Qualities and Instructional Approaches of an Effective English Language Teacher

Syamsiarna Nappu[1], Hasnawati[2], Mawadda[3]

[1,2,3]English Education Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

ABSTRACT   Published Online: July 18, 2025

Teacher effectiveness is widely acknowledged as an essential influence on learner achievement; yet, the composite interplay of professional competence, personal disposition, and adaptive methodology remains underdocumented in many developing-country contexts. This qualitative case study, therefore, probed the characteristics and instructional approaches of a highly regarded English language teacher at Junior High School 2 Sungguminasa, Indonesia. Six ninety-minute lessons were videotaped and supplemented with field notes, then coded and synthesised via the Miles–Huberman interactive model. Analysis revealed nine mutually reinforcing attributes, ranging from unwavering professional commitment and disciplined time-management to creativity, motivational presence, and systematic self-reflection, that together fostered an affirming classroom climate. Pedagogically, the teacher deployed a fluid repertoire comprising Facilitator, Personal Model, Delegator, and Self-Check styles, while also introducing an emergent "Impressive/Entertaining" mode that leveraged music and humour to rejuvenate attention. This stylistic hybridity underscores the value of situational responsiveness over rigid adherence to a single paradigm. Beyond corroborating established dimensions of effective teaching, the study highlights self-reflection and affective re-engagement as under-represented yet critical contributors to sustained learner involvement. Findings invite teacher education programmes to integrate reflective practice routines and emotional intelligence training alongside methodological skills, and prompt further research into the prevalence and impact of entertaining strategies across diverse educational settings.

KEYWORDS:

teaching style; facilitator approach; self-reflection; affective engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher quality consistently emerges as the most potent school-based influence on student achievement across global education systems[1-3]. Meta-analyses estimate that a one-standard-deviation improvement in instructional quality can net learning gains equivalent to almost an additional academic year. Such evidence has prompted governments and scholars to define, measure, and cultivate effective teaching, resulting in influential frameworks that encompass Danielson's four-domain model of planning, instruction, environment, and professionalism[4,5]. The dynamic trajectories of educational effectiveness proposed by [6], as well as large-scale syntheses such as Hattie's Visible Learning, highlight teacher clarity, feedback, and classroom discourse as high-leverage factors[7]. Yet these predominantly Western constructs may overlook sociocultural nuances that shape classroom practice in non-Western settings.

Empirical work from Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam shows that learners accord substantial value to teacher approachability, humour, and moral integrity, alongside demonstrable language expertise [8-10]. In Indonesia, curricular decentralization and the rapid expansion of English as a compulsory subject have intensified calls for context-specific portraits of pedagogical excellence.[11] Although quantitative surveys have catalogued desirable personality traits such as patience and empathy[12] and in-service competency standards have been legislated,[13] qualitative, in-classroom depictions of how these attributes coalesce with concrete instructional tactics remain scarce. Most local studies adopt either a psychometric lens, isolating discrete characteristics, or a methodological perspective, cataloging strategy frequencies,

and rarely interrogate their interplay.[14] Consequently, teacher educators lack empirically grounded exemplars that integrate the teacher's identity with their teaching practices.

Two conceptual debates further motivate the present study. The first concerns the relative weighting of personal dispositions versus pedagogical knowledge. Behaviourist models privilege observable, technical skills, whereas socioconstructivist paradigms emphasise the teacher's role as facilitator, motivator, and co-creator of meaning.[15] The second relates to rigidity versus adaptability in teaching style. Taxonomies such as Grasha's five modes[16] and Mosston and Ashworth's spectrum[17] treat style as a stable preference, but recent scholarship on adaptive expertise argues that effective teachers fluidly shift roles in response to learner cues and situational demands.[18] Empirical validation of such fluidity in English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) settings remains limited.

Additional gaps concern affective engagement and reflective practice. Neuroscientific evidence indicates that emotional arousal modulates attention and memory,[19] yet classroom research often marginalises affect, treating humour or music as peripheral "add-ons." Only a handful of EFL studies have linked teacher humour to students' willingness to communicate,[20] and systematic documentation of how teachers stage affective resets within lesson flow is lacking. Reflective practice, lauded since Schön's seminal work,[21] is mandated in Indonesian policy through self-evaluation logs,[22] but observational confirmation of iterative reflection shaping micro-behaviours remains sparse.

This qualitative case study addresses these lacunae by presenting a fine-grained portrait of an English teacher in a rural Indonesian junior high school who is locally recognized as an exemplary figure. Six video-recorded lessons, each 90 minutes, were triangulated with field notes and coded using the Miles–Huberman interactive model.[23] The investigation pursued two questions: (1) Which personal and professional characteristics manifest in the teacher's classroom behaviour? (2) Which instructional approaches and teaching styles are enacted, and how are they adapted across lesson phases?

The study makes a novel contribution in three ways. First, it documents a harmony of nine characteristics and five stylistic clusters, demonstrating how dispositions such as dedication and humour dynamically interface with methods ranging from facilitator tasks to delegator projects. Second, it identifies an emergent "Impressive/Entertaining" style, a deliberate, time-bounded use of music and humour to reset the affective tone, thereby extending extant style taxonomies. Third, it offers observable evidence of routine, studentmediated self-reflection influencing subsequent lessons, operationalizing reflective practice in situ.

Situated within an under-researched Indonesian context, these insights challenge the wholesale importation of Western models into teacher education curricula and advocate for programs that cultivate adaptive, emotionally intelligent practitioners capable of synchronizing character and technique. The ensuing sections elaborate on the results, discuss implications for theory and practice, and propose avenues for cross-contextual replication.

II. RESULTS

Observation and coding of six 90-minute lessons generated 421 analytic incidents, clustered into two overarching domains: teacher characteristics and enacted teaching styles. The findings below synthesize these patterns, illustrating how the focal teacher's dispositions meshed with specific instructional moves.

a. Teacher Characteristics

Nine interlinked attributes consistently surfaced. *First, p*rofessional commitment was evidenced by systematic lesson-opening reviews (present in all six lessons) and explicit statements of responsibility for student mastery (e.g., "At least you should take one new word home today"). *Second,* Responsiveness to learner needs emerged when the teacher provided on-the-spot vocabulary scaffolds or adjusted pace after noting puzzled expressions; 34 such micro-adjustments were recorded. *Third,* Context-sensitive pedagogical capability was demonstrated through deliberate code-switching: the teacher began explanations in English, reiterated key points in Bahasa Indonesia, and then invited the student to paraphrase, an adaptive trilingual loop that balanced exposure with comprehension.

Fourth, Time was managed stringently: transitions were announced with countdowns, and the teacher apologised for a five-minute late start, reinforcing a culture of punctuality. *Fifth,* Positive personality traits, warmth, humour, and patience, were observed in each session; laughter punctuated four lessons without disrupting task focus. *Sixth,* Organisation and preparation were evident through preprinted materials, a portable LCD projector (brought from home because of limited school resources), and colour-coded lesson plans. *Seventh,* Creativity surfaced in multimodal inputs: television cartoons for narrative text analysis, instrumental music for affective resets, and improvised language games. *Eighth*, Motivational presence was operationalized via continuous, low-stakes assessment; the teacher collected or peer-reviewed student work in every lesson, explaining that "daily scores keep us alert." *Finally*, self-reflection was routinized: at the end of each class, students anonymously wrote down one thing they liked and one thing they wished to change. The teacher collated this feedback and referenced it in subsequent sessions (e.g.,

"Yesterday many of you asked for more speaking time, so today we'll start with dialogue practice").

b. Teaching-Style Repertoire

Five distinct but overlapping styles structured classroom interaction. *First,* the teacher's style dominated, accounting for the majority of coded instructional episodes. It featured guided discovery tasks, pair dialogues, and group text reconstructions. Student talk outpaced teacher talk in these

segments, confirming learner-centred intent. *Second, t*he Personal Model style emerged during pronunciation drills and grammar demonstrations; students echoed the teacher's articulation before personalizing the structure. *Third,* the Delegator style was most visible in project work, such as composing poster narratives of local legends. Students selected topics, organised roles, and presented products with minimal teacher intrusion.

Fourth, the Self-Check style surfaced when learners evaluated their own or peers' worksheets against criteria cocreated on the board. This practice promoted metacognition and was frequently paired with reflective journal entries. *Fifth*, an emergent, Impressive, and entertaining style punctuated lessons at moments of waning energy. The teacher used a three-to-five-minute "affective reset," playing soft jazz through the classroom speakers while students closed their eyes or stretched, accompanied by humorous tongue twisters. Post-reset observations noted an immediate rise in voluntary participation, suggesting efficacy in re-engaging attention.

c. Integration of Disposition and Method

Cross-tabulation of attributes and styles revealed nuanced alignments. For instance, episodes coded as "responsiveness" frequently co-occurred with Facilitator moves, indicating that adaptive help was embedded in student-centred tasks. The Impressive style was triggered by the teacher's sensitivity to affective signals, such as yawns and side talk, underscoring the link between emotional intelligence and stylistic choice. Self-reflection informed subsequent Delegator projects; student feedback about limited autonomy led the teacher to extend project duration in later lessons.

d. Learner Engagement Indicators

Although formal achievement testing fell outside the scope of this study, proxy engagement metrics were noted. On-task behaviour, defined as maintaining eye contact with the speaker, actively writing, or making verbal contributions, is observable in intervals. Student questions increased from a baseline of 0.9 per ten minutes in Lesson 1 to 1.6 in Lesson 6, coinciding with the teacher's explicit encouragement of inquiry and implementation of self-check routines. Exit slips showed that learners valued music-based resets, and 86% reported feeling "more confident" during peer-assessed tasks.

III. DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to illuminate how an English teacher in a rural Indonesian junior high school translated professional dispositions into concrete pedagogical moves. The nine interlocking characteristics and five stylistic clusters identified provide empirical support for the proposition that effective teaching is neither a purely technical craft nor a solely interpersonal art, but a dynamic synthesis of both. The discussion below interprets these findings about existing scholarship, highlights their novel contributions, and outlines implications for research and practice.

First, the prominence of professional commitment, responsiveness, and systematic preparation echoes global meta-syntheses that place teacher efficacy beliefs and instructional planning among the highest-impact variables on learning outcomes.[1] However, the granular observations here show *how* such traits materialize in situ: through lessonopening reviews that anchor new content, apology rituals that cultivate mutual respect, and adaptive codeswitching cycles that calibrate comprehensibility without diluting targetlanguage exposure. These microbehaviours align with adaptive expertise theory, which posits that expert educators strike a balance between efficiency and innovation as classroom contingencies change.[18] The Indonesian data extend this framework by demonstrating that adaptive expertise is viable even in resource-limited settings when teachers leverage everyday tools, such as portable LCD projectors and locally sourced cartoons, to scaffold engagement.

Second, the study documents a fluid teaching-style repertoire rather than a singular, dominant orientation. While Facilitator moves occupied the largest share of instructional time, the teacher seamlessly transitioned to Personal Model drilling for phonological accuracy and Delegator project work for autonomous practice. The Self-Check style further instantiated formative assessment principles, allowing students to audit their learning; an approach aligned with metacognitive strategy research in EFL contexts.[24] Such fluidity challenges taxonomies that treat style as a stable trait[16,17] and supports calls for training programmes to foster stylistic agility.[18]

The "Impressive/Entertaining" style constitutes the study's most distinctive contribution. Short, affective resets; playing mellow jazz or initiating humorous tongue-twisters; reenergised waning attention, and were immediately followed by spikes in voluntary participation. Neuroscientific work on emotion-cognition coupling[19] and classroom studies linking teacher humour to willingness to communicate[20] suggest plausible mechanisms: positive affect broadens cognitive resources and lowers affective filters.[25] Yet empirical descriptions of *deliberately timed* resets remain scant. By empirically documenting the antecedent cues (yawns, sidebar chatter) and consequent upticks in engagement, this research provides actionable insights to the affective-engagement literature. It emphasizes the importance of integrating emotional intelligence training into teacher education.[26]

A further novel strand involves **s**ystematic**,** student-mediated self-reflection**.** Although reflective practice is widely encouraged in policy and scholarship,[21] evidence of iterative feedback loops influencing real-time pedagogy is scarce. Here, anonymous exit slips collected at the end of each lesson were not perfunctory; the teacher cited aggregated student wishes (e.g., more speaking slots) to justify subsequent design changes. Such practice aligns with Farrell's notion of "public reflection," where teachers make their reflective decisions transparent to learners, thereby modelling lifelong learning.[27]

It also meets Indonesian professional-development mandates that require documentation of reflective activities.[22] The finding underscores that reflection gains potency when embedded in a reciprocal teacher–student dialogue rather than remaining an internal monologue.

Engagement indices gathered during observation, on-task behaviour, and rising student question frequency, triangulate with the qualitative patterns. While causality cannot be claimed, the concurrence suggests that the interplay of commitment, adaptive methods, and affective resets fosters a climate conducive to sustained attention, echoing the emphasis of self-determination theory on autonomy, competence, and relatedness.[28] The rise in learner questions also aligns with evidence that formative self-assessment precipitates deeper inquiry and ownership of learning.[24]

Cross-culturally, the synthesis of warm interpersonal rapport and high academic expectations replicates findings from Malaysian[8] and Thai[9] contexts, yet the emergent styles and reflective routines provide culturally situated nuance. Indonesian classrooms have historically been characterised as teacher-fronted and textbook-driven.[11,14] The present findings illustrate a counter-narrative: even within large, mixed-ability classes, pedagogical innovation and learner agency are attainable. Such exemplars are pivotal for policy initiatives aimed at rejuvenating English instruction in under-resourced regions.

Implications for Practice

Teacher-education curricula should (1) embed modules on affective-engagement strategies grounded in neuroscience, (2) cultivate stylistic agility through micro-teaching cycles that require candidates to switch roles responsively, and (3) operationalise reflective practice by training novices to design, analyse, and act on rapid student-feedback mechanisms.

Limitations and Future Research

Generalisability is constrained by the single-case design and the absence of standardised achievement data. Replications across diverse Indonesian provinces, subject domains, and school levels are warranted. Experimental manipulations of affective resets could quantify their causal impact on engagement and achievement. Longitudinal designs might examine whether sustained self-reflection correlates with teacher growth trajectories and learner outcomes.

V. CONCLUSION

The study enriches the teacher-effectiveness literature by articulating how a constellation of dispositions, commitment, responsiveness, and reflective humility interacts with a fluid repertoire of instructional styles to generate an engaging EFL classroom. The identification of an impressive and entertaining style, along with a documented feedback-and-reflection cycle, extends theoretical taxonomies and offers concrete, low-cost strategies for practitioners operating in resource-constrained environments.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

VII. DISCLOSURE

REFERENCES

1. Hanushek EA, Rivkin SG. Teacher quality. In: Hanushek EA, Machin S, Woessmann L, eds. *Handbook of the Economics of Education*. Vol 2. Elsevier; 2006:1051-1078.

2. Nye B, Konstantopoulos S, Hedges LV. How large are teacher effects? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 2004;26(3):237-257.

3. Rockoff JE. The impact of individual teachers on student achievement: evidence from panel data. *Am Econ Rev*. 2004;94(2):247-252.

4. Hattie J. *Visible Learning*. Routledge; 2009.

5. Danielson, C. *Enhancing Professional Practice*. ASCD; 1996.

6. Creemers BP, Kyriakides L. The dynamics of educational effectiveness: a contribution to policy, practice and theory in contemporary schools. Routledge; 2008.

7. Hattie J. *Visible Learning*. Routledge; 2009.

8. Phern CVS, Abidin MJZ. Student voice contribution in determining an effective English language teacher. *Procedia Soc Behav Sci*. 2012;66:460-469.

9. Wichadee S. Defining the effective English language teacher: students' and teachers' perspectives. *JALT Conf Proc*. 2010:50-64.

10. Ngo HX. Vietnamese learners' perceptions of desirable teacher qualities. *TESOL J*. 2019;10(2):e00380.

11. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Education in Indonesia: Rising to the Challenge*. OECD Publishing; 2015.

12. Sulaiman T. Personality traits of effectiveIndonesian teachers. *Int J Instr*. 2019;12(1):235-250.

13. Republic of Indonesia. *Teacher and Lecturer Law No. 14/2005*.

14. Suharti S. Examining Indonesian teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. *Asia Pac Educ Rev.. 2020;21(1):25-- 38.

15. Darling-Hammond L, et al. Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Appl Dev Sci*. 2020;24(2):97-140.

16. Grasha AF. *Teaching With Style*. Alliance Publishers; 1996.

17. Mosston M, Ashworth S. *Teaching Physical Education*. 6th ed. Benjamin Cummings; 2008.

18. Parson SA, Vaughn MG, Scales RL. Teacher adaptive expertise. *Rev Educ Res*. 2018;88(4):611-- 645.

19. Immordino-Yang MH, Damasio A. We feel, therefore, we learn. *Mind Brain Educ*. 2007;1(1):3-10.

20. Wanzer MB, Frymier AB. The Relationship Between Teacher Humor and Student Learning: A Communication Education Perspective. 1999;48(1):48-62.

21. Schön DA. *The Reflective Practitioner*. Basic Books; 1983.

22. Ministry of Education and Culture. *Permendiknas No. 35/2010: Teacher Professional Development Guidelines*.

23. Miles MB, Huberman AM. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. 2nd ed. Sage, 1994.

24. Andrade H, Valtcheva A. Promoting learning and achievement through self-assessment. *Theory Pract*. 2009;48(1):12-19.

25. Dewaele JM, MacIntyre PD. The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and Enjoyment in the Foreign Language Classroom. *Stud Second Lang Learn Teach*. 2014;4(2):237-274.

26. Gkonou C, Dewaele JM, King J. *The Emotional Rollercoaster of Language Teaching*. Multilingual Matters; 2020.

27. Farrell TSC. Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals. *Routledge*; 2015.

28. Ryan RM, Deci EL. Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *Am Psychol*. 2000;55(1):68-78.