Teachers' Teaching Strategies in Activating Students' Participation in Learning English : A Study in Junior High School 1 Gangga, North Lombok Regency

Jessica Tamia Andjani*, Untung Waluyo, Henny Soepriyanti, Muhammad Amin
English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Mataram, Indonesia
*Corresponding Author: jessicatamiaa@gmail.com

Abstract: Student participation in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms remains a significant challenge in rural Indonesian schools, where barriers such as low motivation, limited vocabulary, and lack of confidence hinder active engagement. This study investigates teaching strategies employed by two English teachers, TG and YF, at Junior High School 1 Gangga to address these issues. The objectives of the research are to identify the strategies used by the teachers, explore the challenges they face in activating student participation, and examine their perceptions of classroom engagement. A qualitative case study design was utilized, employing semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis as data collection methods. Thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns and themes within the data. The findings reveal that both teachers employed differentiated learning, group discussions, reading aloud, and English games as key strategies to enhance student participation. However, challenges such as resource limitations, varying student proficiency levels, and low confidence levels were consistently reported. To address these, the teachers adapted their strategies by leveraging available resources, conducting personalized assessments, and fostering a supportive learning environment. The study underscores the importance of teacher flexibility and creativity in overcoming barriers to student participation. Its implications suggest the need for professional development programs to equip teachers with innovative strategies and improved resource allocation to support effective teaching in similar EFL contexts. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on enhancing EFL learning outcomes in under-resourced settings.

Keywords: Teaching Strategies; Student Participation; English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

INTRODUCTION

The language is a vital tool that connects individuals and societies across communities, thus enabling them to share ideas and express emotions. Being a universal medium, it allows the sharing of information across diverse cultural and linguistic boundaries. Among all languages, only English occupies a privileged position as the most widely used global lingua franca to facilitate communication in multinational contexts. Alsagoff et al., (2012). Its role as the official language of many international organizations makes it indispensable for diplomacy and global governance. English's prevalence in academic, scientific, and technological settings ensures that proficiency in the language is a critical skill for accessing cutting-edge knowledge. Additionally, English serves as the primary medium in business negotiations, collaborations, and international trade, further highlighting its importance for career advancement (Nishanthi, 2018). Socially, it connects and allows people of different cultural backgrounds to understand one another. Due to this universality, many countries make English education important to help learners be prepared for international interactions; Nation & Macalister, 2010.

In Indonesia, English is categorized as a foreign language, which affects its role and use in society. This is unlike the application of the language in countries where it is widely spoken. The application of the language in Indonesia is only limited to academic and professional settings. Though it is a compulsory subject in schools, little practice of the language is found in everyday life (Poedjoastutie et al., 2018). Such a

disconnect between classroom learning and real-world application makes practical skills difficult to achieve. For most Indonesians, English is restricted to either communicating with tourists or accessing international media. Teachers play an extremely vital role in this respect by preparing relevant and engaging lessons that can make students eager to learn a language they seldom experience outside their school.

Suryani and Wibowo (2019) in addition, English is usually the avenue into international education, scholarships, and professional opportunities for Indonesian students. However, this lack of exposure outside the academic setting still presents a real challenge, and effective teaching methodologies need to be developed that are relevant to Indonesian conditions. The teaching of English in Indonesia faces serious obstacles at systemic and individual levels. A major problem is the 'fear of making mistakes' among students, which leads to low speaking confidence. This fear is exacerbated by cultural attitudes that discourage errors, making students hesitant to participate in class activities. Limited vocabulary further hampers their ability to express thoughts and ideas fluently. Additionally, the gap between textbook language and everyday communication complicates vocabulary acquisition (Juhana, 2018). Teachers must address these issues by fostering engaging and supportive learning environments that encourage active participation. The major obstacles to the realization of this include overcrowded classes and a shortage of multimedia and authentic English materials. In most cases, teachers face real challenges while planning lessons in a way that balances theoretical knowledge with practical use of the language. Overcoming these challenges is pegged on teacher training, resource availability, and enabling policies that ensure students receive both theoretical knowledge and practical communication skills. Effective teaching strategies are the cornerstone of successful English language instruction, particularly in contexts where exposure to the language outside the classroom is limited. Teachers must move beyond traditional lectures and adopt interactive, student-centered approaches. well-planned strategy takes into account the diverse needs of learners, including their learning styles, motivations, and abilities (Linse & Nunan, 2005). For example, graphic organizers may help a visual learner, while an auditory one will show perfect results in listening

exercises. In addition, a teacher should organize the class so that students will feel free and can express themselves without any fear of being judged. Dynamic activities involving debates, role-playing, and group projects ensure practical language acquisition. Using technology and multimedia materials will make classes more relevant. In the end, effective strategies enable students to take responsibility for their learning process in order to prepare them for challenges in a wider academic and professional context. This research explores the teaching strategies English teachers use to motivate students to participate in classroom activities.

Focusing on Junior High School 1 Gangga in North Lombok Regency, the research examines localized teaching practices and their effectiveness. It examines a range of best practices, both traditional and innovative, that educators can adopt to enhance participation. Those factors that stand in the way of teachers utilizing these strategies to maximum effect are considered. Concomitantly, a number of common complications and recommendations on how these might be minimized are discussed. These have especial pertinence in the case of contexts where English is a foreign language and extra-class exposure is at a minimum. The findings are expected to be useful in informing in-service training programs about engaging students. This study documents strategies and challenges, adding to the broader discussion of English language teaching in Indonesia and providing actionable recommendations for policymakers and educators. With regard to English language teaching, although a considerable body of research already exists, there are still gaps in understanding the strategies that motivate student participation in Indonesian classrooms. Most of the studies do not consider the particular challenges of teaching in a specific cultural and educational environment but are general teaching methodologies. For instance, there is limited research into how teachers in rural or under-resourced schools overcome obstacles such as large class sizes, limited resources, and varying proficiency levels. Moreover, the role of contextual factors, including local cultural norms and attitudes toward English, remains underexplored. This study fills these gaps by examining the teaching practices at Junior High School 1 Gangga, North Lombok Regency. The study offers recommendations for real-world changes in practice through a critical examination

of effective strategies and their perceptions by the teachers and students. Nazara, 2011 The research addresses issues that provide valid recommendations for increasing the quality and standard of learning English in Indonesian schools.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate teaching strategies and their impact on student participation within a real-life classroom setting (Palinkas, et al., 20115) A qualitative case study is particularly appropriate for exploring complex, context-specific phenomena, as it enables researchers to examine the intricacies of real-world interactions and behaviors in detail (Yin, 2018). By focusing on Junior High School 1 Gangga, this research explores the dynamic interplay of relationships among teachers, students, and the learning environment. In this approach lies a valuation of subjective experience and nuanced perspective that may avail rich, detailed insight into how teaching strategies are implemented and affect student engagement. The focus of the study in such a context has thus enabled a holistic analysis of challenges and opportunities that are available to foster active participation in this setting of EFL. This included two English teachers-identified herein as TG and YF-and a class of 15 to 20 students attending the same school. These teachers were selected purposefully because all were active in teaching English and were willing to share their experiences. The selection of students allowed for a representative sample with a range of differing abilities, learning styles, and levels of engagement; thus, this research will cover a wide spectrum of classroom dynamics. This combination of teacher and student participants provides a holistic view of the teaching-learning process, highlighting the interplay between instructional methods and student responses.

By involving both groups, the study ensure that multiple perspectives are considered, offering a balanced analysis of the effectiveness of teaching strategies in encouraging participation. This multi-method was designed to draw upon a comprehensive view of the teaching strategies and their outcomes from data collection. Semi-structured interviews with the teachers, TG and YF, were conducted. These interviews aimed at deep information about their

instructional strategies, the challenges they faced, and also gain insight into students' engagement perception (Kvale, 2008). These semi-structured questionnaires allow freedom for responses that were quite helpful in drawing on the teachers' rich, context-specific insights with respect to their teaching practices and the particular challenges of teaching English at their school. This has proven particularly valuable in uncovering subjective experiences and professional reflections of the educators.

Classroom observations allowed us to note the teaching practice and students' interaction in the class in real time. Direct observations of English lessons themselves provided evidence on how these teaching strategies were implemented and how students reacted to them. This method has captured the dynamics of the classroom environment, including non-verbal signals, student participation, and teacher-student interactions. Observations gave a pragmatic view of how well the strategies discussed in interviews were actually working and helped bridge the gap between teachers' perceptions and what actually goes on in classrooms (Hamruni, 2009).

Third, document analysis was used to supplement the data from interviews and observations. Lesson plans, student assignments, and other instructional materials were reviewed to gain insights into the alignment between planned teaching strategies and their implementation. This analysis also helped verify the consistency and coherence of teaching practices, offering an additional layer of evidence to support the findings. As Bowen (2009) points out, document analysis is a useful approach to data triangulation, which enhances the credibility and validity of the research. Thematic analysis, a widely used method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data, was used to analyze the data collected. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, the initial step in the analysis involved becoming familiar with the data, followed by systematic coding to identify features relevant to the study. These codes were then organized into themes, which were reviewed, refined, and clearly defined. Final themes were used to construct a coherent narrative that aligned with the objectives of the study.

This iterative process ensures the analysis is thorough and reflective of participants' experiences to provide a nuanced understanding

of the teaching strategies employed. Several measures were taken to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulation was ensured through cross-validation among interview data, observation, and document analysis to maintain consistency among the sources. The member checking where participants were invited to review and confirm the accuracy of findings in regard to their contribution was considered to ensure their voices are accurately represented. Also, peer reviews were carried out for the reduction of researcher biases and validation of the thematic interpretations accordingly. Patton 1999. All these measures put together enhanced the robustness and trustworthiness of the research for drawing credible insights about teaching strategies and their influence on students' participation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Results of data analysis show teachers TG and YF employed diverse and contextually adapted teaching strategies to enhance student participation in English classes. Teacher TG emphasized **differentiated instruction** by tailoring lessons to students' individual abilities. TG explained, *"The differentiated learning that I do here is by conducting a test at the beginning to determine the students' ability to receive learning, then I give them learning according to their abilities, so that learning can be carried out optimally."* This approach ensured that students with varying proficiency levels received appropriate support, fostering optimal engagement. TG also highlighted the use of a **personalized approach**, stating, *"I do a test first or take a personal approach to the students."* The data indicate that Teacher TG adopts a student-centered and adaptive teaching approach by employing differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners in their English classes. By assessing students' abilities through initial tests, TG tailors lessons to match their proficiency levels, ensuring that learning is both accessible and effective. This strategy fosters an inclusive environment where all students, regardless of their skill level, can actively engage in the learning process. Additionally, TG's emphasis on personalizing the teaching approach, through individual assessments and understanding students' unique needs, further

enhances their participation and learning outcomes. This method demonstrates the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in addressing diverse classroom dynamics.

Teacher YF focused on **interactive methods** such as group discussions, reading aloud, presentations, and English games. YF described the effectiveness of reading aloud: *"One of the activities that is considered effective is reading various types of texts out loud. This activity is quite effective in training students' pronunciation or listening skills."* Pair discussions followed by presentations also proved effective in engaging students: *"We implemented a discussion strategy in pairs by giving a certain theme according to the material being studied. Then, they were asked to present the results of the discussion. Here, most of the students were involved in the discussion process until the presentation."* The data highlight Teacher YF's emphasis on interactive and collaborative teaching methods to enhance student participation in English classes. Activities such as group discussions, reading aloud, presentations, and English games are central to YF's approach. Reading aloud is particularly effective for improving students' pronunciation and listening skills, as it provides hands-on practice in a supportive environment. Additionally, pair discussions followed by presentations engage students actively, as they collaborate to explore themes and articulate their ideas. This approach not only fosters active participation but also builds students' confidence and communication skills, demonstrating the value of interactive methods in promoting engagement and language development.

Both teachers employed **motivational techniques** such as quizzes, ice-breaking activities, and positive reinforcement to maintain enthusiasm and focus during lessons. TG shared: *"I usually carry out a quiz towards the end of the lesson, so that students are more enthusiastic and their concentration increases again."* These strategies collectively created a supportive and engaging environment, promoting active participation among students. The data illustrate that both teachers effectively used motivational techniques, including quizzes, ice-breaking activities, and positive reinforcement, to sustain student enthusiasm and focus during English lessons. These strategies fostered a supportive and engaging classroom atmosphere, encouraging active participation by making

learning enjoyable and reinforcing students' efforts and progress.

Despite their efforts, TG and YF faced significant challenges in activating student participation. TG identified **low student motivation and concentration,** especially during afternoon classes, as a key obstacle, *"There are several factors that influence this, such as students lacking concentration in learning, especially teaching and learning activities for class VIII during the day."* Additionally, TG noted that students often struggled with **limited vocabulary and a lack of confidence** *"English is a difficult language for students, vocabulary mastery is still lacking, and students are not confident."* The data reveal that both TG and YF encountered significant barriers to activating student participation in their English classes. TG identified low motivation and poor concentration, particularly during afternoon sessions, as major challenges, explaining, *"There are several factors that influence this, such as students lacking concentration in learning, especially teaching and learning activities for class VIII during the day."* Additionally, TG noted difficulties stemming from students' limited vocabulary and lack of confidence, describing English as a challenging subject for them. YF emphasized the impact of inadequate resources, including the lack of essential teaching aids such as LCD projectors and other materials, stating, *"The challenges faced include low student motivation in learning English, lack of supporting facilities such as LCD, teaching aids, and others."* These obstacles underscore the need for strategic interventions and resource enhancement to address these limitations effectively.

Both teachers perceived student participation as critical for effective language learning. TG emphasized that participation enables students to practice their skills, making learning more meaningful, *"I feel successful when students can complete the tasks I give them."* This sentiment highlights the importance of creating an environment where students feel confident to engage actively. YF underscored the necessity of tailored strategies and supportive environments to foster participation, *"To fulfill the learning needs of students who have different characteristics, we try to apply different strategies or approaches according to the conditions as well as the facilities and*

infrastructure that we have." Both teachers agreed that student participation is essential for developing practical language skills. They recognized that fostering engagement requires not only innovative strategies but also consistent efforts to motivate students and build their confidence. By integrating differentiated instruction, interactive activities, and motivational techniques, TG and YF demonstrated a commitment to addressing the unique challenges of their context. Their efforts reflect the broader need for resourceful and adaptive teaching practices in environments with limited resources and diverse student needs.

Discussion

The findings from this study align closely with the existing literature on the importance of student participation in English language learning and the teaching strategies that activate it. Both Teachers TG and YF demonstrated diverse and contextually adapted strategies, reflecting the need for inclusive and engaging approaches emphasized by scholars like Rocca (2010). TG's differentiated instruction strategy, involving assessments to tailor lessons to students' abilities, aligns with Ramsden's (2003) principle of addressing individual learning needs. This approach fosters an inclusive classroom environment, ensuring students of varying proficiency levels are equally engaged. Similarly, TG's emphasis on a personalized teaching approach resonates with Hamruni's (2009) framework, which prioritizes individual student development in the learning process.

Teacher YF's focus on interactive methods, such as group discussions, reading aloud, presentations, and English games, reflects one's assertion that interaction is essential for student participation. YF's use of reading aloud to improve pronunciation and listening skills and pair discussions followed by presentations highlights the application of interactive teaching strategies, as identified by Hamruni (2009) and supported by Suryani and Wibowo (2019). These methods not only enhance language skills but also build confidence and foster collaboration, aligning with the findings of Rahmawati and Sudirman (2020), who emphasized the role of feedback in boosting engagement. Both teachers' motivational techniques, including quizzes, ice-breaking activities, and positive reinforcement, are consistent with literature suggesting that engaging and enjoyable classroom environments

increase participation (Ramsden, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). TG's use of end-of-lesson quizzes to maintain student focus and YF's adaptation of strategies to suit classroom conditions are practical applications of Ramsden's principle of providing clear objectives and creating interest in learning.

The challenges faced by TG and YF, such as low student motivation, limited vocabulary, and inadequate resources, reflect the broader contextual factors identified in the literature. Dörnyei (2001) and Horwitz et al. (1986) noted that individual factors like anxiety and confidence significantly influence participation, while instructional and contextual barriers, such as insufficient teaching aids, align with the findings of Haryanto and Astuti (2022). These researchers highlighted the positive impact of integrating technology to address such challenges, which underscores the importance of enhancing resources in schools like Junior High School 1 Gangga.

The teachers' perceptions of participation as critical for effective language learning echo Rocca's (2010) assertion that participation fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. TG and YF's consistent efforts to engage students, adapt teaching strategies, and create supportive environments align with the literature's emphasis on resourceful and student-centered teaching approaches (Brown, 2007; Tomlinson, 2012). Furthermore, their commitment to overcoming barriers and fostering participation underscores the importance of continuous professional development and innovative strategies, as highlighted by Rahmawati and Sudirman (2020. Overall, the findings of this study not only reinforce existing theories on the importance of participation and effective teaching strategies but also contribute practical insights into addressing context-specific challenges in Indonesian classrooms. By aligning differentiated instruction, interactive activities, and motivational techniques with student needs and institutional conditions, teachers can foster a collaborative and inclusive learning environment, ultimately enhancing student engagement and language acquisition.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the teaching strategies employed by two English teachers, TG and YF, to foster student participation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at Junior High School 1 Gangga, North Lombok Regency. The results stress the need of using several and contextually appropriate teaching strategies to involve students actively. Using creative approaches including group discussions, narrative, and role-playing—which powerfully inspired students and promoted active involvement—both teachers showed how to do this. The study also exposed difficulties the teachers encountered: limited resources, different degrees of student competency, and motivating obstacles. Notwithstanding these challenges, TG and YF modified their strategies to fit their pupils, so highlighting the need of adaptability and originality in educational settings.

The study underlined even more the complex views of teachers about student involvement. TG and YF underlined the need of involvement in improving confidence, language competency, and communication ability. To handle the difficulties in applying successful teaching strategies, they also underlined the need of continuous support including professional development and access to instructional materials. The study shows generally that encouraging involvement in EFL classrooms calls for institutional support, creative ideas, and teacher commitment.

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