

# **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGIES IN AN EFL CLASS: A CASE STUDY AT SMK NEGERI 6 KOTA KUPANG IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/2020**

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## **Abstract**

This study aimed at investigating the role of EFL teachers' teaching strategies in their teaching effectiveness and their students' motivation and achievement in learning English as a foreign language at SMK Negeri 6 Kota Kupang. Data was collected by using a mixed-method with qualitative dominance. The students evaluated their teachers' teaching effectiveness by completing the questionnaires distributed by the researcher. The findings suggested that the EFL students highly value respect and rapport from their teachers.

**Keywords: students' perception, effective teaching strategies, EFL**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Interaction between teacher and students shows the fact of language instruction and learning success. Within the English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, teachers have an important role to interact with the students because they have a major portion of class time employed to give direction, explain activities, and check students' understanding of the employment of the target language (Sinclair & Brazil cited in Yanfen & Yuqin, 2010: 77). Teachers are one of the key elements in any school and effective teaching is one of the key propellers for school improvement. Being a highly qualified teacher is realizing the needs of students,

community, understand the context to know what to provide for the students, how to manage, and how to be effective.

Students' perception, opinions, or experiences of an effective teacher varies. An effective teacher is sometimes seen as a perfectionist, encouraging, friendly, and caring, other times as intelligent, but above all, enthusiastic, funny, intelligent, emotional, considerate, open-minded, and relaxed while teaching.

According to Gibbs (2002) "Teachers must be able to survive the demands, threats and challenges within the diverse circumstances of teaching." He stated that an effective teacher needs the ability to be persistent, flexible, and innovative on new approaches to failure teaching. Stronge et al. (2004) the effective teacher has a psychological influence on students, having a strong influence on their performance. According to Killen (2006), the effective teacher is one who has clear goals and their own teaching goals. A teacher can provide students with the answer to a question, which can only be effective if the main goal is simply to compare and analyze different results. However, if the goal is to make the student think about the option of providing several possible answers, the teacher, in this case, can be considered ineffective. Smith (1995) argued that teachers and teaching must be creative in order for students to learn naturally. He also added that educational institutions should spend more time "doing" and less time "talking about learning and teaching." Furthermore, Gurney (2007) suggested that instead of reflecting on theory and practice, we should reflect on what we do in the classroom.

Effective teachers need to focus on student performance. Alton-Lee (2003) indicated that an effective connection between school and cultural context is required; In addition to caring for and improving the assessment, feedback and assessment, and taking responsibility for the student's learning process, curriculum goals, multiple assignments and contexts. Gurney (2007) suggested that there should be an interaction between different factors in order to be an effective teacher. One of these is the teacher's knowledge, enthusiasm and responsibility for learning. Effective teachers don't teach in front of the class by demonstrating extensive and deep content

knowledge, they teach to promote and enhance learning. In addition, he knows how to manage, not only his knowledge, but also the classroom and the students in terms of discipline, work, teacher-student interaction, how to give instructions, and how to assess and evaluate activities, students and their own job. Therefore, being effective teachers also implies having a series of qualities, in terms of professional and personal skills.

The importance of interpersonal skills in students' perceptions of effective teaching Lowman (1996). Lowman and Bain's "master facilitators" encourage interaction between student and instructor by being warm and open, predictable, and student-centered. Usually language teachers have different roles in foreign language classes like observing, mentoring, mentor, participant, teacher, etc. But certainly one of the most significant is that of the class manager. This means that effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom where learning is hampered by the lack of control teachers have over student behavior, which clearly affects student achievement throughout any course. Effective teachers manage and organize the classroom at the start of the year based on students' needs and preferences to create an upbeat and warm learning environment for all students and enhance learning. Management is not parallel to strict rules; in fact, management should anticipate student needs, then prepare an annual plan, procedures, activities, assessment, assessment criteria and most importantly clear instructions to students to promote motivation, enthusiasm and student learning. Effective teachers use low classroom rules and more routines to maintain a relaxed and warm environment to enhance learning.

While classroom management focuses on instructions that affect students in the psychological behavior of learning, classroom organization influences students' motivation for learning created from the physical learning environment. Effective teachers organize the classroom to enhance learning and interaction, and they must create an ideal learning environment where students feel comfortable and relaxed in terms of decor, accessibility, and mobility. According to Stronge et al (2004), part of

classroom organization is the arrangement of furniture, accessibility to materials, and decor.

Additionally, the effective teacher will combine professionalism with care, understanding, fairness and kindness. They must also be passionate, enthusiastic, motivated to teach and learn. They need to create a warm classroom environment where students feel comfortable and have a sense of belonging, as the environment is conducive to learning. Effective teachers are innovative, invite students to approach and interactions, and also value diversity. To conclude, it can be said that those who have the ability to inspire students to reach their maximum learning potential through their professional and personal qualities and skills are effective teachers.

Variability is the tendency to vary (Hornby, 1995:1320). So variability in teaching is the variation in teaching-learning process. According C. Turney et al (1983:105) the skill of variability as it relates to teacher's manner is specifically concerned with variations in voice, gesture, and movement in teaching space.

Variation refers to the process of change in teaching, variety is the product of such change, but both are significant aspects of effective teaching (C. Turney et al, 1983:104). A gesture is movement of a part of body, for example hand or head, intended to suggest a certain meaning (Hornby, 1995:494). And according to Hornby (1995:1332) voice refers to the sound or sounds produced through the mouth, for example by a person speaking or singing. The last variation is movement variation. Movement is the action of moving or an instance of being moved (Hornby, 1995:761).

The teaching skill of variability is concerned with three variations namely: variations connected with manner or personal teaching style, variations in the media and materials of instruction and, variations in the pattern and levels of interaction between teacher and students.

The variability of instruction is used to grab the attention of students. After giving their attention to the teacher, they will try to understand the material. So by the end of the lesson, they could master the materials well.

Students found incorporating a variety of materials and classroom activities was a significant motivational strategy in this EFL class. This suggests that the creativity of teachers in choosing materials and methods of teaching is important in engaging and motivating students (Dornyei & Csizer, 1998). A decrease in attention and an increase in boredom among students in the class often result from repeated teaching (Lightbown).

This view was reflected by both the students and English teachers in this study. They agreed that varying the teaching materials and methods had a positive impact on students' engagement in the class activities and increased their motivation to learn. Even though some teachers tended to utilize familiar teaching strategies, materials or methods repeatedly, others spent time arranging and varying their teaching methods and materials.

The teaching style is a combination of personality plus the amount of experience one has in teaching technology (methods), subject matter, and educational theory. (Joseph F. Callahan, 1982: 9).

The skill of variability relates to the teacher's manner with variations in gesture, voice, and movement in the teaching-learning process. Variations of voice, gesture, and movement can give effects on pupil attention and learning, and the relationship between certain speech factors of the teacher and pupil achievement is well established. Teachers should master the use of visualization materials and how to get the most out of the various materials available will be one of the most pressing problems for teachers to solve if the teacher is to teach effectively.

According to Cruickshank and Kennedy, as reported by C. Turney et al. (1983: 107) cited, the style of teaching must be adapted to specific learning objectives and tasks. Excessive exuberance may be inappropriate, but sensible differences in manner make classes more dynamic and improve communication.

Education must prepare students for real life. Today, many people live in a world where the media is ubiquitous and, as Tafani points out, "the media is

important because we get to know the world through its use." They function as tools that provide people with information about the world. It is the reason why media can be considered a useful instrument, which can help students in their learning.

Clark and Morrison approve of this assumption, pointing out that "Educators have been studying the effects of the media on learning since at least 1912 when American psychologist Edward L. Thorndike recommended images as a labor-saving tool for teaching." Even so, since 1912, English teachers have used many more different types of media to deliver instruction and aid learning.

Mass media such as newspapers, movies, radio, and television have been used in conjunction with traditional educational media such as textbooks, blackboards, or overhead projectors. However, the range of media available today is much broader. Now English teachers can work with interactive whiteboards, notebooks, tablets, etc.

## **METHOD**

The selected approach for this research study is a mixed-method type of study with qualitative dominance. To get the appropriate data, the data must be collected by using the appropriate instrument. In conducting this research, the researcher used only one instrument that is questionnaires. Data gathered from students through the questionnaires were put into tables with their percentages and analyzed through the descriptive statistics method.

## **RESULT**

This study focused on the students' perceptions towards the effectiveness of teaching-learning strategies particularly the teaching variation and classroom management strategies. The researcher sought to determine if the English teachers in SMK Negeri 6 Kupang had implemented teaching variation and classroom management strategies effectively in their daily teaching. The students' responses from the Likert Scale were associated with the two research questions. The data were

converted to scale scores by summing the scores in the Likert Scale (5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree) for each student.

The formula used by the researcher to calculate the score and percentage is:

**Formula:  $T \times P_n$**

T = the total of respondents who selected

$P_n$  = Likert score option

**Interpretation of calculation score**

Y = the highest score Likert x number of respondents

X = the lowest score Likert x number of respondents

**Index formula % = Total score/Y x 100**

(<https://www.diedit.com/skala-likert/>; Riduwan and Akdon (2009))

**Score interpretation category**

Score	Category
90%-100%	Strongly agree
70%-89%	Agree
60%-69%	Neutral
50%-59%	Disagree
40%-49%	Strongly disagree

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted. The results under this instrument will be presented in the form of tables and percentages and elaborated under different classifications. These classifications include teaching variation and classroom management.

**Table 1. The students' perceptions of variations in teachers' teaching style**

No	Statements	SA		A		Neu		D		SD		N	TS	%
		5		4		3		2		1				
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S			
1	Teacher varies in a tone of voice, volume and speech accuracy	13	65	45	180	4	12					62	257	82,90

2	The teacher makes changes in mime and motion to clarify his presentation	24	120	17	68	13	39	8	16			62	243	78,38
3	The teacher deliberately pause or silent time in his conversation	36	180	24	96	2	6					62	282	90,96
4	Teacher does eye contact with students	14	70	46	184	1	3	1	2			62	259	83,54
5	The teacher always changes position during the process of teaching and learning	32	160	22	88	8	24					62	272	87,74
6	The teacher helps students pay attention to the important points of the lesson	25	125	26	104	11	33					62	262	84,51
7	The teacher sometimes suggests students have class outside	31	155	23	92	4	12	4	8			62	267	86,12
<b>Average</b>													<b>84,87</b>	

The perceptions of students related to variations in teachers' teaching style were positive, as shown in (table 1). It showed that the majority of the respondents choose the option of strongly agree or agree to respond on all the items related to the variations of teachers' teaching style. After adding up the score, it indicates that the participants gave a high percentage (82, 90%) to the statement "Teacher varies in a tone of voice, volume and speech accuracy", while to the second statement, "Teacher makes changes in mime and motion to clarify his presentation" the respondents gave



(78, 38%). Further, (90, 96%) of the students chose the option of strongly agree or agree that while teaching their teacher's eyes always addressed to them. Finding also indicates that (83, 54%) of the participants showed that they are very appreciative to the statement teacher always changes position during the process of teaching and learning. It can be seen from the average or mean value (84, 87%) of the respondents who replied agree that their teachers performing good variations in their teaching activities.

**Table 2. Students' perceptions in media usage and teaching aids**

No	Statements	SA		A		Neu		D		SD		N	TS	%
		5		4		3		2		1				
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S			
1	The teacher uses visual teaching aids (writing on the board, showing pictures or objects)	32	160	23	92	5	15	2	4			62	271	87,41
2	Teacher applied direct voice or recording in his/her teaching	34	170	19	76	8	24	1	2			62	272	87,74
3	The teacher allowed students to use the teaching aids	49	245	7	28	6	18					62	291	93,87
4	The teacher always uses teaching aids that suitable for materials	37	185	19	76	4	12	2	4			62	277	89,35
5	The teacher always uses appropriate teaching aids to support students'	35	175	21	84	4	12	2	4			62	275	88,70





	classroom environment													
4	Teacher creates discipline	41	205	17	68	3	6	2	4			62	283	91,29
5	Teacher support the neatness of class facilities	52	260	7	28	2	6	1	2			62	296	95,48
<b>Average</b>													<b>83,48</b>	

The data in (table 4) scores indicate (75,80%) of the students stated agree that the teacher always gives as much attention to the physical condition of the classroom such as arranging students' seats when looking messy, while (75,48%) of the students also agreed with the statement that teacher sometimes asked students to rearranged their seats to support group work. It is also found that the students gave (79, 35%) of an agreement to the statement "teacher always maintains the neatness of the classroom environment". Further, (91, 29%) of the students gave high appreciation to the statement that teacher creates valuable disciplines in the classroom. It is seen on the table above that (95, 48%) of the students set a high level of agreement to the statement "teacher support the neatness of class facilities". Based on the scores and mean value (83, 48%) as presented in (table 4) the researcher can assume that the students have positive perceptions of the setting and organizing the physical environment of the class.

**Table 5. Students' perceptions of teachers' enforce discipline in managing learning**

No	Statements	SA		A		Neu		D		SD		N	TS	%
		5		4		3		2		1				
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S			
1	Teacher organizes students in the	27	135	20	80	12	36	3	6			62	257	82,90

	classroom														
2	Teacher enforces duration of time in one subject	30	150	26	104	4	12	2	4			62	270	87,09	
3	Teacher enforces classroom discipline	18	90	28	112	13	39	1	2	2	2	62	245	79,03	
<b>Average</b>													<b>83,00</b>		

Consider the teachers' enforce discipline in managing learning as elementary classroom management, it is understood from the scores that the students gave (82,90%) of an agreement to the statement that teacher organizes students in the classroom. The participants gave a higher percentage (87, 09%) to the statement "teacher enforces duration of time in one subject". While to the statement "teacher creates classroom discipline" the participants gave the percentage of (79,03%). Based on the scores and mean value (83%) given by the respondents, it can be concluded that the students hold a positive conception of their teachers' enforcing discipline in managing to learn.

**Table 6. Students' perceptions of teachers' strategies in creating effective classroom organization**

No	Statements	SA		A		Neu		D		SD		N	TS	%
		5		4		3		2		1				
		T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S			
1	The teacher always teaches using varied media to establish an attractive learning	33	165	20	80	7	21	2	4			62	270	87,09
2	The teacher creates students, groups, learning to make the lesson effective	20	100	25	100	16	48			1	1	62	249	80,32

<b>Average</b>	<b>83, 70</b>
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About students' perceptions of teachers' strategies in creating effective classroom organization as an element of classroom management, analysis indicates that (87, 09%) of the students agreed that teachers use varied media to support effective and attractive learning. Besides, teachers creative enough in creating students' groups learning to make the lesson effective, to this statement the students gave a percentage (80, 32%) of agreement. As conferred from the scores and mean value (83, 70%), the students possess a good perspective of an effective class organization performed by their EFL teacher.

## CONCLUSION

The purposes of the study were to investigate the eleventh-grade students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching variation or teaching styles and classroom management skills. A review of the current literature found that independent and successful learning requires effective use of learning strategies. Therefore, it is important to understand how students are dealing with learning and to teach students to learn. Not only the teaching styles of the educators but also the students' perception of the teaching styles of their teacher's influence school performance. Awareness of student perspectives can help teachers tailor their lessons to suit individual needs.

The first question was to identify the teaching variation whether or not the EFL teachers at SMK Negeri 6 Kota Kupang implemented good variation in teaching to stimulate students' interest in learning. The second intended to know whether the EFL teachers in the stated school have good skills in managing the classroom environment.

Only one instrument was utilized in the study. The teaching variation questionnaire consists of 15 questions or statements, while for the classroom a

management skill consists of 20 questions. The learners respond to the questions or statements on a five-point scale.

The study was conducted in November 2019. Thirty-five items of questionnaires were administered to 62 students (the eleventh grade) students at SMK Negeri 6 Kota Kupang. The data from this study may indicate that student perceptions of effective teaching have indicated that students have good perceptions towards the strategies implemented by their teachers. The content is meaningful and relevant to the future, higher-level questions add value to their learning, minimal disruptions occur in the classroom, and teachers communicate that they care for their students.

Based on this study, students were convinced that their teachers cared about their learning, teachers were interested in using instructional strategies that promote learning; furthermore, student responses indicated that teachers were actively engaged in practices that exhibited a sense of fairness in the classroom. The findings indicated a sense of complacency among the respondents, which could be interpreted because seniors may be ambivalent about their perceptions of what should or should not be considered quality teaching.

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