

# SUCCESSFUL EFL TEACHERS IN INDONESIAN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT: ATTITUDE AND APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the notions and issues of Attitude and Approach of EFL teachers in Indonesian Educational Context. The paper was based on some of the findings of a fieldwork conducted in 2014, in which 3 English teachers were interviewed and observed. The aim of the study was to investigate the attitudes of the successful EFL teachers show to the language they are teaching and the teaching styles and methods of the successful EFL teachers consciously develops and employs. Findings from interview data suggest that English teacher should have positive attitudes toward English that they are teaching and also teachers should apply the four language skills and some language elements in form of integrated skills because the skills and the elements connect each other.

**Keywords:** Successful EFL Teacher, Indonesian Educational Context, Attitude and Approach

## ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas pengertian dan isu-isu tentang sikap dan pendekatan guru bahasa Inggris dalam konteks pendidikan Indonesia. Studi ini didasarkan pada beberapa temuan dari lapangan yang dilakukan pada tahun 2014, di mana 3 guru bahasa Inggris diwawancarai dan diamati. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki sikap guru bahasa Inggris yang sukses menunjukkan bahasa yang mereka ajarkan, gaya dan metode pengajaran yang mereka kembangkan dan gunakan secara sadar. Temuan dari data wawancara menunjukkan bahwa guru bahasa Inggris harus memiliki sikap positif terhadap bahasa Inggris yang mereka ajarkan, guru harus menerapkan empat keterampilan berbahasa dan beberapa unsur bahasa secara integrative karena keterampilan dan elemen bahasa saling berkaitan.

**Kata Kunci:** Sukses Guru EFL, Konteks Pendidikan Indonesia, Sikap dan Pendekatan

## INTRODUCTION

All forms of language teaching could be greatly improved if we had a better understanding of the language learner and of the language learning process itself. What is happening to learners in language classes? Why is it that some are successful and others fail?<sup>1</sup>

In an era when English is greatly increasing in importance, excellent EFL teachers are needed to help achieve the national education curriculum goal. But who are the excellent EFL teachers?

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<sup>1</sup>Naiman, N. et al.. *The Good Language Learner* (Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1995) p.1

The suggestion that the “good language teachers” might be doing something special or different that we could all learn from. Good language teachers have, of course, an intuitive understanding of language learning.<sup>2</sup> Successful language teachers are often committed to monitoring their own performance quite consciously; they often want to understand the language system. Using teaching strategies that are compatible with student learning styles. should not be the sole approach to classroom instruction. Good language teachers should always need to build on the teaching styles and strategies that they currently use and to experiment with new other teaching methods.

This is a research, then which illustrates well researchers’ contributions and observation about the way of teaching of successful EFL teachers, their teaching styles and strategies, their attitudes towards the language they are teaching, the way of them in socialize with their students, what are their successes and failures, what is the characteristics of successful

### **EFL Teachers**

By definition, an EFL Teachers is a person who has obtain a teaching qualification for the English language in a teacher education institution , and whose training has been recognised by the award of an appropriate teaching sertificate, and by decree he is officially appointed to teach English as a foreign language in accordance with his teaching sertificate.<sup>3</sup>

When discussing EFL teacher populations, it is again useful to distinguish between natural language and foreign language settings. In a natural setting, EFL teachers are usually native speakers or near native speakers of the language and can cope with various decision making steps that deal with language use; on the other hand, in the foreign language setting, teachers are typically non-native speakers who have never spent time in an English speaking country and therefore may find it much harder to make decisions of a native like-nature.

Successful EFL teachers have respect for their students, taking time and effort to prepare classes and mark assignments. They should not just throw a talk together 5 min before the teaching starts or skim through an essay that has taken a student many hours and much effort to complete. Successful EFL teachers have a sense of humor and are able to use this effectively in their teaching. Humor, both planned and spontaneous, is an excellent additive to many learning environments. The positive atmosphere created through the use of humor increases motivation, keeps the learner’s attention and can reduce stress in both the learner and lecturer. Comedy can be achieved in a variety of ways, including funny pictures, humorous anecdotes and punchy jokes. More laughs are raised, however, if the witticisms are appropriate to

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<sup>2</sup>Naiman, N. et al.. *The Good Language Learner* (Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1995) p. xii

<sup>3</sup>Rasyid. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language: Giving More Insights Into its Perennial Factors* (Paper presentation at English Seminar, 2001) p.1

the subject being taught – random jokes used out of context can be worse than none at all.

Successful EFL teachers provide a supportive, trusting and non-threatening environment in which the student positively enjoys learning. They take into account how much the audience already knows about the subject being taught and structure their teaching accordingly. There is little point, for example, in attempting to teach medical students the detailed microscopic features of chronic hepatitis if they have never been taught the basic principles of inflammation. Successful EFL teachers actively engage their students in the learning process. They make their students want to learn by making their teaching interesting and relevant and putting it into context. Bad Successful EFL teachers, in contrast, make material relevant by telling students that if they don't learn, they will fail the exam.

Experience as a Successful EFL teacher is needed because they teach everyday and meet with other people with other activities. All people around the teacher must have any perception about us, starting from the way they teach and how they consort with the people around them. That is why every teacher needs to evaluate herself and do self reflective.

Based on the description above the researcher can conclude that giving a Successful EFL teacher is an art, akin to a stage performance in which the teacher is the protagonist and holds the audience's attention to the end. Some of the skills involved in giving a Successful EFL teachers stem from the teacher's personality, but others can undoubtedly be practiced and learnt. While some teachers can be delivered as stand-alone teaching events, in most situations they form part of a course, which means that good lecturers must also understand the broader theories of good teaching.

## **Teaching Styles And Method**

### *Teaching Strategies*

A teaching strategy here refers to a choice that the teacher makes while teaching or using the second language that affects teaching, as distinct therefore from discourse moves or communication strategies, both of which aim at language use.

A variety of techniques in your lessons will at least partially ensure that you will “reach” a maximum number of students. So you will choose a mixture of group work and individual work, of visual and auditory techniques, of easy and difficult exercises.<sup>4</sup>

Performance in teaching is examined in relation to effectiveness of course delivery, quality of course content, effectiveness in developing and managing

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<sup>4</sup>H. Douglas Brown, *Teaching By Principles: An Interactive Approach To Language Pedagogy* (A Pearson Education Company, 2001), p.60

instruction, effectiveness in mentoring students, effectiveness of academic advising, and using research and original creative work and service to enhance teaching

The initial challenge for novice lecturers is to acquire the basic classroom skills needed to present and navigate their lessons. Teaching from this perspective is an act of performance, and for a lecturer to be able to carry herself through the lesson, she has to have a repertoire of techniques and routines at her fingertips. These include routines and procedure for such things as: 1) opening the lesson, 2) introducing and explaining tasks, 3) setting up learning arrangements, 4) checking students' understanding, 5) guiding student practice, 6) monitoring students' language use, 7) making transitions from one task to another, and 8) ending the lesson.

What we normally mean by the term *teacher training* refers to instruction in basic classroom skills such as these, often linked to a specific teaching context. Training involves the development of a repertoire of teaching skills, acquired through observing experienced lecturers and often through practice teaching in a controlled setting using activities such as micro-teaching or peer teaching. Good teaching from a training perspective is viewed as the mastery of a set of skills or competencies. Experiencing teaching in a variety of different situations, with different kinds of learners and teaching different kinds of content, is how a repertoire of basic teaching skills is acquired. Over time, experience is said to lead to the development of routines that enable these kinds of skills to be performed fluently, automatically, and with less conscious thought and attention, enabling the lecturer's attention to focus on other dimensions of the lesson.

### *Teaching Method*

A teaching method refers to an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills which persist regardless of teaching methods or content area. Everyone has a teaching style, but each person's is as unique as a signature. Each signature appears to be influenced by both nature and nurture; it is a biological and developmental set of characteristics.

Your teaching style is another consideration in the development of your professional expertise. Teaching style will almost always be consistent with your personality style, which can vary greatly from individual to individual.<sup>5</sup>

As teachers accumulate experience and knowledge there is thus a move toward a degree of flexibility in teaching and the development of what is sometimes called "improvisational teaching." Thus, research reviewed by Borg and others hence describes some of the following characteristics of expert lecturers: 1) they have a wide repertoire of routines and strategies that they can call upon, 2) they are willing to depart from established procedures and use their own solutions and are more willing to improvise, 3) they learn to automate the routines associated with managing the class; this skill leaves them free to focus on content, 4) they improvise more than novice lecturers – they make

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<sup>5</sup>H. Douglas Brown, p. 201

greater use of interactive decision making as a source of their improvisational performance, 5) they have more carefully developed schemata of teaching on which to base their practical classroom decisions, 6) they pay more attention to language issues than novice lecturers (who worry more about classroom management), 7) they are able to anticipate problems and have procedures available to deal with them, 8) they carry out needed phases more efficiently, spending less time on them, 9) they relate things that happen to the bigger picture, seeing them not in the context of a particular lesson, and 10) they distinguish between significant and unimportant issues that arise.

Learning to teach from the perspective of skill development can be thought of as the mastery of specific teaching competencies, at the same time these reflect complex levels of thinking and decision making, and it is these cognitive processes that also need to be the focus of teacher training. From the perspective of teacher's cognition, teaching is not simply the application of knowledge and of learned skills. It is viewed as a much more complex cognitively driven process affected by the classroom context, the teacher's general and specific instructional goals, the teacher's beliefs and values, the learners' motivations and reactions to the lesson, and the teacher's management of critical moments during a lesson.

Knowing the school, the possibilities of the classroom space, the students, their neighborhoods, the resources, the curriculum and policy, the supervising teacher— these are all critical elements that affect what teachers can do, and how they negotiate and construct identity moment to moment. Teaching in a school thus involves understanding the specific values, norms of practice, and patterns of social participation of that school. This will include understanding such things as the role of the prescribed curricula, the school culture, the routines of the classroom, and the school's procedures for lesson planning, and learning how to interact with students, school authorities, and colleagues. Learning to teach involves becoming socialized into a professional culture with its own goals, shared values, and norms of conduct.

### **Research Method and Design**

The research design which the researcher takes is qualitative – descriptive by applying case study approach. The sites of this research are SMP Negeri 1 Parepare, SMP Negeri 2 Parepare, and SMA Negeri 2 Parepare . Then the researcher observes the English teachers from the three schools whether they represent two categories as the research subject in this research, the categories are 1) The subjects have been certified as professional educator from the government and 2) The subjects are chose by most of the students as the successful EFL teachers after completing the evaluative interview process in a written form with the students.

There are several procedures that the researcher will apply in order to collect the systematic and valid data through 1) Direct Observation, 2) Interview, and 3) Document Examination.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussions in the preceding chapter, the researcher would like to draw conclude that the three research subjects have positive attitudes toward English since they were students. The second and the third research subject have already impressed by English since they started to learn it. Though she started late to show positive attitude on English subject, the first research subject realized it when she studied in senior high school. The three research subjects qualities in teaching are they teach the four language skills and some language elements in form of integrated skills. It is generally beliefs that the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and some language elements of English (vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar) should be teach in the form of integrated skills because the skills and the elements connect each other.

Deals with the language used by the teachers, the three research subjects use English mostly on their teaching. This situation appears because they emphasize their teaching on speaking skill therefore they should give a lot of example for their students in terms of pronouncing the words. The three research subjects evaluated the student progress every time they taught in the classroom. The evaluation itself was in the form of asking the students about the material from the previous meeting. There were several evaluations which were included into general evaluation which was conducted and was scheduled by the school.

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