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Spanish as a Foreign Language Teachers Profiles: Inclusive Beliefs, Teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA Program, General and Diversity-related Teacher Burnout, and Experience

Antonio J. Rojas Tejada

Raquel M. Cruz del Pino

University of Almería. Spain. EU.

Moshe Tatar

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Israel.

Pablo Sayans Jiménez

University of Almería. Spain. EU.

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Please address correspondence to:

Moshe Tatar

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Abstract

The present study focuses on one of these programs in which specialist teachers (Spanish as a foreign language teachers -SFL teachers-) teach Spanish to immigrants who are not proficient in Spanish: The Temporally Classroom of Linguistic Adaptation Program (TCLA Program). SFL teachers provided support directly to individuals or to small groups of students. It is suggested that, nowadays, support for immigrant students in Spanish schools should be changed considerably to adapt to a new inclusive educational approach. The present investigation is a preliminary attempt for characterizing the profiles of these SFL teachers by assessing five relevant variables (through applying cluster analysis): inclusive beliefs, teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program, general burnout, diversity-related teacher burnout, and years of teaching experience, simultaneously. The sample was composed by eighty one SFL teachers from 132 schools of Spain (E.U.). Respondents were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire about the relevant variables. The cluster analysis has found two clearly differentiated groups: the majority one, *Innovative SFL Teachers*, and other one, *Traditional SFL Teachers*, minority. The Traditional SFL Teachers, with more years of experience, show lower inclusive beliefs scores, lower teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program scores and lower burnout scores than the Innovative SFL Teachers. Results show the Traditional SFL Teachers conceptualize their teaching role as a "teacher of Spanish" more than as a "support teacher". Both groups understand that support is expected as part of their job performance, but the Innovative SFL Teachers see themselves much more as support teachers as compared to Traditional SFL Teachers.

Key words: Spanish as a foreign language teachers, inclusive education, Inclusive Beliefs, Teachers' perception of student outcomes, Teacher Burnout.

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The number of immigrants in Spanish schools has had a great increase during last decade. Data from the Ministry of Education (2010) indicates that in the academic year 1999–2000: 107303 immigrant students attended Spanish schools. A decade later, in the academic year 2009–2010, the number of immigrants raised up to 762742. This figure reflects now that immigrant students account for 9.6% of the total number of students in the Spanish educational system. The total or partial ignorance of the Spanish language is the main reason that many of these immigrant students are considered as Specific Educational Needs Students (SEN Students). There are several programs for teaching Spanish as a foreign language with a variety of teachers and programs. The present study focuses on one of these programs in which specialist teachers (Spanish as a foreign language teachers -SFL teachers-) teach Spanish to immigrants who are not proficient in Spanish: The Temporally Classroom of Linguistic Adaptation Program (TCLA Program).

The TCLA Program is aimed at 1) improving students' knowledge of Spanish language; 2) improving the relations between immigrant and national students; and, 3) integrating immigrant students into the curricular programs. Support for these students is provided by SFL teachers whose role it is to assist these students. The students that participate in the TCLA Program were traditionally placed in the regular classroom but received additional support in a resource or remedial room for part of the school day or week. SFL teachers provided support directly to individuals or to small groups of students. It is suggested that, nowadays, support for immigrant students in Spanish schools should changed considerably to adapt to a new inclusive educational approach.

The paradigm of *Education for All* (UNESCO, 1990) can be understood as a first recognition of the value of diversity using a global inclusive model. This model attempts to satisfy the educational needs of all the students attending a specific school, applying procedures that increase the participation of these students and is aimed at reducing their exclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). In practice, this model supposes,

among other aspects, the provision of academic support inside the ordinary classroom to the SEN students. These SEN students must take part of the same curriculum inside the same educational spaces that the rest of their classmates. This model challenges educational institutions, by urging them to rethink, and to re-organize, the incorporation of SEN students in ordinary classroom (Jurado and Ramírez, 2009).

The concept of inclusion supposes walking a step beyond the concept of integration. Now, it is not sufficient that pupils will physically attend, an ordinary classroom, but it is necessary to eliminate or minimize any barrier or obstacle that impedes their participation in the regular curriculum with their peer group (e.g. Booth and Ainscow, 2002). The specialist teachers are responsible for supporting the integral development of these SEN students by removing barriers that impede their learning (Jurado and Ramírez, 2009). These specific teachers should be characterized by certain qualities that facilitate the improvement of immigrant's academic integration and attainments (Tournaki and Podell, 2005). For this reason, it would be interesting to know if the SFL teachers have a fitted profile to assume the challenge of changing their attitudes and behaviors towards inclusive effective practices.

It should be noted, that beliefs about inclusivity and heterogeneity in the classroom are one of the greatest predictors of teaching effectiveness (Stanovitch and Jordan, 1998). It supposes understanding that the experiences of inclusive learning in heterogeneous groups (representative of the diversity in an ordinary classroom) improve the interpersonal relations and the academic success, independently of the content of the tasks (e.g. Pujolas, 2008). Teachers' positive attitudes towards the inclusion could facilitate inclusion in a mainstream setting, since positive attitudes are closely and positively related to motivation to work with and teach with SEN students (Kalyva, Gojkovic, and Tsakiris, 2007). Positive beliefs toward inclusiveness are proposed as one of the key factors for facilitating the process of teaching and of student learning. As clarified by Gibbs (2007), the development of inclusive practices is incompatible with segregation beliefs. However, although inclusive beliefs are necessary, they are not a sufficient condition for achieving academic success and a betterment of the relationship between students. In fact, even in the case that teachers have positive attitudes toward inclusiveness, many of them do not believe they have sufficient resources to implement inclusive education successfully, largely due to their low self-efficacy beliefs (Gibbs, 2007).

These two qualities (inclusive beliefs and teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA Program) can be seen modified and/or strengthened by teacher's experience in the workplace. It may be expected that teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA Program increases at the same time that educators get more experience in their job. However, this may not always be the case, if teachers have not experienced the sensation of getting the expected outcomes, the teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA Program will decline (Fores and Fernández-Castro, 2004; Gibbs, 2007), and eventually will affect directly their motivation as teachers. If the teaching experience has been effective is most likely to anticipate that expectations of successful future teaching will raise (Hoy and Spero, 2005).

The many duties and challenges teachers face in general and SFL teachers in particular may derive in an increase of their sense of burnout. Teacher burnout stems from the inability to adequately cope with stresses of work and personal lives (Vandenberghe and Huberman, 1999). It occurs over time when accumulating occupational stressors combine with a lack of coping skills (Greenglass, Burke and Konarski, 1998). Classical models regarding burnout characterized it as reflecting feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced sense of personal accomplishment and esteem (e.g. Maslach, 1982). Research evidence suggests that teacher burnout is affected by a plethora of factors. Burnout, for example, is influenced by attitudes and expectations of achievable outcomes, and by teacher motivations (Vanheule and Verhaeghe, 2004). When teachers feel they have failed, it often results in thoughts of incompetence, negative views toward themselves, their work and personal life, and low self-concept (Byrne, 1991). Tatar and Horenczyk (2003) have reported evidence that working in a classroom with immigrant students provides a unique challenge to teachers. It seems that when working with immigrant students a teacher might suffer from a specific form of burn-out: diversity related burnout. This is a distinct form of burn-out, although it is related to the traditional construct. It is caused by the many efforts demanded from the educators when working with culturally diverse student groups. We suggest including both kinds of burnout, the general and the diversity related, as important elements in the profiles of SFL teachers.

The main objective of this investigation is to explore and characterize SFL teacher profiles by assessing five relevant variables (through applying cluster analysis): inclusive beliefs, teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program, general

burnout, diversity-related teacher burnout, and years of teaching experience, simultaneously. Cluster analysis has been identified as an effective and useful analytic technique in educational psychology research, one that helps researchers identify groups of similar individuals when researchers are examining multiple constructs of interest (p.e. Borgen and Barnett, 1987; Spanierman, Poteat, Beer and Armstrong, 2006). Specifically, due that SFL teachers work inside the regular classroom is beginning to promote a dual role: the addition of the support for SFL students together with support for regular class students by consultation, another purpose of this study was to examine, in the context of SFL teacher role in the Spanish educational system, whether the profile resembles more that of a support teacher or that of a SFL-academic related- teacher.

Method

Participants

Eighty one SFL teachers (86% female and 14% male) from 132 schools (45 primary schools and 87 secondary schools) of Almeria, a province in the south of Spain (E.U.). Almeria is characterized by a high influx of immigrants (average over 10% of the total population in the Province). Years of SFL teaching experience range from 1 to 10 years (Mean = 2.8 years; SD = 2.3). All schools with TCLA program were included in the study. The total number of teachers in TCLA program in Almeria at 2009/2010 course was 84.

Variables and Instruments

Respondents were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire consisting of four sections:

SFL teaching related Inclusive Believes Scale: The participants answered a ten item questionnaire prepared expressly for the study. All the items were reflected inclusive believes: two items about linguistic competence (e.g. *The Spanish language proficiency of TCLA program immigrant students would improve if they were interacting more time with native class peers*), four items about academic achievement (e.g. *The fact that the TCLA program would be conducted within the regular classroom would have positive influece for immigrant students achievement*), and four items about interpersonal relations (e.g. *Immigrant studens would have better relations with the rest of their regular class peers if they were the whole school time into the same class*). Respondents were asked to indicate their extent of agreement with each statement on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (“totally disagree”) to 5 (“totally agree”). This scale showed a

satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach alpha coefficient of .85. A Principal Component Factor analyses (with varimax rotation) was conducted. The analyses yielded a three-factor solution, clearly separating the items related to the linguistic competence (factor loadings: .737 and .686, for item 1 and 2), academic achievement (factor loadings: .791, .737, .896, and .688; for item 3, 4, 5 and 6), and interpersonal relations (factor loadings: .910, .921, .790, and .584; for item 7, 8, 9 and 10). The three factors accounted for approximately 69,2% of the explained variance (28,9%, 26,0% and 14,3%, respectively).

Teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program Scale: A scale with five items prepared expressly for the study was included. All the items expressed teachers' perceptions about the student outcomes of SFL teaching program: one item about linguistic competence (*During this academic year my TCLA program immigrant students have improved their knowledge of Spanish*), two items about academic achievement (*During this academic year my TCLA program immigrant students have improved their academic achievement*), and two items about interpersonal relations (e.g. *During this academic year my TCLA program immigrant students have improved their relationships with native students in their class as a result of the TCLA program*).

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with each statement on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 ("totally disagree") to 5 ("totally agree"). Principal Component Factor analyses were conducted. The analyses yielded one factor structures (eigenvalues bigger than 1.163) with factor loadings of .629, .643, .731, .845, and .821, for item 1 to 5, respectively. The factor accounted for approximately 54,63% of the explained variance with a satisfactory Cronbach alpha coefficient of .82.

General and diversity-related Teacher Burnout Scales: The section consisted of two list of items, translated and adapted to the Spanish context from the Hebrew version of the questionnaire used by Tatar and Horenczyk's (2003): Six of the items describing potential characteristics of burned-out teachers (general burnout: e.g. *The daily work with students gives me a lot of tension*) and four additional items intended to assess diversity-related teacher burnout (e.g. *Daily work with immigrant students frustrates me*). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each of the descriptors applies to him or her, on a five-point interval scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 5 ("always"). The internal consistency of general burnout scale was found to be

satisfactory, with a Cronbach's Alpha value above .82. The internal consistency of diversity-related teacher burnout was lower: .67.

SFL Teacher Role: Two questions about the role of SFL teacher in the educational system were asked: One related to whether the role of a SFL teacher is mainly that of a support teacher, and a second one, asking if the role of a SFL teacher is to be a Spanish language teacher. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agree with each statement on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 ("totally disagree") to 5 ("totally agree").

Respondent's background: years of teaching experience as SFL teacher, and others demographics questions (e.g. age, sex, type of educational center).

Procedure

Questionnaires were administered to the teachers in group sessions by one of the researchers, during staff meetings. Out of the 84 schools approached, only three did not participate in the study. All participants volunteered to participate in the study. Confidentiality was assured. Completion of the questionnaire lasted for about 20 minutes.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Means, standards deviations, and correlations among variables are shown in table 1.

Insert Table 1

The means of the variables show that the teachers had high inclusive believes and teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program and report low general burnout and diversity-related teacher burnout. The SFL teaching experience was about three years.

Positive and significant correlations between scores of general burnout and SFL teaching experience were found. Also negative and significant correlations between scores on general burnout and teachers' perceptions of student outcomes in TCLA program were found.

Cluster Analysis: SFL Teachers profiles

To identify the different patterns in SFL teachers, a cluster analysis using inclusive believes, teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program, general burnout, diversity-related teacher burnout, and years of SFL teaching experience, was performed. All the variables were standardized using Z scores. To control for scaling differences

resulting from the different number of items in each scale, all the variables were standardized using Z scores. A two-step procedure in identifying cluster groups was followed. First, a hierarchical cluster analysis with Ward's clustering method (Ward, 1963) was conducted, which seeks to minimize within-group variability while maximizing between-groups variability in Euclidean distance. This method suggested that a two-cluster solution minimized within-groups sum of squares and was most appropriate for the data. Second, a non-hierarchical k-means cluster analysis was conducted, specifying a two-cluster solution. Table 2 shows the two-cluster solution obtained using the k-means cluster analysis. ANOVA data show that all variables contributed significantly to the formation of clusters.

Insert Table 2

The characteristics of each cluster are shown in Table 2 and in Figure 1. The first cluster (18 participants; 29% overall of clustered) tended to score low on inclusive beliefs and on teachers' perceptions of student outcomes in TCLA program, and high on general burnout, diversity-related teacher burnout and years of SFL teaching experience. This cluster was labelled as the *Traditional SFL Teachers*. The second cluster (44 participants; 71% overall of clustered) tended to score high on inclusive beliefs and on teachers' perceptions of student outcomes in TCLA program, moderate on diversity-related teacher burnout, and low on general burnout and years of SFL teaching experience. This cluster was labelled as the *Innovative SFL Teachers*.

Insert Figure 1

Differential profiles and SFL Teacher Role

The cluster groups were compared regarding the SFL teacher role questions. Results (figure 2) indicated that significant differences did exist only on SFL teacher as mainly fulfilling the "Spanish language teacher role" ($t_{70}=2.26$; $p<.05$) but not when regarding as mainly fulfilling the role of being a "support teacher" ($t_{70}=-3.48$; $p>.05$). The cluster 1 group, Traditional SFL Teachers, had higher scores (mean=4.05; SD=1.28) than cluster 2 group (mean=3.33; SD=1.19), Innovative SFL Teachers.

Insert Figure 2

Discussion

The attitudes and behaviors of ESL (in our case SFL) teachers are crucial for understanding (and even predicting) the extent to and the degree of successful

integration of their students into the mainstream classrooms. Professionally, the importance of ESL teachers' beliefs about second language learning over the 3-year training program at the City University of Hong Kong was stressed by Peacock (2001). In his opinion, teacher trainees might have some mistaken ideas about language learning at the beginning of the program. These beliefs should be addressed due to their potential impact on their teaching and on their future students' language learning. Moreover, ESL teacher assessment practices and decisions are vital in the evaluation process their students go through aimed at facilitating the future integration of these students into regular classrooms (for an interesting sociocultural perspective, see Davison, 2004)

The present investigation is a preliminary attempt for characterizing the profiles of SFL teachers in a Spanish TCLA program. The cluster analysis has found two clearly differentiated groups: the majority one, *Innovative SFL Teachers*, and other one, *Traditional SFL Teachers*, minority. The Innovative SFL Teachers group, with a few years of experience, has showed high inclusive beliefs scores, high teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program scores and low burnout scores. The opposite happens with the Traditional SFL Teachers. It is important to emphasize the Traditional SFL Teachers are characterized by being more experiences (in terms of the amount of years) years working at the TCLA Program. This result can be explained by the educational tradition of exclusion that prevailed in Spain. This may explain why SFL teachers with "fewer years of experience" reported much more sensitiveness to inclusive practices. Probably these new teachers are more open to more innovative trends and approaches. In the same way, it could explain the relatively lower burnout scores of this group.

In addition, results show the Traditional SFL Teachers conceptualize their teaching role as resembling that of a "teacher of Spanish" more than as a "support teacher". In spite of the fact that both groups understand that support is expected as part of their job description and performance, the Innovative SFL Teachers see themselves much more as support teachers as compared to their "Spanish teachers" counterparts.

One of the implications carried with the view that the dominant role of SFL teachers is to be a teacher of Spanish is that immigrant students should be the maximum of hours out of their regular classroom until these students reach the sufficient level of Spanish to enable them to follow the regular teaching and to interact with their national peers.

Innovative SFL Teachers may believe that if the main outcome of educating immigrant

students is for them to achieve academic success, it won't be enough to learn Spanish for surviving, but it is necessary to facilitate their full integration in each of the areas of knowledge. This holistic integration may be phrased as a complex task for all teachers; this target reinforces the relevance and importance of the job of support of SFL teachers vis-a-vis their immigrant students. The advantages of "learning together" have been reported, repeatedly, regarding language learning (e.g. Coelho, 2006): To learn with the peer group is easier, entertaining and, often, more effective (Hopkins, West and Ainscow, 1996). The group offers social support to reach the academic success that would not be obtained otherwise. Moreover, the advantages of cooperative work are also applicable and tremendously significant among the school staff.

ESL teachers work (or at least should work) and are in contact with many school staff members. Among them, in many countries, school counselors may be regarded as one of the key players regarding the present and the future (more integrated) status of ESL students in the educational institutions through coordinating and representing ESL students within the schools. A research dealing with English as a second language (ESL) Latino students found that that ESL staff and school counselors were not engaged enough in meaningful conversations with the purpose of benefiting Hispanic/Latino ESL students (Clemente and Collison, 2000). Teacher collaboration and co-teaching are proven strategies for helping students with diverse needs achieve academically. These tactics are relevant for general education teachers and specifically for English as second language (ESL) specialists to better serve the needs of English language learners.

Honigsfeld and Dove (2009) examine how a collaborative program helps ELLs learn content while meeting English language development goals, and offer information on school leaders' roles in facilitating collaboration school-wide. They encourage us to understand the benefits and challenges of collaborative service delivery, to fully develop a co-teaching partnership and to evaluate the extent to which the strategies applied are successful.

Due that ESL students are supposed to be integrated partially or fully into regular classrooms, it is noteworthy to take into account the attitudes, expectations and behaviors of the regular classroom teachers' vis-à-vis ESL students. For example, Penfield (1987) found that regular classroom teachers encounter many difficulties in integrating Limited English Proficient students socially and academically into the mainstream setting. Accordingly, she recommended that ESL teachers and teacher

training programs devote greater attention to preparing the regular classroom teachers for dealing more adequately with the educational (academic as well as asocial) needs of LEP students. Moreover, Youngs and Youngs Jr. (2001) reported that most regular American classroom teachers reported a neutral to slightly positive attitude toward the prospect of teaching more ESL students in the future. The research emphasized the relevant and important role that might be played by preservice and in-service programs for regular classroom teachers by providing opportunities for exposure to cultural diversity at both- theoretical and practical levels. Moreover, due that institution's images and representations of the ESL learner are important elements both for the development of the various kinds and contents of the ESL student's identities (especially regarding their academic or study-related identities) and for the understanding of the attitudes of the ESL students themselves toward classroom learning. General teacher's and regular student's perceptions and representations of ESL students are vital for explaining the extent of and the seriousness of the difficulties ESL students might encounter in their way to be integrated into the mainstream system (Harklau, 2000).

In spite of the fact that it was not a part of this reseach, it is very important bear the school context in mind. The way of implementing the TCLA program can be very different not only for the attitudes of the professorship in general, but overcoat of the management teams. It would be interesting to identify in the future which are the characteristics of the school environments (more there of the profiles of the teachers) that support the innovative profiles.

Finally, it would be advisable to extend this research in combination with other methodological strategies that help to establish relations between the variables, as well as to gather the meaning that each of them has for the teachers, the student body, his families and the organization, by means of qualitative technologies and with longitudinal studies.

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Table 1

Means, standards deviations, and correlations: Inclusive Believes, Teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program, General Burnout, Diversity-related Teacher Burnout, and Years of SFL teaching experience.

Measures	n	M	SD	2	3	4	5
1. Inclusive Believes	81	3.61	0.82	.173	-.152	-.107	-.078
2. Teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program	81	3.90	0.66		-.360**	-.201	-.189
3. General Burnout	81	1.57	0.66			.162	.233*
4. Diversity-related Teacher Burnout	81	1.53	0.61				-.103
5. Years of SFL teaching experience	72	2.79	2.28				

*NOTE: In variables 1, 2, 3 and 4, ratings are on 5-point scale. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$*

Table 2

Final conglomerate centers with centroid Z scores and ANOVA of variables in clusters
for two-cluster solution of k-means cluster analysis.

	Clusters		ANOVA		
	1	2	Cluster SM	Error SM	F _(1,70)
1. Inclusive Believes	-0.44	0.28	7.75	.84	9.22*
2. Teachers' perception of student outcomes in TCLA program	-0.81	0.40	21.64	.69	31.45**
3. General Burnout	0.87	-0.45	25.93	.56	46.57**
4. Diversity-related Teacher Burnout	0.65	-0.33	14.52	.77	18.89**
5. Years of SFL teaching experience	0.57	-0.24	9.67	.88	11.04**
	N	21	51		
	%	29	71		

NOTE: SM= Squared Mean. * $p < .005$ ** $p < .001$

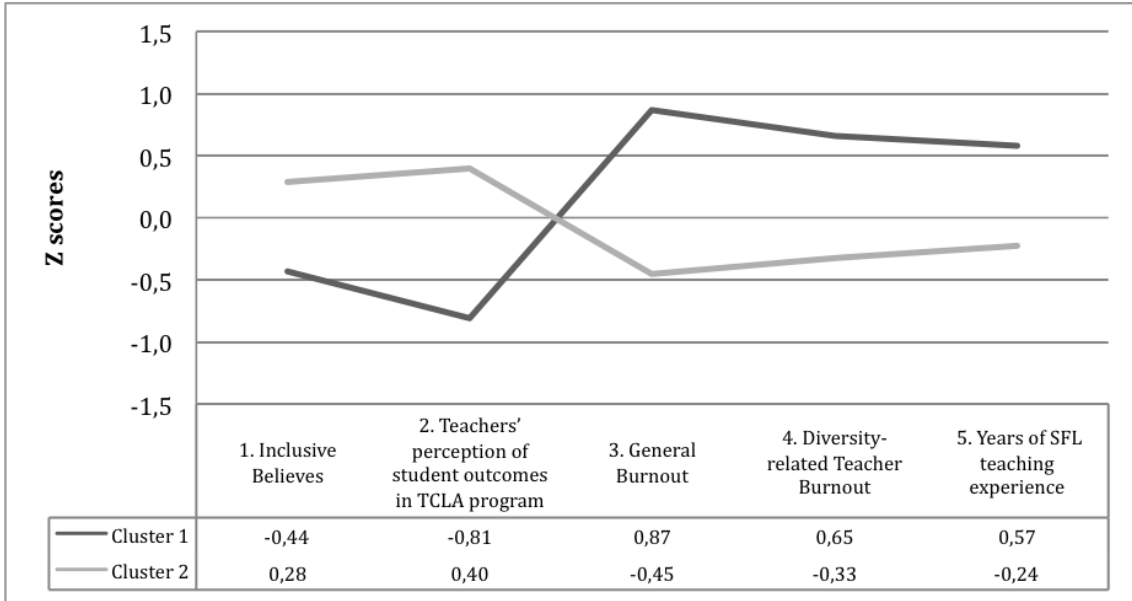
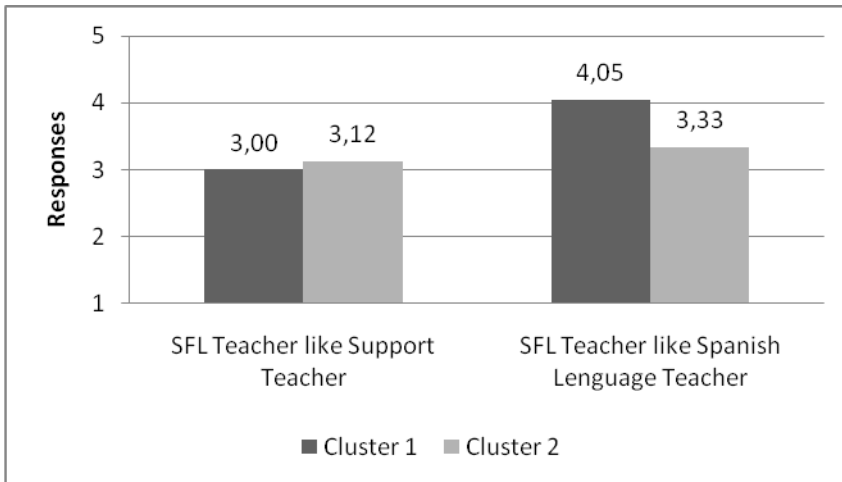


Figure 1. Z scores for characteristics of two clusters.



NOTE: In both variables ratings are on 5-point scale.

Figure 2. SFL Teacher Role Mean Scores by Clusters.