



What Makes a Good Teacher of English as a Foreign Language?

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Abstract

Even though English has become the most preferred language to learn in Indonesia, learners often face difficulties in learning it. These difficulties are often caused by the teacher's role because being a teacher of English as a foreign language is certainly not an easy thing. Therefore, to avoid these difficulties, this article aims to evaluate what makes a good English teacher a foreign language. The researcher has been teaching English for several years at this international school where the students have high motivation in learning English. Researchers took a sample of 30 students. Researchers used the observation method in the data collection process and applied qualitative methods in the data analysis process. The approach method used for students was an introspective method, namely self-evaluation of the difficulties faced by students. The results showed that the students might face some difficulties in learning English caused by the teacher himself, such as irrelevant material, lack of creativity, and lack of emphasis on active communication. Teachers who didn't pay attention to the individual needs of students, don't motivate them, and don't involve them in learning can also be a problem. The solution was to adopt a teaching approach that is more diverse, adaptive and responsive, and focuses on real communicative situations to improve students' English skills. In conclusion, this research emphasizes that becoming a proficient English teacher involves more than just mastering the language itself; teachers must also have additional attributes to be effective in conveying knowledge to students.

Keywords: teachers, mastery of English, teaching methods.

Abstrak

Meskipun Bahasa Inggris telah menjadi bahasa yang paling disukai untuk dipelajari di Indonesia, para pembelajar sering menghadapi kesulitan dalam mempelajarinya. Kesulitan-kesulitan tersebut sering kali disebabkan oleh peran guru itu sendiri karena menjadi seorang guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing tentu bukanlah hal yang mudah. Oleh karena itu, untuk menghindari timbulnya kesulitan-kesulitan tersebut, artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi apa yang membuat seorang guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing yang baik. Peneliti telah mengajar Bahasa Inggris selama beberapa tahun di sekolah internasional tersebut yang di mana siswa-siswanya mempunyai motivasi tinggi dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris. Peneliti mengambil sample sebanyak 30 siswa. Peneliti menggunakan metode observasi dalam proses pengumpulan data dan menerapkan metode kualitatif dalam proses analisis data. Metode pendekatan yang digunakan kepada siswa adalah metode introspektif, yaitu self-evaluasi terhadap kesulitan-kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh para siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para siswa mungkin menghadapi beberapa kesulitan dalam mempelajari Bahasa Inggris yang disebabkan oleh guru itu sendiri, seperti materi yang tidak relevan, kurangnya kreativitas, dan kurangnya penekanan pada komunikasi aktif. Guru yang tidak memperhatikan kebutuhan individu siswa, tidak memotivasi mereka, dan tidak mengikutsertakan mereka dalam pembelajaran juga dapat menjadi masalah. Solusinya adalah mengadopsi pendekatan pengajaran yang lebih beragam, adaptif dan responsif, serta fokus pada situasi komunikatif nyata untuk meningkatkan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris siswa. Sebagai kesimpulan, penelitian ini menekankan bahwa menjadi seorang guru Bahasa Inggris yang mahir melibatkan lebih

dari sekadar menguasai bahasa itu sendiri; guru juga harus memiliki atribut tambahan untuk efektif dalam menyampaikan pengetahuan kepada para siswa.

Kata Kunci: guru, penguasaan Bahasa Inggris, metode pengajaran.

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Introduction

English is considered as the most preferable language to learn by most learners in Indonesia for quite many reasons. The main reason is because it is considered as the international language which is used in most parts of the world. Thus, despite the difficulties in learning it, English is still worth-learning at any level of ages and education. Nevertheless learning English will never be an easy task for many of Indonesian students. Remembering English vocabularies, how to write and to pronounce them are quite challenging considering that the way an English word written will not always be the same as the it should be pronounced. Thus, there is no way the students can understand them but they must remember each word in order how to write and pronounce them. Not to mention its grammar which is really different from Indonesian grammar. English grammar defines the time of the event while in Indonesia language there is no such thing called 'tense' as it is in English. Finally, English is a particularly challenging language because there are so many variations of it. Though fundamentally the same language, it's spoken quite differently in the various countries that have it as a primary language, such as the USA, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Here, students need to get used to different sounds for the same words or sentences adding an additional layer of complexity to an already tricky language.

Specifically, one of the key challenges in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia is the lack of access to high-quality learning resources and materials. Many schools and teachers struggle to provide students with up-to-date textbooks, interactive digital resources, and engaging activities that can make the learning process more effective and enjoyable. This lack of resources can hinder students' progress and limit their exposure to authentic English language materials, such as native speaker conversations, current news, and cultural

content. Furthermore, the assessment and evaluation methods used in English language education in Indonesia can be a specific problem. The reliance on traditional exams and standardized testing may not accurately measure students' language proficiency and communicative abilities. Implementing alternative assessment methods, such as project-based assessments, oral presentations, and real-world language tasks, can be a challenge for both teachers and students.

Another specific issue is the limited exposure to authentic English-speaking environments. Indonesia is not an English-speaking country, and students may have limited opportunities to practice their English skills outside the classroom. This lack of immersion can slow down language acquisition and make it difficult for students to develop their speaking and listening abilities.

Additionally, the variation in English accents and dialects, as mentioned earlier, can be a specific challenge. Teachers may need to adapt their teaching methods to expose students to different English accents, but finding appropriate resources and training to do so can be a hurdle.

Other aspect that plays an important role in teaching English is teachers' personality. In a study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2021), students were surveyed to gather their opinions on the qualities of an ideal English teacher. The findings revealed that, in addition to possessing a wide range of English language knowledge, students emphasized the importance of teachers being patient, understanding, energetic, and entertaining while maintaining effective classroom discipline. The study also highlighted students' recognition that achieving perfection in these qualities is nearly impossible; however, they emphasized that as long as they are treated with respect by their teachers, they understand that excellent teachers, like anyone else, are not flawless. This underscores the significance of teachers exhibiting good personality traits to foster a positive learning environment. Furthermore, teachers with such qualities were

found to be effective in encouraging students to persist in their English language learning journey, including speaking English despite pronunciation errors and grammatical mistakes. These teachers promoted the idea that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process and encouraged students to explore various aspects of learning English.

To make sure that teachers teach English without missing any thing, teachers need to make proper preparation before teaching. And in order to make proper preparation teachers need to know the good process of teaching. The first step of the teaching process is to create the course design. After deciding what lesson will be taught in class, the teachers must know the goals to be reached by having the lesson. By then teachers must decide method of teaching that will be applied. This method is figured out after teachers know the aim of the lesson. After all the lesson plan, teachers must decide how the evaluation will be held in order to check students' understanding of the lesson then after that further action will be taken if needed.

One thing must be built between teachers and students in class in order to achieve the goal of the lessons, teachers must have good emotional relationship with the students. Moreover here writer as the teacher is teaching junior high school students – students at the age will absorb all the lesson given by the teachers a lot better if the students like the teachers personally. Somehow the bond between teachers and students affect the ability of the students to understand the lesson. The more the students like the teachers, the better they will understand the lesson. But once the students dislike the teachers personally, they have decided not to understand the lesson well. Therefore teacher must build good relationship with students.

In short, in learning English as a second language, teachers are the most important part in the process although students may get knowledge from other sources. Teachers with good knowledge in English, good personality, good knowledge in teaching process, good relationship with students and well prepared will create better learning process and make the process or learning easier. This study aims to answer the following question; What makes a good Teacher of English as a foreign language?

Before teaching someone English as a foreign language, one may wonder skills must be had in order to deliver the knowledge at the best

effort. People might ask what skills need to be learnt in learning foreign language. Johnson (2001) says that ones might ask aspects precisely elaborated in educating an overseas linguistics. What varieties of understanding and ability need to be skilled. When people are asked this their first and common answer may include words like articulation, terminology and language rules. Thus in other words it is clear that the basic skills to teach English as a foreign language are pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. As very basic as they are, they need to be mastered before a teacher decides to teach English as a foreign language. Canale and Swain (1980), as cited in Johnson, succinctly stated, "Competence is the term linguists employ to encompass what we have, until now, rather laboriously referred to as knowledge and skill." We can say that teachers should have competence in linguistics. That means that teachers must be reliable in knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, word forms, grammar and are able to apply them in English usage especially for communication.

As learning English as a foreign language is not always easy for the learners, they need to be motivated especially in a rough time of learning. Takahashi's (2000) in Kasper and Kenneth Rose says that definite motivational issues and their strong point are occupied in guiding apprentices' consideration to board realistic structures. In other word, students who get more motivation and attention might get success in learning language. To reach target of teaching and having students who are able to speak English, teachers need to give more attention and motivation. Motivation can be in the form of encouraging students to join activities in the class, make students interested in our subject and make them seriously learn English. And confirmed by Lighthbown and Nina Spada (1999) that in a tutors' mind, encouraged apprentices are typically individuals who take part enthusiastically in discussion, show attentiveness in the topic discussed, and learning enthusiastically. At that moment, tutors ought to have period to contribute assessment and examine their apprentices' blunders. Brown, A. (2004). Evaluating students in the process of "turning" their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue their growth process. We can say that evaluating students' mistakes is the way to help them to know their mistakes and make it better.

In teaching process, teachers should make course design to figure out the aims of

teaching. After deciding the aims of teaching, teachers should decide the method of teaching. It is mentioned by Lightbown and Nina Spada (1999), "Traditional instructional environments (for example, grammar translation and audiolingual) are those where the language is being taught to a group of second or foreign language learners. In this case, the focus is on the language itself rather than on information which is carried by the language." In this case the goal of students to learn English is to learn the vocabulary and grammar rather than to use it in daily life. On the contrary, they also say "communicative, content based and task based instructional environments also involve learners whose goal is learning the language itself, but the style of instruction places the emphasis on interaction, conversation, and language use, rather than on learning about the language." Based on the sentence above the focus of learning is the language itself.

Method

The article employed an introspective method, as stated, which aligned with Mann's (1986) approach. This method focused on examining feedback and production, primarily delving into individuals' interpretations of their thoughts, actions, and emotions as they engaged with specific feedback and production processes. The overarching objective was to comprehend the connection between feedback and production as perceived through individuals' own perspectives. The validity of this method was subject to debate.

In this context, the purpose of the introspective method was to identify teaching-related issues pertaining to the teachers themselves. The author directly observed the teaching process within the classroom and determined the criteria that teachers considered indicative of effective teaching. The introspective method served as a means to uncover challenges and formulate strategies to address these challenges.

The research was conducted during the author's tenure of teaching English as a foreign language at Unity Senior High School. The specific subjects of the study were the teachers involved in the English language instruction. The method employed, introspective, involved the author's firsthand observations and interpretations of the teaching process and the perceptions of teachers regarding their practices.

This approach was oriented towards an understanding of the teachers' internal perspectives, reflections, and perceptions about their teaching methods and their efficacy. Through this introspective lens, the research aimed to uncover issues within the teaching process and propose solutions based on the teachers' own perspectives and experiences.

Results and Discussion

In the High School Unity School environment, the importance of English teachers having a deep proficiency in English cannot be overstated. The students' diverse exposures to the English language serve as a distinctive feature, with some having been immersed in it since an early age, even as infants. However, there are also those who commence their English language learning journey upon entering kindergarten. Despite English not always being the primary language in their home environment, many of these students engage in day-to-day conversations with family members using English. As a result, they enter the school with high expectations that their English teachers will be able to communicate fluently and confidently in English. This underscores the immeasurable value of a teacher's ability to speak English fluently, articulate words accurately, and possess a solid comprehension of grammar.

Due to the early exposure to the English language, students' expectations of their English teachers are notably high. They hold teachers who exhibit exceptional English language skills in high esteem, and this is evident in their tendency to pose challenging questions during the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers are not merely required to convey information clearly but are also anticipated to provide well-thought-out responses that demonstrate a profound understanding of the language.

In the context of the importance of having a profound proficiency in English for English teachers at Unity School, we can refer to relevant theories or studies such as intercultural communication theory and second language education. Intercultural communication theory emphasizes the importance of language competence in understanding and communicating with individuals from different cultures. In the context of Unity School, students come from diverse language and cultural

backgrounds, which can influence how they communicate and learn. Therefore, English teachers who have a deep understanding of the English language can be more effective in facilitating effective communication with students from different backgrounds.

Furthermore, in the field of second language education, it is important to acknowledge that students who have early exposure to English may have higher expectations of their teachers' abilities to speak and teach in English. This can inform the teaching approach of English teachers at Unity School, with a focus on developing strong speaking skills and a solid grasp of grammar.

However, it is also important for English teachers to understand that students with diverse language backgrounds may require different approaches to their English language learning. Therefore, an emphasis on differentiation and responsive teaching to meet individual student needs can also be applied in this context.

In this context, at Unity School, English language proficiency is not merely an attribute but rather lies at the core of the teacher-student learning relationship. Teachers are not solely conveyors of information; they also serve as role models who ignite the spirit of curiosity and foster deeper development in the English language. In other words, within the atmosphere of Unity School, English is not just a subject, but also a means to connect, inspire, and guide students towards a broader understanding.

At Unity School, a strong command of the English language is an indispensable requirement for its English teachers. The students' exposure to English is diverse, spanning from those who have been introduced to the language at a tender age, even as babies, to others who began their learning journey in kindergarten. Although English might not serve as their primary language at home, many engage in daily conversations with their families in English. As a result, they arrive at school with the expectation that their English teachers will communicate fluently and confidently in English. This underscores the critical significance of the teacher's proficiency in speaking English fluently, accurately pronouncing words, and possessing a robust understanding of grammar.

Given the students' early and varied exposure to English, their expectations of their English teachers are understandably elevated. Teachers with exceptional English skills are held in high esteem by students, and this is reflected in their

propensity to raise challenging questions during lessons. Consequently, teachers are not only responsible for imparting information but also for providing well-reasoned responses that showcase a profound comprehension of the language.

The Influence of the Teacher-Student Relationship

The influence of the teacher-student relationship at Unity School is profound and far-reaching. According to Krashen (1982), he states that second language (L2) learners will experience effective language growth when they are exposed to input that is slightly more challenging than their current level of comprehension. This relationship extends beyond the boundaries of a typical classroom dynamic, as the emphasis on English language proficiency creates a unique bond between teachers and students. Teachers who possess a solid command of English not only fulfill the role of educators but also serve as linguistic mentors and sources of inspiration for their students. This connection is built on mutual respect and admiration, as students hold teachers with exceptional English skills in high regard. The teachers' ability to communicate fluently and confidently in English not only fosters effective learning but also encourages open dialogue and intellectual curiosity. As a result, the teacher-student relationship becomes a pivotal factor in shaping students' language development, self-esteem, and their eagerness to explore the depths of the English language. This bond, characterized by respect, guidance, and shared enthusiasm for language, contributes significantly to the overall educational experience at Unity School.

Given that the students at Unity School are situated within their formative teenage years, the intricate dynamics characterizing their relationships with their educators exert a palpable and influential force upon their overall learning endeavors. This phenomenon resonates with broader educational contexts wherein a student's affinity for an instructor assumes a pivotal role in shaping their level of scholarly involvement and classroom participation. It is widely acknowledged that students who hold a positive predisposition towards their instructors tend to display heightened levels of attentiveness and motivation to comprehend and internalize the academic material being presented. Conversely, in instances where a student's personal connection with an instructor is less favorable,

the student's capacity to effectively engage with the curriculum may be perceptibly compromised.

The Implications for Effective Pedagogy

The aforementioned observations underscore profound implications germane to effective pedagogy within the unique milieu of Unity School. According to Slavin (in Suardipa, 2000:270), social interaction stimulates the formation of new ideas and enriches students' intellectual development. Foremost, English instructors are charged with a demanding responsibility to meticulously cultivate and elevate their linguistic proficiencies to align with the students' exacting expectations encompassing linguistic fluency, precision of pronunciation, and grammatical acumen. Such an undertaking necessitates a comprehensive commitment to continuous professional development endeavors geared towards bolstering their linguistic aptitude.

Concomitantly, the cultivation of a positive and synergistic teacher-student relationship assumes a paramount and indispensable status. Instructors are enjoined to proactively endeavor towards the establishment of an affable and resonant rapport with their students, thereby concretizing a tangible manifestation of genuine concern and solicitude for their holistic well-being. This relational paradigm serves as the bedrock upon which an environment conducive to the cultivation of esteem and fervent enthusiasm for active participation in the learning journey is erected.

In summary the instructional cadre at Unity School is imbued with the onerous responsibility of attaining and upholding heightened benchmarks of linguistic mastery, in addition to adroitly orchestrating the delicate nuances of pedagogical methodologies. The early exposure of students to the English language frames their yardstick for linguistic competency, thereby rendering the instructor's capacity to fulfill and surpass these benchmarks an instrumentally influential determinant in shaping the contours of their educational odyssey. Furthermore, the intricate interplay of interpersonal dynamics permeating the teacher-student matrix profoundly molds the spectrums of student engagement and cognitive absorption. As a corollary, an integrative approach that seamlessly amalgamates linguistic finesse with adept cultivation of interpersonal rapport emerges as an indispensable and efficacious

strategy for propelling the realms of successful pedagogy and erudition within the precincts of Unity School.

Implications for Effective Teaching

The ramifications for effective teaching within the framework of Unity School are of paramount significance, given the intricacies of the teacher-student relationship and the pursuit of linguistic excellence. First and foremost, the faculty is tasked with the imperative of cultivating an atmosphere that fosters a rigorous commitment to linguistic refinement. English educators, as standard-bearers of language proficiency, are compelled to engage in continuous professional development endeavors that encompass not only grammatical precision but also idiomatic nuances and effective communicative strategies. This commitment not only meets the elevated standards of the students but also engenders a pedagogical environment where language mastery is upheld as a model for emulation.

Furthermore, the cultivation of an interactive and inclusive pedagogical space is integral to effective teaching. Instructors are advised to adopt a student-centric approach, tailoring their instructional methodologies to accommodate diverse learning styles and levels of linguistic competency. This approach necessitates the utilization of innovative teaching tools, technology integration, and the incorporation of interactive activities that stimulate critical thinking and foster engagement. Through this approach, instructors not only facilitate comprehension but also empower students to become active participants in their own linguistic development.

The dimensions of the teacher-student relationship further accentuate the principles of effective teaching. Beyond imparting knowledge, educators must embrace their roles as mentors, cultivating an environment of mutual respect and trust. By showing genuine interest in students' progress, providing constructive feedback, and being receptive to their queries, instructors forge a positive rapport that nurtures enthusiasm for learning. This rapport extends beyond the confines of the classroom, promoting a culture of lifelong learning and inquiry.

In conclusion, effective teaching within the paradigm of Unity School transcends the conventional confines of pedagogy. It requires a holistic approach that integrates language

proficiency, innovative pedagogical strategies, and the cultivation of a robust teacher-student relationship. By adhering to these principles, educators foster an atmosphere where linguistic mastery becomes an attainable goal, active engagement is the norm, and the pursuit of knowledge is an enduring journey.

The aforementioned observations accentuate pivotal implications for effective teaching within the context of Unity School. Primarily, English teachers must commit to honing and refining their language skills to meet the students' expectations for fluency, accurate pronunciation, and grammatical precision. This endeavor could encompass pursuing professional development opportunities aimed at enhancing their linguistic competence. In addition, fostering a positive teacher-student relationship is of utmost importance. Teachers must proactively work to build a personal connection with their students, showing genuine care and interest in their overall development. This approach plays a vital role in creating an environment where students feel valued and are inspired to actively engage in the learning journey.

In conclusion, Unity School's English educators are tasked with the responsibility of meeting elevated standards not only in language proficiency but also in their teaching methodologies. The students' exposure to English from an early age shapes their benchmarks for language mastery, and the teacher's ability to meet these benchmarks significantly shapes their learning experiences. Additionally, the interplay of interpersonal dynamics between teachers and students can wield a profound impact on student engagement and comprehension. Consequently, a comprehensive approach that amalgamates linguistic competence with adept relationship-building skills is indispensable for facilitating successful teaching and learning at Unity School.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the effective delivery of lessons requires a multifaceted skill set from teachers. Mastery of English language knowledge is paramount, enabling them to convey information accurately and comprehensively. However, beyond expertise, possessing a commendable personality becomes equally crucial. Teachers with traits of patience, empathy, and approachability create an environment conducive to learning. Their

genuine concern for students' comprehension of English fosters a sense of trust and openness.

Establishing strong rapport with students is another cornerstone of successful teaching. Building meaningful relationships encourages students to engage actively with the subject matter. A teacher's ability to connect on a personal level enhances the overall learning experience. Moreover, effective pedagogical practices play an integral role. Employing appropriate teaching methodologies tailored to the students' needs and learning styles facilitates comprehension and retention. Notably, the responsibilities of a teacher extend beyond the classroom. Continuous self-improvement is essential. Participation in teachers' training, seminars, and academic studies that offer insights into the latest trends in teaching English as a foreign language is vital. This commitment to professional development ensures that instructors remain attuned to evolving teaching methodologies and technologies.

To be recognized as an outstanding teacher requires a perpetual journey of growth and refinement.

The synergy of language proficiency, pedagogical prowess, interpersonal skills, and commitment to self-improvement forms the foundation for fostering both knowledge and motivation in students. Through these comprehensive efforts, teachers not only impart knowledge but also inspire and empower students to navigate the challenges of learning English with unwavering enthusiasm and resilience.

To be an outstanding teacher, one must upgrading her/him self by joining teachers' training or seminar or any other study that will keep the teacher updated with the latest knowledge of teaching English as a foreign language. The path to becoming an exceptional teacher is an ongoing journey of growth and refinement. It necessitates a commitment to continuous self-improvement through active participation in teachers' training, seminars, and other educational opportunities that keep educators updated with the latest knowledge in teaching English as a foreign language.

This realization carries significant implications for educational institutions and policymakers. It underscores the urgent need to invest in professional development opportunities for teachers. Providing resources, funding, and institutional support for ongoing training and skill enhancement is crucial. Such investments not only benefit individual educators but also

have a profound impact on the overall quality of English language education in Indonesia.

To put these implications into action, educational institutions should explore the implementation of mentorship programs. Experienced teachers can play a pivotal role in guiding and supporting newer educators, helping them navigate the complexities of teaching English effectively. Furthermore, fostering a collaborative culture among teachers, where they openly share their best practices and insights, can lead to the

continuous improvement of teaching methodologies and ultimately result in better learning outcomes for students.

Lastly, recognizing and rewarding teachers who consistently demonstrate excellence in their profession is essential. Acknowledging their dedication and commitment to student success can serve as a powerful motivator for all educators to strive for continuous improvement in their teaching practices.

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