

Teachers' Challenges in EFL Classroom Management

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Abstract

Every teacher who teaches a foreign language must have challenges in teaching and managing the classroom. The objectives of this study are: (1) To find out the English teachers' challenges in English classroom management at SMA Insan Cendekia Syech Yusuf. (2) To describe the strategies used by teachers to solve the challenges in English classroom management at SMA Insan Cendekia Syech Yusuf. The subjects of this study were three teachers who taught English subjects at SMA Insan Cendekia Syech Yusuf. This research used a qualitative method. The instruments that the researcher employed were documentation, interviews, and observation. The researcher applied Miles et al.'s theory—data reduction, data display, conclusion drafting, and verification—to the data analysis process. The study's findings suggest that: (1) Teachers have difficulties when instructing pupils in English, including inadequate vocabulary acquisition, insufficient exposure to the language, psychological issues, linguistic difficulties, and low proficiency. (2) Teachers used several strategies to overcome the challenges they faced, such as the Determination Strategy, Group Discussion Strategy, and Communication Strategy. It appears that there are still a lot of difficulties in controlling and instructing English in the classroom when it comes to some of these issues. Therefore, in order to create a safe and comfortable learning environment where learning proceeds without problems teachers must employ a variety of teaching strategies in addition to appropriate classroom management techniques.

Keywords: english teacher, challenge, strategy, classroom management.

1. Introduction

Classroom management is essential in all teaching and learning processes, including English teaching and learning. Classroom management, or the capacity to govern and inspire a group of students, is one of the most important teaching skills. Classroom management refers to everything a teacher does to organize pupils, space, time, and materials so that learning can take place. Classroom management aspects are classified in the classroom's physical environment, such as the sight, sound, and comfort; the seating arrangements; the usage of the chalkboard; and the equipment needed in the class (Brown, 2001).

Classroom management is one of the most critical factors in determining student learning results. Good classroom management will assist teachers in coordinating everything that occurs in the classroom so that the atmosphere remains comfortable. Furthermore, the importance of classroom management is to assist teachers enhance their skills and rules as teachers while studying. Based on the definition, classroom management refers to the process of creating and maintaining a learning environment that is conducive to student learning. It involves establishing clear expectations for behavior, implementing procedures and routines, and responding to disruptive behavior in a consistent and effective manner.

Based on the results of previous findings conducted at SMA Insan Cendekia Syekh Yusuf, researcher found that there were six challenges faced by the three teachers during the classroom learning process, namely: shortage of teacher training, lack of vocabulary, lack of English exposure, limited recourses accessibility, linguistic problems, and psychological problems. Meanwhile, limited time is the new finding by the researcher.

These challenges arise because there are many things that influence them, such as students who are less interested in learning English so that their motivation is very lacking in studying, inadequate supporting facilities inside and many other things that can influence it.

Even though there are many challenges faced by teachers at these schools, they are not at a loss to use certain methods or strategies to overcome the challenges they face. The researcher found that there were three strategies that teachers

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used to overcome the challenges that teachers faced, namely: determination strategy, group discussion strategy and communication strategy.

Every teacher has a different way to manage and attract their student's interest in English classes. The researcher is interested in analyzing this research because as is known, every school, especially English teachers, always face challenges during the learning process with students, for example, students' lack of ability in terms of vocabulary mastery, the class atmosphere is too busy, so the teacher is overwhelmed in handling the class. Looking at this case, the researcher wants to see what challenges are faced by English teachers and how teachers overcome these challenges so that the learning process in the classroom is not disrupted. Therefore, the researcher is interested in analyzing the problem above entitled "Teachers' Challenges in EFL Classroom Management".

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher Challenges

In Indonesia, English is taught as a second language and is mostly learned in school. Teachers play a big part because they are the main people who help students learn language and information. It's not easy to teach English. Teachers face a lot of problems when they're learning English, especially in middle and high school, because not all elementary school kids get English lessons.

According to Songbatumis (2017), there are several challenges in teaching English as follows:

- 1) Shortage of teacher training, training refers to the problems that happen when teachers don't get enough training: Teachers can't handle problems in the classroom because they haven't been trained to do so, they don't know how to use language well, or they were chosen to teach English even though that's not their subject.
- 2) Lack of Vocabulary, not having enough words in your language can make it hard to communicate and learn. Students need to build a big vocabulary to read, write, speak, and understand what's going on around them.
- 3) English exposure, when you live in a place where English is not widely spoken, teaching English as a foreign language can be hard. Students don't get to use English as much because they don't see it much. If students don't have any English-related goals, they won't want to learn and understand English because they don't know enough about it already.
- 4) Limited resources accessibility, Infrastructure and facilities are very important to the teaching and learning process because they can help students learn better and more easily, such as the availability of student seats, books, tools such as whiteboards, markers and fans or AC.
- 5) Linguistic problems, issues that students have with speaking, understanding, and using words well. There are many reasons why these problems can happen, such as language barriers, language differences, and different language skills.
- 6) Psychological problem, when students have social, behavioral, or mental health problems in the classroom, these are called psychological problems. These issues can have a big impact on their learning, their well-being, and the classroom. Teachers and other school staff are very important in finding and fixing these problems.

2.2. Teaching Strategy of Classroom Management

According to Santrock (2011), a teaching strategy is a method of making decisions regarding a course, an individual class, or even an entire curriculum that begins with an examination of critical characteristics in the teaching environment. These variables include the characteristics of students, the learning objectives, and the teacher's instructional preferences.

Brophy (2006) grouped strategies in classroom management into three themes: determination strategy, group discussion strategy, and communication strategy.

- 1) Determination strategies are independent learning strategies that assist learners in discovering the meaning of words on their own (Schmitt, 1997). Students use this method to guess and uncover the meaning of new words using context, structural knowledge, and reference material.
- 2) Group Discussion Strategy, Brophy (2006) noted that conversation is one of the most effective tactics in education and social studies. Discussion as an activity in which the class is divided into small groups with the goal of having a productive conversation on a subject, problem, or issue.

- 3) Communication strategy, according to Brophy (2006), learning activities that involve communication are those that allow students to communicate in real-world situations. Students and teachers take on the roles of sender and recipient. During an explanation or presentation, the instructor takes on the role of the sender, conveying information to the students, while the students take on the role of the receiver, accepting and interpreting the information.

3. Methodology

In this research, the researcher applied qualitative method to analyze the data. The qualitative approach is issue into explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups described a social or human problem, (Cresswell, 2009).

This research was conducted at SMA Insan Cendekia Syech Yusuf Gowa, one of Senior High School in Kabupaten Gowa. The researcher chose the school because the researcher has known about the condition of this school, and there has not been any researcher who investigates the challenges in managing class, especially in English classroom management and the researcher chose three English teachers as the subjects of this research.

Researcher in collecting the data used two research instruments. The first instrument was the observation checklist. Additionally, the second instrument utilized was a semi-structured interview. This interview served as a complementary tool to gather additional information and address the research questions comprehensively. Comprising 18 questions, the interview included in-depth probing for clarification if responses were unclear. In analyzing the data, the researcher used Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014) model namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

4. Findings

The findings of the research reported the related data of the teachers' challenges and the strategies to use by the teachers to solve problems.

4.1. Teachers' Challenges in teaching English

Based on the data found in this research through observations and interviews, the results obtained were that teachers faced several challenges during the process of learning English in class, they were lack of vocabulary, lack of English exposure, limited resource accessibility, linguistic problems and psychological problems. Crowded classes do not include the challenges faced by teachers in this school and there is a new finding discovered by researcher outside the theory used. The new challenge is the lack of time during the process of learning English in class.

a. Shortage of Teacher Training

The researcher found data from the first teacher about teacher who had maximized good quality learning even though the teacher had never attended any training. This was because the first teacher was a fresh graduate and a new teacher at the school.

This is supported by interviews that have been carried out with the first teacher, the results are as follows:

Extract 1:

Researcher: "have you ever attended English teacher training?" (*apakah anda pernah mengikuti pelatihan guru bahasa inggris?*)

Teacher 1: "English teacher training as a teacher now, **as a teacher I haven't attend because yeah you know that I'm still fresh graduate** yeah so I still haven't got any training of English teacher." (*Pelatihan guru bahasa Inggris sebagai guru sekarang, sebagai guru saya belum hadir karena ya kalian tahu kalau saya masih fresh graduate ya jadi saya masih belum mendapatkan pelatihan guru bahasa Inggris.*)

(Interview transcript recorded on January 15th, 2024)

Based on **extract 1**, the results of the interview with respondent 1 revealed that he had never attended any English teacher training, but the statement conveyed in the interview was that every English teacher in 1 district was obliged to take MGMP training and the first teacher would take the training later.

b. *Lack of Vocabulary*

Students don't acquire a sufficient vocabulary in English through learning activities. Some students were unsure of the answers when the teacher asked them questions concerning the English names of the days. The pupils appeared perplexed by what the teacher was saying when she spoke in English. Nevertheless, the kids responded more to the teacher's explanations when he proceeded in Indonesian. This has to do with the students' limited English language proficiency.

There is the support of observation data by the result of interview with the first teacher, as follow:

Extract 8:

Teacher 1: "... English is a language of course it includes a lack of vocabulary of course because not all students will like within to English, and they are not used with English yeah so they have lake of vocabulary of course..." ("... *bahasa inggris adalah sebuah Bahasa, tentu saja itu termasuk kurangnya kosa kata tentu saja karena tidak semua siswa akan menyukai bahasa inggris dan mereka tidak terbiasa dengan bahasa inggris ya jadi mereka memiliki masalah dalam penguasaan kosa kata tentunya ...*")

(Interview transcript recorded on January 15th, 2024)

Based on the interview results, it can be seen that students do not master English vocabulary. Anticipating this, teachers use two languages when teaching in class, namely English and Indonesian. This is because students can more easily understand what is conveyed by the teacher. The first teacher's effort to increase students' vocabulary mastery was that the teacher provided several games which could increase students' interest in learning English, especially in memorizing vocabulary. This game includes 2 or three teams and each team writes any vocabulary related to a predetermined topic and not only that, there are other games such as constructing sentences. In essence, the first teacher adds several games in between lessons so that students don't get bored or sleepy easily in class.

c. *English Exposure*

The instructor sometimes uses both Indonesian and English in the classroom. Students won't understand if the teacher speaks in full English since they don't understand English. As the second teacher said, one of the reasons they are reluctant to use English in class is the influence of the environment where they live. they live in places where their mother tongue is dominant. So, they are more comfortable using their mother tongue with their classmates. Even if they use English, their mother tongue accent is very clear when pronouncing English sentences.

There is the support of observation data, the result of interview with first teacher as follow:

Extract 12: "okay uh of course yeah english exposure but i think because they have more interesting with English because English is new for them. so i think they are fine with new things English, malah they like English they love English" (*oke uh tentu saja ya English exposure inggris tapi menurutku karena mereka lebih tertarik dengan bahasa inggris karena bahasa inggris adalah hal baru bagi mereka. jadi menurutku mereka baik-baik saja dengan hal-hal baru dalam bahasa Inggris, malahan mereka menyukai bahasa Inggris, mereka menyukai bahasa Inggris.*)

(Interview transcript recorded on January 15th, 2024)

Based on the results of the interview with the first teacher, it was discovered that the material delivered during the lesson was delivered using Indonesian and mixed with English. one of the reasons may be because not all students receive English lessons at school. This makes students confused in understanding the lesson if the teacher uses English completely. However, this does not make the students give up not speaking English because it can be seen in extract 12 which states that they are very enthusiastic during the learning process because English is new to them so the students' curiosity about English is very great.

d. *Limited Resources Accessibility*

The facilities provided by the school to support the English language learning process are inadequate. It can be seen from the facilities such as air conditioning that only a few classes have the rest only using fans and also the inadequate availability of LCDs, only 3 LCDs are available, so each teacher has to take turns using the LCD. In Extract 15, sometimes teachers bring their own LCDs to school to use because other LCDs are also being used.

Extract 15:

Researcher: Nah, itu tadi pertanyaan sesuai dengan topik yang ini, limited resources accessibility, apakah kipas anginnya berfungsi? (*So, that was a question related to this topic, limited resources accessibility, is the fan working?*)

Teacher 2: iya. Semuanya berfungsi. Ada juga beberapa kelas, yang kemarin itu AC nyala, jadi dingin, mungkin, mungkin **di sini memang hawa nya memang panas sekali, kadang, tidak terlalu ini dingin.** (*Yes. Everything works. There are also several classes, yesterday the AC was on, so it was cold, maybe, maybe the weather here is really hot, sometimes, not so cold.*)

Researcher: Oke, what about another facilities like LCD? (*Oke, bagaimana dengan fasilitas lain seperti LCD?*)

Teacher 2: Ada, ada. **Tapi kadang mungkin, kalau guru lain pakai, limited yah, untuk guru yang lain, untuk mungkin saya, atau beberapa guru, mungkin, karena tidak hanya, boleh cuma provide, 2 atau 3, LCD,** Kadang, I bring my LCD to school, ya. Kalaupun misalnya LCD yang dirumah juga dipakai saya akan menyesuaikan materi dan fasilitas yang akan saya pakai. (*There is. But sometimes maybe, if other teachers use it, it's limited, yes, for other teachers, for maybe me, or some teachers, maybe, because not only, can only provide, 2 or 3, LCD, Sometimes, I bring my LCD to school, yeah. Even if, for example, I also use the LCD at home, I will adjust the materials and facilities that I will use.*)

(Interview transcript recorded on January 15th, 2024)

Based on the results of interviews with the second teacher, the facilities provided by the school to support the English language learning process are inadequate. It can be seen from the facilities such as air conditioning that only a few classes have the rest only using fans and also the inadequate availability of LCDs, only 3 LCDs are available, so each teacher has to take turns using the LCD. in Extract 15, sometimes teachers bring their own LCDs to school to use because other LCDs are also being used.

e. Linguistic Problem

The instructor uses a combination of English and Indonesian to provide the content. The majority of the students reside in Gowa, thus even though the teacher speaks English fluently, their accent is still audible. The teacher spoke words correctly in English, according to the researcher's findings. The material was delivered using language that was categorized as simple and easy to understand. When a teacher hears or speaks a term that they are unfamiliar with, they look it up online to make sure they pronounce it correctly.

f. Psychological Problem

Both engaged and inactive students were present in the class. Active learners typically have higher levels of enthusiasm for their studies and are more willing to voice their questions and ideas to the teacher. Conversely, inactive students remain silent and are reluctant to express their opinions or ask questions. The reasons why students are passive in class is because they are embarrassed and afraid of making mistakes or maybe it is because the students don't like and are not interested in English lessons. Therefore, several teachers provide motivation for them to be interested in learning English.

The above is supported by interviews with the first teacher, the results are as follows:

Extract 20: “**Less confidence, yes, of course, because maybe, because English is not used, they are not used with English, because they will shy, they are wrong,** if they are don't really into English or don't really into the subject or the material, so, yeah. That's one of them. Yeah, shy is one of the biggest issues in psychological problems. (*Kurang percaya diri ya tentu saja, karena mungkin karena bahasa Inggrisnya tidak digunakan, mereka tidak terbiasa dengan bahasa inggris, karena mereka akan malu, mereka salah, kalau mereka tidak terlalu ke dalam bahasa inggris atau tidak terlalu suka subjek atau materinya, jadi, ya. Itu salah satunya. Ya, rasa malu adalah salah satu masalah terbesar dalam masalah psikologis.*)

(Interview transcript recorded on January 15th, 2024)

Based on the results of the interviews and observations above, there are active and passive students in the class. Active students usually tend to be more enthusiastic in learning and do not hesitate to ask questions or opinions to the teacher. While passive students keep quiet and are reticent to voice their ideas or pose a query.

In Extract 20 it can be seen that one of the reasons why students are passive in class is because they are embarrassed and afraid of making mistakes or maybe it is because the students don't like and are not interested in English lessons. Therefore, several teachers provide motivation for them to be interested in learning English.

4.2. Teacher Strategy in Classroom Management

a. Determination Strategy

Determination strategy refers to individual learning strategies that help learners discover the meaning of words by themselves. On the results of interviews with the three teachers above, they all think that it is good for students to bring dictionaries to school, and specifically at this school, the rules for bringing cellphones to school are permitted. This is not without reason; bringing a cellphone to school can support classroom learning such as using the internet and so on. In the observation results, it was also seen that several students actively asked questions if they did not know some of the material, and the teacher was also ready to answer the students' questions.

b. Group Discussion Strategy

In learning EFL, teachers use this strategy to make it easier to deliver material to students where they are grouped based on their abilities so that they can help each other in doing assignments or having group discussions.

c. Communication Strategy

The teacher used a communication strategy by getting to know their students better inside and outside school. This is useful for building better relationships between them during the learning process. For example, in the case in the extract above, the teacher asked about the students' condition and if they felt that in class the students are confused or have problems. Therefore, teachers must be sensitive to the conditions of their students, so building good relationships is important. The third teacher did the same thing in extract 30 regarding communication strategies, where the third teacher communicated directly with their homeroom teacher.

5. Discussions

5.1. Challenges

The researcher discovered a number of difficulties instructors experienced. The difficulty for students was their poor command of language, which makes it difficult for them to comprehend and apply what they are learning in class. The children appeared perplexed when responding to the teacher's English-related queries. This is inextricably linked to the limited exposure to English that the pupils had in their prior schools. One could argue that educators ought to work harder at implementing student-appropriate teaching strategies. In addition, psychological issues with pupils pose a hurdle while teaching English since some students are passive and prefer to keep quiet, reluctant to actively participate in class or share their opinions out of insecurity or embarrassment.

After the researcher found out all the challenges faced by the three English teachers at Insan Cendekia Syech Yusuf High School, there were six challenges faced by the three teachers during the classroom learning process from the seven challenges from the theory used by the researcher. As explained in chapter two where there are seven challenges faced by teachers in English lessons proposed by Songbatumis (2017) in her journal and in this research only one challenge was not faced by teachers, namely crowded classes. As seen from the research results, the three teachers did not experience problems regarding the number of students which could affect effectiveness during the learning process because there were only around 15-20 students in each class.

5.2. Teaching Strategy in the Classroom Management

Research findings showed that teachers do face several challenges in classroom management so teachers must look for ways or strategies to solve each problem they face. Based on the theory of Brophy (2006), he groups 3 strategies regarding classroom management for teachers, they are (1) Determination Strategy, (2) Group Discussion Strategy, and (3) Communication Strategy. The following are the findings obtained by researcher after conducting research regarding the challenges teachers face in teaching English as well as the strategies teachers used to overcome the challenges teachers face in the classroom and all teachers used the strategies above to overcome the challenges teachers face during the classroom learning process.

6. Conclusions

This study is conducted to find the challenges faced by the English teachers at SMA Insan Cendekia Syech Yusuf, Gowa. The conclusions of this research can be answered based on the research questions. From the interview with the teachers, the researcher found some data which are contained with the challenges and strategies by the English teachers.

First, the researcher found that there were six challenges faced by the three teachers during the classroom learning process, namely: a shortage of teacher training, lack of vocabulary, lack of English exposure, limited resource accessibility, linguistic problems, and psychological problems. Meanwhile, limited time is the new finding by the researcher.

Second, the researcher found that there were three strategies that teachers used to overcome the challenges that teachers faced, namely: determination strategy, group discussion strategy and communication strategy.

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