

A PORTRAIT OF PROFESSIONAL EFL TEACHERS AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract: EFL teachers are considered to be professional in their fields. Becoming a professional EFL teacher needs to possess several competencies to support his or her teaching. Regarding to the teachers' competencies, the subjects whose being investigated in this research met the criteria of pedagogical and professional competence. It is found that the subject A and subject B had their own way and differentiation in achieving their pedagogical and professional competence. Both of subjects had a good personality, it means by having good personality leads them into the professionalism. Subject A is a professional teacher from the aspect of having good personality, social, and have a good sense of humor, and subject B also professional from the term of improving her self-development in teaching. One thing stands out from the results of this research that whatever the condition or where they live and teach, the professional teachers have one thing in common: they are professional in the real sense of word. This research analyzed qualitatively with a case study as the design. The data gathered in-depth investigation from the online interview, spreading self-reflection form, and did the data analysis.

Keywords: EFL Teachers, Teacher's Competencies, Professional Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is basically an attempt to create conditions or environmental systems that support and allow for the learning process to take place. Teaching in principle means to guide the students during the teaching and learning process. It implies that teaching is an attempt to organize the learning environment which later can enable the students to absorb and gain the material being discussed. This understanding implies that teachers are required to be able to act as organizers of students during their learning activities and should also be able to utilize the environment, both in the classroom and outside the classroom, which can support the teaching and learning activities. Harmer (2007) points out:

One of the most important tasks that teachers have to perform is organizing students to do various activities. This often involves giving the students information, telling them how

they are going to do the activity, putting them into pairs of groups, and finally closing things down when it is time to stop. (p.111)

It means that, without the existence of the teacher, it is almost impossible for the students to learn by themselves during their learning process.

Teachers also have to know about four teachers' competencies, those are pedagogical competence, professional competence, personality competence, and social competence. Those parameters are clearly stated in *Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen* or Act on Teachers and Lecturers Number 14 Year 2005. All aspects mentioned above are important as the main benchmark as a professional English teacher, because teachers can fulfill their duties with the best performance in the teaching and learning process by promoting aspects of competence.

Defining the meaning of a good English language teacher is not enough. Some experts also try to further give characteristics of a good and professional English teacher by synthesizing several researchers' findings. Brown (2007, p. 430) listed the characteristics of a good language teacher after doing a synthesis of a successful language teacher. Those characteristics of a good English teacher can be seen from several aspects namely technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities. Each from those aspects has several points on how to be a good English foreign language teacher. Asmaradhani (2017, p. 2) revealed that as someone who really masters the field, a professional teacher always uses his or her time continuously in obtaining new things in the field. He or she presents the materials enthusiastically and stimulates the eagerness to the students. This will finally make the students learn independently.

Based on the parameters which have been stated in *Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen* and also from the qualification of professional EFL teacher proposed by Anugerahwati (2009) and Dincer et al. (2013), one of English teachers at SMA Negeri 7 Malang, East Java, is seen as a professional EFL teacher and an English teacher at MA Al-Ittihad Malang who also seen as a professional EFL teacher. That is why the researcher wants to

investigate both of teachers and find the difference among the teachers. In short, the terms of those parameters of a professional EFL teacher which is used in this study namely teacher pedagogical competence and professional competence.

As the researcher hopes that this research will give certain information related to the pedagogical and professional competence, the objectives of this study was to know the detail description of a portrait of professional EFL teacher at SMA Negeri 7 Malang and MA Al-Ittihad Malang, such as:

- 1) The competencies of a professional EFL teacher in senior high schools in Malang, which are further elaborated into the pedagogical and professional competencies, and
- 2) How the professional EFL teacher achieves those competencies.

METHOD

This study used qualitative design because it did not seek to verify any theory but instead to generate a theory, in this case about EFL teachers' professionalism. The data is analyzed qualitatively based on the three major of how to analyze the data in qualitative research, those are; 1) developing and applying codes, 2) identifying themes, patterns and relationships, and 3) summarizing the data.

The objective of the study is to know the teachers' pedagogical and professional competence at SMA Negeri 7 Malang and MA Al-Ittihad Malang, and also to know the portrait of two English teachers from two different schools. The subject of the study focused on two English teachers as the main subject and it is considered of two competencies, criteria of being a professional teacher and finds the difference of way both of teachers teach. As it is focused on two subjects, then this study uses a descriptive qualitative research with case study as the research design. Using case study as the research design is considered appropriate because the researcher wants to investigate both of English teachers from the different school specifically.

Research Instruments

In order to get the result of this study, the first step is collecting the data. This step is needed in order to have valid and obvious information and it is analyzed forth. The technique of collecting data in this study is spreading self-reflection form, interview, and document analysis.

The first technique of collecting data was from the teachers' self-reflection. The self-reflection form that used by the researcher was the subjects were asked to fulfill the online form which included Angket Guru and Self-reflection. It was made due to anticipate the unstable condition that the researcher cannot conduct the direct observation in the field.

The second technique of collecting data was interview. It was conducted after the subject fulfilled the first step and it was held by WhatsApp video call with the subjects; it was focused on gaining the information of two competences. In the interview, the writer used a list of an interview guide questions which covered two competences of professional EFL teacher as the instrument.

The third technique of collecting data was document analysis. The document analysis done by checking the lesson plan, the result of students' test, the media which used for teaching and learning. The function was to provide valid evidences about the pedagogical competence within the subjects.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings present the data which had been collected by conducting an online-based research, such as; asked the subjects to fulfill the self-reflection form by Google Form and held an online interview by WhatsApp video call. As this study used the theory of descriptive qualitative analysis proposed by Gilbson (2003: 64) that qualitative analysis is more concerned with meaning. Data is a word which describes valid information that can help a researcher answer his or her question(s), it can come from many different sources either from observation, interview, newspaper clippings, personal journal, or questionnaire.

The results showed that both of subjects are professional teachers and had their own ways to achieve the pedagogical and professional competence. It can be indicated that the subject A is a professional teacher from the aspect of having

good personality, social, and have a good sense of humor, and subject B also professional from the term of improving her self-development in teaching.

Pedagogical Competence

According to the theory that proposed by UU No. 14 Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen, Anugerahwati (2009), and Dincer et.al (2013), they grounded the criteria that should possess by every professional English teacher, those are;

- **Having good relationship with the colleague and students**

Based on the result of interview with the subject and the informant, the subject A and B had a good relationship either with the colleague or with the students. It is proven from the informant who was a student of the subject A in 2016, she gave a statement that,

“Kalau ke guru dan karyawan beliau selalu ramah, mesti suka tebar senyum. Kalau dengan senior beliau, beliau selalu menghormati gitu. Kalau ke murid, beliau selalu sabar dan nggak berani marah. Kalau marah pun itu bukan marah yang bentak-bentak, tapi marah yang menasehati.”

It can be indicated that the subject A really had a good relationship that if with other teachers and the employee he is always friendly, he always gives smile to others, and also to the students.

As a social being, according to what the subject B's said, it is important to make a good relationship with the society. It is proven by the information that researcher's got from the informant that, *“Humble sih orangnya, gampang akrab juga. Beliau juga pribadi yang ceria, talkative juga orangnya.”*

It can be implied that the subject really had a good relationship with others and the students, since the informant gave her contribution to proof that the subject is sociable.

- **The knowledge of curriculum and syllabus**

From the lesson plan that has been analyzed, the subject A made his lesson plan appropriate with the curriculum and syllabus. It can be seen that based on curriculum and syllabus, a lesson plan must have core competencies and basic competencies that are in accordance with the material to be taught.

The researcher found that in developing the lesson plan based on the curriculum and syllabus, the subject B also referred to the syllabus itself and the lesson plan should not deviate from it, but it is allowed if the teacher wants to add and in accordance with the syllabus rules.

It was found that the subject A and B made a good lesson plan in accordance with the curriculum and syllabus. Based on the result of interview, in making this lesson plan, they did collaboration with peer English teacher at school by conducting a meeting or workshop called MGMPS (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran Sekolah*). This workshop had a function to share any ideas from all English teacher at school or within the city of Malang related to the development of lesson plan based on the curriculum and syllabus that settled by the government. By doing so, the subject knew the variations of teaching methods, media, and materials that could be used as his consideration in developing the lesson plan.

- **Motivating students**

As the subject A was teaching English at one of senior high school in Malang, he had students with different social background and variations in term of ability. Most of his students had different capability and different motivation in learning English. Thus, the subject always gave them a certain motivation in his initial stage of teaching. This was because the subject had other goal that is to make the students love English and got motivated to learn it. From the interview, he said,

“Masalah yang saya hadapi dalam mencapai tujuan itu adalah motivasi belajar siswa yang masih rendah, karena; satu, dari diri sendiri yang tidak memiliki motivasi belajar; kedua, dari lemahnya fisik dari kondisi psikisnya yang tidak bisa berpikir berat, ada juga karena materinya sulit.”

From what the subject A stated above, when he found the difficulties in conveying the material that caused from several problems, he then reflects to himself and motivated the students to follow the process of learning in the classroom.

To build a good relationship with the students, subject B also motivated the students if she found her students had no interest to learn English. According to

her, it is important to motivate the students since to make students love English; it should come from the inner willingness that is self-motivation. From the interview, she said that,

“Nah, kalau saya mengenalkannya biasanya saya tanya ke anak-anak, di sekeliling anak-anak. Misalnya mindset anak-anak seperti ini; saya belajar Bahasa Inggris untuk apa, kan saya nggak ke luar negeri? Saya juga nggak kuliah Bahasa Inggris, jadi untuk apa? Terus saya beri motivasi bahwa belajar Bahasa Inggris itu nggak harus nunggu ke luar negeri.”

From the statement that she elaborated above, it can be illustrated that the subject motivated the students by stimulating them to love English not only learn it when the students want to go abroad, but to love English in many aspects.

Professional Competence

The word “professional” can be indicated as the teacher who can put him or herself according to their fields. The subject A explained that a teacher can be said as a professional teacher if he or she masters four teacher’s competencies. Not only that, professional teachers are also required to have a teacher certificate which becomes a benchmark or legal recognition from the government. The subject said that although the certificate becomes crucial thing for a teacher to have, it does not rule out of the possibility that teachers who do not have a certificate are not professional. He is professional because of his profession and certificate is an official award from the government.

In the context of learning mastery, a professional teacher must master the learning material being taught. The indicator that the teacher is successful in terms of delivering material is when students understand the material that the teacher conveys, if the teacher’s explanation is not understood, teacher needs to know what the causes are; it could be from the teachers or students that are less being motivated. If the factor comes from the teacher, the teacher needs to evaluate or reflect on him or herself when the lesson delivered is not understood, the subject asked the students by interviewing them. But, if the factor is from the students

themselves, the teacher needs to motivate them more. Since, the subject believed that the teacher is the main factor that determines a success of learning process.

In the term of language use, the subject used English approximately 75 – 80% in the classroom. He added, however, if out of the context, he used full English regardless of whether the student understands his speech or not. In using English, the teacher must have goals and reasons why to use English in learning. He believed that this much usage can make students accustomed to hearing English words through speaking and applying them in everyday conversation. This is also an exercise out of the context of learning, so that students are trained to speak English. According to him, speaking and writing are the appropriate level of proficiency for the context of teaching students. By mastering these two skills, students can survive; when they go abroad and can speak, they will easily speak, and after speaking, they will also be able to write, but also do not rule out other skills. In addition, teachers are also required to be at an advanced level in English, since if the teacher is still at the beginner or intermediate level, the teacher will not be optimal in English. Besides that, to find the lesson that will be applied to students, teachers can apply the knowledge that obtained from lectures. One of lesson that being lectured was Cross Cultural Understanding, it is one of ways to introduce the students about English, that there are differences of cultures among the countries. In this case the subject used certain approaches that embed a good value to students that English cultures are varied.

To support learning process, the teacher needs to develop him or herself through involving them in a teacher association, like; PGRI (*Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia*), MGMP (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran*), or others. The purpose is as a forum so that each teacher can discuss that related to learning in. According to the result of interview, the subject said that he joined in an association called PGRI and MGMPs (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran Sekolah*) that held by school or from the government. He also joined seminar and workshop that support his professionalism, like; teaching methodology, teaching technique, or seminar and workshop that related to the technology, like; online-

based teaching English, utilizing the online application for learning English, and so forth.

Every success teacher must have plans, goals and purposes that want to be reached. The researcher found that the subject had certain purposes in order to his learning process well-going. In achieving his purpose, when he made a lesson plan, it must be suit with the core competencies, basic competencies, and must not deviate from the syllabus. There must be a problem the teacher faced in achieving goals; in this case the subject experienced how the problem happened often to him. The problem he faced the most was about the students' motivation to learn English. Students were less interested in learning English and tend to lack self-motivation, so the subject motivated the students and engaged them to learn English with more fun. If his goals are not attained, he determines what has been taught by giving remedies in the form of homework assignment.

After conducting the interview with the subject B, the researcher found that according to professional competence, mastering the material is considered important. According to the subject, if the teacher cannot understand the material well, if the teacher cannot master the material, it will be difficult to convey to students. The way the subject in mastering the material was always learn to follow what was on the news and develop a curriculum that came from the government. If students do not understand the lesson she conveyed, she asked students again the part that which is not understood and use examples that students often use. The criterion for the success or failure of the teacher in presenting the material could be successful, or not, because it could mean that success because the students understand, but if it was not, because they only understand in class but not applied. Since, linguistics must be applied.

In the term of certificate of professionalism, it is a must for every teacher to have it as the proof that he or she is a professional teacher. In the past, all teachers were professionals and must be graduated from education, but in the present, teachers can be said as a professional teacher who has a professional teacher certificate. She said, if the teachers were not graduated from education, the teacher should take master degree of education or turn to undergraduate program

of education. According to her, professional teachers who are painstaking and patient to the students and being able to manage the students' thermal in the classroom. She added, everyone can teach, but not necessarily be a teacher, because the teacher is not only teaching, but also educating.

One of the criteria of being a professional English teacher is to consider the level of English proficiency. The researcher found that, in applying English in the classroom, the subject followed the conditions of the teaching environment. When she taught in the city, she used almost fifty percents of English, but it was different when teaching in the village, she found it was difficult to apply English and chose to use local languages so that the purpose she conveyed was understood. Because, if she insisted on applying full English, it will bring a boomerang on her, like; students are not confident, students make fun of her, etc. The level of proficiency in understanding English for students that is important to be able to understand the purpose of the conversation carried out, for example for their daily lives. She added that the level of English proficiency for teachers is started from speaking, since she liken it like a baby who is trained orally first, no matter the grammar is right or wrong, it is important to speak first. In finding the material that helped in her teaching, she found various inspirations aside from books as well as from social media. For example, when opening Instagram, she found quotes in English, so she applied the quotes in class, but did not deviate from the context of the lesson. In the context of introducing English culture to students is to see from their daily lives and surroundings. For instance, when students play games, the instructions of the games are in English, she asked the students if they are understand the instructions of the game, they will reach the level (of games) quickly, and she explained that learning English did not have to wait when going abroad.

To support teacher professionalism, teachers must develop themselves in teaching. It can be done through programs or professional association that carried out by the government or from the school itself. Based on findings that collected from interviews, the subject preceded an association called MGMP (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran*) which was formally or informally held; the association

which was formally held from the school, but informally held from social media, like; Telegram, WhatsApp video call, Zoom meeting application, etc. She also utilized the activity or the association because, when taking part in the activity, it is considered more productive and more conscious of the changes that are taking place.

In achieving teacher professionalism, teachers must also have learning objective to be achieved, what the problems in achieving the learning objectives are, and what if the learning objective unsuccessfully achieved. From the interview, the researcher found that to achieve the learning objectives, the subject seen more from how the students are interested to learn English, and see the students' condition by not forcing students to master English. Because she thought that forcing students to learn English would just make them lazy. The problem in achieving the learning objective was time-management. She added that when she had a goal but the time available when teaching in class was less than what it is supposed to, it was one of the problems she faced. To find out whether the objectives were achieved or not, she conducted an evaluation by observing students' development after being explained the material. If the student showed a significant increase in change, she assumed that the learning objectives were achieved. However, if the objectives were not achieved, she evaluated the lesson plans and test the new lesson plans that being evaluated.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

One thing stands out from the results of this research that whatever the condition of where they live and teach, the professional teachers have one thing in common: they are professional in the real sense of the word. They have very good mastery of English. They have the skills and mastery of the appropriate teaching techniques to be used. Furthermore, they implement well-planned lessons, use various media, and can make a classroom activity interesting for the students. They have good relationships with their principals and colleagues and are generally well-liked and well-respected because of their exemplary good conduct, work ethics, commitment and their personality in general.

In short, either subject A or subject B, they are all professional according to the standard of *Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 Guru dan Dosen*, even though the researcher only investigate two competences; pedagogical and professional competence. The researcher really sure that even though the social and personality competence are not tested, both of subject have a good social and personality; it is proved from the findings that both of subjects have a good relationships with the students and colleagues. It can be seen that both of subjects also master the social and personality competence.

There are several suggestions related to the result of this study. The first is for the teacher and the future researcher who had read this study, can learn the way the subject in becoming a professional EFL teacher. The professionalism can be started by having a good personal competence that can lead to the good social competence and good pedagogical competence will lead to great professionalism.

In term of selecting the subject, the research suggests that the next researcher will select more than two professional EFL teachers from different region across Indonesia in order to enrich information of being a professional EFL teacher. As this research did not conduct either observation or interview directly on the spot, it is suggested also that the next researcher will conduct a direct research, since the result of the direct research and online-based research are really different. It will be easy to write the findings if the researcher can conduct the direct research, since he or she can remember when observation takes place, and it is more authentic rather than online-based research.

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