

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

As a global language, English has been prominently included in educational curricula as a language subject. Indonesia acknowledges English as a foreign language (EFL), which has been included in the curriculum as a language subject from primary to secondary levels. As a foreign language, English is taught chiefly in non-native countries. In teaching and learning, EFL is taught to the students to enable them to communicate with native speakers (Si, 2019). Furthermore, EFL learners' exposure to English is limited. They mostly learn the language at school, yet rarely use it daily. As English is not used dominantly by societies, the status of English in Indonesia is considered a foreign language.

Based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Republic of Indonesia Number 12 Year 2024, it states that English is introduced as an elective subject in elementary school. It can be taught since grade 1, depending on the readiness of the school, while in high school, English has become a compulsory subject. In fact, many schools have chosen to teach English since grade 1, though it is still an elective subject in the primary level. This affirms that EFL learning in Indonesia is crucial for supporting society, particularly students, in

improving their language competence to communicate and collaborate in global networks (Sun, 2023).

Many factors influence the success of EFL learning, including the role of teachers in establishing effective instruction for students. It is mentioned that effective teaching and learning occur through a developmental and dynamic process that requires teachers to expand their teaching abilities. This means they need to upgrade their knowledge and skills, address students' learning needs, create interactive teaching and learning strategies, provide diverse learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom, offer feedback and support, and build a strong, close relationship with students. Teachers are responsible for fostering effective language instruction by providing appropriate learning resources, using various methods and media, being creative and current in designing activities, and managing all classroom situations (Metruk, 2021; Rahim, 2019).

To succeed, EFL teaching and learning are associated with teachers' roles as good teachers. Nowadays, the notion of a "good teacher" has raised many concerns among scholars. Some studies have been conducted to examine aspects characterizing good teachers. There are some abilities that teachers must hold, like being able to design meaningful learning, apply good teaching strategies, utilize various learning resources, provide constructive feedback, and build positive bonding with the students. These abilities are part of teaching skills, mapped into professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, and interpersonal abilities that should be continuously developed by the teachers.

In the Indonesian education context, it has been officially mandated that teachers must possess basic teaching competencies. These competencies are explained in Permendiknas No. 16 Tahun 2007 (Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007) about Indonesian Teacher Competency Standards. These competency standards consist of four basic competencies that should be mastered by the teachers, namely pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies. Good mastery of these competencies is a requirement for all teachers to bring good quality in their teaching and learning process. Indeed, these competencies also reflect the quality of good English teachers.

Pedagogical competency is crucial as it reflects the teachers' capabilities in organizing the teaching and learning practices. Pedagogical competency involves some crucial skills for establishing effective learning that leads to academic success. These skills are complex as the teachers must be competent in planning the teaching and learning process, providing appropriate teaching methods and strategies, facilitating the students with adequate learning materials and proper resources, managing the class atmosphere, and assessing the students' learning progress (Wirantaka & Wahyudianawati, 2021). In line with this, Purnomo (2023) explains that students' success in achieving learning goals cannot be separated from teachers' roles in creating meaningful learning environments. Teachers are thoroughly conscientious in applying their pedagogical skills to create meaningful student learning experiences. They must manage their classrooms effectively, ensuring their lessons help students meet their learning needs.

In other hand, professional competency is associated with the mastery of the subject matter, where teachers possess good ability in using the knowledge effectively during the teaching and learning process. One of the most striking things about teaching a foreign language is communication. Borg (2006) supports the claim that, unlike other subject teachers, EFL teachers have goals to make their students capable of communicating in the target language. This poses a significant challenge, as teachers must master the subject matter well. Their qualification is evident in how they use the target language. Their fluency is a big deal, as the students evaluate their teachers based on their mastery of the target language. Furthermore, to transfer the knowledge to the students, the EFL teachers must have a relatively broad knowledge of English and understand the cultural aspects of the language (Guspita et al., 2023). Their professionalism in mastering the target language is a pivotal competency that influences their teaching performance. The professional competency ensures that the teachers possess good proficiency in mastering the target language (Hien, 2020). This dramatically impacts the learning process and strengthens students' trust in their teachers, from whom they learn.

Furthermore, the quality of teachers to promote the success of EFL learning is also determined by their social ability. As aforementioned, pedagogical and professional competencies are crucial, but it is worth nothing if the teachers lack social skills. Their competency to develop social skills, such as building good relationships with the students and being cooperative and collaborative, is crucial as well (Tarajová & Metruk, 2020). Possessing good social skills is helpful for teachers

in administering the teaching and learning process. Additionally, a study conducted by Karim et al. (2020) reveals that students tend to be more confident when their teachers are easy-going and close to them. Friendly teachers build better bonds with the students, making them feel more comfortable in their learning. Building positive relationships prevents gaps between the teachers and the students; hence, it supports the establishment of effective teaching and helps the students achieve their learning goals.

Moreover, Fauth et al. (2019) explain that teachers must have personal competency in addressing motivational factors such as self-efficacy and enthusiasm. It is believed that teachers with high motivation and strong self-efficacy tend to succeed when coping with challenges during school practices. Besides, the teachers' quality is determined by their resilience (Carmel & Badash, 2021). They explain that teachers must show great patience when teaching students and be able to overcome problems in any situation. With good resilience, they thrive on their commitment to teaching rather than just surviving in their profession. Being resilient enables teachers to enhance their skills to succeed in their jobs. Many students likely favor their teacher because of their personality. The students adore a figure of kind, caring, helpful, compassionate, or even humorous teachers (Tarajová & Metruk, 2020). Furthermore, it is essential to understand that the students reflect their teachers. When they find out a figure of the right person with a good personality and behavior, the students follow and imitate their teachers and make them their role models. Karim et al. (2020) add that teachers must represent good behavior and attitude as student role

models. Creativity, curiosity, caring, and compassion are a few examples of how teachers are seen as good figures whom the students will acknowledge.

As teachers play essential roles in effective EFL learning, it is undeniable that they must be qualified to teach. When the students feel comfortable learning with their teachers, it is easier to achieve the learning goals. The qualification of a good English teacher might be relative due to different perceptions of people. For example, the students at school might have favorable teachers whom they consider good teachers. This voice differs from other students, as they have criteria for considering a good teacher. The previous paragraph discloses the essential competencies teachers must possess to qualify as good English teachers. Those essential competencies are pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies (Borg, 2006b; Carmel & Badash, 2021; Fauth et al., 2019; Guspita et al., 2023; Hien, 2020; Karim et al., 2020; Metruk, 2021; Purnomo, 2023; Rahim, 2019; Tarajová & Metruk, 2020; Wirantaka & Wahyudianawati, 2021). These competencies are crucial for teachers to understand and comprehend, even those planning to be teachers.

Building understanding of the characteristics of good English teachers involves exploration of someone's perceptions and beliefs. Studies on perceptions of good English teachers' characteristics are numerous, with most focusing on students' point of views. However, further exploration is needed of those preparing to become teachers, also known as prospective teachers. Prospective teachers are teacher candidates who undertake teaching programs in educational institutions (González et al., 2023). Simply put, it can be understood that prospective teachers are students who

study educational matters to prepare for future teaching. Prospective teachers develop knowledge, skills, and experience in teaching through theoretical courses, microteaching, and teaching practicum during their education program (Malki et al., 2022). In addition, they develop their teaching competencies through field experience, where they learn to teach in a school under the supervision of an experienced teacher.

As teacher candidates, prospective English teachers must also fully understand the basic competencies of being a good English teacher (Hien, 2020). When the prospective English teachers carry out their university program and engage in theoretical and practical learning, they develop their cognition. Borg (2006) explains that teacher cognition is a cognitive dimension of teaching that describes what teachers know, think, and believe about teaching and learning. It encompasses teachers' thinking, knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions regarding various aspects of their work. Teacher cognition in prospective English teachers develops as they acquire knowledge relating to teaching and learning in their coursework and experience microteaching or a teaching practicum. The development of their cognition during their education program definitely affects their future classroom practices of how to establish effective teaching enhance students' learning performance (Borg, 2006a). By considering this situation, exploring the prospective teachers' perceptions on what constitutes good English teachers' characteristics is important. This gives insights on how the prospective English teachers perceive the quality of good English teachers and ensure their readiness as future teachers.

Perceptions of the characteristics of good English teachers are influenced by individuals' personal backgrounds, experiences, and even their academic journeys (Carmel & Badash, 2021). This is in line with ideas by Pajares (1992) who mentions that perceptions are often shaped by prior experiences, beliefs, academic background, and personal characteristics. Gender, as one of numerous aspects that belong to personal characteristics, often contributes to the formation of the teachers' perceptions. The examination of gender influence, particularly in educational research, indicates that both male and female teachers might carry out variations in their perceptions due to their experiences in learning, sociocultural expectations, or stereotypes they hold (Wood, 2012). In addition, the level of achievement is part of the academic background that can influence the way prospective English teachers perceive the characteristics of good English teachers. According to Shin et al. (2025), low and high achievers tend to judge differently on the teachers' quality due to their prior learning achievement. While high-achievers might value more on the academic side, others might value the supportive presence of the teachers. Often, perception is a reflection of achievement experiences (Fitria, 2021).

Some studies have been conducted to investigate the perceptions of characteristics of a good English teacher. For instance, a study by Mohammaditabar et al. (2019) investigated the Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions, revealing that having adequate pedagogical competency, care for students, and enthusiasm in teaching are prominent for effective English teachers. Besides, Carmel and Badash (2021) explored early-career teachers' perceptions of the qualities and competencies of

professionalism. The results of the study show that teacher effectiveness can be seen through pedagogical and professional competencies, supported by personal qualities such as resilience, motivation, confidence, and the ability to work with colleagues. Other study conducted by Wangdi and Shimray (2022) investigated students' perceptions of what constitutes good English teachers. Findings found that the students consider that English teachers succeed in their teaching and learning with sufficient knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, and have good classroom instructional and socio-affective skills. Mursaleen et al. (2022) also examined university students' perceptions of the characteristics of good English teachers and found that they valued a good personality and traits, teachers' professionalism, and a supportive teacher-student relationship.

According to the studies above, the findings highlighted the pedagogical, professional, personal, and social abilities that good English teachers should demonstrate. Despite their valuable contributions, some limitations remain, leaving gaps in the research. The first gap lies in its participants. Although the studies investigate the perceptions of in-service teachers and students, limited attention has been given to prospective English teachers as future educators. The prospective English teachers build their professional beliefs, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching competencies through the programs they carry out in the university, such as microteaching, field-teaching, classroom observation, or any related educational program. Their perceptions are prominent as these may impact to their future professional teaching. Additionally, their perceptions may provide valuable

information regarding how teacher education programs prepare the prospective English teachers to perceive and internalize what constitutes good English teachers.

Secondly, previous studies have focused more on describing participants' perceptions. They have not examined whether these perceptions might differ across certain factors. Given that perceptions may vary due to specific individual characteristics, further studies that consider those characteristics are needed. Studies comparing prospective English teachers' perceptions based on individual characteristics such as gender and level of achievement remain limited. These variables potentially influence how the perceptions are shaped among prospective English teachers during their education program (Cardenal et al., 2023). Hence, investigating prospective English teachers' perceptions by comparing them across gender and level of achievement may yield a more comprehensive understanding and broaden perspectives on the characteristics of good English teachers they consider essential. This point can fill another gap in the study.

Additionally, the approaches used in previous studies predominantly relied on either qualitative or quantitative models. Although these approaches can describe the characteristics of good English teachers, they offer little explanation of the reasons underlying participants' responses. Therefore, the present study can fill this gap by employing an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative results to identify prospective English teachers' perceptions, providing a more complete understanding that these perceptions are not only presented statistically but also supported by the reasons behind them.

Based on the aforementioned considerations, this study henceforth aims to discover prospective English teachers' perceptions regarding the characteristics of a good English teacher viewed through the lenses of gender and level of achievement. These variables bring out a complex discussion and enrich the information on what makes a good English teacher to sustain a better and more effective teaching and learning process.

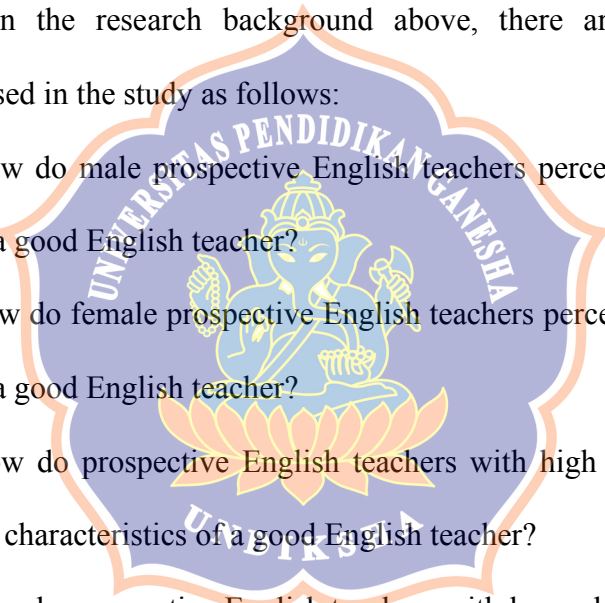
1.2 Problem Identification

To succeed in EFL learning, teachers play a vital role during the teaching and learning process. A qualified teacher creates an effective learning environment that enhances students' performance to reach their goals while learning the target language. Different perceptions on what makes a good English teacher enrich how teachers can perform competently and become well-qualified. Typically, teachers should possess four core competencies: pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies. Some studies have examined students' perceptions regarding the qualities of a good English teacher. However, few studies explore the views of prospective English teachers as future educators. It is essential to gather perceptions from teacher candidates, as this indirectly prepares them to become effective teachers in the future. In addition, there is a lack of research that examines how genders and levels of achievement impact the perceptions of prospective English teachers. Considering these two variables may influence how prospective English teachers

prioritize particular competencies and assess teachers' effectiveness. Therefore, this study is conducted to explore prospective teachers' views on what makes a good English teacher, comparing the perceptions based on gender and level of achievement.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the research background above, there are six main research questions proposed in the study as follows:

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- 1.3.1 How do male prospective English teachers perceive the characteristics of a good English teacher?
 - 1.3.2 How do female prospective English teachers perceive the characteristics of a good English teacher?
 - 1.3.3 How do prospective English teachers with high achievement perceive the characteristics of a good English teacher?
 - 1.3.4 How do prospective English teachers with low achievement perceive the characteristics of a good English teacher?
 - 1.3.5. Are there differences between the perceptions of male and female prospective English teachers regarding to the characteristics of a good English teacher?

1.3.6 Are there differences between the perceptions of prospective English teachers with high and low achievement regarding to the characteristics of a good English teacher?

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are proposed as follows:

- 1.4.1 To explore perceptions of male prospective English teachers regarding the characteristics of a good English teacher.
- 1.4.2 To explore perceptions of female prospective English teachers regarding the characteristics of a good English teacher.
- 1.4.3 To explore perceptions of prospective English teachers with high achievement regarding the characteristics of a good English teacher.
- 1.4.4 To explore perceptions of prospective English teachers with low achievement regarding the characteristics of a good English teacher.
- 1.4.5 To investigate differences between the perceptions of male and female prospective English teachers regarding the characteristics of a good English teacher.
- 1.4.6 To investigate differences between the perceptions of prospective English teachers with high and low achievement regarding the characteristics of a good English teacher

1.5 Research Significance

There are two types of significance in the study, namely theoretical significance and practical significance. The differences in these significances are explained as follows:

1.5.1 Theoretical significance

Theoretically, this study can provide information about the characteristics of a good English teacher. The investigation is done by seeking the perceptions of prospective English teachers that can enrich the information about the qualifications shaping teachers' professionalism as good English teachers. This information is essential for all teachers, especially the teachers' candidates, to prepare and qualify themselves as good teachers, contributing to the success of EFL learning. In the end, the result of this study can be used as an empirical review to provide evidence for the upcoming research, particularly dealing with characteristics of good English teachers, which deal with essential competencies that the teachers must comprehend.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

Practically, this study is expected to establish a reference, especially for teachers, to enrich their knowledge of the characteristics of being a good English teacher. The qualifications are based on the four basic teaching competencies used as the foundation for enhancing the qualification of good English teachers. So that, they can administer effective EFL teaching and learning processes. In addition, this research gives various perceptions compared to two different variables, such as

gender and level of achievement. These comparisons definitely vary the voices of the prospective English teachers regarding the characteristics of good English teachers.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1 Conceptual Definition

A conceptual definition refers to a definition made based on a theory proposed by previous researchers. This study's conceptual definition deals with the definitions of perceptions, prospective English teacher, good English teacher, gender, and level of achievement.

1.6.1.1 Notion of Perception

Perception can be understood as the way of seeing something (Hughes, 2005). This concept concerns how people build understanding and construct their points of view regarding certain phenomena. According to Qiong (2017), there are two dimensions of perception: physical and psychological. The physical dimension of perception includes human sensory organs such as the eyes, ears, and nose, which allow humans to detect stimuli that are later processed by the nervous system and brain. The physical dimension of perception concerns how the human body receives information from the world through its senses, leading to similar perceptions across individuals due to similar sensory systems. On the contrary, the psychological dimension of perception has something to do with people's beliefs, values, and attitudes that affect the way people determine meanings and make interpretations of

selected stimuli. The psychological dimension of perception leads people to think differently, resulting in varied understandings of the same situation.

Perception enables people to conceptualize situations and reality in their surroundings. Creating a perception toward something involves a process of thinking that impacts our attitudes, beliefs, or values. Metruk (2021) believes that perceptions create various interpretations and tend to be subjective, as everyone generates different standpoints. As it involves a cognitive process, building perceptions influences how people reason and judge something. As part of cognitive process, the process of perceptions encounter three stages: selection, organization, and interpretation (Qiong, 2017). The selection process enables people to select certain information from the environment and make it meaningful. After that, organization process occurs when people organize the selected information into meaningful patterns, where they group, compare, or connect the information with their prior knowledge. Last is the interpretation stage. As the information has been categorized into structured patterns, then people begin to create meanings. Their interpretation might be distinguished as it is affected by different cultural background, personal experiences, beliefs, or values.

1.6.1.2 Prospective English Teacher

Often, the notion of a prospective teacher is equalized with a teacher. The fact is that these prospective teachers and teachers are two different concepts. The prospective teacher is a teacher candidate who is being trained or involved in a

teaching program in an educational institutions (González et al., 2023). Usually, prospective teachers are associated with students enrolled in an institution and learn to broaden their pedagogical knowledge and skills. This means that a prospective English teacher is a student who enrolls in the educational institution, majoring in English, and prepares themselves to be a future English teacher. As the teacher candidate, the prospective teacher has not officially become one yet. Instead, in a journey to be an official teacher, prospective teachers must pass the license exam, finish an expedited university degree, and appear in multiple interviews (Rachamalla & Hans, 2022). To prepare themselves to be a future teacher, prospective English teachers must equip themselves with a wide range of knowledge, skills, and competencies. Before entering the teaching field, prospective English teachers participate in several teacher training and microteaching programs to increase their experiences. So that they gain a clearer insight into the profession they will pursue.

1.6.1.3 Good English Teacher

A number of scholars have focused on examining the characteristics of a good English teacher. They have gained perceptions from both students and teachers. A good English teacher is able to help their students achieve the learning goals of the target language. Hien (2020) summarizes several characteristics a good English teacher possesses, such as pedagogical content knowledge and skills, an upbeat personality, attitude, and behaviors, and building good relationships with the students. In line with this, Mursaleen et al. (2022) argue that the qualifications of good English

teachers are determined based on their professionalism in teaching, communication skills, punctuality, personal traits, and acceptance of diversity (e.g., being tolerant toward multicultural differences). To specify, a good English teacher must have basic competencies in enacting effective teaching practice for the students, and those competencies hook up with professional competency (the ability to master the target language), pedagogical competency (the ability to manage the learning instruction), social competency (e.g. friendly, communicative, building a strong solid relationship with the students), and personal competencies (e.g. caring, good attitude, resilient, creative, visionary, etc.) (Borg, 2006b; Carmel & Badash, 2021; Fauth et al., 2019; Guspita et al., 2023; Hien, 2020; Karim et al., 2020; Metruk, 2021; Purnomo, 2023; Rahim, 2019; Tarajová & Metruk, 2020; Wirantaka & Wahyudianawati, 2021).

1.6.1.4 Gender

Commonly, gender is associated with males and females. However, this concept encompasses more than male or female status. The concept of gender embodies the social concept that covers biological and cultural components (Mazzuca & Borghi, 2024). Gender constructs differences between men and women seen from social and cultural perceptions. It leads to an understanding of the difference between men and women in association with their behavior, personality, activities, attributes, and expressions labeled as masculine (men) and feminine (women) (Lindqvist et al., 2020). It is undeniable that male and female people share differences, including perceptions. Their way of thinking is affected by their social and cultural background.

As part of social humans, both male and female people (men and women) have different attributes and opportunities in their societies, which leads them to have different beliefs and values on particular aspects. Further, this social and cultural environment impacts their attitude, behavior, personality, and even perceptions on something.

1.6.1.5 Level of Achievement

In essence, everyone has different abilities to achieve something. The term achievement is diverse as it can refer to many aspects, such as academic, social, or professional achievements. Particularly for academic achievement, this achievement is usually accomplished by those who are working in the academic field, for instance, students, teachers, researchers, and so on. Academic achievement is defined as performance results that demonstrate someone's ability toward something (Suleiman, 2023). Further, he explains that academic achievement indicates how far a person has gone toward particular objectives of activities in an educational environment such as school, college, or university. It is believed that academic achievement plays an important role in students' learning progress as well as their qualifications. Moore (2019) finds out that academic achievement is reached once the students meet their learning goals and perform well during the learning process. As everyone is born to be unique and different from others, everybody has a different level of achievement. Some people achieve quickly, while others walk through their abilities. Learner's individual differences lead to high and low achievement. Samperio (2019) explains

that high achievement represents good marks achieved by the learners, showing successful accomplishment in the learning goals. High achievers tend to be proficient in their field and make good marks in their learning. Instead, low achievement is described as low grades, where the learners, as low achievers, are considered less proficient and slow in achieving the learning goals. There are many determinants affecting the performance of the students that make them become high or low achievers. Some deal with the teachers' performance in providing effective teaching and learning experiences, classroom environment, students' motivation, cognitive skills, learning habits, socioeconomic status, or personal traits (Deeba et al., 2022).

1.6.2 Operational Definition

Operational definition refers to a definition made based on the variable that can be measured during the study. Thus, the operational definition of this study deals with perceptions, prospective English teacher, good English teacher, gender, and level of achievement.

1.6.2.1 Perception

The perception of this study relates to the viewpoint of the prospective English teachers who will become the research subjects. The perception deals with prospective teachers' understanding of aspects of being a good English teacher. Their perceptions are measured through some statements (questionnaire) that they must evaluate using the Likert scale and open-ended answers. The questionnaire covers

four basic competencies as characteristics of a good English teacher (professional, pedagogical, social, and personal competencies).

1.6.2.2 Prospective English Teacher

Prospective English teachers refer to the students as teacher candidates who are still undertaking teaching programs at one of the universities in Bali, majoring in English language education. These prospective English teachers also become the subjects of the research studied to find their perceptions regarding the aspects of being a good English teacher, adjusted with the four basic competencies (professional, pedagogical, social, and personal competencies).

1.6.2.3 Good English Teacher

The operational definition of a good English teacher encompasses four basic competencies, and each competency has some items that reflect the characteristics of a good English teacher. These items are measurable since it is presented in the Likert scale to help the researcher justify the result of the whole perception

1.6.2.4 Gender

Gender, in this case, refers to the male and female prospective English teachers who participate in this research. Their differences in terms of way of thinking about something influence their perceptions toward the characteristics of a good English teacher. Through this difference, this study seeks more information to compare how male prospective English teachers differ from female prospective English teachers.

1.6.2.5 Level of Achievement

Level of achievement is measured based on the latest result of the prospective English teachers' grade point average (GPA). Their GPA is classified into two; high and low achievement.

