**FINDINGS**

In the following sections, we detail the specific personal and pedagogical features and characteristics that the learners in this study believe to contribute to good language teacher leaders. The elicited characteristics of good language teacher leadership are presented under the thematic subheadings of *Passion, Rapport, Purpose, and Balance & Flexibility,* which were the final interpretive themes that resulted from the formal data analysis and coding procedures previously outlined.

**Passion.** The first theme, *passion,* contains responses which reference good language teacher-leaders as charismatic, confident individuals who are deeply engaged in the profession of teaching, concerned with their own growth and the growth of their students, and are motivated by an intrinsic sense of responsibility to the students and the joy and satisfaction that comes from the process of teaching and learning. In essence, these teachers lead by example and provide a good role model which can energize and motivate learners. This is illustrated in the following interview excerpt from Miyoung.

*Have passion and love your job, that job means teaching and have responsibility… because that.. if we students saw that passion, love, responsibility then we will be motivated .. yes.. and try to keep that motivating in hard studying.*

Participants explained that passionate teachers exude enthusiasm and help motivate their students, aiming to instil within them an interest in the language, confidence, and a positive attitude towards learning, which can extend far beyond the classroom. Minjun explains:

*I think so many… so many professors or teachers are focused on more information, more data, but when students are really really interested in … in some foreign language they will learn by themselves … so of course information, …guidelines and guidance will be important but more than that I think as a leader professor can be… can influence and can inspire the students who will eventually may become a nerd in some language …*

Additionally, many participants feel that teachers who exhibit passion for their job and a dedication to constant development and improvement are good language teacher leaders. As outlined by Sohee:

*If I am a student I think wow she is so passionate for teaching English… If they don’t have passion of teaching, they can’t develop their knowledges or way of teaching I think because they just satisfied to become a teacher and they teach and teach again same way I think; so we need passion.*

However, it is not simply about possessing a passion for teaching, but also about conveying this passion to students and being a good model for them to follow. As Suyoung states:

*...someone who shows their passion and love through their teaching, it means their passion and love are visible so students can receive it and move it to their study.*

For students, *passion* is manifest through a teacher’s professional commitment to developing and expanding their knowledge, repertoire, and expertise, through the motivation and inspiration they impart in their students, and by actively demonstrating a genuine interest in the subject matter and in their classroom instruction.

**Rapport.** In the theme *rapport,* references to good language teacher leadership relate to the positive connection and communication among people (teacher and learners) and the capacity to lead, manage, and develop an active learning community through respect, empathy, kindness, and by building and maintaining positive relationships. Some participants in this study believed rapport and communication to be essential leadership capacities, indicating that good language teacher leadership is seen as something that learners feel is co-constructed among people, and something that cannot exist without positive interaction between the teacher and learners. As Minjun states:

*Interacting with students, umm dialogue… a dialogue by itself signifies interaction and communication should be based upon interaction rather than lecturing lecturing lecturing, I’m the greatest professor in the world… I think …it may be efficacious to be more friendly and amicable to make a good relationship.*

The significance placed on active, two-way communication between a teacher and their learners was ubiquitous throughout the data. Participants commonly expressed that a good language teacher leader listens to and is genuinely receptive to their students' thoughts and opinions. Sohee outlines her thoughts on the importance of this quality:

*I think all teachers can be leaders, but not all teachers are leaders. I think maybe they should be listening to their students carefully and like I said before, they should motivate students, not force or be pushy to them.*

Participants communicated that a good language teacher leader establishes and maintains a controlled learning atmosphere in which learners feel supported and connected, being mindful of not making them feel pushed, pressured, or nervous. Minjin vividly recalls his feelings of apprehension because of the teacher's assertive demeanour and counters with his idea of what leadership should involve:

*I'm not follow the teacher but just obey the teacher because he has a punishment when we do not memorize all the words or sentence, so yeah, I feel a little scary of the teacher, can't even talk, too scary . . .I think that leadership is all member of, maybe the student, want to do, but punish to push the student is not making the student really want to do.*

Making students feel comfortable, appreciated, and confident requires that teachers get to know and understand learners as individuals and seek to develop a relationship based on comity and trust (Underhill, 2005). Donghyeon exemplifies this point when discussing his experience with a language teacher that he felt was a good leader:

*He keep saying, you are really doing good, your English is really perfect, so I feel am I? Are you serious? He give me confidence. And I have any questions he answer me really truly I mean he really care my question, my situation so I feel he is really interesting in me.*

For language learners, good teacher leadership is about the ability to manage people through positive relationships rather than through authority. Rapport is created by engaging students in learning and communicating with them throughout the learning process. Further, by listening earnestly to students and being supportive rather than overly assertive, a teacher can help students feel more autonomous, comfortable, and confident in future undertakings. Kyung offered this advice to teachers interested in being better leaders:

*Ask a lot of questions. Meet students after class and ask about their problems, not just related to teaching, but anything they want to talk about. Obviously be friendly because just smiling is not enough.*

Kyung’s comment synthesizes several of the components of rapport addressed above: Two-way communication demonstrates a teacher’s genuine concern for each individual student and their willingness to help students when needed; students feel supported, which in turn can build trust and make learners feel appreciated; and talking to students about their challenges can galvanize their efforts and help build their confidence.

**Purpose.** The theme *purpose* includes responses in which participants mentioned a good language teacher leader as prepared, oriented towards helping learners achieve their goals, delivers clear/purposeful lessons, and teaches because it gives them personal and professional fulfilment. Further, participants stressed that for good teacher-leaders, the reason for wanting to be a great teacher is what drives them. Several participants stated that they could clearly recognize when their teachers are dedicated professionals, and when they are not. Dongmin lamented that:

*[Some teachers] were just there to earn money, so that was a problem, I think. And they didn’t have the ability to teach students.*

Participants also mentioned that a teacher’s sense of purpose needs to be exteriorized through an enduring commitment to helping students achieve their goals. In the act of sharing their purpose through their teaching practices, actions, and attitude, they engage students and inspire them to create their own sense of purpose. Jihun explains:

*I felt … (this teacher was a) great leader because he always prepare many thing to class …so I feel that he tried to do something to teach students… and then also he always smiling… he tried to teach more and more something I think …*

Additionally, teachers with purpose exude a sense of commitment and responsibility to their work which fosters learners’ assurance and trust in them. Jaekwong affirms that:

*. . . teachers make students believe language teachers well. I mean, students have to have confidence about their language teachers. Like, “my teachers really good at teaching.*

From students’ perspectives, *purpose* is conceptualized not necessarily as teaching ability, but as a desire to demonstrate professionalism through effort and sincerity. It is also exemplified through encouraging and empowering students to achieve their full potential and to enact their own sense of purpose.

**Balance & Flexibility.** In the final theme *balance & flexibility*, references to good language teacher leadership relate to teachers being able to balance various aspects of the environment and teaching process through a flexible mindset, and flexible teaching approaches. Participants commonly referenced good leaders being able to balance between challenging students and making the class enjoyable as exemplified in the following interview excerpt from Minjae.

*In many case professors (have) different styles... But good leaders make a fun, enjoyable language class. It is important because language subject is usually boring subject...it is important balance sometimes enjoyable and sometime hard work.*

Additionally, many participants voiced that good language teacher leaders are flexible, experiment with new modes of learning, infuse the lessons with humour and novelty, and invite students to share in leadership responsibilities. Jaekwong provides an example of his language teacher displaying good leadership skills:

*He taught not in the book, he used different ways… he always find some good materials for improve my English speaking, so he always find somewhere not in the textbook, additional materials. … He asked me first about the course, after every week, how was this week’s course, he always get my feedback, this part is boring and he changed another part.*

Although it is not always possible for teachers to experiment with novel materials, activities, and teaching techniques because learning objectives may determine to some extent what they teach and how they teach it, a good teacher considers students’ opinions and is willing to make reasonable adjustments where possible. While Jaekwong alludes to the belief that good teacher-leaders will seek students’ input and feedback, Sohee states it more explicitly:

*Change your way of class more interesting or ask students how to . . .how good the class was …what they want… and try to change her or his class…after then, study more their way of teaching.*

Thus, components of *balance and flexibility* indicate that the teacher is concerned with students as individuals, is willing to adapt to various learning styles and needs, and can find an effective balance between work and fun and between covering content requirements and integrating novel approaches. Moreover, flexibleteachers query their students’ feelings about their learning processes and progress and make appropriate and beneficial adjustments based on students’ feedback.