, the films might still support Turkish teachers, as they offer a chance for gaining additional classroom experience and viewing a classroom atmosphere with which they are not familiar. Moreover, multiculturalism in education is not only related to racial diversity. In fact, it also encompasses differences in sex, and class, and deals with the education of students with disabilities, as well (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). Thus, English classes may serve as an atmosphere in which to discuss social issues deriving from diversity (Bulut & Arıkan, 2015). Moreover, multicultural classrooms are challenging for teachers not only because the students are from various backgrounds, but also because they are accustomed to different teaching styles (Vita, 2001). In Turkey, as well, there are many classrooms with students of different cultural backgrounds and learning styles. Thus, the films provide an effective example of teaching in diverse classrooms.

This relates to another issue regarding the representations of English language teachers in the movies, which may provide benefits for prospective teachers and teacher trainers; namely, the ways that the teacher characters balance their personal and professional lives. In fact, the English language teachers portrayed in the films are so dedicated to their profession and so devoted to their students that they cannot separate their personal and professional lives; when analyzing their pedagogical and social identities, it is impossible to exclude their students from either of them. These teachers embrace diversity in their classrooms, and they deal with all types of learners; they are even concerned about social problems in individual students' lives. Their encouragement of their students to believe in themselves, be self-confident and have high self-esteem, as well as motivating them to achieve academic success, indicates a perception that their profession has two sides: in one of which they support students in their academic development, and in the other of which, they lead them to a transformation in their personal lives (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). In this sense, they might be accepted as transformative intellectuals, since they are evoking social awareness and giving their students hope for surviving difficult situations (Giroux, 2010).

Th teacher characters work hard to make a difference in students' lives, and thus, they become heroic. The female teacher characters in the movies Particularly exhibit this characteristic, as they are represented as challenging authority or parents more often the males. For example, the character who is expelled from school, the one whose marriage comes to an end, and those who have arguments with parents are all female teachers. On the other hand, there are many scenes in the movies displaying both male and female teacher characters spending time with or, at least, for their

students after school. They all sacrifice their personal lives to help students. For instance, some visit parents, while others organize extracurricular activities; one of the teachers even works part-time jobs to buy books for students. Therefore, it might be accepted that teachers' personal and professional lives must be uniquely amalgamated in order for them to become heroic. These heroic teacher characters may set an example not only for preservice teachers, but also for in-service teachers and teacher trainers, by providing a model for solving problems in and out of class.

Overall, the teachers manage to create an effective classroom atmosphere from which learners gain the opportunity for personal as well as academic development. The heroic teachers adapt their techniques match the needs of each classroom, and thus, they create an effect on students' lives (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). As such, they motivate their learners and establish rapport with them by praising their individuality (Husain, 2017). Their ideologies in this respect may provide inspiration for those in the profession, as they are able to find the most appropriate methods or materials to transform their instruction according to learner needs, rather than following generally accepted approaches in education (Arikan, 2006). Through these qualities, English language teacher characters in the movies are able to manage their classrooms and the conflicts regarding students' academic and personal lives, developing close relationships with them. Thanks to their dedication to their profession and to their students, they become heroic.

Some suggestions for further studies can be offered as follows:

- Since the present study examined only eight films with English language teacher characters, similar studies should be carried out with a wider variety of films.

- The present study analyzed movies with English language teacher characters. Similar studies should focus on films with characters who are teachers of English as a foreign or second language, specifically.
- As the films examined in the present study are only produced in twenty-first century, further studies might be conducted with films from a longer time period.
- Similar studies might focus on English language teachers working in different school types, and/or with learners of various age groups.
- Further studies should also examine the differences in English language teachers' gender, age group, personal and educational backgrounds.
- Since the present study suggests the use of eight movies with English language teacher characters in preservice teacher education, further studies might be conducted to analyze the effectiveness of the specific suggestions and implications offered by this study in English Language Teaching Departments.

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## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX 1 MOVIE ANALYSIS CHART

Film Title	Year	Name of the English teacher	English Teacher's characteristics	Important quotes	Teacher's Role
Freedom Writers	2007	Erin Gruwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• First teaching experience</li> <li>• Dedicated</li> <li>• Enthusiastic</li> <li>• Wears formal clothes</li> <li>• Plays music in class</li> <li>• Make students play games</li> <li>• Takes students to trips to museum</li> <li>• Uses the board for every lesson</li> <li>• Organizes teacher-parent meeting</li> <li>• Brings journals to students</li> <li>• Finds part-time jobs to earn money for students' books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "You can't make someone want education." (head teacher)</li> <li>• "Do I look like a teacher?"</li> <li>• "I know I have a lot to learn as a teacher, but I'm a good student."</li> <li>• "I wouldn't wear them to class!" (head teacher)</li> <li>• "I think the real fighting should be here in the classroom"</li> <li>• "We don't talk about anything but your job." (husband)</li> <li>• "Settle down."</li> <li>• "Quiet please."</li> <li>• "Can you please sit back on your seats?"</li> <li>• "May I please get some help here?"</li> <li>• Erin: "Gloria read the first sentence on the board!" Gloria: "Why me?" Erin: "Because I know how much you love to read. Close the magazine!"</li> <li>• "None of these sentences are correct. I'd like you to rewrite these sentences using appropriate tenses and spelling using page four on your books."</li> <li>• "My English teacher is the only person that reminds me of hope. I'm home in class."</li> </ul>	<p><b>Delegator:</b> tries to make students have their own point of view</p> <p><b>Prompter:</b> helps students achieve more by encouraging them</p>
The Perks of Being a Wallflower	2013	Mr. Anderson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Wears suits</li> <li>• Walks around the classroom looking at Ss while talking</li> <li>• Makes a student take off his cap in class</li> <li>• Recognizes the student's knowledge and encourages him to participate</li> <li>• Tries to be friends with the problematic student</li> <li>• Knows about the student's problems from the previous year, which shows he is interested in his students</li> <li>• Allows the student to ask personal questions about love and gives advice</li> <li>• Gives his favorite book to the student for Christmas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "You should learn to participate."</li> <li>• "Why didn't you raise your hand?"</li> <li>• "They call you the teacher's pet?"</li> <li>• "If you make one friend on your first day, you are doing good."</li> <li>• "This is my favorite book by far. This is my copy but I want you to have it."</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tutor-Enabling Advisor:</b> Spends time for HW outside class with individuals</p> <p><b>Monitoring and Assessment specialist:</b> observes all the students and sees who is good at the topic</p>

Girl in Progress	2012	Ms. Armstrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Not married</li> <li>• Not feminine</li> <li>• Wears jackets and glasses in class</li> <li>• Asks questions before explaining the new topic</li> <li>• Gives a lot of examples to explain the new concept</li> <li>• Assigns homework</li> <li>• Spends time out of class with students helping homework and talks about personal issues</li> <li>• Notices the change in the style of the student's clothes- which her mother doesn't</li> <li>• Gets in touch with parents upon seeing parental neglect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Can anyone tell me what coming of age story is? Any of you familiar with that term? All right a coming of age story is of a young person's change from inner child to an adult.... In other words, think it as a template for leaving your childhood behind."</li> <li>• "Kids are animals."</li> <li>• "Students in my class raise their hand."</li> <li>• "Shouldn't you ask for permission?"</li> <li>• "Are you trying out a new look?"</li> <li>• "I'm not going to call the states."</li> <li>• "You don't have to go to Harvard to see a little girl crying out for help."</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resource-Expert:</b> explains in detail</p> <p><b>Tutor-Enabling Advisor:</b> Spends time for HW outside class with individuals</p> <p><b>Monitoring and Assessment specialist:</b> observes even the clothes of students</p>
Easy A	2010	Mr. Griffith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Strict look and talk</li> <li>• Married to the guidance counselor</li> <li>• Reminds students of the rules</li> <li>• Interferes in students' conversations while walking through the garden and corridors</li> <li>• Has sense of humor in class</li> <li>• Asks for a beat from a student while giving key words</li> <li>• Uses the board, board showed full of questions and keywords</li> <li>• Takes opinions from students</li> <li>• When there is an argument in class and a girl uses bad language, he sends her to the principal's office</li> <li>• Later apologizes for sending her to the principal's and confesses hating the other student</li> <li>• Students are mostly quiet during his class</li> <li>• Spends time off class with students, talking about their personal life</li> <li>• Makes fun of students' favorites like rap and Facebook</li> <li>• Asks his wife to see a problematic student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Go hit the books, they don't hit back."</li> <li>• "Also...not drugs, mess with boys, ... And other cliché you can come up with."</li> <li>• "Even I had trouble with him personally. I read him (Hawthorn) originally when I was 5 but I struggled."</li> <li>• "Don't forget tomorrow is Earth Day"</li> <li>• "I hear some Rumor"</li> <li>• "I know you read the book."</li> <li>• "I'll deny if you tell anyone."</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tutor-Enabling Advisor:</b> Spends time for HW outside class with individuals</p> <p><b>Prompter:</b> encourages students by saying the novel is difficult</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> does the novel review together with the students</p> <p><b>Monitoring and Assessment specialist:</b> observes what is going on among the students but senses the truth</p>

The English Teacher	2013	Linda Sinclair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Not married</li> <li>• “has always been alone”</li> <li>• Disciplined</li> <li>• Wears glasses and skirts all the time</li> <li>• Has her hair in a ponytail</li> <li>• Uses the board; it is shown as full</li> <li>• Tries to be a role model for the students</li> <li>• Interested in students’ works, products</li> <li>• Gives quizzes</li> <li>• Book reviews together with the students in class</li> <li>• Former students say, “you are lucky to have Ms. Sinclair as your teacher”</li> <li>• Talks to parent about a student</li> <li>• Judges all the people she meets and gives them labels, as if she is reading a book and they are the characters in the book</li> <li>• Tries to encourage students’ production by promising to pay the extra expenses for the school play</li> <li>• Refuses to cut the ending of the play not to disappoint the student because she understands students’ feelings</li> <li>• Understands the student’s relationship with his father by reading the play</li> <li>• Shows students they do wrong bitterly but sweetly</li> <li>• Stands up to a parent</li> <li>• Interferes in father-son argument</li> <li>• She sees her students as her kids</li> <li>• Uses formal language when talking to students</li> <li>• Always stresses her experience in conversations</li> <li>• She looks down on people</li> <li>• She judges herself when she does something wrong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I could at least read your play”</li> <li>• “I’m not a writer, I’m a reader.”</li> <li>• “We’ve lost with classical virtues.”</li> <li>• “Do you want your father to win? I didn’t think so!”</li> <li>• “This is my school and if someone is ... It’s my business.”</li> <li>• “He’s a bully and someone has to tell him that he’s wrong.”</li> <li>• “May I have a private word with you? Please excuse us.”</li> <li>• “May I speak with you a moment please.”</li> <li>• “You could start with the respect and freedom he deserves.”</li> <li>• “I have got a lot of kids.”</li> <li>• “You can forget about that letter of recommendation.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Participant:</b> does the novel review together with the students</p> <p><b>Tutor-Enabling Advisor:</b> Spends a lot of time on the play outside class with students</p>
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Donnie Darko	2001	Karen Pomeroy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Wears formal clothes- usually skirts</li> <li>• Wears glasses in class</li> <li>• Uses the board</li> <li>• In relationship with another teacher</li> <li>• Makes fun of students in the class- insults them when they don't read the books</li> <li>• Gets opposition from the gymnastics teacher, who is also the mother of a student, because of her book choices for the syllabus</li> <li>• Later watches the students' show from the back because the gymnastics teacher prepares the show-this shows she is really interested in her students and their talents</li> <li>• Argues with the principal because of her methods-says we are losing the kids and he fires her</li> <li>• After the arguments, she goes out and shouts- one of the students sees her and she is shocked</li> <li>• Talks only to Donnie-one of her students-in her classroom before leaving the school while she is packing</li> <li>• Closer to the students than the teachers</li> <li>• Teachers see her as a threat to the students because her methods of teaching and her choice of materials is different than the others</li> <li>• Her course is not traditional and she is less strict than the other teachers</li> <li>• Her point of view is different than the other teachers</li> <li>• Others believe life and education have rights and wrongs and nothing in between. They try to expose this to students, too</li> <li>• She thinks that is wrong and makes them lose students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I don't think that you have a clue what it's like to communicate with these kids. And we are losing them to apathy, to this prescribed nonsense. They are slipping away."</li> <li>• "The children have to save themselves these days because the parents have no clue."</li> <li>• "Joanie, if you had actually read the short story, which, at a whopping 13 pages, would have kept you up all night, you would know that the children find a great deal of money in the mattress, but they burn it."</li> <li>• Gretchen: Um, where do I sit? Karen Pomeroy: Sit next to the boy you think is the cutest. [the class gasps] Karen Pomeroy: Quiet! Let her choose.</li> <li>• Donnie: So, what do I tell the other kids when they ask about you? Karen Pomeroy: Tell them that everything is gonna be just fine.</li> <li>• Karen Pomeroy: When the other rabbits hear of Fiver's vision, do they believe him? Donnie: Why should we care? Karen Pomeroy: Because the rabbits are us, Donnie. Donnie: Why should I mourn for a rabbit like it was human? Karen Pomeroy: Are you saying that the death of one species is less tragic than another?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Monitoring and Assessment specialist:</b> observes what students really need and what the school lacks</p> <p><b>Delegator:</b> tries to make students have their own point of view</p>
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An Education	2009	Miss Stubbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Single</li> <li>• Wears formal clothes and glasses</li> <li>• Very strict look</li> <li>• Talks about students' personal lives, love lives before she starts the lesson</li> <li>• They identify with novel characters</li> <li>• But criticizes them because they have low marks on the assignment</li> <li>• Makes students read books aloud in the classroom</li> <li>• Does not use the board</li> <li>• Sometimes sits on the table while students are reading</li> <li>• Meets Jenny at her house</li> <li>• Reminds the students of school rules all the time</li> <li>• Students can giggle and have small chats among themselves in her class</li> <li>• Uses formal language when together with students</li> <li>• Jenny says, "action's character my English teacher says I think it means if we never did anything, we wouldn't be anybody" this shows she is really impressed by Ms. Stubbs and she thinks about and she can interpret her words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Tina top button!"</li> <li>• "If I took it (perfume) I'd feel I be betraying both of us."</li> <li>• "You can do anything that you want. You know that you are clever and you are pretty."</li> <li>• "I'm telling you to get to Oxford no matter what because if you don't you'll break my heart."</li> <li>• "Take it off. You know the school rule about jewellery."</li> <li>• "Let's forget about it."</li> <li>• "I was hoping that's what you are going to say."</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tutor-Enabling Advisor:</b> Helps Jenny study for and get to Oxford although she is banned from school</p> <p><b>Controller:</b> gives instructions even about students' clothes</p> <p><b>Prompter:</b> tries to stop Jenny from leaving school and pushes her to the challenge of studying for Oxford</p>
The Gambler	2014	Jim Bennet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Single</li> <li>• Comes from a rich family</li> <li>• Has a good education</li> <li>• Has a gambling problem</li> <li>• Always wears suits</li> <li>• Careless</li> <li>• Aggressive in and out of class</li> <li>• Walks around the class</li> <li>• Sits next to students</li> <li>• Asks about students experiences, listens to their ideas</li> <li>• Insults students when they make mistakes</li> <li>• Author</li> <li>• Knows students by their names in class but doesn't recognize outside</li> <li>• Criticizes other teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I've seen you in your other life." (Amy)</li> <li>• "Absolutely, not!"</li> <li>• "I want to take the money and go."</li> <li>• "I'd never do something like that."</li> <li>• "They don't know grammar."</li> <li>• "Do I look happy? I'm not because to a class full of students who don't give a ..."</li> <li>• "I'm here pretending to teach and you're here pretending to learn."</li> <li>• "Why do you care about this while you don't care about anything?" (Principal)</li> <li>• "I've seen you in your other life." (Amy)</li> <li>• "Did you mean what you said about me having talent?" (Amy)</li> <li>• "I need to go pro now, not later. I got a knee." (Lamar)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Controller:</b> gives instructions</p> <p><b>Monitoring and Assessment specialist:</b> sees Amy's talent</p>

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**Banu CİVELEK KAZANCI**

# English Language Teachers in The Movies: Focus On Pedagogy and Teacher Identity

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