UNDERSTANDING TEACHING METHOD USED IN EFL CLASSROOM: STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: This study is focused on getting an understanding of the students and teachers perceptions of teaching methods use in EFL classroom. More importantly, this research is aimed at bringing to light how students and teachers in the higher education English language classroom help provide new meanings of how different methods are used in the classrooms. To make sense of their perceptions of teaching methods, we focus on four individual narrative interviews, classroom observations and two focus group discussions. The data findings show that a particular teaching method, such as students' presentation, based on the students' view, is due to that lecturers are not quite confident to speak in front of the classroom. The students assert that the lecturers seem are not quite well prepared to teach, so that the students are asked to make presentation in front of the classroom. This, based on the students' view is about spending much time for the students to speak rather than their lecturers' do. In addition, the data findings illustrate that the traditional methods used in the classroom such as classroom presentation and group discussion are needed to be modified by considering the employment of technology to mediate the acquisition of 21st century skills. In addition, the findings suggest that the lecturers' experience during their careers and study deeply influence the way they conduct teaching methods in the classroom. Moreover, the data findings indicate that identity and the self- image are prevalent in shaping the teaching methods the lecturers are used in the classroom. This study indicates that students and lecturers have different view point with regards to the teaching methods use in the higher education language classroom. It is suggested, therefore, that the use of teaching methods in the classroom should ideally involve the students' view point to generate more effective and future goals oriented.

Key words: *teaching methods, higher education, lecturers and students' perspective, and second language classroom.*

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing awareness of utilizing students' and actors' voices who get involved in the classroom activities to uncover the challenges and successes of the academic classroom practices. The importance of working with teachers and students reflected through their stories and how they perceive the teaching methods used in classroom interactions can be beneficial to help anticipate the problems arise in the classroom and can be effective to help focus and direct the learning goals. The research conducted by Lizzio et al., (2010) about the students' perception of the learning environment and academic outcomes, for example, has revealed that the students' academic achievement and development of skills are deeply influenced by their perceptions of those factors (Lizzio, et al., 2010). The importance of getting involved the students' view point to achieve educational goals has also been pointed by Telli (2015) & Shofer and Leshem (2016).

The principles understanding of involving students' voices in the research is that the significance and authenticity of what is going on in the classroom during the teaching learning process and interactions and what they encounter in their day-to-day life in the classroom, particularly within the Higher Education Language Classroom. In other word, how the students can provide a meaning of the teaching methods used by lecturers by involving them to provide reflections of how teaching methods are used during the classroom practices. This is congruent with the concept of 'agency' in which it is understood that "individuals as actors with the ability to make sense of the environment, initiate change, and make choices" (Kuczynski, 2003: 9).

Getting involved students in the process of selecting teaching methods is about meeting the 'desired outcome' and the 'reality outcomes' (Poulos & Mahony, 2008). As generally understood that there is a tendency that preferred teaching methods use in the classroom are often more on teachers' needs not on the students' needs. This is due to that teaching methods are highly influenced by the teachers' belief, abilities and preferences (Borg, 2003). When the teachers perceive that the preferred teaching methods are quite effective in the classroom practices, an inquiry should also need to be addressed to the students' voice. What are the students actually think, belief, and perceive about the teaching methods which are carried out by their lecturers? As the trends of teaching now should empower the students or with its notion, students-centered, arguing that classroom practices should be able to promote students to self-regulated, self-monitoring and self-correcting (Gregory, 2002). Teachers' role is central to stimulate and create active engagement environment in the classroom and the teaching methods use in the classroom is another crucial factor influencing classroom environment and academic engagement.

In regard with teaching methods use in the classroom, a study conducted by Sander et al., (2000) in three universities in the UK involving 395first year undergraduate students' expectations and preferences of classroom teaching methods has shown that interactive lecturers and group-based activities are much preferred among those students. In the contrary, lecturer's formality style, role play and students' presentations are the least favored of the students. Although the research does not provide a clearer understanding of the students' preferences, it implicitly indicates that the classroom situation should be in group rather than in

personal activities. Moreover, it can also be said that teachers' orientation of implementing teaching methods do not always fit with the students' preferences. The required involvement of students informing the selection of teaching methods are also raised by Gopinath (2015), in that when she (the author reflection) on her first year teaching, she was aware that her teaching methods was effective, but soon after she go through the year, she became aware that teaching also needs to involve students (Gopinah, 2015), considering that teaching should develop students independent and autonomous learning or what she called 'self-directing, self-monitoring, and 'self-correcting'. to achieve what is called 'desired outcome and factual condition'. Moreover, a study conducted by Yakovleva & Yakovlex (2014) demonstrates that teaching methods should put students at the center of the teaching and classroom activities.

It is, therefore, essential to bring the students' and teachers' perspectives to the forefront of selection of teaching methods in the HE (Higher Education) classroom. By doing this, it is expected to add another dimension of students' choice of the preferred-teaching methods, empowering their views to improve the success of the language teaching. Recognizing that utilizing students and teachers' views in educational research is prevalent, there is a need to conduct similar research within Indonesian context, specifically in the context of English language classroom in Higher Education. This research, therefore, utilizes students and teachers' perspectives to reveal the meaning of teaching methods use in English language classroom and compare it with the students' view. In a more specific, this study emphasizes on what ideology and identity are underlying the use of specific teaching methods and how this ideology and identity drives the practice of teaching and pedagogical interaction in the classroom, and clustering their perspectives into themes. Having presented the themes based on the two different perspectives in the discussion section, cross case analysis between teachers and students' views are discussed. The summary of the study is packed to provide some implications and recommendations for the future research and how the study should be conducted in relation to the ideal teaching method in t higher education.

METHODS

To uncover the meaning of the teaching methods in English Language classroom, we employed narrative interviews with two teachers and two students and two Focus Group Discussions. Through their narrative story, we can get a better understanding the meaning of teaching methods either from the students or teachers' view point via the chronological moments they encounter during their classroom interactions. Connelly & Clandinin (1990) argue that narrative seeks to build up stories of individual lives and experience. Moreover, Creswell (2005: 252) contends that narrative method is a research 'focuses on studying a single person, gathering data through the collection of stories, reporting individual experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences'. Since this study in intended to get a better understanding of teaching methods use in the classroom from the actors' perspectives, narrative interviews is suitable with the research goals.

In addition to narrative interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and classroom observation were also conducted. We conducted two students Focus Group Discussions. The students participated in this FGD are mainly from seniors,

they are from8th semester. The reasons behind selecting students from 8th semester are that they have already completed required courses and have exposure to various teaching methods used by different lecturers. Other reason of assigning focus group discussions is that it provides opportunity to express themselves. Moreover, FGD will be more effective to generate data since they will be more confident to express themselves specifically when they are with their friends compared to personal interviews. We also conducted classroom observations. we observed four classrooms which we perceived to be ideal to conduct observations. During our observations, we made field notes and video recording. Classroom observation (field notes and video recordings) is aimed at getting authentic representations of classroom practices, particularly, how the teaching methods operate within the classroom and contextualize themes which emerge from the interviews and focus group discussions.

In regard with the research site, we select a private university in Surabaya. Accessibility and familiarity with the social and cultural background of the participants are the ultimate reasons to select this university.

Inform consent was given to the students who get involved in personal interviews and FGD. The aims of giving inform consent is that minimizing power relations might arise during interviews and focus group discussions. It also means that their participation is voluntary. They can withdraw without providing reasons. The questions we asked during the interviews and FGD are surrounding research themes, such as 'what do you think the teaching methods used by the lecturers? why?", what is the ideal teaching methods? Why?

The data in this study were analysed by adopting thematic analysis. The data went through several steps of analysis; principally, through three steps, namely familiarising oneself with the data, generating initial codes and searching for themes (Braun and Clarke (2006). Due to ethical consent, the name of the university and participants are anonymized. Participants recruited in this study are completely voluntary and there are no benefits were given to the participated students and teachers, only pencils or pens are given as an appreciation and gift.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of the research and clustering it into two sub-sections; students and teachers' perceptions.

Students' Perception

There are three key findings which closely associated with teaching methods. Firstly, teaching methods are about identity and being professional. Secondly, teaching methods should be two-sided. Lastly, teaching methods should accommodate the cutting-edge technology and 21st century skills.

Teaching methods are about identity and being professional

The research findings suggest that teaching methods used in the classroom are closely associated with performing professional identity. Through the selection and implementation of a specific teaching method in the classroom, the students can have a feeling about the tendency of the teachers' orientation and eventually can have a judgment about the type of teachers they have. For example, when teachers provide much time and plenty of opportunities for the students to express

themselves through classroom presentations, whilst the teachers themselves keep taking distance by not explaining the topics being presented by the students, they can be viewed by the students to be "incompetence teachers". In this sense, the students perceive that particular teaching methods use in the classroom is often used by the teachers to disguise and disclose their deficiency in knowledge and skills. This condition is eloquently described by one of the students in FGD

> *"We are often asked by the teachers to make presentation, and the teachers are seldom to explain the materials. It is boring. It is likely that the teachers are not quite confident to speak" (S1. FGD)*

From the extract, it can be explicitly said that the issue of teacher competence is clearly seen from the teaching methods use in the classroom. It is said that lacking creativity in teaching methods means incompetence, being able to present creative ways in the teaching methods, on the contrary, often perceived by the students to be competence.

> *"We are interested in the teachers who are creative, using different methods in teaching. They are cool. They are like professional" (S3. FGD)*

Students often perceive that the ideal teachers are the teachers who are about conducting teaching learning with the newest way of teaching. In this sense, the creative teaching methods are the main consideration and being a parameter to claim whether teachers are professional or not. There has, therefore, been a dichotomy concept of being professional and not being professional based on the students' perceptions, emphasizing to the utility of teaching methods use in the classroom interactions. This finding corroborates the previous study which suggests that negative perceptions of the students towards their program and classroom experiences are primarily due to failure of the teachers' performance of building up interesting and rewarding learning situation (Studer, 2015).

Moreover, instead of possessing creativity, the concept of professional and not professional is also attached to the teachers who provide evaluation or not. The following extract illustrates that teachers who can provide feedback can be categorized as professional teachers, whilst the teachers who start the meeting without getting involved the students on the selection of the teaching methods implicitly not being professional.

> *"Yes, sometimes we are asked by the teachers to have group discussions but they (teachers) never walk around and never provide feedback" (S1, FGD)*
> *"Yes, I agree with (S1), teachers often come to start the lesson with their own technique" (S2, FGD)*

It can be seen from the above extract that lecturers tend to ignore the importance position of the students, neglecting the students' voice by not getting involved the students in deciding what the suitable and best teaching methods should be carried out in the classroom. This ignorance will likely bring a negative effect on the success of the teaching learning in the classroom. Kember (1997), for example,

has listed five teaching conceptions that teachers should be aware of, two of them are teaching as an interaction between the teacher and the student, teaching as facilitating understanding on the part of the student, and teaching as bringing about conceptual change and intellectual development in the student. It becomes clear, Based on Kember's concept, that teaching is the integration of teacher and student's interest. Moreover, Richardson (2005), speculates that instead of teacher, students play crucial role in constructing expected teaching environment. It can be said, therefore, that implementing a particular teaching method in the classroom should ideally involve the students' voices, as the current trend in educational curriculum focuses on student-centered. The role of the teachers, therefore, is to provide opportunities for active participation and prepare for learning environment (Isikoglu, 2008). However, as far as the demographic concerned, the challenges of integrating teacher's and students' view on selecting teaching methods is that the gap of knowledge between students and lecturers. The following sub-section is discussing the expectation of ideal teaching methods which should be understood by the lecturers.

Teaching methods should be two-sided

The students expect that the methods should facilitate the acquisition of the technology through the implementation of teaching methods in the classroom. However, the biggest burden of not accommodating the students' expectation is about the demographic factor. This factor, however, becomes a serious issue in the sense that the older teachers are not quite familiar with technology and its practical application during the classroom activities.

> *" I think, the older lecturers are not use to use technology on their teaching, they mostly use traditional methods such as lecturing and oral presentation" (Nita, FGD, 1)*
> *Yes, I think so. Older lecturers did not use newest teaching methods, they never use gadget, they never use like Edmodo and so on". (Anda, FGD 1)*

The students' judgment about the issue of age which often corresponds with the very contemporary methods, in fact, is about the two divide worlds - digital native and digital immigrant'. The older people, as they are not used to live in the digital era, they would likely find difficult to use and utilize technology and other modern devices on their teaching and classroom interactions. In this sense, the issue of digital native and digital immigrant is prevalent in this finding. As has been argued that digital native often position themselves and is often associated with technology in their day-to-day life including in the classroom whilst the teachers take stance towards their students, not accommodating the students' needs to utilizing technology in the classroom activities, there is a mismatch between the expectation and reality in the classroom. The students' expectation of utilizing technology in each teaching methods can also be understood as their awareness about the importance of the technology for their knowledge in teaching as well as for their 'refreshment' in learning a language. It, therefore, becomes imperative for the teachers to facilitate the acquisition of the current technology and 21st century skills, as will be discussed in the following section

Teaching methods should accommodate the cutting-edge technology and 21st century skills

Based on the research findings, the teaching methods should shift away from the traditional method onto the current trends of utilizing technology. The teachers should be able to facilitate and provide spaces for the students to explore their competence and skills in the digital world through their active engagements with teachers and students in the classroom activities and through the selections of digital teaching methods. When the classroom activities fail making the students get engaged with the taught materials due to the teaching methods use in the classroom, the learning goals are likely difficult to be achieved. The following extract illustrate that when teaching methods cannot facilitate the students with the exploration of the current skills, it can put students boring.

> *"teaching method like lecturing and ppt presentation are boring and do not encourage students to be active"*
> *"yes, (in ppt presentation) there is usually a deal between students for not asking the presenter". So ppt presentation will not make us speak.*
> *"actually, there are teachers who use very interesting teaching methods"*
> *"Yes, like Ms. Yuni who uses miniature to teach cross cultural understanding, Mr. Joko who uses Edmodo, and there is a teacher who uses poster presentation" (FGD I).*

Selecting teaching methods encouraging students to think, speak and get involved in enjoyable activities is what the students expecting. Introducing students with the new teaching methods they have never been taught before can be a meaningful to stimulate them to be more active participating in the classroom activities.

In addition, as far as the students' view concerned, teaching methods should also facilitate the acquisition of critical thinking skill, which based on the students' view is often associated with the demands of the globalized world and the demands to be a global citizen. Several teaching methods which are perceived by the students to build and promote critical thinking are group discussion and poster presentation.

> *"We prefer to have group discussion because it requires students to be active and critical. If the students are not critical (they just keep silent), they will die"*
> *"poster presentation is also great!. Because, before the presenters are able to explain, respond, and answer the questions, they need to read first, they need to understand the material going to be presented" (FGD 2)*

The possible reasons that particular teaching methods, as the students said, can promote critical thinking skill is due to the demands and challenges of the teaching method type which require the students to be self-managed and self-directed in preparing materials before discussion and presentation. Although it can also be said that teaching method such poster presentation, based on the students' view, is inevitably link with the concept of effective teaching.

It becomes clear that teaching methods should facilitate students with the cutting edge of knowledge, facilitating students to be active, putting greater efforts to empower the students, accommodating the acquisition of critical thinking and providing more dialogic interactions between the actors within the classroom. Having presented teaching methods and critical thinking skills, the following sub-section is discussing the teaching methods from the teachers' view point.

Teachers' Perception
There are three themes will be discussed in this section; teaching methods are about inspirations and educational background, identity matters in deciding the teaching methods and teaching methods are utilized to display self-image.

Teaching methods are about inspirations and educational background
From the data sets, it can be recognized that teachers often said that teaching methods they use in the classroom is an accumulation result of the inspirations they obtained during their previous study. The most inspirations, however, are coming from their tertiary education. As mostly the teachers earned master degree, their inspirations coming from the classroom interactions when they were at the graduate program rather than when they were at undergraduate program. One of the significant influences is their surrounding including their friends.

> "When I was at my master program, I learned a lot about teaching methods from my friends. As we know that in master program, the students are mostly teachers and lecturers and they have been teaching for many years. They have experiences and I learned from them" (teacher A)

This finding accords the previous research which shows that previous rich experiences of students studying overseas, for example, are very beneficial to take alternative methods when they return and start teaching to their home country (Kong, 2016).
Instead of colleagues which play important role on getting inspirations of selecting teaching methods, another significant factor is also prevalent, it is about educational background. The data sets indicate that teachers who have pedagogical background tend to have variety of teaching methods. When we asked two teachers about their underlying reasons they use the project based and not classroom (student)presentation as a teaching method, they answered that they learnt from his lecturers and classroom interactions in which they feel that those methods are interesting and can be very enjoyable teaching methods to be imitated.

> "During my undergraduate, the classroom activities were so joyful especially in TEYL subject. I learnt a lot about teaching methods" (teacher A)
> "The methods I use in the classroom because I just basically imitate what I got during my previous study" (teacher B)

It can be said that classroom experiences strongly inspire the students to apply the similar teaching methods in the future when they are teaching. The tendency of imitating the teachers' teaching methods in Indonesian context is quite prevalent in that the teachers are positioned as the higher position whose attitudes and utterances should be obeyed and when this situation occurs within the educational milieu, this traditional value is inevitably adopted. These research findings corroborate the previous study which shows that educational programs clearly influence pre-service teachers' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and values (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, J., 2007; Isikoglu, 2008) and teachers' beliefs inform their thinking, decision making and behavior in the classroom (Rimm-Kaufman, Storm, M.D., Sawyer, B. E., Pianta, R. C, & LaParo, K. M., 2006).

In addition, the issue of dichotomy between the label of 'pedagogy and non-pedagogy' discipline of the teachers is also prevalent. From the data sets, it is recognized that teachers who come from non-pedagogical background tend to use 'strict' and 'conventional' teaching methods, whilst the teachers whose background are from educational faculty tend to use variety of teaching methods and more flexible depended upon the classroom condition. It is indicated that the issue of dichotomy of educational background and selected teaching methods is not only about the familiarity and the belief about the teaching methods, but it is also closely related to the teachers' background experiences.

Another clear conception of preferred-teaching methods use in the classroom is about identity of the teacher they want to be achieved, as will be discussed in the following section.

Identity matters in deciding the teaching methods

The selection of teaching methods in the classroom, based on the data sets, is related to identity construction. To be regarded as being different from other teachers is the primarily reason for some teachers when selecting specific teaching methods.

> "I actually know that a particular teaching method is really beneficial and effective, but I want to be different, yes just different with others". (teacher B)
> "why?"
> "I want my students remember me. When they talk about me, they will talk about particular method I use in the classroom" (teacher B)

From the extract, it is acknowledged that in fact teachers understand about which teaching methods are perceived to be effective, but when the personal factor - identity - is most prevalent, they tend to set aside their acknowledgement and awareness. The teachers have tried to negotiate what kind of person they are compared to others by behaving and selecting specific teaching methods differently. Norton (1997) & Varghese et al., (2005) demonstrate that negotiating identity is a prolonged process requiring interaction in relation to the roles and positioning of others.
Identity matters in selecting specific teaching methods, it is more about personal factors. The identity that the teachers

Self-image

The research findings indicate that teaching methods are often used by the teachers as a strategic instrument to display a particular image. The image they presented is aimed at displaying the positive image to the students. One of the positive images the teachers want to negotiate with the students is that the distinctive characteristic they possess which might differ from that of other teachers.

> "You know that talking in front of the classroom for two or three hours is not easy. You need to prepare everything, you need to read many books to be able to speak, you need to read many times. You need to prepare the materials well…you know, if we do not have anything to speak and we still have plenty of time in the classroom, the students will think that we are not ready to teach"(teacher A)
>
> "…If you don't have previous teaching with the same subject, you need to work hard. So, by asking students to make presentation, it helps you a lot, you do not need to speak too much". (teacher B)

Teachers' argument that provides space for students to be active in various activities helps mediate students to be active, but it also means a lot for the teachers. Facilitating students to work and active participations in the classroom can also be meant that teachers can have time to prepare and think about the materials they want to teach. Moreover, when the teachers are not quite well prepared with the materials, active students would help save teachers. In addition, teachers also aware that teaching method is a crucial aspect to show their image. Image in the classroom is crucial, as has been suggested by…on their research that the first impression on the success of the classroom is the image the teachers make during classroom activities. Another research also indicates that image can bring positive atmosphere which eventually can help support the students' motivation. In other word, positive image which is presented by teachers can help make the classroom save and secure. This condition is belief to be helpful in improving students' achievement. This finding corroborates the previous study which show that teachers' performance of using effective teaching method is heavily influence the students' achievement (Wieman & Welsh, 2015).

Instead of image which is perceived by the students to be crucial element on the classroom success, however, image can also be a means of a strategic way for the teachers to first impress to students, arguing that positive image can be built through the teaching method use in the classroom.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

The research findings have shown that there has been a gulf between what teachers think, perceive and belief about the selection of the teaching methods with the reality in the classrooms. The findings indicate that when the students asserted that the teaching methods should promote the acquisition of twenty-first century skills and more on the students' needs, a number of lecturers tend to orient themselves within the assumption that the preferred teaching methods are the best and suitable with the classroom condition. Moreover, the students often

have different orientation and perceptions about what the teachers should be and what kind of teaching methods should ideally be used in the classroom.

Garnering students' perception of teaching method use, therefore, can help provide insights of how the students understand the teaching methods and define how they respond such a situation - desired outcomes and the reality outcome. Getting involved students' views is inexorable to lessen the gap between what the desired and the reality outcomes. The reasons for this notion is that teaching methods in higher education should shift from traditional method to the contemporary effective learning method - creative teaching (Stenberg, 2006; Rankiin & Brown, 2015). Effective teaching, in this sense, should put the students at the center of classroom practices, demonstrating that students can develop their autonomy and responsibility on their learning by providing spaces to voice their views and in this sense, they need to be getting involved when deciding teaching methods.

Moreover, as there is a missing link between the teachers' perception and students' perception of teaching methods use in the classroom, the decision of using teaching methods should ideally get involved the students' views. It is therefore, argued that seeking ideal teaching methods should be bidirectional - involving not only teachers' intentional and orientation to utilize teaching methods to students, but also student-to-teachers, informing what the students intent to learn particular teaching methods suiting to their needs and conditions. The research findings will inform classroom practices in regard how teachers select and implement the teaching methods in the classrooms.

As this study only illustrating the students and teachers' perspectives, it is therefore, recommended that a further research should include cross-case analysis and comparison between what they teachers' belief and what the students' perceptions of teaching methods across departments, thus the results will be more comprehensive to portray the teaching methods use in higher education from wide ranges of perspectives and disciplines.

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