# CERTIFIED EFL TEACHERS' PERFORMANCES IN CONDUCTING TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN CLASSROOMS

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## Abstract

In 2007, the Indonesian government released teachers' certification to assess the in service teachers. However, the latest study conducted by Directorate General of Quality Assurance for Teachers and Educators facilitated by World Bank (2010 in Payong, 2011:89), concerning preliminary research on SD and SMP certified teachers showed that most of the secondary schools teachers were not able to fulfill the obligations to teach. Thus, the researcher was interested in conducting a study which was aimed at investigating the performance of the certified teachers in the classrooms. The study employed a case study, involving six certified EFL teachers in six secondary schools in Bandung. The data were obtained through classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews. The data gained from observation were analyzed using criteria according to Flander's FIAC system to measure the EFL teachers' performance in the classroom, particularly in asking questions, giving information, correcting students' sentences, giving direction, and accepting students' feelings, praising/encouraging students, joking as well as accepting/using students' ideas. Later, the results were analyzed based on Darling-Hammond and Bransford's (2005:11) conceptualization of teaching knowledge, also four teaching knowledge proposed by Borkoand Putman (1996, in Kauchack et al, 2002:14), and the four teaching competences stated in *Permendiknas* Number 16 dated on 4 May 2007 mentioned in Payong (2011:24-41) to picture students' opinion about teachers' performances in classrooms. To some extent, the findings showed that in terms of performance in the classroom, the teachers have mastered the teaching knowledge which include content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, general content knowledge, and knowledge of learners and learning as mentioned by Borko and Putman (1996, in Kauchack et al, 2002:14), Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005:11), Flander's FIAC System, and *Permendiknas*(cited in Payong, 2011:24-41).

**Keywords**: certification; classroom interaction; profession; teaching performance

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Indonesian Law Number 14 year 2005 about Teachers and Lecturers has led to raise the issue of teachers' certification to become the most attentive one in the world of education in Indonesia. It is understandable since it becomes a new phenomenon which involves teacher's fate and future. The law further informs teachers misunderstanding of certification, in which teachers thought that those who have bachelor degrees in education (S1) automatically hold the certificates. Some others say that the certificates can only be gained after someone has joined special training conducted by an institute of education appointed by government. Besides holding the bachelor degree in education (S1) or Diploma IV, a teacher should master teaching competences (Depdiknas, Book 2, 2009:1).

The latest study conducted by Ditjen PMPTK (Directorate General of Quality Assurance for Teachers and Educators) facilitated by World Bank (2010 in Payong, 2011:89), concerning preliminary research on SD and SMP certified teachers, depicts several interesting pictures. First, certification has not yet given good impact to the development of professionalism. The impact is more

to the raise of teacher's welfare rather than her/his professionalism. About 76% professional support fund was used to fulfill household daily needs, while the rest was used directly or indirectly toward the teacher's professional development. Second, certification has not shown the development of reward for teacher's professional pride. Some certified teachers still work on other jobs, like, about 24% teachers were still active in delivering private lessons for students, and of about 20% were still working as entrepreneurs (sellers, etc) and 38% of them were still farmers. The last, certification has not impacted on developing disciplines of running her/his profession. Although they have gained professional supports, many of them were absent from doing their tasks. There were about 45% of certified teachers absent from schools because of having no class hour. The most cases occurred to SMP teachers because they were subject matter teachers. In other words, the salary gained by the teacher cannot afford to fulfill the daily needs, unless s/he works in other jobs. Most of the secondary schools teachers did not keep the responsibilities to teach.

Thus, this issue has been seen as a reference to do the research. Research on teacher's performance is still a few. Thus, this study attempts to describe good models of certified teachers' performances in classroom activities.

**Statement of the Problem**

This study was concerned with investigating how certified EFL teachers from six different secondary schools in Bandung performed in the classroom teaching in terms of classroom activities, particularly in asking questions, giving information, correcting students' sentences, giving direction, and accepting students' feelings, praising/encouraging students, joking as well as accepting/using students' ideas.

**Underlying Theories**

Certification is defined as the process of deciding that an individual meets the minimum standards of competence in a profession (Cronin in Burns and Richards, Eds., 2009:61).In Indonesia, certification has become very popular among teachers at present.Samani (2006:7) mentions that the certification will be legible for those who have fulfilled two requirements, viz. one has a minimum education qualification of Diploma-D4/Sarjana-S1, and one has completed certain competences. Certification is also defined as the process of giving certificates to a certain object (either to a certain person, thing, or organization), determining that the selected one has fulfilled the certain criteria or standard (Department of National Education- henceforth *Depdiknas*, 2009:1; Payong, 2011: 68). Certification is claimed to be a quality assurance for those who hold the certificates so that they do not feel at lost.

Trianto&Tutik (2007:71-72) state that teacher's certification in Indonesia is assessed by accredited teachers college, and the colleges are assigned by the government. In fact, Article 10 of *UUGD*mentions teachers' competences which contain pedagogical competences, professional competences, personal competences, and social competences. Each competence is clarified byGovernment Decree No.19/2005 Article 28 Verse 3 as follows:

Firstly, pedagogical competences refer to the ability to manage the teaching-learning activity in the classroom covering: understanding students, designing and planning the lessons, doing evaluation, and developing students' own potentials.

Secondly, professional competences refer to the ability of mastering the methodology of teaching broadly and deeply.

The third competences, i.e. personal competences, refer to the ability of having consistent, stable, mature, wise, prestigious personality that becomes a role model for students. Besides, teachers

have noble morals.

Finally, teachers should have social competences, meaning that they need to have the ability to communicate and socialize effectively with students, among colleagues, with students' parents, and also with societies around the teachers.

In addition, standards of foreign language teachers should be fulfilled by the certified teachers. There are many ways to display this conceptualization of teaching knowledge. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005:11) depict a framework that closely tracks with the National Academy of Education's core curriculum for teacher educationprogram.
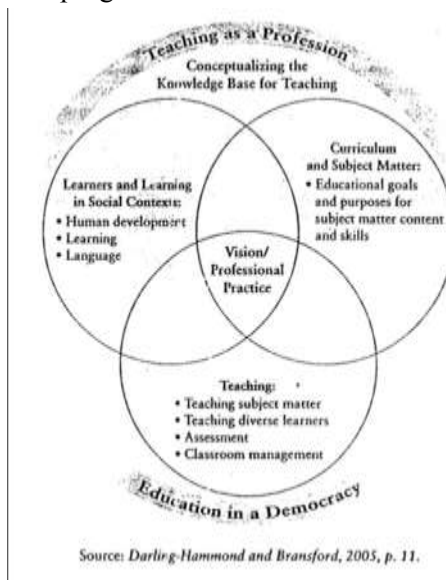


Source: Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005, p. 11.

**Figure 1. Conceptualization of Teaching Knowledge**

The framework, as represented in the figure, organizes the ideas described here into three general areas of knowledge, skills, and disposition:

1. Knowledge of learners and how they learn and develop within social contexts,
2. Conceptions of curriculum content and goals – understanding of the subject matter and skills to be taught in light of the social purposes of education
3. Understanding of teaching in light of the content and learners to be taught, as informed by assessment and supported by productive classroom environments.

Over the years we have come to realize that "the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement" (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992:ix in Richards and Renandya, 2002:385). What teachers do is not only implementing the curriculum, but they should also define and refine it; they interpret and transform it in a way that makes learning more manageable for the learners.

**Aims of the Study**

Generally, the purpose of this study was to investigate how the certified EFL teachers in Indonesian context, specifically in Bandung, carried out their classes. In other words, the study attempted to find out what was the effect of certification on EFL teachers performance in terms of their professionalism after they have gained the certificates. In details, the purposes of the study can be described as to describe the performances of six certified EFL teachers in secondary schools in Bandung in terms of teaching/learning activities in classrooms, particularly in asking questions,

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giving information, correcting students' sentences, giving direction, and accepting students' feelings, praising/encouraging students, joking as well as accepting/using students' ideas.

## METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

As this study concerned with depicting certified EFL teachers' performance in the classroom, it employedacase study design in which it was carried out in "a small scale, a single case (Stake, 1985 in Emilia, 2005:74). It involved six certified EFL teachers in six different schools in Bandung. It is assumed that these teachers are qualified, skillful, and professional. Besides, they have been teaching English for more than 25 years and certified..

The data were collected through classroom observationsalso questionnaires distributed to the students. Later, all data taken from various data collection were analyzed gradually. The data gained from the observations were coded, while the data from questionnaires were subsequently categorized and interpreted to answer the research questions.

In analyzing the data, standard observation of classrooms made by Flanders (1970 cited in Richards, 2003:149), was applied. Richards (2003:149) states that this standard, known as the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC), developed a ten-category observation schedule which is designed to identify direct and indirect teacher influence, its coverage and simplicity broadened its appeal beyond this relatively narrow focus, so that many subsequent systems have their roots here.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS
### Classroom Interaction

In terms of classroom interaction, most of the participants showed great performance in conducting the classroom activities. As the purpose of this study is to describe the performances of the certified EFL teachers in the classrooms, the explanation focuses on teacher's talk in form of asking questions, giving information, correcting students' sentences, giving direction, and accepting students' feelings, praising/encouraging students, joking as well as accepting/using students' ideas.

### *Asking Questions*

Asking questions in the classroom is an important part, especially in language teaching, as it can guide the students during the learning process (Borko and Putman, 1996 in Kauchack et al, 2002:12).It could be seen from the video that when the teachers asked questions, they needed to repeat the questions or simplify the questions to make the students understand, as illustrated in the following extract:

| **Extract 1** | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | : | Do you have any special experience during the project? |
| S1 | : | Hmm...hmm... (silent) |
| T | : | What is it? Your special experience? |
| S1 | : | Hmm, *apay*a... I think when we… (pause) when we worked on the project. |
| T | : | About the cat? |
| S1 | : | Yeah... (nod) |

This practice showed that the teacher gave the students some time to think of the answer to the question. She also put emphasis on the thing that she asked to the student using intonation and slowed the seech to help the student access the meaning of the question. This practice reflected that the teacher was capable of being a teacher who develops the students' potential as suggested in Article 10 of Teachers and Lecturers Law.

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### Giving Information

Presenting learning material or giving information in the classroom is one of the roles of a teacher. From the videos, it can be seen that in giving information or presenting learning materials to the students, the teachers used various methods. Some teachers preferred explaining the materials directly to the students, while some other used elicitation to involve the students during the learning process. Using this method in the beginning of instruction, the teacher made use of students' prior knowledge on the topic and help the students to focus on the material that they were going to learn at the session as seen in the extract below:

| **Extract 2** | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | : | Now we're learning about narrative text. (writing on board) |
| | | What is narrative text? |
| S1 | : | A kind of ... a kind of.. |
| T | : | A kind of what? |
| S1 | : | A kind of text (murmuring) |
| T | : | It's OK, if you want to say in Bahasa Indonesia. |
| S2 | : | *Cerita* |
| T | : | Yes, *cerita*..and then? |
| S3 | : | *Ceritakhayalan* |
| T | : | *Yah, ceritarekaan, ceritakhayalan*. What is it for? |
| S4 | : | *Untukmenghibur…* |
| T | : | Yes, to entertain people. To entertain the readers. |

This practice reflects teacher's knowledge in the way that s/he was able to make students engaged in the learning activities. This is in line with Harmer's (2007:111-112) statement that the first thing teachers need to do when organizing something is to get students involved, engaged, and ready; which means that something 'new' is going to happen and that the activity will be enjoyable, interesting, or beneficial.

### Correcting Students

In the video, it can be seen that sometimes the teachers needed to correct students' answers because they gave wrong answers to the questions, or made some grammatical mistakes. In this study, the teachers proved themselves to be helpful to the students, as when they made mistake the teacher did not judge that the answer was wrong. Instead, the students were guided until they could produce the right utterance in English, as presented in the following extract:

| **Extract 3** | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | : | What do you think about this? (showing a graph about car driver |
| deaths by age in the UK) | | |
| S1 | : | Because the driver too fast at travelling |
| T | : | at travelling? |
| S1 | : | hmm, not carefully. |
| T | : | oh, not carefully. OK. Who else (wants to answer the question)? |
| S2 | : | *Sayabu!* |
| T | : | OK, Dena? |
| S2 | : | Because they are sleepy head, *Bu*. *Jadidia* sleepy head *Bu*. |
| T | : | OK, they are driving… |
| S2 | : | They are driving when sleepy head *Bu*… |
| T | : | OK, so they are driving with sleepy head? |
| S2 | : | Yes Bu. |
| T | : | Good. Who else? |

The extract shows that the teacher proved herself to be helpful to the students, as when they made mistake the teacher did not judge that the answer was wrong. Instead, she guided the student

until he could produce the right utterance in English. This practice then proved that the teacher not only possessed the pedagogical competences, but also personal and social competences which are stipulated in Government Decree No.19/2005 Article 28 Verse 3 as well. This can be seen from her way in guiding the student to produce the right utterance. She showed patience and tender loving care to the students that they did not feel judged or threatened by the teacher.

### *Giving Directions*

In giving directions, the participants used various methods to make students understand the instructions. The teachers tried to help their students to understand the instruction through the use of their gestures, even giving examples on how to perform the tasks. The illustration can be a good measure that the teachers have mastered the knowledge of learners and learning as mentioned by Borko and Putman (1996, in Kauchack et al, 2002:14).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Extract 4** | | |
| T | : | We have learned how to make an opinion, argumentation and recommendation. So now, I want you to make a group of four. (using gestures to help students understand the instruction) |
| Ss | : | …..(Silence/Confusion) |
| T | : | *Sekarangkitabuatkelompokberempat-berempat*. I'll give each one a topic. |
| S1 | : | *Jadisekelompokberempatkanbu?* |
| T | : | Yes. I will give you 5 minutes to discuss the topic, and after that you will present your opinion in front of classroom. *Setelahdibuatnantidipresentasikandidepankelas.* OK? |
| Ss | : | Yes Ma'am. |

All the illustrations in this section have proved that the teachers are capable of developing a supportive learning environment for the students to improve their skills and knowledge.

### *Accepting Students' Feelings*

The following extract shows how a teacher accepted students' feeling during a class:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Extract 5** | | |
| (talking about a project about a cat) | | |
| S1 | : | I think the experience is in the project |
| T | : | About the cat also? |
| S1 | : | Yes |
| T | : | Oh I see, so the interesting part is about the cat. I see.. Narayan, you're afraid of cats? |
| S2 | : | (smiling) |
| Ss | : | (chatter) |
| S3 | : | Meow |

The illustration in extract 5 showed that when the teacher is talking with student 1, she remembered that another student was afraid of cat and she confirmed it to the student. This extract reflected that the teacher cared about her students; based on Government Decree No.19/2005 Article 28 Verse 3, it can be said that the teacher possessed social competences as she had a good interpersonal relationship with her students. The teacher in this illustration is a good example of teachers who have good knowledge about learners as mentioned by Darling-Hammond et al. (1999:35).

*Praising/encouraging Students*

| Extract 6 | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | : | So what is your suggestion to the government about this case? |
| Ss | : | (confused) |
| T | : | Suggestions or recommendations? |
| S1 | : | *Bu,.eh.. Bu… apaya…* |
| S2 | : | Monorail |
| T | : | Make monorail, and then? |
| S1 | : | Try to… eh… |
| T | : | Try to? |
| S1 | : | wide road |

The extracts showed that the teacher provided support to the students when they were stuck with the words they wanted to say, or the students were hesitated to speak in English. However, the teachers did not directly give the vocabulary. Instead, they gave more attention to the students and encouraged them to use English This practice showed that the teachers possessed pedagogical knowledge mentioned in Government Decree No.19/2005 Article 28 Verse 3 as they were able to help the students to develop their skills. The illustration also proved that the teachers have mastered the knowledge of learners and learning as mentioned by Borko and Putman (1996, in Kauchack et al, 2002:14). In addition, this showed that the teachers mastered the knowledge of child development, as mentioned by Rhodes and Heining-Boynton (1993, in Bailey, 2006:210) and provided supportive assistance for the students in developing their skills.

*Jokes*

| Extract 7 | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | : | (to all students) what's your favorite food? |
| S1 | : | (rises his hand, and sweeps his nose with funny gesture) |
| T | : | (imitates what the student did) |
| Ss | : | (Laughter) |
| S1 | : | Fried… eh… |
| T | : | Fried? |
| S1 | : | Fried eh...eh… rice |
| T | : | Fried rice, good! |

The illustration showed that the teachers could develop a warm learning environment in the classroom. The teachers made use of jokes and comedy to make the students engaged in the class activities. This practice showed that the teacher have good knowledge of learners and learning as mentioned by Borko and Putman (1996 in Kauchack et al, 2002:14), which includes knowing learners' characteristics. Besides, this proved that the teachers have social competence as mentioned in Government Decree No. 19/2005 Article 28 Verse 3 that the teacher needs to have the ability to communicate and socialize effectively with the students.

*Accepting/using Students' Ideas*

| Extract 8 | | |
|---|---|---|
| (in a group discussion session) | | |
| S1 | : | Maam, how about explaining the issues first? |
| T | : | Yeah, that's good. You can start with the issue. |
| S1 | : | yah, something like..... (inaudible) |
| T | : | Yeah, that's good. Just continue |

This extract is one of the examples of teacher accepting students' ideas during the classroom activities. This practice reflected that the teacher had a good knowledge of learners, as Borko and Putman (1996 in Kauchack et al, 2002:14) stated that knowledge of learners and learning includes understanding that learners tend to be egocentric, seeing the world from their perspectives and often ignoring others' views. Thus, when a teacher accepts or uses the ideas prompted by the students, s/he basically creates a supporting environment for students' potential development which is one of the basic competences that should be possessed by a teacher as suggested in Government Decree No. 19/2005 Article 28 Verse 3, viz. pedagogical competence.

**Students' Opinion about Certified EFL Teachers' Classroom Performances**

There were seventeen aspects the teacher should possess in teaching/learning activities, and the students were asked to give their opinions under the criteria of very good, good, fair, and poor as suggested by Payong (2011). The aspects concerned with: mastery of materials taught; relating the learning materials to other related things; conveying the materials systematically in connection with the standards competences; giving a contextual learning; ability to manage the classroom according to the time allotted; demonstrating ability to use learning tools and technologies; encouraging the students to make use of the available source and media; ability to create an interesting message; making the students to actively interact with teachers, classmates, and other learning resources; ability to create fun and comfortable classroom situation; monitoring the students' progress; giving final test in connection with the standard competences; ability to speak in clear and fluent English; ability to use written English well; communicating using appropriate style of language; involving students in concluding the learning material and doing self-reflection; and providing follow-up activities by giving information to do remedial or enrichment.

It was found that 33.75% of the respondents stated that the performance of the certified teachers was considered very good in conducting the instruction in the classroom, especially in terms of their mastery of the materials taught to the students. The respondents also stated that the instruction was very good because of the teachers' ability to use learning media and technology and the fluency of their speaking ability.

The data also showed that 57.47% of the respondents considered the instruction good, and the rests considered fair (8.68%) and poor (0.09%). This result was supported by the data that 8.68% of the total respondents thought so because of the ability of the teachers in creating interactions in the classroom and building a good learning environment. It was the teachers' ability in establishing classroom interaction and creating fun and comfortable situation that made the instruction fair. What made the respondents thought that the instruction was poor was because of the dynamic in the classroom. There were 0.79% respondents who had opinions that the teachers' ability in making the students actively interact with the teachers, classmates, and other learning sources was poor

**CONCLUSIONS**

In relation to the observed performance of the certified teachers, the participants in this study have displayed very good teaching performances, as reflected in their various methods in conducting teaching-learning activities also in managing classroom, which includes teachers' ways in asking questions, providing explanation, correcting students' mistakes, giving direction, accepting students' feelings, praising/encouraging students, throwing jokes during the instruction, also accepting/using students' ideas. The findings have showed that to some extent, most of the certified teachers in this study have fulfilled the requirements of being professional teachers. Both the analysis toward the

observation videos where the teachers conducted their teaching in the classrooms, and the results of students' questionnaires about their teachers, implied that the teachers had mastered the four competences mentioned in Government Decree No. 19/2005 Article 28 Verse 3 containing pedagogical competences, professional competences, personal competences, and social competences. Additionally, the results showed that the students had positive impressions about their teachers' performances.

In relation to the issue of professionalism, the EFL teachers participating in this study have proven themselves as professional teachers. All of the teachers participated in teacher council (MGMP). This indicated that the teachers fulfill the criteria of professional teachers mentioned in Chapter III Verse 7 UUGD Number 14 Year 2005 about teacher's principles (See also Jalal et al, 2009 for a similar discussion), as the teachers possessed professional organization that has authority to give orders concerning things related to teacher's job and professionalism.

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