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Students' Perceptions towards Ideal Maritime English Teacher

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Abstract

This paper discusses the perceptions of students about the characteristics of an Ideal Maritime English teachers in a vocational institution. It is an interpersonal point of view regarding of their perceptions of qualities of English teachers and teachers' immediacy behavior (verbal or non-verbal) as a students' academic motivation. A total of 60 students of 3 departments of the 2nd level was randomly involved. Results of this study show that students and teachers described the ideal teacher as a person who is friendly, young, enthusiastic, creative and humorous person whose gender is not important. Also, students expect their teacher to be a native speaker of Indonesian but fluent in English, someone who like to play educational games, and who teaches maritime context effectively by using real life situations to explain language item. The aim of this study is expected to give understanding of how teaching Maritime English in a foreign language context can be better.

Keywords: students' perception, ideal Maritime English teachers, EFL

INTRODUCTION

A teacher is a profession that has a lot of challenges. Creative and patience is needed because there are so many characters, abilities and interests of different students should be faced by the teacher. A teacher should also be able to think creatively to establish a good relationship to their students both in and outside the classroom. The teacher is a figure for students who could have been a

motivator, an inspiration even as a parent that directs students to be a good personal. This Figure is supposed to be able to describe on what the ideal teacher for their students is. Talking about an ideal English teacher according to students' view is not an easy thing. The students' background has a big influence towards the effort of a teacher to be an ideal one.

Maritime English is a subject that is in demand because it is the important for cadet as prospective sailors should be able

to master the international language. Based on this requirement an English lecturer should be able to form their selves to be a favorite figure so it will be easy for students to absorb the contents of the material presented. Just as the proverb says "one likes a subject because he likes his teacher", it can be pursued in the second focus such as the process of delivering the materials or the final result of students. Of course, both will be interconnected and as communicated by Young and Shaw (1999) that an ideal teacher who has an effective communication between teachers and students, were able to create a learning atmosphere that is comfortable, focused on student learning in the classroom, as well as encouraging students' motivation.

The meaning of the 'ideal' itself is very varied. Some expressed the opinion that the ideal teacher is someone who has the qualities of good teaching (methods / style of teaching), the materials are mastered and up-to-date, able to manage the class effectively, communicative towards students, but what about the opinion of the students themselves? Generally, the students have their own view of the ideal teacher. As a teacher it would be better to know the meaning of the ideal itself according to the student's perspective so that it is able to be used as a reference to develop themselves according to the needs of these students.

Based on the description of the background above, this research was built with the title Students' Perceptions towards Ideal Maritime English Teacher. This research is expected to outline the opinion of the cadets about their

perceptions based on the experiences they face in the classroom every day to let the teacher knows what characteristics should be owned as an ideal English teacher. We find an identification of problems as follows:

- a. What is an ideal English teacher based on students' perception?
- b. Which features do students think a foreign language teacher should not possess?

Perception is curious element in communication process in classroom activity, due to wrong perception will affect to wrong interpretation which make communication going ineffectively. According to Oxford dictionary, 2016, perception is the process by which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them. It is supported by Mulyana, 2000, that perception is a communication, meanwhile interpretation is the core of perception, which is identical with decoding in the communication process. Next Mulayana stated that perception determines we choose a message and ignore other messages. Then, perception defined as a process by which sensations received by someone are sorted and selected, then regulated and finally interpreted (Prasetijo & Ihallauw, 2005). However, perception is the single most important determinant of human behavior, because there can be no behavior without perception first. In this case, behavior of students in the classroom is depending on perception of the students about their teacher. The way of the teacher teaches

influence students' attitude towards the subject that has been taught.

Maritime English, being an ESP, is one of professional specialized technical English that should be effective for communication between ship and shore, between crew members and even passenger in order to ensure the safety at sea (Karastateva, 2011). Since English was officially adopted by International Maritime Organization (IMO) as the language of the sea in 1995, Teaching of English to mariners has increased due to the introduction of the International Safety Management Code and the development of the SMCP (Standard Marine Communication Phrase). The practice of deck and engineering crew training in Maritime English is carried out in close connection with development of national and international standards (Demydenko, 2009). Maritime English is an operational language that specialize vocabulary is considerable but grammar is limited taking in the communication on board.

Identifying the qualities of an "ideal teachers" is not an easy task, since the term "ideal" can be interpreted differently by different people. Literature suggests that, depending on the criterion used to judge idealism, an "ideal english teacher" can mean a teacher who always produces a class of high-achievers, or a teacher who generally receives positive evaluations from supervisors and administrators (Stronge, 2002). However, if the focus is on the teaching process and not on the end result, then it is possible to define an ideal teacher as a person who "provides information to students in a way that is

clear, understandable, and motivating" (Benson et. al., 2001).

A similar definition of an ideal teacher is given by Stephens and Crawley (1994) who asserted that the quality which distinguishes an effective teacher from the rest is the teacher's ability to share information with students in such a way that students are able to understand and relate to this information. In another study, Young and Shaw (1999) found that an ideal teacher is associated with qualities such as "effective communication, a comfortable learning atmosphere, concern for student learning, student motivation, and course organization." There are several opinions about an ideal teacher and this study focus on an ideal Maritime English teachers that described the qualities of effective teachers who could transfers the Maritime English knowledge based on the context with a good passionate in building effective communication, motivating and encouraging students, and has a tendency to build more positive relationship.

METHOD

In order to find out how foreign language learners perceive the ideal Maritime English teacher, a questionnaire with three sections, each containing 10 statements was used. The sections were titled personal qualities, professional qualities, and pedagogical skills. The questionnaire was adapted from Yu-Hsin's (1999) inventory and consisted of 30 items adapted by the researchers with minor changes. The three headings (professional, personal and pedagogical) were rated on a

four-point scale (1= not important, 2= important, 3= very important, 4= it is a must). Students indicated the degree of importance of the statements for them by using this scale.

In order to get a more detailed description of the qualities of an ideal teacher, students' own descriptions of ideal teachers were collected by means of two open-ended questions. These two open-ended questions were:

- a) Describe the qualities of the foreign language teacher you admire most. Why do you think he/she is an ideal teacher?
- b) Which features do you think a foreign language teacher should not possess? Why?

The participants were 60 foreign language learners who were studying English in the 3rd semester of Nautical, Marine Engineering and Port and Shipping Department. There were 47 male and 13 female participants. Their ages ranged from 19 to 21 and they had been studying Maritime English in STIP for almost 2 years.

First, the participants provided responses to the open-ended questions, and then they completed the questionnaire. Results of the questionnaire were analyzed by counting the percentage. The students' written descriptions of an ideal maritime English teacher were analyzed by noting the frequency of the words (such as the adjectives) used to describe the ideal teacher. The words and adjectives describing the ideal teacher were categorized to present them in a meaningful way.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results of the student questionnaire describing the qualities of effective teachers. For the purposes of clarity, the results are given for each type of quality in the questionnaire under the relevant headings.

Table 1. Personal Qualities

	Not	Important	A must
Friendly	0%	75%	25%
Creative	0%	52%	8%
Caring	0%	45%	15%
Strict	88%	12%	0%
Fair	0%	65%	35%
Enthusiastic	5%	75%	20%
Young	35%	55%	10%
Experienced	3%	30%	67%
Humorous	5%	75%	20%
Gender	48%	37%	15%

As can be seen in Table 1, students identified the most important qualities of an ideal foreign language teacher important to possess as friendly, creative, caring, fair, enthusiastic, young, and humorous. The teachers' gender and his or her being strict are shown to be less important than the other qualities. On the other hand, even the 'experienced' shows about 67% is 'a must' but it is the highest percentage than other specification items.

Table 2. Professional Quality

	Not	Important	A
A Seafarers' background	17%	78%	5%
An English background	1%	18%	71%
A Native Speaker of English	45%	48%	7%
Gives home work	17%	72%	11%
Takes attendance	30%	58%	7%
Gives test and quizzes regularly	17%	75%	8%

Uses plays and games while teaching	7%	78%	15%
Has lived in a foreign country	63%	37%	0%
Teaches both formal and informal English Language	7%	85%	8%
Uses pair and group work activities	6%	87%	7%

As can be seen in Table 2, students prefer Indonesians' teachers to Native speaker with the condition that they are fluent speakers of English. Although it is in maritime education, the teachers with seafarer's background is important for the students but the necessity of teachers with English background is a must. Students believe that an Ideal teacher are the one who incorporate educational games into their language instruction. Equally, teachers who teach both formal and informal English are regarded as more efficient by the participating students.

In terms of pedagogical skills, using technology and visual materials, making students correct each other's work, having correct pronunciation of English, making students feel relax, manages the classroom effectively, giving some examples in explaining materials, making learner discover language are found to be the top qualities of an ideal maritime English teacher should possess. As can be seen in Table 3, doing the talk rather than listening to the students, teaching grammar intensively, and being the central authority in the classroom are least important qualities the ideal maritime English teachers should possess.

Table 3. Pedagogical Skills

	Not Important	Important	A must
Uses technology and visual materials	2%	80%	18%
Makes students correct each other's work	7%	82%	11%
Talks rather than she/he listens	30%	57%	13%
Teaches grammar intensively	68%	23%	9%
Has correct pronunciation	0%	70%	30%
Makes students feel relax	27%	3%	70%
Manages the classroom effectively	2%	75%	23%
Give some examples in explaining the materials	0%	77%	23%
Makes learner discover language	10%	80%	10%
As the central authority in the classroom	10%	60%	30%

Result of the Open-Ended Questions
Question 1: Describe the qualities of the teacher you admire most. Why do you think he/she is an ideal maritime English teacher?

Table 4. Qualities of Ideal Maritime English Teacher

	Mostly Appear	%
Possesses good knowledge of the English language	56	93%
Should be open to innovations	55	92%
Friendly and not authoritative	52	87%
Motivating	48	80%
Aware of student needs	43	72%
Good at classroom management	43	72%
Witty, finds fun ways to teach subjects (i.e. games)	39	65%

As can be understood from the table above, the majority of students (93%) describe an ideal English teacher as the one with “good knowledge of English”. As the second the most important quality, there exist “being open to innovations” (92%). In the third place, the students prefer friendly teachers rather than authoritative ones (87%). They give importance to the qualities of being “motivating” (80%), “aware of student needs” (72%) and “good at classroom management” (72%). Lastly, the participants indicate “witty” as another preferred quality (65%).

Question 2: Which features do you think a teacher should not possess? Why?

Table 5. Students’ description of the least ideal maritime English teacher

	Mostly Appear	%
Angry or strict	58	97%
Insufficient knowledge of English	56	93%
Focuses on only one skill	49	82%
Using one-way teaching methods	44	73%
Unable to meet the needs of the students	43	72%
Discriminates between students	40	67%
Bad at classroom management	37	62%

As shown in Table 5, there is 97% of the students describe un-ideal maritime English teachers that are angry or strict and 93% of them find those teachers un-ideal who has poor knowledge of English. Focusing on one-skill only (82%), using one-way teaching method (73%) and unable to meet the expectations and needs of the students are also found to be the qualities of un-ideal teachers (72%). Similarly, 67% suggest that those who discriminate against some students as un-ideal teachers and 62% suggest that those

are bad at a classroom management as un-ideal maritime English teachers.

CONCLUSION

In this study, it is aimed to gather data on students’ perception towards an ideal English teacher that giving understanding of how teaching Maritime English in a foreign language context can be better.

As these results suggest, students perceive teachers as ideal, if they teach both formal and informal English, incorporate games into teaching, and organize group/pair work activities in the classroom. In addition, students view teachers who use technology/visual materials and make learner discover language as an ideal one, but do not prefer teachers with high teacher talking time. Finally, the students who participate in this study find some traits as “un-ideal”. They perceive who are angry/strict, who doesn’t have enough knowledge of English, who focuses on only one skill as unideal maritime English teachers. In this study, it was also found that friendliness as opposed to being angry and strict which was a trait that an ideal teacher should possess.

Other results of this study, naturally, students expressed some traits of an ideal maritime English teacher such as having English background with the reason that students’ feeling more comfortable in the classroom. It can be inferred that students feeling more relax if they know the teachers has sufficient knowledge of English better than the one whose background are seafarers.

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