CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theories and concepts that support this study. These theories and concepts are related to effective English teachers' characteristics, EFL context, and students' preferences.

2.1   Effective English Teachers' Characteristics

Several studies provide varying definitions of the term effective teacher. Effective itself according to Oxford University Press (n.d.) is providing the desired outcomes. Meanwhile, according to Tarajová and Metruk (2020), the term effective English teacher refers to a teacher who applies certain teaching methods and techniques to achieve success in teaching and produce satisfactory learning achievements for students. Sanderson (1983, as cited in Al-Yaseen, 2019) also added that effective English teachers are not only competent in teaching skills, but also master the subject matter, and use the target language predominantly. Then, this teacher effectiveness is summarized by Hunt (2009) as a set of teacher characteristics, competencies, and behaviors that assist students in achieving learning objectives and facilitate other student developments such as problem-solving skills, critical thinking, cooperation, and readiness to participate as effective citizens. Furthermore, the term characteristics refers to the distinctive features or qualities possessed by a person (Oxford University Press, n.d.). Thus, based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that effective English teachers' characteristics are the distinctive features of English teachers which are measured by factors such as teaching competence, material knowledge, and behavior, which successfully contribute to improving student learning achievement.

Effective teachers play an important role in the learning process. They are able to create quality learning experiences (Arnas & Assiddiq, 2021). Some of those qualities can be reflected in the use of appropriate teaching methods and clear instructions that encourage student engagement and create a comfortable learning environment. Teacher effectiveness also significantly contributes to learning

efficiency so that students can more easily understand the subject matter (Hien, 2019). Ultimately, teacher characteristics in the learning process affect not only motivation but also students' academic achievement (Alzeebaree & Hasan, 2021). Thus, effective teachers' characteristics are necessary in the educational process to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning as well as to increase student learning motivation and achievement.

There have been several discussions describing effective teacher characteristics. According to Alzeebaree and Hasan (2021), an effective EFL teacher is a teacher who can read English well, manages the classroom properly, is confident, and has self-control. Moreover, Purnomo (2023) explained that the characteristics of an effective English teacher are a teacher who masters the knowledge of English, has good personal traits and is approachable, applies teaching methods according to the student's needs, and does self-improvement such as attending seminars and teacher training or carries out academic studies. He stated that self-improvement is part of professional development that is useful to broaden teachers' insights and knowledge regarding the latest English teaching trends. An effective English teacher is also a teacher who has high dedication, cares about student's needs, has a high level of discipline, is organized, entertaining, motivates students, provides opportunities for students to reflect on their teaching, explains the learning material well, and uses English and Indonesian alternately (Arnas & Assiddiq, 2021; Lubis & Samsudin, 2021). Therefore, the characteristics of an effective English teacher are not only seen in their mastery of teaching materials and strategies, but also in their personality, relationship with students, and willingness to improve their professionalism.

On the other hand, ineffective English teachers' characteristics can also be identified. In this case, Lubis and Samsudin (2021) explained that ineffective English teachers are teachers who are too serious and strict when teaching, not open to their students, give incomplete task instructions, and give too many tasks. Students cannot relax in learning when the teacher is too serious or strict. Moreover, students may feel stressed and burdened with a heavy workload by teachers who do not give complete task instructions or give too many tasks. In addition, less

favorable English teachers are those who lack quality teaching practices. Suwartono et al. (2022) mentioned some of the lack of teaching practices of English teachers such as having high Teacher Talk Time (TTT), lack of quantity and quality of English use, translating too much English into students' L1, using one source in compiling materials, creating monotonous activities, have low creativity, applying a teacher-centered approach, giving bad first impression, organizing lesson plans poorly, and not understanding the subject-matter. Therefore, ineffective English teachers' characteristics can be seen by their traits or demeanor in the classroom, their social relationships with students, the policies they implement in the classroom, and the quality of their teaching practices.

These effective English teachers' characteristics can also be measured through various indicators. Park and Lee (2006) measured the characteristics of effective English teachers through three categories namely subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. Wichadee (2010) added one category to measure the characteristics of effective English language teachers, namely English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, socio-affective skills, and organization and communication skills. Then, Kourieos and Evripidou (2013) prioritized three categories to measure the characteristics of effective EFL teachers, namely personal and interpersonal characteristics, subject-matter knowledge, and approach to language teaching. Meanwhile, Dincer et al. (2013) divided the indicators of an effective English language teacher characteristics into four categories, namely socio-affective skills, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, and personality characteristics. These indicator concepts have some similarities and can be used as a reference to evaluate effective English teachers' characteristics.

In the context of this study, the concept of Dincer et al. regarding four main characteristics of an effective English language teacher was used as an indicator to investigate students' preferences for effective English teachers' characteristics in EFL context at the high school level. This concept has four indicators, as follows.

1) Socio-affective Skills

It is the teacher's ability to interact socially and build a positive relationship with students. Effective English teachers need to have this ability to provide conducive and comfortable learning so that students are facilitated not only in a cognitive context but also in an emotional context (Dincer et al., 2013). Some socio-affective skills are guiding and helping students, having positive behaviors toward students, and having sensitivity to students' negative feelings during learning such as anxiety, fear, stress, frustration, or others. Thus, these skills allow teachers to give not only cognitive but also emotional guidance.

2) Pedagogical Knowledge

It is the ability and knowledge possessed by teachers to teach their subjects. Pedagogic knowledge allows teachers to create effective teaching and a supportive learning environment because teachers can prepare the lesson well so that students are more actively involved in learning. In addition, this knowledge is also important to evaluate students so that teachers know how far students have achieved learning objectives. Some of these knowledge and skills are knowledge and ability to decide teaching methods, knowledge and ability to apply learning activities, ability of classroom management, ability to integrate technology into learning, and provide assessment for students (Dincer et al., 2013; Hien, 2019). Therefore, pedagogical knowledge enables teachers to teach effectively.

3) Subject-matter Knowledge

It represents teachers' knowledge of the field they will be teaching. Dincer et al. (2013) explained that effective English teachers are knowledgeable about their field so that they can use English when teaching, adapt the subject matter to students' abilities, and prepare the material to be taught well. The knowledge associated with this are English language proficiency, ability to use the target language, awareness of target language culture, and use of learning resources (Al-Yaseen, 2019; Dincer et al., 2013). Ultimately, subject-matter knowledge is crucial for teachers to ensure effective learning processes and maximize student understanding.

4) Personality Characteristics

These are traits naturally possessed by a teacher that influence the learning process. According to Satchell et al (2017, as cited in Deng et al., 2020), personality is something inherent in a person as a uniqueness that is stable and influences behavior and thoughts. Teachers with good personalities can create a safe learning atmosphere to increase student learning motivation, which in turn encourages student achievement (Krisdayanty et al., 2021; Sahid, 2024). Some personalities that effective teachers usually have are friendly, polite, empathetic, humorous, enthusiastic, patient, kind, tolerant, thoughtful, open-minded, flexible, caring, optimistic, and other positive personalities (Dincer et al., 2013; Purnomo, 2023; Tarajová & Metruk, 2020). It indicates that besides teachers' professional aspects, teachers' personal aspects such as personality characteristics need to be considered to create good relationships with students and form a positive learning environment.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that effective English teachers' characteristics refer to the distinctive features of English teachers measured through various factors, which in turn contribute successfully to improving students' motivation and learning achievement. One key framework for evaluating effective teacher characteristics is the concept proposed by Dincer et al. namely socio-affective skills, pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, and personality characteristics. Consequently, these four indicators should receive careful consideration from English teachers to assess their effectiveness. By reflecting on these indicators, English teachers can maximize students' learning experience and improve the quality of the teaching and learning process.

2.2   EFL Context

EFL stands for English as a Foreign Language. According to Si (2019), EFL means learning English in a non-English-speaking country. It means that English learning is carried out in an environment where people do not use English as a daily language. Therefore, EFL is relevant to the context of English language learning in Indonesia, given that English is considered a foreign language.

The context of learning English as a foreign language has its characteristics. The learning process in EFL contexts tends to be referred to as learning rather than acquisition because it is a conscious process of gaining language knowledge (Setiyadi, 2020; Si, 2019). This learning process is usually more concerned with grammar rules and error correction than applying the language in a communication context. EFL contexts are also characterized by limited active exposure to English outside formal environments such as schools, so EFL learners have fewer opportunities to use English in social contexts. Therefore, English teachers in the EFL context are dominant as the centerpiece of the classroom and the main source of English.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is English language learning that takes place in an environment where the language is not a daily language. As a result, exposure to active English is usually only obtained by students through formal institutions such as schools. In this condition, a teacher becomes very important in facilitating students to access English knowledge. Therefore, the characteristics of effective English teachers should be considered to create a qualified learning process and improve students' English knowledge and skills.

2.3 Students' Preferences

Preference can be understood as a sense of more interest or a tendency to choose one thing over another. According to Lee (1984), preference is a condition where a person chooses between two or many things. He also described that preference occurs when a person chooses A over B because A is what the person wants. Meanwhile, Seel (2012) directed the meaning of student preference to students' preference for learning elements such as environment, materials, activities, media, learning evaluation, and so on. Most of these learning elements are shaped and implemented by a teacher in the classroom, so some of them are characteristic of their effectiveness. Through this explanation, it can be understood that students' preference is their tendency to choose the learning elements shaped by the teacher according to what they like. Thus, in this context, the definition of

students' preference is students' tendency to select characteristics of English teachers that are considered effective.

Students' preferences may be influenced by their own characteristics. These characteristics are reflected in several aspects such as age, gender, personality, aptitude, language learning strategies, learning style, and multiple intelligences (Alannasir, 2020; Dmitrichenkova & Dolzhich, 2020). For example, extroverted students may prefer teachers who create an interactive learning environment, such as group activities, while introverted students may prefer teachers who provide a quiet learning environment, such as small group discussions or participating in writing. In addition, other aspects of these student characteristics are interest, motivation, and level of development (Risan, 2022). Students tend to be interested and motivated in different things. Some students may be more interested in a disciplined and structured teacher, while others are more interested in a relaxed and flexible teacher. The same applies to the student's level of development, especially cognitive development. This cognitive development is closely related to students' academic development (Alannasir, 2020). The research of Alzeebaree and Hasan (2021) found that low-achieving students prefer teachers who are patient and have self-control, while high-achieving students are more interested in teachers who do not discriminate and treat students fairly. This suggests that low-achieving students need more support and attention in learning, while high-achieving students need a fair and competitive learning environment. Thus, students' preferences vary based on their diverse characteristics, making it important to customize and meet their interests and needs.

Student preferences can contribute to the sustainability of the learning process. Sari et al. (2023) revealed that the effectiveness of the learning process can be improved by considering students' preferences. These preferences can be a guide for teachers in designing learning that suits students' interests and needs. Learning elements such as methods, media, activities, and atmosphere can be adapted to students. When learning matches students' preferences, their motivation and engagement in the learning process can increase. Seel (2012) supported that students' preferences can predict their engagement in a particular learning format.

As a result, an enjoyable and effective learning experience can be realized, which in turn will improve students' learning achievement. Therefore, knowing students' preferences can be a guide to creating more effective learning, and improving students' motivation, engagement, and learning achievement.

In conclusion, students' preferences are the tendency of students to choose characteristics of English teachers that are considered effective. These preferences can be influenced by students' characteristics such as age, gender, personality, interest, motivation, cognitive development level, and others. Therefore, students' preferences need to be understood by English teachers as a reference for evaluating their own characteristics, to support the learning process more effectively. Understanding students' preferences also contributes to supporting their motivation and English learning achievement.

2.4   Study of the Relevant Research

Several previous studies on students' preferences and teachers' characteristics have been reviewed to conduct this research. Then, three previous studies are described in the following order.

The first study was conducted by Alzeebaree and Hasan (2021). The study aimed to find out effective EFL teacher characteristics based on senior high school students' perceptions through a quantitative method. The result revealed that students think a good English teacher is one who can read English well, manage the classroom properly, is confident, and has self-control.

The second study was conducted by Arnas and Assiddiq (2021). This study aimed to describe the characteristics of effective English teachers and their teaching style through observation of an English teacher in one junior high school using a qualitative method. The result showed that there are nine characteristics of good English teachers, namely high commitment and loyalty, responsiveness to students' needs, teaching skills that adjust the circumstances, good time management, generosity, organized and prepared, creative, good stimulation skills, and self-reflection. Meanwhile, effective teacher teaching styles are facilitator style, delegator style, personal model, self-check style, and impressive style.

The third is the study conducted by Lubis and Samsudin (2021). This study focused on describing the ideal and reality characteristics of English teachers in the context of flipped classrooms based on the perceptions of students majoring in information technology who contract English Language I course using a qualitative method. They found that the ideal character of an effective English teacher is a teacher who has a patient, friendly, and kind attitude, as well as a teacher who uses varied, innovative, easy-to-follow methods, mixes English and Indonesian when teaching, and integrates technology in learning. Meanwhile, the real characteristics of English teachers are too serious, not open to students, giving unclear instructions, and not providing enough guidance to use technology.

Therefore, to fill the gap, this research aims to investigate effective English teachers' characteristics in EFL context based on the preferences of students in a senior high school in Tasikmalaya. This study used the concept of an effective English language teacher according to Dincer et al. to answer the research question.