

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the Chapter

This study was aimed to investigate how English teachers with different achievement levels of competence reflected their competence in their teaching performance, perceived their own teaching performance and important characteristics of competent English teachers. The study also sought students' perceptions on their English teachers' teaching performance in terms of professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes and important characteristics of competent English teachers. In other words, this study was an in-depth analysis of teaching performance of English teachers with different achievement levels of competence as reflected by the results of Teacher Competence Test.

This introductory chapter provides a brief overview of the factors that underpin the importance of undertaking the research project into junior high school English teachers' competence and performance in Indonesian context (Swales, 1994). The chapter also portrays and outlines the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the dissertation.

1.2 Background of the Study

In a world defined by rapid change and development, where young people must be lifelong learners, much is expected and demanded of teachers (UNESCO, 2015a). A central post-2015 development goal for education argues that all youth must achieve at least basic skills as a foundation for work and further learning, not merely that they gain access to schooling

(OECD, 2015a, p. 3). There is passionate belief that all young people can be helped to fulfill their potential and become successful (Ofsted, 2009). To achieve this, today's teachers need to prepare students for jobs that have not yet been created, to use technologies that have not yet been invented, and to solve social problems that haven't arisen before.

In addition, teachers have to do more than transmit educational content. They have to cultivate students' ability to be creative, think critically, solve problems and make decisions. They have to help students work better together, by developing their ability to communicate and collaborate; they have to build students' capacity to recognize and exploit the potential of new technologies; and they have to nurture the character qualities that help people to live and work together (Schleicher, 2016, p. 9). Thus, students' school experiences must help them develop the attitudes and abilities required for functioning effectively in this new environment (DoE Queensland, 2005, p.1).

Consequently, nations around the world are undertaking wide-ranging reforms to better prepare children for high educational demands of life and work and challenges in the 21st century (Schleicher, 2012, p. 5). The UN convention on the rights of the child article 28 also stresses the importance of good quality education as the right for every child. Therefore, efforts on the improvement of education quality has always been one of the important concerns of governments in all regions of the worlds (Suherdi, 2012, p. 54; UNESCO, 2012b, p. 21; World Bank, 2012a, p. 3) since the quality of education plays a crucial role in determining a nation's competitiveness (Jalal, et al., 2009, p. 5).

The improvement of quality of education relies heavily on the quality and competency of a teacher (e.g. Bourgonje & Tromp, 2011; Byamugisga and Ssenabulya, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Milanowski, Heneman, III, & Kimball, 2009). Teachers are the single most important factor in improving and ensuring the quality of education

(UNESCO, 2015c). Quality education produces good learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2006, p. 49). Hence, teacher quality is emerging as the most important ingredient in students' achievement (Protheroe, Lewis, and Paik, 2002; Stronge and Tucker, 2000; UNESCO, 2012c; U.S. DoE, 2000; Wright, Horns and Sanders, 1997).

Teacher is also considered as the most significant resource in schools; therefore, teachers are critical to raise education standards (OECD, 2009a, p. 3). In this way, raising teaching performance is the policy direction most likely to lead to substantial gains in student learning (OECD, 2005) because teacher plays a central role in student learning (Scarino and Liddicoat, 2009, p. 12).

Parents, students, the public and those who run education systems need to know how well are young adults prepared to meet the challenges of the future (OECD, 1999, p. 7). Equally important, parents are also demanding that well-prepared competent and qualified teachers can teach their children (SIREP, 2010, p. 12).

Therefore, plans for improving the quality of education should focus on the improvement of quality of teaching (Suryahadi & Sambodho, 2013, p. 11) and the development of teachers' competence (Creemers, 1994, pp. 10-11) because high performance in education systems is dependent on the quality of teaching (Husband and Pearce, 2012). Evidence also shows that education quality improves when teachers are supported (UNESCO, 2014a, p. i). The precondition for high-quality teaching is high-quality teachers (OECD, 2015b, p. 195). This emphasis is critical because the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers (Patrinos et al, 2013).

Relevant studies on the effects of the quality of teaching on student achievement have been well documented (e.g. Anugerahwati and Saukah, 2010; Arifani and Saukah, 2013; Hakim, 2015; Kunter et al, 2013; Musthafa and Hamied, 2015). Anugerahwati and Saukah (2010)

conducted a study to investigate the professional competences of the exemplary secondary school teachers. The findings reveal that the subjects in three of the four towns have all the four competences (subject matter, pedagogical, social and personal competences), with the personal competence being the most influential in shaping them as professional and exemplary teachers.

To investigate how competent English teachers conducted their classroom teaching practices, Arifani and Saukah (2013) chose four out of sixteen English teachers from two good senior high schools based on teacher standards and several additional criteria. The findings reveal that the English teachers shared the following commonalities in their classroom teaching practices:

- They built good communication with their students through the implementation of good English language modeling;
- they explained the English lessons using deductive and inductive ways;
- they provided help to their students indirectly during the learning process;
- they gave indirect corrections to their students' errors;
- they checked their students' understanding through questioning; and
- they always provided their students with plenty of opportunities to practice their English.

Hakim (2015) conducted a study which was aimed to analyze and determine the contribution of teacher competences (pedagogical, personal, professional and social competence) on the performance of students' learning. The results showed that, partially, pedagogical, personal competence, professional competence and social competence has a significant influence in improving learning performance.

Likewise, the research conducted by Kunter, et al (2013) tried to investigate the effect of teacher professional competence on instructional quality and student outcomes. The aspects of professional competence include pedagogical content knowledge, professional beliefs, work-related motivation, and self-regulation. They found that teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, enthusiasm for teaching, and self-regulatory skills had positive effects on instructional quality and affected student outcomes. In contrast, teachers' general academic ability did not affect their instruction.

Another research conducted by Musthafa and Hamied (2015) to 55 activists of TEFLIN concerning teachers' roles in EFL classrooms reveals that teachers of EFL serve as a model for their students to observe and learn from (87.3%; n=48). Second, EFL teachers structure learning activities so that their students learn English optimally both in class and out (76.4%; n=42); and third, teachers of EFL provide continuous and consistent supports so that their students learn English independently (61.8%; n=34).

Other research, such as a study by Zacharias (2003), had investigated teachers' beliefs about English language teaching in Indonesia with regard to the role of English as a global language. Zacharias then compared these teachers' beliefs with their classroom practice using classroom observations to cross check the extent to which the teachers' beliefs stated in the questionnaire were actually present in their classroom practice. The findings indicate that what teachers believed in principle was not entirely matched by what they did in the classroom.

From these studies, it is clear that teacher competence can affect many aspects of education such as students' performance, achievements and quality education improvement. Hence, efforts on improving teachers' competence are imperative.

In conjunction with the improvement of education quality, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia has set a number of strategies

and policies (Setiadi and Musthafa, 2013; Tobias et al, 2014; UNESCO, 2015b) through strengthening the teaching forces and reforming the curriculum and pedagogy. In 2005, the Government of the Republic Indonesia established the National Standards of Education. In 2007, the Government has also organized a teacher certification program to improve teachers' professionalism at all educational levels (Jalal, et al, 2009; Setiadi and Musthafa, 2013). In the same year, the Government also developed the teacher academic qualification and teacher competence standards including pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competences (Ministry of National Education, 2007a). The Government, indeed, sets a high expectation that through the improvement of the teachers' competence and professionalism, the quality of education in the country will improve significantly.

The Government also conducted Teacher Competence Test as integral parts of the aforementioned efforts. Beginning in 2012, the Government of Indonesia has implemented this policy aimed to identify the mastery of individual teacher level of competence and served as the basis for the mastery of teachers' pedagogical and professional competence (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015a, p. 8). In other words, Teacher Competence Test is aimed at providing the evidence that a teacher has achieved a minimum standard of professional and pedagogical competence (Ministry of National Education and Culture, 2015b, p. 12). The result of Teacher Competence Test is also used as the basis for the levels of teacher training that the teachers need to attend according to the scores that they achieved.

Out of the four competences to possess by a teacher (pedagogical, social, personal, and professional) as stated by Government Rule Number 19 Year 2005 and Rule of Ministry of Education Number 16 Year 2007, Teacher Competence Test only covers two aspects, pedagogical and professional competences. This is of course not sufficient. Alternative

ways of testing the four competences required by the Ministry need to be developed. Otherwise, the other two competences will not be sufficiently dealt with.

Taking teacher's competence as a whole is imperative if quality teachers are targeted. This study was intended to provide a comprehensive picture of teachers' competence in terms of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes both in its inner forms and in real teaching performance. To be specific, this study was aimed to investigate how English teachers with different levels of competence reflected their competence in their teaching performance, how they perceived their competence and teaching performance and important characteristics of competent English teachers. Students' perceptions on the teachers' teaching performance and important characteristics of competent English teachers were also collected and analyzed to complement the data obtained from the teachers.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The study focused on the English teachers' competence and the ways they reflected their competence in their teaching performance. The study also tried to capture the teachers' perceptions on their own competence and teaching performance and important characteristics of a competent English teacher. In addition, the study also sought to find students' perceptions on their teachers' teaching performance and important characteristics of competent English teachers.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to make the investigation more focused, the following overriding, interrelated research questions were developed to guide the inquiry process (Paltridge and Starfield 2007, p. 57):

1. How do English teachers with different levels of competence perform their competence in terms of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes, in their teaching performance?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions on their own teaching performance and students' perceptions on their English teachers' teaching performance in terms of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes?
3. What are the teachers and students' perceptions on the important characteristics of competent English teachers?

The research problem and research questions of the study are outlined in Figure 1.1.

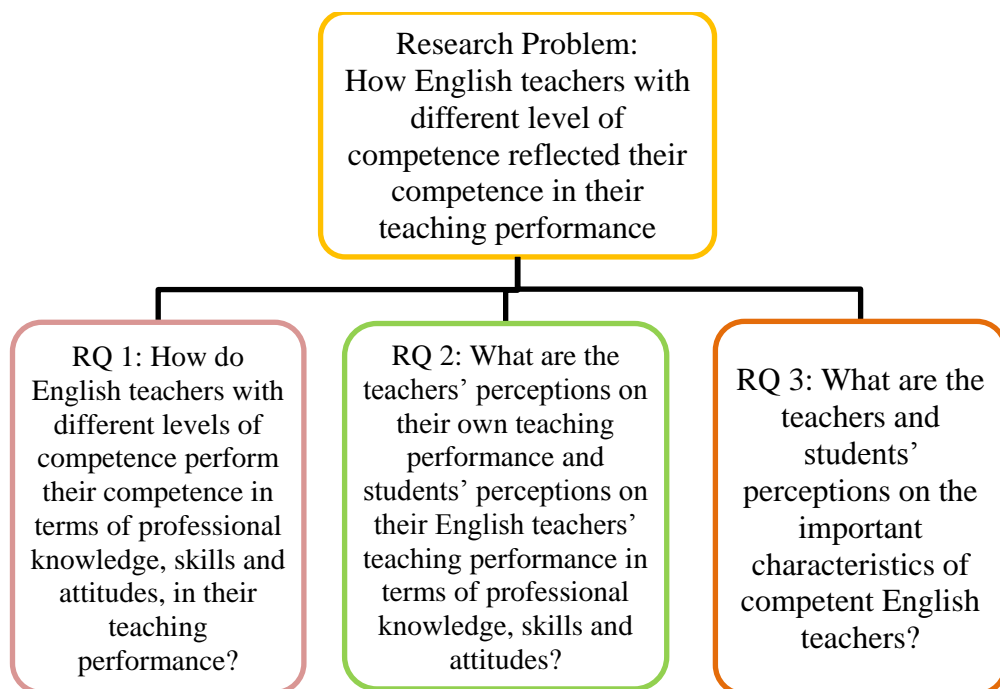


Figure 1.1 **Research problem and research questions of the study**

1.5 Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were:

1. To provide an in-depth analytical description of how English teachers with different levels of competence perform their competence in terms of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in their teaching performance. The descriptions resulted are hoped to give detailed picture of how each aspect of competence is reflected in their teaching performance, and whether there is a linier relationship between the level of competence and that of teaching performance;
2. To describe English teachers' perceptions on their own competence and teaching performance and students' perceptions of English teachers' teaching performance in terms of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes. This is expected to give detailed picture of whether the teachers perceived their competence and teaching performance in an appropriate way indicating the level of competence they were at, and whether the students perceived their teachers' teaching performance in an appropriate way, and whether the teacher and the students shared the same perceptions;
3. To describe how English teachers and students perceive the most important characteristics of competent English teachers. This is expected to give detailed picture of teachers and students' perceptions on important characteristics of competent English teachers and whether they shared the same perceptions.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study was expected to contribute to the following areas:

- *Theoretically*, the study was expected to highlight the significance of taking teachers' both inner competence and real performance as an integrated aspects of teachers' competence that cannot be separated and therefore efforts on developing and testing teachers' competence cannot neglect one of the two aspects.
- *Practically*, the result of this study was intended to inform practitioners, theorists, and decision makers of educational policies of empirical evidence on English teachers' competence and how they perceived their own teaching performance and students' perceptions of English teachers' teaching performance in terms of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes and whether they shared the same perceptions. This is important in establishing teachers' competence in its entirety and good teaching performance that is in line with their students' perceptions and learning preference

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focused mainly on providing an in-depth analytical description of how English teachers with different levels of competence perform their competence in their teaching performance, describing English teachers' perceptions on their own competence and teaching performance and students' perceptions of English teachers' teaching performance and how English teachers and students perceived the most important characteristics of competent English teachers.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

Admittedly, there are some limitations regarding methodological procedures. This study had tried to provide in-depth analysis and comprehensive description of how English teachers' competence was reflected in their teaching performance and how they and their students perceived their teaching performance and important characteristics of competent English teachers. Various limitations were encountered during the sampling, fieldwork, data collection and analysis stages of the research. The data of this study were obtained from 2 English teachers and 318 English students. In addition, the study was further limited by the duration of the observation time which meant that the participants were observed over a relatively short period (N=25 lesson observations). The number of the sample was too small to generalize beyond the context of this study (Brown, 1988, p. 113). However, this mixed methods case study, as suggested by Stake (1995), did not mean to generalize, as generalization is not the purpose of the case study at all.

Nonetheless, while the results of this study may not be generalizable, they can be transferable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as the readers with their own situations can compare them. Therefore, thick descriptions, detailed information of the context, and the background to the study have been provided.

A further limitation was subjectivity in interpreting the findings. To overcome this, competence and performance framework were constructed based on literature on the theories of teacher competence and performance.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

In the discussion of teacher competence and teacher teaching performance, a number of terms are used extensively throughout this study and required defining. These terms are teacher competence, teacher performance, teacher professional knowledge, teacher professional skills, and teacher professional attitudes.

Teacher competence – refers to a combination of what a teacher knows (knowledge), what a teacher does in the classroom (skills) and which values a teacher bases teaching on (attitudes), to perform effective teaching (Anselmus, 2011; Armstrong and Baron, 1995; Borich, 1977, 2011; Caena, 2011; Gooler, 2002; Hagen and Skule, 2004; Koster & Dengerink, 2008; Medley, 1982a; Perera, 2003; Sayer, 1992; and Soepriyatna, 2012).

Teacher performance – refers to the behavior of a teacher while teaching a class (inside or outside the classroom) (Medley, 1982a, p. 1894).

Teacher professional knowledge – refers to the teacher's understanding of the pedagogy, subject content, learners and how they learn by providing relevant learning experiences (AITSL, 2011; Barge, 2013; Stronge, 2012).

Teacher professional skills – refer to the ability of a teacher to use knowledge in strategic ways to facilitate student learning (Wragg and Wood, 1984).

Teacher professional attitudes – refer to the way a teacher behaves towards the learners that shows how she thinks and feels (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English, 2015).

1.10 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The subsequent chapters were framed as follows. Chapter 2 explores the relevant theories framed the investigation of English teachers' competence, teachers' performance, and students' opinions of their English teachers' performance. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study, which describes the research design, research participant, research setting, ethical issues, research procedure, data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis, presentation, interpretation and discussion of the data findings. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the discussions of the previous chapters, provides policy recommendations and implications for future research.