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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON CHARACTERISTICS OF ATTRIBUTES OF AN EFFECTIVE EFL TEACHER (A Survey Study at a Multimedia Class of a Vocational High School in Ciamis)

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Abstract: This study revealed students' perceptions on characteristics of attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a multimedia class of a vocational high school in Ciamis/ Indonesia in academic year of 2020-2021. The purposes were to figure out the students' perceptions on characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school and to figure out the dominant characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school based on students' perceptions. A survey study was used as a research design; and thus 25 students at class XI- Multimedia were selected as the participants. The questionnaires and the interview were used to collect the data. Triangulation analysis was used by the writer to triangulate the results of the questionnaires and the interview. The findings showed that the students perceived their teacher had five attributes of characteristics on effective EFL teacher. Those five attributes of characteristics were rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, as well as organization and preparation. The findings also showed that those attributes were the dominant characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school based on students' perceptions. However, there was not dominant attribute of effective EFL teacher on organization and preparation characteristics. The conclusion indicated that an effective EFL teacher must have five attributes of characteristics. It also pointed out that those five attributes of characteristics were dominant characteristics of effective EFL teacher at vocational high school emerged based on students' perceptions. It is suggested for the next researchers to apply performance assessment to measure the students' improvements on English abilities, achievement, and academic performance.

Keywords: attributes; effective; EFL; perception; teacher

INTRODUCTION

English is regarded as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia with the purpose to make students able to use English fluently and correctly both spoken and written. Thus, EFL teachers are supposed to cope with a good acquisition of professional knowledge and competence to meet the demands of new trends in the teaching English as a foreign language (Sun & Sihes, 2020, p. 246). Unfortunately, teaching English in Indonesia seems to collide with several problems that can

be viewed from some perspectives. Those problems might be derived from teaching techniques, methods, and strategies (Herlina, Kurnia, & Faridah, 2017, p. 46). Therefore, EFL teachers play a prominent role in ensuring that students become skilled users of English both formally and informally (Mudra, 2018, p. 59).

Because teachers have important role to make students become successful learners, they are expected to understand and continuously build their teaching quality. A teacher is a critical factor in students' learning in the EFL classroom. Therefore, the teachers should always improve or develop their professionalism or quality in order to be effectively educating the students. Meanwhile, effective teachers are identified as those who give various materials to their learners and a lot of tasks and group work activities, which are conducted in their classes and soon evaluated in the form of feedback to be given by teachers (Adams & Pierce, 2006, cited in Atmowardoyo, et al. 2015, p. 609; Borich, 1992, cited in Tajeddin & Alemi, 2019, p. 3).

Similarly, teachers have important part in teaching English for foreign language and students are highly motivated to learn English from the proficient and effective language teacher (Khaing, 2020, p. 44). In this case, effective teachers are those who foster instructional skills and personal characteristics that contribute to effective language teaching (Alzobiani, 2020, p. 33). Thus, effective teaching is extremely needed because effective teaching is derived from effective teachers.

The effective teacher in the classroom is a very important factor that catalyzes students' learning (Hismanoglu, 2019, p. 103). Therefore, the teachers should recognize and improve their effective teaching. By recognizing the indicators of effective teaching, the teachers can do a reflection of teaching to know whether their teaching is effective or not. Then, they can do an exploration of teaching and some efforts to improve his performance towards an effective teaching (Ajam & Usman, 2018, p. 89).

The teacher can do a reflection on the students' perceptions to recognize the characteristics of effective teaching. Perception is a set of mental concepts that identifies, defines, and describes the structure and content of mental thought to lead a person's actions (Febriyanti, 2018, p. 83; Salem, 2019, p. 436). It also enables individual to take the sensory fact in and make it as a meaningful thing (Jafar & Rahman, 2018, p. 8). Perception concerns with the use of mind or senses to figure out a person's surrounding (Jafar & Rahman, 2018, p. 11). Perception is how people judge others and who they contact with (Uddin, 2019, p. 5001).

The teacher and students have different perceptions and understandings on characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher. Likewise, regarding effective teaching, there has been no agreement between teachers and students because they differ not only on their understanding of what describes an effective teacher but also in their perception of the word effectiveness (Al Tameemy, 2019, p. 1172). However, in this study, the writer focuses on students' perceptions on an effective EFL teacher's characteristics of attributes. They are classified into five major categories as proposed by Salem (2019, pp. 437-438), Faranda and Clarke (2004), as cited in Mudra (2018, p. 60), consisting of rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization and preparation.

Many practitioners through their empirical studies supported practices focus more on students' perceptions on characteristics of attributes of an effective EFL teacher (Alzobiani, 2020; Salem, 2019; Mudra, 2018; Külekçi, 2018; Kwangsawad, 2017). However, no one of them conduct the study to the teacher and the students at vocational high school level. Therefore, this study focuses on related topic aiming at finding out the students' perceptions on characteristics among

attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school; and the emergence of the dominant characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school based on students' perceptions.

METHOD

The qualitative method was used in this study through the use of survey design as suggested by Cohen, et al. (2007, p. 205). The class XI- Multimedia of SMK AL-IHYA that consisted of 25 students as a sample of the study were involved. It consisted of 19 male and 6 female students and ranged from 15 to 17 years old.

There were two types of instruments used for data collection in the present research including questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires consisting of 38 statements (Salem, 2019, pp. 441-447) which were employed to answer all research questions. The types of questionnaires were in form of closed-ended questions (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 321). In contrast, the questionnaire only provided dichotomous questions with checklist [] responses' column consisting of "Yes" or "No" responses. The results of the questionnaires were presented in visual data presentation with the type of exploratory data analysis of frequency and percentage tables which were simpler than the others (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 507). In the percentage calculation, this study adopted percentage formula taken from Fraenkel, et al. (2012, p. 211).

The second research instrument was the semi structure interview which was conducted to three students (upper achiever, middle achiever, and lower achiever) and based on the English teacher's suggestion. The writer prepared the open-ended questions which were adapted from Hismanoglu (2019, pp. 109-110). The data analysis of this study used interpreting approaches for the interview data consisting of transcribing, describing, concluding, and interpreting (Berg, 2004, p. 239).

The results of the questionnaires and the interview of first and second questions were triangulated with the theories underpinned the present study. The results of triangulation could reveal the perception of students dealing with characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the interview and the questionnaire results will be described in the following organization:

The Students' Perceptions on Characteristics among Attributes of an Effective EFL Teacher at a Vocational High School

The students' perceptions on characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school were obtained from the analysis result of the interview and the questionnaire that will be described as follows:

The findings of questionnaires result

The questionnaires were divided into five sections. The first section was about Rapport Characteristics, which was from the first to the eleventh statements. The second section was about Delivery Characteristics, which was from the twelfth to the twenty- fourth statements. The third section was about Fairness Characteristics, which was from the twenty-fifth to the twenty-ninth

statements. The fourth section was about Knowledge and Credibility Characteristics, which was from the thirteenth to the thirty-second statements. The fifth section was about Organization and Preparation Characteristics, which was from the thirty-third to the thirty-eighth.

Those five attributes of characteristics were in line with five major categories of effective EFL teacher which were proposed by Salem (2019, pp. 437-438). Rapport is concerned with how a teacher becomes friendly, affable, vehement, and approachable (Mudra, 2018, p. 60). Regarding the attributes of delivery characteristics, it concerned with how a teacher delivers a lesson with particular strategies or techniques (Mudra, 2018, p. 60). Fairness focuses on how a teacher treats learners, which includes treatment, examination, grading, and hard work (Mudra, 2018, p. 60). Knowledge and credibility characteristics, focus on intelligence, qualification, and mastery (Mudra, 2018, p. 60). The attributes of organization and preparation characteristics focus on preparation, comprehension, and delivery materials (Mudra, 2018, p. 60).

Findings from interview to answer the first and the second questions

The result of interview became the findings taken from the first question (“Do you view your teacher as an effective EFL teacher?”) and second questions (“Why do you view your teacher as an effective / ineffective EFL teacher?”).

Based on the first questions, it was revealed that they considered their teacher as an effective EFL teacher. Similarly, in teaching English for foreign language, teachers take an important part to the improvement of students’ achievement and students are highly motivated to learn English from the proficient and effective language teacher (Khaing, 2020, p. 44). In other words, students’ motivation and learning enhancement can be achieved through being effective EFL teacher.

The existence of an effective teacher in the classroom is an important part that catalyzes students’ learning (Hismanoglu, 2019, p. 103). By recognizing the characteristics of effective teaching, the EFL teachers can do a reflection of teaching to know whether their teaching is effective or not. As an effort, the teacher can do a reflection on the students’ perceptions to recognize the characteristics of effective teaching. It could be concluded that the teacher should try to be an effective teacher in order to use effective teaching in the classroom.

Meanwhile, the three students’ responses which were categorized into upper achiever, middle achiever, and lower achiever on the second question revealed that the students considered their teacher as an effective EFL teacher since the teacher had excellent education for teaching and learning English. Similarly, an effective teacher means to be able to master of the subject matter knowledge in their specific field. The more teachers master the subject-matter knowledge, the more effectively they teach and the more successful results will be obtained (Külekçi, 2018, p. 3).

Furthermore, the students deemed their teacher as an effective EFL teacher since she presented English materials and lessons that were easier and understandable for them. Accordingly, effective teachers are identified as those who give their learners with various materials (Borich, 1992, cited in Tajeddin & Alemi, 2019, p. 3). In addition, the effective teacher has an ability to adjust the material with the students’ need and ability to organize the material to facilitate the learning and to reach the goal of teaching and learning (Adams & Pierce, 2006, cited in Atmowardoyo, et al. 2015, p. 609).

Furthermore, the students thought that their teacher as an effective EFL teacher since she performed good teaching in English class. Similarly, effective teachers are those who foster instructional skills and personal characteristics that create effective language teaching (Alzobiani, 2020, p. 33). To strengthen this, effective teachers possess specific characteristics and knowledge

such as good instructional skills (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2019, p. 3). In short, the students considered their teacher as an effective EFL teacher since she had potential knowledge for teaching and learning English, presented English materials and lessons that were easier and understandable for them, and had good teaching performance in English class.

Summary of the findings from the first research question

The findings showed that the students perceived their teacher had five attributes of characteristics on effective EFL teacher which was in line with five major categories of effective EFL teacher which were proposed by Salem (2019, pp. 437-438). In the attributes of rapport characteristics, effective EFL teacher should be friendly, develop a good interaction with students, share personal experiences, give attention to the students, be patient, understand students, give a positive manner in general, have a charisma, know the student's English education background, understand the different student levels, and understand the different student levels. Similarly, rapport is concerned with how a teacher becomes friendly, affable, vehement, and approachable (Mudra, 2018, p. 60).

In the attributes of delivery characteristics, effective EFL teacher should be eager of EFL teaching, give good explanations, adopt good models, select diverse teaching methods, good writing errors, good speaking errors, teach grammar, use group work, encourage student participation in class, employ students' participation with low confidence, talk slowly in English, choose easy words, and ask questions frequently. Likewise, delivery is concerned with how a teacher delivers a lesson with particular strategies or techniques (Mudra, 2018, p. 60).

In the attributes of fairness characteristics, effective EFL teacher should give all students the same treatment, make students well-prepared for exams, give students clear grading guidelines, ask students to work hard during class, and ask students to do homework. Accordingly, fairness emphasizes on the way teacher treats learners including treatment, examination, grading, and hard work (Mudra, 2018, p. 60). Based on the attributes of knowledge and credibility characteristics, effective EFL teacher should have good quality for EFL teaching with good knowledge of grammar good vocabulary mastery. Similarly, knowledge and credibility focus on intelligence, qualification, and mastery (Mudra, 2018, p. 60).

In the attributes of organization and preparation characteristics, effective EFL teacher should have good preparation to face every lesson, make syllabus containing weekly course content, detail the instructional methods, explain students the lesson objectives at every session, make the syllabus as the guidance, and make their own enriching material. In line with this, organization and preparation focus on preparation, comprehension, and delivery materials (Mudra, 2018, p. 60).

From the findings, the writer argued that the students considered their teacher as an effective EFL teacher since she had potential knowledge for teaching and learning English, presented English materials and lessons that were easier and understandable for them, and had good teaching performance in English class. Likewise, effective teachers are those who foster instructional skill and personal characteristics that lead to effective language teaching (Alzobiani, 2020, p. 33).

The Dominant Characteristics among Attributes of an Effective EFL Teacher at a Vocational High School Emerged Based on Students' Perceptions

Like the first research question, the investigation of what dominant characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school based on students' perceptions

was derived from the analysis of questionnaires result and interview. They will be described in the following organization:

indings of the questionnaires result

The analysis of the students’ responses based on the questionnaires from statement one to thirty showed the percentages of the students’ responses on every statement that can be seen at Figure 1.

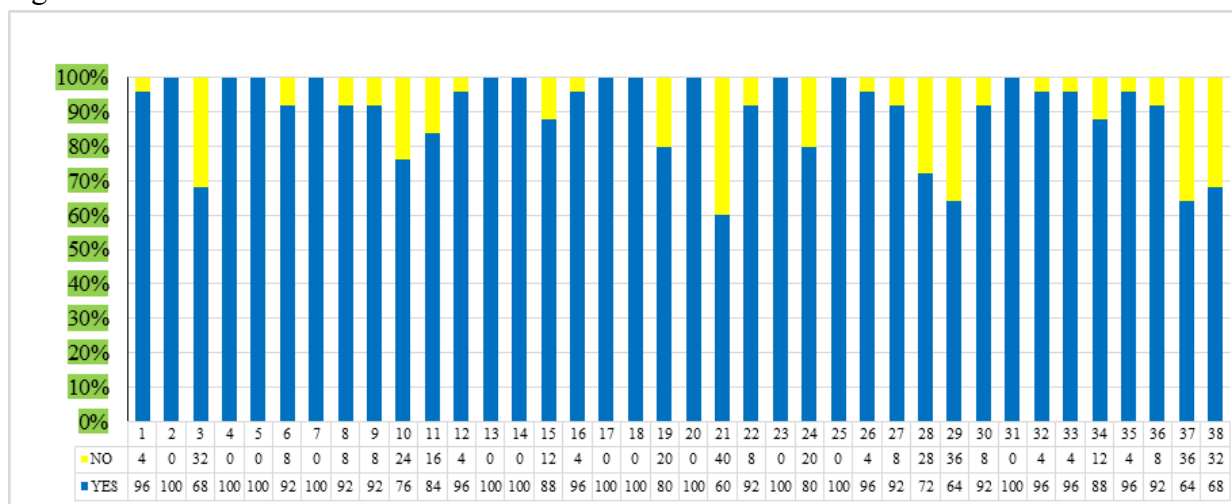


Figure 1 The percentages of students’ responses on the questionnaires

From the figure 1, it could be noted that the students stated their dominant perceptions toward characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school on the statements number 2, 4, 5, 7, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25, and 31. It could be concluded that the students dominantly perceived EFL teacher should develop a good relationships with students, care about students, be patient, and have a positive attitude in general (rapport characteristics). Besides that, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher should give clear explanations, use good examples, correct speaking errors, teach grammar, encourage student participation in class, and use easy words (delivery characteristics). Furthermore, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher should treat all students fairly (fairness characteristics). In addition, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher should have a good knowledge of grammar (knowledge and credibility characteristics).

It could be concluded that four attributes such as rapport, delivery, fairness, and knowledge and credibility were the dominant characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school based on students’ perceptions. However, there was not dominant attribute of effective EFL teacher on organization and preparation characteristics.

Findings of the interview from the third and the fourth questions

The writer analyzed the results of the interview from the third (3. What are the most important characteristics that an effective EFL teacher should generally have?") and the fifth (4. "Why do you choose these characteristics as the most important for an effective EFL teacher?") questions to answer the second research question. Specifically, it was purposed to find out the dominant characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school based on students’ perceptions. Based on the third question, it was revealed that the most important

characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher were developing a good relationships with students (rapport characteristics), caring about students (rapport characteristics), giving clear explanations (delivery characteristics), teaching grammar (delivery characteristics), using easy words (delivery characteristics), giving students clear grading guidelines (fairness characteristics), having a good knowledge of grammar (knowledge and credibility characteristics), and being well prepared for every lesson (organization and preparation characteristics).

It could be concluded that five characteristics of effective EFL teacher at vocational high school based on students' perceptions were rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization and preparation. The findings of this study were in accordance with one of the previous study carried out by Salem (2019). However, there were some differences between this study and the previous study carried out by Salem (2019) in term of its attributes of characteristics. For example, rapport characteristics in this study emphasized on developing a good relationships with students and caring about students. Meanwhile, rapport characteristics in the research conducted by Salem (2019) emphasized on involving care and attention students. Besides that, delivery characteristics in this study emphasized on providing understandable explanation, teaching grammar, and using easy words. On the contrary, delivery characteristics proposed by Salem (2019) focused on encouraging students' engagement and escalating students' self-confidence.

Other differences dealing with fairness characteristics in this study emphasized on giving students clear grading guidelines. Meanwhile, fairness characteristics suggested by Salem (2019) emphasized on characterizing by teacher impartiality. Furthermore, this study discussed something about characteristics of knowledge and credibility that emphasized on having a good knowledge of grammar. Meanwhile, knowledge and credibility characteristics in Salem (2019) emphasized on possessing the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In addition, organization and preparation characteristics in this study emphasized on being well prepared for every lesson. Meanwhile, knowledge and credibility characteristics in Salem (2019) emphasized on preparing for every lesson and providing supplemental material.

Meanwhile, the writer's question and three students' responses on the fourth question of the interview revealed that the most important characteristics for an effective EFL teacher were chosen by the students because of some reasons. Firstly, there was an improvement on students' motivation in learning English as claimed by Khaing (2020, p. 44). Secondly, they could enhance their English achievement that links to what has been said by Wright, et al. (1997), cited in Kwangsawad, 2017, p. 156, and Ahangari (2016, p. 72). Thirdly, they could overcome their difficulties and problems in the process of English learning that is relevant with Mezrigui (2015, p. 570) and Murray (1991), as cited in Ahangari (2016, p. 69). It could be concluded that the most crucial characteristics for an good EFL teacher were chosen by the students because they could improve their motivation in learning English, could enhance their English achievement, and could overcome their difficulties and problems in the process of English learning.

The summary of findings from the second research question

The findings concluded that the students stated their perceptions toward characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher which was dominant. However, there was not dominant attribute of effective EFL teacher on organization and preparation characteristics. Specifically, the students dominantly perceived EFL teacher should develop a good relationships with students, care about students, be patient, and have a positive attitude in general (rapport

characteristics). Besides that, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher should give clear explanations, use good examples, correct speaking errors, teach grammar, encourage student participation in class, and use easy words (delivery characteristics). Furthermore, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher should treat all students fairly (fairness characteristics). In addition, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher should have a good knowledge of grammar (knowledge and credibility characteristics).

However, the findings of the students' interview showed that five characteristics among attributes of an effective EFL teacher at a vocational high school based on students' perceptions were rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization and preparation. Those were chosen by the students because they could improve their motivation in learning English, could enhance their English achievement, and could overcome their difficulties and problems in the process of English learning. Accordingly, to avoid some problems of students' underachievement in learning language, it is recommended that EFL teachers ought to assume particular effective academic roles as one drastic measure that can contribute to effective teaching and successful learning (Mezrigui, 2015, p. 570 cited in Ahangari, 2016, p. 69).

CONCLUSIONS

This study showed that EFL teacher must have five attributes of characteristics including rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, and organization as well as preparation. Those five characteristics were also dominant characteristics of effective EFL teacher at vocational high school emerged based on students' perceptions.

Specifically, the students dominantly perceived EFL teacher as the individual who should develop a good relationships with students, care about students, be patient, and have a positive attitude in general (rapport characteristics). Besides that, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher should give clear explanations, use good examples, correct speaking errors, teach grammar, encourage student participation in class, and use easy words (delivery characteristics). Furthermore, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher should treat all students fairly (fairness characteristics). In addition, they dominantly perceived EFL teacher who must be equipped with a good knowledge of grammar (knowledge and credibility characteristics).

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